

## **Gathering Information 11: Work A Work**

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### **Introduction**

**Ali:** Hello, everybody, and welcome to Gathering Information, your podcast about setting the table for Friends at the Table. This is your... eh... March 2024 episode. We're getting closer to being caught up. I am joined today by Art Martinez-Tebbel.

**Art:** Hi. I don't do intros on Patreon shows, right? That's my policy?

**Ali:** [laughing] You don't have to.

**Art:** If you're here, you probably know where to find me, and if you don't, you've probably chosen that, and, you know, respect.

**Ali:** [laughing continues] And Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey, if you're listening to this, are you also getting access to Media Club Plus bonus episodes, [cross] or are those on a different tier?

**Ali:** [cross] You better be.

**Dre:** Okay, we're gonna record our second bonus episode for *JoJo's* tomorrow.

**Ali:** Tomorrow, oh man. [**Dre:** Yeah.] What are you doing for the second one?

**Dre:** Uh, let me go look, [Ali laughs] ‘cuz I don’t remember. They’re all season 3. [**Ali:** Okay.] Season 3, episode 10: “Let’s Go Eat Some Italian Food.” And then episodes 21 and 22, which are “Yoshikage Kira Wants to Live a Quiet Life” part 1 and part 2.

**Ali:** Oh, man...

**Dre:** I still have not recovered from — ‘cuz I haven’t watched any *JoJo*’s past season 2.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Dre:** I’ve not recovered from seeing the ending credits come up and then just [Savage Garden](#) starting to play. [cross] I lost my whole fucking mind.

**Ali:** [cross] Yeah! [laughs] It’s so good. Season 3 is so good. I should join you guys tomorrow.

**Dre:** Yeah, sure, fuck it, I’unno. [Ali and Dre laughing]

**Ali:** Hey, everybody, I’m here now. I really like season 3, I think that’s my favorite of the... the bit! Um... Hey, everybody. How are you feeling about Friends at the Table? How... what’s... [laughing] what’s going on? [Dre laughing] Dre, how are you doing? [cross] Oh, Dre.

**Dre:** [cross] Ahh... you know, is there a specific [Ali and Dre laughing] that you want to seek comment on?

**Ali:** Sure. I mean, everybody I think is still going to be gripping with the loss of Figure, but, you know, when this is released, Levi will have already been introduced, so we can all [**Dre:** Okay, yeah.] get into that. We can get into everything that’s been recorded, basically, which was our... like, character building session of Questlandia at this point? So, yeah, I knew that [laughing] people would want to hear about the Figure stuff from your perspective, Dre, and then I knew that people would want to hear about it from your perspective, Art, because I think that there was like a through-line here, in terms of your response to Figure dying.

**Art:** Well, it's a much stronger response behind-the-scenes than in-front-of-the-scenes, [All laughing] but if you wanna pull that curtain back, I will, too.

**Ali:** Sure, this is... we're... this is behind-the-curtain, as it were.

**Art:** Alright. Well, I never know what level of [kayfabe](#) to keep on any level of Friends at the Table. [Ali laughing]

**Dre:** [quoting] "Don't work yourself into the shoot, Mark."

**Ali:** [laughing continues] In a long standing tradition of talking about wrestling on this show, Art, do you want to explain what "kayfabe" means? [Dre erupts with laughter]

**Art:** Uh huh. "Kayfabe" is Carney slang for "fake."

**Ali:** Oh!

**Dre:** Oh, you gotta protect the business.

**Art:** Yeah, it's a carney variation of Pig Latin for "fake," and in this context it means, like, 'keeping the story going for [Dre: Oh...] people who might not be smartened up, a.k.a., jabroni Marks. [Ali laughing] [cross] And we're generally referring...

**Dre:** [cross] So it's, yeah, it's like, "ix-nay on the kayfabe." Oh, okay, yeah, yeah, alright.

**Art:** Yeah. And, additionally, what we're referencing — well, it's not quite Pig Latin, but it's a Carney variation of Pig Latin. We are referencing a Hulk Hogan tweet, and Hulk Hogan's a piece of shit, but let me get the full...

**Dre:** Yes.

**Ali:** Oh, uh, yeah, someone has to read this tweet to me every day, and it's jabroni... yeah, you find it. Let's see who finds it first.

**Art:** [reading] "Goodnight, HULKAMANIACS and jabronie marks without a life that don't know it a work when you work a work and work yourself into a shoot,marks - Hulk

Hogan, October 16th, 2011.” [Dre and Ali laughing] But in, like, a really profound way, this is the greatest tweet of all time.

**Dre:** It’s up there.

**Art:** And I’m sorry it came from such a repugnant person, but we are all constantly working [laughing] ourselves into shoots. Your brain is a ‘work yourself into a shoot’ machine. **[Dre: True.]** I think that’s why we have Dre here, who’s an expert in this, who can say with authority, that that’s true. [all laughing]

**Dre:** Aw, man, I can’t wait to tell my clients tomorrow that their trauma has worked theirselves [sic] into a shoot.

**Art:** But, like, that, sometimes it is, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, no, [all laughing] listen, like, you’re not wrong, is the thing. I talk to people a lot about how our brains are basically bad pattern recognition machines.

**Ali:** Wait, but, what is “work a work” mean? [laughs] Or is that just him?

**Dre:** Oh, so, like a ‘work’ is like you’re doing... you’re following the script, right? **[Ali: Yeah.]** And then a ‘shoot’ is when it becomes real.

**Art:** So, if you, like, if you pretend on your pretending, you will end up hurting your feelings in real life.

**Ali:** Oh... kay...

**Dre:** Or if you get, like, if you lose yourself to the character, you’ll end up getting your feelings hurt and you’ll get actual mad.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Ali:** [very quietly] Right, when you’re a jabroni Mark and you work a work into a shoot, Mark... [laughing, normal volume] Okay, yeah, I get it. I think everybody at home does, too.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** We all overthink things sometimes, and we're like 'oh, that's dumb, I shouldn't think about that,' and then you just keep doing it.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah. The season of Media Club Plus that will never exist, and should, is just the entire history of American professional wrestling. But it's beyond the scope of something like this, and it's been done by a lot of people — and done by people, frankly, worse than us — but, who I don't think any of us have the time or energy to do. [**Dre:** Yeah.] So, this is that.

**Ali:** What if we just did a Media Club Plus on, like, *Lucha Underground*?

**Dre:** Oh, hell yeah. [Ali laughing] I never finished that, but...

**Art:** Yeah, I'm a little worried it's too narrow, but we can sure try.

**Dre:** You know, that's got Kentucky Zone... well, now he's Ricochet, what was he in *Lucha*? Was it Prince Puma?

**Art:** Prince Puma, yeah.

**Ali:** Oh, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** I mean, it had Swerve in it... [cross] a lot of top guys.

**Dre:** [cross] Johnny Mundo.

**Art:** Johnny Mundo.

**Ali:** [cross] Isn't it now Johnny Television?

**Dre:** [cross] Dominik Mysterio. What'd you say, Ali?

**Ali:** Johnny Mundo is now Johnny Television? Is that true?

**Art:** He's just Johnny wherever he is at the time.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Okay. [erupts with laughter] Sure. Sure, sure, sure, sure. Okay, well. [laughing continues]

**Art:** [chuckling] Don't work yourself into a shoot with the Johnny stuff.

**Dre:** Yeah. And then there's also Johnny Wrestling, but that's a different guy, right?

**Art:** That's a different guy, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah. That's Johnny Gargano.

**Ali:** Okay, sure, okay, fair, okay. I'm up to speed. I feel like everybody —

**Dre:** Oh, God.

**Ali:** Huh?

**Dre:** I forgot that, like, Brian Cage was on *Lucha Underground*. [Ali laughs] That's where I first saw him.

**Ali:** I haven't watched it all the way through. I haven't done that.

**Dre:** Me neither.

**Art:** It gets... the first two seasons are very good and then it sort of gets worse.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Dre:** I think, yeah, I just watched the first two se— I might have even finished the second season, I'm not sure.

