

## **The Road to PALISADE 16: Serious Reading**

Transcriber: vesta#5711 (Live at the Table version); thehreadbiter (intro and edits)

**Austin:** The Road to PALISADE is a show about war, politics, religion, revolutionary violence, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings, please check the episode description.

**[TV tuning in]**

**[Garbled voice]**

**[People chanting and protesting]**

**[Following clips are from various speakers]**

**CLIP 1:** Well, now we have more uh gas going off here, is that your perspective there? —

**CLIP 2:** What you are seeing is that tension spilling over that we just talked about, a [muffled] while ago people kept pushing the police line and pushing the police line and pushing the police line, now we're seeing a wide variety of of response from that police team—

**CLIP 3:** It seems that this time the protestors are taking a stand. Bear with us with our picture, we're trying to move closer—

**CLIP 4:** They're just going through the window right now and presumably they're going to come out with some cash, I don't know what's going on over there but I don't remember seeing anything like this—

**CLIP 5:** They look to be uh flash grenades that are going off and we can only assume and hope that those are being launched by uh police officers—

**[Music begins: “[Permanent Peace](#)” by Jack de Quidt]**

**[Protesting sounds fade]**

**[Following clips are from various speakers in-studio]**

**CLIP 1:** One small band of protestors came to town with masks on their faces and destruction on their minds.

**CLIP 2:** Um, again, any group that wants to be taken seriously should not be conducting itself that way.

**CLIP 3:** What are they protesting? Nobody seems to know.

**CLIP 4:** I am struggling with trying to understand what is it that resolves this, what is it that, what is it that people are waiting for? Are there some other specific things that need to happen for these demonstrations to move into some other form, to move into a reform form, or some, something else? I'm just puzzled as to where we go next.

**CLIP 5:** This is just a symptom of what many people see as another example of the value base of this society decaying and and and being attacked —

**CLIP 6:** So everything you say, you have to be careful, and you have to make — and look, and this goes, by the way, for people on the far left, too, who are like “fuck all the centrists” and bullshit like that, too.

**CLIP 7:** Every government has an absolute obligation to enforce the rule of law and to protect private property, and frankly they oughta be filming these people —

**CLIP 8:** I mean, what comes next, a guillotine inside there? —

**CLIP 9:** Absolutely, they should be declared a terrorist outfit, and what they do is textbook terrorism, is engaging in violence for the purposes of politics and ideology...

**CLIP 10:** [crosstalk] They are not stupid people, they are devious and treacherous and very competent—

**CLIP 11:** [crosstalk] Right. That's a great insight.

**[Audio clips cut]**

**AUSTIN (as Layer Luxurious):** The same as it ever was.

I am your host, Layer Luxurious, and if you are a clever listener, then based on what you just heard you may be able to guess that today we turn our analytic apparatus towards the media infrastructure of the Divine Principality during the final years of the Perfect Millennium. And as you may have surmised, the news entertainment and publishing ecology during that time

was finely tuned to offer the *illusion* of choice. Yes, there were technically differences between the Principality's traditionalists and reformists, but whatever words were sung, the rhythm was locked to a beat provided by the great fundamental truths of power, property, and violence. So long as the violence was used to keep those first two in the right hands.

Nevertheless, every now and then, a perfectly tuned clock breaks. And so today we present you the final episode of what was once the Principality's most beloved political podcast. All I can say is enjoy the ride.

**[music ends]**

**AUSTIN:** Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterisation, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today, Jack de Quidt.

**JACK:** Hello there! I am Jack, you can find me on Twitter [@notquitereal](#), and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

**AUSTIN:** Keith Carberry.

**KEITH:** Hi my name is Keith Carberry, you can find me on Twitter [@KeithJCarberry](#), and find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#).

**AUSTIN:** And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

**ART:** Hey, you can find me on Twitter [@atebbel](#). I think I'm on Cohost as AMTebbel? And I should start using Cohost. I am going to try to do at least one cohost-

**AUSTIN:** [overlapping] Today is the day.

**JACK:** [overlapping] Cohost is good.

**AUSTIN:** Now that, now that the fucking Elon Musk Twitter purchase of Twitter seems like it's going to go through again because he's afraid of whatever's going to come up in-

**KEITH:** That's so funny.

**AUSTIN:** In- not findings, what is it called, discovery?

**ART:** Discovery or deposition.

**AUSTIN:** [overlapping] Or deposition.

**ART:** He was about to-

**JACK:** But it's a real like, even when we win, we lose? Cause the funniest possible outcome here is Musk has to spend too much money to buy a thing it turns out he doesn't actually want?

**KEITH:** And then it ruins it.

**JACK:** But it does then turn out that he does have it.

**AUSTIN:** He does in fact have, yeah. That would, yes, that would suck, but. It is what it is. Yes I should-

**KEITH:** I mean who knows? He might just back- he said was going to buy it, like before, and it didn't go through- I mean, I guess technically he bought it when he said he was going to buy it, which is why all this is happening. **[AUSTIN: Right.]** Is because you, there was no return policy **[AUSTIN: Right.]** When you sign the paper saying I wanna buy Twitter.

**JACK:** Yeah. He's got buyer's remorse.

**ART:** [overlapping] Well then he's in breach because he didn't buy Twitter when he said he would buy Twitter **[KEITH: Right]**, so they could theoretically be like, no, we would rather have the penalty money, and **[AUSTIN: And- right.]** you go away, but.

**KEITH:** I would rather have that. I would rather have the money for buying Twitter but still keep Twitter without having to sell it. That's what I would want if I was them.

**AUSTIN:** I don't really want any of it.

**JACK:** I started writing a Cohost post about something funny that happened to in me *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla*. And then I thought to myself, Jack, you can hold on to this experience to yourself, and I deleted it? And going to post something on a better platform **[AUSTIN: Yeah.]** than Twitter and then stopping? Feels like I've reached some kind of higher level of power.

**AUSTIN:** You've ascended, for sure.

**KEITH:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um, we should do this show. Welcome to the next episode of *The Road to PALISADE*. Last one was, last game we played was a big one. *Orbital* was five episodes long, high drama, deep characterisation, all sorts of surprises and worldbuilding.

**JACK:** Several cults.

**AUSTIN:** More than one- [chuckles] and then the person disappears and comes back, whatever the thing was that we always kept coming back to. [**JACK** chuckles] Yeah, very fun. Today we're going a different direction. There's still going to be some worldbuilding here especially up top as I get everybody on the same page. But today we're playing, Keith, your pitch to Crunchyroll last year, two years ago. Do you remember exactly what you said?

**KEITH:** Uhh, yeah. I bel- so we were asked [what we wanted as a PARTIZAN spin-off](#)? [**AUSTIN:** Yes.] And my answer was that I want- I didn't want like a different show, [**AUSTIN:** Mhm.] or like, I didn't want to do another podcast- wait. Hm.

**AUSTIN:** You didn't want to do another anime show.

**KEITH:** I didn't want to do like an anime show, I wanted to do a parody podcast version of like a Pod Save America-style like, power-serving liberal like, quote unquote center left, actually center right, sort-of show, [**AUSTIN:** Yes.] talking about politics and current events of our world.

**JACK:** It's a pitch so good that I haven't stopped thinking about it [**KEITH** chuckles] since you gave that interview.

**AUSTIN:** I opened up a document and wrote "Pod Save the Principality" [**KEITH** laughs] basically immediately after you said that.

**KEITH:** Oh good.

**AUSTIN:** And was like yeah, we have to do it. We have to do all of these. A big one for we *have* to do all of these. And so we're gonna do that, and it was hard because it was like, what's the game? Because we could just like talk into a microphone and pretend to be these people. But I was like, I wanna- we're doing games on this, and so eventually I dug around, and eventually I found a game called *Serious Reading*, a solo journalling game of useless opinion columns [**KEITH** laughs] by Jordan Boschman, which was actually recently updated with a whole second

page of prompts and stuff. And we have hacked it a little bit to turn it into, I mean well, I'll read the description is.

*Serious Reading* is the only game inspired by the brow furrowing and spine shuddering evoked by opinion columns. It is a comedy-focused, single-page, solo journaling RPG where you take on the role of grossly paid- a grossly overpaid opinion columnist who probably should have quit years ago, as most of them should have if we could only be so lucky. You'll use separate tables of prompts to write headlines for fictional opinion pieces, ostensibly about very serious topics, and excerpts from those articles that reveal little to nothing about their supposed topic but everything about the bizarre, broken life of your columnist character.

And so I've sent this around to everybody, and I made some- some very basic hacks to it that are not in this document, I'm just going to repost them in our main chat here. Where have I written this down? Oh I guess I wrote it down in our Road to Season 8 document. The way this is gonna work is- actually I sent y'all a run of show earlier which is very fun. I'm- we're doing the real Friends at the Table intro, we're introducing ourselves, I'm explaining the game and the hack, then we're going to go into the show. The show is going to have segments.

The three big segments that are tied to the- our hack of *Serious Reading*, are that instead of it being a solo game where you have a character, and then you roll on the Headline table and then you roll on the Write About table, I'm going to publically roll on the Headline table, come up with a topic based on the table that we see here, explain what that topic is as if we're throwing to the next segment of the podcast, and then you will all independently and privately roll on the Write About table? And this will be the thing that your person, your character, actually wants to write about.

So I'm just going to make two up that are not- I've not looked at this, I'm just going to say off the top of my head, I could roll the topic "the military", right? Is about modern, contemporary western culture, right? So I could say "military spending" could be the topic, the headline topic. But then the Write About could be like, you know, "your trip to the carnival this weekend". And like an opinion columnist or a talking head, you will try to turn the conversation to what you want to talk about while still trying to laboriously connect it to, or fail to connect it to [**JACK** chuckles] whatever that topic is. Does that all make sense?

**JACK:** Yes.

**KEITH:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** I'm going to set timers for these segments. These are going to be 20-minute segments, each of them. And there's going to be a little bit- there's going to be a little bit of other stuff, is all I'll say. That's, that's all I'll say. But it won't be a super long one because of that. Are there any questions? I feel like the host of a game show.

**JACK:** This does feel very game-like.

**ART:** Yeah this is the closest to like comedy sports we've ever done on the-

**AUSTIN:** Yeah I'm happy about it. I'm ready. [**JACK** chuckles] I'm ready to do it. Alright. So, let me switch over to-

**JACK:** [smirks] This is such bullshit.

**AUSTIN:** [laughs] Alright!

**JACK:** You gotta make clear that this is parody, Austin, or we're going to hell.

**AUSTIN:** This is all parody. [clears throat]

**[00:11:15 - CENTRE/line begins]**

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Hello! My name is Continental Countinghouse. And this is CENTRE/line, a podcast about meeting in the middle. Recorded live at the 10th Coronet, joining me today as always, my friend and yours, Pregoria Prilt.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Hello it's good to be here.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Pregoria, what are you working on lately? How're you doing?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I'm good, I'm good, it's always good to be here on the show with you. I just wanted to let you know, wanted to give you an update that I have gone ahead, and I have sponsored that think tank to look into producing the sequel to the fork.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The sequel to the fork? The sequel- the utensil that we eat with?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, the utensil. That we eat with, yeah. People are always, people are always saying to me, you know, Prilt, it's been too long since the fork has had an update. And I'm getting the best minds on it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What's the budget? What's the starting budget look like for something like that?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Well I've set aside two and a half.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Two and a half... million?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah [exhaling], two and a half million, it's, yeah, I'm really excited, we're getting the first sketches back. Um, I'm trying to-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Of the Fork 2? Sorry I shouldn't have, what it's called?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We're going to call it The New Fork, or Fork New.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Fork New. I love it.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I love that.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I love it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Well, you know, I'm happy, I'm excited to eat with the Fork New. I'm putting my- I'm going to put my cap- I'm going to throw my chips in on Fork New.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeeeah. Oh!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's what I like.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's what I like to hear.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Alright, also joining us today, an old friend going way back to when I was in Kesh boarding school, Reatta Fossick, joining us.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's wonderful to see you as always.



