

## PARTIZAN 48: Post Mortem

Transcriber: vesta

**00:00:00**

AUSTIN: Hello, [friends giggling]<sup>1</sup> and welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends.

ART [overlapping]: Sure is!

AUSTIN: I have no idea who is laughing, because-

[Friends burst out laughing]

ART: Fun interaction between good friends!

AUSTIN: Great. Good. Very professional. I'm Austin Walker, joining me today, Ali Acampora.

ALI: Hello. [pauses] Oh!

[Friends burst out laughing again]

ALI: [unintelligible] -this quickly!

KEITH [overlapping]: Trying so hard to be normal that we fucked up introductions.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: A hundred percent.

ALI: @ali\_west on Twitter. Hi, hello.

AUSTIN: Also joining us, Keith J Carberry.

KEITH: Hi, my name is Keith Carberry you can find me on Twitter @KeithJCarberry and you can find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://www.youtube.com/runbutton). In fact we're doing a new marathon this month I think.

AUSTIN: You are, I just saw this on Twitter. I'm excited for it.

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<sup>1</sup> If you are a Patreon subscriber, listen to Clapcast 43 (March 2021) for context on why the friends are laughing.

KEITH: Yeah, we're gonna do Final Fantasy Games because I don't understand what Final Fantasy is. So we're gonna do a lot of them.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Oh my god. I can't wait.

ANDREW: Dang!

AUSTIN: Sylvia Clare.

SYLVIA: Hi, I'm Sylvi you can find me on Twitter @sylvisurfer, and my other show on there @emojidrome or wherever you get your podcasts.

AUSTIN: Jack de Quidt!

JACK: Hi! I'm Jack, you can find me on Twitter @notquitereal, and buy any of the music featured on the show including the full PARTIZAN soundtrack at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: Janine Hawkins.

JANINE: I'm Janine, you can find me @bleatingheart on Twitter.

AUSTIN: Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey you can find me on Twitter @atebbel and if you go to fangamer.com you're gonna order our new merch collection, and I assure you they are going to send it to you. [Ali chuckles] Eventually.

AUSTIN: Okay. You should also note other merch stuff right? There's- we're clearing for Bluff City.

ART [overlapping]: Oh the Bluff City stuff is on clearance. 50% off Bluff City merch. There is not a lot of it if you want to go get it right now.

AUSTIN: Finally! Andrew Lee Swan.

ANDREW: Hi, you can find me on Twitter @swandre3000.

AUSTIN: Welcome, Dre.

ANDREW: Hey!

AUSTIN: We're here to do the PARTIZAN Post Mortem. We got a billion questions. I think all said across all platforms we probably broke a hundred? And that is a lot of questions. We're not going to go through all 100 questions. We did our best to figure out throughlines and as many-

as many different topics as we can. Also we know these go long often and it's been a long and tiring year. So we're gonna do our best to just do our best here. What else? What else was I gonna say?

AUSTIN [continued]: Oh! Here's a note up top. Normally, or in the past, we've ended post mortems with an announcement of the next season. I wanna say up top, we're not doing that this time. COVID sucks, and it was very hard to make one season during COVID? The idea of having a trailer for a second- for the next season ready when we literally have only really kicked pre-production into full gear now, is just- would've been impossible. It would've been a lot to put onto Jack and onto everybody else, onto me, to get things to where they needed to be. And so yeah, heads up. Don't expect a post- end of stream reveal or anything.

JACK [overlapping]: No. We truly are making another season.

ANDREW [overlapping]: Mhm.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Oh yeah!

JACK: And- it's very exciting,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JACK: But we're not gonna tell you anything about it today.

AUSTIN: Yes. You'll hear about it soon enough. We have a timeframe in mind, but please be patient with us as we continue to react to living under COVID. [coughs] Speaking of, let me cough briefly. Let's get into questions, cause otherwise we'll be here forever.

AUSTIN: Paige writes in with a great opening question:

**00:03:44 Who do you think that your PCs would get along with best from previous seasons?**

ALI: I can only think of one person. And I thought about this a lot. And it's a hard one to answer. The person who was Cas' doctor? Who was described as-

AUSTIN: Koda Whitegloves.

ALI: Yeah! A geniu- no. Wait. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: There was the military one, and then there was like the cute genius one.

AUSTIN: Who- wait.

ART: Wait?

AUSTIN: Cas' doctor?

SYLVIA: Are you thinking of Cene?

AUSTIN: You're thinking of Cene Sixheart, Audy's doctor.

ALI: I'm thinking of Audy's doctor [laughs].

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Maybe they would all hang out. The three of them. That would be great.

AUSTIN: Cene's great. They're fantastic. Love them.

ALI: Yeah.

ANDREW: I feel like Valence hanging out with Hadrian would be just.

SYLVIA: Oh my god.

ANDREW: Both incisive and tragic at the same time. [Art chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Who else? Janine you highlighted this question, you have to answer it.  
[Ali laughs]

JANINE: I did- [chuckles]

AUSTIN: You said: fun! [friends burst into laughter] And highlighted it.

JANINE: I wanted to hear everyone else's answer!

JACK: Fun for other people!

AUSTIN: Let's not- yeah!

JANINE: I think my honest answer is probably that I would really love to see Thisbe interact with like, with Fero, but also with the gnolls. Like, just like people who get to fucking be out in the woods kinda stuff?

AUSTIN: Oooh sure.

KEITH: Mhm.

JANINE: Like I would love for her to get that kind of time with people who are actually a little more rooted in the natural stuff because we didn't really get any of that side of her. We got very- we got within a framework of you know, the natural contained within the unnatural. So it'd be- it would've been really cool to, you know, it would be cool to see her interact with people who are you know. I don't know that her and Fero would necessarily get along? [Ali chuckles] But I think it would- it would be interesting? [chuckles]

AUSTIN: It would be! I think they'd get along.

KEITH [overlapping]: Fero's very genial.

JACK: I feel like some of the worst excesses of villains in previous seasons. I'm thinking of people like Kitcha Kanna. I don't think any of them would like Clementine? So I don't think that counts as like get along? [Sylvia chuckles] But I'm sure that we have encountered cruel or petty villains in previous seasons who would be able to make use of somebody like Clementine?

AUSTIN: Oh, definitely!

JACK: Where it's like, oh this person fucking sucks. I don't want to spend time with them, but. I'm able to turn this towards-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah.

JANINE [overlapping]: You know who would love Clementine?

JACK: Who?

JANINE: Adaire would love Clementine-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Adaire!

KEITH [overlapping]: Yes!

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah a hundred percent! [Art chuckling]

JANINE: Oh they'd be- they would have a great time. Or at least Adaire would have a great time [chuckles].

JACK: Do you think Adaire would just run rings around Clementine, right? Would just be like, oh, I'm able to exploit this person for- What's the angle?

JANINE: If- I mean- I think Clementine's wants are so transparent and Adaire is so much about kind of manipulating people and trying to figure that stuff out that the transparency of those wants just means like, oh she's like this [Jack chuckles], and also she has power? That's fantastic.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: A vast amount of money?

JANINE: Even minimal power is- you know? Yeah, she's got money.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: She's got a room full of rings she has access to? That's great, I love that.

AUSTIN: [Ali chuckles] I love that, I'll take some of those!

KEITH: Slightly fewer rings.

JACK: Just slightly fewer rings.

AUSTIN: Any other answers here or should we keep on moving?

ART: Aria, Signet, [short pause]

AUSTIN: That's two- that's not from-

[unintelligible table crosstalk]

AUSTIN: You mean with Sovereign Immunity?

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Okay.

ART [overlapping]: Yeah, yeah.

ALI [overlapping]: Oh, sure.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay.

JANINE [overlapping]: Yeah.

JACK [overlapping]: That would be really interesting.

AUSTIN: Wow. How-

ART: -Signet as the answer to my quest- the question from my perspective?

AUSTIN: The power there is a lot. That's a lot of- that's a lot of agency to put into a trio of characters.

JANINE: Three incredibly fantastic teacups on a table. [Austin and Ali chuckle]

ALI: Yeah. Uh huh. That's a book club I would wanna go to.

SYLVIA: Oh my god. [Ali laughs]

ART: It's a book club you wanna go to until the book that they all three disagree on, and then it's like-

ALI: Oh!

JANINE: Oh yeah.

ALI: [whispers] No that's the best! Yeah.

SYLVIA: No that's when you most want to be there.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Feast of Patina Part Two.

ART [overlapping]: Oh we can get different things out of these.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh. [Art and Ali laugh]

SYLVIA: I misread this as which of your two PCs would get along when I was thinking about it? So I was like, I don't know, I guess Aubrey? But actually thinking about that, I think Millie and Sige would get along ok?

AUSTIN: Oh! Yeah! I could see that.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They both want out, you know?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And they both understand violence extremely well.

SYLVIA: Yeah! And very chill outside of it sometimes, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally.

KEITH: With the- with those new rules, it'd be very funny to see Leap, Mako, and Gig. [friends laugh]

AUSTIN: Unbelievable.

JACK: Like a whirling ball of chaos.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [Keith laughs] Yeah.

ART: That's not a book club I wanna be in! [chuckles]

KEITH: It's much closer to an episode of Jackass I think, than a bookclub.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: Gig is just like, making sure no one gets hurt desperately. Failing. [Andrew chuckles]

KEITH: But also like, what's the most dangerous thing you can do and not get hurt?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Gonna try to get this horse to kick me. [friends laugh]

ART: I think I saw that Jackass episode.

AUSTIN: Alright! Any other final thoughts here? Keep on moving. Alright. Who wants to read this one from Paz?

JACK: I will!

AUSTIN: Alright! Thank you Jack.

JACK: Thank you for such a fun season.

**00:09:46 I would be interested in hearing Austin and the players' thoughts**



JACK [continued]: on the Rapid Evening side of the game—did people's feelings towards the concept change once it was actually tested out in play? Did the prisoner and captor setup ultimately feel too restrictive or hard to roleplay within? There were moments when I felt like characters wanted to take a more drastic action—escape, or even directly attack Clem, such as the attempted escape in the first arc,

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: and Leap's hostility towards Clem at the end of the Icebreaker arc—than they ultimately took. Was there any talk of abandoning this setup earlier, and did the limits of this squad setup affect the decision to move into the Kingdom game and merge parties? Thanks! Looking forward to the next season, and then a smiley face with the little pointy nose :^)

AUSTIN: Keith you already said something.

KEITH: Oh! I was just agreeing that wow, what- it was very early that we tried to escape. That was really what-

AUSTIN: Oh, yes. It was right away. I- the big lesson for me. The thing that if I could go back and snap my fingers and say one thing different. It would be- and this is like, I came into this assuming this? And then did the open hearted GM thing of not wanting to constrain people too much? But like, we're talking about season 7 now right? And we're talking about- you've heard me say this again and again is, I want there to be a certain sort of buy in from every PC for season 7, and if I could go back to the beginning of the Rapid Evening, the thing I would change is, I want everyone to have a Beam Saber goal? Why am I blanking on the name of this- a Drive? That is not about escaping, but is about something you could get from Kesh for working for them even if you hate working for them?

KEITH: Right.

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: When we got that from like Sovereign Immunity, we got Sovereign Immunity wants to become the Sovereign Immunity of Clementine Kesh. But the only way you get a Dirty Dozen or Suicide Squad style thing to work, is for them to hold something over you that isn't freedom? But is about getting someone off from a charge, you know? For- getting somebody else out of prison. Freeing a colony that you're a part of. Giving you a great deal of wealth, because that's what you really care about. And I think if we- if I could go back and shift one thing? It would be to ask for Leap and for Millie to have something that was not freedom that they wanted. Not that they couldn't want freedom, and in some ways it would have opened it up more for escape because then it wouldn't have been your Drive? And that would've meant you didn't need to fill a Drive clock to escape if you wanted to.

JACK: Oh right!

AUSTIN: Right?

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So that's my big- that was my big lesson was, be firmer about getting mechanical and narrative buy-in for the premise. But I didn't- but then we had it, and I think- I think that those moments are really fun. I think those moments of like, SI trying to talk-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: People into staying was really good. And then everyone trying to undercut Clem over the first four arcs, was fun to watch.

JACK: It set a tone so fast. And tone was as exciting and as communicative as it also required I think a lot of thought from all of us, as to like how we were making these moves and where we wanted to go with them.

KEITH: Yeah-

ART [overlapping]: Yeah- [pauses] Go, go.

KEITH: Okay. The word here that like I don't- in the question, did it feel- did it feel restricting or hard to RP within? It didn't almost the entire time feel restrictive. But it did- it was like constantly on my mind that like, like the thing that I wanted to really do was sell that Leap was a prisoner. Like, and,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Without that- without the- Austin you were talking about like wanting to get a buy-in from us like, something that would keep us in the group even though we really didn't want to. And without that, it wouldn't have felt right for me to just like, not try and escape.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Or- or at least like push back against even being there. To-

AUSTIN: And sometimes you don't even- we don't even get to the thing that would've fit for a while? Like, imagine if we come in with the idea that there was an Equiax colony, or an Equiax settlement on the planet somewhere that needed help?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That would have been a very good way to align Leap towards fuck this, but this could be a thing I can do-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -that I want to happen. And this is one of the things about Actual Play, which is sometimes you get the good idea six weeks, seven weeks in, and you're like well. Shit.

KEITH: And then on the other hand like, would that have strengthened parts of the season overall? Maybe, but also would it have- that first arc for me was so much fun.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: So would we have gotten the immediate escape plan without- with that? Probably not. So, it's sort of like ehh, can't change it. And I also couldn't say if that would have been better or worse. But it did occupy a lot of like my time thinking about this season which is like. How do I be part of the group and also not want to be part of the group. Especially having come off Fero where that was like, really exhausting.

AUSTIN: That was the thing with Fero. Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Art, you were starting to say something here too.

ART: Yeah I've said this in a little bit of behind the scenes content, of Patreon content, but like I've found it hard to get my footing this season because of- because of this? That like, the way that I've come to this private, intern- to myself recently is that like, I had a little bit of Sting-booking?

AUSTIN: Sting the wrestler.

ART: Sting the wrestler?

AUSTIN: Not the musician.

ART: Uh huh. Which is a thing you need to know about the wrestler Sting. Is that he was the main baby face in WCW for a good long while. And the main villain in WCW was Ric Flair and the Four Horsemen, and several times there would be like a plot where the Four Horsemen pretend to have like, a problem and Sting would team up with one of them and then, inevitably, betray Sting.

AUSTIN: Of course.

ART: And Sting is just like, a moron. [Austin chuckles] Because Sting fell for this very obvious plot of the dastardly villain,

JACK [overlapping]: Kicking the football.

ART: Ric Flair, who no one should ever trust. So the problem ends up with Sovereign Immunity that like, Sovereign Immunity's supposed to be this savvy political maneuverer, who is just tricked all the time by known moron Clementine Kesh. [friends laugh] You know?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

JACK: Oh, god.

ART: And it's hard to like, wrangle all those character elements into a forward moving thing.

JACK: It's so interesting- you say that right, because like, I think Clementine experienced something fairly similar, which is that, I really wanted to be honest to the horror of the power dynamics of that group. Of you know, this is someone leading a squad of prisoners basically entirely against their will for their own ends. And to be honest, about the way that Kesh as an organisation is able to wield power. But I really didn't want to like, stop people from rolling? I mean, the simplest way to put this is like, Clementine would've killed someone really earlier in that scene.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: If, like-

AUSTIN: We floated that idea even before the show started, about like, do we wanna open this with Clem showing what the power is by killing a major NP- like A.O. Rooke just getting shot in episode one.

JACK [overlapping]: Yeah! It's so hard.

AUSTIN: Right? And it felt hard out the gate- I think, I think you managed to communicate Clem as a terrible person, and a warden of prisoners, and a manipulative, frankly pretty evil person out the gate, without needing that sort of dramatic- we got instead was you killing a person in cold blood, because of a mission, right? You killed the scientist instead. And that wasn't planned. I mean I gave you that secondary objective to see if Clem would go there? And you did go there in such a way that was like. Very indicative of how much Clem was willing to actually get her hands dirty on top of wielding other people like weapons.

JACK: Yeah. Where it's like, I think there's a version of this season where if. It's so rough right? Where it's like, if we were making this as like a television show, we were just writing scripts? Would Clem be more competent, and more frightening in her competency? The answer is like, I

don't know? I think I keep coming back to Clementine as thinking of like the amateurish plotter in Crusader King II? Which is a character who- [Austin chuckles] it's a trait that means that a character was quite a low espionage skill? But has a very high propensity to like, try and do espionage? [Keith and Janine chuckle] And it leads to these incredible Crusader Kings characters where you have someone just like, wild- making \*wild\* swings that they have no capacity [Dre chuckles] to deliver on. But in some way they are almost like these terri- when you encounter a really dangerous amateurish plotter, they're this weird dynamo. Because you're like, oh fucking hell. It's very likely that this isn't going to work, but if it does work, like. Apostolos' front line is absolutely fucked or something.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: So there would be the temptation right, to just make Clementine way more competent. And way more scary. But in the same way that Art was talking about trying to balance like being a savvy revolutionary who was constantly hamstrung by an idiot, I think Clementine was trying to balance being someone that is frightening and capable at wielding power, while not wanting to like slam doors shut for other players, or for Clementine. Or for the kind of story we want to tell, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: This is a story about revolution, so it's like. I don't want things to break good for Clementine generally.

AUSTIN: Sylvia, I'm curious-

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -as the one person here who has not talked about this quite yet.

SYLVIA: I'm kinda like. I'm just thinking about like, what you said about if we had gone back and done things like, had different Drives not related to like freedom? And I feel like that would've changed the way I played Millie like so entirely?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Because like. If I look at just the story I had for her at the beginning, in the way- like before like I had even sort of landed on the "claw your way out" Drive, the other one I had was get revenge on GLORY.

AUSTIN: Right.

SYLVIA: And that sort of became a thing in parts, but like, I kind of, one of my favourite things about Millie's story is that it doesn't end up being a revenge story?

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: In the most- for the most part? And like. I don't know, I think that having to sort of play within the confines of the like situation we've been in really helped me in sort of like the opposite way of what I described really, helped me figure out her right away? Because like, it's oh, you're someone who has had to be in captivity in some way or another her entire life.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And like, that immediately just like, clicks everything into place. Or if not everything, like at least the basic stuff that ended up filling out the rest of her character.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. And I think we got really great resolution there with where Millie ends up at the end of everything? And in a really good- I think everyone in the Rapid Evening ends up in a really interesting place by the end of that. I think everyone in PARTIZAN ends up in a really interesting place [friends chuckle]. So I don't- I guess when I say like oh, if I go back I could do blank, I don't mean and because I didn't it was ruined? I think everyone did such a great job with what we had and I'm so so happy with everyone ended up, so. Alright. Let's keep moving. Sylvi can you actually read this next one here.

SYLVIA: Yeah, for sure! This is from Gary, and Gary asks:

**00:22:07 What was your favourite moment where a PC looked sick as shit?**

I do have this! If I can just go ahead.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Please! Just jump into it.

SYLVIA: Remember the mission we had on the Prophet's Path?

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: There was the moment, I can't remember his name. The fucking hot Oscar Isaac guy.

AUSTIN: Callister Drive Callister.

SYLVIA: Thank you so much.

JACK: Oh, yeah! [Keith chuckles]

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: There's a moment where like I think my mech is just like beat to shit, and I have to get out. Oh no! I got out to shoot someone with my sniper rifle,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

SYLVIA: There's a moment where I'm staring down his mech on foot, with the sniper rifle? And he just backs off? And I think that is an underrated Millie moment. [Austin, Ali, and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: Absolutely! That moment also has the- that mission also has the Clem on foot with the mechs approaching through like the sandstorm moment? Which I could conceptualise in my head so well, and then I saw people do fanart of it? And I was like, yup! That's it. Nailed it.

SYLVIA: Yup! [Janine chuckles]

AUSTIN: A hundred percent.

SYLVIA: That mission ruled!

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a good-

JACK: That was a fun mission.

AUSTIN: Beam Saber led us to make lots of really good missions in a way that are so memorable. And I love past seasons, but in terms of giving me as a GM the ability to be like, here's a cool forest mission. Here's a cool snow mission. Here's, you know, it just felt so good to play in that space. And I think that- I hope that that enabled a bunch of these kind of like incredible sick as shit moments because I have- I have them for every character, you know? Everyone had a moment where they had the spotlight in that way. But- I need some more answers.

JACK [overlapping]: Thisbe riding the Blue Channel was really good, at the end?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: Yeah.

JACK: Thisbe basically being the mounted gun of a ship. [Ali and Andrew laugh] Something I was able to visualise really well. Really any time Millie took action was great. [Sylvi laughs] I had so much fun playing the- that like, that ridiculous scramble in the Boole Batanca mission where Millie and Kalar are teaming up as a unit.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Oh my god!

JACK: In like this ruined building? And keep like stumbling from one crisis into another,

AUSTIN [overlapping]: God, that was super fun.

JACK: But pulling out of each one in interesting ways? Like, you're talking about-

KEITH: That's maybe the best combat encounter in Friends at the Table.

JACK: That was so much fun!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And playing with Sylvi in that scene was just the best, where it was just like. Millie was such a great character to interact with, and it was such a wonderful space to find my feet with Kalar? To have all these moments kind of cascading. Like how are you gonna react to this? How is Millie gonna react to that? [Ali and Dre chuckle] I had a great time playing that scene.

SYLVIA: Thank you.

JACK: Starts out shooting people accidentally. Yes!

AUSTIN: That mission was so good, that that was the moment where I was like, we can't end this season in Beam Saber because I can't- we got blood out of the stone. Not that Beam Saber is a stone. Beam Saber is an incredible gift to us. But we got so much out of it in that mission from the sort of like rolling successes to the, my favourite use of a "Rival can make a move at any time", with the arrival of Laurel, aka the Cas clone.

JACK [overlapping]: It was wonderful!

AUSTIN: To the big final, huge roll, where everyone had to collaborate to get as many dice as possible to try to get this one big home run swing. And it's like, we're not gonna get another home run swing. We got it. We got the biggest home run swing we could get. I have to start thinking about how to end this season in something else, because if I tried- if we tried to recapture this tension, we're just not gonna get to this high again, because it was so mechanically tight and good. For sure.