## 00:08:16 – A Bro Check-in

**Ali:** Sure. Anyway, [laughing] but yeah, Dre, how have you been, I —

**Dre:** Oops.

**Ali:** — oh, I, so... I don't expect people to listen to this show — I don't expect the *cast* to listen to this show. But, the last episode that I did with Austin, we kind of went into the sort of reaction to Figure's death, and the sort of, like, change in how that scene ended up going. And I hadn't really checked in with you about, like, where — how you came to that, how are you feeling? How are you doing? [laughing] We're doing a Dre check-in, we're doing a bro check-in. This is your bro check. [Art laughing]

**Dre:** [laughing] 'Sup, bro? How are the vibes, bro?

**Ali:** But, yeah, I guess to refer to like the decision that I'm talking about. It was the sort of, like, Figure makes eye contact with Future and either gets obliterated or, um... I think the other option was, like, shackled in, like, a Clem-similar, sort of thing? [Dre: Yeah.] I guess, not that, I guess it was just soul. I guess it was just, it was not physical, it was just... not, [cross] whatever's not physical — spiritual.

**Dre:** [cross] Well, yeah, I mean, it's... yeah.

**Ali:** So, yeah. Hi. [laughs]

**Dre:** Hi.

**Ali:** What was... I guess, what was going through your head there? What ended up making you, sort of like, move away from the initial, like, 'I would like Figure's spirit to live on' vs. not? How are you doing?

**Dre:** Boy, I mean, I basically remember the conversation with Austin that night being like, 'hey, I can't make any decisions right now, because I am too upset,' like a mix of like, sad and angry. Like, not angry at anybody, just like... 'Motherfucker. Finally my hubris has caught up to me.' [cross] 'Cuz I think at the t—

**Ali:** [cross] It was just...

**Dre:** Oh, go ahead.

**Ali:** I was just gonna say, it was really like, just seeing a game over screen, [laughing] on like...

**Dre:** Yeah, but like, you don't actually know why you died, right? It's just like... 'well, if you hit this button three times, you get the game over screen.' And you're like, mashing to try to beat the boss, and then suddenly you get the game over screen. [Dre laughing] Um... So, yeah, that sucked. That sucked. But, again, I think, like, if we had, like, tried to force me to make a decision in that moment, I probably was leaning towards, like, Figure... may— like, basically Figure still being able to be, like, saveable in some way. But the more I thought about it, the more I was like, 'no, that's gross.' That is more a reflection on me just not wanting to let go of this character that means a lot to me, than it is like me thinking about, like, story, or what would actually be, like... good. [chuckles, Ali laughs] Like, what would actually be like, honoring that character as opposed to just, like, what I want to leave the door open for? Does that make sense?

**Ali:** Yeah, no, absolutely. I think that when you look at some of the themes around Figure and, like, what they ended up overcoming with Clem, it would have maybe sucked. [bursts with laughter]

**Dre:** Yeah, no, it would have super sucked! [Art laughs]

**Ali:** Yeah, but it's so like, [sorrowfully] 'I can't believe that happened.' We spent so long knowing what happened and that [laughs] it did.

**Dre:** Yeah. Somewhere — I need to go find — I can't remember who did it... The person who did the Cohost post, where they like, broke down the map [**Art** and **Ali:** Oh yeah.] and the odds of like, how long it was gonna take for Figure to statistically be more likely to die from rolling three 6s than not.

**Art:** That fuckin'... really surprised me. If you'd asked me how long it was gonna be, I would have guessed much longer.



**Dre:** Yeah, me too! I was like ‘aw, I’ll totally make it through the season.’ [Ali laughs]  
And, really, I was like one session away, man.

**Ali:** Ah, well... it’s... it’s interesting...

**Dre:** [cross] Well.

**Art:** [cross] Yeah.

**Ali:** Two things are happening here, right, is that the season ended because Figure died, and then also... [laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah. Yeah that’s true. It did be like that. [laughing]

**Ali:** [cross] It was already... it was ending, so, you know, the things we’ll never know.

**Art:** Well, I mean, I don’t think we had fifty more episodes in if Figure had lived. But, it definitely...

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah, it’s...

**Art:** [cross] It definitely was the ‘wrap it up’ music. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Yes. If Figure lived, I could see us doing like, two more arcs maybe.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, it would have started to be a problem for me.

**Ali:** Oh. Oh, because... Ooh, who would you have played if you would have been compromised? Who would you have been, as the most tired person on PALISADE?  
[laughing]

**Art:** The most tired... the most ‘on their travel mic’ person on PALISADE?

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Art:** I don't know, probably just still Clem, just like a worse... like, instead of like, confident Clem, just like... regular Clem. You know, regular Clem I feel like is like me when I haven't slept for three days.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Yeah. [laughing]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Art:** I mean, I hope — I hope... that's true. [laughing with Ali]

**Ali:** Um, yeah, that's interesting. How are you feeling about Clem these days? How's that going?

**Art:** I mean, I think I've said before that I'm just super uncomfortable playing Clem for like, character ownership reasons that I understand are ultimately silly. That, like... 'I shouldn't play Clem, Jack should play Clem,' is how I feel, and it's taken me a while to feel like I'm there, but I'm feeling as good as ever about the work. I had... this might be a bit different question — I had bigger ideas for Clem that we didn't end up going with.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. I think you spoke about that a little bit on the episode, right, with like the... the going after Future stuff?

**Art:** Was that on the episode?

**Dre and Ali:** I think so...

**Art:** Well, I'm gonna tell you... I don't listen to main feed episodes that I'm in.

**Ali:** Sure, I understand. I do understand that. I think that you said it really off-hand though, so if you wanna like... go into that a little bit more, I would love to, because I think that maybe some people might be surprised to hear that, or would love to know where you're coming from with that.

**Art:** Yeah, my thought was that Clem would be very upset about what happened to Figure and want — and, of course, Clem knows that it's not the real Gur Sevraq. And then Clem would be like, 'I'm not putting up with this anymore,' and then Clem would

wage some giant war against the now-weakened — Future weakened by the rest of the chaos of the Mirage. And then Clem would go for Future, but it didn't work for a bunch of reasons. It's not super consistent with Clem's character, it's sort of just more consistent with my desire to break shit at the end of the season.

**Ali:** Okay, sure, yeah.

**Art:** And, which I mean I think is fine, I love that for me, but it's... [Ali laughs] and it's... it doesn't... it's not super conducive to a finale that involves everyone else.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Yeah, fair. [laughing]

**Art:** And, at one point, I pitched like an interstitial, like we could do, like, just a little bit of Clem and Future, and maybe that's like a set of intros or a gap-week, especially because it looked, for a little while, like we would need a gap week, maybe not from your perspective, but from my perspective it was like... 'What the hell is—? Are we out of cast?' [Ali laughs] But maybe you were always like, 'no, this is gonna be fine, we're nailing this.' But, from outside of production, I was like, 'I know there's no more.' [Art laughs]

**Ali:** Yeah, well, it was uh... a little difficult. Yeah, it was a little touch-and-go there, in terms of being like, 'hey, what *are* we doing next? What game were we playing? What do we wanna, uh, what's happening?' But I think we've made the right choices.

**Art:** [cross] I think so too, and...

**Dre:** [cross] We were talking about a time shift at one point, too, weren't we?

**Ali:** We were a little bit, yeah...

**Dre:** It was never like, it wasn't like, we almost did it, and then at the last second — but I know it was something that was like, on the table.

**Ali:** [cross] Yeah, I mean —

**Art:** [cross] Yeah — oh, sorry.

**Ali:** No, you can go ahead.

**Art:** Well, 'cuz we have this like, situation where the stakes have changed and the conflict as we have been experiencing it is sort of irrelevant. [Ali chuckles] And you can see us sort of grappling with that with what's... what we've already recorded, [holding back laughter] I'm sure you'll see us grappling with the stuff we haven't recorded that you might have listened to before you hear this. The cause and the... antagonists... [laughs]

**Ali:** The Bilats; the Authority?

**Art:** Yeah, the Bilats and the Blue Channel. That doesn't feel as significant anymore because the Bilats are going to lose. The Mirage is too big and their forces are too separated and we can't have a compelling narrative with, 'well, can the Bilats do it? Because the answer is simply yes.'

