

## **Bluff City 35: To Be Young Near the Shore Pt. 04**

Transcriber: robotchangeling

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** Ghost are everywhere, Miss Already, and you have to be very careful around them, or else they'll get you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** You're messing with me.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** I am absolutely not messing with you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay, then you're talking about like a metaphor or something. You're gonna be like [mocking] "ghosts are books" or something.

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [overlapping] No, I'm talking about... [laughter] I mean, of course there are haunted books, but that's different, or that's a subset—if you've learned what subsets are—of ghosts. There are lots of different types of ghosts. All of them will get you. [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** Holy shit.

**Jack (as Frankie):** What do you mean get me?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** If you run afoul of a spirit, it will consume your soul and eradicate you.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [Concerned] Erad— did you say eradicated?

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** [matter-of-factly] Of course.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] CC, I don't want to break into the school anymore. [Sylvia laughs]

**Sylvia (as CC):** There's not ghosts. She's just saying that so people don't look at her weird books. [Keith laughs]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] There are ghosts! We saw two of them!

**Sylvia (as CC):** Well, one of those was Britney. Britney's not a ghost.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Well, they could've eradicated us. Maybe that's what happened to Britney.

**Sylvia (as CC):** I don't want to get eradicated.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Especially not my soul. I need that.

[music begins: [“To Be Young Near the Shore”](#) by Jack de Quidt]

**Austin (as Miss Maxwell):** You know, when I was quite a bit younger, I used to go between here and Bluff City and Blough City all the time. The way I did it was very difficult. People go back and forth, and it's much more convenient. You don't have to talk to a person like me at all. But...for all of it's convenience, it requires a great deal of, let's just say...a great deal of technology. And sometimes that technology breaks.

**Austin:** You find the Ollie McGowan file, and it maps so cleanly to the Britney Namor case. Olivia and her friend Elle went into the tunnel through some side entrance, and only Elle came out. No one believed Elle except for this group of people. People didn't even remember who Ollie was. The thing that you end up seeing is a note attached to this that says “If only we had fixed the tracking sooner. I think we had about a week. If we'd gotten to her in the first week, we could have saved her.” There's like a five year on update, and this update is filed by someone named Josephine Highsmith—so your Aunt Jozy, Ronnie—and it says basically, oh, no movement on this. Reports of figures in the dark suggest that McGowan is still haunting the grove in the nature reserve. As you leave, I want to introduce a threat here, which is...you know, you've called Cam to come pick you up, but in the sky, as you begin to drive away, there is a circular almost donut-shaped machine with a big smiling face drawn on it. Clearly this place and you are all under observation at this point. You know, the camera then follows down from there into a town car, where inside we have two people in black suits with black ties and white shirts. And it's the two of them sipping bad coffee in those little paper cups here as they watch you, and I think she says:

**Austin (as Agent Bailey):** They're just a bunch of kids.

[music ends]

**Austin:** Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today, Sylvi Clare.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter at [@sylvibullet](#) and listen to my other show *Emojidrome* wherever you get your podcasts.

**Austin:** Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey! You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#).

**Austin:** Jack de Quidt.

**Jack:** Hi. You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](#) and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

**Austin:** And Keith Carberry.

**Keith:** Hi, my name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me on Twitter at [@keithjcarberry](#), and you can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/RunButton](#).

**Austin:** Today we are hopefully finishing up our game of Tales from the Loop designed by Nils Hintze and based on the universe of Simon Stålenhag. What's our...can we do like a high level summary of what's happened so far? Y'all were in a band.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** You went to another city.

**Sylvia:** A school band, specifically.

**Austin:** A school band. Came back, realized one of your band mates was missing but her—that's Britney, Britney Namor.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But her presence is still felt inside of...or, her... There was a solo she played or something or whatever that's still on the tape.

**Jack:** Yeah, a sax solo.

**Austin:** A sax solo. Then—

**Sylvia:** And only on Ronnie's recording.

**Keith:** A specific tape.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that specific recording.

**Austin:** Only Ronnie's recording, which later we would figure out was because Ronnie had a special tape deck that had been modified.

**Keith:** Ronnie's aunt seems like she's into some shit.

**Austin:** Ronnie's aunt seemed to be...

**Jack:** Yeah, she's part of the crew, right?

**Austin:** ...tied to Blossom Investigations, which actually seems to be tied to the Hector Hu crew, all of whom seem to be missing or gone or...like, that whole setup that you found in the airport seemed to be like...

**Keith:** Yeah, or just uninterested in investigating things.

**Jack:** Something—

**Austin:** The specific thing I wanted to hit there in that office is that it was like dusty and basically...

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. You're right, yeah.

**Austin:** I think she still had a workspace there, but like a lot of other people seemed... The crew seems to have been diminished, at the very least.

**Jack:** The Tunnel Project is...has...like, eats people.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And they're not super sure why. Even the Blossom investigations aren't super sure why or who. They knew it ate this girl called Olivia.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Fairly recently, right?

**Austin:** About 10 years ago.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Austin:** Ollie, Olivia, who you know is the...

**Jack:** The stern looking woman with—

**Austin:** No, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. Ollie is the woman you've seen at the boathouse.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Elle is the woman, I believe.

**Jack:** Oh, the sister.

**Austin:** Unless I've gotten that...I've gotten them mixed up.

**Jack:** No, I think Ollie is the ghost and Elle is...

**Keith:** It says it on the thing, on our sheet.

**Austin:** Oh, right, it says it on our sheet. I forgot that we wrote on the stuff.

**Dre:** Oh yeah.

**Austin:** Ollie is the ghost. You're right. Ollie is the ghost of the woman in the woods with the weird face. And then Elle is the...

**Jack:** Her sort of beknighted...

**Austin:** Ell is the friend who...or whatever, the—

**Jack:** Frazzled sister.

**Austin:** Uh, friend. They're not. They're not. They have different last names.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Austin:** t's Elle Castor, Elle K. Castor and Ollie McGowan. So, different last names.

**Jack:** And it seems like the tunnel has also eaten Britney, Britney Namor.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Jack:** And so I think where we left it last, we had found some evidence that suggested that this is what Blossom Investigations were doing, and we also found a tape which Blossom Investigations seems to think can sort of protect you from the effects of these...from the effects of the tunnel.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Yes, it was singing something from like an opera, and they just recorded themselves singing it so they wouldn't have to keep singing it, wasn't that it?

**Jack:** [laughs softly] Yeah.

**Austin:** That's correct. Jack, do you remember what it was?

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** We also learned that there was a...

**Jack:** It was, uh...

**Keith:** There was basically a time limit. We had like X amount of time to get Britney back.

**Dre:** Yes, right.

**Keith:** Before she was, like, fully digested by the tunnel.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And it seems like that's what happened to Ollie, right?

**Austin:** Right. That is exactly true. Yes.

**Dre:** Yeah, they were like, "We figured this out too late to get her out."

**Austin:** Mm hmm. I don't remember, did we give a specific number of days during that recording?

**Dre:** Uh, I don't think so.

**Austin:** It's coming up, is what I would say, right?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like the clock is ticking, let's say.

**Jack:** Austin, wasn't there like a thing where Blossom Investigations had these kind of like transmission towers or something, like these little units that they could put in the tunnel? Or am I completely making that up?

**Austin:** That sounds unfamiliar to me.

**Keith:** Sorry, what was it? Say it again?

**Jack:** Blossom Investigations had these, like, little units, like little transmitting dishes or towers or something that they could put in the tunnel that would protect them or something?

**Austin:** I think they just have to do the singing and the tape. I think that's all they had.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Maybe I dreamt it. [laughs]

**Austin:** Okay, here's a question. [Keith laughs] What is this thing I've drawn in the top right that looks like a like a tower?

**Jack:** Now, I think this might be a little transmission tower, Austin.

**Austin:** Hrmm.

**Jack:** What is this?

**Dre:** Yes, that was the transmission tower thing that you described.

**Jack:** Yes!

**Dre:** That hey had set up to...uh...

**Jack:** Yeah, Blossom's put these things in the tunnel.

**Dre:** Yes, yes.

**Jack:** They're small. They're like chest high, aren't they?

**Keith:** Mmm. I now remember you describing something as looking sort of like a nuclear reactor.

**Austin:** Those were outside the tunnel. It was one thing outside the tunnel, and it was meant to, like, literally tag any of the like digital or whatever, the weird TV ghosts, the people who get stuck inside of the tunnel system. Not literally inside the tunnel system, but like captured by the misfired tracking that we've talked about. I keep describing it as being like a VHS cassette, or a VHS player, or a VCR that has busted tracking. And so those ghosts basically get tagged, literally with name tags, using that thing automatically. I don't know if...do they generate their own name tags? Probably, right? It's like, "and this is my name," like it generates it based on their internal idea of their identity, probably. What else? Other agents are on your tail from the Concern.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I'm grounded as hell.

**Austin:** You're super grounded. [Jack laughs] I mean, let's go high level with characters, actually. Let's go through character shit one more time before we go into hopefully our final thing. Let's just get names and...names and drives today, maybe? I feel like we've gone over everything else so many times and we're so deep into it now.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**[Timestamp: 0:10:12]**

**Jack:** I am playing Frankie Already, Frank Already, and my Drive is that I want to be in a magazine.

**Austin:** Okay. Uh, let's do problems also. Problems and drives.

**Jack:** My Problem is that I keep appearing in TV adverts I know I have not recorded. I saw an extremely menacing version of myself playing Hungry Hungry Hippos a couple of nights ago. It was upsetting.

**Austin:** Right. Who's next?

**Sylvia:** I'll go. I'm playing Cori Curtis, but she goes by CC. My Drive is that I want my big brother to think I'm cool. And my Problem is that my family is about to move, specifically to one of the cities through the tunnel system.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. Dre, go ahead.