KEITH: If I could give myself a moment from now on, because it was very new playing, me and Kalar, it was our first mission.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah.

KEITH: With those characters, right? Figuring out that Phrygian could turn into-



AUSTIN: Oh!

KEITH: -the like, the like Divine energy?

SYLVIA [overlapping]: It's so good! [Janine chuckling]

AUSTIN: Yeah, the energy, the super gun, the gun that-

JACK: So good!

ANDREW: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: The other person in the other Millie mech had. The like, the Stray Dog you know Mk. II or whatever. That moment- realising that you were about to use that move, was like, I marked out so hard. I was so excited. [Friends chuckle] It was so good.

JACK: SI with the scythe is always good. Anytime SI had his scythe.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I really like-

ART: The Motion stuff was good.

AUSTIN: Yeah. All the Motion stuff I think is fun, right? For sure. I really like Thisbe in the statuary, beating the shit out of-

ANDREW [overlapping]: Oh yeah! [Janine chuckles]

AUSTIN: Aram Nideo statues, is very fun. God, trying to think of other big ones. Obviously the big Valence moment. The big Valence moment. Is, you know, the sick as shit is buried under you know, tragedy.

ANDREW: Sad. Yeah. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: But looks. It did look sick as shit, didn't it? And then I think for Broun, is also Orzen for me. The moment of like, all of the stuff around these much more mobile mechs? And Broun being in this kind of like, not that your mech wasn't maneuverable, but it didn't fly, and suddenly there were these dive bombers [Ali chuckles], and violin grappling hook mechs fucking with you, and you're on the roof trying to deal with that by like launching whatever is in your missile pods, or your projectile pods, was really fun too.

ALI: Yeah. I was trying to think-

AUSTIN: Oh go ahead.

ALI: Well I was trying to think of the question because I was like, Broun did a lot of stuff that I don't- at the end of the day I don't know if you could call any of those things cool, cause it was just always like a, you need a medic- [chuckles]

JANINE [overlapping]: That moment- that moment when they dove off with Thisbe.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: When Thisbe was deactivated.

ALI: Oh, yeees!

JANINE: That was really good.

AUSTIN: Diving off Icebreaker into the ocean with Thisbe. That's sick as shit. Yeah.

ALI: Yeah. I think it was- That was-

KEITH [overlapping]: Was that. That was- during the flag fight?

ALI: Yes. That was against um, Mourningbride?

AUSTIN: It was against Mourningbride, correct. Mourningbride.

KEITH: What's the name of that Divine?

AUSTIN: Courage. Yeah, you know. Courage.

KEITH: Courage. The flag, right.

AUSTIN: Which first showed up in Road to PARTIZAN. That's where Courage first showed up. And was a flying banner in a similar way. Yeah.

ART: Can we just YouTube that people are allowed to say shit in our chat for christ sake.  
[Friends burst out laughing]

AUSTIN: There's probably a setting somewhere, right? I don't know where it is.

KEITH: Yeah, it's in like, preferences.

AUSTIN: That'd be great, but. Alright. Do we wanna keep moving? Next question here?

ANDREW: Sure.

AUSTIN: Dre, can you read this since you said sure?

ANDREW: Yeah! This is from Wayne & Morgan.

**00:28:42 The music this season has been chock full of fantastic sounds,**

and I'm curious how you found or created these sounds. Do you tend to stumble upon a sound you like and build a composition around it, or do you try to find or generate a particular sound that you already have in mind? I'd be curious to hear more about your process as an amateur composer who's been daunted by the massive world of synths and electronic sounds many times before. I'd also be curious what your learning process has been like and if you have any learning resources to recommend. How did you balance the desire to create music with a harsh mechanical tone and the need for it to sound musical and be able to be talked over?

JACK: It's a really good question. I think that it's been really fun making this kind of what do you call it Austin? The Divine trilogy?

AUSTIN: The Divine Cycle.

JACK: The Divine Cycle.

AUSTIN: That's what I started calling it, yeah.

JACK: Since it is no longer a trilogy, yeah. Where it's like in the first one, it was all pianos and barely any synths. And then the second one I wanted to do something really warm, and even as I was making Twilight Mirage, I knew that I wanted the third season to be- cause I think already we were talking about making a war season, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, oh yeah, from the jump, right?

JACK: We've wanted to make like a war movie or something. And so even as we were finishing Twilight Mirage, I was like "oh I know what the next thing is and it is", and it's something really harsh. And so I started looking at atonal stuff, or less melodically focused stuff like Ryuichi Sakamoto, and also started looking at just like classic 90s industrial music?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: At Trent Reznor, and the Nine Inch Nails- and is it David Lynch introduces them as the Nine Inch Nails, in?

AUSTIN: I think that's correct.

JACK: I think that's really good. And also looking at you know, more modern industrial stuff and the sounds of PC music, and sounds that are deliberately overwhelming or harsh or

uncomfortable, or miserable, and that was so exciting to prep for, because I was just like, coming off Spring where I was trying to write beautiful melodies and pretty harmonies. It was so exciting to be like alright, this is gonna be fucking, this is gonna be miserable music and I want to try to make it exciting or have a swagger, or whatever. So I started by looking at synthesisers that I suspected would have those characteristics. There are so many different digital and real world synth manufacturers that sort of specialise in particular sounds, and so right off the bat I was able to be like. I'm probably gonna look like a synth called Massive, and gonna look at a synth called Reaktor with a 'K' because it's like sick as shit. Spelled with a 'k'.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. That's Cool, not Doubt.

JACK: Yeah, that is Cool no Doubt. [Andrew chuckles] And then there were additional criteria where I was like, I don't really want to use an arpeggiator, which is a kind of synthesiser that produces very rapid patterns of notes like Tron or Daft Punk, or when you think of like the Stranger Things sound? I didn't really want to use an arpeggiator because I can't use them very well. I don't really know how to use them very well. And I didn't really want to use a sequencer for the same reason, which is sort of where you plot things out on a graph and the music sort of plays itself as it moves down that graph. So I wanted a synthesiser where I could just play straight into my program using a MIDI keyboard. And then it was just a case of going really slowly through loads and loads of different- this is my least favourite bit of composing. Cause you just open a list of-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: -instruments, and for every one you find, there are like 35 that you- that don't work. You play three notes and you're like, oh that's crap or whatever. But I'm like, oh fine, I want a bass that feels really heavy, or I want the Crysanth synths to sound like they were needles, to sound something very piercing or jagged. And so you just go down this list being like, is this it? Nope. Is this it? Nope. Is this it? Until you get close to one, when you start turning knobs, and I'm not familiar with knobs to really know what the knobs do? So when I got something that I was- that I liked, I would just start turning the knobs on the screen and being like, does that- does that get me closer or further away from what I picture in my head? [Art and Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I ended up at a point where by the halfway point I had like 13 or 14 different synths that I had saved, so these were presets that I could call up instantly. And from that point I pretty much didn't look for new sounds. I had this massive base, I have these horrible distorted bells. I have various screaming or distorted sounds. I have two or three different drum sets. And from that points it's just much more of it's in a regular season where I'm like, okay, Austin and Ali sent me the file. [Ali chuckles] I listen to it a lot of times, we talk about what we think is going to work here.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: There are just like, synths that are audibly glitching or breaking or stuff hasn't been like snapped to beats or whatever-

AUSTIN: There were times when you'd be like, "I lost it, I broke it the right yeah and I can't break it the same way again".

JACK: Uh huh! So that kind of like, that kind of whining drone that begins the main theme? I managed to record once for a demo I sent Austin a year and a half ago?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I lost the synth for that? So every single time that that sound appears in the soundtrack, and it does like three or four times, I pulled it from the mp3 file [friends start laughing].

AUSTIN: That's real shit. That's PARTIZAN, babey, right there!

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You don't have the original toolset, you just have a copy of a copy-

JACK [overlapping]: I have a copy!

AUSTIN: -and you just drop it in, and yeah.

JACK: It gets increasingly deep fried-

ART [overlapping]: That was a year of- that felt like a year of Austin having to copy paste every time we needed to use one of-

[friends burst out laughing]

AUSTIN: Yes! A hundred percent! Totally, totally. And I'll say like, even going back to the beginning, Jack just like, get back to that first part of this question of like, how do you find something that doesn't- that isn't too abrasive, I just want to underscore how much attention you put into that question of how do we make a show that's aggressive sounding, that isn't physically painful to listen to.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You went- you must've iterated on the main theme. I mean, you go back to the first time we had a call about what the main theme was, and we were like listening to engine noises and stuff like that, you sent me like four demos, and three of them you were like "I think this is

too harsh. I think this hurts people, this will hurt people's ears too much." And we just kind of dialed it in from there and like, the amount of attention you put to that. But also clearly the big things like Motion's sound, you know? Which like should be scary and upsetting? But also shouldn't override the dialogue of any given scene-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -where it's dropped into? I just think you did a really really good job of managing to be scary without being distracting, and that's really hard to do.

JACK: Thank you! I mean I think that like, the thing that I- and I think this is because I have such a good time working with you and Ali, where it's like, the thing I'm most excited about is people being able to listen to the show, and hear the storytelling that we're doing?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: So like. I cut so many synths that I thought that were cool that just, either ate through the audio, or didn't sound very nice. Like there's a drum set that I have, its cymbals just obliterate the top end of anything we put it into? [Austin chuckles] To the point where it is just horrible to listen to? But I love this drum set so much that I gave it double duty on some tracks. I played the kick drum and the snares of this massive unworkable drum kit and handed the cymbals off to a more palatable kit that wouldn't destroy the top end. But I do think, you know, I have no interest in making music that is so harsh that it is actively painful to listen to, or that is so harsh that it stops us telling the stories that we want to tell. So on some level I think it's quite easy.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: I also think that there's a key distinction between certain types of tracks. So the Black Century track, god what's the name of that track. This is the thing is we use those ideograms this year? [Janine chuckles]

KEITH: Yeah!

AUSTIN: I don't remember any titles. [Andrew chuckles]

JACK: I know!

AUSTIN: I'm bad at this.

JACK: And it's overwhelming and frustrating. Sick! That's what we wanted!

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Perfect! But that track is just terrifying. It like goes really hard but it's like very frightening?

JACK: Like a slow march, right?

AUSTIN: Right. Versus the finale theme where I think it sounds like a Vince Staples beat. And that's super important in a game that was about the slippage between fighting a revolution that you believe in and slipping into the logic of empire and thinking actually doesn't it just feel good to be aggressive?

JACK: It's-

AUSTIN: And capturing that in that song was so important to me and you nailed it.

JACK: My favourite thing to do is make music that's sarcastic? [Ali chuckles] Or is music that is saying what you are hearing in the scene, is not actually quite what- so the first time they have the big Millenium Break conference aboard Icebreaker?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I had the closest that I got to this triumphant theme which was played on this electric piano. It's this really nice little theme. And then it keeps showing up more and more towards the finale, played over characters who you're like, do they need this theme? Why are they playing the theme here?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: This doesn't sound right. And like, I just wanted to be, I wanted to, as Sovereign Immunity dies, the music slips into the major key kind of? And I wanted listeners to be confused. To be like, wha? Why is this happening now?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You know. This doesn't sound like it's supposed to go-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: You broke certain rules around, not rules, but like, you would sometimes start with a character motif right? Or a faction motif, but then that would find its way into referencing something else? And that draws a connective line between the two of them in a way that's- you said sarcastic, or somehow jarring, which I really loved.

JACK: And sometimes it's not subtle. And sometimes it is not meant to speak directly- for example, we give Gucci Crysanth's theme by the end.

AUSTIN: Yes, yeah.

JACK: That's, you know. This is some real like, there's- the subtext is fairly clear.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

JACK: And Motion's theme gets spread all over the place to the point where I stopped thinking of it as Motion's theme and started thinking of it as like something awful has been happening for a long time and hasn't been allowed to stop.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [chuckles]

JACK: Where it's like, yeah. So much less than Hieron where it's like, oh Samot has a theme. Oh Twilight Mirage where oh this is, you know.

AUSTIN: Every character has a theme because-

JACK: Every character has their own theme!

AUSTIN: We had a week of themes. [Andrew chuckles]

JACK: In part of that it was just much more like, oh this is- this is a theme for a miserable thing that's kept going. Or this is a theme for people getting organised. Or this is a theme for whatever. And that gave me a bit more flexibility while trying to make music during COVID. And I think we did that during all aspects of the show.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Big time. All right, let's keep moving. This next one, can you read this Janine?

JANINE: Sure.

AUSTIN: From Saint.

JANINE: Yeah.

**00:40:12 It seems like every player swung for the fences-**

in terms of the types of risk they were willing to take- sorry, were willing to put their characters through. Was this a conscious decision? Something Beam Saber encouraged? Both? as an extension, was there a particular mindset y'all went in with in terms of how your characters would be played?

SYLVIA: I have-

AUSTIN: I think this is- go ahead, Sylvi.

SYLVIA: I just have kind of like a quick and easy answer to this which is like, we wanted to tell a war story, and people die in those, so if it happened, I would've been fine with it, you know? Like, that just enabled me to risk things more as opposed to like, other seasons where it felt like, I wanted Millie to get through it, don't get me wrong.



AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: When I'm like- I trusted us to like be able to tell a compelling story if one of the PCs died in the middle, and we did do that?

AUSTIN: We managed to do it!

ANDREW: Mhm.

SYLVIA: So like. I don't know. It just- it- I think also in general it comes from just years of doing this at this point? Like,

AUSTIN: I don't think we were ever as comfortable with a system as we were mechanically, maybe, as Beam Saber in the middle of it.

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Maybe- that's not true, maybe Dungeon World by the end. But y'all understood this system and pushed it as hard as you could for you know, maybe there's one or two types of thing you didn't do super often, we definitely got some of like, frankly backseat gamey emails of like [Sylvi chuckles], why didn't the party do blank? It's because- what? Because you're doing Actual Play. And you don't always have the book in your mind all the way. But I think things like that big Motion fight really indicate the ways in which you were all like committed to pushing on the system as hard as you fucking could.

SYLVIA: Yeah and I think like, with Forged in the Dark stuff, having played a few different variations of it now, like we've always had the best results when we're going at a 10. Like when you're pushing it, the envelope all the way.

ANDREW: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Yeah. And it's like, I don't know. I'm hoping I can keep this energy for the rest of this show. [Ali chuckles] I'm hoping this isn't a PARTIZAN exclusive thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, totally. Janine I had you read this because I think you came in with the most like, explicit "I'm going to-"

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: "-swing at the fences as hard."

JANINE: And it was because when we played- when we had played Forged in the Dark games before I have not had fun.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: I- I like explicitly, I respected them? I respected what they were going for, but I had experiences where just like, you know, first second and third impressions were a bit rough. Like, I would have bad dice rolls, and it just felt you know, we would be moving from a system that maybe I had felt more attached to my character in, and various reasons why you know, I kind of had a bit of a grudge I guess? So I was like, you know, if we're gonna be doing this, if we're going to be playing this for an extended period of time, I need to find a way to make this work for me. And like- I need to figure out like am I doing something wrong here? Or am I doing something that is maybe making this a bit less fun? And the answer is that like, I can be a really conservative player? In terms of like, I'm always like very aware of my resources, I'm very aware of, sometimes too aware of like, what the limits of a move should be and things like that. And I will sometimes even- I'll argue against myself for some case of like "well I don't think I should be able to do that". Or the other side of things of like, if I'm very sure I should do something, I don't know. I can get really into the weeds there, is my point.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And I think that approaching sort of games in this network, in this mould with that kind of approach can make them very not fun? Because there is so much risk? And if the thing you're worried about is just risk in general? It feels really oppressive to like, to plan to that. But you have to realise and like, for me the thing was like, I have to play harder. Because the risk exists for you to take it.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And they wouldn't give you, like, the way risk is balanced, it is balanced so that you can take on quite a lot of it, and like, you can experience quite a lot of consequence for taking on those risks. That's the point. So if you have a player who is always trying to hyper-manage your risk, you're gonna have a bad time unless tact. So I changed tact. And I had a better time with it! [Austin chuckles] It's still not my favourite system, but it definitely- I definitely didn't chafe against it the way I had in the past. It used to be that every time we were playing one of these systems it just- it really got under my skin. And this time around I did eventually just stop really even thinking about it in that way. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally. I would say the other character who did this was Leap? Who was literally built to be- [Janine chuckles]

KEITH: Mmm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: -as leaned into Desperate situations as possible.

JACK [overlapping]: Unbelievable.

AUSTIN: Keith you also do that generally speaking with characters?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I think never as successfully- another sick as shit moment is Leap getting out of your mech and running across the battlefield and like, jumping extremely far and high?

KEITH: Oh I totally forgot about that! The first Motion fight.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The first Motion fight. Yeah, was very good for that, but like-

KEITH: So-

AUSTIN: You also were just playing as hard as possible.

KEITH: Yeah! I- I think you're right I do try to do that. It keeps me interest- it keeps me focused to do that. But then, I think I've mentioned this before, maybe it was during a Tips or maybe it was during like some early season thing. But when we were at Gen Con?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: You remember the thing you said about like, make your car explode-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: I fucked up the saying, the saying is play-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The saying is "play to make your car explode". [Art chuckles] The saying is play your character like a stolen car. What I said was "play your character like you're driving a stolen car". But I said was "play your character like you're crashing a stolen car"? [Friends burst out laughing]

ANDREW: Honestly!

JACK: God, what a great misquote.

KEITH [overlapping]: Yes! So I did that! I tried to do that for that episode, for that Gen Con thing.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah! That Gen Con game was when I knew we would be good, because everyone- we ran a full fucking Blades game in like 2 and a half hours or something?

KEITH: Yeah.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which we had never managed to do in Scum and Villainy or in Blades in the Dark. And I was like okay, I can run shorter scores?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So that Gen Con game was a huge confidence boost. Anyway sorry, continue.

KEITH: And so I had so much fun during that Gen Con game that I was just like, I'm just going to do that again- as a character. Like, my character would be- the tools are here. I can make a character whose job it is to crash a stolen car.

AUSTIN: Literally that is what Leap did before being arrested, was crash space cars into other space cars. [Friends laugh]

KEITH [overlapping]: Literally would crash-! The mech was designed to crash into things.

SYLVIA: We also stole that car!

KEITH: Did we steal a car?

SYLVIA: The first mission, remember?

AUSTIN: First mission you did steal a car! The first mission! [laughter erupts]

KEITH: Yeah! Yeah, see? There, I took it really literally. And then I was like worried about losing that when we switched over to Phrygian, and so that first session I was just like, well let me just make sure I'm still doing that.

AUSTIN: And you did.

KEITH: And I did.

AUSTIN: Totally.

KEITH: And we all almost died. [Sylvia laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Definitely. I do wanna underscore again what Sylvi said at the top which is like, this was a war story.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think we all did have a conscious conversation at the top, and actually, let's just jump into the next question. Does anyone have anything here before we move on? We can always come back to these ideas in future questions. So. But really quick, Jack, can you read this question from Jay?

JACK: Yes. Jay says,

**00:48:26 For Keith, when/how did you decide to leave Leap behind?**

Dre, was Valence's death something that you guys had planned, or was it just the luck of the dice?

AUSTIN: So I queued this up to again underscore the war story element around character death and stuff, so. But yeah, Keith and Dre, what do you think about these?

KEITH: This goes back to like the first question I think, about, or maybe the second question, about like, to where we were talking about taking seriously the fiction of like warden/prisoner dynamics, where during the Kingdom game, it started to become harder to like. It started to become harder to manage and it also started to feel like the result of taking- the result of doing what I thought was taking the fiction seriously was like literally hampering the game. And so I was just like, I- if I just switched characters it would be fine. And so. And I also- there was also a second part of it where like, I felt, I feel like a lot of my characters get more depressing as they go? [Austin chuckles] And so, there's part of me where I was like, I have the points here to do like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: A good ending for Leap? But then also I had seen a lot of, I had seen people saying- you know how you see people say stuff.

AUSTIN: I do know this.

KEITH: I saw people wondering like, where, when the sad turn was going to come for Leap. And I didn't want Leap to have a sad turn, because Leap started off as a prisoner. It was sad- it was not subtext.

AUSTIN: The sad turn was- yes. [Sylvi laughs]

KEITH: The thing for me was that, Leap is a prisoner, wants to get out, can't escape. And so I didn't want to like. Give it like a second thing at the end where it's like, oh, now here's like the real tragedy. Because I felt like the real tragedy was the first half of the season.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So get Leap out. Let Leap go. Let Leap live.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Dre, do you want to talk about Valence's last stand?

ANDREW: Yeah. It was absolutely luck of the dice. It was not planned whatsoever.

AUSTIN: You had no idea. It was like-

ANDREW: Yup!

AUSTIN: It was like, boy! Threw us into chaos. [Ali chuckles]

ANDREW: Yeah I think it was basically, I mean we were reaching the end, it was late, and you basically said like. I don't want this to be a dice thing? I want you to make the decision like, you all can take out Crysanth, but it's going to mean somebody like has to stay- or maybe it was specifically Valence.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: You have to stay behind to make it happen.

AUSTIN: We said you could- I think I did say, you could play it out after. You could play out the scenario,

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And we could roll dice, we can come back next week, we can fight it out and see if maybe you could take out Crysanth in the fight, and maybe y'all- you get away. But everyone was beat to shit,

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because that mission broke so bad.

ANDREW: Yes.

AUSTIN: And so I gave that very clear offer of like, you could do a one-for-one. Or more than a one-for-one trade. Because you also got to destroy and then steal the remaining Eyes of the Exemplar, right?

JANINE: Yeah, we absolutely had that as an out. I remember that really clearly being a choice of like, you know, we have this resource, we could get out of this Valence, like there were a lot of options there.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: In that way.

ANDREW: Yeah. But yeah, it was just- it was the choice, and I think even after we made the choice, you know it was very much an ongoing conversation of like, are we still okay with this?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ANDREW: You know- does this still feel right?

AUSTIN: Sleep on it. Yeah.

ANDREW: But no I mean it. I think once it happened I never really. Like I did think about it but it was never really like a no, this- this felt like the right choice.