**Ali:** [laughing] Fair. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was a little touch-and-go there, I went through a lot of different games before we chose Questlandia. There was a little bit there where we were thinking of doing Microscope, too. There was a time there where I was like, 'you know what, instead of finding a big finale game, we're gonna have everybody choose their own solo-journaling game, and then, [Ali and Art laughing] they'll figure it out, you go play it on your own, and then I'll just put it together.' Which would have been great, but very time consuming. [laughing] I don't think... that would have worked out in the end. But, yeah.

**Art:** But, I could have gotten my campaign — Clem's campaign against Future [Ali: Sure.] in that scenario, probably. But, again, it doesn't super make sense. Clem, I was pitching as like, well, you know, 'cuz Clem doesn't care about Figure, but Clem cares about... Clem, and I couldn't really make it — I couldn't square the circle.

**Ali:** Okay, sure, yeah. Yeah, but it —

**Art:** Well, I would still be interested in a Clem-Gur confrontation, but I don't think Clem is clever enough for that to be fun.

**Ali:** [laughing] I mean, there's — the option will always be open in Questlandia, because Future is still a big, open... open question mark, there.

**Art:** Well, Clem's not getting any smarter. [chuckles]

**Ali:** Mhm... [laughs] I see. That's too bad. But, yeah, I mean, I am curious to see sort of where it goes. I think it's interesting that you say that, like... Clem doesn't care about Future because it felt like it was like a, um, almost like a revenge response to that at first.

**Art:** Figure. But, yeah. Yeah, well, it's because I could make... I could make Clem care about Figure, but the existing text says that she doesn't. [Ali laughs] And to have that kind of change in the finale is, you know, not always the best. Sometimes, that is good, you know, but sometimes it feels like, 'somehow Palpatine has returned,' right? You have to make those things feel earned and I don't think that it does feel earned with Clem...

**Ali:** Sure, sure, sure, sure.

**Art:** ... who has not been on the screen a ton, and so you can't really justify any sort of change.

## 00:21:30 – Breaking Shit

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, I do want to also go back to a thing that you said earlier, which is that at the end of a season you like to break things. [erupts with laughter]

**Art:** Uh huh. Hell yeah.

**Ali:** Can we hear a little more about that?

**Art:** Yeah, I mean, not every season, historically. And, I mean, this might be a post-mortem question, but I regret the cavaliness with which I threw away Sovereign Immunity at the end of PARTIZAN, I sort of wish that he was still out there.

**Ali:** Okay, sure.

**Art:** I don't think it would have changed my decision to not be a player character this season, but, like... Closing that door has been worse than I thought it would be. But I don't like to be precious about my ideas, and so, when we're winding down the season, I think it's more conducive to my process to just start throwing stuff away, [Ali laughs] rather than holding on to it for next time. You know, do everything you can, and then come up with something new, don't try to hold on to something. You know, and not all the time, right? You know, Hieron I knew was a big story the whole time and didn't do that.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Art:** But, sometimes... sometimes you need to just, you know, give yourself a clean slate.

**Ali:** Yeah, I'm trying... [laughs]

**Art:** Do stuff that makes people say, 'Oh, shit!'

**Ali:** I think you've succeeded in that, at least. I think we've all succeeded in that, at the very least, in individual ways, this entire season. If you can give PARTIZAN one... [laughing] one credit, it's that.

**Art:** Yeah, I have no idea, anymore, how PALISADE is doing. You know? I know how, like, I know in, like, the larger scale, I know, like, what... I check the downloads every few months and everything, but like, I don't know what the temperature is outside of us.

**Ali:** Yeah, I don't really know either. I, like, I see fan art. People seem to like it that way. And there was the — some of the response to the Faction Game stuff a little bit, which we sort of became aware of. But I feel like it's been good to not, sort of...

**Art:** Well, no, I hope people are liking it, I just don't want to live in that feeling.

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, there's been a... a healthy separation, I would say. It feels a little better not knowing than knowing does. But, yeah. How are you feeling about PALISADE?

**Art:** Me?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** I like it and I'm also ready to be done.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughing]

**Dre:** Man, yeah, yeah!

**Art:** Uh huh. I'm sure you are, too, as you — any time I'm in my second character sheet, it's like, well shit. [Dre and Ali laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] Three seasons in a row, Art. Yeah.

**Ali:** [cross] It's definitely a third for you.

**Art:** Yeah. But like, I'm very excited for what we're doing next, I'm super ready. I'm not doing as well with not having a fixed character as I thought I would. I'm very happy I had the extra time to work on the extra stuff that I got to work on because I didn't have a fixed character, but I'm ready to be — I'm ready to feel like I'm on the show a little more, I say as I'm moving into a time when I won't be on the show a little less, but then much much more.

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, I'm ready to — I'm excited to see who your next guy will be. It's always nice to have a guy.

**Art:** Great to have a guy.

**Ali:** [cross] Speaking of...

**Dre:** [cross] We...

**Art:** [cross] It's happened to like, twelve guys.

**Dre:** Yeah. We have not said or hinted at anything as far as next season, right?

**Ali:** We have not.

**Art:** [cross] No, and I think we should start.

**Dre:** [cross] Okay.

**Art:** But, not here.

**Dre:** Not here. [laughs]

**Ali:** Uh huh. Yeah. Speaking of having your own little guy, Dre, how's... how'd you come to Levi?

**Art:** How's your little guy, Dre? [laughing]

**Ali:** Yeah, how's your little guy doing?

**Dre:** [chuckles] How's my little guy!? Calling him a little guy is kind of appropriate.

**Ali:** [laughing] I guess, how tall is Levi? Is Levi a little guy? No, Levi has to be...

**Dre:** I don't think s— eh, Levi's probably an average guy. [cross] Probably like...

**Ali:** [cross] Is Levi ripped?

**Dre:** Yes. Levi is ripped.

**Ali:** [laughing] Okay. Okay. Okay.

**Art:** But you can be a little ripped guy.

**Dre:** Yeah, that's in these days. That's what all the kids on TikTok are posting about.

**Ali:** Little ripped guys?



**Dre:** Yeah, just go — well, it's lil, like L-I-L. But, yeah, just go on there and search #lilrippedguys. I don't know if that's actually a thing.

**Ali:** [laughing] I'm gonna do that.

**Dre:** [laughing] I don't wanna... Listen, I don't wanna work into a shoot, brother. [all laughing] I don't know if #lilrippedguys is actually trending on TikTok right now, but...

**Ali:** [cross] Oh, God...

**Art:** [cross] Oh, I love it, though.

**Dre:** Uh, he — well, here, let's... well, I wonder how — do we know how tall Cori is?

**Ali:** Oh, I don't know... I remember height was a thing with Hazard, so, [laughing] I think Sylvi has been... [cross] reluctant to say that... Cori's height.

**Dre:** [cross] I'm messaging Sylvi to ask her how tall Cori is.

**Art:** How tall is Hazard?

**Ali:** Why does it matter how... well, I re— Sylvi was like, 'Hazard's really short, like 6 feet.' [Dre and Ali laughing] [cross] We were all like, 'what are you talking about!?'

**Art:** [cross] Oh, that's funny. It's 'cuz everyone on our show is super tall.

**Dre:** It's true. It's true. I will take our crew, our podcast crew in a deathmatch against most any other podcast crew.

**Ali:** Wow, [cross] a deathmatch.

**Art:** [cross] Wow.

**Dre:** [cross] We're some tall, broad motherfuckers.

**Ali:** I'm 5'3".

**Dre:** [cross] That's just average.

**Art:** [cross] But it's just you. [Ali laughing] You look at a cast shot, it's...

**Ali:** That's fair, that's fair, yeah, that makes sense.

**Dre:** But, like, I trust you can throw hands, Ali.

**Ali:** Okay, sure, I appreciate that. Why does it matter how [laughing] how tall Cori is?

**Dre:** Uh, because, uh... however tall Cori is, minus one or two inches for Levi, probably.

**Ali:** Oh, okay. You don't want to get yourself into a kabadon situation?

**Dre:** A *what*?

**Ali:** The, when you... [laughing] That's the pose when like — I'm gonna gender this, it doesn't have to be gendered. But when the guy puts his hand on the wall to, like, pin a girl [cross] between him and... a kabadon. Yeah.