**Dre:** Yeah, I'm playing Ronnie Lee Highsmith Jr. He's eleven years old. My Problem is that Dad is sick and doesn't want to admit it. My Drive is that I just want to make friends.

**Austin:** True. And Keith.

**Keith:** I'm playing Nolan Pearson. His Problem is that he's grounded until further notice, and his Drive is my friends in class love stories about my outside friends.

**Austin:** We love to have...this is why you're popular.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You got fun stories. And let me tell you, this has been a good story. You're gonna be even more popular with this one.

**Keith:** Tons of...



**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** This is gonna be tons of fifth grade clout.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Ha!

**Austin:** So, last we kind of checked in, y'all were getting...y'all had gone to the airport, snuck out of your homes at night, investigated the airport. And then I think we ended on a shot either of you driving away and then that drone following you or just the drone showing up in frame. I think we should probably advance to the next day regardless, you know. I feel like it's a bright, overcast day here in Bluffington Beach. Where do y'all want to kick things off? Where do you want to start? Is it a school day? Is it a weekend? I guess we started on the weekend, so it's probably still school week, midweek, and we talked about you going somewhere after school yesterday. You went to the Press of Atlantic City's HQ back on the mainland, and that's the other thing that happened, was—

**Jack:** Ha.

**Austin:** You you interacted with someone who seemed to have been a former member of the Blossom crew and fell out of that, and...

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** But still seems to have—

**Jack:** Wants us to be detained.

**Austin:** Yes. But also still seems to have...I mean, she was still wearing that badge, right? She still— or, not badge, the pin, the blossom pin, even if it seems like maybe she has other loyalties these days, so.

**Keith:** Yeah, it seemed like she was working for the Concern.

**Austin:** Yes, that is what it—

**Keith:** Is what it seemed like to me.

**Austin:** Yes, that is who she called and who showed up to chase you a little bit, so. So, next morning. What's going on? Do y'all make plans on your way back the night before? Did you...do we come back in on like...at the lunch table at school?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah. We like in the canteen.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Prepping for our next...

**Austin:** What day is it? What food is...what's the meal today?

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Hot dogs and mac and cheese.

**Austin:** Hot dogs and mac and cheese day. Sure.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Keith:** Tater tots.

**Jack:** Wow, that's a tough food to use as props for planning something.

**Austin:** You'll figure it out.

**Keith:** It's not— well, it's tough if you don't want to get your fingers dirty. If you don't mind a little bit of sticky fingers...

**Austin:** Let's get in character, please. Let's...please just say that again in character, Nolan.  
[Jack laughs softly]

**Keith (as Nolan):** I don't mind getting sticky fingers. I'll move the hot dogs and stuff around. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Don't touch my hot dog.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay, you move the hot dogs and stuff around.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I'll just wash my hands.

**Jack (as Frankie):** You can have my hot dogs, but they're only for planning purposes.  
[Austin laughs]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, I'm gonna eat mine right now. I don't...yeah, I'm hungry.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I'm gonna plan with mine and then eat mine.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay. It's important to...it's important to maintain energy for the...expedition.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Protein.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [speaking quickly] You know, last night, before we all split up, I said that you should be allowed to sleep on it, and I figured that now's the time. You gotta decide, are you with us or are you against us? Are we gonna rescue that ghost from the tunnel?

**Sylvia (as CC):** But...we gotta.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Who's against...

**Sylvia (as CC):** Wait, yeah.

**Keith:** Is someone against?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, who's against us?

**Jack (as Frankie)::** Well, it's just frightening to go in the tunnel, and I thought that you might want to sleep on it and wake up in the next morning and think, that ghost—

**Sylvia (as CC):** Did *you* want to sleep on it and think about it until the next morning?

**Jack (as Frankie):** Well, I think that maybe someone...

**Sylvia (as CC):** Someone, mm-hmm.

**Jack (as Frankie):** You know, I wanted to let somebody...I just wanted to let somebody think about it.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Yeah, totally.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Who?

**Jack (as Frankie):** So let's do a vote.

**Sylvia (as CC):** And I hope somebody did. And I hope *somebody* is feeling a lot better about things.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [defensive] I'm just saying we should maybe consider this. [Sylvia and Austin laugh]

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [bewildered] Who are we talking about?

**Keith:** I vote that anyone that needed to sleep on it should maybe sleep on it.

**Austin:** Middle school is where you invent someone to get mad at and then get mad at them.  
[laughter]

**Jack:** [laughs] New type of middle schooler to get mad just dropped.

**Austin:** [laughs] New type of middle schooler— yeah, uh huh. It seems like y'all are more or less in agreement.

**Jack:** Yeah, I think Frankie is afraid.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But hearing that everybody else is, you know. I guess we're—

**Jack (as Frankie):** Well, I guess we've *all* decided [Austin laughs] that we're gonna go in the tunnel, and I guess that we're all gonna rescue [deep breath] the ghost [deep breath] today!

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Well, hopefully she's not a ghost, so we could still rescue her.

**Jack (as Frankie):** [apprehensive] Mmm!

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Or like all the way ghost.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Ghostlike thing.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, ghostlike thing.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Mid-ghostification.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Her name's Britney.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Oh. Yeah.

**Austin:** It must be weird, 'cause no one—

**Jack (as Frankie):** [rushed] Okay, I'll just say it.

**Austin:** Go ahead, go ahead.

**Jack (as Frankie):** I've been thinking about it all night. What if we're marked?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Marked by ghosts?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, but like—

**Jack (as Frankie):** And they're going to come, and they'll eradicate our soul. [Austin laughs] In the tunnel.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, but like, now we know they're not ghosts. Like, a ghost is when you die, and that's like your soul or whatever. This is just like technology stuff.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Like a computer ghost.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Like a computer virus.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, you can't, like, print a ghost. [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** Frankie closes her eyes, the mirror image of Frankie on the television is hammering the button on the Hungry Hungry Hippos advert. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Uh huh! [laughs] Uh huh.

**Austin:** Somewhere, deep in your head—

**Keith (as Nolan):** [overlapping] Do you think we can print—

**Austin:** Miss Maxwell says, "You can absolutely print a ghost." [all laugh]

**Keith (as Nolan):** Do you think it would help?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** What?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Printing the ghost?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No!

**Keith (as Nolan):** I don't know. I don't know about ghosts.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I guess I don't either, but we know this isn't a ghost. Because, like, if it was a ghost, then she would be dead, and if she was dead, then we couldn't bring Britney back. But we still have time to save her, so she's not a ghost, so therefore we can't be marked.

**Keith (as Nolan):** I'm sorry, but I don't know how any of this works, [Austin and Jack laugh] so I'm just doing my best.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Listen, it's okay. That's why I'm here to help.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Should we do it after school?

**Keith (as Nolan):** It would be really convenient for me if we did it during school.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Wait, no, you just want to skip class.

**Keith (as Nolan):** No, it's that I will get in a lot less trouble. [Jack laughs] It's so much easier for me to not go to school than to try to get out of my house.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] But like—

**Austin:** Also, you know it's family night tonight, so you're gonna have spaghetti and you're gonna play board games tonight, so.

**Jack:** Oh, what board game?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah, we're having spaghetti spaghetti.

**Austin:** Spaghetti spaghetti, yeah.

**Keith:** We're having spaghetti spaghetti, and then also, like, I'm gonna have eyes on me. And also I have a test tomorrow.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Okay, do you think—

**Austin:** You're playing Family Guy Monopoly tonight, so. [Jack and Keith laugh]

**Dre:** God. I think you need to sneak out of school *and* you need to sneak out of home.

**Keith:** I'm not allowed to watch Family Guy, but we were allowed to get Family Guy Monopoly.

**Austin:** [laughs] You're allowed to get Family Guy Monopoly!

**Keith:** I have the monopolies of all the shows I'm not allowed to watch. [Austin laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** It teaches good business.

**Austin:** Exactly, that's what my uncle says! [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Going over to Nolan's house to play his copy of The Sopranos Monopoly. [laughter]

**Jack:** Sopranos Monopoly.

**Austin:** Ahh.

**Austin:** The vowels in "bada bing" have been covered over with masking tape as if they're slurs and you can't print them. [laughter]

**Jack (as Frankie):** Okay, what's everybody got this aftern—

**Jack:** Uh, I don't know how U.S. middle school works. Do we have different classes? We must do. Nolan must have different—

**Keith:** [overlapping] No, we have the same class all day.

**Dre:** Well...

**Austin:** I think it probably depends.

**Jack:** I mean...

**Dre:** I did not have the same class all day. My middle school was very much like high school.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. Middle school—

**Dre:** Like, the bell rang, and you went to a different class.

**Keith:** So for me, middle school was like...there was like three different classes.

**Austin:** Mmm.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Keith:** We get homeroom that did half of everything, and then a teacher for science and a teacher for history.

**Austin:** This is how mine was, Keith. I was the same way as Keith's. But I do know people whose middle schools/junior highs were basically like...basically like high school.

**Jack:** High school lite.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, high school lite.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Let's say, for the sake of this being like...easier and more fun—

**Jack:** Mmm.

**Austin:** You all have schedules and like change classes and...it's more like high school, more like American high school.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Otherwise, it's like, where did five kids go, four kids go, from the one class? It's a little...I mean, I don't know, maybe that's actually more interesting.

**Jack:** Like a fifth of the class disappears.

**Keith:** We'd be in different class probably.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We're three different ages.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Well, that's true. That's true, you're different ages. That's true.