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Reatta, what's on your mind today?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Ummm [exhaling], well, you know the weather is always changing.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Is that true where you are? Where- where do you reside mostly these days? I know obviously right now you're in the studio with us, but when you're not-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It feels like that's where I reside, is in the studio.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [laughs]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Tell me about it!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And I am producing a documentary on the weather and-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just generally on the weather?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Oh well specific- it is generally on the weather, and specifically on how changes in weather affect people's moods where they live.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** A lot of our perceptions about ourselves and each other come from the kind of weather [JACK (as Pregoria): Ohhh.] [AUSTIN (as Continental): Huh.] that we experience on a day to day basis, and how-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Now do you think we would be in the situation we're in if the weather were different?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And that is exactly what I feel like I'm trying to get at, and um, prescribing, technologically, [AUSTIN (as Continental): Mhm.] different weathers for different areas according to-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping entirely] Different weathers for different areas according to-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** To their needs.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** To their needs.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yes. Mentally.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yes.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Economically.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right. Mentally and economically.

**KEITH and JACK (as Reatta and Pregoria):** Socially.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Socially, economically.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Exactly, exactly.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Boom.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, exactly.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We have a couple of heavy hitters today. And you know, again, I think people may be out there listening to- maybe this is their first episode of CENTRE/line and they are thinking, "Continental, how could you bring someone from Columnar and someone from Kesh to the table? [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ha ha haa, yeah!] Aren't you at war with each other right now?"

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I'm not at war, I'm in the studio, is how I think of it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's right! That's exactly it.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Am I at war?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [hushed] I don't know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Am I at war, Reatta?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** But! I will say, it is a little, it is a little one-sided today because our third guest, also from the Pact. You know. We all love you. Galae- [stumbles] Galaebulus Splu-u-mp!

**JACK and KEITH (as Pregoria and Reatta):** [chuckles and laughs]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Sorry I shouldn't laugh, every time!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Galaebulus! I apologise if I stumbled there a little bit. You know I just call you Gala normally, but I wanna make sure everyone is, you know.

**ART (as Gala):** Yes, that's. That's of course fine. But yes, that is correct. Gala-ebus.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mm!

**ART (as Gala):** Ebulus. I've- ah. **[AUSTIN and KEITH stifling their laughter]** I'm a real Memphis Longhand over here.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm. Mhm!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ohhh.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gal, is- how are things going for Apostolos right now?

**ART (as Gala):** Just great!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just great?

**ART (as Gala):** Couldn't be better!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** That's great to hear.

**ART (as Gala):** You know what they say, we're always in motion on Apostolos.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I've heard that about you guys.

**AUSTIN:** Um, out of character, Austin, I just want to note, thank you for all these names. Your first name, says *Serious Reading*, is a car model, a forgotten Roman emperor's name with

some swapped syllables, or a baby name that no one- that no longer exists. Your last name is either mistaken for a swear or a slur, or is a previously unknown onomatopoeia. So.

#### **[00:16:05 - State of the Board]**

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** With our intro done, I need to take the camera for myself, everybody. You already know what time it is, it is time for, [dramatic voice] *The State of the Board*.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** The State of the Board!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The State of the Board, of course, is where I get us all on the same page so that our conversations, our discourses, all align. I'm gonna start today with I think maybe one of the most important stories, our Opening Gambit, Palisade Lockdown.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Mhm.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Today, the day you're hearing this, it marks two years since Stels Kesh and Nideo first landed on that little purple-hued planet of Palisade, right on the border of the old Twilight Mirage, mythical homeland that it is. Fighting continues across the sector, which means that right in the middle of the- right in the middle of Nideo space, has joined Partizan and the Golden Branch as places I personally would not like to visit on vacation. The Pact and The Curtain—well what used to be called The Curtain, more on that in a second—they've continued trading missiles in the star systems adjacent to Palisade, but it seems like Nideo and Kesh have the planet and its solar system, and the route in and out, locked up pretty tightly as Year 3 of their- what should we call it? Occupation, return, cohabitation, of the planet? Continues.

Next up, State of the Board, Midgame Maneuver! There was a *huge* win this week, not only for us here in Stel Orion, shoutouts to everyone on the 10th Coronet, but also for business owners large and small across the galaxy. The Elect of Space, the big guy named Rye, who has always been a formidable negotiator, spearheaded new negotiations towards an agreement that would maintain Orion neutrality. You wanna call it the State of Orion, you wanna call it Stel Orion, whatever you want, we're free here. And on top of that, this new agreement guarantees the safe and legal passage of all Orion ships from the teeniest frigate to the largest freighter across the entire spread of Principality space, so long as that ship has its paperwork and is doing legal business, of course. Rye-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** From trading missiles to trading missiles.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's exactly- that's it! [**JACK (as Pregoria)** applauds and cheers] Yes, absolutely! Rye worked- [**ART (as Gala):** Yeeeeah!] with senior leadership on every side of this ongoing conflict, including the Divines like Columnar's Choice, Nideo's Imperium, our very own Arbitrage. The Orion Trade Concordance, that's what they're calling it, the Orion Trade Concordance, the OTC, is absolutely the *best* thing for the Principality right now. It means that regular people, regular folks, Joe Schmo, people with only one or two or three spaceships, are able to freely move around the galaxy once again doing business, creating jobs, transporting people across the stars, and getting us back to where we belong, together! Which brings us to the final update to the board. State of the Board segment three!

**AUSTIN and JACK (as Continental and Pregoria):** Checkmate of the Week!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Checkmate of the Week. Since- I'm going to get a little serious here, folks. Since we started this show at the beginning of this conflict, and the three of you are my friends, you can justify- you can say you know, Continental, you have been saying this from the jump. I have been saying that the Peaceful Princept, Cynosure Whitestar Kesh, needs to clean house.

I get it. Kesh and Nideo are all about tradition, and secrecy. I don't think any of us here in Orion were that surprised when it was revealed that a mysterious intelligence agency called The Curtain had been key to operating things across the galaxy. But Cynosure isn't that sort of leader. He's a "read the small print" kinda guy. He's a "deal with the brass tax" sort of regular guy. That's a guy who likes to do his taxes, you know? And I think that you know, I know, and he knows, and you know, that he shouldn't have had that sort of shadow government going on. Which is why I think that his decision along with Celadon Shore, the Cycle of Nideo, to perform this- they're calling it a civil coup, it's been a huge step in the right direction. This week, those two declared, The Curtain, well it's going back behind the curtain. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh!] And in its place rises *The Bilateral Intercession*.

The Bilateral Intercession. A combined interim government made up of currently elected Kesh and Nideo leadership. As far as I'm concerned, the war should be over! This puts these Stels in the hands of the people. Isn't that what the Pact wants? Isn't that what we all want? Apparently not, because the way that the Pact, and I have friends in the Pact, two friends in the Pact, right here on the show today, but the way that the Pact responded to this was by

releasing a press release. A piece of paper, let me take a look here. And it says that they're changing their name too! That's their response to this.

They are now the *Pact of Free States*. Apostolos and Columnar run it, the Pact of Free States.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Pact of Free States, baby!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Stel nowhere in the name. No, not the Pact of Free Stels.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Don't need it anymore.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Huh. Well! At least they get to keep the Pact moniker. I'm not really sure what we're supposed to call The Bilateral Intercession. BI? The Bilats? Maybe just the Intercession? I don't know, it seems ominous, like the villain in a Columnar series. The Intercession.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I like the Bilats.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Bilats! Yeah, let's just go with Bilats for now.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [husky voice] The laddies.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Bi-bilates like pilates, like pilates, Bilates.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** The- the laddies.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The laddies! The billies!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah.

**ART (as Gala):** [disapproving sounds]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Bilates. I'm kidding! I really do love the name Intercession, it's not an intercession, I don't think, like, "I have to make an intercession into my kid's life because he's failing algebra. I have to start paying attention again". I think it's more like a prayer. In a real way, this war has separated us from the Principality. Not just you know, what we used to have, but the ideal version of the Principality, everything we could be.

So the Intercession to me, it feels like a prayer to the Divines across the galaxy saying, hey. You're greater than us. And you know I have some mixed feelings about some of these Divines, but they are greater than us. It's like, you're greater than us, you're closer to the ideal we fallible beings could ever be, bring us home. Intercess on our behalf.

Is that a word, intercess? Inter- intercede.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I don't think so.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Intercede?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Intercede, I'm getting my words all messed up, which is about as good of a sign as there needs to be that we should start this show for real. But first, I do have to thank our first sponsor. And then we'll come right back with our first topic.

#### **[00:23:10 - Word From Our Sponsors 1]**

**AUSTIN:** *Word From Our Sponsors* is a segment in which- actually let me keep this slideshow up, we generate a new sponsor. We're doing that with the following two links I'm about to send you. Those links are uh, [finding sounds] where did I put them? Here we go. I'll pull them over on to the stream. Also... those are... Random Object Generator [**JACK** chuckles], which I'll drop into our PALISADE- our live shows- I'll put it in PALISADE chat, which is [perchance.org/object](http://perchance.org/object). I'm going to hit randomise on this one.

**ART:** Great.

**AUSTIN:** Okay, I got empty tin can. That's good. And then, we go over here to [namelix.com](http://namelix.com) and we put in the thing, which again is empty tin can [**KEITH** laughs], then I'm gonna hit generate.

**ART:** Oh no.

**AUSTIN:** Uhh, and, okay! Let's see if we got- PUFFTIN! Here we go! Hooo.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Our first sponsor today folks, is of course PUFFTIN Empty Tin Cans. What's there to say? You know, sometimes they ask us to do these reads for an object I don't know too much about, you know. So one time I got a, something about like a car sparkplug? I don't know anything about cars. I don't have a clue about cars. You know what I have a clue about? Empty tin cans. I'm *surrounded* by them. [**ART** wheezes] I use them every day, I use them for so many different things. Ask me what I keep in my empty tin cans.

**JACK and ART (as Pregoria and Gala):** What do you keep in your-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [interrupting] Nothing! They're empty!

**ART (as Gala):** Ohh.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Wow.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ohhh. Woah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They're empty, I keep them that way, because they help balance me. Sure you could put beads or nails in there. You could put your floss. You could use them as a cup. I like 'em empty. I like keeping 'em empty, it helps reflect my voice around me. I build a little wall that separates me from the world with my PUFFTIN tin cans. PUFFTIN.com/CENTREline. Remember, C-E-N-T-R-E, it's classier that way.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Is it time for topic one, folks?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I think it might be.

**AUSTIN:** Alright. Let's roll some dice. Topic number one, rolling the D20, um there are two different- there's a 2021 and a 2022 Topic list along with there being Write About lists? I think we need to pick between the two. I think we get to roll one and pick between the two. I'll also say as we move into our next sets of rounds, feel free to continue to harp on whatever your earlier thing is? But make sure you hit the second one. And make note of it, because I wanna know at the end what everyone's actual topic was [chuckling]. Maybe it'll be obvious.

**ART:** We're rolling- we're rolling in secret, correct?

**AUSTIN:** You're rolling in secret. I am not going to know. I will- I will tell you what my- what the topic is. Mmm, interesting. Okay. [**KEITH:** Ooh.] My topic-

**KEITH:** Where's our- where's our lists?

**AUSTIN:** I've linked you. There.

**KEITH:** [overlapping] Oh okay, I didn't see that.



**AUSTIN:** Sorry they're a little bit higher up in the scheduling chat in Friends at the Table. I'll re-[finding sounds] I'll link you to the *Serious Reading* thing. There you go. In PALISADE chat, I've now linked to the Discord message where *Serious Reading*'s link is. Okay.

**ART:** [mumbling] -how weird this dumb...

**KEITH:** Okay we've got- okay okay okay okay.

**AUSTIN:** You've got em, you see the two lists?

**KEITH:** Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Alright. My options for Headline topic are "international political summit" or "lobbying/political corruption".

**ART:** Oh both of those are pretty good.

**AUSTIN:** Number- the first one is really on point with everything I just said in terms of the current worldbuilding stuff? But I think I'm gonna go for "lobbying and political corruption" because I think there is a little more to play with. So, are we all- do you all have your stuff ready? You have your ideas? Do you need any more time?