**Dre:** [cross] Oh... Okay. Gotcha.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** And then it's... okay, that's what that one meme is with the two ladies [cross] that are, like, posed. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay.

**Ali:** [cross] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh huh, uh huh.

**Dre:** I'd never heard of that before. That's fun.

**Ali:** [laughing] I feel like that's more difficult to do if you're shorter, but I'm sure there is many a meme out there that challenge this — that idea.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Ali:** [laughing] That's really funny, though. So, shorter than Cori, importantly.

**Dre:** Yeah. I mean, I guess unless Cori is like — If Sylvi is like, 'oh, Cori's 5'5'," then it's like, okay, then I — they're the same height.

**Ali:** This is — these are how decisions are made, look at this. Let's talk about Levi for a little bit and how you, you know, it's a difficult time to make a new character, I know. How'd that process go?

**Dre:** Um... bad until it went well? [Ali and Art laughing]

**Ali:** Sure.

**Art:** I really respect you for doing it. If it had happened to me, I would have been like... [cross] I'll see y'all next season, 'cuz like... [Ali laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] I was... I was 90% sure that I was just gonna play... ah, now I can't remember her name... this is, this is where... I'm gonna look up Road to PALISADE episodes... 'Cuz I was basically — I was gonna pick up my, one of my Road to PALISADE characters that, the show, Last Shooting? That, yes.

**Art:** [cross] Oh, sure.

**Ali:** [cross] That one was also Cori, right?

**Dre:** No...

**Ali:** Is it another C, though?

**Dre:** Let me, uh... [searching for name while singing nonsense syllables] Uh, Cor'rina Corrine is who I was gonna play, and then Misericorde was who Sylvi played. So I was probably gonna play her — not probably, that's who I was gonna play, because I was just very much in a place where I was like, [pouty] 'I don't fuckin' wanna [Ali erupts with laughter] make another character I'll be too sad.' Which is fine, I shouldn't make fun of myself for being in that place. And then I just kind of like, I think — I don't, I don't think it happened organically, I think it was just like I randomly thought in my head, and I was like, 'wait, how long has it been since Twilight Mirage,' and I asked Austin and Austin was like, 'Iunno it's like five thousand years,' and I was like, okay. So — 'cuz I had the idea of like, 'what if I played, like, Cascabel and Even's grandkid?' And then, Austin was like, 'well it's been five thousand years,' and I was like, 'okay, what if I played,' what is it,



on Earth, they didn't have shit. We know very little about what happened — I mean, we know a lot, but we don't know a lot about people and who their kids were and who their kids were. And, so, like, the scale of the — I know that we always get shit from all... we use giant time scales [Ali laughs] what small time scales would do, but like, five thousand years is an eternity to be like, 'yeah, the person I'm related to five thousand years ago, they were awesome. They did this thing,' and it's super cool to do it, but that by itself feels science fiction-y to me.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Thanks? [laughs]

**Art:** I mean it's a, I'm... yeah, I just think it's a rad fuckin' idea.

**Dre:** Thank you. I'm excited, and I feel like, when I had to do this in PARTIZAN, I felt like I did not do a good job with Figure, and I think a part of that was because I gave Figure's kind of backstory and character a lot of like, heaviness, like, pre-attached to it and I have done the opposite with Levi. Like I feel like Levi is a character who I can play honestly without having to, like, figure everything out.

**Ali:** [cross] Oh, sure. [laughs]

**Art:** [cross] Oh, that's the dream.

**Dre:** I mean, we'll see, right? But...

## **00:34:34 – Grand Magnificent**

**Art:** I mean, no, the fucked up thing is for me, it's like, when you say, like, 'Yep. Grand Magnificent.' It's like, don't say that out loud, [all laughing] that makes you feel — look like a fucking asshole.

**Ali:** Oh, Grand Mag was really easy for you, Art? [Art and Ali laughing] Was that...

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Listen, sometimes you just have a little YOLO boy.

**Ali:** Yeah, yeah.

**Art:** I made a tweet today that like, broke orbit in a big way and it's like, 'this is just my Grand Magnificent.'

**Ali:** Mmm?

**Art:** I had to mute it. It's too much. No one talk to me. [Ali laughs] That's the problem, is that, inside I have a Grand Magnificent, and outside I have 'Don't talk to me.'

**Ali:** Oh, okay. Because too many people retweeted your tweet? [laughing]

**Art:** And, like, responded, or like, talking to me about what I was talking about, it's like, 'I wanted fifty people to see this, and now...'

**Dre:** What tweet is this?

**Art:** I tweeted about lighting and Star Trek.

**Ali and Dre:** Ohhh...

**Ali:** [cross] Sure, sure, yeah that's the thing... [laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] Gotcha.

**Art:** But like, that was just for, you know... that was for a small community. [laughing]

**Dre:** Man. Could be worse, could be worse.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Did you see all of the Gen Xers and older getting mad at the person on Twitter who tweeted, 'I don't believe it when old people tell me that they watched the O.J. Simpson trial on a TV in their classroom?'

**Ali:** [laughing] No.

**Art:** Oh, I'm a millennial, and I watched the O.J. Simpson trial on a TV in my classroom.

**Dre:** [cross] That's just... I didn't.

**Ali:** [cross] Did you?

**Dre and Art:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I didn't do that.

**Dre:** [cross] Shoutout to [@dirtbagqueer](#) on Twitter. Great follow.

**Art:** [cross] Well, I'm older than you by a little. Not a lot of the O.J. Simpson trial, but like, a little bit and then the verdict, and then I remember the school going apeshit. Which is one of those things where like, I've seen like, 'oh, it was this big divide by race over how people reacted to the O.J. Simpson trial,' and I remember my class full of white kids going wild, [Ali laughs] they were so psyched that O.J. got acquitted. [laughing]

**Ali:** [cross] [through laughter] Why were they psyched!?

**Dre:** [cross] For good reasons? Or...

**Art:** Yeah, 'cuz fuck the police!

**Ali:** [cross] Oh, mm... okay, sure.

**Dre:** [cross] I mean, fair, but, you know. I'm just thinking about... how old were you at this point, Art?

**Art:** I believe at the O.J. Simpson verdict I was 11.

**Dre:** Okay. Maybe this is just a sign of where we grew up and, geopolitically speaking, I don't know if I would have trusted a room full of 11-year-old, mostly white kids, where I was in school, to be saying like, 'fuck yeah, O.J. got off,' [Ali laughing] and for it to be like a 'fuck the police' statement. [chuckling]

**Art:** Um... I mean, maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm misremembering, but I very vividly remember the loud cheer I heard. [Ali cackles] And, of course, the school wasn't mostly white, but the way that segregation works, the New York Public Schools says — which is not the topic of this podcast — the classroom that I was in was mostly white.

**Ali:** Since we're on this, I just have one question. Were you old enough that, like, O.J. Simpson was somebody you were a fan of when he was a [unsure] baseball pl— [cross] oh, baseball —

**Dre:** [cross] Football.

**Art:** [cross] No, I did not know who O.J. Simpson was until he was a murderer.

**Ali:** [laughing] Okay. Okay.

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah, probably me neither.

**Art:** [cross] And I want to be clear, I think it's very clear that O.J. Simpson killed those people, but also that they didn't... they didn't do enough to convict him. He was probably rightfully acquitted.

**Dre:** Ali, when do you feel like O.J. Simpson played his last game as a football player?

**Ali:** [cross] When do—

**Art:** [cross] Oh, I'm sure it was before I was alive.

**Dre:** [cross] Just guess, just guess.

**Ali:** Okay, wait. Art, what was the year that you said before, of the trial when you were 11?

**Art:** I believe the verdict of the O.J. Simpson trial would have come in in '95 or '96.

**Ali:** Okay, 19... 89, maybe?

**Dre:** Is when you think he played his last game?



**Art:** I'm guessing it's at least ten years before that.

**Dre:** 1979.

**Ali:** What!?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** I think I didn't know who O.J. Simpson was, but if I did I think I would have known him as he was a spokesman for Hertz. [Ali laughs] [cross] If you really made me identify...