AUSTIN: And it was Art I think who smartly said before we hang up tonight, do we wanna play it out and see how it feels?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because it let us keep the momentum and the tone of that mission in your play in a way that I think helped underscore the place we were actually at in that mission.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Whereas I think- I'm glad we did then still open up the door to say hey, we can always come back and re-record, we can always throw this out, we can retcon it, I don't care. I want you to be happy and feel safe with the decisions you're making as a storyteller here. And so you always had that opportunity but I'm so glad we did play it out and see how it went and then go a different direction. I mean frankly, we did that twice this season. It's not on this question because how would anyone know to ask this, but like, Sovereign Immunity died in this season, briefly, right?

ART: Uh huh.

ANDREW [overlapping]: Oh right!

AUSTIN [overlapping]: During the Kingdom game.

ART: And we decided to walk it back.

AUSTIN: And we walked it back because it felt wrong.

ART: Yeah, I woke up the next day like nope.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's not it. We slept on it, it felt like- it felt like the momentum of the table broke against the story the wrong way. And so yeah. In some ways it's why the idea of like, "did you plan it or was it the luck of the dice" doesn't really tell the whole story because there is always safety mechanisms at play, there's always the feeling that like, you know. I mean I guess I would say, if someone got a level four harm and couldn't heal it, they would get a level four harm and couldn't heal it and would die. Right? Like that, that could have happened this season at any point. In fact we got very close a number of times. SI could have died easily during the, that same mission that Valence did, with it going the way it did.

ART [overlapping]: That was going badly.

AUSTIN: It was going very badly!

ANDREW: Yeah!

AUSTIN: But the Kingdom- the Kingdom was basically, there's that moment where Sovereign Immunity gets- does that even exist? Yeah, Sovereign Immunity gets arrested still in the Kingdom game, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

ART: Yeah.

SYLVIA: It's like much more- it's not a full scene in the actual Kingdom game, I think we like reduced it to just some narration that you did.

JACK: We moved some stuff around.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

ART: Yeah.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Thank you Ali! [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: So yeah that was a situation where it was like, we played it out, yeah! And hated- and hated the way it felt because it didn't feel in character for anyone involved. Right? It just felt like we kind of backed ourselves into the corner to where it played out that way? And so we ended up rerecording the arrest, making it less of a focal point? Which is an interesting thing because it means, it's like we had to stay away from the scene. We knew we wanted it to happen, but the closer we got to it, the more like radioactive it would get because to play it out beat for beat might put us in the same position, right?



JACK: Like we'd get trapped again in the same-

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ANDREW: Mhm.

JANINE: Because it was emotion-

AUSTIN: Totally!

JANINE: Like it was emotional.

ART [overlapping]: No I very much was like-

JANINE [overlapping]: It was- it reminds me a lot of-

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally!

JANINE: Of not just because it was a midseason kind of thing, but the Feast of Patina because it was like. There was a degree to which the emotions at the table were pushing people in directions where it felt like, I don't know how to get out of this. Is this the thing I want? No. But, or maybe like, you don't really know because everyone has this idea of what's happening and having that separation from it is helpful because again if you just-

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: -play through it again you might end up in the same state.

AUSTIN: And I wanna underscore because I think, I've seen people over the years say, that because fact that we do things like this sometimes it means we're not doing Actual Play?

JACK: [groaning] Ohh...

AUSTIN: You can play like these at home!

ANDREW: Mhm!

AUSTIN: You can say at your home table, hey, can we sleep on this, can we undo this, can we go back? That is Actual Play. You can and should have those mechanisms of collaborative storytelling at your table at home. That is not a special thing that making a show allows to do. You can to do that too.

JANINE: A lot of rulebooks even outline like hey, if you need to-

AUSTIN: Yes!

JANINE: -you know, they have mechanisms for jumping back or for you know, if we're saying like hey, if you decide that your story took a bit of a weird swing, please go back you know.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: And it's like oh! But you didn't do what the dice said! Like, fuck off. We're taking care of each other and trying to make a good story. [friends chuckle] Like what do you want?

AUSTIN: And the other thing here is, and we don't- we're not even at that question yet. There are other deaths that happened this season that have nothing to do with dice at all.

JACK [overlapping]: Boy howdy.

AUSTIN: In that same game obviously, is the Clem/Gur Sevraq fight. Which is- do we just wanna, Jack do you just wanna jump to that since we're here anyway in this moment?

JACK [overlapping]: No! Let's go in order! Let's go in order. We can jump back.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Okay. Alright so then.

ART: Guess what, we're teasing to keep people

AUSTIN: You're gonna have to wait. We're teasing it.

JACK [overlapping]: It's a little trailer for Season 7.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Exactly. Alright-

ART: Season 7's the second half of this postmortem. [Friends laugh]

SYLVIA: Oh my god!

AUSTIN: Yes. Alright let's go to that next one then. Unless does anyone have anything to say about Valence or Leap leaving the show?

JACK: It was exciting to see both new characters. That's it.

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. Art, can you read this next one? From Hen.

ART: Uh, wait did this- we just? This isn't what we just- oh this is different.

JACK: It's a slightly different-

AUSTIN: No, this is different. It's different.

ART: Slightly different.

**00:57:43 My question is for Jack, Dre, and Keith.**

This was the first season during which we've had PC changes mid-season. What was that experience of changing characters like on y'all's end? Was there anything particularly challenging or surprising about it? How long had you been planning your new characters?

JACK: It was exciting! It was risky! I found it exciting and risky, [friends burst out laughing] as to like- you know.

KEITH: I also found it exciting and risky.

JACK: Did you find it exciting and risky, Dre?

ANDREW: Um, I found it hard, actually.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [Andrew chuckles]

KEITH: Yeah it was stress- for me it was stressful.

ANDREW: Yeah.

JACK: That's the risky bit.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We didn't know how much time was left!

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: We had no idea!

JACK [mirroring, overlapping]: We had no idea.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That was part of the thing of the back half of the show, is that like, we left Kingdom thinking we would have as much after Kingdom as we had before, but not knowing that for sure, right? And then Valence dies. We had \*no\* idea that was coming!

JACK: [chuckles] That was so good!

AUSTIN: And I think, you know, Ali, you and I- it was like, Ali, we might have to end the season now, I think the season's actually over, I'm not sure what we're doing. [Friends laugh] Like. Valence died, what the fuck do we do? Okay we're going to do one more arc and then it's over. And we ended up doing like two more arcs each in the end anyway.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or maybe even more than that plus the finale. But we just didn't know, and so suddenly there was this. You all had a lot of pressure on you to fill in those characters with very little time.

KEITH: Especially because like-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: But we did know- to be clear. We did know at that point that season 2 was coming. With each of those characters I had already said privately-

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -to each of you, hey, to what degree. To some degree we can start chewing up stuff for the future in a way that we know we're gonna have time to get to. Sorry, Dre you were gonna say something.

ANDREW: Oh boy. I don't remember if I was gonna respond specifically to you, but I was just gonna [chuckles] talk about like why-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: No please, go for it, please. Yes.

ANDREW: -it was difficult for me. I think Valence was really the first character that I- my normal character creation process for the show is to find a mechanic or a hook that really interests me? And then to like build a character around that, and Valence was the exact opposite. I mean, we had so many conversations about Valence before we decided, or even talked about a class for Valence.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

ANDREW: It was all like, who is this character? And then what class fits that character. And I think switching to Figure, it was more mechanic driven I think? With some backstory stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: But then it was also like, we ended up not really having any space for all of his mechanics to come to [chuckles].

AUSTIN: No, not at all, right? Because it was just like one arc, right?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And we knew that you were gonna end up playing the Figure in next season-

ANDREW: Sure.

AUSTIN: Assuming-

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: \*Assuming\* that they made it right?

ANDREW: Yeah. And I think that was another part that was tricky, was at times it felt like Figure was just, we were bidding the Figure's time until the next season.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But the alternative was you not playing anyone?

ANDREW: Yeah, no! And I wanted to play [chuckles].

AUSTIN: Yeah, which is tough! Which is a tough situation with a campaign like this right?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or doing another mission to just stretch and give Bismuth space. Which like, there's plusses and minuses to that. One of the minuses would be we would still be doing PARTIZAN month 14 or something, you know?

ANDREW: Right. For sure.

AUSTIN: Because of the way Actual Play cuts down. Jack and Keith, I've heard that it was- what was it, exciting and risky? Do you have any other thoughts besides that here?

JACK: Well, a). [Dre chuckles] I didn't know- I don't- you say you told us that there was gonna be a sequel. I think we were probably still in conversations about whether or not I would be playing Clem in a sequel. I distinctly remember throwing Kalar into that mission,

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: -not knowing whether this was going to be the last time I was going to play them.

AUSTIN: So this is what we have to- this is why I'm like, we might have to talk about Clem to explain some of this stuff. Because. You just, Clem lives, right? At the end of Kingdom.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: When we recorded. When we recorded, Clem, the last shot of Clem is crying in a bedroom when we end.

JACK: Yes. The original recording of Kingdom.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: When we end Kingdom, right. And you. And the plan is for you to just keep playing Clem in the second half of the season.

JACK [overlapping]: And then we just go like, this doesn't fucking work. Why-

AUSTIN: This sucks!

JACK: You know, Clem comes- we have like a load of options here, all of which are bad, right? Either Clem- Clem's like, I'm a revolutionary now, and everyone's like,

AUSTIN: Ugh. No you're not.

JACK: Gur- why should we believe you?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Or Clementine is like well screw you guys, and then it's like well what do they do. Do they lock her up? And, or do they- but then it's like, then how does she go out on missions? Is she only put on missions that she is going to try to exploit or something?

AUSTIN: Also we had established that she was not like a good pilot? And why would they ever let her have command.

JACK: Right. Why would you let- why would you let- so, then we were like oh.... [voice fading] what do we do. This sucks.

AUSTIN: Mhm. And so you wanted space. You wanted like, okay. Let's push away from Clem. Let's get her associated with something else- let's play out something to figure out if she will return as a PC, but in the meantime, let me roll up another character we could either be a one-off or could be planting a seed for Season 2.

JACK: Yes. I don't know if I have the notes for the characters that I came up with. It was like, A.O. Rooke was one, was-

AUSTIN: That's correct. That would've been like a rookie character probably, right?

JACK: Yeah, here's what I've written. Bureaucratic monitor committed to the cause but still struggling to find their place in the revolution. Old leftist who was fought all the battles and is exhausted. Pirate queen. Church of Perennial cultist signing on with Apparatus.

AUSTIN: Ah!

JACK: Now, interesting. [Ali chuckles] Then I wrote leader of distant Millenium Break cell who's been brought back in from the cold. This ended up being Kalar pretty much.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Rival Nobel agent. And then I wrote, aliens in the outfield, enemy team of aliens [Austin and Sylvi laugh] trying to convince the alien planet that the Earth should be destroyed.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Where it's like the idea of someone sent in like another Valence, was like no, fuck these guys, we don't want anything to do with them. How could we destabilize them? And then finally A.O. Rooke's- A.O. Rooke, his eager subordinate following his promotion? But what this meant you know, relevant to Kalar was that like, I, I played him so aggressively in that first mission?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Not really knowing that he was going to- it's a bit like when you told us that we're doing a sequel to PARTIZAN Austin, and I went, I had planned three seasons of sci-fi music,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And now, what do I have to do? And is- with Kalar, it's like, I thought he was just gonna show up and then we were gonna do another season and suddenly we're in another mission and he's got twenty six stress or something. [Janine and Austin chuckle] How did that happen? I don't know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that is what happened, isn't it? Yeah. Uh huh.

ART: It's amazing how PARTIZAN 2's soundtrack is gonna be all just covers of non-royalty music.

JACK: Of royalty free music. It's just gonna be Dark Carnivale for Bluff City again. So good.

AUSTIN: God.

ART: Big scenes with camptown races onto them.

JACK: Everyone's like "what is going on?" This is my least favourite season yet. The place is really good but the music really sucks.

AUSTIN: The music is brutal! It's not good. Yeah, so I think that that adds a lot to the way you played Kalar out the gate. And then like, we played Tower and we'll get there. We'll talk about that in a bit.

JACK: The other thing with Kalar is that, you know when you see those videos dogs that are being held above a swimming pool and they're paddling even though their paws aren't in the water? You know those videos?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes, I do know those videos.

JACK: That's what I wanted to do with Kalar. I wanted to do like lower Kalar into a scene and have his legs moving before he hit the ground [Ali laughs] such that when he hit the ground it was like "off we go! Alright! Let's go! Let's do what we're gonna do here!"

AUSTIN: Keith.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Phrygian rules. I love Phrygian so much. And there is something so- like, I'm honest. It was very stressful being like okay, the first major Branched character we're going to see for an extended period of time is going to be a Player Character because it's a big weird high concept thing like the Iconoclasts were in Twilight Mirage, and it means giving over control over the depiction of them. And I definitely trusted you to do it but it was one of those things that was still like, alright we're gonna have to have a lot of conversations so that we could sync? And my favourite thing is, you consistently surprised me in line with exactly how I thought of the Branched in your depiction of Phrygian, both as an outside observer who was trying to make sense of the world, who didn't have any preconceived notions or connections with people. But also in the ways in which you were able to find a sort of aesthetic and self expressive throughline, and play that throughout both action sequences, through downtime sequences. The bit about the mind conversation at Gen Con, and how you put on that for Phrygian trying to find a new war form and stuff like that? Amazing. Just so, so, so good.

KEITH: [bursts out laughing] Oh! I was like. I thought you said "mime" and then I was like oh wait "mime", and I was like what are you talking about?

AUSTIN: Mime.



ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay, mime, right, yes. Okay. Well that's cause I-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: How was it for you on your side? Yeah.

KEITH: It was. It was stressful the whole time. It was stressful. Well because, so- alright, so. The first thing that was stressful was like, choosing to leave Leap behind was tough. And then there was- we went through like a really short period where I was like okay, I've got half a season to do this, and then it was like, no, I've got one arc to do it.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: And then it was like no, maybe I've got three? Or two? Or who-

AUSTIN: Two and a half?

KEITH: Two and a half? So that was- it was tough to like not know how much time I had to do Phrygian. And then also really wanting to make sure that I did them right.

AUSTIN: But you did it! Like, I think it's one of my favourite characters from you.

KEITH: Phew!

AUSTIN: All time, because you. You got them in a really great way, and also, there was so many sequences with them where the encounter can feel very alien because of what they're doing or like when they finally meet Corrasion at the end of the- the Chasmata Quarry arc? That whole exchange is so weird.

KEITH: It's so weird. [Janine chuckles]

AUSTIN: I love it so much. [Andrew chuckles] It's like so. I mean that whole mission. I mean here's the other thing that actually goes back to Dre's character, right. I designed that mission to include- I knew that Dre had a sick mech, and so I wanted to build a mission where Figure in Bismuth could debut this incredible mech and do like, big shit in it because that's how powerful the Figure in Bismuth was as an ace. But we just didn't get that mission. And so at the end of it, it felt very appropriate that we also didn't get a big brawl-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Between the two Branched and also just like it felt very Branched in a way to me.

KEITH: It did! And it- I really- I also really ended up liking how different Corrasion was.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: From Phrygian.

YesAUSTIN: .

KEITH: Where like when you play like the only Branched character in the entire thing, it makes it equally hard to know well, who are the Branched, because then- you go from having like no example, to like, an all-encompassing single point reference point?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

KEITH: And then to have Corrasion show up and be like, totally different.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Right. To be, to be-

KEITH: To like, one of my lines-

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

KEITH: -in that whole like post-Kingdom was, Corrasion looking at like- was it? Who was I with? Was I with Millie?

AUSTIN: I'm going to say Sovereign Immunity.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: Oh it was with Sovereign Immunity, right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And asking Sovereign Immunity like, are they always like this? [chuckles and laughs] Or something? Something like that.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally. There was such a- there was such a, you know, I had built that entire encounter to be about Corrasion- one, seeing the marks of Corrasion slowly working their way through the entire facility? Burning- not burning, but like,

KEITH: Eroding.

AUSTIN: Working through- things like it's, it's eroding but it's not eroding in the traditional sense, it's this other sort of like, ocean erosion, or whatever.

KEITH: It's time rain.

ALI: Yeah they were like making a canyon out of this. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yes, yes. Exactly, right, yeah. Yeah! Yeah. And then doing it on the stairs? While you're down the stairs? Which is like, that's Corrasion. At some point someone asked me via Twitter, I think it was someone on Twitter, maybe it was someone in the- it might have been in the Discord. Someone basically was surprised to see another humanoid Branched and was like nonono, Corrasion took that form of a humanoid to talk to Sovereign Immunity mostly. Because Sovereign Immunity was there. Corrasion is the water eroding the stairs behind you. That's what Corrasion \*is\*, in the same way that if we ever saw Phrygian in full form,

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Phrygian would be this wild set of cables, you know? Bouncing around like loose bridge cables or something right?

KEITH: Yup.

AUSTIN: And I loved playing that character, I loved having you to bounce off of to produce different visions of what the Branched are. And Corrasion is in some ways as the outro suggests, a vision of what the Branched who come in contact with Empire can slip towards, right? You can- once they've been removed from the Golden Branch, once they stopped living in the bubble of other Branched, they start to hit Empire and start to be convinced of other ways of living that are about conquest and harming people. And so it was fun to play that perspective as sort of a foreshadowing of what may be to come to some degree. Not that that's what's happening to all the Branched, but that is happening to some of the Branched as the outro suggests.

KEITH: Yeah. The other thing I like about Corrasion is that it- it's like, Corrasion is able to produce like a relatively salient argument for themselves as like, not really doing anything different than what-

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Phrygian is doing. By like, you're just working with some other group in order to help your main goal of destabilising the Stels. And I'm also doing that. And it's like-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Right. I work with a different group, yeah.

KEITH: If. If your position is that like, like it's hard to explain what makes it different that you're killing people pretending to have a humanoid form, and not doing that.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally. Yes.

KEITH: Like, what is the diff- to an outside observer, what is fundamentally the difference between these two kinds of killing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

KEITH: And I think having a second Branched character really helped to highlight that, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah, alright. Next question-

KEITH: Sorry to turn it into a why Corrasion is an interesting character-

AUSTIN: No, no! [chuckles]

KEITH: -instead of why, what I liked about- or how Phrygian felt.

AUSTIN: No, I still think we got there. I still think- I think because, a lot of my playing Corrasion was still based on you playing Phrygian. I was bouncing off the depiction of that character you did? Because I didn't want there to be one Branched perspective that only suggested one like, way of being or whatever.

KEITH: Right. And Phrygian didn't have the answer. Phrygian's not you know, it's not,

AUSTIN: No! [Ali chuckles]

KEITH: Who was expecting Phrygian to all of the sudden be able to just describe like, you know, a like, like I don't know how my elbow works on a fundamental level. [Andrew chuckles]

AUSTIN: Right! Yes. Ali! You wanna read-

ART [overlapping]: I bet you're closer than you think.

AUSTIN: Mmm. Probably would get there. Ali do you wanna read this next one.

ALI: Yeah! This one comes in from Anonymous. And it's,

**01:14:23 Art, how did you decide that you wanted to complete SI's life and arc**

in the finale, rather than carrying him to season 8?

ART: There's a couple answers here, and there's like the most base one which is. I've- have we announced what we're doing for that?

ALI: For what?

ART: Mechanically?

ALI: For season? Hm?

ART: For the next one?

ART: For 8? For PARTIZAN 2?

SYLVIA: If you're asking about the game system, I think we've said that.

ALI: Oh, yeah.

ART: Okay.

ALI: Yeah. [Sylvia and Andrew laugh] We know about Armour Astir, please talk about it.

ART: We're playing Armour Astir, and I was- I was instantly like, I need to play the most magical class that I can. I'm taking a magic class. I- I'm you know, boxing out for that? And Sovereign Immunity can't get there. I don't want- I'm not interested in that story, you know? And,

KEITH: Where Sovereign Immunity becomes extremely magical?

ALI: That would've been great, Art!

SYLVIA [overlapping]: That would've been really good, though! [Art and Ali chuckle]

ART: Too late now!

ALI: I'm so old now I'm learning- I'm learning magic, and it's helping me! [Keith and Ali laugh]

ART: Yeah. Yeah. I- I guess I should've said this all out loud before we put it out there. But I didn't, and so here we are. And the other thing is like, after Crysanth died, it was like well. What am I doing here anymore? And once you have to like manufacture your new nemesis, that's not- that's not fun anymore. So those were the two factors, I think way more the first one than the second one? [Ali chuckles] I think if I've been really invested in keeping SI, I could've found something you know? But instead because I was looking at the distance, I was like well this is it, bye!

ALI: Yeah. It ended up becoming a really interesting throughline because like, the thing SI ends up having to do is like, prove himself to this new generation of revolutionaries.

ART: Mmm.

ALI: And at the end of that, he does so with his life, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: So.

AUSTIN: Cementing him in a way, right? That like, his legacy would have been overshadowed in some ways otherwise. It would have been very easy for this new generation to just talk about him like a has-been or like someone who had never achieved it? And now he gets to be a symbol of the cause in this really big way. Also, it is really worth underscoring how much losing Crysanth again threw the second half of the season into chaos, right? Where like, that was- that was part of- Valence and Crysanth at once, realigns the entire back half of the season. I pitched internally the back half of the season as being like, there will be a Crysanth mission side, and a Motion mission side. Maybe the parties jump around, excuse me. But that's the structure? It's like, the Curtain, the Pact, and Millenium Break are all in this kind of three-way struggle. And that still remains to some degree?

AUSTIN [continued]: But the Pact just likes, becomes such a more powerful thing when Crysanth gets taken off the table because she's a check on them, fictionally? As well as you? As well as a nemesis to you? And the other thing about that moment that was so wild is like, if Sovereign Immunity had declared, actually declared Crysanth as his rival? She could not have died there? And that would have meant some other resolution to that whole sequence. And I think about that all the time. That like, your Drive was to get one over on Crysanth, but you had never declared her a Rival, which didn't give her plot armour in a really funny way. And again it's one of those things that's like, Beam Saber is representing or is trying to produce mechanically the rules of fiction in that way. Where like, no, we didn't frame her as your quote unquote Rival exactly, and so she is not safe from- from Valence, for instance [Ali chuckles]. So. So yeah. Any other thoughts here? Keep on moving. Alright. Who has not read one yet?