**JACK:** I think I'm good.

**KEITH:** And this is off of List 1- or sorry the-

**AUSTIN:** Or 2, you can pick which one you want.

**KEITH:** Oh okay. Okay okay.

**ART:** Yeah roll your number and then see what you think you can [**AUSTIN:** Yeah] go with.

**KEITH:** Okay. Yeah. I'm ready.

**AUSTIN:** It didn't hit, let's go back in- there we go, slideshow. Boom! Lobbying and political corruption in the Principality.

**[00:27:45 - First Topic]**

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Our first topic tonight, with all of these changes, the arrival of the Bilateral Intercession, the rename of the Pact, I gotta know. How much of what you think goes on in the big picture, the- the kind of entire galactic politisphere, is driven by political actors, people who have been elected or who have taken power, you know, the people who are supposed to represent people's interests? And how much of what happens do you think reflects political donors? Lobbyists? How many people do you think have been impacted by you know, maybe not here in Orion, where CEOs effectively you know run the game, and that's the way we like it. But throughout the rest of the galaxy, how much do you think money plays a part in what's going on out there? Let's start with, you know what, let's start with my old friend from boarding school, Reatta.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I'm jumping out of my seat to talk about this one.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I can see! You're leaning forward- people who are only listening in the audio right now, Reatta is literally bouncing up and down in their seat.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Because I have been thinking about this a lot, and I think it's undeniable when you look at culture at a broad scope that **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mm, mm.] things move from the bottom up. You talk about how corporations are the name of the game in Orion, and that's how you like it, and that's why that's how it is. It's because that's how you like it. And the reason different places are acting differently aside from-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's cause they're different.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's- well, part of it is weather patterns, which I talked about earlier.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They are different. Right, well.

**JACK: (as Pregoria):** Right right right.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** There's, there's geologic differences between places. Do you live **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Mountains.] in a hilly place, do you live in a rural place? But the way that our cultures work is going to send norms upwards up to the top. And so if you have a culture, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah.] a social category where it's cool-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] Like a group of people. Like,

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, an identity.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Where it's cool to *not* be doing things the right way, to *not* work hard, to *not* take your job seriously, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] that is going to affect things in the boardroom and on-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** On Main Street.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And on the main street, yes.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And on the floor, also.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And on the- yeah. At every level.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The dance floor, the trading floor, there's lots of different floors. They're all there.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Cause buildings get built from the ground up. You don't start from the top, you start from the bottom. And so, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's true] if the foundation's shaky at the top, it's cause the building wasn't built right.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I see. Let's go over to Pregoria. Do you agree with this, that if a building is shaky, it's cause it wasn't built right?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I don't think that there's any other way to think about it. You know you look at the studies that've been done, and you talk to the people who are in the know, and you know they always say that you gotta start with putting that, that special fast drying concrete in at the bottom layer, you know? You get the big trucks that come in, they put that concrete in-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Beep, beep, beep. Yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Beep beep beep, yeah. Like beep beep beep. And it's like, you know, to bounce off what Reatta's saying you know, we're not just talking about the foundation, we're talking about the people who brought the trucks there themselves. Have they been, you know? Have they been?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Have they gone to school? Do they just know how to drive a truck?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Have they gone to school?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Did they get paid off? Is what I'm saying.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Oh.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Did they get paid off? Did the cement truck drivers take a cheque, a little payola.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Because we know! You know? We've seen it, we've seen it happen, we saw it happen at the Summer Passage of Arms, these kinds of conversations [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] get made- right, you know the palms get greased, and all of a sudden you know, you have the swim team coming through in a way that they shouldn't.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Swish... swish... swish... that's them swimming.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah. And we all remember-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And they've been paid off, is what you're suggesting. The swim team.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Well we know they've been paid off! I'm- this is an oversimplification but we know they've been paid off-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] This is- wait wait wait, we know they've been paid off?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We know the swim team's been- did you not see? The interviews?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I hadn't seen this arti- what's the, can we get- production, can we get that article? [**JACK (as Pregoria):** I think-] Let me pull this up. Do you have a link?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Uh, ye- uhh, yeah. Okay yeah, it's just- it's just here- it doesn't say that they were paid off exactly, right?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** No, it says that they won, a trophy.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [chuckles] But *how* did they win the trophy?

**ART (as Gala):** Mmmm.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** By swimming.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** How did they win the trophy? That's a great question.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Swimming. Swimming too damn fast, Reatta.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Huh. Gala, you're- you know, people will say, people from Apostolos, oh they're fish people, do you have swimming feelings?

**ART (as Gala):** I have a lot of swimming feelings.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's not me saying that, I want to be clear, but people will say that.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah. I have a lot of swimming feelings, I mean. We of course do swim in our gym classes all the way through school, from little kids to, to high school kids, to university students. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Amazing.] Swim swim swim. Gotta keep swimming.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gotta keep swimming. Do you think that, have you encountered that because of the Apostolosian military culture there is more or less of a chance that swimming competitions get corrupted by political lobbyists?

**ART (as Gala):** No, the swimming competitions are never corrupted. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh ho ho ho!] They're sacrosanct. Everyone in an Apostolosian swimming competition, you can take it to the bank. The central bank of Apostolos, you can take it to- those are on the up and up.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Well, not to bring it back to the original point here but is the idea of taking it to the bank, something you can take to the bank?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Huh.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** To the bank.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Do you know what I mean?

**ART (as Gala):** I think you can definitely take taking to the bank to the bank.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Even in Apostolos?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Even in Apostolos?

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah everywhere. Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Everywhere?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Would which bank you took it to count as political lobbying?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It would on Kesh.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay woah, let's keep it civil here.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I mean I don't- you know, you know I'm just having a bit of fun.

[**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay, of course.] You know how I feel about Kesh banks.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Of course, of course. [exhales] Reatta? [**ART (as Gala):** But I mean-] do you wanna respond to that? It feels like-

**ART (as Gala):** I think there- I think there's a fundamental corruption in our society. I don't want to seem naive, I just think that we need to have our eye on the real prize here!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Which is?

**ART (as Gala):** And I mean, and I think that's obvious, which is that people who adopt pets from shelters are garbage people!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh my god- every single time! And you make such a good point every time!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The people who adopt pets-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [overlapping] And every time you make this point, you're making such a good point.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah-!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They're garbage people- you mean like a dog? Or a cat?

**ART (as Gala):** A dog or a- **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Lobster?] if you go to a- or a lobster **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Parrot.] sometimes on **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Parrot.] Apostolos it's lobsters, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] it's rarely parrots. But you know, the- those are the people you gotta look out for! And I think it's Big Abandoned Pet that really controls all the political leverage.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay wait, so you're saying- are you mad at the people who are adopting those pets, or people who are leave-

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** So they're not- are they abandoned pets, or are they adopted pets?

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah if you- if you go and you rescue- **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Rescue.] an animal from a shelter, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, when they're sheltered.] you're destr- yeah, you're contributing to social malaise.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** You're perpetuating the abandonment of animals.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** T[overlapping] I see! This comes back to what **[JACK (as Pregoria):** It does.] Reatta was saying to begin with, I think it was Reatta, maybe it was you Pregoria, apologies, people used to be lazier. Or people are lazier now than they used to be, apologies you know, sometimes I get my words mixed up. People are lazier now, they are not putting themselves forward. **[KEITH (as Reatta):** Mhm.] In the old days you won't get to go to a shelter to get a dog **[JACK (as Pregoria):** No, no.] or a cat or a lobster. You had to go to the source and get one! Now people are-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** To the dog farm.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** To a dog farm- to a dog farm, exactly. A high quality dog farm, not one of these- and that's- it's a metaphor, is what you're saying, for **[ART (as Gala):** Yeah] political corruption in a way. People are shortcutting-

**ART (as Gala):** But I think it is the other way, I think political corruption is a metaphor **[KEITH laughs out loud]** for-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** For the real issue in-

**ART (as Gala):** For the real issue-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Of people adopting pets from-

**ART (as Gala):** Right, yeah, when you take a pet that someone else has decided is not a good pet-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What should be happening to the pets in your mind? They get-

**ART (as Gala):** I don't- maybe, maybe they can get jobs?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Maybe they can get jobs.

**ART (as Gala):** We can-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Wait, wait, Gala. Gala.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Gala. You know how I feel about your cat, you know.

**ART (as Gala):** Uh huh.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Where'd you get Spinky from?

**ART (as Gala):** [slowly] From a proud lineage of good, proper cats!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And how many hours a week is she working?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Well-

**ART (as Gala):** Well none, I have a very good job!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right. **[ART (as Gala):** Doing this with you.] Spinky is provided for **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Ohhh.] in this scenario, **[KEITH (as Reatta):** Okay.] we're talking about people who go to get a pet from a shelter, and maybe they're already struggling on rent, you think they'd get the pet, the pet could help out, the pet doesn't help out.



**KEITH (as Reatta):** Well but don't you think that the visibility of people in our sort of position having pets that don't get jobs [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Hooo.] might set a bad example just because we don't need our pets to have a job that all of a sudden that they can go [**ART (as Gala):** People should send their pets-] adopt a pet the easy way and then not even get a job?

**ART (as Gala):** [crosstalk] You're misunderstanding, I don't think pets should get jobs,

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [crosstalk] No no, you're right, you're right. No no no, no, no.

**ART (as Gala):** I think unad- un-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I see.

**ART (as Gala):** Unattractive animals should-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** *Failed* pets. Failed pets.

**ART (as Gala):** Failed pets should go and make themselves worth- worthwhile.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Wait, but isn't the whole thing with the Pact, and you know maybe this is- I'm misunderstanding this—I'm not from the Pact, I'm from Orion, we didn't join the Pact, we chose to have our own kind of internal civil conflict—isn't the whole thing that there are no failed pets, there are no failed people, there are no failed pets, we can all work together, it's a Pact-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, people love to say that. There are no failed people, there are no failed pets. There are failed people. There are failed pets.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Hmm.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And Spinky is not one of them. But I just- I think it's so, it's such a testament to the kind of times that we live in [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Hmm.] that we're so ready to say these things like you know, there are no failed people. We're not, we're not- I'll say it!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay wait-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We're in a war!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay well, we're in a conflict. We're in a civil conflict, we're in a number of different civil and external conflicts-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** We're in a spontaneous disalignment.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's exactly right. We're in a temporary, um, you know, a temporary distance from each other. Again, this is why I like the word Intercession, we're praying to get closer again. But it's not a war, a war would suggest something different than what we have.

Well this isn't the right topic, we're supposed to be talking about lobbying and political corruption in the Principality. I'm going to try to get us back on track, that's my job as the host. I know, everyone likes it when we go off on these side diatribes. My job, you know? If I don't do it? Do you know, the- the sponsors are going to call me up later and they're going to say, "Countinghouse? You gotta stay on topic." So let's go back to Reatta, and talk about lobbying and political corruption in the Principality, does money make the galaxy spin around?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And I, you know, and not- not to say that you're wrong, but I just think you have it backwards, out of force of habit, out of, you know, the metaphors that we have for how things work-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They're limited metaphors! **[KEITH (as Reatta):** They're limited metaphors.] We only have metaphors that are in the world, right?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Exactly. And it's the galaxy moving around that makes the money. It's not the other way around, the fact that we're here, money- it means that money's going to happen. You know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The fact that we're *here* means- I mean, I know what I get paid, and I know what you get paid, and I know what the studio gets paid this episode **[KEITH (as Reatta) laughs]**, you're not kidding.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Well! Certainly we as in us, but I mean we as in all of us, you know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Say more.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** If people go to a place, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mm.] there will be money there. Because that is part of humanity.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're saying that money is a part- and, and you know, not just humanity but personhood, we wanna make sure, you know Pregoria as Columnar, not a human.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Not a human.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gala- Galebolus as an Apostolosian, human-adjacent, but not a human. But you're saying is it true, is it true, I'm asking you this Reatta. It's true for them as well even though they're not human. You're not telling this is a *human* specific thing about money.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I wouldn't speak specifically for them, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I see.] but from what I've seen, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] you know, the personhood begets-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Money.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Economy!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Economy, an economy [**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's part of-] begets money- you can't have an economy without money, is what you're saying.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** You can't have a society- you can't have anything without it! You can't have society without it. The fact that we have a society, and us talking here is proof of having a society, we are here, we are cooperating, we are communicating with each other despite- [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Despite the differences, yeah.] everything that's happening in the world, despite our differences, the number one thing that we can point at is say, hey, what is the- what are the fruits of this society? [**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's money.] It's money. It's the economy. It's the fact that we can- [**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's buying things.] it's buying things, selling things, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I mean you-] expressing ourselves in that way [In money] being able to express in, you know, in money in goods and objects, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Trade.] food, you know. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] Art- artisanal, artisans, craftspeople.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You keep coming back to food- I have a question for all three of you, and this is a tough one. If money were a food, what type of food would it be?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Beans. You know. I can answer it right off the bat, and I'm sure that a cer- [chuckles] I don't know what used to be in your empty cans before there was stuff that-maybe beans.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I bought them empty, I don't- I suspect they were always empty.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, okay, sure. I mean, fair enough. Beans, it's simple. It looks like money. Small individual pieces, you know? Reminiscent. They evoke, they reminisce coins.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And I know that we're such good friends, and they say about this sort of opposites attract, but to me, money is sort of like, it is like a boundless feast of fresh fruit. Each piece **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** A cornucopia!] its own gorgeous little morsel of fruit; sweet, natural, delicious **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Delicious.] food.