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah, and he, also after he retired, he did a... he tried to get into acting.

**Ali:** Oh, I didn't know any of this.

**Art:** That's why he was in L.A. [cross] Before he killed his wife.

**Dre:** Yeah, [cross] O.J. Simpson was in the mini-series version of *Roots*.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Art:** No shit! I definitely saw *Roots* before he killed his wife. [Art and Ali laughing]

**Ali:** Okay. Sure. Um... so, Dre, [laughter roars] the thing about Levi, is that...

**Dre:** Hey, you guys wanna talk about Michael Jackson next? Let's just...

**Ali:** I, so, the, um, I, it didn't just, I think that, um... When you say, [laugh] he's a character with a lot of baggage, I think that's really interesting because it does seem like it's an idea that's really self-indulgent in a fun way, and in a way that I think that you've earned. But, like, you know, go into, like, I guess what it feels like, the creative difference is to just be like, 'you know what, fuck it. I'm just gonna be a silly guy.'  
[laughing]

**Dre:** [laughing] Sometimes you just wanna be a silly guy.

**Ali:** Yeah. You know, sometimes you do, sometimes you do. Why Giantkiller?

**Dre:** Boy, um... Okay, Ali, you might want to delete this and I'll rephrase this, **[Ali: Okay]** but, I mean, that's the part that goes to the character I was thinking about playing for the next season.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure, sure. Okay.

**Dre:** They were very specifically a character who was like, a, like... aerial-based character.

**Ali:** Oh, you sure you wanna use these ideas? I guess the thing is that you'll always have more ideas.

**Dre:** Yeah. **[Ali laughs]** Listen, I can't get my Vyvanse filled right now, my head is nothing but ideas all the time, Ali. **[laughs]**

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Are they at least fun Friends at the Table ideas? Or...

**Dre:** Oh, you know, sometimes. **[both laughing]**

**Ali:** Sure, sure. So, yeah, how are you guys liking Questlandia so far?

**Dre:** I mean, I'm excited for it. I'm interested in it. It feels hard to answer because we haven't, like, we haven't played yet. **[Ali laughs]**

**Art:** Yeah, I mean, ask me when we're really through the wringer on it, you know?

**Ali:** Mmhm. I think we did have —

**Art:** 'Cuz, you know, the finale... Finale season really reveals the mettle of a game and of a person.

**Ali:** [laughing] Oh, you mean mettle, like M-E-T-T-L-E?

**Art:** Yeah, yeah, that kind of mettle.

**Ali:** Fair. Fair, fair, fair. Yeah, it does feel strange sort of going into this. I'm sure it is even stranger for you both having to pick up new — new characters.

**Art:** Well, it's nice, 'cuz Clem has a history, and if I'm, like, fucking up Clem, at least someone could be like, 'Hey, Art. You're doing bad right now.' **[Dre: Yeah.]** I mean, I don't know [who] ever would, [Ali and Art laughing] but it's nice that if I ever really got off the rails, someone could be like, 'Stop doing this.'

**Ali:** What is your like, you have... it feels like you have such a, like, I don't want to say resistance, but there's like this anxiety you have about playing Clem.

**Art:** 'Cuz Clem is one of the big characters in our show.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** It's like, it's like if you... that doesn't make any sense. [chuckling] I was gonna say it was like showing up and someone expecting you to play Hamlet. [Ali laughs] That happens all the time, [cross] it's what theater is.

**Dre:** Yeah, but if I just randomly, five days before, was told I could play Hamlet, I would be freaking out about it.

**Art:** Yeah, there're... every season we do has, like, has characters that really make an impact and characters who make less of an impact, and I say this not to like, say that individual players are doing — we're all trying to do different things, but like, I would struggle to want to play Clem the same way I would struggle to want to play Aria. You know, if someone was like, 'you could play Aria in this finale,' I would say... [Ali laughs] no.

**Ali:** You sure? I bet you'd do a great Aria.

**Art:** Um... I don't know, maybe. [Ali laughs and snorts] But I don't think it's right for this finale.

**Ali:** Could you image? That would be so funny, you should do that, just for... 'cause it would be funny.

**Art:** Well, I mean, it's weird that we established that Clem is a big, like, Jace fan and didn't establish that Clem was a big Aria fan. [Ali laughs] I do feel like Clem would be one of those, like, 'oh, the music of today doesn't really represent me, I wish I was born in the '70s,' kind of person, but about Aria Joy, but we didn't do it so we can't do it now. But for the Netflix adaptation of PARTIZAN, I hope someone sneaks that in. [laughing]

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, I think the thing with Clem is like, she didn't even know who Jace was, right? She was just like, 'wow, cool robot.'

**Art:** Right.

**Dre:** Is Clem just like a really misguided Lana Del Rey fan, who doesn't get it?

**Ali:** [cross] That's part of her, yeah.

**Art:** [cross] Yeah, uh huh. I mean, that's part of it, for sure. Or, like, what, ten years ago when people would show up in, like, Native American dress to Coachella and think that they were really nailing it...

**Ali:** Oh, wow...

**Art:** ... before we, as a society, agreed that we had to shun those people?

**Ali:** Uh huh, yeah.

**Art:** It took like 18 months. [Ali laughs] You might not know this if you don't live in California, but it took like 18 months.

**Dre:** I'm surprised it didn't take longer.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** [laughing] Well, people really want to not like people who go to Coachella.

**Dre:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, so it's already — you already have — there are already people not open to criticism, as it were. Who's playing at Coachella this year? I don't even know.

[laughing]

**Art:** Um, Kesha. Kesha [**Ali:** Oh!] went and did "Tik Tok," and did "Wake up in the morning, feeling fuck P. Diddy," or something like that. [**Ali:** Oh.] She changed the lyrics to be more current with how people feel about P. Diddy.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Yeah, that's 'cuz he's a lyric in that song. That's... [laughing] [cross] That's tough.

**Art:** [cross] He's *in* the song.

**Ali:** Wait, he's in the song? Wait. Is he in that song?

**Art:** Yeah, she says that, and then he — and then P. Diddy's like, 'What's up, girl?' That's his only contribution to the song, but like...

**Ali:** Oh... I forgot about that. Wow. [laughing] Yeah, I—

**Art:** Are all the Gathering Informations like this, [Art and Ali laughing] or am I making this show worse?

**Ali:** Not usually, but it's good to see where the conversation goes. I... [laughing] We have to follow our hearts, I think.

**Art:** That's true. That's true. But, yeah, that's who I think [**Ali:** Clem is...] Clem is, in part, is that kind of...

**Ali:** A Coachella goer. A Coachella goer. [laughing]

**Art:** A Coachella go— Yeah. RIP Clem, you would have loved Coachella.

**Dre:** Ugh.

**Art:** And I see that, for weekend 2 of Coachella, Kid Cudi will not be performing, and Vampire Weekend will be taking his place.

**Ali:** Wow. Wait, why?

**Art:** Um...

**Ali:** I guess you don't have to look it up right now. [laughing] Um, I guess I... I'm a little curious about, there was a thing that you said in a recent episode which was like, Clem is a little bit too close to Grand Magnificent for you. [**Art:** Mmhm.] [**Dre:** Oh!] What's, what's up with that?

**Dre:** Yeah, that's a good question!

**Art:** Well, they're too close in the sense that I don't want my performance as Clem to turn into a Grand Magnificent performance, [**Ali:** Oh... [laughs]] in just like, trying to make someone who is the worst, I want Clem to be the worst in the way that Clem is the worst and not just like me freestyling on the concept of being the worst, which is what Grand Magnificent is.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughing]

**Art:** I want to be able to drill into what Clem is instead of just being — instead of just like, whatever.

**Ali:** Yeah, I think that Grand Magnificent like, um... didn't emotionally, like, torture people. [laughs]

**Art:** No!

**Ali:** I don't think that he became, like a weird freaky witch lady.

**Art:** [laughing] No, he just has bad opinions.

**Ali:** [laughing] Okay, there's an overlap. There's that.

## 00:48:26 – Reaching into the Character Buckets

**Art:** He's just annoying, but, like, you don't wanna... um... it's like, some of it was told to me about acting, and, again, I think I'm not a very good actor, but you need to be able to like, to access your emotions to mimic emotion, you know? You need to know what anger and sadness and happiness feel like in order to portray them. But you have to — you can't just have one, or every time you do it, it will feel the same, you know? You have to be like, 'oh that time I was mad because I was cut off on the freeway,' and also, 'that time I was mad —' I don't have an example... 'that time I was mad because they... did something else,' I don't know, [cross] whatever people get mad about.