**Jack:** Mr. Garrett—

**Dre:** Yeah, someone is probably skipping class right now to be at the same lunch table as the rest of us. [laughs]

**[Timestamp: 0:20:03]**

**Austin:** Almost certainly, right?



**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** True. True.

**Keith:** It's me. I'm already skipping a class. [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** School fucking sucks.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah. I had this thought the other day that was like, you know what rules is I'm never gonna be in school in that way ever again. [Dre sighs]

**Jack:** It's great.

**Austin:** Like, even if I decide to go back and do grad school again or something, it's not the same. It's not the same as high school which sucked. So.

**Jack:** It's fucking traumatic. You have to do it for as—basically, you're a child, your whole life—

**Austin:** Your whole life.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** —as you understand it, has been doing this.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** And then at the end of it, you immediately get X amount of thousand dollars in debt.

**Keith:** It reminds me of, uh...does anybody remember there's that line in Arrested Development where Maeby convinces George Michael to skip work, to go out to eat.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Keith:** And they see their aunt, and he's like, "She's an adult. She's allowed to have fun. We're kids, we're supposed to be working!" [Austin and Jack laugh] All of school felt that way to me forever.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Ahh.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Oh, I got band with Mr Garrett after lunch, and he doesn't—

**Keith (as Nolan):** He banned you?

**Jack (as Frankie):** Hmm?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** No, we have—

**Keith (as Nolan):** He banned you?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** We have band, like band practice.

**Jack (as Frankie):** No, no, no, no, band practice.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Oh, okay.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Like, music class. But he doesn't really know who I am, because I don't know how to play instruments. So I can get out of that pretty easily. [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia (as CC):** I can just use the move as an excuse if anybody asks anything. They're not really paying—

**Jack (as Frankie):** Like you've gotta go help with the move.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Yeah, like, no one's really paying attention right now, let's be honest.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] I think, as long as we're not out too late, I can probably get home in time to erase the message on the answering machine, [Austin chuckles] when they call and ask where I am.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Hmm. Okay.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** 'Cause like, nobody should be home for a while.

**Austin:** It's honestly grim.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm!

**Austin:** [sighs] And real.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Keith (as Nolan):** So wait, so we're going...so we're going...when are we going?

**Jack:** Looks at my watch, which has like a—

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] I think now.

**Jack:** Plastic swatch thing.

**Austin:** Does it have the pizza, the big pizza, the upper crust pizza guy on it? [Keith laughs]  
With the hands?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like that Mickey Mouse watch, except it's the pizza guy?

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Jack:** Well, no, you'd think. It's actually two pizza guys rotating around the... [Austin laugh]

**Dre:** Oh, that's horrific.

**Keith:** Here's what I need to do. I need to go to whoever is like, the class...either the like...the teacher's pet. I need to get...I'm bribing— [Jack chuckles] I'm going to give a bribe to the teacher's pet.

**Austin:** Ooh, okay.

**Jack:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Because if the teacher's pet says that I went home sick, then all of the teachers will just believe that's true.

**Austin:** Will just believe, yeah.

**Dre:** Mmm, yep.

**Keith:** And I got that— I got that money. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** You do have that money. That's true.

**Dre:** Oh god. Yeah, did we split that?

**Keith:** What's that?

**Dre:** Did we split that?

**Keith:** No one has asked for that. [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Dre:** That's fucked up.

**Austin:** You know the...

**Keith:** I assume that I've given out everyone's cut for the photo that we were...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** that seems likely to me, right?

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

**Austin:** Yeah. The teacher's pet is named Jody.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** She is...she's, like, not super...she's not like a— she's a teacher's pet more than she's like a brainiac. Do you know what I mean? She's more like overinvolved and is like the first one to raise her hand and—

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Is also like the one who like helps clean up after science experiments, and like...

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Which is like, she's nice. She's a nice— she's nice, but.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Dre:** This poor kid already has crippling anxiety about whether or not she has enough extracurriculars for her college application.

**Austin:** Yes, a hundred percent.

**Dre:** God bless her.

**Austin:** Is 11 years old and is...yeah. In fact, she is sitting... Does she have friends or does she sit by herself at lunch? She chooses to sit by herself at lunch. There are people who like her.

**Dre:** It's the 50 minutes, 30 minutes she gets to be quiet.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Dre:** [laughs] And just be by herself.

**Austin:** Uh huh. And so she...yeah, she's there, she's eating a pudding cup, and she's reading a book. She's reading like a kid's first novel. What's a good kid's first novel? Is she...how deep into a Nancy Drew book is she right now?

**Dre:** Ah.

**Keith:** You're always 80 percent of the way through Nancy Drew book.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** She's trying to solve the fucking picross puzzle. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Nancy is trying to solve the picross puzzle.

**Keith:** You go from just starting to almost finished with Nancy Drew.

**Austin:** Like that, yeah. So that's...so then, yeah. I think she sees— she notices you approach but doesn't make eye contact, and she says:

**Austin (as Jody):** [tersely] Pearson.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Hi Jody.

**Austin (as Jody):** What can I help you with?

**Keith (as Nolan):** I love that you're already willing to help. [Jack laughs softly] I need to—

**Austin (as Jody):** Mother says I have to be helpful, that helpfulness is next to godliness.

**Sylvia:** Oh boy.

**Austin:** This is the second next to godliness joke we've made in this show. [laughs]

**Keith:** Always say it so weird that you...

**Jack:** This poor fucking kid.

**Keith (as Nolan):** You know he's not supposed to say that. I know you know history.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Wait, who? Who's not supposed to say that?

**Keith:** Oh, wait, was it not a...was it not the teacher that said this?

**Austin:** No, it was Mother. Mother.

**Keith:** Oh, Mother. Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, Mother.

**Keith:** Because we had said the first episode or something that the music teacher that we all hate—

**Austin:** It was the music teacher.

**Keith:** —had said the same thing about about tardiness.

**Austin:** Tardiness, that's what the joke. I couldn't remember what that first joke was. [laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** So I thought it was him again.

**Austin:** Mm-mmm.

**Keith:** So never mind.

**Austin:** Well, maybe it is now. Maybe Jody...what's the music teacher's last name again?

**Jack:** Garrett.

**Austin:** Mr. Garrett? Jody Garrett. Here we go. [laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, man.

**Keith:** Oh no. [laughs]

**Jack:** I have class with her dad in like a second.

**Austin:** But she didn't say shit about her dad. She said shit about her mom.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So maybe there's a play here.

**Keith:** True.

**Keith (as Nolan):** So, you know...ah, I'm so busy. I need to do... [Austin and Jack laugh]  
I have an extracurricular I need to do today.

**Austin (as Jody):** Which one?

**Keith (as Nolan):** It's unofficial. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin (as Jody):** So it's an extra-extracurricular, then.

**Keith (as Nolan):** It's extra, right, it's extremely extracurricular.

**Austin (as Jody):** Well, what is it?

**Austin:** Puts the book down.

**Keith (as Nolan):** It's so extra that the school doesn't even know about it. [Austin laughs softly]

**Austin (as Jody):** Well, what is it?

**Austin:** And she puts the book down and looks at you and like pushes her glasses up and is now very curious. Big round glasses.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Um...Adventure Club.

**Austin (as Jody):** Adventure Club. How does one join Adventure Club, Pearson?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Um...I'm just friends with some of the older kids, and they had an adventure club.

**Austin (as Jody):** And they let you in.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin (as Jody):** Hmm!

**Keith (as Nolan):** 'Cause I'm really fast.

**Austin (as Jody):** Are there tryouts for Adventure Club?

**Keith (as Nolan):** [calling back to other kids] Are there tryouts for Adventure Club?  
[Austin laughs]

**Jack:** Vigorous nodding.

**Keith (as Nolan):** There are, yeah. There's totally tryouts for Adventure Club.

**Austin (as Jody):** [sighs] Well. What do you need? Because if you get me a tryout for Adventure Club, then maybe I can help.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Okay, done. You got a tryout already. I don't even need to ask them, 'cause we're close like that. And I need to go out of the school, and I need to not get in trouble for it. And can you just vouch for me when in class, when they ask, "Where's Nolan?" and you can say "Nolan had to go..."

**Austin (as Jody):** To Adventure Club?

**Keith (as Nolan):** "...home sick," or something.

**Austin (as Jody):** You want me to lie.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Um, no, I actually really don't want you to lie. I just can't think of anything where you wouldn't have to.

**Austin:** [laughs] This sounds like a roll to me. This sounds like a Contact, maybe? Is that what Contact means?

**Keith:** I'll roll Contact, yeah.

**Austin:** I think you have Contact. You got like a lot of Contact.

**Keith:** I have more Contact than anything.

**Austin:** Yeah. Contact is "Know the right person. Get a hold of them. Tell the GM who it is." Yeah. I'm going to say that that's...you know, it's kind of like knowing the right person. This is that still.

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah. Alright.

**Austin:** A success! There you go. Awesome.

**Keith:** Nice.

**Austin:** Yeah, a lot of dice, and then unfortunately only one six, but you'll take that six.



**Keith:** I'll take that six.

**Austin:** And yeah. So this is not even so much knowing. I should have had you just roll this to begin with 'cause of how Contact works. But this totally works for this, where it's like, yes, this is the right person for it. She's on board. You've given her what she wants.

**Keith:** Oh, would Contact have produced Jody?

**Austin:** Yes, that's correct.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** That's how Contact is built. And that's like, we could have used Contact to produce the taxi driver before too.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** [laughs] In retrospect.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** I gotta be rolling Contact more.