**ART (as Gala):** Mmm!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Natural delicious food.

**ART (as Gala):** I gotta go the other way. I think money is clearly a stewed spinach. It's unpleasant to eat it, **[KEITH (as Reatta)** chuckles] but it's damn good for ya.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Damn good for ya! **[KEITH and JACK (as Reatta and Pregoria)** laugh] You know? [laughs] I'll always make the point! Yeah.

**ART (as Gala):** [crosstalk] Yeah I will- yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping, whoops and laughs]

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [crosstalk] You have to eat your veggies.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You're such a laugh every time. Every time we have you here.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Pregoria, I feel like we didn't really get your full picture on the issue of lobbying and political corruption. And specifically in the wake of these recent events, I wonder, you know, and you can maybe talk about this as an outsider, as someone from the Pact, The Curtain seem like bad news to me, you know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, bad news.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Shadow governments, secretive organisations, [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Hit squads.] hit s- I mean, it's worse. It's hit squads, saboteurs, economic misdeeds, all sorts of things lar- and I'm not, I'm not putting this on you, Reatta. I know you weren't part of the Curtain as far as I know. [**JACK (as Pregoria)** chuckles] But I'm curious now that there's the Bilateral Commission which seems like it's pushed the power of The Curtain away, and we've got elected officials taking control again, do you think, as a member of a Pact nation, do you think that this could be a turning point for Kesh and Nideo in terms of cleaning up political corruption in their houses?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I think you look online, you look in all the networks, and you see a lot of young people saying things like, I don't care. They say things like I don't give a damn, if I may say that.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah you can say that. It's allowed. We're on, you know, we're on a- a private network.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** They say I don't give a- they say I don't give a crap that The Curtain is now called like the Bilat or something. You know, and they're so ready to throw the babe- to throw the baby out with the bathwater. But I really do think that this is a time for people who are prepared to be maybe a little more moderate and you know like, listen. You know *listen* to what's being said to you, that you know this is, this really does seem to be some kind of a cleaning of house. And of course I have my alliances, we have talked about my alliances.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We have, we have, let me tell you.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I'm reluctant to say- I'm reluctant to say that you know, Kesh is doing something good other than, you know, living on a big snowy planet or something! [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] But you know, I think that this really might be the beginning of- you know, if I was in charge? I'm meeting you across the table now!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We're talking it out.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's as if they're [**ART (as Gala):** Here's-!] speaking the same language. I'm sorry, go ahead, Gala.

**ART (as Gala):** Here's my problem though. You can say they're cleaning house, but who's paying for the maid?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [nervous exhalation]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Who's paying for the maid?

**ART (as Gala):** Who's paying for the maid?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Where's the money coming from?

**ART (as Gala):** Where's that money coming from?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And it-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Could be coming from The Curtain, who- who knows?

**ART (as Gala):** There's no new maid employers!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's just the same- same cleaning services it's always been.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [crosstalk] Money's coming from somewhere.

**ART (as Gala):** Same cleaning services it's always been.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [crosstalk] Reatta, who's paying for this?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Wh- I mean, as much- as much as I appreciate a good analogy, I think uh you know, you don't always need a maid to clean a house. You can clean your own house on your own dime.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [crosstalk, mumbling] You can clean your own house, yeah.

**ART (as Gala):** It's a big house!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's a big house, but there's a lot of people in it, and there's a lot of people willing to do the work, and I think *finally* is what we're saying, it's like finally we-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay but, how about this, there's an argument that comes out, and we only have a few more minutes on this topic, but I wanna get your honest impressions

here. And I'll stay with the metaphor about the maids and the dirty house. Some people say, you get a house too clean, everything's out in the open, it's all polished and shiny. You end up missing the dirty room, right? But if you have a little bit of dirt, everybody knows there's a little bit of dirt going on. That means that everybody has like a little more- there's always looking for it, right? If your kitchen's a little dirty, then guess what, you're ready to see the dirt in the bathroom.

But if the bathroom and the upstairs third floor back bathroom, you know the one I'm talking about Gala, if there's the only place there's dirt, and everything else is clean, well maybe you don't get to cleaning so often! I'm just trying to represent the people who say that the only way you get anything done in this galaxy, is with some behind closed doors meetings, a little bit of money changing hands, that sort of, you know, the room full of smoke. You know what I'm talking about? Big cigars, big dealers, the smoke leaves stains, the stains need to be cleaned, and that's how you get insurance, it keeps going. Do you feel like there's any truth to that perspective?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Well, you know that I'm not privy to these conversations. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're a regular person, yeah.] Having dinner now and then [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yes, yes.] at restaurants and parties is not the same thing as being in the backrooms.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** No.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Not the same thing.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** So, we can really only get-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] If you could get me an invite to the next one of those though, I would love to go. [**JACK (as Pregoria)** chuckles] I would love to be part of one of those parties, you know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I want to go.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's already in your email.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's already- love that. Anyway sorry, continue.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** So, we can only speculate what you know, these people are doing, you know, quote unquote. But, you know. I can speak to the trust that we have largely, that the intentions are there, Mhm and there's a willingness to do what it takes to make things run properly, and not to, as I already said, throw out the baby with the bathwater. We're very away of the baby. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** The baby.] I mean they're very aware of the baby, and, you know, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Not you.] and the window.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're not, right. But from the conversations you've heard, second hand, third hand, [Right.] things trickle down, we all know, that things trickle down, and including rumours.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** To our two Pact guests, any thoughts? A little bit of dirt keeps things moving clean? You know grease is sort of like a dirt.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Look. I think that there's always going to be somebody, you know, greasing the wheels. There's always going to be somebody greasing the palms. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's what we pay them for.] There's always going to be someone with their palms in the pies, you know. But if you're gonna have someone- **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm.] if you're going to have that little bit dirt, and that little bit of grit, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm.] you know, I'd much rather that it's people shaking hands to keep people safe. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Ohhh.] If something like a Bilat, you know, how'd that come about? Maybe some arms were twisted, you know? We don't know how willingly The Curtain went, and you know, if we're gonna have this kind of dark- sometimes you know, when we talk about corruption, we have to consider the fact that people are being corrupt in *our best interests*, you know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, right. It's not a-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Corruption's such a bad word, but it's not like uh, you know, it's not like hit squads! You know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's not like hit squads.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's not like The Curtain.



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gala-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Are you- do you have any pro-dirt feelings in that heart of yours?

**ART (as Gala):** Uhm, I mean, sometimes you just have to eat a greasy pie.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's what- I- yeah, I'm always saying!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They're going to put it in front of you, they're not- ther's no other pie in the kitchen, right?

**ART (as Gala):** There's no, yeah. If that's the pie you have, it's better than going to bed without dessert.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**ART (as Gala):** So yeah-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** So this is a sweet pie? I'm sorry if this is obv-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I was also thinking more of a- I thought it was gonna be a, a savoury dinner pie.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** This is a greasy sweet- I was thinking a savoury pie.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Cause I can imagine enjoying happily a hearty, greasy, savoury pie.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** A hearty, savoury, **[ALARM BEEPS AND GOES OFF]** yeah-

**ART (as Gala):** [slightly unintelligible] Oh but it's not that greasy!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Well, folks, that is the time we have for the first segment here. **[KEITH laughs]** We have to go to another sponsor, otherwise they'll kill me. Not with a hit squad, just with their words. **[JACK (as Pregoria) laughs]**

Let's go back to the sponsor, and hey, can I ask, Pregoria, could you do me a favour and give us this next sponsor read?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**[00:49:35 - Word From Our Sponsors 2]**

**AUSTIN:** Let me generate it for you, give me a second. Let's pull us back over to this screen. Are you watching the stream? Can you see the stream?

**JACK:** I can see the stream.

**AUSTIN:** Alright, are you ready for your random object?

**JACK:** Yup.

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] It's a martini glass. Are you ready to see a new name for a martini glass company?

**JACK:** Yes.

**AUSTIN:** Here's a question, do you want low, medium, or high randomness?

**JACK:** Oh my god! [chuckles] Let's take high.

**AUSTIN:** Okay! And then, name style, I'm just going to say auto. I want all styles possible. Generate. Shoutouts to namelix. Ooh! Ooooh! Okay! You got some options here, Jack! [laughing]

**JACK:** I'm just waiting for the stream to catch up.

**AUSTIN:** Ohhh, these are very fun! Oh no!

**KEITH:** We're on the randomness page-

**AUSTIN:** Are you still behind a little bit? Okay, okay.

**JACK:** Yeah yeah yeah, it's taking a second.

**AUSTIN:** I will- okay. [**JACK:** Name style, auto.] I'm gonna re- I'm just going to screenshot this.

**JACK:** Oh no, here we go. [**AUSTIN:** You're there?] It's loaded.

**AUSTIN:** Okay.

**ART:** Ohhh! These are- here's some- *oohh...* Ohh!

**AUSTIN:** I was going to say this top set-

**KEITH:** One of these stands out to me.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**KEITH:** For, for Jack specifically.

**JACK:** Okay, no I got it.

**AUSTIN:** Yup.

**JACK:** Okay.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Now you know I love a martini. You know I love a- I love everything about a martini. But very often I'm drinking a martini, and I'm thinking, I love the feel of the glass in my hand. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] I love the weight, I love the shape. But what I don't love **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm.] is that briny, salty concoction inside it! **[ART wheezes]** You know?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The briny-ness really, yeah, yeah the vinegar.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And I think to myself, well, time to go into the kitchen, you know, Pregoria, time to go into your kitchen and dig into your cellar and get out another bottle of wine, you know? It's softer. It's less briny! You know, there's not an olive in there! But then I pour the wine glass and I cradle the glass, and I think to myself, you know, I'm missing the martini glass! And today we got a product that's really gonna help us out here. It's VinoDelise, the martini glass for wine!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** VinoDelise.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** This is a martini glass, and you might be thinking. How's that different from a regular martini glass?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're right, I was going to ask!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You can put wine in this one! You know? It's got a special coating, a Columbar scientist- this is a Columbar joint so you know! I'm, I'm you know, I'm representing it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] Is this- you, okay, but you're not, there's no, money has not changed hands. This is not an issue of political corruption, correct?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [scoffing sound] I don't know, what do you think? No I should respectfully say that no, no money has changed hands.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm. Mhm. Mhm.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** But I did get a tour of the factory at VinoDelise, and see that their four-pronged groove armour that's used to cut these like, it's kind of like a, a- it's kind of like a, again, this is like an oversimplification, but it's kind of like a square spiral down in the inside of the martini glass that enables the wine to percolate more fully [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, right.] throughout the glass.

VinoDelise. For when you want to hold a martini glass, but you want to be drinking wine. And that's a Stel Columnar special.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And of course you can get your VinoDelise glasses, it's a monthly subscription, we get 10 glasses a month, plus 2 if you subscribe for a year, it's 12 glasses a month. You just go to Vinodelise.co and slash CENTREpoint. Again, CENTRE, C-E-N-T-R-E, it's classier-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's classier that way.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That way.

We're going into our next topic everybody. What's that topic gonna be, I'm sure you're curious.