**Ali:** [cross] 'I was late to a movie.'

**Art:** Right, yeah, or, you know, 'someone held the door on the subway and I missed by, yeah, and I was late to the movie.'

**Dre:** Sure. Every time I interact with a health insurance company.

**Ali:** But what you're saying is there is that, like, when you go into your feelings of how to be an annoying person, you're afraid that [chuckles] Clem and Grand are coming from the same bucket, essentially?

**Art:** Right, I have to make sure that I keep — I have to make sure that I always reach into the Clem bucket, and never reach into the generic bucket, [Ali laughs] because then it will just become something else.

**Ali:** Yeah, that's fair. That's fair.

**Art:** And that's the job, right? That's all that we're all doing is making sure we're reaching into the right bucket [Ali laughs] and not fucking it up.

**Ali:** I do really hope that we don't fuck it up, yeah, that's really... [laughs] What I try to do the most, is not fuck it up, and, um... you know, not every week...

**Art:** Well, when — and, you know, you’ve def— there’s no way in nine and a half years of doing this, you’ve never done a line reading and been like, ‘oh shit, that’s not exactly the character. I’m sort of out of bounds in this person.’ And, because of what we do, you just move on and get it the next time. But, for characters I gotta play for so little in such a high stakes thing, I really want to do is just a good a job as possible, which is not to say that in the other games I’m like, ‘well, whatever the fuck happens today.’ [Ali laughs] But, like, this one has — there’s a little bit of pressure here.

**Ali:** Yeah. Do you feel like that’s some of the resistance that you had, like, playing Clem in scenes in [Art: Definitely!] the Faction Game stuff, or even just, like, resistance to play some of the Cause characters?

**Art:** Yes, um... well, *some* of the Cause characters. But it’s... I don’t want to put our audience in the position of being like, ‘well Art’s Clem sucks,’ or ‘Art’s Clem is this way, and Jack’s Clem is this way.’ You know, I want people to be able to just have the experience with Clem that they had, which is great, and to not necessarily bog that down.

**Dre:** Art, have I ever told you... I think I’ve typed this in the Discord. Okay, Ali, you *have* to delete this part.

**Ali:** [laughing] Okay.

**Dre:** Do we need to like, clap or something?

**Ali:** [cross] We can’t keep saying things we can’t say on this recording, during this recording, but please, go on.

**Dre:** [cross] Here, you know what, no... no... no, I know, I know, I know, I know. Alright, I’m gonna... I’m gonna message — here, I’ll drop it in our DM, [Ali: Okay.] and you tell me if I should say this and you’ll delete it...

**Ali:** Okay.

**Dre:** No, I won’t say this.



**Ali:** Okay... [laughing]

**Dre:** I'll say: "My biggest fear the whole time we have done Friends at the Table is," and then the blank is what I will send you.

[typing in the background, Ali laughing]

**Dre:** And I feel like that's kind of what you're talking about, Art.

**Art:** Well...

**Ali:** No.

**Art:** ...I would never. [All laugh]

**Dre:** I mean, in terms of being like, 'oh, my version of the character was the bad one.'

**Art:** Yeah, definitely, or even just like... Um, I mean, I don't want to just start with like, 'This is what it's like to be insecure about your abilities as an artist,' because, like, there's so much content in this area. But, like, yeah, right? You don't want to think that, like, you're doing a singularly bad job, especially with something that someone else has done a good job at. No one can do — I can't do a worse version of Hadrian than anyone else; I can do a worse version of Clem.

**Dre:** Welcome to the Impostor Syndrome podcast, starring Art and Dre, [Ali and Dre laughing] and today...

**Art:** And not even just like, worse, but — 'cuz worse isn't really right. I do think I can do a good job with anything we do, I do believe that, but *inauthentic*.

**Ali:** Okay, sure. Yeah. That's interesting 'cuz, like, I think that we're a show that hands characters over more readily than other tables do.

**Dre:** Oh, 100%.

**Ali:** That it just sort of feels like, 'oh, that's... you know, it's my turn.' I don't want to say, like, I'm not terrified of this when it happens, and, like, don't have characters that I'm

protective over or wouldn't touch. But, like, you don't have to... There's nothing to be afraid of. [laugh]

**Dre:** Well, Ali, you know, you smoke too tough, your swag too different. [laughing]

**Ali:** I guess so. Well, I mean, people will always be able to say that my Gucci is the worst, [laughs] because of how that scene ends.

**Dre:** Yeah, but maybe that's a compliment.

**Ali:** Sure, yeah.

**Dre:** When it comes to Gucci.

**Ali:** Perhaps, perhaps.

**Art:** Well, and... I wouldn't feel like this if it were Gucci.

**Dre:** [cross] That's fair.

**Ali:** [cross] There's something about Clem that you're like, 'she's... she's on the pedestal.'

**Art:** Yeah, 'cuz Jack was really on one with Clem, and...

**Ali:** It's great to be on one. Let me tell you something, it's great to be on one.

**Art:** You're certainly on one, this— No one gets to talk to you [Ali laughs] for this, so Brnine is the great mystery of PALISADE, but you're super on one with this.

**Ali:** [softly] Thank you, I am a little bit.

**Art:** It's like, I want you to write a book about this, [Ali erupts with laughter] pronto. Like...

**Ali:** 'I have a tummy ache.'

**Art:** It's so fun to watch, it's... I've never seen I have a tummy ache done so well in this medium before, maybe any medium... I'm trying to think, it's not coming to me. But, like, 'I have a tummy ache, and also I can't stop winning.' [Ali and Art laugh] You're like Michael Jordan's flu game, but with being kind of like a wet blanket instead of Michael Jordan with the flu.

**Ali:** [surprised] Michael Jordan's flu game?

**Dre:** [cross] Oh, you don't know about this?

**Art:** [cross] Michael Jordan had the flu once in the playoffs and scored like 60 points or something.

**Ali:** Wait, really? [laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, and then also, like, tried to say that some people, like, gave him food poisoning on purpose, [cross] instead of saying he had the flu.

**Art:** [cross] Yeah, 'cuz that's what you have to do if you're Michael Jordan, to play with the flu.

**Dre:** Well, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** But, but this is like, 'what if Michael Cera was soaking wet and scored 60 points in an NBA playoff game.' [Ali laughs] That's what Brnine is doing this year and it's so fascinating to watch.

**Ali:** That's the dice. [cross] The dice have — [laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] That's... yeah.

**Art:** [cross] That's what I wish that — I wish that we were... I wish we had a bigger audience so more people could see Brnine this year, like, that's all I want for Friends at the Table, is for more people to see this performance. It's — it's... unbelievable. [Ali laughs] I'm sorry, if you were saying this to me, I would be so uncomfortable. [Art laughs, Ali laughs harder] But, I love it so much.

**Ali:** I appreciate that. I'm a fan of Brnine, too, it's all good. It's all good. And, also, I think you both now have a new opportunity to be on one. There's never a better time.

**Art:** Um... I think I'm saving it for next year.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughing]

**Art:** I think I'm gonna try to just make good passes and, uh...

**Ali:** [laughing] Well, I don't know, 'cuz you're a little bit gonna have to be on one. You're playing an on one character.

**Art:** Yeah, you're right, I am. I'm gonna have to figure something out. Especially because — I mean, I guess I've talked to Austin about this, 'cuz at one point I said to Austin, like, 'is there even a world where Clem is around after this?' Because, like, I didn't want to play a character who *had* to die.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure, sure. Yeah.