KEITH: I haven't read one.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Everybody has at this point? You have one or you have-

KEITH: I have not.

AUSTIN: Keith, go ahead and read this next one from Kate.

KEITH: From Kate.

**01:19:01 Pre-finale, a lot of things- a lot of the big fights seemed impossible at first**

and then the party pulled out victories by the skin of their teeth (every fight with Motion comes to mind). Austin, I was wondering how you set up those scenarios so precisely—or did you expect

some of those fights to not be winnable? I suspect that the answer is “Beam Saber’s tier mechanics are really good”, but I’m still curious.

AUSTIN: I think Beam Saber’s- it’s not the Tier mechanics that are good, it’s that the Mission Setup stuff lets you think through things in terms of how many- so the basic way Beam Saber’s like, here’s how you do a mission report, here’s how you build a mission out, is here’s a list of NPCs, here’s a list of objectives and secondary objects, here’s the rules of engagement, which if they break you get paid less. Which is an interesting thing in that game that I think we even harder, like fictionally? But in Beam Saber, breaking the rules of engagement just means you don’t get paid as much. It doesn’t mean that you’re like, that you get ostracised instantly from your- I mean you might lose some points, you do lose some like faction points? But it’s mechanised in a very clear binary you know, quantifiable way.

AUSTIN [continued]: But in any case, the- after those you then also set up like, here are basically the number of clocks they need to clear to succeed at this mission, sort of? Here are the object- here are the obstacles that are on the board? And then here are some like, problems that could show up. And the GM has a lot of agency both designing those problems and those clock challenges at the, you know, before the game starts. But then also, it’s almost like, if your mission to take Fort Icebreaker, you’ve set up what those starter clocks are to get in and overcome it? And then if you need to spice it up, you’ve already pre-built this menu of kind of challenges you can add to the pot to turn the burner up a little bit, to add a little kick to it. And so being able to do those things, and then kind of like adjust for taste in the middle of a mission means that you end up with a lot of space.

AUSTIN [continued]: What I’ll say is, there are actually lots of examples here where the mission didn’t get the way I thought it would go at all, right? So for instance in the- one of the early missions, the Hypha- the Ashen forest mission, y’all like never stepped on one of the like plates [Ali chuckles], one of the wards right, successfully? So you managed to not to ever like trip the alarm and cause a bigger conflict to occur. In the- obviously in the Chasmata Quarry thing that was- you just went in an entirely different way than I anticipated, and so I never had- we never had like the open conflict with Valor that I had expected, that would’ve been this big Motion-style fight? And also could’ve been this big assault from the jump if you had gone a complete different way. But then things like the Motion fight, and things like the Orzen like mock-fight? That was really fun. I just felt like I had the right tools to frame those conflicts and then to dial in the difficulty as we continue by either adding or subtracting you know, obstacles along the way?

AUSTIN [continued]: And then also frankly I just think that the parties, I think everyone as a player was very good about doing setup actions, about doing teamwork actions, and once I can rely on that, because of familiarity with the system, it means I can play harder, because it means that I know that when it’s time for the big swing, everyone is on the same page at trying to get the dice to where they need to be. Because you know you have those tools at the table, right? Art you just made that tweet about en passant, the move in chess, right? Where you were taught it wrong? And it made you want to quit chess- it did made you quit chess as a kid, right? And it’s like, you need to know all the moves in chess to have- to make chess be a fun time, if

you're playing against someone else who's going to use all the moves available in chess. Otherwise, it's gonna suck. And so- and I think like if you go back and look at Scum and Villany, I wasn't- we weren't all on the same page there. I was often playing- [coughs] excuse me way harder and expecting everyone to know all the teamwork moves, know how to use their gambits, know how to use you know, how to push themselves, change their position to Desperate etc. And we got way more of that this season, and I aligned to that a little bit cleaner, and that's- that's about me recognising where the players are at and trying to meet at the right point. So yeah, I think you know, shout out to Beam Saber for giving me that framework.

AUSTIN [continued]: And also and this is just a big thing. It's genre knowledge. It's like, I get mech fights [Friends chuckle] really well, because I've been watching mecha anime and playing BattleTech and MechWarrior my whole life. And so there is a rhythm and a familiarity to what those fights are supposed to feel like when they're good, and I- I think I have a pretty good familiarity with them to the degree that I can orchestrate or conduct it. Well cause it's just a rhythm I know already, so. I think that's a big part of it still. Thank you for the note, Kate. What's up next? Gus writes in. I'll read this one it's really short.

**01:24:31 Dear Tablefriends, I have a very important question for Dre: does Valence have a tail?**

ANDREW: Alright. So my answer when I was this yesterday was no. But now when I think about it? My answer is... maybe? [Sylvia laughs]

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: What's the- why did you- you just sat with it?

ANDREW: [high pitched noises] I don't know! Yeah! Maybe?

JANINE: How many tails?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Maybe. Ooh.

ANDREW: Probably one.

SYLVIA: Aw.

AUSTIN: Just the one.

ANDREW [overlapping]: Is this-

KEITH [overlapping]: When you say maybe, do you mean like, maybe Valence has a tail and everyone knows? Or, maybe Valence has a tail, no one is sure.



ANDREW: I think everyone knows.

KEITH: Okay.

ANDREW: If Valence has a tail, everyone knows.

ART: If Valence has a tail, it's huge. [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: It's huge, it's beautiful. Everyone loves Valence's tail.

ALI: Can I just say something?

AUSTIN: Always.

ALI: That now I'm really desiring seeing Miles "Tails" Prower cosplaying Valence? [Andrew laughs]

SYLVIA: Oh my god!!

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Just let me enjoy that. [clapping sounds]

AUSTIN: Good. Well I'm glad we got to the next question here [Ali and Dre giggle], Ali can you read from Anonymous?

ALI: Oh please, yeah! You want me to read this?

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI: Um.

**01:25:49 If you were casting your PARTIZAN Season One characters in a live action adaptation,**

Who would you choose, and why? Austin gets three NPCs because he's special.

AUSTIN: I don't need any because I already did this all season [Sylvia laughs]. I already said, that's Oscar Isaac, that's Dev Patel, that's- here are all the hot boys I like. They're all in this fucking show already.

SYLVIA: Thank you so much for that!

ANDREW: Uhhuh.

AUSTIN: Of course! But no, so Tails- Miles "Tails" Prower for Valence,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Got it.

ALI: Yup [chuckles].

ART: We're all doing Sonic characters right?

ANDREW: Yeah.

ART: Just making sure I get the joke.

AUSTIN: Sonic is. Leap?

ART: Oh that's a good one.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: Leap is fast. Leap had all the-

KEITH: Is fast. I like that.

AUSTIN: Has attitude.

JANINE: Rosie is Millie-

ANDREW [overlapping]: The Figure is- oh yeah. Figure's Big the Cat.

AUSTIN: Oooh.

ALI: Yeah. [Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. Totally.

KEITH: Who's Froggy?

ALI: Yeah.

ANDREW: Oh that's a-

AUSTIN: Froggy...

ANDREW: It's... Clem. Right? [Ali bursts laughing]

KEITH: Oh Phrygian-

JANINE [overlapping]: I wouldn't put Clem as green.

KEITH [overlapping]: Maybe. I was gonna say Phrygian is E-102 Gamma.

JANINE: Hm.

AUSTIN: We're talking over each other. We're too excited about this. Say that again, both of you, one at a time.

JANINE: I was gonna say that Clem would be Cream the Rabbit. Cause Cream also has the little pet Chao.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Mmm.

ANDREW: Mmm.

AUSTIN: You don't think like a- ...yeah.

JANINE: It just feels very-

AUSTIN: True.

JANINE: -Clem to me. Also Cream has a mom

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, canon Mom, Vanilla or something? Like the bigger rabbit-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: That sounds right.

JANINE: So you could have like a dynamic there.

KEITH [overlapping]: I would've-

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Yeah.

KEITH: I would've put Clem as Blaze the Cat, a villain who hangs out with the heroes.

JANINE: Oh sure.

AUSTIN: Ohh. Is Blaze a villain? I don't know anything about Blaze.

KEITH: Blaze is-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: She's in 06?

KEITH: Blaze is sort of a villain, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Or Rouge. Rouge is also a villain.

AUSTIN: Or Rouge.

KEITH: If that's one-

AUSTIN: Rouge is too like, "I'm a sexy bat". That's not-

SYLVIA: [dreamily] Yeah she is.

AUSTIN: That's Millie. [Ali giggles]

SYLVIA: Thank you! I was gonna say Shadow, but that works too.

AUSTIN: Also Shadow works.

KEITH: As I was saying-

ART [overlapping]: SI is Knuckles, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

ART: Knuckles is the revolutionary.

AUSTIN: Me? What about you! Yeah, definitely Knuckles.

ART: Sorry, Keith.

AUSTIN: Misled by Robotnik.

ART: Uh huh.

KEITH: I was- I was putting Phrygian as E-102 Gamma potentially.

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure. Yeah.

ALI: Wait.

AUSTIN: Love that.

ALI: *Wait*. Leap isn't Sonic, Leap is Metal Sonic.

AUSTIN: Oh... Leap is-

[Friends make acknowledgement sounds]

AUSTIN: Metal Sonic's evil though! [Ali laughs]

KEITH: Leap is metal.

AUSTIN: You're not wrong. Leap is metal.

ALI: Leap is metal.

KEITH: I think it's more important that Leap is good than that Leap is metal.

ALI: Oh sure. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Who's Broun?

ANDREW [overlapping]: I think there was a comic arc in the original Sonic the comics went metal to beat Metal Sonic.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: Well there you go. There you go. Broun is Robotnik, right?

ALI: You think so? Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're a scientist who builds machines.

JANINE [overlapping]: But Rouge likes money.

AUSTIN: It's a rough one, Sonic, but it is what it is. [Janine chuckles] Rouge does like money!

KEITH: Oh who's Charmy Bee?

ALI: Broun is not even close to sexy enough to be in the same conversation as Rouge.

AUSTIN: Aw. It's just the truth, yeah. Yeah wait, who is- who is Vector, Charmy Bee, and the-

KEITH [overlapping]: We need to know who is the Chaotix- [unintelligible]

SYLVIA [overlapping] : Oh my god!

[Sonic lore soup]

KEITH: Always forgot-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Who is Mighty-

KEITH: -who's the famous sniper-

ANDREW: Are the Chaotix just uh, oh shit, just oh god, what are- who are our friends from the bridge town? Why can I not remember their name?

AUSTIN: The Oxblood Clan.

ANDREW: Yeah! Is that just the Chaotix?

ALI: Oh, sure!

AUSTIN: Yeah, probably. Probably.

KEITH: Oh Jesset is extremely Mighty Armadillo.

AUSTIN: You're right. [Friends chuckle] Yeah, Jesset is Mighty, Vector is A.O. Rooke, and Charmy Bee- we don't really have a Charmy Bee. Who's like our fun- I'm Charmy Bee, I'm a little Bee.

ALI: Si'dra, or-

AUSTIN: Sorry for doing Larry King's Sonic voice. [Friends laugh] "I'm a little hedgehog!"

ALI: Who's Clem's assistant-?

KEITH [overlapping]: [slowly] Nobody cares about that.

JANINE [overlapping]: Clem's assistant is-

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Yeah I was gonna say Clem's assistant-

JANINE: Sticks the Badger from-

AUSTIN: Who the f-? Wait-

JANINE: Sticks the Badger from- what's a goo- the new Sonic Boom: Rise of Lyric

AUSTIN [overlapping]: [in disbelief] Sticks the Badger?

JANINE: She's the- she has a boomerang?

AUSTIN: Ohhh, I see her.

ANDREW [overlapping]: Ohhh.

JANINE: Pigtails.

AUSTIN: She has a boomerang.

SYLVIA: Who is Manic the Hedgehog?

KEITH [overlapping]: Speaking of Sonic Boom, is Sovereign Immunity normal Knuckles or buff Knuckles?

AUSTIN: Oh, buff Knuckles!

ART: Buff Knuckles. [Andrew chuckles]

KEITH: [chuckles] Extremely broad Knuckles.

ART: Sovereign Immunity is definitely Knuckles accompanied by the Sonic Adventure Knuckles rap song.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Unfortunately, Gur, Gur Sevraq is Silver the Hedgehog. Which, it is what it is. It just happens like that, and you gotta take the L sometimes. Alright. Do we- does anybody have any real casting? Or is this just good enough for us?

JANINE [overlapping]: So I- in the document for this I put Gillian Anderson and maybe you thought that was a joke, it's not a joke. I would cast Gillian Anderson as Thisbe.

AUSTIN: No! I didn't put it as a joke!

JANINE: Cause I have- I have the benefit of like-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah, okay!

JANINE: -I don't have to worry about faces. I don't have to worry about-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: No, you just to- good voice.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: Yeah.

JANINE: I just have to- who would do an amazing robot voice? And my choice is Gillian Anderson.

AUSTIN: That'd be fun. She's never done it before I don't think. We should- we should make it happen.

ALI: Reach out, yeah.

ANDREW: I figure for Valence, it's probably either a completely CGI character, or a stunt-person who's CGI-ed over? So it would just be a voice actor? But the voice actor I thought of was Shoreh Aghdashloo? She did- she was in The Expanse-

AUSTIN: Why do I know that- oh! She's-

ANDREW: She was-

AUSTIN: She's Avasarala in The Expanse, right?

ANDREW: Yes. Yes. She's also voiced someone in Mass Effect and I can't remember who it was. But yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh did she? I didn't know that!

ANDREW: She was one of uh-

JACK [overlapping]: Like a diplomat or something, right?

ANDREW: Yeah, she was one of Tali's people. Why can I not remember-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Oh, that makes perfect sense.

JANINE [overlapping]: Oh she was! Wasn't she Tali's aunt or something, I wanna say?



ANDREW: That might be right.

JANINE: She's like the- one of the main.

AUSTIN: That makes sense to me.

ANDREW: Yeah like maybe she's someone of the council of Admirals or whatever.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah, Admiral. She's an Admiral. She's Admiral Shala'Raan vas Tonbay apparently. Yeah.

KEITH: I- I cast Leap- you know- I've been thinking about this, who's Leap. Leap's a robot, so I also don't need to think of a face? So, me. I cast me as Leap.

ALI: Wow.

ANDREW: There you go.

AUSTIN: That'd be great.

ALI: You're gonna do a very good job.

JACK: Great. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Perfect.

JACK: I think your performance is very true to the original character in the book. [Sylvia chuckles]

KEITH: That's what I was thinking. I literally could not me better than me.

JACK: I think Clementine is Anya Taylor-Joy. Just like a, like a very. Shows up, says lines well.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And I think that- I could- there's a film- wish I could remember who's it by. It's called Midnight Special. It's just about a boy who has magic powers.

SYLVIA: Oh!

JACK: And his dad and their brother who try and look after him. Because the government are coming after him. It's a fun movie!

SYLVIA: Yeah it's alright.

JACK: And it stars Michael Shannon as the dad. And Joel Edgerton as his brother? And they both play really out of type in ways that I think was really really fun to watch? And so I would- I would give Kalar to either Michael Shannon or Joel Edgerton, who are both kind of like, tough weirdos most of the time? But in this movie at least have a real- have this real streak of like taking care of this person and understanding what that means, and what is going to be necessary for taking care of this person. It's a fun movie! I'd watch it again.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Anyone else have one that jumps out?

ART: I think I've said this one already. But Sylvester Stallone has been my-

JACK: A classic.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Oh, sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah you have said that. That makes sense to me.

ART: The good movie Sylvester Stallone, not bad movie Sylvester Stallone.

ANDREW: Sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah, good yes. A good- an important distinction.

ART: We're making a good movie, okay?

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Yes.

ANDREW: I don't know. Vin Diesel for Figure? [Janine and Sylvi laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh, sure! Yeah.

ALI: For Broun I would have to find someone completely new. And I would have to get- do a casting call and sit across from people and be like, can you do your most condescending eye roll for me? [Dre chuckles] And I would choose.

SYLVIA: Oh my god.

JANINE: You just wanna bring in people from Instagram to be mean to you? And then cast based on that? Okay.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah. I would DM everybody who has a TikTok video that's like, "your best friend does your makeup and is- [wheezes, Sylvi laughs] mean to you about it" And then be like yo, come through.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: God, incredible.

KEITH: Is that a genre?

ALI: Yes.

JANINE: That also like-

AUSTIN: Oh my god.

JACK [overlapping]: Do you wanna play a fish person?

JANINE: That's like a big ASMR right now, there's a whole ASMR genre of just like,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: I'm gonna be mean to you and you're gonna like it.

AUSTIN: We can't go down this. We can't go down this. Keith, the world is vast and we are small.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I will shout out. I would cast for Gur Sevraq's voice, Chiwetel Ejiofor, who is a fantastic actor who is an incredible voice, and who could turn it on the way Gur needs to? So, shout outs to him. Any other ones? Alright. I'm gonna keep on moving. I'll read this one from Jess, who says,

### **01:35:05 I really appreciated how this season paid special attention**

to not only how different bodies can look and function, but also how they can break down and heal. As someone with chronic fatigue syndrome I really appreciated the inclusion of a character with the same diagnosis. Not gonna lie, I did cry a little bit when it was first mentioned during character creation. Even though Agon was the only character that explicitly shared my disability, I felt that sense of- the sense of loss, trauma, fatigue, and alienation from my own body that I experienced due to CFS, was echoed in many other characters for example the loss of Phrygian's war form, the way that Valence's gas body had to acclimate to a new suit, the dramatic physical transformations from the Witch in Glass' healing etc. How did you go about creating this recurring theme of bodily breakdown and the way it changes someone? Was it someone that you set out to depict at the start, or did it emerge organically during attempts to

honestly portray war and conflict? To what extent did the mechanics of the game influence how much attention was paid to the consequences of pushing a body beyond its limits?

AUSTIN [continued]: I'll use this again to shout out Kevin Snow, they were a huge help in thinking about bodies, you know, injury, disability. I don't think we were perfect with this this year? I think there are a number of things we could have done better, I really wish I had foregrounded Gucci Garantine's condition much earlier in the show and definitely struggled like I think a lot of creators do with like, how do you bring something that's quiet and private into the foreground? And the answer is to do it the way we did it with Agon, which is to just say it outright, and even if we don't get a lot of attention on it, it at least is there and we can work with it? And then to try to apply that same material bodily focus on the moments when it makes sense for the characters who do get a lot of spotlight. And so, the things that come to mind are obviously the ones Jess has highlighted here. And some of it is- some of it is mechanical, like I think Beam Saber even with the lighter healer rules which we took? You still end up with moments like Clem completely beat to shit after- I think it was- was that after Prophet's Path? That Clem was-

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: The Winter Doctor stuff happened? And it was like we need to hold on Clem being hurt here in a real way. But I also think that there were moments when we did that separate from mechanics? Clem on Chorus Island, it was important that we consistently came back to her arm having been broken? And what she was trying to do to treat that, and the slow healing process therein?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And it's interesting because I don't- scifi often gives you the space to instantly heal something. In fact one of the questions we got this season from someone who we didn't include here because like, why didn't you cut anybody's arm off this season? Isn't that a classic thing. And the answer is that we haven't done that in a few seasons because we were leaning on it as a quick and easy Star Wars-y way of indicating change and harm? And instead this season I think we saw people get hurt, struggle with repairing themselves, healing in some way. And even when we did lean into science fiction-y things, I think about something like Cas'alear getting the kind of mosaic you know, seaglass stuff from the Witch in Glass. I think about obviously all of the Figure in Bismuth being someone who had suffered traumatic near life-ending injury, and then having received the sort of like supernatural prosthetics in the Bismuth itself. We had conversations about like, like Dre one of the first conversations before Bismuth was on screen was how do you deal with having half of your body be this rock? What is the- what are the material things you have to do-

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: To maintain your body after this like magical surgery because. Even if the surgery is supernatural and its Perennial magic, and it's a special rock or whatever. There still has to be a material set of practices that then assoc- that the Figure does to continue to live like this, right?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it was like, exercise as in rehab and stuff basically, right?

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So yeah. I think those are the big things for us. I think it does go back again to what Sylvi said before, which is that we are making a season about war, I knew it would be weird to do that without like damage, people being hurt? And damage rolls being scary? And to make that real it meant to have a scene where Clementine has to go under the knife and it's very scary. We almost lost Clem there for a moment. And you know, that doesn't mean that the doctor Leap stuff wasn't also incredibly funny in some ways? But I don't think it ever was not tense during all of that. You know? So. So yeah. Any other thoughts on this stuff? Alright. Let me look ahead and see what the next question is. Oh boy, here we go. Art, can you read this? I don't- sorry. Sorry to Morgan who got two questions here but both times were just attached to another question, because it made sense as like a supplemental thing?

JACK: Yeah, no shame-

KEITH [overlapping]: That equals one!

JACK: ...yeah! These are good questions.

AUSTIN: Yeah that equals one. You're right.

ART: Yeah. I mean Anonymous got a ton, so. [Ali chuckles]

ANDREW: It's true.

ART: You really have to wonder.

AUSTIN: True.

ART: Sorry, I'm working on my joke, I scrolled away from my question.

AUSTIN: No worries.

ART: [question from Gav]

**01:40:26 At what point did Jack and Austin decide Clementine would come back**

and did they know it would make me personally lose my whole bean with delight and terror?

ART [continued]: And then to follow- I'll just do the other one now, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: [Question from Morgan] I'm curious why you chose to keep everything about the Witch in Glass totally secret until the Tower episodes - one of the things I love the most about Friends at the Table is the embrace of dramatic irony and feeling like the audience and players get to be "in on the joke" - but here this twist was kept very secret until it had been completely played out. What was the logic behind that?

AUSTIN: So, Jack, we said before that when we actually finished the Kingdom game, Clem was just like, lying in bed doing a Shinji. Just kind of crying, right? [Andrew chuckles] Dissociating.

JACK: Yeah. Well, I think the idea was like. You know. It's sucks when you have to tell a story and you have a great idea of where it's going and then you have to sit down at the page and actually tell that story, cause that was like. I think we had both been talking where it's like, oh, let's do a fun sort of like, punished Venom Snake arc where it's like, oh, Clem is like dark and angry and is depressed.