**AUSTIN:** Let's roll some dice. Uhh, pull this back up, back over here, go to the dice roller, clear that one, and hit the 20. Oooh, a number one! Alright, what are our options. Our options on Topic. [chuckling] Medical and student loan debt, or tax rates and tax evasion. Oh we gotta go with medical debt and student loan debt. We gotta, we gotta go with that.

Let me know once everybody's ready with their, their actual, oh-! Should we, should we reveal what your first set of things was? [**JACK** chuckles] Should I guess? Or should we wait? Let's guess now, because otherwise we're going to figure. I think Art had "Dog and cat rescuers-"

**JACK:** Oh, you think?

**AUSTIN:** “-are the downfall/saviours of Western civilization.”

**ART:** Yeah. Uh huh. It was hard to- I think, play that slow. [**KEITH** laughs] I think I had to get on that!

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, it was pretty quick.

**ART:** Pretty hard, yeah.

**KEITH:** Did I open the wrong thing?

**AUSTIN:** Oh my god. What did you do? I was wondering what yours is, yours is the other one that I was like, I have no idea what your topic is.

**KEITH:** Ohh. Well it worked, I mean I feel like it felt right when I was, it was “cultural norms are killing the cargo plant and I in fact am not owned”.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah! Okay, no, that’s, we didn’t really- sorry you said cargo *plant*.

**KEITH:** Cargo plant, yeah.

**AUSTIN:** That’s not what it says.

**KEITH:** Oh. Uhh, cargo *pant*. Whoops!

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, like cargo pants. Uh huh.

**ART:** Cargo pants.

**KEITH:** I just- I just, I autocorrected it in my mind.

**AUSTIN:** [overlapping] In your brain, yeah, that’s fair. And then finally, Jack, I’m guessing you had something about lazy kids?

**JACK:** No, I had uh, I had “why don’t my favourite athletes love me enough to not lose”? I wanted to get more into sports, but we got so sidetracked by political corruption that you know.

**AUSTIN:** You just couldn't get there. Well I gotta give that one to Art then, who made it very clear-

**JACK:** Yeah, Art just went in with-

**AUSTIN:** Dog and cats. Yeah, you know? You only get so much time in front of the microphone, so. Alright. Do people have their second follow-up in their pocket?

**KEITH:** Yeah.

**ART:** Oh my god. May god have mercy on our souls, yes I do.

**AUSTIN:** Let's keep it uhhh, let's, you know. Be careful, Art. I'm very-

**ART:** I mean it's not- I'm not going to be more controversial than don't adopt shelter pets!

[**EVERYONE** laughs]

**AUSTIN:** Okay! Alright.

**ART:** Which I wanna say is not something I believe, my, I, yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Uh huh.

**KEITH:** Oh, thank god I was worried.

**ART:** These opinions do not reflect my-

**AUSTIN:** No. Not at all.

**KEITH:** Where was yours? Where was that one on here? I don't- that's why I thought I was reading from the wrong thing for a second.

**ART:** That's three. Three from the first set.

**KEITH:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Alright, topic set. Slideshow. We're back here.

**[00:56:15 - Second Topic]**

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Alright, for our second topic. People have been saying more and more, you hear it more and more these days. This conflict, which is what it is, has really uh, hit us in the pocket book. People who are getting injured and needing to go to hospitals and medical facilities come out with long, long receipts for money that they owe the hospital. Students who sometimes don't even get to go to class because the conflict has delayed their semester, or because a new bioweapon was used on the planet, are drowning in debt. And in general, I think that we have found that it feels as if this is one of the big topics.

In some way some people might say, the Pact, when it was still the Pact of Necessary Venture and not the Pact of Free States, was formed to try and address debt. Maybe a broader debt than individual debt, but it was a hope to find a new part of the galaxy, which would have produced more jobs, injected more money into the economy, would've allowed people to get the sort of income they need to pay down debt.

I'm curious for the folks here, you know, we don't need to talk about your particular relationship with debt, but I'd like to know what you think the relationship between this war and medical and student debt is. Let's start with you, Gala, I know you have military experience, I'd love to hear how that reflects.

**ART (as Gala):** Mhm. I mean, I'd of course be lying to you if I said that I didn't think the war was exacerbating [AUSTIN (as Continental): Mmm.] medical and student debt. Um, well medical more, you know, we often will pay some of the student loans, not student loan money, but we'll pay for some tuition if you join [JACK (as Pregoria): Right] the military. That's a great tool we have in our toolbox over there. But we do end up sending home a lot of hurt people. Hurt people need medical services, and we can't always- we can't always have our hands out for those people. [AUSTIN (as Continental): Mmm.] So that debt is of course gonna accrue there.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**ART (as Gala):** But I mean, I don't think it's on the military or the government. I think the problem is that the hospitals and the schools and the doctors' offices aren't being run efficiently enough!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Ohhh, so you're saying [**ART (as Gala):** And we can-] that there are savings to be found at the medical facilities?

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah of course!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And you could pass that savings on to the customer.

**ART (as Gala):** Of course you could! Just like any other business. When the business is saving money, then everyone's saving money.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**ART (as Gala):** And I think, I think we need to just get people into power who are gonna facilitate that.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** This makes perfect sense. Pregoria, how do you feel about the idea that it's about who's at the top of these medical institutions, these maybe, even these universities, running things inefficiently?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You know, don't even get- you're gonna get me started on universities again?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Listen! I- people love it when you get started on universities. I know that it gets you heated up, but people like to see Pregoria heated up!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** People love a classic Pregoria rant. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm.] Are you about to rant?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ah! Am I about to-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] A Pregoria rant, yeah, that's what they say.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** TSYU has appointed, this-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Sorry what was that, TSYU?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** TSYU, has appointed-



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Oh that was a university, yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** This new director [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mm.] of their medical school. And I- I think that Jellicle is-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] Jellicle?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, you know it's Jellicle! She's come straight out of the advertising agency-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** What is her, what is her experience-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Which would surprise me, because I thought you know, she obviously understands a lot about advertising, very successful in the advertising field. We all love the advertisements with the panda bear, you know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You know, *Do you have it?* Yeah, and the panda comes up.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, the panda-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And says, *Do you have it?*

**KEITH (as Reatta):** *Do you have it?*

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** *Do you have it?* [laughs]

**ART (as Gala):** *Do you have it?*

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [funny accent] *Do you have it?*

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [funny accent #2] *Do you have it?*

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [German accent #1] *Do you have it?* And-

**ART (as Gala):** [German accent #2] *Do you have it?*

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And I, you know-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [German accent #3] *Do you have it?*

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [laughs]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I just don't think-

**ART (as Gala):** Making the bear German was so brave. So brave.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** An embarrassing story, when I was at university, and yes, I went to university for three years before they told me to stop coming to campus.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** But when I was at university in my dorm, you know.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You had the *Do you have it?* poster.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I had the *Do you have it?* poster!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We all had the *Do you have it?* Poster. I bought a- I didn't put it up, I felt a little embarrassed. I got back, I saw my roommate had already bought one so I was like, [**JACK (as Pregoria):** *Do you have it?* He did!] well we don't need two. Do you have- yeah. Yeah. So.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [in the background] I'll bet Jellicle's a piece of shit!

**ART (as Gala):** [overlapping] That's all people were asking! *Do you have it?* The *Do you have it?* poster?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And I get it, the commercial brought one person back to life. It was playing, people say it was a miracle, a Divine miracle. I get it. But that doesn't justify you taking over a medical school!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And she keeps coming out- did you see in her commencement speech? She came out and said, I made the commercial that brings someone back to life, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah I saw it.] that's why I'm so glad that TSYU has let me be in charge of their medical facility. What the- I'll say it! What the fuck-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Wo-kay!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** -does a panda bear commercial-?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We can swear, but we can't cuss. [**KEITH** wheezes]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay sorry, I'm sorry, I take it back. [lowers voice] What- why- [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just say it quietly.] What's she- [whispering] what the fuck is she doing [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** There we go.] running this school? You know? She's keeping- she's driving those costs up. She's teaching people new medicine-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Well she's shooting new ads, on with the actors- [**JACK (as Pregoria):** She's shooting new ads!] with the students. Students are actors, actors are students, it's a whole thing!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** God. I didn't even know that! Yup. She's shooting new ads on the campus? [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** On the campus.] Where did you see that?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Um. I heard about it from someone who's going there, but they said they wouldn't want to get in trouble. So I can't actually repeat who said it. But I heard it on this really good authority from someone first-hand, who said, yeah, she's making us do advertisements here now.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** *Making* them do ads?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, it's required, I believe.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I have a, I recently went down and I bought this new fridge, that uh, you know me, I'm fridge buying every six months, it's a new fridge for me.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Pregoria is so fridge-pilled, it's unbelievable!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [chuckles] Fridge-pilled.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I don't get- I wait, I'm on a two-year cycle with fridges, but I know- / know, you can tell after six months that it stops cooling things down as well.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It stops cooling things down as well, and I have the heat probes on the inside- I'm very proud of my fridge heat probes, and I'm very proud of my new fridge, and it has a function on it where I get like a little packet of old and new commercials, all the- you know, not all the new commercials, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right. The award ones,

yeah.] the award-winning commercials that week, the award ones? That they send them through, and I get to, you know watch them-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It shows up on the fridge, you're saying. On the fridge screen.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It shows up on the inside of the fridge [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Oh the inside, right.] So when you open up the fridge to check the heat probes? You can see it on the inside, you know, where you keep- where you would've kept the eggs, right? But now you have to [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The egg slot, yeah yeah yeah.] move the eggs to the inside of the fridge. But that means it's easier for the heat probes-

**ART (as Gala):** [overlapping] That must save you *so much time*! Because I spend *hours* a week watching the weekly commercial awards.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah! I-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It saves me so much time! Oh it saves me so much time!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And this is the efficiency we're talking about that could maybe, possibly, get rid of medical and student debt! [**JACK (as Pregoria):** What are you doing-] I bet these students at TCYU don't even have these new refrigerators.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh it doesn't have to be the refrigerators. You know, there's a dishwasher that does it [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Wow, there's a dishwasher.] when you open the dishwasher to take the stuff out and you see it on the inside-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Do they sync up? Do they- is it the same, do they share data between the two?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I don't- I don't know, I don't have the dishwasher. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Ah you just got the fridge, you already have the fridge.] Because my guy takes care of the dishes [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay.] but the fridge, well, you know, some of us don't- some of us don't have the debt, and that makes it a little easier for me to get the guy who takes care of the dishes. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] But you know, the time I'm spending- the time I'm saving. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] Gala's right. How much time are you spending watching the ads, Gala?