**Art:** So, I wanted to play a character who had options, and was assured that, yes, there is — there are possibilities for Clem past this.

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, she's not gonna get immediately executed, it seems like.

**Art:** I mean, maybe. You never know.

**Ali:** Uh huh. Play to find out what happens.

**Art:** But it would be a real bummer.

**Ali:** Yeah. I don't —

**Art:** If I had to have the Jack experience in the Kingdom Game from PARITZAN in this finale, [Ali laughs] I would be upset. I can't believe Jack put up with that.

**Ali:** We're really doing our best to open the table up, I think. I think it's difficult, especially with the Blue Channel's attachment to Figure, [laughs] but I...

**Art:** Yeah. Oh, and I'm gonna say rude things to Sylvi in this.

**Ali:** Oh!

**Art:** I mean, I guess — if you're listening to this, you've probably heard it, but I think I'm gonna end up saying something super rude to Cori. That Clem will say, you know, [Ali laughs] I'm not interviewing with Sylvi, that's not true.

**Dre:** Sure, sure, sure, sure.

**Art:** Clem is gonna say something rude to Cori. I... yeah, [cross] you know what I mean.

**Ali:** [cross] She has to. Sylvi's gonna go insane, first of all, [laughing] if that happens. I'm looking forward to that. 'Cuz she has to, right? It just has to happen. It just has to.

**Art:** I mean, how can it not? I guess I don't know, but the two of them can't never be around each other, and Clem isn't capable of not saying a stupid thing. [Ali and Dre laughing] I mean, I feel like I should go try to, like, write — I should go write eight things and... then not say any of them, just like... 'cuz you know, like, the really good shit is the second or third thing you think of, right?

**Ali:** I guess so, yeah. Yeah.

**Art:** And it's gonna go both ways, right? Cori is with Clem's ex, [Ali snorts] and Clem is with Brnine's ex.

**Ali:** Sure, I wouldn't call them exes, but sure.

**Art:** Well, I almost said [Art chuckles] Clem and Brnine are in the same polycule, [Ali laughs] but I just didn't wanna...

**Dre:** Oh... oh...

**Art:** I mean, I could say it on here, I'm not gonna say there's nothing — I'm not gonna say there's anything resembling a canon program.

**Ali:** Yeah, I... you know, it's been... [laughing] it's been good to be vague, is what I'll say. It's been... it's been fun to have that not... as an open door. But, yeah.

**Art:** It's nice that none of the people who made it through to PALISADE have specific — none of the old characters have specific-Clem beef, they just have general-Clem beef.

## **01:00:52 – What if...?**

**Ali:** Oh, sure, yeah. Yeah, I... one thing I guess, I feel like I don't have the sense of how Thisbe feels about Clem. [clears throat] And I do think like, all of Brnine's feeling is sort of wrapped up in Figure stuff. But... but, yeah. [laughing] It does make it a little easier, yeah. I will admit, it's a tough [stumbling] pill to swallow to have her hanging out. But, that's sort of the point. That's the fun of it though, right? That's the... **[Art: Yeah.]** the rubbing your face in it sort of joy that you [cross] get to get.

**Art:** [cross] And Clem doesn't know anything about Valence, you know, there's none of that.

**Ali:** [laughing] I guess Clem was around when Valence was almost president, question mark? **[Art: Yeah.]** Remember when Valence was almost president?

**Dre:** Uh... [cross] no — no?

**Art:** [cross] Do you think Clem remembers that? I don't.

**Dre:** When was Valence almost president? Oh...

**Art:** In the Kingdom Game.

**Ali:** In the Kingdom **[Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.]** — yeah, there was like a vote of who was gonna be the leader of Millenium Break temporarily, **[Dre: God, yeah.]** and Valence gave it up to get Brnine out of jail, question mark? [laughing]

**Dre:** [cross] That, yeah, that sounds like something Valence would have done.

**Art:** [cross] We had too much jail work in that game. I know we're not talking about that right now, but we had too many jails.

**Ali:** [laughing] I, you know, I — sure, I think that maybe we felt at the time like it was worth seeing what people's version of justice was, and we had a lot of jail in the season to start, [cross] which didn't help.

**Dre:** [cross] That's true. Yeah.

**Ali:** So, yeah.

**Dre:** Jail-heavy origin story.

**Ali:** Jail-heavy origin story. But, yeah. It is funny how much we are thinking back to the Kingdom Game, 'cuz it feels like... like that was, like, a mid-season finale, and this is like the finale-finale. But it does, like, sort of... like, you know, bring you back to that sort of mode, I guess I would say. Um... man, Valence. Rest in peace.

**Dre:** Awoo.

**Ali:** Awoo. [laughing]

**Art:** Awoo.

**Ali:** Can I get an 'Awoo' in the chat?

**Art:** It's something we would never do, but I would love to, like, do the 'what if' story, the like 'what if Valence hadn't died.' But, like, it would be like, committing ten months of all of our lives, [Ali laughs] or whatever, [cross] and we would never do it

**Dre:** [cross] That sounds like, 'this is a graphic novel that we are kickstarting and we're only publishing it if,' you know. Like, yeah, that would be... that'd be a big investment. It'd be fun, though.

**Art:** [cross] Yeah.

**Ali:** [cross] Well it'd be Disney+ doing it for their *What if...*? Series, right?

**Dre:** That's true. [Ali laughs]

**Art:** Yeah, for when we get bought and incorporated into the *Marvel* universe, which I think is gonna happen any day now. Um... God, those are like the fun stories we never get to tell, is the time that CoVID stopped us from being acquired by a comic book company.

**Ali:** Oh, sure. [cross] Yeah. [laughs]

**Dre:** [cross] What?

**Art:** Oh, yeah, don't worry about it. [chuckles]

**Dre:** I'm worried about it! [laughing]

**Ali:** There was some talks.

**Art:** We had a meeting, to that affect, scheduled, and CoVID canceled it and it never got rescheduled.

**Ali:** Yeah, [cross] maybe it's for the best. [laughs]

**Art:** [cross] And it's not — it wasn't *Marvel*, obviously.

**Dre:** Well, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Um... yeah.

**Dre:** And we were like, 'eugh, we can't sell to *DC*, eugh...'

**Art:** Yeah, I don't want to see Zack Snyder's...

**Dre:** [snickers] Okay, [cross] I kinda do. [laughing]

**Ali:** [cross] Are you sure?

**Dre:** The Valence 'what if' story, as filmed by Zack Snyder.



**Ali:** Oh, God... I think Austin's heart would stop. [laughing]

**Dre:** No, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah... [cross] Mine too, but...

**Ali:** [cross] Like it's...

**Art:** [cross] I mean...

**Dre:** Once we get past me just being like, 'haaaaaaaaaa,' and then I like, have to come to grips with the consequences of me wishing this into existence. [Ali laughs]

**Art:** You just have to have an Alan Moore perspective on it, which is that you don't see it and you won't [chuckling] respond to questions about it.

**Ali:** Yeah, that's the way — what if Valence lived?

**Art:** It's interesting, 'cuz it has a knock-on effect that changes a lot.

**Dre:** Yeah. Do — are we doing... are we even doing PALISADE if Valence lives?

**Art:** [cross] I don't know.

**Ali:** [cross] Yeah, right? I guess you can't — I guess you don't know how the finale ends, right?

**Dre:** [cross] Probably. Are brain and V— er, brain. Are Brnine — brain... [Ali laughs] That's what I'm calling brain — er, Brnine and Valence. It's Brain now.

**Art:** [imitating Valence] What do you want to do tonight, Brine? [Dre and Ali laughing]

**Dre:** Ah... like —

**Art:** I guess that's Thisbe, I don't know.

**Ali:** Yeah, maybe.

**Dre:** I could see... I bet Brnine and Valence aren't in... aren't in PALISADE.

**Ali:** Oh, maybe, yeah, I don't know.

**Dre:** They run away.

**Art:** And it probably convinces me to stick with Sovereign Immunity, [**Ali:** Oh.] because it's the fight with Brnine that's like, 'this character doesn't have a fuckin' future.'