**Austin:** Contact's great, yeah. Uh huh. So yeah, you—

**Keith:** This ten year old kid knows everybody. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Well, which speaks to why you're, again, the popular kid, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's I think probably why you put those points there.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** So yeah, she's like:

**Austin (as Jody):** [sighs] I'll figure something out, but we have to figure out a time for my tryout. And if it goes bad, I want a second backup tryout.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Um, sure, yeah. And if it— yeah, we just have to do it on...I'm grounded, so we have to do it like after school. Like, right after school.

**Austin (as Jody):** That's fine by me.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Not today, but like this week.

**Austin (as Jody):** Mm-hmm. Alright, well, good luck with Adventure Club.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Thanks, Jody. It's fun. If you get in, you'll love it.

**Austin (as Jody):** We'll see.

**Austin:** Book up, glasses, face turned. [chuckles] Immediately went from "I can't wait to join Adventure Club" to "I'm too good for Adventure Club."

**Keith:** "We'll see." Yeah. Maybe I should have played it harder. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** No, you're good. She'll cover for all of you at this point. She wants to be part of Adventure Club. The idea of an unofficial extracurricular is great, because if you could *make* it official, then that looks incredible, 'cause then you're a founder of an extracurricular, and colleges love that.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Right.

**[Timestamp: 0:30:04]**

**Austin:** Eat that shit up.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So, yeah, you're covered now.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Do you think it's true that we're an adventure club?

**Jack (as Frankie):** No, absolutely not.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I mean, we could be.

**Keith (as Nolan):** We have an HQ.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah.

**Sylvia (as CC):** [sighs]

**Jack (as Frankie):** I think—

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Hmm.

**Austin:** And you're about to be down a member, because CC is leaving, so.

**Keith (as Nolan):** That's true. We have a spot opening up.

**Austin:** Sorry, CC.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Sorry, CC.

**Sylvia (as CC):** It's fine, Nolan and disembodied voice. Don't worry about it. [Austin, Jack, and Keith laugh]

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. Actually, we know a lot about ghosts. We're always talking to this disembodied voice. [Austin and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, always saying what we're doing and stuff.

**Austin:** Yeah. I like to think of myself as, like, the faculty advisor to the Adventure Club. [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** Argh.

**Austin:** If we made like a really twee kids part of an adventure club thing RPG, I would definitely name the GM the faculty advisor, as like our little cutesy fake name for what a GM is, you know?

**Keith:** Oh yeah. [Jack laughs]

**Sylvia:** Really good.

**Austin:** Alright, so you're... The path is clear, as far as the not getting in trouble part of this.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** At least not getting in immediate trouble, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** I am going to pick Tiny up from the dog sitters. Tiny is at a dog sitters today, because my parents are at work, or there's nobody at home to look after Tiny, and last time that happened, it was a...it didn't go well. So, on the way to the tunnel, I am gonna pick up this dog.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** I thought you were going to say that your parents just needed a day off from the dog.  
[Austin and Keith laugh]

**Jack:** I mean, that...

**Keith:** Like, they're home.

**Jack:** I think maybe what they said to me was, you know, "No, we...it's not gonna work out today," or whatever, but yeah, no, they're at home, just relaxing. They're able to put things on low surfaces. They got a whole plate of food out on the table. [Jack, Austin, and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** We never get to have charcuterie anymore.

**Austin:** Tiny just eats it. Anyone else getting anything before you head to wherever you're going, which I'm not even a hundred percent sure of? Maybe everyone's like, "We'll meet back here at the hideout in an hour," or something?

**Jack:** Or do we want to... Didn't they identify a way into the Tunnel Project, into the tunnel?

**Austin:** So there's...I believe there...yes, I believe the answer is yes.

**Jack:** I'm sure we found like a way in.

**Austin:** There are two. You have a secret entrance that's *your* secret entrance. It's on the map. It's north of the Bluff City Studios place. That goes in through some office spaces, which you haven't completely explored. There's also a primary entrance which is close to where the grove is on the map, which is where you saw the ghosts. So there are two entrances to the Tunnel Project as far— or, to the tunnel, as far as you know.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Austin:** I'll mark the other one with an X. But you haven't explored the one near the grove. I will say, going through either of— going through one or the other will be different experiences, you know what I mean?

**Jack:** Can you tell us whether one is a sneaking mission and one is a...?

**Austin:** I think they're both seeking missions, it's just what you're sneaking past and also what is...I mean, I'll say this much, right? Like, you go through the secret tunnel entrance you know, and that takes you into the office area. That's an area that potentially has more information you don't have yet, right?

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true, and that might arm us. That might be a good way to arm ourselves as we sort of enter the tunnel proper.

**Austin:** Alternatively, the one near the grove where you saw a ghost might be closer to the stuff that makes the ghosts, since that's where the ghosts were. So maybe it's less of a...you don't have to go through as much of the tunnel when it's time to go through the tunnel, you know? Or the under tunnel, whatever the weird place is that you have to play the tape.

**Jack:** Austin, have you drawn the sort of facing of the tunnel on this map?

**Austin:** What do you mean by facing?

**Jack:** The line of the tunnel.

**Austin:** Yes, that big gray thing.

**Jack:** Oh, it's currently running sort of north to south.

**Austin:** It runs north-south, yeah, yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** It's underneath all that. That is the tunnel. Yeah, sorry.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Makes a weird twist there underneath that one piece of land.

**Jack:** I would be prepared to go in through the...I would be prepared to meet up at the studios hideout and go in through the secret tunnel entrance. It's where we go. Frankie was kind of hoping that some people would be less...that she would have comrades who were less confident about this than she was, so she could hide her own lack of confidence, and I think she is now hiding her lack of confidence by saying: let's go to the one we know. We've been in there before. This will be successful.

**Sylvia (as CC):** Yeah, I'm fine with going for the one that we already know.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah, that sounds that sounds good.

**Austin:** Nolan? You on board? How are you feeling?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Hmm. I guess that's fine. I feel like it would be fun to do one we haven't seen, get some new stuff.

**Sylvia (as CC):** We know how to get like...it might be easier to get out the way that we already know.

**Jack (as Frankie):** And not die, and...

**Keith (as Nolan):** What if we can't get out the way that we went in?

**Sylvia (as CC):** [softly] Shit. Shoot.

**Keith (as Nolan):** And so we would have to escape out of the new place under, sort of, you know, a ticking...

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Why are we making up potential, like fake reasons to have to go in the other way? [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** Make up a plan and get mad at it. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Look, this is the...I thought that we were doing planning. That's what you do in planning, right? You come up with fake things that might happen. I'll go in the new— I got nothing against the new— the old way.

**Jack (as Frankie):** Good.

**Jack:** Swinging backpack.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I'm gonna go get some more batteries for the tape player.

**Austin:** Smart. Alright, I mean, it sounds like we're ready to go to this tunnel entrance.

**Jack:** I'm trying to think. Is there an item or something that we know... [laughs] This is why it's dangerous playing as kids, 'cause otherwise I'd just be like, "I'm going to try and get a gun," but that would be a whole...

**Austin:** [laughs] No! Yeah, uh huh.

**Jack:** It'd be like a whole fucking thing.

**Austin:** Yikes.

**Jack:** No, think I'm ready. just anxiously watching, flipping through television channels, sitting at home, waiting for the— oh, no, we're going straight there, right? Yeah, this is...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This class.

**Austin:** Yeah, now. If we can't do it...yeah, uh huh. Let's say that you had an early lunch period, like an 11 lunch period, and so by the time you get there and stuff, it's like 12:30, you know? You had to go pick up your dog. You had to get back to, you know, Atlantic City and Bluffington Beach from your school. You know, we're kind of handwaving some stuff here, but you get what you need, and there's a suiting up montage, you know? [Dre laughs] Grabbing stuff from the hideout, grabbing stuff from the dogsitter.

**Jack:** Trying to persuade the dog to come with me.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [laughs softly] And then yeah, we get the kind of hero shot, right, of you like nearing this tunnel. This...it's not a...from where you are, it's as if the tunnel from underground has poked up. The tunnel itself is just like a regular tunnel, but around it there is an entire facility that's been built underwater, right, and underground in this whole area. And it's as if part of it has like poked up from underneath the marsh as if it, like, has bubbled up to the surface or the plates underneath the earth have shifted just so that it's lifted. It's not like a nice stairwell down. It's like a doorway that opens into a tilted, like, walkway, you know? Ar not walkway, but a tilted hallway down into this facility. So it almost feels like the tunnel has crashed up from the ground, like the way a subway car might bust up through the ground of a street or something. If you imagine that, but it's an entire side of this facility. And you've been in it before, has a big heavy metal door that has been placed on this entrance. This is not like the original door. The original door is like a hallway door. It might have even been like a glass door. But there's been a new big heavy metal like vault door on the front of it, which if you all pull on, you're able to like lift and open. And as you're doing that, as you're getting ready to go in, you hear the sound of buzzing nearby, different than the TV buzzing that you heard before. Not that static sound, not the distant saxophone. This is like a motor. What do you do?

**Dre:** Uh. I think Ronnie starts like putting the tape that we took in the tape deck and like, make sure it's rewound all the way. [laughs]

**Austin:** [chuckles] It's good to go.

**Jack:** Did we see the drone chasing us or was that something only the camera saw?

**Austin:** I don't think we did. That was...yeah.

**Jack:** Mmm.

**Austin:** That was something only the camera saw in that moment.

**Jack:** Okay. Yeah, can I try and figure out where this noise is coming from?

**Austin:** Yeah, totally.

**Jack:** But sort of stealthily?

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. I would say that that's a...that's a roll. That's a...what is that? I think in general, this is probably a Sneak, right?

**[Timestamp: 0:40:00]**

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Or I guess it could be an Investigate, finding this thing before it finds you and then reacting very quickly, right? So yeah, Investigate would also work.