**ART (as Gala):** The ad *awards*. Hours! And that's not even counting the ads they show in the breaks in the ad awards!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** There are live performances-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Why don't you just- why don't you just take the patch?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The ad patch that gives you [KEITH (as Reatta): The ad patch.] the download with all the new ads?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah, you just put it on, and over the- you know, you can do whatever you want, [JACK (as Pregoria): The patch isn't real.] you can do the dishes and the other things and you- Yeah! The patch of course is real! I have a real patch.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The patch is real!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** The patch isn't real, people talk-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You *don't* have the patch, you have something you think- [KEITH (as Reatta): I have the patch!] maybe you have something you think is the patch. Show me the patch.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Sh- show the patch.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I have- here.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's not the patch.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** That is the patch!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That- that can't be it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's the patch!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** What, you're seeing new ads now?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I'll put-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Put one on. Put one on.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** You don't have skin! I would put one on you.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ohhh, now we're coming back to I- **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay, let's- okay.] [chuckling] I'm razzing you, I'm razzing you.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Ho ho! Gettin' a little touchy there. But we haven't heard from you Reatta, about medical and student debt, I don't know if things are different in Kesh-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Things are not different in Kesh. Um, the realities, but I think the attitudes are what is different and I think that's really important. There was something that each of you said about **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Efficiency?] this topic that really resonated with me. Gala you said businesses need to make money, number one.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's why they're businesses, yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And the other thing that resonated with me was the talk about not being able to get that, that poster, when you- right before, Pregoria, you were kicked out of college-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** *Do you have it?* No.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** *Do you have it?* **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** *Do you have it?*] No, I don't have it.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** No one has it on this whole floor!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I don't have it, it's all sold out!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** The issue here is supply chains.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** That's the number one thing that we've gotta be focusing on.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** The number one.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** You know, if you're going to war, if you're going to school, taking on this debt, you know, obviously becoming a soldier fighting for uhhh, your home.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Whomever. Your home.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** For whomever.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** For whomever, for your home.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Cause we're all fighting for our home, really.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We're in  
different- even right now-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right, and that's-  
right.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Even when we have the same home, and I consider the two of us, Pregoria, to have the same home, and we are each fighting for it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just in different perspectives.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Just in different, from different- right.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Different ways, different angles. [**KEITH (as Reatta):** That sacrifice-] If you- one of you comes in through the front door, and one comes in through the helipad, you're both going into the same place.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right. That is a sacrifice that each person who decides to go to war makes. But if you get injured, if you have this medical debt, being able to pay that off also is a sacrifice that you're making [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Riiight!] to your home.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's part of the conflict! [**KEITH (as Reatta):** And so-] It's part of the war for your home.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right. And if you think about, you know, your government has all of these different pieces, and they get to put their little pieces where they can, you know there's more spaces than there are pieces, like some things can't get pieces.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** More spaces than there are pieces.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And so-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** There's more, there's more people than there are slices in the pie.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And the number one thing you can do is make sure that the ships that have the stuff that people need are on time, and stocked full.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gotcha.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And if that means that people have to take on that additional responsibility, the you know, patriotic duty almost of being able to pay off that medical bill, [AUSTIN (as Continental): Right.] then that is what needs to happen in order to get those, those stocks-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Bonds.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Shelves! Those shelves stocked.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, I got you, everything-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I haven't been to a store in so long I forgot which one-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [chuckles]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's the shelf, they put stuff in the shelf. Let me see if I can break this down for people who maybe don't have an economics degree or background. I know you have a lot of first-hand experience with money, and logistics and all that, so you have a different relationship with- people who maybe just listened, who don't have that kind of hands-on experience, you're saying. Here's Jimmy, Jimmy uh, you know.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Jimmy Jimmy.



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Jimmy Jimmy [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Woah!] from Kesh, there's- [**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah.] that's Jimmy Jimmy.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Jimmy Jimmy is from Kesh, cares about his homeland, goes off to fight for his vision. Shrapnel in the leg, uh-oh, whoops.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's very sad, whoopsie!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Very sad. Comes home, goes to the hospital, turns out because he only got Cs in Basic Training, his coverage does not extend to knee shrapnel. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Right.] If it was above the waist it would've obviously been covered. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** It would've been fine!] But below the waist, not covered. Gets the bill.

Now what you're saying is, paying off the bill is just as much of a sacrifice, and just as much an act of social service as being- [**KEITH (as Reatta):** As part of duty.] It's part of duty, exactly! [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.] Duty continues. Now, I'm gonna keep running with this because I wanna make sure I get this right.

That money that is paid to the medical facility, a little bit of that [**KEITH (as Reatta):** Mhm.] gets- now I don't love, you know. I think that there's a place for taxes, you know I think that even though I'm from Stel Orion. People think, oh, we don't like taxes here. But you know,

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Look I think I see where you're going, but can I pre-phrase that for you?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, could you give me a different pre-phrase?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** So that, Jimmy Jimmy paying into [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah.] that service provided to him by the hospital, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] frees up you know, his government, wherever that may be.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, the government doesn't have to pay the- [**JACK (as Pregoria):** They don't have to spend that money.] the government already has the money.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They can spend that money on space lanes.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yes.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** On maintenance.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** That's exactly right.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** On cattle farm subsidies.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's not about taxes,  
it's about-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** On the armour that  
makes it so that people like Jimmy don't  
even get their leg shrapnel in the first  
place!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** In the first place, they've built armour for Jimmy in the future.  
They make sure Jimmy is well fed because they've given the cattle farm subsidies, the cattle  
farm subsidies can now provide Jimmy with a delicious hamburger across space, and Jimmy  
goes into war with a little bit of extra oomph.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I'll- you know I-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Right. And Pregoria-

**ART (as Gala):** I'm glad you brought that up.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Y-Yeah?

**ART (as Gala):** The delicious hamburgers.

[KEITH holds in his wheezing]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What about them, Gala?

**ART (as Gala):** Cause that's an industry that I think we all admire.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh well. Well.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I mean, who  
doesn't love a delicious hamburger?

**ART (as Gala):** The delicious-

**ART (as Gala):** Who doesn't love a  
delicious hamburger? I love it, you love it.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Who doesn't love a  
delicious hamburger? Who doesn't?

**ART (as Gala):** It's provide- I'm never gone into debt buying a delicious hamburger.

**ART (as Gala):** I'm sure none of you  
have.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** People love it all  
across the Principality, you know?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** But I would. But I would, if I had to.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** If I could. If I had to.

**ART (as Gala):** You would! But the people who run those industries would never ask you to!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're right.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Bless them.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That- it's so affordable [**ART (as Gala):** It's so affordable!] to just  
go get a hamburger. [**ART (as Gala):** Go get a hamburger!] Some fries.

**ART (as Gala):** We need to put the people making the hamburgers in charge of the  
hospitals! [**JACK (as Pregoria):** In charge of the hospitals!] In charge of the schools!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** But we didn't do that, we put the people making the *ads* for the  
hamburgers-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [overlapping] Not this ad- making the ads for the hamburgers in charge  
of the school.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** -in charge of the school. We skipped- we went to the middleman,  
[**KEITH (as Reatta):** Someone-!] instead of going to the chef!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Someone proven, by the way, to not be able to get those products to the  
shelves.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, you're  
right, I mean, yes.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Well, yeah, you  
know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You make one ad, that one time, and it's only one time. People will  
always keep saying, this is the ad that brings you back to life, no. It happened once! [**ART**

**(as Gala):** Yeah.] And she spent the rest of her career going, I worked on the ad that makes-made someone come back to- no!

**ART (as Gala):** But the *product*, the product is always there.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The product is always there.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** The product is always there. And, I'll say, you know, reminding everybody about Earth Germany.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, Earth Germany.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** All of a sudden- do you remember when all of a sudden everybody was an Earth Germany expert, like overnight?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah,  
because the- yeah! That's all we thought-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, I was like,  
really into Earth Germany.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You read one article and you think you can weigh in. [**KEITH (as Reatta)** chuckles]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Weigh in on Earth Germany.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Just because it was Pregoria's article doesn't mean that it wasn't, you know.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** No Pregoria wrote great a article! [**ART (as Gala):** Yeah.]

Pregoria, can you remind people about your article, about [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, of course!] Earth Germany and hamburgers and student debt?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, I'm ready to talk about Earth Germany. I mean you know, after the floods, Germany—*Earth Germany*—Earth Germany became a pretty hard place to live! You know what with the sea levels rising.

**ART (as Gala):** [overlapping] This is very confusing for me. I knew a man in school named Earth Germany. Owes me twenty bucks to this day.

[sounds of dismay from **AUSTIN (as Continental)** and **JACK (as Pregoria)**]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Not- we're not talking about that.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, no no no. We're talking about the Earth Germany on Earth.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** In the centre of the galaxy. Which really ha-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Way back, way back when.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's an old thing, you know. I don't think- last time any of us from our Stels have been there, five thousand years? But I mean, people don't remember Earth Germany-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It was flooded.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Floods and all that, yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Everything- everywhere got flooded, Germany did a lot better, you know, and then did the hamburgers, there was that old story about that, it's sort of more of a myth at this point, about the hamburgers, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm, mhm.] and then of course the Jellicle went on to do that, make that panda, like from Earth Germany. [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] Which was like, kind of like a weird move, it made a lot of historians feel weird, but I suppose it connects to the myth in some way.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You know people said that it was disrespectful to the history. Eh. The burger tasted good-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And it- no. no!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And again, I- you know [**JACK (as Pregoria):** It was- no!] I'm not a fan of her us the dean of TCYU Medical School, but I think she made great advertisements, and she should go back to doing it.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And by the way, you know what is more disrespectful? Forgetting the history, honestly.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're right.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's why you need people like me.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** So, let's see if we- it seems to me like we have this figured out. It seems like when you put the people who make the delicious hamburgers in charge of running the medical facilities, and that gets rid of the-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh ho, they're so delicious!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** -that gets rid of the medical debt because it's more efficient, it's cheaper. *Obviously*, the hospitals will just pass that savings on to the consumer. [**ART (as Gala):** Mhm.] But we haven't talked about student debt- we only have a few minutes left, and I really wanna know how do we solve student debt here in the Principality. Any ideas?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** What do you mean- what do you mean solve?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Well-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** People have to pay it.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Something that people need- pay. Pay it.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah, they have to pay it.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** You solve your debt by paying it. Yeah!

**ART (as Gala):** Maybe have one less delicious hamburger and pay your loans!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay but what if I'm somebody, and I'm not. But let's say I was somebody who's working two or three jobs right now. I do valet service, I do delivery packages- I can do those at the same time, I'm a hustler, right, I'm on, I'm grinding.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, you're on the grind.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And then at night I answer random questions that come to my communications device to the best of my ability for a few pennies per question. I'm already doing all that. I'm working eighteen, nineteen hours a day. Student debt, you know, I'm, I'm not even hitting the actual debt, I'm only hitting the interest.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** What- why, why aren't you hitting it?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's competitive out there. There are lots of great people- **[JACK (as Pregoria):** You got- no, you got more on your- you got three jobs!] Maybe this is- I'm gonna put the question back on you. Why aren't they hitting it? These people who are working that hard. There are some people out there who are working that hard, they're not hitting it, *why* aren't they hitting it? We have to be- listen. We can't do that thing, I'm not here to- you know I'm not a revolutionary. I'm not one of these enhhh, you know, I'm not them.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Ohhh, don't say it! They'll come for you!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** But! But, I know, but. I wanna make sure that we have answers when they ask questions, right? And they're saying, these people, they can point to these people, they can say oh look. Jerry Jerry, or Jiminy Jiminy, whatever the guy's- the kid's name who came back from the war **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, whoopsie! Yeah.] with the busted knee, whoopsie, yeah. He's working really hard right now! And he's under medical *and* student debt. **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay, okay, here's my answer. Okay.] So I want- what is our answer for that situation?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's really simple. They're just not taking advantage of- and it's not their fault- you know they're clearly working hard, but they need some guidance to help them take advantage of programs that are available to them! **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm!] Especially, and I'll say it, under the Pact of Ne- at the Pact of Free States.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** States, yup, mhm.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Still tripping over it a little. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's new. Yeah.] It's still new, I'm getting there.

But you know, my friend Carla was talking about how on Apostolos they have this, these programs that help you pay some of your debt in exchange for some military service, in exchange for basic training. That's a great way! **[KEITH (as Reatta):** Yes.] To knock a couple of ten- a couple of ten thousand off, you know? Something like that?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [overlapping] I mean if, if what you're looking for is a handout, well, there's a job that I know where they pay for your food, they pay for your bunk, you know, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right. Right.] they pay for transportation.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [overlapping] I mean in Columnar, where-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping] So you're saying that Jiminy Jiminy should go from Kesh, served at Kesh, wanted to protect his home, busted up a knee, deep in debt. Apostolos is calling, ring ring, pick up the phone, come work with us, we'll wipe that away, we'll get you trained up, we'll get you a **[JACK (as Pregoria):** Possibly.] new knee, maybe.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I think there's programs like this on all sides. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mmm.] I think that, I think that Jimmy Jimmy, and I remember Jimmy Jimmy's name, it's Jimmy Jimmy.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I gotta keep a lot of names straight, okay?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** You know, uhh and people say, uhm, you know, oh I can't pay it back. Well, you know. How big of a danger is that? You're working these three jobs, no one's stopping you, no one's hindering you, life is plugging along just fine. Why don't you just **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.] keep going, **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just keep going.] you know?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I was volunteering for a- can I give a little shout out?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, yup. Of course.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah I'd like to give a little shout out to a similar program that we have back on Columnar, it's called *Clouded Presents*, *Bright Futures*, and we- **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** CP, BR- BF, BF?] we take a look- BF, yeah. [ruefully] *CPBR*, *CPBF*, yeah! We, we head to universities, not, *not all universities you know*, some deans aren't **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, yup we know.] as ready to have this on campus. And we offer grants to people just entering university, just beginning to take on university debt to help with, you know, critical research for the war effort! **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Hmm!] You know you have science and tech students you know, they might be seventeen, eighteen years old, they're just starting out, they've got-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** They can get hands on experience.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** They can get hands on experience, *and*, and it's like- **[ALARM BEEPS AND GOES OFF]**



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's the little timer, just finish your thought. Mhm.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's like- oh! I hear your little timer! But just like what Reatta was saying, of like, Jimmy can help serve by paying off his medical debt, you know these seventeen year olds, these eighteen year olds, can help serve Columnar on the front by developing new targeting systems.