AUSTIN: We didn't know-! We knew that was one of the outcomes. I think we did go into Tower being like, who the fuck what happens here. Maybe you die!

JACK: No, even pre-Tower right, like if we just assumed-

AUSTIN: Oh okay.

JACK: -that prior to falling off Icebreaker-

AUSTIN: Ohohoh yes.

JACK: Clem's gonna be like. And then we just had these conversations. I think it's something you're really good at as the showrunner of just being like, yes, but how? Or like, yeah, but what does that actually, you know. Like, what does that actually mean? What's that actually-

AUSTIN: Because otherwise it's going to be six weeks from now and Clem is going to feel like she stalled out because I'm afraid you don't have momentum here at this point, right? We didn't get the scene of you swearing vengeance on Crysanth, or decide I'm going to undercut this rebellion from the inside out. We just kind of got deflation, which felt right, but didn't feel like you could stay as Clem at that point.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: But also you said to me in pretty, no uncertain terms rather, very certain terms, that like you weren't quite ready to decide to leave Clem behind yet. You wanted to stick with Clem for a little bit. But not keep her here. Right? Not keep her in the thing.

JACK: Yeah, I kind of got this sensation of like, there is something horrible and interesting, and now we just need to work out what that is? Where it's like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You know when you're like- and I get this a lot with music when I'm counting measures and I'm like, oh there's something out there, six measures from now, and I don't know what it is, but I know I'm aiming for that thing. And now what we've got to do is figure out what the six measures up to this thing in the future is. I think the first thing you pitched right, was like, we were just talking it through, and you were like, oh what if Gur kills her?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And that was immediately really exciting because it let us kill two birds with one stone where, which is ironic given what happened, that it let us say something about Gur, which was really fun. And I think as soon as you said, oh Gur- let's have Gur kill her? It also immediately started like giving both of us images of a scene that we were really excited about. Like this idea of like, what does a scene mean that is gonna make Gur Sevraq, the patient priest, take such a petty action. And on some level, reduce themselves to Clementine's level in such a, like a, weird violent motion?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And the the more we talked-

AUSTIN: And it was- specifically we did land on the like, insulting his faith, saying that they didn't actually believe the things that they believed and had sacrificed so much for. And so we end up, you know, almost choreographing that sequence as an outro to the Kingdom arc. I mean one of my favourite things is the way we ended up cutting that sequence to where everywhere is laughing about sick as shit, "Looking sick as shit" as the final rule. And then you kind of come in with like, hey, what about Clem?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's up with Clem? I don't remember the exact transition there, maybe I was asking about Clem. But it's like the other foot drops. And so we knew we wanted the scene where Clem and Gur threw each other off of Icebreaker Prime. We kind of talked about the palette we wanted to use for that sequence, right? We talked about it being dirty and ugly. You know we go

to the Coen Brothers a lot? So we did that here in terms of like, what if they were shooting this sequence? We knew they- there should be a storm. And this actually replaces a scene, right? Because the other thing we had to do at that point was the- we had to re-record an Overthrow. Because the Overthrow that Gur does at the very end happened on the top of Icebreaker Prime originally. And instead we had to change that to be a pri- the chapel, or whatever, right?

JACK: Yeah we recorded three scenes. We came in and did three big pickups which was-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Clementine going to Gur and getting overthrown at a chess game with threefold repetition. That was new.

AUSTIN: Right. Yes. That was fun.

JACK: We had Clementine making an absurd pitch to the Princept?

AUSTIN: Yes. Which was also just we needed the Princept on screen. The Princept just kind of vanished in that third Kingdom- or the final Kingdom third- Jesus, the eighth or whatever Kingdom turn? [Friends chuckle] And then yeah. And then the final encounter there on the roof, right? And it was so fun to do that scene with you because we both knew where it was going but we didn't know how to get there necessarily?

JACK: We talked to others long enough that is wasn't-

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes.

JACK: It wasn't quite like, and I felt really comfortable going into that scene. It was tremendously exciting to be just like. Man, these are the beats we need to hit. I think if we went into it with much less prep, it could've been really unpleasant, and it could've been really difficult and wouldn't have made the scene that felt safe or felt consequential- cause the thing we kept coming back to was oh, we want this to hit really really hard.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Because we realised pretty quickly that if we want to send them off Icebreaker there is something really fascinating about what if they survive, you know?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Where it's like. What if you do something so outlandish and violent and they come out of it? And that opens the door to this- to this arc that's coming, which is like. What pulls someone like Clementine out of a situation like that?



AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And so in order to make that work, we wanted to hit that scene as absolutely hard as we could. Which required us to have these conversations about player safety going into it. And I have- we did it in one take I think, but I would have had-

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, a hundred percent.

JACK: Absolute faith in both of us, that if we had gone like, oh no, that doesn't work. Or, I don't like how this-

AUSTIN: Let's rewind, let's try that again, yeah. No but I think that our timing was real- I'm really happy with that sequence. And so then, again, the thing to like understand about the timing and all this stuff is, I think we knew we wanted to do, okay. And we had lots of conversations. Do we go right into the Tower arc right after that? Because we recorded it after Kingdom but before we came back. Before we like did probably whatever the next- what was the? I guess, was Nooncrown? Was Valence's death the next arc recorded?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Oh god.

AUSTIN: I think it was, right? So we do the Tower arc, we record it not knowing Valence is about to die, right? We make all these decisions, not knowing Valence is about to die, which changes so much I suspect, about the way Clem's eventual return happens. But like, I think Jack in the notes for when we outline this question, the thing that you identified was like. The character who comes back from the dead is such a genre like standard? And for me, it was exciting because it was something we've never done before basically.

JACK: It was so exciting!

AUSTIN: Right?

JACK: To- you know, it's such a. A lot of the time it is, it's joyful to get to tell stories and part of that is going, man, I really love it when this happens. Or like, I've always wanted to try that thing. Or like, this feels like it dovetails really nicely with what we're talking about. And I think there was some level of it where you know, both you and I were just like, holy shit. Let's- let's kill a character on screen and then bring them back as part of this war story. As part of a story about lying and about weird fake plays that people do.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: It is so consistent to be like. And now here's a cliffhanger, what's gonna happen, oh no they died! Oh no they're back!

AUSTIN: Right, totally. Which is like, such a Gundam thing, but it's also a touchstone in things like Doctor Zhivago, the Strelnikov scene I've talked about as being like, I've always wanted the mother or are there wolves in the forest, cut to the reveal of Strelnikov. I know this is the most like, niche thing, cause who the fuck has seen Doctor Zhivago?

(t/s note: go watch it it's great)

AUSTIN [continued]: But that's a hit for me. And it's a thing I've done on my side on the table before with characters. There have been big things that like, no one knows. Like the Ibex reveal in COUNTER/Weight which I don't want to get into too many specifics there? But there's a moment where someone punches Ibex in the face and that's a big reveal. And that's a thing I sat with for a long time but neither players nor audience knew. And obviously lots of things in Hieron about the gods, about major characters, about the identities of major characters. And for me, part of doing it with Clem was, this is the moment is becoming an NPC. Like, we finished recording the Tower, and I knew that was- we both kind of knew this is probably it for you and Clem. We'll sit with it for a while, but that felt like it was worth sitting on and teasing through the Witch in Glass stuff, and then coming back to. I think it's understandably divisive because you know, we definitely got other questions that framed this as like. Hey, I really like- kind of what, the way Morgan does here, kind of being in on the joke. I really like seeing it laid out all in front of us, and there are a couple of times in the season where it's not the case. And I think that that's just about genre mostly, and I think it's about being excited to play in that space for the- one of the first times do kind of do that long tease, you know?

KEITH: Is there- my question would be, is it- is it sort of like the cutting off people's hands, where part of it's a genre thing, but the other part of it is, we've done that.

AUSTIN: Right!

KEITH: And so, there's other tools like, how many times can you do dramatic irony in a row where the question is like, a question would come in being like, why did you do dramatic irony again? [Friends laugh]

AUSTIN: And again, part of it is that it was not set up to be-

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: We did- it's so- I think it's one of those things that it's tough is that like, to get the end of episode 28, the Clem/Gur fight, it has to be done the way we did it. I don't think we get to that in natural play,

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: Because we didn't get there in natural play, right? We ended up needing to sit with it and then come back to it and play it out separately, and make that decision later. And so to get

that high, we had to do it that way. But we only get that high after Jack says “I wanna bench Clem for a little bit”. There isn’t a version of this story where Clem dies there, because that never- it didn’t- it couldn’t have occurred in the game mechanics without Jack saying “I want to kill Clem here”, right?

JACK: Yeah. Also it happened as a result of like, fucking loads of conversations between all of us, and especially like, Ali and you and me, where we were just like, oh my god. What do we-

AUSTIN: What the fuck are we doing!

JACK: What- what does this look like- the other thing is like, Clementine is a character who is always doing big and stupid things? So I felt like,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Any key beats about Clementine really up until we hit Chorus Island when she starts, when Clementine believes she has invented subtlety? [Austin chuckles] Is like. She’s got to move noisily and stupidly however she goes.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. And the other half of this was, at the end of it all, I knew I had a villain to play with. Or, you know, if not a vill- I mean definitely a villain, Clem was always a villain. But now, this sort of strange semi-antagonist that I would get to play for the rest of the season and into the next season of PARTIZAN? Where now we have this force out in the world that is not, is neither the Curtain nor the Pact, nor the Principality, but is certainly not Millennium Break, and can have this antagonistic rivalry as another rising force and also a locus? A place where lots of people are? The Reflecting Pool as this through line from Past, and thus also a through line from what Past used to be, now becoming this thing that also echoes the two fleets, at the end of Twilight Mirage? Is such a fun echo of what happens at the end of Twilight Mirage. Like there are witches out there in the sea of stars. And they have ships, and fleets, and they are weird, and I don’t know if you can trust them. And here’s another one, and here’s one that is like all of the persona, all of the masks of the other space witches out there pulled away to this character who is so petty, and selfish, and thinks she’s in control. I love having that in my like, in my playbook going into Armour Astir.

JACK: Yeah, I hope that if we give you Clementine she doesn’t get more capable.

AUSTIN: No. She’ll get-

JACK [overlapping]: She has more- yeah.

AUSTIN: She has different types of capability, right? Like, you know, it’s one thing to be more capable because you’ve gotten sharper. It’s another thing to be more capable because you have more money. You have more power, you have more people, you have- you know. Your incompetence has a bigger effect.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: If that makes sense.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. So yeah. I think that's probably the big picture stuff with all those scenes. So yeah. Also, also, also. You had no idea about Gur.

JACK: No! No no no. Not at all!

AUSTIN: That was a fun gift to me. [Ali chuckles] I think maybe a couple other people on the cast learned it because we had to do- I forget-

KEITH: I feel like everyone knew it but me and Jack.

ALI: No.

AUSTIN: I think that might be the- no...

SYLVIA [overlapping]: I had no idea.

AUSTIN: Ali knew it probably.

ALI: I think you-

AUSTIN: I wanna say Ali knew it, and maybe-

JANINE: I knew it.

AUSTIN: Art knew it for some reason?

JANINE: Cause you told me.

ART [overlapping]: I pictured something that was too close.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Of course Janine, I talk to you about everything. Oh that's what it was! Art, you pitched me something and I had to be like, no, we can't do that, because Gur is secretly, has secretly been killed [Ali chuckling] and turned into a ghost and then also-

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: -his body has been fished out of the sea by Nideo. So that's how you found out.

ART [overlapping]: And therefore I could not be haunted by the ghost of Crysanth Kesh.

AUSTIN: Correct. Yes.

ALI: Oh yeah..!

KEITH: I remember there was this moment where Gur shows up as the ghost, or as the haunting, and-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: I'm like, wait, Gur is alive too? And there was like, there's a vibe of like, no, also shut up, and also maybe, [friends chuckling] and then,

AUSTIN: We'll get there!

KEITH: The reveal happened, and I was like, wow, whiplash, okay! And the vibe that I got was like, I had missed one thing where everyone knew. That- okay, so at least I wasn't the only one.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. The reason that Crysanth can't be a ghost is, even- you know. Is Perennial going to help two Keshes live on in a row? Fuck that, no way. Perennial took her decision and stuck with Clementine. Don't fuck with Crysanth like- also, also, also, the other reason why I didn't want Crysanth to come back as a ghost is, Valence. Dre killed a character for that. I have to respect that as hard as I can, right? If Crysanth gets to keep fucking with people after death, that puts us in the situation where then I have to offer that to Valence. And then we have three ghosts, and that's a lot of ghosts.

ART: It wasn't a real ghost, it was just grief, Austin.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Well, you said ghost. So what do you want from me. We already had a ghost.

ART: I don't believe in ghosts!

ALI: Well.

AUSTIN: Okay, well.

JACK: It felt like a-

KEITH [overlapping]: Just grief torments.

JACK: -you've done this in other seasons where you have thrown a twist of one of our characters back at us in another way, again?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: There's one in Marielda that I think about a lot. That felt very similar to this moment, where its like. You the player, think you've got one-up on the situation, but actually. And the one that Art and I kept predicting was that you were gonna introduce Sovereigns- you were gonna introduce Crysanth's new Sovereign Immunity? We just like.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah! I had no idea you were thinking about that!

JACK [overlapping]: Early in the season, Art was like,

AUSTIN: I wish you would've told me. That would've been really fun!

JACK: We were trying to predict what you were gonna do, and Art was like, I think Crysanth's Sovereign Immunity is coming. And they never did!

AUSTIN: That would've been fun. I wish I would've thought of that. Yeah, I wish I were to- you should've told me that was a thing you were afraid of [friends laugh], because then I would've made it happen! Cause it's great. Tell me those things! It's a collaborative story!

ART [overlapping] : I can't tell you everything I'm afraid of, Austin. [Ali laughing]

AUSTIN: Yes you can! I need to know!

ART: We don't have the time! [Jack and Austin chuckle]

AUSTIN: Alright! Next question. Who wants to take this one?

JACK: I'll read it.

AUSTIN: You'll read it, Jack? Okay.

JACK: Ali- Anonymous asks—it's this person again. [Friends chuckle] Anonymous asks,

**01:58:02 Ali and Dre, when did you decide to take Broun and Valence's relationship**

in a romantic direction? What goes into portraying that type of relationship in the actual play medium?

ALI: [giggles] Well hello. Hi. It's-

AUSTIN: Hi!

ALI: -time to talk about Broun and Valence I guess. Broun and Valence, was it an accident? Um, it was definitely my- [starts laughing]

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Oh hoisted.

ALI: My favourite part of the season. It definitely like changed Broun's characterisation in a huge way. But also [giggles] happened completely on accident. And then just like, kept rolling. I- so the thing with Beam Saber [chuckles] is that when you Cut Loose, quote unquote, you have to do it with another person. Which is a thing that I just completely forgot, until I had to do it?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And I had this idea that like, Broun should go to a bathhouse! Like, where would Broun hang out, where would be a cool setting for that? Oh Valence is there? Wait, they had to talk to each other while they're here? This is awkward. And then you know. Telepathy happened. And that's fun and interesting! [laughs] But then I DM-ed Dre in between us recording that and releasing and being like, that was a little much. I really wanna know how you feel about this because like. That's such a version of intimacy that isn't actual intimacy but like, we should talk about this before this is released to an audience. And, you know. Dre I don't know if you want to interject here. [Dre chuckles] But where we ended that conversation was like, okay, they're not like, neither of us really are intending to have these characters dating or anything at the end of this. I think you would explicitly say that like, I don't think that Valence is like interested in starting a relationship because they have this like Divine mission going on.

ANDREW: And like not just with Broun. Like with anybody.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah! Valence is busy. Valence has priorities.

AUSTIN: Some real "it's not you, it's me" shit right there. [Art laughs]

ALI: And the way that we ended that conversation was that like, that makes sense that it wouldn't be a relationship but like, the idea of like exploring what friendship or like how intimacy is different for two non-human characters? Would be interesting to continue to do. And then we continued to do that. I think the thing that became difficult was that um, the biggest Valence/Broun shipper on the podcast was Austin Walker? [Friends erupt into laughter] So.

AUSTIN: Yeah, what's up? What's good?

ANDREW: It's true.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. I'm gonna make damn sure, listen.

SYLVIA: God!

ALI: Yeah. The character of that relationship I think got out of our hands in that way too. [Dre chuckles]

AUSTIN: What did I do?

ALI: No-

AUSTIN: What the fuck? What did I-? [Ali screaming, Art guffawing]

ALI [overlapping]: It was your disappointment at-

AUSTIN: I never \*did\* anything!

ALI: Whenever they were together on screen, you would be like yeah I'm into this, because I ship them. And me and Dre would be like yeah. We get it. It's sexy and it's good. So. [more laughter]

AUSTIN: It is! And then I got to message you one night and be like. Hey, are you around? That was fun. That was like.

ALI: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Heartbreaking but in the best possible way? Because. Because like genuinely for me, what we ended up with was, a great sequence with Valence, and now we get the like. [Ali chuckles] Yeah? What's up?

ALI: I remember just freaking out when I heard about that too. And like in a way, in a way I had to be respectful to Dre and be like, you know, how are you handling this? [Dre laughs] I really like Valence as a character, this is really great. But then I was like, oh my god, I'm going to play Broun for the rest of my life. I'm gonna have Broun in the greatest game ever, this is gonna be great. This is like-

AUSTIN: Say more. Explain-! How did you get to there from Valence dying?

JANINE [overlapping]: That's the reaction of a long time like, long time fanfiction-y shipper person.

ALI: Yeah...

JANINE: Like oh man, this is so much material!



AUSTIN: Uh huh. Juicy.

ALI: It's just like- Broun was like, the thing with Broun for a lot of the season was like, how significant is their buy-in? How, you know, genuine are they? Is there going to be a person to reach out to them and sort of pull them in?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And that person was Valence, and then we got Broun like, the most like, Broun was on the tip of being like yeah. I'm in it. I'm good now! [chuckles] I have a positive influence in my life. And then, bop! See ya! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Gone.

ALI: Just like the idea of playing Broun like post-losing Valence is the like. Broun and Valence weren't in a relationship, but it doesn't matter for the rest of Broun's life. Because it's me sitting there being like. That cake looks delicious, and I am also tasting it while viewing it. [Dre laughs] It does- like, it- yeah. I'm excited to continue to play Broun.

AUSTIN: It's so- it is so juicy and productive and like, the version of Broun from that relationship ending when it does, and again, not a romantic relationship, but an intimate relationship. A very close and singular relationship. That who knows where it goes on a long enough timeline? It being cut short and then also it being tied to the material thing that now separates Broun from who they were before, the Blue Channel, is like. Incredible. [Ali giggles] It's so. It's so good. I cannot wait to see more Broun.

ALI: Shout out to Valence. Valence ruled.

AUSTIN: Shout out to Valence. Valence ruled, great character Dre, loved Valence. Miss them every day.

ANDREW: Pour one out.

AUSTIN: Pour one out.

ALI: There's-

AUSTIN: Any other thoughts? People-

ALI: There's only one-

KEITH: That's their nickname, Pour One Out.

ALI: There's only one note that I wanna make here which is during the Kingdom game, I had just watched Starship Troopers for the first time?

AUSTIN: Mmm.

ALI: Which is like, you know the space battle but there's also this love story happening. And like the idea of having a Kingdom game and you know, all of the themes are about like revolution, and there's this party that's coming together, and what are they able to do together. Having like a D-plot of that be Broun is mad at Valence because they helped Valence become class president [wheezes, Andrew and Keith laugh] was something I was so happy to do.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Extremely good. Alright. Janine, can you read this one.

JANINE: Yes, I can! Yeah.

AUSTIN: From Vikram.

JANINE: [reading]

**02:04:52 Was it just me, or was it both the characters and Millennium Break itself**

most morally questionable group (of the ones supported by the protagonists)? Like as the show progressed, the whole "branded as terrorists" felt like less and less propaganda and more and more accurate.

AUSTIN: I think this is interesting because if you- okay so if you limited it to the groups supported by the protagonists. I'm guessing what you mean is SBBR and The Rapid Evening, right? Beforehand. And I think that you really have to understand how Empire works and how hegemony works to understand why Millennium Break killing people is not as bad as SBBR participating in the perpetuation of Empire, or the Rapid Evening especially doing what the- what Kesh wants to do, being an arm of not just like Empire loosely? But being a group of prisoners whose labour is being extorted from them, and being turned into weapons of- secret weapons of the state. You- I don't think that there's anything that the revolutionary group Millennium Break on one corner of- one tiny corner of an Empire filled with oppressive forces that maps as worse to me,

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As what something like the Rapid Evening does, right? And that- that to me is like, a big, is a big-

JACK [overlapping]: It's like a categorical difference.

AUSTIN: It's very much about the frame. Yeah, totally, totally. And I also think that it's important to- we got another question that I don't think is in this mix, let me just jump ahead and just triple check really quick, but, you know, someone did ask something about like. Hey, do you think the way violence or revolution or whatever would be framed differently going forward in *Armour Astir*? *Beam Saber* is so clearly about the ways in which violence is tied up in war. Inescapable, you cannot end the war, etc.

AUSTIN [continued]: And it's important to note that *Armour Astir* says, you know, I want to say like, this is thirteen pages in. It says. When depicting fascist and imperialist powers it is practically impossible not to also depict personal, relatable violence and that everyone at the table should be in agreement about where those boundaries are in regard with where the Authority- with the Authority, which is the kind of Empire, like mechanical term is. And so- or what they do. And so, you know I think thinking forward, especially given the ending we got from the finale, we're going to continue being in this place where what *Millennium Break* does is going to be you know, violent. It is an armed uprising. It is an armed revolution against a deeply oppressive Empire that has conquered most of the galaxy. And so I don't know that we will ever move to- I mean, it would be great to move there by the end of next season. Who knows where it takes us, I don't have a game plan for it yet, which is exciting. But where they're not doing things that get them branded as terrorists, right?