**Jack:** So, I have...I have seven in Investigate.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So that's four Mind, three—

**Austin:** Wait.

**Jack:** Investigate?

**Austin:** Oh, yeah, okay. Right. I thought you meant just in Investigate and I was like, that seems...

**Jack:** Oh no, oh my god.

**Austin:** That seems incorrect. [laughs softly] So, yeah.

**Jack:** I think, yeah, let's give this a roll. Okay.

**Austin:** There's a six. There's a success. Yeah, you spot this little figure up in the sky with the smiley face, and it's looking the other direction at this point, but, it like, buzzes over you from the sort of tunnel side. And it's turning to look at you, and just in time, you have enough time to, like, duck away from it and kind of pull people away from its line of sight.

**Jack:** Do I get questions here?

**Austin:** Yeah, totally.



**Jack:** Or do you just want to play forward?

**Austin:** No, no, you always— you get your Investigate questions.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Austin:** Two questions on a success. And I'm just giving you that it's that, but you don't have to do what is— I guess if you do “What is hidden here and where is it?” that could be a different...you could get something else, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah, that's true.

**Austin:** But this is not a hidden thing in a real way, so that's why I didn't want to make you spend for that, you know?

**Jack:** How can I get past the drone? Not necessarily in this moment, I feel like we just go down into the tunnel and close the door.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But like, in future, can I sort of see where this thing has a—

**Austin:** Yeah, there is...it is doing...we are in a stylized world, and so it is doing...you see that it does this sort of like localized...has cameras, but it also has some sort of scanner. You see it scan with like big bright laser lights, like vector, like lasers, green, you know, like sci fi laser scanning technology.

**Jack:** Hitman security camera lasers.

**Austin:** That style, yeah. And it scans like a nearby bush. And when it does, it goes like:

**Austin (as SAARA):** [robotic] Organic life detected. [overly friendly] Hello!

**Austin:** And the sound of it saying “Hello!” causes a bird to like breach out of the side of this bush and fly out into the sky. And then we hear its...we hear the sound of like a click of...and like a [increasing in pitch] *boooooom*, as if it's going to charge, charge up like a weapon, like a stun weapon or something. And then it says:

**Austin (as SAARA):** Organic life is not the target.

**Austin:** And then it goes [decreasing in pitch] *boooooom*. And it like uncharges the weapon as the bird flies away. So you know that it literally has this kind of localized scanner that it can use to kind of detect things. And based on the range and stuff, you know that like if you're...I don't know distances enough to be like, “It's 100 feet away.” I don't know what height it's at. But like,

you can see where it's scanning, so as long as you stay out of that scan, then that seems to be its primary way of detecting you, besides you're seen by its camera, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah. Okay, so if we just keep low and keep hidden, and then in the event of a scan, try and...

**Austin:** Keep...yeah, exactly. Try to avoid that particular thing, yeah. In fact, maybe what you see is that like, it...I'll give you this. The camera turns off in that moment. Right?

**Jack:** Ooh.

**Austin:** It's doing that scan, and so it like puts this special thing in front of the camera so that that then becomes the only thing it's seeing, is what it's scanning.

**Jack:** Okay, second question: what threats can I perceive here?

**Austin:** I think it says...I think you hear like a speaker on it, right? And you hear the voice of the two Concern agents that says...they say...do they actually call out or do they just...do we just catch them? I think we catch them via the speaker arguing about something like baseball or what their favorite, you know, Scorsese movie is or something. And then one of them says:

**Austin (as Agent):** [exasperated] You're leaning on the button again.

**Austin:** And the thing cuts off. So now you know there are particularly...there are people who sound like government agents, right? Like spies, attached to this thing, you know?

**Jack:** Mm-hmm. Okay, I think I just hustle everybody into the tunnel, pull the door closed behind us as quickly as possible. You know, let people know that we are being pursued by something, the people from the black car.

**Keith:** I wonder what their favorite Scorsese movies are.

**Austin:** I'm making this decision currently. I'm looking at a list. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** One of them is *Casino* and one of them is *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's perfect. Yes. Yes, I agree with this. [laughs] I was exactly looking...Keith, I was exactly like, I think one of them leans Scorsese the comedic director. [Keith and Dre laugh] A hundred percent. I think that's probably the older one. Their two names, again, are...I have them here. Agent Clark, who's like a middle aged white guy, is the one who likes *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. And Agent Bailey, who is a younger Vietnamese woman, is the one who likes *Casino*.

**Austin (as Agent Bailey):** You know, there's just so much going on in *Casino*. There's just so much, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah. The one who likes *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* prefers the novel of *Casino* to the movie.

**Austin:** [laughs] Of *Casino*, yeah, to the film. Yeah.

**Austin (as Agent Clark):** You just miss all the details.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Keith (as Agent Clark):** There's so much in the movie? There's so much in the book! It's a book!

**Austin (as Agent Bailey):** I don't like books! Plus, we live in a casino town.

**Keith (as Agent Clark):** How do you say you don't like books? There's a billion different kinds of books. It's like saying you don't like sandwiches. You can put anything in there.

**Austin (as Agent Bailey):** I don't like sandwiches!

**Keith (as Agent Clark):** You can put anything in there! It's the book of food.

**Austin (as Agent Bailey):** Well, I'm consistent at least, alright? Don't like sandwiches. I don't like books. I like things that are—

**Keith (as Agent Clark):** Consistently wrong.

**Austin:** [laughs] And that comes through the speaker of this killer drone. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** Well, time to kill all these children. [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** It's time to...time to use our our fucking Taser drone! So.

**Jack:** Is it dark in here with the door shut?

**Austin:** Yes, immediately, right?

**Dre:** Uhh.

**Austin:** I think there's probably...as the door closes, some emergency lights flicker on, but they're like...they're not good emergency lights. They're like the lights...they're like the orange walkway lights from a movie theater, which is not enough to see by, you know? You wouldn't

walk— they can show you where the path is, but you're not going to see much more. Do you have like flashlights or something?

**Jack:** Yeah, I think Frankie has a head mounted flashlight that she got by giving a magazine, [chuckles] a caving magazine, too much money over 10 issues.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Uh huh.

**Keith:** Can I have a Christmas stocking hand crank flashlight?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Oh, those things rule when you're eleven.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Oh, wow.

**Austin:** And it makes that great motor sound as you turn it, like that... 'cause you're working on a...

**Keith:** Yeah, the whining. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. 'cause it's like an actual dynamo or whatever in there.

**Keith:** Right. Like if you're trying to play with an RC car, like without the power.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes, totally. So, yeah, those light up the hallway here, and you can kind of see as you kind of follow this tilted hallway down, eventually it just hooks up with another regularly like leveled out hallway. And this hallway goes really far down like to the south, at which point it hits another one of these big metal doors. But to your left and right, up and down this whole hallway are a bunch of little office buildings, and these seem to be deserted. They've been deserted every time you've come here before. And the doors on at least one or two of them have been ripped off or removed. There's spray paint up on the walls here. There are beer bottles along the floor in the corners. Someone dragged a mattress into one of these rooms. You know, this is a hangout spot for teens at this point. But there are also, as you peak in one of the rooms, like white boards and old computers. It seems like it hasn't been used in years, but the computers actually feel older than just a few years. They feel like, you know, big boxy IBM computers from from the 90s, right? Early 90s, late 80s style towers and desktops, you know? And in one of the rooms, in fact, as you peer out, there's like a glass...the wall, the end of it, the end of the wall is like a glass, or the far wall is like a glass window looking down on something that...I don't know if you've been in that room before, but you can see the reflection in the glass of cars every now and then driving down a tunnel. And you don't know if it's literally looking down on the tunnel, the actual tunnel itself that's in use, because you don't think that that's where it should be. Like,

your brain mapping is like, that's not...I shouldn't be able to look down at the tunnel from here, but that is what's happening. You know, you see a big truck drive past, and you see the top of the truck. But, yeah, this place is abandoned and presumably filled with information and stuff. So. What do you do?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** I feel like a good thing would be to like figure out what, like, as a group we're looking for, if we're gonna look through the information stuff. I was thinking like a map or like blueprints of the construction project or something.

**Keith:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But if other people have ideas.

**[Timestamp: 0:50:00]**

**Keith:** I also was thinking map. I don't...that makes total sense to me.

**Austin:** Totally.

**Jack:** Yeah, is there like consistent iconography down here to help guide you from one place to another?

**Austin:** Yeah, there's...it has like that style of like extremely... [sighs] You know, I guess I'm gonna try to keep in our own...I was going to describe it as being very much like *Alien*, that style of like very brusque.

**Jack:** Boxy.

**Austin:** Boxy. But it's not, because, again, we are playing a game set in the fake 90s. And so you have to think about like signage from the 90s, which is going to be like a little bit too...a little bit too bright, a little bit too *Saved by the Bell*, you know what I mean? [Dre laughs] It has that...you know the cups, those cool 90s cups?

**Keith:** Yeah, with the colors?

**Austin:** With the blue and the...

**Keith:** The splash of colors? Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, the splash of colors. It's like everything is over...it's like, oh, what's the word I'm looking? Not over stylized, but like there's excessive. There's no interest in keeping things clean. What the interest is in is in flair. There are ways in which this place—

**Keith:** Maximalist design.

**Austin:** Yeah, extremely maximalist. There are ways in which this place looks like a TGI Friday's. Everyone is allowed to have like stuff on their desks. And in fact, this place seems like it's been left, as if—

**Keith:** You're saying all the signs have pieces of flair.

**Jack:** Ha!

**Austin:** All the signs have pieces of flair, but so do the desks. The desks all have bobbleheads or baseball pennants or photos of favorite superheroes or like, you know, comic book cutouts, right? Like, everyone had one or two pieces of special like flair at their desk, and that was tied to what rank you were in this place. The bigger desk at like the front of the other desks has three pieces of flair, and that's how you know that's the boss.