And trying it out, maybe. Testing it.  
Testing the equipment.

Right. Right.

Testing it. Working on it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Incredible. Well we gotta go back to another Word From Our Sponsor, and I would love if uh, Galaebolus Splu-u-mp [**ART (as Gala):** Uh huh.] could read this next one from our next sponsor, our third sponsor of the day. Let's pull up who they are.

### [01:18:25 - Word From Our Sponsors 3]

**AUSTIN:** Once again, I will generate an object for you. Here we go. An iPod charger, Art. You got an iPod charger.

**ART:** iPod Charger, wow. [**JACK** chuckles] A real antique.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah- you could go broad with this, right? You could go phone charger, I mean music listening device charger is probably what you want, right. Alright, how much randomness do you want? Low, medium or high?

**ART:** Let's go high.

**AUSTIN:** Okay. And all the name generation possibilities, here we go. I, [chuckles, **ART** laughs] I'm gonna copy these and just drop them right into our PALISADE chat. And you tell me, here we go. Dropped right in for ya.

**ART:** Uhm-

**KEITH:** What are the ones that say "Ad" on them?

**AUSTIN:** Those- They own those domains, Keith.

**KEITH:** No way.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, they're gonna sell you that- Gamerpurse is 2395 dollars.

**KEITH:** So they- they generated [**AUSTIN:** Yes, yes.] a bunch of random stuff up front.

[**AUSTIN:** Yes.] And then purchased them.

**AUSTIN:** There's some more here- [**ART:** There's "*phonecharger*".] [laughs] I'm gonna drop the next set here, because I think they're very funny also.

**KEITH:** I'll say that a couple of these are worth a little bit of money, I think.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, fair. Fair. Wait, is one of them-

**ART:** We should buy GamerPurse. [**KEITH** laughs] Let's shut down Friends at the Table and start GamerPurse.

**AUSTIN:** It's so funny!

**KEITH:** Hey, it's the best time ever to get into writing about video games.

**AUSTIN:** I'm- [chuckles] oh god.

**ART:** No this isn't- we're selling purses.

**AUSTIN:** Oh.

[**KEITH** and **AUSTIN** laugh]

**KEITH:** Purses for gamers?

**AUSTIN:** Yes.

**ART:** Yeah, purses for gamers.

**AUSTIN:** Which- which one of these are you reading here? I'll add it to our slideshow.

**ART:** I think I'm reading for Rodeo.

**AUSTIN:** [gnarly voice] *Rodeo*, love it. Okay. Rodeo, and drop that right on in. There we go, and slideshow.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And we're back! Give us this Rodeo read, Gala.

**ART (as Gala):** If you know anything about me, you know that I love my music. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mm.] I take it with me anywhere, everywhere. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm. They do, they do.] You know, it's great these days, it fits right in my pocket.

**ART:** I agree, *Oi!* is also- is very funny, I didn't see it until after.

**ART (as Gala):** I take it, it fits right in my pocket. But sometimes, you run outta battery! **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah.] And then what do you do? The music stopped!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Ohh. Brutal. What do you do?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [overlapping] Heartbreak.

**ART (as Gala):** You need- you need something for the rough world of diminished expectations. You need a Rodeo.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Mmmm.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeehaw.

**KEITH (as Reatta):**  
Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):**  
Yeehaw!

**JACK (as Pregoria):**  
Yeehaaw.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeehaw!

It'll take your worries about running out of power. [**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Mhm.] It'll tie a rope around their head, [**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Mm!] knock it to the ground, tie its legs up, and leave it confused and on its back.

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Huh.

**JACK (as Pregoria)**: Yeehaw!

**ART (as Gala)**: Just how you want it. Yeehaw.

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Yeehaw.

**KEITH (as Reatta)**: Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala)**: Yeehaw!

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Yeehaw from me.

**JACK (as Pregoria)**: Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala)**: Uhm, I know what you're saying. What separates Rodeo from its competitors? And I'll say in a word. Class.

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: That's why it's called Rodeo.

**ART (as Gala)**: That's why it's called Rodeo.

**JACK (as Pregoria)**: That's why it's called Rodeo. [**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Ro-day-o] Ro-day-o!

**ART (as Gala)**: Ro-day- oh that's, that's a different product. [**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Oh, okay.] We'll get to that. We're gonna get to that.

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Okay.

**ART (as Gala)**: You know, a Rodeo is appointed with luxurious leathers and fine-

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: Oooh! Multiple different types of leathers?

**ART (as Gala)**: Multiple- multiple leathers, multiple animals!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeehaw.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeeeee, haw!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Wait, multiple animals?

**ART (as Gala):** Multiple animals.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** What animals?

**ART (as Gala):** Well, of course we have Earth Cow.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Earth Cow.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeehaw.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Um, there's some tanned space goat on the button array.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeehaw.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeeehaw. And um, you know those uh, those bugs they got out there past uh, past Columnar space?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah, I sure do.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, do I know about those bugs!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Calyxes! Calyxes, yeah yeah yeah.

**ART (as Gala):** Calyxes, that's, yeah. There's a fine bit of Calyx leather on the underside where your hand goes.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Oh, when you touch it.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeehaw!

That's a yeehaw- that's gonna be a big yeehaw for me, yeah!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Hey bug leather, *Do you have it?*

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Uh, yeehaw!

**ART (as Gala):** *Do you have it?* bug leather, uh yeehaw!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Uh yeehaw!

**ART (as Gala):** Yeehaw! But I know what you're saying. This is a visionary product, I can't wait to get one, how do I do it, I'm not ready to tell you yet, because you also have to hear about the Rodeo [pronounced Ro-day-o], [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Oh.] their other product.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh. [**KEITH** laughs] Yeehaw? [**ART** chuckles]

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Hmm, yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yee. Haw?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Uh, the Rodeo is a car stereo!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Road-eo!

**ART (as Gala):** Roadeo, from Rodeo.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** From Rodeo. From the word Rodeo, the brand-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** [overlapping] Roadeo, from Rodeo.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeehaw.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Right. Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Anyway, if-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Great products, it sounds like. [**ART (as Gala):** Uh huh, head-]  
Where can people go to take these out- check these out?

**ART (as Gala):** They wanna go to rodeo.net.yeehaw

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Dot yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** And enter promo code CENTREline at checkout.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** CENTREline, C-E-N-T-R-E.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We all know why!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Classier.

**ART (as Gala):** Just like a Rodeo.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Just like a Roadeo! [**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw.] And just a quick follow up here, it says here on the ad sheet that this is also a subscription service, but you just get the one, which is useful because you just have the one, you don't have to like keep track of them all. But as long as you pay the subscription, the charger will keep working. If you stop paying the subscription if you're done with it, you don't- that's the thing that's great about it, is choice, right? If you're done using the charger, just stop paying the subscription, and then it'll stop working for you.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Someone said I use 'em on a music player, what am I gonna do, pay for it? For that month?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right. For that month, I'm not using it right now, right?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** No.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Jimmy's knocked out in the hospital, why is he gonna pay for the charger that month, you know? Yeehaw.

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah. You wouldn't.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeehaw. Yeehaw.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Saving money for Jimmy.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Speaking about Jimmy, let's go back to our final topic of the evening.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Jimmy's not real, right? We don't- you know, we're not thinking about a-  
[**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's a hypothetical, yeah.] I mean I'm thinking about Jimmy in our hearts, I didn't know if we should-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** No, no.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** There's Jim- there's Jimmies out there.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** There's Jimmies out there!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, there's Jimmies out there, [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah!] and they're very important to us. But I didn't know if we were talking about, you know.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** No, listen, I-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** And I think that that's an important thing to highlight, is that part of the reason why we do this show is that, there are Jimmies out there, and we care deeply about those Jimmies.



**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, which is why we make sure we just make one up, because we don't want to insult a real one, by trying-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I just feel like kind of fighting-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah. And Jimmies are a real one.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I don't want to appropriate a Jimmy story, right? [**JACK (as Pregoria):** No, no.] And so I'm gonna come up with from stories I've heard, [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Come up with one.] I'll come up with one. I'll have, you know I know like some details, I know a little bit of story from A, a story from B, a story from C, and I'll be like, that's one guy, I'll tell that guy's story, that way you- [**JACK (as Pregoria):** You synthesize.] I synthesize and I push them together, and that way I have a clear, holistic picture of the truth.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's the only way to do it.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** The truth. Let's get our final, truthful topic of the evening.

**AUSTIN:** My options are attempted coup, and military intervention.

**JACK:** Oh my god.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's time to talk about em. Folks. Millennium Break, I know I'm not supposed to say it, but. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, they'll come for you, watch out!] I- one second, one second, one second. Let me just say it out loud. This document [slaps document] signed by the Elect Rye of the Divine Space, allows me, you see the signature right here, you see the digistamp right here? [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah yeah yeah.] Allows me- there's one for all of us, all four of us and our producer, to release this conversation about Millennium Break.

And I wanna be clear as- this is an Elect, this Elect, their word is a vouch that will last, that will reach across the Principality for you. So even if you're from Columnar, even if you're from Kesh, even if you're from Apostolos, if one of you were from Nideo, this would clear you from any wrongdoing, you're allowed to say Millennium Break openly for this conversation. [**JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay, okay.] We're allowed to talk honestly, we're encouraged to talk as directly as we can to tell the truth about this organisation, their attempted coup, the multiple coups at this point, attempted, they were shut down thankfully each time. [**JACK (as**

**Pregoria**): Thankfully.] And their ongoing criminal conspiracy, their ongoing terroristic activity, their ongoing naivete, their ongoing broken supposed idealism. People call them idealists, I think they're terrorists.

**KEITH (as Reatta)**: I think they're ideal-less.

**AUSTIN (as Continental)**: I think that that's true. So once you have your points and perspectives ready to go, you let me know and we'll dive in to talk through it.

**KEITH**: Can I rewind us? Did we go over what our topics were for the last one?

**AUSTIN**: We did not, Imma get- I thought two- okay. I took a swing at what I thought Keith's was? And I got Art's instead.

**KEITH**: That's funny.

**AUSTIN**: Keith, I thought when you were talking about logistics, that you had "we much secure the existence of chain restaurants and the future for fast food".

**ART**: I actually had the other food one.

**JACK**: Fuck!

**ART**: "The loony leftists are once again putting our nation in danger by not appointing recognizable food industry figureheads [**AUSTIN** and **JACK** laugh] to economic and trade cabinet positions, like that racist pizza chain owner, flat tax pizza chain owner, or Charles Entertainment Cheese."

**JACK**: I had one that was like "the best thing in modern life is my kitchen appliances"?

**AUSTIN**: [laughs] Ohh!

**KEITH**: Oh this time- so before I was wrong, but this time I did take it from the wrong column, I was "supply chain woes" from the headline topic.

**JACK**: That's just the headline.

**AUSTIN**: That's just the headline topic, yeah, uh huh, okay. This time pull from the Write About column please.

**KEITH:** I'm sure there's a good one. I'll figure out what I did.

**AUSTIN:** You have a bunch- there's a bunch of them here, you're fine, [**KEITH:** Yeah.] it'll work out. Let's go ahead and swing back over to Topic Number 3, which we're just gonna say it, Millennium Break, [**JACK** exhales] and their terrible, stupid coup attempts. And, tell me when you're ready.