AUSTIN [continued]: I think that there is- that that is part and parcel with what we have to think about when we think about what does overthrowing Empire look like. And not being afraid to like- or resisting the urge to frame it in a way that makes them acceptable revolutionaries, or something like that. Because I think the second we start doing that is how you end up falling back into logic of Empire. And the second you start telling stories about like, the second you end up doing the *Rogue One* thing of like, *Saw Gerrera* is too far, and like, you're spending time in your very limited story about revolution to devote to saying why the revolutionaries are the bad guys, when the scale of oppression is so vastly the other direction? Is I think a mistake that comes from knowing you have to appeal you know, in the case like *Rogue One*, a movie I really like, but you need to appeal to a vast centrist audience that feels a little icky about terrorism. You know, or about violent revolution. And so, I do my best to not fall into that trap if that makes sense.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I also feel like we did a pretty good job of like, highlighting the fact that people will join revolutions not for like, pure like, ideological pure reasons? Like, most of the time it's just like, they don't, like. They're joining this group because it's the best option here to actually change something? And that's going to like lead to complicated subject matter like this right? Like, if we're trying to play honest- like I don't think, and I was thinking about this I was just like. Trying to look at it from like, the perspective of stuff that like I personally did with *Millennium Break* during the show, and like.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Yeah, Millie hated all the power structures and stuff? But if you look at her actual motivation, it is to get the fuck out of there. And it always kinda was, right? Yeah.

AUSTIN: Definitely. And what's interesting to me about Millie is, she does get out at the end but also becomes, sort of gets out at the end, gets out of Partizan at the end,

SYLVIA: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: Is able to set up a position in life that it seems like she's more comfortable with. But that position is about bringing more people in to the fight.

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: In a way.

SYLVIA: I think like-

AUSTIN: Right?

SYLVIA: Not to turn this into a Millie question, but we did low-key get the Bad End for her, in that regard?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally, I mean it goes back to that question, like. I was not joking at the end of the- the Blue Channel like escape arc? When you get to the Portcullis that like, when I sat down to prep the mission. That was the end of the game. That this game was not going to have a finale game. It was going to be like the end of a Hieron season, where both sides just get to an ending, and that's it. And like the end of that game could have been Millie and Thisbe and Broun go off to live on Collier and you know, that could have been it.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Millie had that available, you know?

SYLVIA: And that decision took me \*forever\* to arrive to. And honestly I think if like we could go back, it would have been more honest to do that, to sort of show this sort of thing?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: But I mean I'm happy with the finale. But yeah! I don't know, I feel like also now that Millennium Break is an established thing going forward we have more space to explore this sort of thing too?

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: Maybe, I don't know. Clarify some of the messiness that comes with this sort of organisation.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. I mean I think that's, for me the big thing with the finale was like, we have to get past the identity crisis for Millennium Break. And once we have that situated we can start telling stories inside of whatever framework that looks like, whether that is Millennium Break is a state, or Millennium Break is an insurgency, right? And we've landed on that latter, and that means that we can start telling those stories now in Armour Astir. Which is great, because Armour Astir is really built for that in a real way. So that did work out in the favour of Armour Astir. Anyone else have any thoughts here?

JANINE: I think like, for me this is a lot of- this is also just a big question of not necessarily just revolution but like, storytelling. Like, the more characters you give me who are pure in what they believe and what they do and stuff the less I believe the entire group. Like, you know, if you give me a couple of those characters whose motivations are genuinely benevolent, who you know, act in what is as close as possible to a sort of pure good course of action, they're believable only if there's a few of them. But when you have a whole crew that is acting in that way it gets harder and harder to buy in. Because like even people who are doing good things for good reasons have motivation that can seem selfish, or have background, have history that can kind of lead them of course. Like when you're telling a story about people who are often being empowered for the first time? And dealing with that? Just as believable as characters, they could, should, and will fuck up. And sometimes they're gonna fuck up in really really big, bad ways. And that kind of has to be part of it, especially if you're telling, you know, as we keep going back to. If you're telling a war story, if you show me a cast of characters who get everything right, it's like, okay, cool fairy tale. This is- you know. It's not gonna work for me.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Totally. We have another question coming up that's sort of around that, so we'll wrap back around a little bit. Any other thoughts or do you wanna jump ahead to the next question? Alright. Keith, can you read this one from Simon?

KEITH: Sure.

**02:14:40 The year is 202X. The PARTIZAN anime has just aired its last episodes.**

And it was exactly how you imagined it. You are about to make your own AMV about the show, obviously. [Sylvia laughs] Other than the make-damn-sure Balance AMV, what sort of AMV do you make? What would the theme of your AMV be? What are some shots from the show you would include? What song do you use?

ART: I really love Keith's complete non doing this ship pronunciation of that [Ali and Janine laugh].

AUSTIN: That's fine.

ART: It was just like. Keith setting the fandom on fire. [Friends chuckle]

KEITH: Sorry. Sometimes you just gotta roll through.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Do I need to retake it? *Balence*.

AUSTIN: No, you're good! [Sylvi laughing] Let's- no, you're good, the way you said it was right. It's done.

ALI: I would make a Millie/Broun video. It wouldn't be a shipping video, but it would be like them and all their coolest mech moments? And it would be to My Chemical Romance's Thank You for The Venom.

SYLVIA: Oh my god. This is incredibly close to what I have, [Ali giggling] it is a different My Chemical Romance song. It was Hang 'Em High from the same album!

ALI: I, yeah, when we recorded PARTIZAN I was listening to Three Cheers on repeat. [chuckles] The entire time basically! Just like on 10% volume. It's time to sit down and-

AUSTIN: Amazing.

SYLVIA: That rules.

ALI: Record PARTIZAN and listen to this album.

AUSTIN: I don't have one on the top of my head, does anyone else-?

JACK: Yeah, I don't have one off the top of my head but I know I'd get it wrong. It would be produced badly. Or like, there'd be a very visible watermark over something?

ANDREW: Mhm.

JACK: The digital zoom would've zero-ed in.

SYLVIA: Unregistered HyperCam 2?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I got it. It would be a AMV of all of like, Clem fucking up or being, getting into trouble, running away from things, fighting things, and it would be set to JPEGMAFIA's I Cannot Fucking Wait [Sylvi bursts out laughing] Until Morrissey Dies.

JACK: [chuckles] Oh boy! That'd be great.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: My original answer for this was a like, kind of upbeat, slightly haunting super cut of every like big mech fight, or everything time a big thing got fucked up? Set to Circ's Destroy She Said. But I think my actual answer is like, every time Thisbe went fucking beast mode set to Mindless Self Indulgence's Shut me up.

[Friends chuckle]

AUSTIN: That would be very good.

JACK: I want to see a Divine fancam, and the first five comments are just people saying "No. Don't do this." [Friends chuckle]

AUSTIN: Stop. You need some help.

KEITH [overlapping]: That was. That was mine. I'm not- I've never watched an AMV to completion. I've seen maybe five total minutes of AMV content in my life? So I don't have- I maybe don't have the tone here, I don't know the stable of songs that make sense here.

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: But I would do all of the- I would do all of the times that a Divine did something terrible, set to Tiny Tim's Living In the Sunlight. [Friends laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh! Keith's-

ANDREW: Good.

ART: I'm afraid-

AUSTIN: -an open book. Hates Divines. Love it.

ANDREW: I got three? I'll go from most serious to least serious? Most serious. My Balance AMV would be Bon Iver's The Wolves.

ALI: Sure.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

ANDREW: It's very sad. [Ali giggles] I would make an Oxblood Clan AMV to System of a Down's B.Y.O.B.

AUSTIN: Yes! Good! Amazing.

ANDREW: And then I would do an Olympics AMV to Fort Minor's Remember The Name.

SYLVIA: I have one more.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. [chuckles] I'm sorry I have that laugh at that so much. Anyway, go ahead Sylvi.

SYLVIA: Just the Lacrimosa Drive compilation set to Break Shit- Stuff by Limp Biscuit. [Friends laugh]

AUSTIN: Hell yeah!

SYLVIA: That's a great ship, I don't think the name- but yeah.

AUSTIN: So good. Art, did you have something there?

ART: All I have is the Lucille Bluth answer of I don't understand the question and I won't respond to it. [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN: Okay good, great.

JANINE: What's our "Let the Bodies Hit the Floor" and/or "Bring Me to Life" moment?

ANDREW: I was gonna say who gets a Linkin Park song?

JACK [overlapping]: Let the Bodies Hit the Floor is all the bodies-

SYLVIA: Bring Me to Life is the Thisbe and Broun fall.

JANINE: Oh yeah. [Ali giggles]

ANDREW: Yeah, uh huh.

AUSTIN: Ooooh. That's good.

SYLVIA: Also that kind of works to almost any Kingdom Hearts theme song. Just anyone falling dramatically.



AUSTIN: That's true. And then what was the other one? Let the Bodies Hit the Floor? That's- that's- what is that? I was gonna say Broun, but Broun's just not as. Broun's- the bodies Broun makes hit the floor don't do it in a big aggressive way, because it tends to be terrible chemical weapons most of the time?

ANDREW: Is it just the GLORY fight?

AUSTIN: Oh it's the GLORY fight, yeah. That makes sense. It's the GLORY fight, yeah. Alright. Next question. Who's not read one in awhile?

ANDREW: I ca-

SYLVIA: I could-

ANDREW: Go ahead Sylvi. I'll read the next one.

SYLVIA: Alright. This is from Mike.

**02:20:34 One of my favourite things in PARTIZAN was the way you played with audience nostalgia**

And playing callbacks to fan favourite moments and characters but doing so in a way that created friction rather than providing comfort. Powerful secret organisations become the pet projects of despots. A beloved character returns as an instrument of war spouting one-liners. It's not that the moments don't land, they very much do, it's that the new contexts rubs against our memory in a way that can feel uncomfortable. Between this and the framing of the finale, I was wondering during planning and playing this season did you have any metanarrative goals when evoking fan nostalgia? What's PARTIZAN say about the ways we frame the past?

AUSTIN: Totally. I very much had rules about how to do this, because I knew I wanted to do it, mostly because in Twilight Mirage we very much barely did it? There's like, a brief hit of the Rigour bell at one point in Twilight Mirage. And there is like a reference to a kind of open thread that never wrapped up regarding like a Macguffin from COUNTER/Weight. Whereas here, I knew I didn't want to touch Twilight Mirage much, but I really wanted to touch COUNTER/Weight and bits of Twilight Mirage where it made sense, but not character ending stuff. And the big through line here, the two things are one, never anything that I can't in twenty explain in twenty seconds without referencing a specific episode or anything like that.

AUSTIN [continued]: So for instance, the design of Gucci's mech, the Transgress Oblige, it has a reference to some Twilight Mirage stuff, and that is meant to very quickly, I had to be able to evoke that like, oh it does this thing when you see it in all its glory, and I can explain that without talking about what that reference actually is. So that was one thing. And then two is, it should always be unsettling, and it should always under- it should always represent that one of the

things you lose to Empire is control of your own history. That you don't get to tell the story of what happened anymore. And so when you look at characters like Laurel who are explicitly a bastardisation of a character from COUNTER/Weight, when you look at the way that Clementine ends up with the Panther at the beginning of the season, it's supposed to be insulting? It's supposed to really underscore that heroism doesn't get to remain heroism in the face of imperialism. Imperialism will take it for its own, it will take your heroes and make it theirs.

AUSTIN [continued]: And then over the course of play, A.O. Rooke ends up with the Panther, right? And you can take it back. You can fucking grab it by the throat and pull it back and fight for it a little bit there. But I always wanted it to be unsettling, I always wanted it to be upsetting. It was never- could never be comforting because people have lost control of history, right? Past has all of history, and no one gets to have access to it. They have to go to the palace, they have to go through the palace to look at the Past, and the palace has been scrubbed and controlled. And that means that the narratives of history have been controlled by the Principality. And when that's the case, you can't rely on history to guide you anymore. You can't find the stories of actual resistance and rebellion. You can't look for the role models who could help explain what heroism in conflict look like. Because they've all been turned into symbols of the state. And specifically symbols of an oppressive state. And not you know, not a state that has anything but the worst interests in mind for its people.

AUSTIN [continued]: And so yeah, that is, that was a huge part of how I wanted to do that. And then the other half of it is just with Twilight Mirage stuff specifically, I wanted to honour, there's a couple of times in this season where you- I reference like, hey, the people in Twilight Mirage are watching this happen, right? They're looking on from a distance. I think that was like, end of Kingdom, there's like a zoom out maybe? I think that was the end of Kingdom. And then something, maybe one other place in the season, a little gesture. And I think it was important for me to underscore that the victories of Twilight Mirage maintain to be the victories of Twilight Mirage for now, right? Like, I'm not taking anyway there because to do so would be a betrayal of what the players achieved, right? So yeah. We'll see what happens next season. I'm excited for a player to say they want to bring in something from Twilight Mirage next season, because we'll have that removed to where it feels like it's fair play? So you know, if during the off-season someone says they wanna bring one of those fleets I talked out or want to reference what's going on on Quire like, you let me know. We'll talk about it. We'll figure something. We'll figure something out you know. So we'll see. Any other thoughts about past season connections or anything like that? I guess Jack, musically,

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: There's a couple of little moments here, right?

JACK: I'm like, I'm always, I'm as reluctant as you are to bring back these, to make callbacks. In part because it's like, we did that. We're telling another story. But I do think what you were talking about in terms of the way Empire is ransacking history and is drawing it back, and is coming back in weird ways was definitely something that I aimed for you know. So of the first notes that you sent me music-wise were like, this sounds too much like Twilight Mirage.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And, the thing takes on its own character eventually. Like, you know, if we had decided to just keep writing in the Twilight Mirage style, the soundtrack would have transformed as we were making it. Like I feel confident that we could have used that instrumentation and brought something different out of it. But at the same time the choices that I made in terms of evoking Twilight Mirage instrumentation was always make this thing harder to listen to, make this thing more aggressive. There are these horrible high bell-like synths that like drown in their own distortion that show up, I think for the first time during Valence's death, and I loved the sound of them so much that I kept using them. And those are just, those are just bells from Twilight Mirage that I have done work on.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And by that I don't mean that it's like, and there's some narrative link, you know, it's not like, there's a secret Twilight Mirage message here. It's more just that the physical structure of the story we're telling has come from somewhere before it, and then that is going to keep coming up. The most recent example that I can think of is, towards the very end you have this great description of people watching the Girandolia particles in the sky at night?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And I know that that's not a Twilight Mirage reference. And we never talked about it being a Twilight Mirage reference. But I felt like on some level you were evoking the some of skyspaces of things like the Mirage. But doing it with such a light touch, you know. You weren't really saying anything about the Mirage, you were just trying to bring us into a similar space. And so that moment with the music I definitely tried to act as likely as you did there and just shift to the colour of those chord progressions, slightly more towards that. But never going any further. At one point when we were dealing with the thing in the ice in the north? I know we had a lot of conversations about like, do we want to specifically fake people out?

AUSTIN: Do we hit the bells?

JACK: Do we- yeah, exactly. And it ended up not being the place for it. And that's, I'm fine with that, you know. There are so many horrible things that scream in PARTIZAN. So many miserable, horrible screaming things. Making another miserable, horrible screaming thing didn't feel like a particularly necessary call at that point.

AUSTIN: Totally. And there's a degree to which that fake-out. I had already leaned as hard as I could on the fake out, the ice fake out, you know what I mean? They're digging for something in the ice. The audience gets that that one way or another I'm evoking that part of COUNTER/Weight, right? And I don't know that we needed that hard hit, especially given what was there. And maybe irony of ironies, my favourite thing about this, my favourite little "this is

how actual play podcasts work”, is both that case, I’ll just say Rigour from COUNTER/Weight, and Logos Kantel being in the prison at the end of PARTIZAN. I stumbled over the same thing both fucking times. Back in COUNTER/Weight, there was a moment in one of the faction games where I ended up doing a huge lore dump about Rigour, and then we cut it from the episode. And we go like, that’s not the way to debut all that information. It sucks to do it like this. This isn’t fun. And then we sat on that for like months until we found the right place for Rigour to be really debut narratively. Like obviously Rigour was still I think visible? Dre or Sylvi you’ll have to remember if you remember but like, that sequence where a character finds out stuff about Rigour. That gets cut, but Rigour itself still showed up, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah I think we just cut back on like- I’m thinking Natalya Greaves was the person who got like the info dump?

AUSTIN: Yeah it was Natalya Greaves.

ANDREW: Yeaah.

SYLVIA: We just cut back on a lot of that.

AUSTIN: I loved- shout outs to Natalya Greaves.

KEITH: Imagine remembering any name from- [Ali chuckles, then Keith]

AUSTIN: I remember all the COUNTER/Weight ones. COUNTER/Weight ones are the ones that are drilled in my head. I could probably name everybody from COUNTER/Weight.

KEITH [overlapping]: I don’t even remember names from the current season.

AUSTIN: Marilyn September, Twelfth, yeah.

JACK [overlapping]: Alright, let’s go. Alphabetically or chronologically?

AUSTIN: Oh no. Chronologically. Chronologically way easier because I can think about arcs, and I can think about like, Orth Godlove was there, and the Weightless were there, which means that means that, like that whole- the Queen’s Gambit crew you know was there, and stuff like that. Anyway. Tea- Tea Kentridge. I don’t remember her crew’s name. But Tea I remember obviously. The other- so that was in COUNTER/Weight there was that like, oh shit, we shouldn’t reveal this yet. And then in this season, at the end of Kingdom, one of the things that Keith had predicted, or I guess, not Keith, but Leap- or not Leap, you were playing Apparatus. Apparatus had predicted that the Curtain would strike back, right? That the Curtain would hurt you know, Millennium Break somehow in response. Or maybe not hurt Millennium Break, but use some of the- maybe it was that they would use some of the Exemplar parts, I don’t remember the exact prediction and I don’t really wanna go look it up right now. But there were some prediction there,

and the way that that scene played out originally was that you basically wound out with a photo Logos Kantel in prison.

AUSTIN [continued]: And so that was known by everyone in the party, but it was so bad, it was like. I knew I wanted to pull the trigger on that, but it felt to so just give you the information loosely like that? Because it was like, flat, and bad, and like that's not the way to find out that information. So we did the second Miracle instead. The greening of the icy north basically. And then that put me in an interesting position where I had to then juice that reveal up because if I had to hit you with it, it still had to be creepy and weird even though you knew that Gur Sevraq- not Gur Sevraq, Jesus. That Logos Kantel was somewhere. And also I don't even know if you remember that Logos Kantel was going to be at the Chasmata Quarry at that point. We didn't talk about it again for six months,

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or whatever till you got there, right?

KEITH: I remembered that.

AUSTIN: But what- okay. But what no one knew about, was what they were doing with Logos Kantel.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Which ended up being the kind of sleep no more, like, living pri- living you know, play stuff trying to trick them into doing stuff via immersive theatre. And it's gross and terrible and so I had to like raise "they have them" to "they're doing this thing with them". And I had already known that's what they were doing. But I had to really lean into it to really evoke some sort of creepiness? And I think that came across. I remember Art specifically hate- at some point just goes like, I hate this, or something. And it's very good. It's very good. Dre, you said you'd read the next one.

ALI: I- before we move on, I just want to briefly that like, part of what I kept in my mind through this season, I think it was a little divisive, the audience, but like, I really tried to keep in mind like how Divines were protec- uhh, predict- p- what's the word that I want? Predicted? No.

SYLVIA: Depicted.

ALI: Depicted!

AUSTIN: Depicted, yes.

ALI: Thank you!

KEITH: You're welcome.

ALI: And like part of the Broun/Asepsis stuff is like, part of knowing that like, Broun would never be able to have the relationship with Divines that other PCs in other seasons did. Like, that's just taken from them, from society in how it grew, and like, how the stuff at the very end of Twilight Mirage with regards to Divines happened via Broun's life. And like how they would think of that stuff, like. The other thing that I kept in mind is that like, AdArm had a specific goal that was like, we wanna build a machine that can destroy a Divine.

AUSTIN: Yup.

ALI: And thinking of Broun as someone who had that background like there's just. It's just 0s and 1s for them, right? There's just no emotional attachment in terms of being like, oh, well this thing is something different the other tools that I use. So that was fun.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I think people-

AUSTIN: I'll always will say like, that was always, this is the season Divines I needed to be as scary as possible? And I think they've always been frightening in moments? They've always had the moments where they disregard the agency of the people that you know, worship or work for them. They've always had the sort of like reach that can be very frightening. But coming off of Twilight Mirage where we also had very intimate relationships between player characters and Divines, or where we had a vision of Divines as a stand-in for like, what if social systems functioned correctly? And had the resources they needed to treat people well? Etc. I really had to swing really hard the other way and that meant mechanically too. Like a play Divines as hard as I could. I think at some point, maybe the first time we deployed Asepsis I said, you're never going to be able to deploy this without it being Desperate. Like, it's always Desperate.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because the result is going to be, it's always that risky. It's always that big. And you're never going to fight a Divine, especially not someone like Motion, without it really pushing you to the brink. Because they represent something so large and so dominating. Not just powerful, but dominating. They are the vehicle by which metaphorically and literally those in power remain in power. And are at once not just tools for the powerful to do that, but are the powerful doing that in many cases. And so I always had to make the Divines feel like there was some additional risk involved. Which is also why in the finale, the third fight was a fight you could lose in a way that the first two fights were not really about victory? But the third fight required a certain number of like successes. I figured you'd get it, but I wanted the added little boost of tension for that last one. Alright. Any other thoughts on nostalgia or callbacks before we move on? Alright. Dre, do you wanna read this one from Remi?

ANDREW: Yeah!

### **02:36:27 One thing that surprised me as the season went on**

And took its revolutionary shape, it surprised me how many of the main PC cast didn't seem terribly invested in that premise other than for how it would benefit them individually. Sure, Valence took a strong stand against injustice. The Farmer used to carry that fire with him, and Kalar is fully bought-in. But for several of the crew their motivation felt like- their motivation really only extended to "this is my ticket out of here". I'm curious as to what the session 0 for this campaign looked like given how few firebrands and true believers we wound up with.

AUSTIN: I don't think we had a session 0 up on the site that is \*the\* Session 0, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There was not any other separate session 0 outside of The Road to PARTIZAN? But, you know, I think one of the early things that we say in that episode 0 is that you should be playing characters that reflect living in a world more oppressive than ours. Where information is even more shaped by Empire than the one that we currently live in. Obviously-

KEITH: Which is already extremely shitty.