**Keith:** The more pop figures you have—

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly.

**Keith:** —the higher your rank in the company.

**Austin:** Exactly, however many desk toys you have.

**Keith:** Wow. Sounds like heaven. [Austin and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Also, they're all still here, which is creepy, because no one's worked here, and they just left their bobbleheads and their like colored hourglass things that have like the cool, colorful sand? That's just still here, so.

**Keith:** Something bad must have happened if they left behind their sand art.

**Austin:** [laughs] If they left behind their sand art, exactly. Someone's sea monkeys were left behind, and that's just a tragedy. Who is looking for—

**Keith:** Did I hear that sea monkeys are a myth?

**Austin:** What?

**Sylvia:** What?

**Keith:** Like it's fake? Like they were fake.

**Jack:** What?

**Keith:** Like, sea monkeys weren't a real thing.

**Dre:** No.

**Austin:** No.

**Austin:** Sea monkeys are real.

**Dre:** They're real.

**Jack:** I think the thing is that they're not necessarily like...special.

**Sylvia:** Monkeys.

**Jack:** Yeah, they're just like a fairly common kind of small shrimp right, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They're brine shrimp, yeah, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yes. As far as I know.

**Sylvia:** I'm here to provide such insight as they're not real monkeys.

**Keith:** I remember reading like a 1000 words of a 5000 word thing on sea monkeys, [Jack laughs] and I don't remember what it was.

**Austin:** There seems to have been a battle over the sea monkey fortune, which has a *wild* subhead.

**Jack:** Murder.

**Austin:** [reading] "A former 1960s bondage film actress is waging legal combat with a toy company for ownership of her husband's mail-order aquatic pet empire."

**Dre:** Huh.

**Jack:** Whoa!

**Austin:** Gonna drop this in here to read later. [Dre and Austin laugh] So, who wants to roll to try to find the blueprints or whatever else you're looking for here? Again, this feels like Investigate. I guess it could be something like Tinker or Program if you're...probably Program if you're using computers here.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** We try to get a PowerPoint presentation.

**Austin:** Or, sorry, or Comprehend. It could be Comprehend, have the right piece of information or be able to find it.

**Keith:** I love this list of things I don't do.

**Dre:** I can—

**Austin:** I actually think it's probably Comprehend, but go ahead.

**Dre:** I can kind of Comprehend. I only have one in it, but I do have three in Mind.

**Austin:** Sounds like a good...

**Sylvia:** That's basically my situation with Investigate, so I think you're better off.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** Comprehend says—

**Jack:** I have six in Comprehend.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Ah, well there you go.

**Dre:** Ooh, there you go.

**Sylvia:** There we go.

**Austin:** The ability to have the right piece of information or be able to find it at the school library or similar location. The game master—sorry, the faculty advisor—will give you the information or ask you to come up with something on your own. If you fail the roll, the game master gives you bad news or the wrong information. I won't say which it is. [Jack and Austin laugh softly]



**Jack:** Okay, let me just...

**Austin:** And then you're going to get for...if you get additional successes, then you get additional information and bonus die to use when you use the information, which is fun.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Austin:** So you're at six right now?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Is anyone helping? I think one person can help, if I remember right?

**Dre:** I mean, I'll help. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, it seems like you have the skill, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** So. And yeah, I think you need to have the skill, might be the thing.

**Jack:** So I get one more D6?

**Austin:** I believe that that's true.

**Jack:** Oh, look at that! Two sixes!

**Austin:** Two sixes! Look at you.

**Dre:** Nice.

**Austin:** So, what's this look like, as you boot up a computer or look through file folders and stuff?

**Jack:** It's a microfiche machine, actually.

**Austin:** Mmm, okay.

**Jack:** It's one of those microfiche machines, which I'm very familiar with because I went to—

**Keith:** Speaking of see monkeys.

**Jack:** [laughs softly] Micro—

**Keith:** [quietly] Microfi—

**Sylvia:** Fuck off. [Keith cackles] Fuck you!

**Austin:** Bad. [Sylvia laughs, Keith continues laughing]

**Jack:** I went on a trip.

**Austin:** See, the fish would be small. [laughter continues]

**Dre:** Oh, okay. Alright, there we go. It took a second for me to get it, but yeah, okay.

**Keith:** [faintly] Micro fish.

**Jack:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** Fuck!

**Keith:** Mail order microfiche.

**Sylvia:** I hate you.

**Austin:** New type of guy who only pronounces it fiche. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** Ficheteen Minutes. [more laughter]

**Jack:** Ficheteen. Ah, Ficheteen Minutes, sea monkies.

**Austin:** Yeah. I would love for Fishteen Minutes to come back.

**Jack:** That was episode 28, actually, Austin.

**Austin:** Ah, fuck, I missed it.

**Jack:** I went on a trip, Frankie went on a trip to the...American Magazine Museum in Washington DC—

**Austin:** The AMM, yeah.

**Jack:** Three years ago.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** And I got to look at all of the back issues of the [deep breath] Man from Greston. It's a magazine.

**Austin:** Excuse me?

**Jack:** There's a comic book. The Man from Gres— Grexton!

**Austin:** Oh, sure. [Jack and Sylvia laugh]

**Jack:** That's the alien planet that he's from.

**Austin:** Oh, I thought it was a British town, like Brixton. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, I also thought it was a British town, yeah. [Jack and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** I deadass thought you were like, oh, yeah, it's like a hard rollin', you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** (??? 56:53) yes.

**Austin:** Like, a Guy Richie type motherfucker.

**Jack:** I have absolutely changed my mind. That's what it is. [Austin laughs] It was actually— [laughs] It, you know, had some Jason Statham looking motherfucker on the front.

**Austin:** [laughs] Exactly.

**Jack:** It's from the early 2000-and-whatevers, and they had it on microfiche. And I spent the whole afternoon there reading The Man from Grexton while my family wanted to go do something else. But this means that I'm very qualified to use this microfiche, and I'm enlisting Ronnie's help to bring the little cartridges over and to sort of like stand behind my shoulder and be like, "Oh, wait, stop, zoom in on that thing," or whatever. You know, you turn the dials.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Perfect. So, you're gonna get what? You're gonna get a bonus. You get plus one die while using this information, but you also get bonus information here. You were looking for what exactly? What was the main thing you wanted here? Was it just—

**Jack:** What were you aiming for, Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** So, I specifically was looking...like, I was thinking of, because this is an ongoing like construction project—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** That there would be like plans or something? I don't know if there'd be like a finished facility map.

**Austin:** No, totally. There's totally a finished facility map that you're able to find.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay. Then, sick.

**Austin:** This place is done, right? This place is operational at this point. In fact, what you find is more than that. It's not just a map of the place. And let me give you the map of the place first, right? Like not...not literally, 'cause it doesn't super matter. You know that door to the south that has like a big metal door on it? If you go through that, the next big metal door basically, you will find your way into...eventually into the memory core of this place, the verbo brain [chuckles] of this place. [Dre laughs]

**Jack:** Shit.

**Keith:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**Austin:** It's actually not called that. I think it's called the...I do have it written here. It's called the con—

**Keith:** Memory core?

**Austin:** It's called the memory core? [laughs] It's called the control track. There is just a room that is...think of like...you know, think of a VHS tape or a cassette tape, that style of like magnetic tape, you know? And it's huge reams of those going around the room, like literally the size of the room. But then also these big kind of oval servers almost in the middle, like a bunch of those. It's almost like a...it's a room filled with giant cassette tape style tape rolling again and again and again and again. And from what you can put together, this is important for making sure that the people who go from...that people get to the right destination, right? That if you're going from Buffington Beach to Bluff City, it's important that your kind of self gets recorded onto this tape here at this kind of the Buffington version of it, and then as if through a 56K modem, it is transferred to another one of these places at the other end of the tunnel, at which point it's downloaded and reinscribed back into the reality there, basically? These are big, weird concepts, and it's not laid out as cleanly as this, but you're pretty sure you get this. You're pretty sure it basically means that—

**[Timestamp: 1:00:22]**

**Jack:** Like, icons that show it happen on the microfiche.

**Austin:** Yeah, very basic ones. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. It's almost like there is a copy made here of you, and then that copy is sent to the other end, and then it's put into into the reality there, at which point you're set to continue living there. And it does say, warning, you know, the track

heads need to be cleaned regularly. Allow the automated track head cleaners to perform their tasks. Failing to do so could be detrimental. Could be— it has to be the most euphemistic thing in the world, right? So it's like, could be detrimental to further experiences of potential passengers through the the tunnel, by which they mean those people could get turned into weird ghosts.

**Jack:** Don't open your eyes during the jaunt.

.

**Keith:** So, what you're saying is the way that this works is that—

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [sighs] They print a ghost. [Jack laugh]

**Keith:** You get...it's a clone. You're cloned.

**Austin:** It's hard to know, because it's not like the physical body doesn't...the physical body goes through the tunnel, right?

**Jack:** Like, I get in my car, and I drive through the tunnel, and then I get out of my car at the other end.

**Austin:** Correct. There is no disintegration of the person.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It's like...we've talked about—

**Keith:** Your mind gets taken out and put back in, or a copy of the mind.

**Austin:** It's not even necessarily the mind. It is the mind. It's the self. It's the...we use video game comparisons a lot here. You know, in Hieron we had to talk— with the Strata and Lamina, we talked a lot about like save files and like dwarf fortress and stuff. [Dre laugh] So, pardon me while I do this again. Buffington Beach, Bluff City, and Blough City are like three different video games, and their save files are not perfectly compatible. But there is this mod that was made called the Tunnel Project [Sylvia laughs] that allows you to transfer your file from one to the other, right?