**JACK:** Yeah, ready.

**ART:** Yeah.

**[01:29:30 - Third Topic]**

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Millennium Break and their terrible, stupid coup attempts.

**ART (as Gala):** [chuckles]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We can laugh about it a little.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We can laugh about it a little here, but we're safe. We're on the 10th Coronet, the biggest space station in Stel Orion space, maybe in the galaxy, I believe in the galaxy, you know. I'm not all knowing, I'm, you know, but who is. We know that we're safe here, a lot of people aren't safe so we should be a little cautious when we talk about Millennium Break. You know, where to begin? Pregoria- [**ART (as Gala):** Where to begin?] Or let's go with you, Gala.

**ART (as Gala):** I- I don't know- I don't know what we can do about Millennium Break.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Okay well, let's get away- let's not say- let's not give in to doom and gloom.

**ART (as Gala):** Well! [**JACK (as Pregoria):** That's what they want us to think.] I mean I don't wanna- I don't want you to misunderstand me, I think that we could crush Millennium Break at any time [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Crush Millennium Break at any time.] with a minimal amount of effort [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Minimal amount of effort]. But, but should we?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yes. Yes.

**ART (as Gala):** [overlapping] What- what if-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We should. What are you talking about?

**ART (as Gala):** What if it makes your life more difficult? Or my life more difficult? Or Jimmy Jimmy's life more difficult?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** To get rid of Millennium Break?

**ART (as Gala):** Yeah, what if- uhm,

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You know, really quick, we're gonna go to Pregoria to get Pregoria's perspective, I forgot that's the third- we'll come back to you Gala after production has a talk with you. On the third one we always go to Pregoria first to get Pregoria's perspective. Pregoria?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah, I'm happy to speak. I think that Millennium Break is you know, clearly as we've spoken, they are a violent, backward organisation. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's right.] And I think that I'd like to start off by saying you know, we've seen Millennium Break hit several sites. They've hit the oil refinery a couple of weeks ago, and they've done similar across the station- sorry, across the galaxy. And I think that there's a lot of doomsaying and a lot of gloomsaying about the size of Millennium Break's force. People are like oh, there must be so many of them! **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Mhm.] You know, and I can feel that fear coming off people. But that's not true. I think that what we're dealing with is a loud and violent minority. And, you know.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's only fifty people, basically.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I can't see how it could be more than you know, a hundred and fifty. A hundred and fifty radicals, a hundred and fifty revolutionaries, they go out there- you know, now. I'll say this, the areas in which they are able to strike is to do with this kind of distribution, you know? And I've seen that, you know, we have to look to history to understand, understand the present and understand the future. You know guerilla tactics, you know, do thrive and are strong in a distributed effort. But all this means is that we cannot let our guard down in terms of the work that you know, all Stels, that *all* Stels have been doing with checkpoints. With ID checks. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yep.] With DNA profiling. **[AUSTIN (as Continental):** Biometrics, yes.] With biometric profiling. You know, and sometimes you get pulled over. I got pulled over on the way to the studio. But we can't-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** How did it go? It went fine! Because you're an innocent person, right?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It went- it was so easy, I showed the card, I had nothing to hide.

[**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Exactly.] They in fact- they swiped under my car with one of those little things, you know? [**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Beep beep beep, yeah there's nothing there.] The detective did their- there's nothing there. No bombs, nothing, perfectly fine. And so there are these random checks on taking off and landing, you know, in the orbital platforms, the random checks. It's hard, so what? You know? I say just, deal with it.

**ART (as Gala):** I- [grunts] I can't agree! I can't tolerate it! I need to get through the checkpoint faster!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh tough! Ohhh tough!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, we all have to sacrifice a little. What were we just saying, there's lots of different ways to sacrifice, Gala!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Gala, you say that to the people who got blown up by the terrorists.

[**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's right, that's right.] Oh that you want to get to work faster-

**ART (as Gala):** [overlapping] I can't say it to them, because I'm stuck in a damn checkpoint! You're stuck in a damn checkpoint, everyone's stuck!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** But this is how-

**ART (as Gala):** If I had an appointment to speak to the dead people, I couldn't get there!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** How can you say this? Where are you-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gala. Gala! Gala!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** This is deeply disrespectful, Gala. That you would come here, on to- sorry, I should- I'm talking out of place.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We're friends. Look, please, let me. I'm the host. Gala, you know that we're friends, and frankly I think your heart is in the right place. It's fine to be annoyed at the situation, because none of us like going through checkpoints. None of us like needing to

wear our name tags in our own homes. None of us like to have to request admission to see your own families. None of us like that. But, whose fault is that?

**AUSTIN and JACK (as Continental and Pregoria):** It's Millennium Break's.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** How do we fix this?

**ART (as Gala):** Of course it is!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We stop Millennium Break, and then we can go back to normal.

**ART (as Gala):** No. We have to stop them through unending and aggressive freedom!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** That's what we're talking about! We're talking-

**ART (as Gala):** But we're- I need, I need all the freedom all the time!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Gala, you know.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** [overlapping] You can't, you can't have that freedom all the time.

**ART (as Gala):** I can and I will!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We are- Gala, you know it's the middle of the third topic, and that means we have to go to Topic Fossick for Reatta's view from Kesh about the issue. Gala, I'd appreciate if you don't interject this time.

**ART (as Gala):** But if I do, I will! Cause I- I can't wait!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You know, we're just gonna- we're gonna mute- we're gonna have to mute you for a little bit, Gala. Putting you in the time-out zone.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Well, [clears throat] obviously we think, we all think, that Millennium Break is insidious and despicable no matter what our other opinions [JACK (as Pregoria): Right right right.] on other things might be. You know, I'm reminded of the constant news cycles of violence and hatred are like, a nagging in my ear not unlike my wife's insistence that I stop eating only chicken-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right.

Right.

How is your wife, Reatta?

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Oh, but it's so delicious!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** For every meal! It's so delicious, and nutritious!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I mean, she's- I mean, I'm starting to suspect- I'm-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You don't think that there's-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Can we-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah we can, really quick, let's just go-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Could we do this maybe sort of like off the record? Well we'll see how this segment goes and then we cut it?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We're just really quick, let's, you know, I'm gonna say we're gonna, we're gonna throw to commercial, we'll just keep- we can keep recording? We'll just keep recording locally.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Okay.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We're gonna kill the stream for a little- you know can we get our last-? We just get our last-

**ART (as Gala):** [muffled, distant voice] I could just- I think I could just get through the time-out zone! [**JACK** chuckles]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We got a- someone- hit the-

**ART (as Gala):** I know you can hear me! [fading voice]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Alright I'm gonna mute the- and we have another sponsor here. Um, Reatta could you do me a great favour and read- read the last ad-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Sure.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Let's see here. Glasses is the industry of course, I don't know if that's drinking glasses or if that's eyewear. Sorry folks, this is. Yeah no we're- it's fine. It's fine! It's you know, I'm gonna send you the ad read, and then you could just hit the ad read [KEITH (as Reatta): Mhm.] and then we could, okay.

I'm just gonna step away for a second. You can just go ahead whenever you- you know let me pull it up on the screen so that we can get it all at once. What's the name again? Sorry, I forget the name.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** The name on the ad read is...

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah I'll be right- I'll be right there. I'll be right there, we'll talk about Gala, it's gonna be fine, Gala's just- they're just very passionate! What's the- sorry, what's the-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** They're very passionate.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [tired] Yeah.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's BLINGEYEWEAR.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Right, BLINGEYEWEAR. [KEITH (as Reatta): Blingey-] Bling Eye Wear-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Blingey-e-wear.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Blingey-e-wear.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** It's Blingey-E-Wear. [AUSTIN (as Continental): Yeah okay, so let me just-] Not Bling Eye Wear.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Not Bling Eye Wear, alright let's pull that up here-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** That is a mistake, that is a mistake. On behalf of the company [AUSTIN (as Continental): Right.] they have written in the ad here that it was their fault, it was their mistake, they didn't see it.

But if *you* want to see it, you can sign up for the Blingey-E-Wear electronic glasses subscription, the only subscription that sends bedazzled spectacles to your door every day,



**KEITH (as Reatta):** So that you never  
have to go

two days in a row,

wearing

the same

glasses.

BLINGEYEWEAR.

Electronic glasses, for analog eyes.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** And I wear Blingey  
glasses myself.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [overlapping,  
in the background] Gala. What are you-

**ART (as Gala):** What?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What are you  
doing?

**ART (as Gala):** I have to do it!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What you  
mean you *have* to do it-

**ART (as Gala):** Say what I think- that's  
the job!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** What do you  
mean it's the job- What do you mean it's  
the job!

**ART (as Gala):** The job! It's covering our  
opinion! I believe that if I'm waiting at a  
checkpoint, that's fucking up- that's  
fucked up!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [angry  
hushed shouting] Of course it's fucked  
up! We all think it's fucked up, Gala! We  
all think it's fucked up! None of us want  
to do this.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Oh, and you got-

What- do you have the 7 day special? Or do you-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Well they give me the special little trial, that enabled me to-

[chuckles] I don't wanna make myself feel special here, but I was able to enjoy the little trial.

You know when they send you the little box, and you get to try out several, and you send back the one you like?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Yeah.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** They sent me all of them!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Oh!

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I don't wanna brag, but.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Wow! I get sent 7 new ones every day, and then I send 6 of 'em back.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay. That seems like a- you must be going through quite a

Grow up!

**ART (as Gala):** Grow up!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You grow up!

**ART (as Gala):** You are children ardently following stupid directions! Like you're in kindergarten!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Like *I'm* in kindergarten? Like you're in preschool before kindergarten!

**ART (as Gala):** You're in- you're in the-school for two-year olds!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You're in the thing that they put babies right after they're born!

**ART (as Gala):** You don't even have a mouth!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** You can't even eat! You just go *waa waa waa*! I'm sick of my fancy car. You're being-

lot of glasses! Are you a glasses person, Reatta? Is this a Kesh thing?

**ART (as Gala):** I didn't get a fancy car so I could- I got a fancy car so I could go somewhere!

**KEITH (as Reatta):** I wear them around my neck to suggest that I need them, but they're mostly just a gesturing tool for the- for meetings and stuff like that.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Yeah of course, and you know, in Columnar we don't necessarily need the glasses to see? But we can use them to get the extra information! You know you see a film poster, you're looking at a film poster and you get the information about who's starring in it. So I guess it's kind of like gesturing?

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Ah, sorry, I missed that last bit.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** It's like you watch a movie poster-

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Sorry folks, I'm gonna just-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Oh, for what? What do you mean?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** There was just some audio issues. I'll- I'll just-

**JACK (as Pregoria):** We good?

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I feel like, I- between us, I feel like you, you used to be a different person before this war. And I said it. It's a war. War war war.

**ART (as Gala):** War.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I want you to get out of my studio.

**ART (as Gala):** I want you to take your studio and fuck off with it!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** It's a studio, asshole! I can't bring it with me. It's here. And I'll remind you, you're in Stel Orion space, you're not-

I'm sorry, sorry guys.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah, the read sounded good, I got the thumbs up from production.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I'm pointing at the booth. We had a little sidebar.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** Yeah it was fine. Everything was fine. Gala's gonna- Gala's gonna *head out!*

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And we can do our outro without them.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Okay, thanks Gala! Thanks-

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Guys, I think my wife  
is in Millennium Break.

**ART (as Gala):** [distant voice] Shit!  
Here's what I'm going to do! I'm gonna  
take a big shit *right in front* of your house!

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** [whispering]  
*Shut up!*

[**KEITH** chuckles]

**JACK (as Pregoria):** I just- okay, let's just keep going. Let's just-

[Music begins: "**Permanent Peace**" by Jack de Quidt]

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** I think that's going to do it for us today. Thanks so much for joining us here at CENTRE/point. CENTRE/point.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** CENTRE/point.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We spell it C-E-N-T-R-E, cause it's classier. As always, I am your host Continental Countinghouse, and we were featuring Pregoria Prilt from Stel Columnar.

**JACK (as Pregoria):** Signing off.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** And Reatta Fossick from Kesh.

**KEITH (as Reatta):** Bye bye.

**AUSTIN (as Continental):** We are of course, always a show about meeting in the middle.

**[music ends]**