AUSTIN: Which is already \*extremely\* shitty, right? But we're able to have this conversation on a mass you know, communication network without secret police- we said earlier in this podcast, that Empires deserve to have insurgencies, right? You could not do that in the Principality. There isn't a mechanism for that sort of conversation, right? Because, one day, we might not have that mechanism available to us. That is a hundred percent a thing that can be taken from us any day now, you know? Absolutely the January 6th attacks on the Capitol could lead to further restrictions of free speech from the left about what is an acceptable way to withstand or fight against imperialism and state violence. That could happen in our lifetimes. And so we had to start from there and think about- and the thing I asked you all of to do is like, think about someone who has not yet had any you know, inner action with revolutionary politics. Start with someone who can have a personal reason for wanting things to be different, but doesn't quite have the organisational you know relationships, has not had any encounters with you know, revolutionary thought. And has not been tied to any groups that have actively fought for that, you know, in a way beyond personal gain. And at that point even the Oxblood clan at the start of the season is like, looking forward for a bigger paycheck. They're not looking to overturn you know, the Principality. That's out of the- that's not something they could dream about at that point. And so I think that probably shaped people but I'm also curious from your perspectives here, for sure.

KEITH: I think- I think that there's like, there's a way that what I can say can be taken as sort of pessimistic, but I don't feel like it's pessimistic.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: So like, whatever the non-pessimistic version of this is, take it that way. But it's like, you know, if, for me if you're talking about a revolution. You don't need- you don't need an army of people whose goals are too like, cast the world in a new light for some grand vision of future society, as much as like- these people are putting their lives on the line. They were fully bought in. Like, the reason that they were bought in was because they wanted- they had personal reasons. "I don't want to live in this world. I want things to be different. I'm going to fight for this." Like it sounds selfish, but it's like, if you have an army of people who are all fighting for the same thing for themselves, that's a movement. That's a revolutionary army. Like I don't think that it has- that everyone has to have like, this you know- I don't think everyone has had to have worked out for themselves-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Not everyone has to have theory, right? Like you don't need theory to be-

KEITH [overlapping]: Yeah. You don't need to have-

AUSTIN: -yeah yeah yeah. To be a revolutionary.

KEITH: Yeah. And like, you know. Some people do, some people don't. But if you're there with a gun killing people with that gun, boom. You're bought in.

AUSTIN: And Leap was there with a gun. [Ali chuckles]

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Any other thoughts about their characters and buying-in. I know Janine you've kind of already hit this a few questions ago to some degree, right?

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah, I think like it's. Part of the reason that I think it's more believable if you have people who aren't purely motivated by this sort of ideal concept of justice and rightness and all of that is that like, it can be both. Like you can say, this is unfair and also that. You can say you know, this system is unfair and this isn't right, and you can also say like, and I'm suffering. Or I don't like what's happening to me, and like, in many ways the person who acknowledges their selfish interest is likely to fight very hard for the right thing that they also acknowledge is there. Like it's- I think the story of- the story of liberalism right now right, is that people who are comfortable don't fight very hard.

AUSTIN: No.

JANINE: People who are uncomfortable fight *\*very\** hard.

AUSTIN: Yeah.



JANINE: Or fight harder, usually. There are exceptions to that, but. You know, personal stakes and personal motivations make for better characters in general and it can't just be you know, like I said before. If you give me a party full of people who have these really like benevolent and laudable and amazing motivations and beliefs and don't have any selfishness in there, I don't believe any of 'em.

ALI: Yeah! I, you know. I had fun playing Broun. [chuckles] Broun was definitely like you know, a very specific column on this. I think with Broun it was like, part of the personal reason to play Broun that way because like, I was in a place where I was trying not to create roots, and pushing that to its extremes and just being a jerk into a microphone was really fun.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: [laughs] And then you know, just sort of thinking about like the, what- in situations like this where people sort of have to come together for a shared goal, or you know, sort of advocate for themselves because they just don't have any support otherwise. Like, the worst version of that is reacting like everybody else is trying to hurt you. There is like, like the idea that Broun always had that like, Gucci is a bad person who doesn't actually care about me. And if it were a choice between me and Gucci at any point Gucci would choose herself.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And that is not a great reading on Gucci. And like the, Broun's inability to try to see something in other people that you know, was worth reaching out towards, or worth finding common ground with, or like being vulnerable with is a bad response to the situation that they're in. And [chuckles] you know, I think that's worth depicting?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It is a very- I don't know that we've had a character quite like that before. I think maybe Adaire gets close in some ways? That feeling of like, I'm not letting anyone in, but obviously Adaire's arc is Adaire's arc. And seeing Broun- I mean there was a real moment when- someone asked this earlier, we kind of moved past it but like, where the end of that Kingdom game, we went into that Kingdom game thinking what we would end with was a party shuffle,

ALI: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Not a unified party, right? We thought-

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: -that we might end with the Rapid Evening becoming Clem, Broun and Thisbe, or something like that.

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: And then the other half- or maybe there'd be three parties, who knows? Maybe SI stays with Clem and Broun, and Thisbe or something like that? We don't get that, but like, we recognised that Broun was in a position to be pulled into the orbit of whoever the most powerful paycheck- powerful person with a paycheck [Ali chuckles] to offer was there, right?

ALI: Yeah! There was- when we went into the Kingdom game, it was definitely, my idea was like, Broun is going to sell information about somebody to somebody [laughs].

AUSTIN: Jesus christ.

ALI: And then they would leave the Kingdom game with a uniform for an office and healthcare. And like, that's the thing that Clem would've provided for them, and they would've been like, good, I got what I needed. And the shift from Broun- and like, the shift from Broun especially at the end of the Kingdom game as like understanding them as like, a organisational part of Millennium Break in a real way, was like oh okay, so they do have this responsibility to people now. And like, the way that they were actually able to get people to engage with them or like find value in them was to actually, genuinely do this and genuinely use their skills for like food, and communication, and things in that way. So like you know, *you know* [chuckles]. You know they didn't get their healthcare plan, but they got like the Millennium Break patch to put on their jacket and like, somewhere to sleep every night. And it was like you know, that's just as good I guess. [laughs]

ALI [continued]: The second thing- it's funny that you mentioned Adaire because I remember one time I was like, oh okay, I'm- it'll be fine doubling down with Broun in this way, is when I was- there was like an early Thisbe/Broun bond that we were trying to figure out because like the basics of what I wanted the bond to be- I think it was the second one, where it was like, I wanna see what Thisbe is willing to pay to get out of here or whatever. Like, the meat of what that- I really wanted that was [chuckles] like I was imagining a scene in like three weeks or whatever where like it was revealed that like Broun was pocketing all of Thisbe's like SBBR earnings [laughs]. And spending it on their spaceship and be like, trying to get it out of Thisbe in that way so they could get a spaceship or just do what they wanted to because that's what Broun does. And I remember having a conversation with Janine and being like, I don't want to just play Adaire back at you. And Janine was like, oh my god, no, we should do that. [Austin laughs] *Please do that*. And I was like oh, okay! [Janine chuckles] Got it! [laughs]

JANINE: I mean that was- yeah! Because- totally! Because Adaire and Hella was the manipulator and muscle combo, so the idea of—especially early on—of flipping that, was like totally, was totally fine with me, and I think I even carried like- I carried that in with one of

Thisbe's later bonds about like Broun- was it a bond or was it a thing in the end of-? I don't remember. There's a thing about like, "Broun lies to me because they believe I'm a person".

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Which is like a very complicated belief.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: In terms of it's- it's very tied up in Thisbe's own self image. But you know, the underpinning there is like, is Thisbe, one, being able to recognise lies, two, being able to recognise that Broun perceives as being worth lying to for some reason. Or like, there being a value for Broun to lie to her. [Ali chuckles] The thing I was going to say that I think differentiates Broun and Adaire a lot though is that, Adaire didn't want to let people in, but she wanted to be in. You know? She wanted-

ALI: Oh yeah!

JANINE: -other people to let her in?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Because that let her take advantage of them better? Whereas I don't think Broun had that same- at least it very rarely seemed like Broun wanted to be let in. Broun would like, wanted a good working relationship with people. But there was an arm's length quality that felt a little more underscored with Broun than with Adaire. Adaire like wanted to- she wanted you to think that you were her best friend. [Ali and Austin chuckle]

ALI: Broun not so much.

AUSTIN: Not so much.

ALI: I had a lot of fun playing with Thisbe in the season and especially there was like, ways in which I wanted to make sure that Broun was being mean to Thisbe in a way that it would be rude to a person? [chuckles] And not to a robot? Cause it is two very different things. And then like, for the first- the mission where we go to the forest, and Thisbe is like, I really want to go to this forest. And Broun being like "well is this important to you?" [laughs] is one of my favourite Broun moments cause it's like. Yeah, that's a genuine question, and Broun ends up genuinely agreeing to that because it is important to Thisbe. But like, the like—I'm gonna check first—that was really fun for me! So, yeah. Shout out to Broun and Thisbe.

AUSTIN: The Broun and Thisbe relationship was always so interesting to me because like, there is- especially in the first half it's either perceived as Broun buys Thisbe from the back of a truck and then Thisbe is like an asset owned by SBBR- by the Society of Banners and Bright

Returns. But then there's like a six month period of post-Kingdom where like, Thisbe's doing whatever Thisbe wants. That makes it very clear that Broun has not been like, alright Thisbe, come with me and carry my shit. And reveals to me that like Broun- it goes back to the thing that Janine you were saying of like. For some reason, Broun treats me like a person. Because Thisbe didn't ever consider herself a person in that way, but Broun did, but also was just mean because Broun is fucking mean, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean the terrible thing to- not the terrible thing, the thing maybe to recognise is, if Thisbe had been just someone from Orion, Broun probably would've treated her very similarly. And Broun is just miserable at people. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Mhm.

JANINE: I think also like, a thing that gets forgotten is like really really early on maybe in character setup or something or in the first arc, we establish that like at some point you know, Broun, yes, Broun had purchased Thisbe, Thisbe was being sold by-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: From mercenaries, right? Yeah.

JANINE: -mercenaries. People who stole her away or who purchased her and etc. But the thing that happened off camera before we started the show and you know, we said this I know we did, was that at some point Broun realised that Thisbe was not just, you know, a hauling robot kind of thing. And started treating Thisbe more like part of the crew even if they still treat Thisbe poorly, you know? It's still- Thisbe is still not just lifting boxes which is the thing that Thisbe ends up doing sometimes when she's left on her own.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Broun still gives Thisbe that seat at the table.

AUSTIN: Even if there- even if that's not in their mind a thing they're doing positive or something [Ali chuckles].

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? Yeah. Thisbe. Alright, anything else here on revolutionary ideals? Or buy-in.

SYLVIA: I guess like really quick,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

SYLVIA: I think that one of the things about Millie was like, there was parts of the season especially I think right after the Kingdom game, where I f- I don't know, I felt like I was playing her as pretty bought in, then like things went bad, and she got disillusioned again, and like. I don't think that it's like, I don't know. I don't think that it makes up for like, if you're looking to have more of these true believer characters, I don't think it's going to fix that. But I do think that like, I don't know, I'm very happy with that? Because I- it felt, I don't know. It felt realistic to me?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Just be- you know. People, even in revolutions, sometimes feel like they're not important.

AUSTIN: Millie! Yeah.

SYLVIA: Look! It's rough out here.

AUSTIN: It's rough out here, it truly is. Millie clearly proved her importance as clear as anything- as anyone else ever could to Millennium Break.

JACK: It's like- like, real quick, as far as I'm concerned it's like, big tasks and small tasks. Where often when we talk about like, are they bought in? What do we actually mean when we're talking about that? Is it like, are they bought into an ideal of freedom and justice for all? Okay, what are the small tasks? It's like- what does Kalar want? Oh he wants to go home and see his family. Or specifically he wants his family to be able to come home to him. Does that mean he's morally compromised or he's acting selfishly? Not at all! That's you know, that's like a way in which he is- that is a lens through which he is expressing this broader concept- this kind of fairly unworkable concept of like, I just want- I want freedom and justice! Well what does that mean? And how are you gonna you know, how are you gonna fight for that? Sometimes that's I want to be paid, I don't have enough right now to eat.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And I want to make sure that I can eat. And I want to be able to sleep at night while I'm doing that. Or it's like, oh I think that this city is being threatened by something. I'm not just going to go out there and say like, oh I think someone else should own Cruciat! Cool, good! What are we talking about here, like? My motivation might be like, I want to be able to go back to my house in Cruciat.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And that reflects something I care about more broadly. So I think when we are talking about the like, characters don't necessarily seem to be bought in, maybe what we are looking at is their smaller scale- you know, is them having broken down that question to its smaller parts.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That makes perfect sense.

JACK: Why do we want a revolution? We want things to be better for us and people that we love.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Big same. And we'll see more of this in the second season of PARTIZAN right? Where we know what Millennium Break is, where we know how they are aligned, not just ideologically but structurally and materially?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And maybe we'll get some more firebrands. I don't know! Obviously we'll have at least a couple of new characters, right? From- maybe at least with Sovereign Immunity, right?

ART: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Is gone, so Art we'll see someone new from you. We'll see who's what in next you know? Next time we come back to this place. Alright. Next question. We only have two left, so. I will- who wants to read this one? I'm gonna read the last one. So wants to read-

ART: I mean there is an obvious choice.

AUSTIN: Jack. [Sylvia laughs] Could you read this one?

ART: And Jack, you could just ask us. [Austin laughs] You don't have to send- [unintelligible]

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: I'm back. Hello.

AUSTIN: Hi Jack. You wrote us this- you did not write this question, but someone else named Jack did.

JACK: Hi. My name's Jack, and I have a question.

**02:57:15 One of the biggest structural changes this season was the "Road to PARTIZAN"**

series of games, which helped build the world and kick off thematic elements that were expanded upon. I know how the Road to PARTIZAN changed my experience as a cast member of this show [friends burst out laughing] [t/n note: the actual question says "changed my experience as a listener", Jack is sticking to the bit]

JACK [continued]: —I felt much more like an insider and anthropologist of the world—but I'm curious how those Road to PARTIZAN games may have changed your experience as players. How did aspects, events, themes, characters, history, or whatever from the pre-season games impact your choices on the “main” season?

JACK [continued]: I'll take my answers via Discord or whatever, [Austin chuckles] message me when you get the chance. [Art chuckles]

KEITH: Austin- was Columnar, was that Road to PARTIZAN or was that after Road to PARTIZAN-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: That's Road to PARTIZAN. You knew you wanted to play a cool robot.

KEITH [overlapping]: Okay, that's my easy answer.

AUSTIN: That you knew you wanted to play a robot person, and I was like where are they from? What do they do? What's their vibe? What's a robot person doing here?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And so we brainstormed Columnar stuff and then introduced it in Microscope, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And kind of like played it out the way that they were courted, the courting of the Columnar, the Columnar Tabulary. Which was so fascinating because we knew- I knew we wanted, I wanted the fifth Stel to be, or one of the five Stels to be the sort of like, liberal state at the margin of the crushing boots of imperialism? You know Stel Orion had established itself by expanding into the one arm of the galaxy that's just massive, and they've just conquered all of it. Apostolos was pushing in on the Golden Branch and fighting as hard as they can do capture territory there. Stels Nideo and Kesh had been the heart of the Principality and had been the ones that brought Orion in via conquest- brought Orion and Apostolos in via conquest.

AUSTIN [continued] And so I wanted there to be some group that was like, no we don't do the war. We just don't- and you can vote here. This place is nice actually. We're really cool. Sure we benefit from the imperial conquests of the state we're a part of. Sure we support them through the development of technologies and propaganda and everything else. But we're not- our hands are clean. And that felt like a really great place to reintroduce- or where that group could enter and where your specific idea of this sort of marginalised you know sub-group inside of a majority group could really exist, and the Equiaxed fit that so well. I really love what you did with them. And so setting them up during Microscope really really helped and gave grounding for someone like Leap to show up and then. For people who are getting still- the postcards are coming, the postcards are on their way, we're on now the last postcard I think, in terms of designing it. Jack, you and I still have to figure out the exact narrative final step on it. But that story ended up being

about a Equiaxed group too, and all of that comes from the work that you did Keith, both in the Microscope game but also just like, as we talked about who the Equiaxed are, or what Columnar was, so.

KEITH: Yeah. That's- I feel like that is the most- I guess we didn't spend- we spent of a lot of time with Leap. We didn't spend a ton of time with Equiaxed aside from Leap.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But it was still like, I feel like, the biggest single thing that I've done at Friends at the Table probably.

AUSTIN: In terms of developing part of like, the culture and stuff like that?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Definitely.

KEITH: Cause normally I stay- normally I play small. Like I don't normally come with ideas like, I have a whole group of people.

AUSTIN: No, but you did it and it was great! You should do it more, it's fun. I like it when you do that.

KEITH: Yeah it was a ton of fun.

AUSTIN: It's great.

KEITH: But I feel like that's the thing, Road to PARTIZAN felt like that was-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: It felt like a place to do something like that.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense. Any other Road to PARTIZAN thoughts here? From people who played as them- as character or as storytellers?

ART: I have like no concept of how to answer this question?

AUSTIN: Mhm?

ART: Because I don't know how anything impacts the choices I make [Ali chuckles] during play? I just have like-



AUSTIN: This is that determinist in question that we were talking about [Andrew chuckles] yesterday Art.

ART [overlapping]: -no knowledge of my own. Yeah, I just have no knowledge of my own process, it's just when it's happening, my brain is disconnected from all past and future.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: You know? I don't. I don't know.

ALI: You're in the zone.

AUSTIN: Galaxy brain.

ART: Yeah. [Ali chuckles] Galaxy brain but like, not.

AUSTIN: But head empty. Head empty galaxy brain.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Got it.

ART: Yeah, galaxy outside, nothing inside. [Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: Well what I'll say is, I'm really glad we got Memphis Longhand and the continued adventures of Memphis Longhand in our Sports are Numerology game halfway through the season.

[t/n note: that's a good game, I transcribed it too, go listen!]

ART: Yeah and I'm excited to tell people that magic Memphis Longhand is the season- it's not. It's not.

AUSTIN: It's not. [Ali chuckles] Defrosted like a demolition man, or, you know?

ART: Yeah, or- is there a sports clone movie?

AUSTIN: There's gotta be.

ART: It feels like there should be but I don't know what it is.

AUSTIN: God. Memphis Longhand but now he knows magic. [Janine chuckles] God.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Incredible- wait you already said magic. When you said that, I thought you were making a Magic Johnson joke?

ART: Oh no, Memphis 'Magic' Longhand, no.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

JACK: No literally magic.

AUSTIN: Magical. Yeah. Got it.

ART: Yeah.

JANINE: My answer to this is ask me at the end of next season. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: Fair.

JANINE: The Road to PARTIZAN affected-

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, totally. That's fair. Whatever, you're playing a robot based on the Hypha who we-

JANINE: No no, I mean season 7.

AUSTIN: Oh! Okay. Yeah, that's a good. Uh huh. Mhm!

JANINE: [laughs] Give me until season 7 to have the Road to PARTIZAN-

AUSTIN: Stay tuned to Drawing Maps to find out the answer to that one. You said that to me a couple days ago.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: What else? Anyone- for me obviously it was so good to do all that stuff, and to do all the lead-in Drawing Maps stuff because it helped me just know the world? I lost it, like completely lost it in the most joyous way after we finished the first Rapid Evening game, and had a tense negotiation about the remains of a broke Divine between two major political players that was coherent, in the first arc of a game? Being able to have that sequence where you sit across from Cas'alear, Clem? Jack, as Clem? And negotiate the like, salvage rights between two giant you know substates? Was so like, it hit the mark. We did it. We managed to be able to do something in this sort of like Crusader Kings-y space without a ton of lore dump because we actually secretly done a ton of lore dump via Road to PARTIZAN. And even if we didn't-

JACK: Hours and hours.

AUSTIN: Hours and hours. And even if you didn't listen to that, it made the players and made me as the GM confident enough to talk in the terms of the world in a way that you could have a scene like that instead of kind of grasping at what is the shape of this place, what are the powers that be. We could have never had that scene at the start of COUNTER/Weight or Hieron or something like that, you know? Yeah.

ALI: The Road of PARTIZAN stuff is kind of interesting to me because I-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: -was barely involved with it.

AUSTIN: Yeah! That was you were- you were only in the Beam Saber game, right?

ALI: Yeah and that was like a continuation of another game,

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: So I was playing that and I had no idea what the fuck [wheezes] was going on.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

ALI: I mean. I liked Pigeon, that was a fun character to play. And I think that's- did I play the same um,

AUSTIN: Character type? No I think-

ALI [overlapping]: Class? No-

AUSTIN: I think you were an Ace in the-

ALI: Oh, suresuresure, yeah. But I remember reading it that time and being like, I would play- I don't even remember what Broun's class is.

AUSTIN: Tech-ni-cian..?

ALI: Technician-

AUSTIN: Engineer? Something like that.

ALI: I- yeah, it was interesting for Broun being so outside of it and then also creating Broun and then being like, oh, they can just be a character who's sort of outside of it to the- [chuckles] the way I arrived at Broun kind of being like stepped out of society was like, at the first suggestion

that they were Apostolosian, I think. And then from there it was just a rolling ball of like, well, what kind of relationship would they have with the society at that point, and what would it mean to try to get out of it in the society that is already so open in these ways but like really oppressive in other ways? Like, what does it mean to be a they/them Apostolosian, so that helped really get my head in the game for Broun essentially. It's like a similar like shortcut that I took with Hella where she's like, I don't know this character yet, and if I could just pretend that they don't care about anything I could kind of get past a lot of it [laughs], the things I don't understand yet or getting comfortable with stuff, and I think that that helped with Broun in terms of being like, fuck anybody anyways, so.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: It was fun playing that guy who wants to climb out of his mech and fight robots.

AUSTIN: That guy! That guy had a name. [Andrew chuckles]

JACK: Was his name- his name was Smack Talk, right? I can't remember whether or not he was Smack-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: And he had a brother.

JACK: -and his brother was David.

KEITH: Yup.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Or whether he was David and his brother was Smack. But-

KEITH: You played- you played a character with the great name called Smack Talk. I had a character without a name and I decided- I'm gonna say, this is one of my favourite jokes that I've told at Friends at the Table. I decided at the moment that this will be your brother, and that his name will be David. David Talk. [Ali laughs]

JACK: So good!