**Jack:** Oh, it's One Wasteland, the *Fallout* mod that lets you play *Fallout 3* in *Fallout: New Vegas*.

**Keith:** This is what the video game Blockchain people want. [Austin laugh]

**Dre:** Yeah, I know, they want you to have an NFT of yourself that you can take to the different video games.

**Austin:** Of yourself, yeah, uh huh. [chuckles] God. But that's like a very loose, you know, analogy, which I want to be clear, I only...that analogy I just thought up on the spot. This has not always been a video game thing. But that's sort of the idea, right? The idea that you could take a character and your save from *Morrowind* into *Oblivion* into *Skyrim* or from *Skyrim* into *Dragon's Dogma*, which is like, well, that's not supposed to work. [laughs softly] That doesn't work that way.

**Keith:** I feel as though we have stumbled into the plot of *Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase*.

**Austin:** Let me tell you, Keith, I know less about *Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase* than I do about *Click* at this point, so.

**Keith:** [laughs] Well, prepare for me to say *Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase* every week for the next month.

**Austin:** [laughs] Okay, good. This is your new thing. So, that's the main information you get. There is secondary information you get here. More important information. I mean, again, I'm gonna underscore, if you could read through the— if you can breach the euphemism, if you can read past it, you understand that it means that people get—

**Jack:** Frankie knows videotapes through and through, right?

**Austin:** Totally.

**Jack:** So like, she's able to just be like, oh, shoot. They got like goofed up by the readers that weren't clean.

**Austin:** You know what it's like? For videotapes, it's when...imagine you use...you record— and you've done this before, Frankie, where you've recorded over the tape over and over again.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But there's like a ghost from a previous recording that doesn't quite get filtered through all the way? It gets burnt in, you know what I mean? Or like a TV that has a burn in from having the weather channel on all the time, and the UI— or the, you know, not the UI. The UI of the weather channel. [Jack laughs softly] The like chyrons of the weather channel get burned in, so even when you're on MTV, you can see...it still has the little cloud.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or it still says "Weather Update" at the bottom.

**Keith:** What if you were watching like football, and you could turn the UI off?

**Austin:** I mean, that sounds great. I would love to do that. So this is...that is what happens, and that's what these ghosts are. They're people who got stuck in that system. Now, you find a little something else, which is there is the...a thing called the expansion protocol, which seems to have been put into effect about ten years ago, soon after— like, not long after the tunnel came online or that people started using the tunnel, in which...this is hard to read and hard to accept. Do you know how Facebook sometimes does experiments...

**Jack:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Where, like, you get— you find out—

**Jack:** They destabilize a country? [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Where they destabilize a country, right. Or they go, "Okay, these 10000 people, we're going to show them more angry posts for the next week and trace how it changes their posting habits," right? Facebook does that stuff a lot. The Tunnel Project okayed a thing that was an experiment to see: what if we put people in a place they weren't supposed to go to? What if someone was going from Blough City to Bluff City, and instead we put them in Buffington, and we used this technology and this weird magic shit basically to have them integrate into life there. They don't know it, their life just adjusts, right? Reality— you've loaded their save into a different place. They don't go, "Where am I?" They go, "Okay, I'm here now." They just kind of click in. So that's step one, and I'm gonna say maybe this is where you see this. Are you all crowded—

**Keith:** You're saying as if they thought that that's where they meant to go.

**Austin:** Correct.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** And in fact, you see an example of this, which is: you see one example of this that's scheduled is for the arrival of Ronnie Lee Highsmith and family, who was supposed to go to...where were you from originally, Ronnie?

**Dre:** Oh, I should have picked a specific town.

**Austin:** Were you in...or, no, you were in the real world, I guess, right? Or you were in...

**Dre:** Yes, yes.

**Austin:** So you were supposed to come...you were supposed to go to...or maybe we...I feel like we went back and forth on this many times.

**Dre:** Yes.

**Austin:** And who even knows at this point? You were supposed to go either to Blough City or Bluff. I'm guessing you were supposed to go to Bluff, because the technology in Bluff is Bluff, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's super science town.

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

**Austin:** Instead, you wound up in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Where like, Atlantic City, New Jersey isn't even like a good place to go in our real world for cancer treatment. I'm from New Jersey. If you have someone who is suffering from cancer like I have in my family, you want to go to Philadelphia, you want to go to New York. And so, your family was moved here by this experiment just to see what would happen, right?

**Jack:** From where?

**Austin:** From whatever place that...maybe the world of Blough makes the most sense here, or maybe from our own world, right? Thought that you'd be going through this tunnel and going to Bluff, and instead it got turned around on you, and you just came back into Buffington, and reality was changed such that you just fit into life here. Don't worry about it. Which is a weird thing to see.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** Your own name on this list, your father's name on this list. Now realizing that, like, this is the way this sort of thing can fuck people's lives over, right? So that's already— and there's a lot of examples of this, right? There's like a hundred different names just in front of you of like, this person's supposed to go from Blough to Bluff, and we're gonna send them to Bluffington instead. This person's supposed to go to Buffington to Blough for a job. We're gonna send them to Blough instead and see— or, to Bluff instead and see what happens. It's all just to figure out, you know, how the technology works and ways we can better improve, blah, blah, blah. That part of this experiment ended about five years ago, and something new started called the expansion protocol, in which, based on those findings—and it's dressed up in the nicest, shittiest terms you can imagine—the quality of life in Bluff is the best, right? There's great science.

**Jack:** That place seems great. It's a bit weird, a bit frightening sometimes, but.

**Austin:** It's a bit weird, but it's exciting, and by and large, people seem to get along pretty nicely, and the economy is booming there, and it's expansive in this really energetic way. And so a project starts that says for every ten people who go from Blough or Bluffington into the tunnel to go to either Blough or Bluffington, you know, three of them instead wind up with their lives



moved to Bluff. And over the last ten years, Bluff has grown as these other two cities slowly start to fade. These are, again, big, weird ideas for kids to handle, but it's the process of fucking with the tracking so that will happen that ends up with these edge cases where ghosts get left behind. This is a case where...maybe the thing is that in three days or in a day or whatever, Britney would have supposed to have wound up in Bluff City. That didn't happen. Instead, she wound up in this weird grove playing the saxophone, stuck here as a digital ghost. So that's the situation.

**Jack:** It's like they're draining the two other cities—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** —to sustain Bluff?

**Austin:** Not to sustain it, to do more than sustain it. They're making it like—

**Jack:** Sort of—

**Austin:** The one city. They're slowly—

**Jack:** It's like they've decided where the capital is, and they're like...

**[Timestamp: 1:10:01]**

**Austin:** Yeah, yes. [chuckles]

**Jack:** “Everyone to Bluff!”

**Austin:** Uh huh. Don't worry about the fact that it's like destroying these other cities. Including—and like, listen, we know Blough City sucks.

**Jack:** That's the worst of the three.

**Austin:** And yet, it's not the one that's doing this, so.

**Jack:** Do we know who is doing this? Is there any...?

**Austin:** That stuff is not in this sort of paperwork here.

**Jack:** No.

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** Hmm. Okay.

**Austin:** Let's say that's a mystery for another day and maybe even another year.

**Jack:** Yes. I'm trying to figure out like, what...how, as an eleven year old, I would respond to this. I think it would be like that confusion that you know the adults are fucking people over in some way—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** But you can't really work out...

**Austin:** You know what you probably find is some version of, like, market tested and then destroyed versions of what like marketing materials would have been for this protocol if it had been made public instead of just been a thing that they do secretly, where it has like notes, it says like, "Yeah, we can't go public with this. Uh, people get really upset [laughs] when we tell them we're going to forcibly relocate them into a different reality. [Dre laughs] They don't like that very much." But you see it in really bright and sunny terms. Do you know what I mean? Where it's like...and maybe it's even before they commit to doing it forcibly, and it's just like: [advertising voice] Sick of your life? Try Bluff Beach! You know, or try Bluff City, that style of thing. In fact, Jack, we...there is a real life Bluff City pamphlet, like tourism pamphlet, out there at this point as part of the postcard level of Patreon.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah!

**Austin:** Maybe it's basically that sort of thing, right? Where it's like, the Tri-City Tunnel Project has made this like "Come to Bluff!" thing and yikes.

**Jack:** But that's not good enough for them, so they are just gonna steal people.

**Austin:** They're just gonna steal people. Yeah, it's a body— it's not a *Body Snatchers* situation, but it is a snatching bodies situation.

**Jack:** How is Ronnie feeling about this?

**Dre:** [sighs] Mad. I mean, like, his whole life was completely upended for something that's not even happening. And he's been watching his dad get worse and worse and worse, like ever since he got here, and now we know that that's not just like a sad thing and that your dad is just really sick.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Dre:** It's on purpose.

**Austin:** Yeah. As a test. Like, you didn't even get to be part of this second wave where it would have theoretically helped your dad in the long run to go to— I mean, you were going to Bluff City anyway.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So it's just fucking bad.

**Dre:** I think he's also...I mean, he doesn't have any proof that his aunt is involved with this, but—

**Jack:** Mmm.

**Dre:** Knowing that his aunt knows about some of the stuff is like furious, like seething.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Doesn't feel bad about potentially stealing the only tape recorder that keeps her safe anymore. [chuckles]

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, I guess it's not necessarily clear to us what she knew, right?

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, no, absolutely.