**Ali:** Oh, no, wait, why? [laughing]

**Art:** Because that was such a cynical fucking thing to say, and I meant it the whole — fuckin', with my whole chest, and it's like, 'I can't play this fuckin' grimy, old bastard.'

**Ali:** That's good, wait, why? [laughing] You...

**Art:** It was good, but it was like, 'I have to let this go. I have to, like... there's no future here.'

**Ali:** Come on...

**Art:** I regret it. I should have, [**Ali** laughs] I should have held onto that character.

**Ali:** When did you come to regret it? I'm actually really interested in this, like, how you've — how this has changed over time. [cross] 'Cuz I didn't —

**Art:** Um, in the last couple months, [**Ali:** Oh.] maybe when — um... What the hell — what set of episodes was I listening to when I went to see *Killers of the Flower Moon*?

**Ali:** Oh. That's a great question!

**Art:** So, that would have been in... like, November — what would I would [sic] have been listening to? But, it was like, oh, because — because like, I always felt that that character I just never... found the way to make them connect to the rest of the characters very well.

**Ali:** [cross] Mmhm. Yeah, I... I...

**Art:** [cross] And it was like, ‘oh, in the Blue Channel, I would have figured it out. If it had come to this point, this would work.’

**Ali:** Oh, sure. I do think that’s one of the things that I think about when I — I think back on PARTIZAN, is that, like, we sort of no-selled who he was supposed to be in a big way that, like, did not... [chuckling] was not fair to you, I don’t think.

**Art:** It was frustrating, and like, the solution was that I should have called it out. I should have just insisted on it being sold, and didn’t. And, you know, I guess, like, I kept thinking I could pull it out, and far beyond when I had hit the mountain and burst into flames. And, you know — you live, you learn. Next time I have an important piece of history like that, I’ll make sure it’s respected. Because if you go back and listen to it, the fatal flaw is Keith’s bond with the character in the first episode.

**Ali:** Oh...

**Dre:** Oh, what was it?

**Art:** Because Leap should have known and been more, like, aware of that history.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure, sure.

**Art:** And Leap’s bond is instead something like, ‘Dinner with the Warden, I can’t trust him.’ And it’s like: No, no, no. [Art and Ali laugh] This is a famous terrorist.

**Ali:** Yeah, fair. Uh huh.

**Art:** But, like... you know, you live, you learn.

**Ali:** Did you find the [chuckling] the episode — I guess now that you’ve said what sort of brought you there. Was it *Killers of the Flower Moon* that brought that to you, [laughing] or was it just... [cross] you just noticed it?

**Art:** [cross] No, it was one of those — we were going to record, and I had to listen to a lot of episodes, so I listened to the show all the way there and all the way back, and it was like... That’s when I was like, ‘Sovereign Immunity would have worked this season.’

**Ali:** Oh, yeah, maybe.

**Art:** And if he wasn't dead, I could try again, next time. [Ali laughs] Instead, it's just gone.

**Ali:** [clears throat] Have him as a ghost. We know ghosts exist. Importantly, ghosts exist!

**Art:** I'm about to play a ghost in Realis. Am I allowed to say that?

**Ali:** [cross] I... please, yeah!

**Dre:** [cross] Sure.

**Art:** Alright. [laughing] How many ghosts can I — [Ali laughs] I don't want to be typecast as the ghost guy.

**Ali:** Uh... Dre, you've... you've finished your bit of Realis, [cross] right?

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah.

**Ali:** [cross] How'd that go?

**Dre:** [cross] Yeah. It was sick.

**Ali:** [laughing] Drop some teasers, drop some morsels, drop some, [Dre: No.] uh... hints.

**Dre:** What — like, about what?

**Ali:** You know, just, you know, how it went, how the vibe is. [laughing]

**Dre:** Um... um... I play a character who's an asshole.

**Ali:** Oooh, okay! That's... wow. I feel like we don't 'asshole' from you a lot.

**Dre:** No, that's why I wanted to do it.

**Ali:** [laughing] Yeah, that's... uh huh, uh huh. Yeah. I've — God, Valence. The through-line of Throndir to Even — no, to... wait — to Even...

**Dre:** Mhm. Okay.

**Ali:** To... [Art and Ali laughing] Revealing a lot about myself about how much I have to think about past characters. But, Throndir to Even to Valence, to Figure, to Levi, right?

**Dre:** Yes.

**Ali:** I, yeah, that's an interesting... I feel like there's a lot of 'nice guy' there... [cross] not the— [howls with laughter]

**Dre:** [cross] Damn. Burn.

**Ali:** Not the kind of nice guy — not the... I feel like... Is it fair to say maybe Levi is your nice guy-est character of the... [laughing] of the bunch.

**Dre:** No, I would say early-Throndir probably is.

**Ali:** Oh, wow. Dig into that a little more.

**Dre:** Um... like, again, not in, like, not — like, not in 'bad nice guy' way, right? Not like 'creepy nice guy' way, but more of just like, 'oh, I don't want to step on anybody's toes, I just want everyone to like me...'

**Ali:** Yeah. Throndir was a good boy.

**Dre:** Yeah, whereas, I think Levi wants people to like him, but he also doesn't care if somebody doesn't like him and he thinks it's for a dumb reason.

**Ali:** Okay, sure, which is important. [laughing] I think that's a [cross] very important way to go about life, imo.

**Dre:** Yeah. Yes, [Dre and Art laughing] if you learn nothing from Friends at the Table, besides that...

**Ali:** Uh huh. God, I'm — yeah, I'm... I'm excited to see more. I'm, uh, to see more flipping and jumping, excetra [sic].

**Dre:** Yeah. [Ali laughs] I don't know how much of that's gonna happen in Questlandia, but...

**Ali:** It's... it's... it's a fiasco, you can put as much of it in there as you want. **[Dre: That's true.]** You set a scene; I'm flipping. I'm flipping and jumping right now. [Dre and Ali laugh] That's how you play that game. [laughter continues and trails off] God, that's funny, though. I do wonder, like, what... [chuckling] Because it's such a good idea, was there ever a time where you were like, 'oh, this is too hot to touch.' Like, 'oh, I can't be a,' you know, 'I can't reference my own character.' Or, were you just, the whole time, like, 'you know what, fuck it.'

**Dre:** I think I was 'you know what, fuck it.' Like, I think there was that initial, like... like, I want to make sure that if I'm doing this, I do it for a reason and it's not just — oh, here we go. We'll bring back the wrestling parlance again. **[Ali: Oh!]** I don't want it to be a cheap pop. **[Ali: Oh, yeah.]** You know? Like I don't want to just be like, 'hey, look at this, isn't this cool?' And then, it's just, you know, a whatever character. **[Ali: Right.]** So, in that sense, it's important to me, but it was never like, a end that made me doubt if I wanted to or could play this character.

**Ali:** Okay, sure. Which is important, I'm glad that you... [laughing] I'm glad that you did not shy away from your own good ideas, a thing that I... I think we're all susceptible, still — [cross] susceptible to, still.

**Dre:** [cross] Oh, yeah.

**Ali:** But, yeah. I think that's been an episode of Gathering Information. Unless, there's more that either of you want to say, any teasers, any notes about Coachella, any...

**Dre:** Yeah, what else can I say that I then have to tell Ali to delete from the episode? [Ali laughs] Um, my credit card number is... [Dre laughs]

**Ali:** Please, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, I would like to slander the following people on other actual play podcasts.

**Ali:** Oh...

**Art:** Uh, no, I really — I don't even have bad feelings about any other shows right now.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Except, too many people play D&D. Stop playing D&D!

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah. Like, not everybody has to stop playing D&D, but some of you all gotta stop.

**Art:** Yeah. But also stop just like filing the serial numbers off of Blades in the Dark. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah. Yeah, you should just... you should just play Blades in the Dark if that's what you want. [cross] Or one of the licensed Blades in the Dark products.

**Art:** [cross] You don't have to own everything...

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Like I know they hired the people to do it, but still...

**Ali:** [laughing] Uh huh, uh huh. And if you don't know what we're talking about, [cross] don't worry about it!

**Dre:** [cross] That's fine. Yeah, it's fine.

[end of episode]