AUSTIN: It's so- that game was great. Shoutouts to Dusk to Midnight by Riley Rethal. An incredible game. Really really fun. We all had great corporation names in that game too?

JACK: Oh yeah, it was like!

AUSTIN: Yes Power?

JACK: Yes Power.

AUSTIN: And David worked for a competing power company called Better Brighter! [Jack chuckles] Loved it.

JACK: Oh it was great! But doing the weakest part of the mech is the pilot-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Which is, you know, was made up. Completely made up, was like. Oh damn, that was really fun to do a season that is all about like weird personal brutality? And at the same time writing the theme for that and beginning to lean into this noise at the end. I remember thinking to myself, oh both of these things are really interesting to me. And then going, oh shit, that's- we're just about to do that. Like we can do a whole season where we explore this stuff and look through this stuff and that was exciting! It's kind of like a teaser trailer for getting to do it

AUSTIN: Mhm. Totally. A hundred percent. And that's also when I was like, when we did the follow up to Dusk to Midnight and we did Beam Saber I was like, we have to fucking play Beam Saber. That moment is so good—the weak point of a mech. And in general it was like again just, I think we could do some really fun encounters here which is not traditionally the way we think about doing our storytelling? But inside of the mecha genre space it's such a big part of it? And also I come off of Spring in Hieron mad at myself for the way the fight scenes in Spring in Hieron had gone? I think there were some really fun moments obviously-

JACK: There's at least one amazing one.

AUSTIN: I think there's a bunch of amazing ones. Players did- you all did really good stuff, I wanted to give you more to play with. I wanted there to be more kind of geometry to the spaces. I wanted the spaces to have more toys to play with? More scenarios and kind of make it more visual? I was very mad at myself for a fight in a library in Spring in Hieron that didn't use any bookshelves or books or spaces or aisles. And there's still a really great physical moment in that scene that has to do with a window and a tree outside. And so there were still- players still did it. Y'all still did it. But I felt like I had dropped the ball on creating interesting play spaces. And so one of my big goals coming into this was to create sequences and scenes that gave people the play space to do really fun memorable encounters and actions?

AUSTIN [continued]: And so when I played Beam Saber I immediately- and for what it's worth, Armour Astir also gave us this. It's just that I knew we weren't starting as a revolution so we couldn't play Armour Astir, because that's a game about a revolution. That's a game about like, fighting the Empire from the jump, so we couldn't start there. And so that really pushed me into Beam Saber and Road to PARTIZAN is what helped me figure that out. But when we played

Beam Saber and I was able to do that a couple of times in that play session where there were like really fun objectives, and even though I wasn't as- I didn't think I was as confident or strong with it as I was by the time I got to the second half of PARTIZAN, I just knew that it fit. And it worked. So, so yeah.

AUSTIN [continued]: And I guess also it's worth saying that like, I kind of knew from the jump that I was going to try to direct this season to a second season, and that Armour Astir would be where we would get to? I didn't know any of the mechanisms there, and so a thing that you do for me as a GM and a storyteller like this is, plant enough things that one of them could grow to the road, to the place you want to get to, right? So like you have the Exemplar parts, you have Motion, you have Perennial, you have the True Divine, you have enough stuff out there- you have the Branched. To where you could get to a slightly more fantasy version of the game you're playing. And one of those things will develop in that direction.

AUSTIN [continued]: And I knew from the- I knew in my heart of hearts from the negotiation over Past's body, that I wanted to do a second season of PARTIZAN. And like that early in the season I was like, we have to stay in this world. The world is too good. [Ali chuckles] We've built it with The Road to PARTIZAN in such a way that it has legs the way Hieron had legs. And so from that point forward I knew I wanted to work towards that. And in some ways that made the pacing in season one pretty weird, because it was going to end up- I knew I needed to get to a certain point, but also I didn't know how long it would be. And we went way longer than I thought we would go. I thought we would go a Hieron season length, and we still went a full sci-fi season length. Maybe not Twilight Mirage in episode count? But in hour-age it's pretty close, you know? Especially if you count Road to PARTIZAN, so.

KEITH: It's funny- PARTIZAN, I don't know maybe it's only me, PARTIZAN felt short to me.

AUSTIN: Yeah- no. I think it- I think the first half felt short to me. We blew through it really quick? But- I don't know. It's been a long year? It's a hard show to make.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Not having my normal routines has made it- despite being the easiest season to make content-wise, like, it's been the- one of the more stressful seasons to make because of not being able to make it the way I like to make things. And that's been tough, I'm sure that's true for everyone here that like, to some degree COVID has shifted us in ways that have been difficult on top of general life changes and every other fucking thing. Like, it's just been a little extra fuck you to have to get over, you know? I don't know. But I'm glad we're making PARTIZAN during this year.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There was a bit- Art, if you don't mind me saying this. Do you remember the thing I'm about to say about the name of the season? That you raised- maybe we shouldn't call it PARTIZAN?

ART: Oh yeah, uh huh.

AUSTIN: Because it was an election year [Ali chuckles], and it's like we're going to hear the word 'partisan' over and over and over again. And I was like you're totally right, but I think we just have to lean in. We just have to go for it and we didn't know it'd be- we certainly didn't know it'd be the year that it was. But I'm happy with it-

KEITH: I did not- ever end up seeing that come up.

AUSTIN: Yeah no one said it because we're so past it, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We're so past the idea of quote unquote "partisan politics" in America, we're at something else at this point, so. I don't know.

KEITH: I like to think our show is especially past it.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. A hundred percent. A hundred percent. Alright, any other final thoughts here or should we move on? The final question.

KEITH: We've moved on into the "is it good to be a terrorist?" realm which is a different space.

AUSTIN: It's a different space. We're not really doing the "do you think this show is too partisan?". Spam writes in, and says

**03:14:25 Hi Friends!! I've got a question for each of you.**

If this was a show or a movie and you got to orchestrate one moment where your character(s) (or NPCs in Austin's case) could do any single ridiculous thing without worrying about how it would affect play, what would they do? Like a moment to really show off how cool, (or doubt?) they were. Thank you for the wonderful season. - spam.

AUSTIN [continued]: What's the showcase moment? What's the big- you know what the way I think it is? You know how like in a cartoon there's an intro, like an in an anime or cartoon you get like the X-Men intro and it's like, Cyclops shoots like a billion sentinels with laser-

SYLVIA: Oh man.

AUSTIN: -with the concussive blast? Or like in an anime you just get some wild-ass shit. That doesn't happen in the show, but it looks sick. And so it's in the intro? That's what I wanna know from people.

SYLVIA: Oh! [Ali chuckles] I had like, a thing I wanted to do with my mech at some point? Like a fighting- like a battle thing that I never did? Which was like, I had this idea if when the Stray Dog's in the Lacrimosa Drive, it's like grabbing onto something, and still using the cannon on its back like really close range.

AUSTIN: Oooh! That's really fun.

SYLVIA: And having to like tilt its head down to fire it. But it never happened, it just never came up. But it's cool!

AUSTIN: You know! That's- in my mind, that will be in the intro, for sure.

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: God, I'm trying to think of so many NPCs, I have to pick one.

ALI: This isn't like a cool moment, but when we were talking about Phrygian before I wanted to mention and didn't get the chance to that like, I really like Phrygian? [laughs] If Broun-

KEITH [overlapping]: I'm glad people like Phrygian. Honestly the hardest thing that I've done I think.

AUSTIN: You crushed it. I loved it.

ALI [overlapping]: Phrygian was great.

KEITH: The most doubt that I've had. [Austin chuckles]

ALI: I- if Broun had not had a grief breakdown that also caused the party to break down a little bit, I would've wanted more like fun, Phrygian/Broun like labcoat moments?

AUSTIN: Oh that moment! [Ali chuckles] That car moment is so good!

ALI: When they- god, just. I really wanted overtime for like, cause that first conversation with Broun being like, oh you're a scientist. I really wanted to develop that more and it just didn't go anywhere, but we'll see.

AUSTIN: We'll see!

KEITH: We'll see. [Ali chuckles]



ART: I think if I had an X-Men opening? I would want like the, the thing that I wanted out of Sovereign Immunity that never got like on camera, is the like, if Giantkiller had existed when we started, that's the playbook I would've used?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: I wanted Sovereign Immunity to like, beat up mechs? And so I guess my opening intro moment would be Sovereign Immunity taking a mech down with a big scythe. That's the like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Imagery we- that I wanted that I didn't like get to put on screen in that way.

AUSTIN: Yeah. We were almost there a couple times and it just didn't come together. Or-! Maybe we've gotten close in like, that first Motion fight, right?

ART: Oh yeah, I'm not like mad about how it happened! It's just that would be my opening scene. Cause if it's the opening credits people think about it even if it doesn't happen you know?

AUSTIN: Totally. [Ali chuckles] That's true. That's science right there. Shit. God-

KEITH: I have an answer for your two hypotheticals. The first one, the like, the X-Men opening where we're seeing different action scenes? I would like to see a shot of Leap's Mech bashing through a wall and into a target,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But from the inside?

AUSTIN: Yes!

KEITH: Camera inside, you see coming through the wall, [Janine laughs] like the Kool Aid Man?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: I guess if you wanna think about it that way?

AUSTIN: I do.

ART: You said it! [Friends chuckle] You're like, "if you wanna go that way" but you brought up-

KEITH: It's the only time I can think of someone doing that! But it's like that but cool with a robot and they're fighting. And then the shot from an anime opening that doesn't happen, which is

something that we wouldn't put in the show, but I can explain it away by being ilke, whoever's producing the TV show gets to be in charge and make a decision that I maybe wouldn't make. But I do wanna kinda see it selfishly, is Phrygian starting out in their actual form, and then shifting down into war form, and then shifting down into the like, the humanoid shape.

AUSTIN: Mmmm. Yeah yeah yeah.

KEITH: Like going from the biggest to the smallest thing.

AUSTIN: And then like sipping tea or something, that's what would happen in the anime intro that never happens.

KEITH: [chuckles] Or all- thank you Ali for reminding me that they're- a scientist because I forgot. [Ali laughs] Putting on a lab coat. Putting on a lab coat.

AUSTIN: Right, yes. Yes.

KEITH: Or like adjusting a name tag. [Ali giggles]

ALI: Phrygian with like one of those like, pocket, those plastic pen pocket protectors on their- [bursts into laughter with the rest of the Friends]

AUSTIN: God that's so funny! Yeah.

KEITH: No one's told them that those suck.

AUSTIN: No one said you look like a nerd, because what you look like is writhing cables! [Friends laugh]

KEITH: Yeah, too scary to be a nerd.

ART: Are you gonna tell him [apprehensively whispers] he looks like a nerd? [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: Anyone else?

JACK: Clem in a parade.

AUSTIN: Ahh. Clem in a parade.

JACK: At the head of a parade. [Janine chuckles, acknowledgement sounds from the rest] Just like, treated with the adoration and respect that she perceives as her birthright. I think there's like ticker tape going you know, and she's riding on the back of a mech and saluting and like-

JANINE: Does she have like the Disney wave down with I think it's the two, with the full arm and three with the wrist?

JACK: Yeah, I'm trying to do it now. [Austin chuckles] And this is an audio medium [Janine chuckles]. Yes, definitely. And then I think Kalar is killing a Divine.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure.

JACK: I think something that Kalar desperately wants to do, and is gunning for pretty constantly is spotting a Divine and killing them? I don't know if- I don't know if it ever happened? Did point at the Divine and say see that big thing in the bay I'm gonna kill the fucker or something?

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Something like that. Yeah.

JACK: I feel like that's very consistent with- and I think in the intro he's doing that.

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah, that makes sense.

KEITH: Putting a cigarette out on the broken remains of a giant mech-

JACK: Yeah. Drawing, smoking a cigarette and killing gods.

ALI: You know what Broun needs? More scenes when they're in their mech with that big jewel that looks like ocean light?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah! Those jewels! [Ali chuckles] The Memoria! Yeah, uh huh.

KEITH: What is an ocean light?

ALI: Well it was like, it was like a gem that was in their mech that like when it glowed or when it was activated or whatever it would like make it- like you know when your- you know when ocean light- [starts laughing]

KEITH: I remember the gem, the thing I don't know is ocean light.

JACK: You mean like a light seen through the ocean?

ALI: Yeah! Or like when you-

KEITH: Do you mean like a lighthouse?

ALI: When you're looking at a wall, and like the light is moving like waves, like the ocean,

JACK: Ohhh!

KEITH: Oh! Like a lamp with a thing on it.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: You're introducing me to a new image in my head.

ALI [overlapping]: I feel like that happens in real life-

JANINE [overlapping]: It's really big on Instagram now aren't they?

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: It's like a spinning night light that has-

ALI: You'll see them, any tweet-? Any tweet-

JANINE: Like water reflection-

KEITH: Any tweet.

AUSTIN: Any tweet.

JACK: Any tweet?

ALI: I feel like water with light all through it also actually does that, right?

JACK: Yeah, sure right?

JANINE [overlapping]: Yeah, yeah it's like if you go to like a public indoor pool when the lights are off but the pool lights are on,

ALI: Yes.

KEITH: Right.

JANINE: You can get that effect. And also, Ali is right about saying like any tweet, when people's tweets go viral right now, that's like the number one product that they're getting paid to rep in the replies, is these water lamp things.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: I appreciate that these things are popular enough to call them an ocean light, but I would never see like a flashlight shining through an aquarium and go, oh! An ocean light! [Ali and Art laugh]

JACK: Ocean lights! Let me just write ocean light in the inspiration chat here.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Yeah, just save that name back, pocket it.

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: That's a good name.

AUSTIN: I have an answer for that- oh go ahead, you go ahead.

JANINE: I was just gonna say for Thisbe I have an answer, and just- I like, I don't like my answer? But I have it.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So, you know. I think for Thisbe it's one of those anime moments where- I know these are very common. They're commonly used for a character who is like, it's the scene where they show how like you're- really elegant and precise the character is, in a show that is still about fighting? I regret that the best example that comes to mind is Black Butler?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But like, a scene where it is just very much like, maybe fighting in a garden or something, and absolutely none of the plants getting touched? But whatever she's fighting getting completely torn up, or she rips a chunk off but then catches it before it can crush a rose or whatever, like that kid of shit.

AUSTIN: Totally. I think mine is actually a modification of something that got cut. Which is the first time Motion shows up and we have that Black Century reveal, there is a bit where I describe- and part of it's still in there. I describe the camera revealing the kind of the rest of Black Century in the hills and plains beyond in the Barranca beyond, when she arrives and is like coming over the hill with the kind of vanguard of the Black Century? And I describe it- and this is still in the episode. Of the kind of like, zoom out and scale of how many more behind her? But in the original cut of that, I talk about how that vision turns a sickly monochrome and reveals the kind of like, all of the weight of the Principality behind her and the Black Century? We had to cut it for musical timing reasons.

JACK: Really?

AUSTIN: Yeah. A hundred percent. A have a note from you.

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: Jack, sorry, it's fine! We- I ended up-

JACK: No, we probably cut it for a good reason. I'm just, you know-

AUSTIN: We did. We did, it happens, you know. And we went back and forth on it, you sent me a couple cuts, I was happy with the cut that we went with. But- and I ended up coming back to it you know, the next time Motion showed up, post-Kingdom, when y'all fought her in Auspice, and there's the scene of like seeing the expansion out of Motion's forces across Partizan and then across the galaxy and stuff like that. And that was supposed to be echoed first, as soon as you saw Motion. And what I would do in the anime intro or the cartoon intro, would be Black Century shows up, you know the Motion beat hits. We kind of like begin to move past Motion to see the kind of like rows and rows and columns of the Black Century behind her, and the camera speeds up and leaves Partizan behind. And then we see space, but then in space we kind of get the like, just the face cut ins of like, ghostly figures of Crysanth Kesh, the Princept- Cynosure Kesh Princept, and then Dahlia way in the distance, kind of turning and like cautiously looking you know, over their shoulder. Not even cautiously, but almost like coyly looking over their shoulder. And that is where you would see in a way that would infuriate the viewer because we never get to Dahlia. We would see Integrity kind of clamp onto their back, revealing that they have Integrity the whole season. And then it's like- where's Dahlia? Why are we not getting to Dahlia yet? And the answer is because we'll get to Dahlia some time in season 2. But that would be the like, the way that Char shows up in the intro to Double Zeta and then is never in Double Zeta even once for a second? [Ali chuckles] We would get that big view of the rest of the galaxy hanging over everything kind of weighing in on the Black Century and Motion. So. That's mine.

JACK: Damn. Listen, if you're Netflix or anybody who's making a- has a lot of money. Contact us.

AUSTIN: Please do.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: You don't even have to make a show. We could just have the money.

AUSTIN: Yeah you could just give us the money.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: For the rights and then not do anything with it. That sounds hard- it sounds hard to make a show.

JACK: Yeah! You would still have the-

KEITH: But it sounds good to have the rights to a show.

AUSTIN: It does! It does sound good to have the rights to a show. So hey, if you have money and want rights, you let us know! [Friends laugh]

JACK: If you really want to make a show.

ART: Yeah I'd love for someone to make the show. My second choice is for someone to buy the rights and not make the show.

AUSTIN: Yeah! I'd want to watch the show. I'm curious about it, how people would adapt it.

JACK: Oh yeah!

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: They'd have to figure out a second season at some point, probably before we did- eh no, at this rate they wouldn't. At this rate- we probably three seasons of a show right now, right? We got a lot-

JACK: Probably!

AUSTIN: -of content in this one season.

JACK: Totally! There's Road to PARTIZAN too which is done as some sort of like,

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah! Some OVAs, you know? Let's like- yeah.

JACK: Or Animatrix, let's get different directors to do the-

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. Exactly.

JANINE: We got a lot of slow pans and stuff. So that eats up some time [chuckles].

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah definitely. Anyway.

ALI: We have a whole tournament arc. We could just have the big-

JACK: There's a whole tournament arc!

AUSTIN: We didn't even-! I'm so mad we didn't get to do-!

JACK [overlapping]: There's a beach episode,

AUSTIN: If that's the- if I could redo one thing this season, it would be pausing Kingdom to just do the Olympics in some other system.

JACK [overlapping]: [chuckles] The Olympics! There's a great- one of the great callbacks though which is in the finale and I can't remember who it is, but someone sees Thisbe and goes, has that robot won the Olympics? [Friends laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Definitely. Definitely. Alright, I think that's going to do it for us. Thank you everyone who joined us. I don't know why I left this in here but [tinyurl.com/freebluff](https://tinyurl.com/freebluff) is how you can listen to all of Bluff City season 1, which still is- I love PARTIZAN, Bluff City season 1 might be my favorite-

JACK [overlapping]: Good show.

AUSTIN: It's a great show.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: It's fantastic.

ALI: Honestly if you just listen to PARTIZAN and you're like, that's really good, I wish I had more Friends at the Table to listen to. You do.

AUSTIN: Oh my god.

ALI: And Bluff City rules.

AUSTIN: Bluff City's so good.

ALI: Go check it out.

AUSTIN: So much to listen to. We do know some people jumped on board for the first time with PARTIZAN? I'm so happy people did that. I'm so glad that we got to make the show this year. Like I said it has been a light- it has been a life raft for me in a very turbulent year. So, just for my own selfish sake, I'm glad we got to make it. I hope this year is easier. Regardless of the show, I don't care about the show so much as people's lives and everything so. So you know. Thanks for listening, thanks for supporting us. Anyone have final PARTIZAN thoughts before we wrap up?



JACK: Thank you for making it with us Austin!

AUSTIN: Totally!

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Thank you for making it with me! It's like. I got to sit down and say "I wanna make a season about mechs- no. *Really about mechs.*" And y'all came along with me and that shit, so. You know. It's exciting.

JACK: We got something fun to do next that we're not gonna say anything about! But I'm excited!

AUSTIN: I'm excited we've finished- what I'll say is, we've finished- I just did conversations with all of you about your characters and the various kind of corners of the world that the characters you're playing help to define? And help to fill in? And it was really fun doing those? Those will be a Drawing Maps bonus. So there's seven of those coming. And those were really fun because I started without any idea about names or anything, and now I have a lot of stuff to play with and synthesize before we sit down and do like a worldbuilding episode proper! And so look forward to those things. We're there. We're in pre-production. We're in production now in a real way I guess I would say. We're just not at the season yet. So you know. Look forward to that. We'll have more to say on what that is in the next month or so hopefully, you know?

AUSTIN [continued]: I think that's gonna do it for us. Any other final thoughts? Alright. time.is is the address.

ART: Oh right.

KEITH: Closing time.is loop on PARTIZAN.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

ART: It's a decent ending PARTIZAN quote.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: Do you wanna read it to us, Art?

JANINE: Is it-? Is it- [chuckles]

ART: I mean. For a time.is quote.

JANINE: Read it.

ART: Time changes everything. Except something within us, which is always surprised by change.

AUSTIN: Sovereign Immunity, said that. [Ali chuckles]

SYLVIA: It being from Thomas Hardy does make just think it's from the guy who was in Venom.  
[Janine laughs]

ART: That's not-

KEITH: Is that not?

ART: That's not who it is, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, no.

ANDREW: No that's not who it is.

ART: Thomas Hardy starred in the movie Venom.

AUSTIN: Yeah,

ALI: Yeah. [Dre sighs]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. It's actually his character in Inception said that. [someone spits] And then he said, you got to dream bigger darling, and then shot a grenade launcher, it was sick. It was sick as shit!

ALI: Yeah... that ruled...

JACK: He was sitting backwards on a chair at that time! [Andrew laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: This is honestly a really good quote from an actor, I mean. I say as someone who is basically an actor for a living now. I don't know what- [Friends laugh]

ALI: That is so weird! Anyway.

AUSTIN: Anyway. Let me look at time.is again.

ALI: 5 seconds-

AUSTIN: Sure, 5 seconds.

[claps]

AUSTIN: Hoo... [Ali giggles]

ANDREW: Not a good one.

AUSTIN: 15, 15.

KEITH [overlapping]: That was first one was really good-

AUSTIN: 15 seconds.

JANINE: 15, 15, 15!

[claps]

**03:32:47 [MUSIC - "TANAGER. PERFECT. TOUCHPAPER." starts]**

[music ends]

[t/s note: goodbye partizan!!]