**Austin:** She may not have gotten two successes on her...

**Jack:** Right.

**Austin:** You know?

**Dre:** And this is not me implying that, like...I don't know if she is, right?

**Austin:** Totally. But Ronnie...yes.

**Dre:** Ronnie is very pissed.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally.

**Dre:** And his aunt already lied to him once.

**Austin:** Yeah. And so yeah. So the thing you learn is that the control track is specifically modified in order to produce that effect, which means that it has been...like whatever the things are that are supposed to clean it, they are—remember I mentioned there being like automatons

that clean it—are now being...are now, instead of cleaning it, like...I mean, I guess they're still cleaning it, but they are misaligning it on purpose towards Bluff instead of like towards accuracy of what the person intends. If this was a TV show, we'd get like a cool graphic showing this with bright lights and like a projection, you know? And like bright, big arrows showing like, "They intended to go here, but instead," like an old infomercial.

**Jack:** I buy a plane ticket to Orlando or something, and I'm like—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** "Off I go to Orlando!" and they just print the ticket saying, like, "You're going to Munich," except I arrive in Munich and get off, and I'm like, "Here I am. This is my life."

**Austin:** [laughs] Can't wait for my vacation in Munich!

**Keith:** On purpose.

**Jack:** "In Munich. This is where I intended to go."

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** I'm still wigged out about the copying thing. I mean, I— this—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You've gone through this tunnel. All of you have gone through this tunnel.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** The episode started— or the season, the mini campaign or arc, are started with y'all coming through the tunnel, so it's...how many other people have gone through it that you've missed? How many other Jennifers have there been? Or Britneys, Britney Namor.

**Jack:** Well, there's definitely been at least one Jennifer.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's definitely been a Jennifer.

**Dre:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Does this give us any guidance as to how...as to like... [sighs]

**Austin:** Yes, like how to...theoretically, you could set the the control track back on its right tracks, which means like pulling the magnetic tape off the track and putting it onto the right ones. I'm almost picturing like rollers, like...I don't know. In my mind, it's like sort of like two columns that have this tightly wound magnetic tape spinning around it, almost like a newspaper machine or something. Do you know what I mean?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I have it clear in my head, but I can't find a real life reference for what the fuck I'm thinking of.

**Keith:** Wait, describe it again?

**Austin:** It's like two columns.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** That then...put up two index fingers, and imagine a rubber band is connecting them.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** And imagine instead of a rubber band that is like VHS tape or a tape deck cassette tape thing, and it's spinning around them as if it's a machine that's reading those cassettes. Do you know what I mean? Or that tape. And then it also has tracks, like it also has like grooves in it where the that those big...and these are big. This tape is big and wide. It's like a a foot tall, each one of these things. And then it's very, very, very long, 'cause it runs across these tracks. It's like being inside of a VHS player or something, you know?

**Keith:** Right. So this is just like a really weird reel to reel player.

**Austin:** That's exactly right, yes.

**Jack:** This is in a neighboring room, or is this somewhere else in the facility and we're seeing—

**Austin:** This is beyond, this is to the south beyond the big heavy door.

**Jack:** The big metal door.

**Austin:** That separates the offices from the inner facility.

**Jack:** Right, right, right. Okay. And if we could realign it...

**Austin:** Then you would stop it from happening— then Britney would theoretically be reloaded into the right place, which is back here in Bluffington.

**Jack:** We'd have to find her tape, though, right?

**Austin:** At this point, you'd have to...I mean, it's a single room, and it only has...this is why people get stuck, is eventually whatever the current person or the current like buffer is gets loaded into the archival buffer or whatever, right?

**Jack:** Sure.

**Austin:** You get loaded out of the main like recent feed, and that tape gets erased, and all that's left is a ghost on it when it gets passed through the archival. And so you'd have to...you know that it would be the recent feed, basically. If you could realign the recent feed before it gets all the way aligned to the out.

**Jack:** Oh, this is why there's a time limit on this.

**Austin:** Yes, correct.

**Jack:** Because Ollie's tape has just degraded, gone into the...

**Austin:** Yes, correct. It's too late, yes.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** As far as you know, it's too late, anyway.

**Jack:** It's like we're trying to watch the football game before our brother tapes over it with his fucking show.

**Austin:** Correct. Exactly. And then it's gone, yeah. Except for the one bit where, for whatever reason, the commentator comes in on the variety show and says "Touchdown!" [laughter] And that's just like a weird recording problem.

**Jack:** Yeah, okay.

**Austin:** So that's what you know, and you know it's beyond the door. There's other facility things down there. You know that those automatons are down there. And you know you need to play the tape as you go through this place, which it's playing during all of this, presumably.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Maybe not in the office, but maybe as we begin to go deeper into the...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** 'Cause if people have like dragged mattresses in here and hung out.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. The...I'm trying to think if there's anything else here. I guess, at this point, you hear a sound on the metal doorway into this, the office part of the facility, the out door.

**Jack:** That we came through?

**Austin:** That you came through. And it says— you can hear the drone outside saying:

**Austin (as SAARA drone):** Hello, I would like entrance!

**Jack (as Frankie):** Nobody let that thing in. It tried to obliterate a bird.

**Austin:** [chuckles] And you hear it like start to pull at this door.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** [hushed] Wait, is it a ghost?

**Jack (as Frankie):** No, it's like a...it's a drone. It's a drone with a smiley face on.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Oh.

**Jack (as Frankie):** It's looking for us. I think it's...I heard these people talking. I think it's the same...

**Jack:** Was her name Rita? What was her name? The woman in the...who tried to rat us out to the Concern.

**Austin:** Oh, the...Angie. Angie.

**Jack:** I think Frankie just says:

**Jack (as Frankie):** I think it's to do with that woman who tried to rat us out to the Concern.

**Jack:** [laughs] To the...

**Austin:** To the Concern. [laughs]

**Jack:** To the Concern.

**Austin:** To the black car.

**Jack:** I'm like suddenly very informed. To the black car.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Jack:** And I think I just sort of stand up and say, like:

**Jack (as Frankie):** We have to go deeper.

**Jack:** Clicks the tape player on. Aria from "Così fan tutte" starts playing. And yeah, I think I start heading towards that deeper door, dog barking at my heels.

**Austin:** God, I forgot about the dog. Ugh, yeah, great. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**[Timestamp: 1:20:00]**

**Austin:** So then yeah, you head down to this other door. We are entering a new phase of this game. It's a special thing.

**Jack:** A delve. [chuckles]

**Austin:** We're entering the delve. [Dre laughs] I mean, that is...it's as close as this game gets to a delve as possible. On page 70, you'll see a thing called Extended Trouble: sometimes at a crucial moment of a mystery, trouble can be so climactic that the kids have to come up with a plan and work together. A single dice roll is not enough to portray the trouble they are in. Each kid will have their part to play in the plan's final success or failure. This is called Extended Trouble. Set one: the game master declares what's at stake, what will happen if the kid fails. So let me paint you this picture briefly. There are kind of three things to keep in mind here, so to speak. You are currently at this kind of secret tunnel entrance where I just put a black mark on the map. Do you see that?

**Jack:** Mmm...

**Austin:** Up near the secret tunnel entrance. I mean, you're just right there, right?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Dre:** Okay.



**Austin:** The place you're trying to get to will be this red dot that I'm gonna put that's also just—it's kind of equidistant in this tunnel between where you are now and the entrance near the grove. I'll just paint you this picture. You're...as you get closer to that, as you get down to that second big door, the second big metal door that leads into the mechanisms part of this place, inside of there are things that will trouble you, these big automatons that keep the tracks clear but also seem to just be automated work machines that are also meant to keep it clean, to keep intruders away, et cetera. There are robots in there. There are a couple of robots in there that will not like your presence, and we kind of see shadows of them moving in the dark. You can't get a good picture of them at this moment, but you can kind of get the sense that they're humanoid in nature. There's...you hear the sound of like a motor activating, and it sounds almost like a floor scrubber, like a floor waxing machine or something, that high whining, scrubbing sound. So that's there. Going to your south is that pressure. To the north—as you're peeking down to the south where the robots and the control track are—to the north, the door where the drone was finally opens, and what the...the first thing you hear coming from the north at that point is you hear someone say:

**Austin (as Agent):** Well, what about *The King of Comedy*? I think *The King of Comedy* is underrated. [Jack chuckles]

**Austin:** And the two Concern agents have opened the door for their drone, and now they—with flashlights, you know, peering through the dark—are beginning to come into this facility with their drone flying next to them. So they are sneaking in from the north, and you're now kind of caught between the two things. We also get a shot from the far south at that other entrance, at the grove entrance, where we see the the woman who was at the old creepy boathouse, Elle, kind of near the the door. And now that we can— we see her in her daytime clothing instead of her middle of the weekend weird static jazz clothing, and she is in Tri-City Tunnel Project clothing. She's in like an engineer's outfit. She has like screwdrivers and hammers and a belt. And we actually see her— maybe this is where you get to see what these robots look like. She's doing maintenance on one of these robots at like a sort of engineering room far to the south where the X is on the map. And the robots that clean this place I will describe to you, as the camera kind of moves up them, as being like...like Baymax from *Big Hero Six* or like the Michelin Man. Big white rubber, you know, or synthetic, like bouncy, except they have these really long arms. No heads. It's just kind of like a flat, like squared off top, long arms, and at the very ends of these arms are these like very dense metallic brushes that spin up very fine, but like a billion little bristles. And we see Elle working on one of these things, replacing its parts and stuff. So she's out here as a repair person to keep— to, you know, take care of these these devices that are going in and fucking with the with the control track. That's what her job is. That's what she does living out here by herself. And that means she's prepping a third one of these things to come in there, so more robots might be on their way.

**Keith:** This is an official job? This isn't...

**Austin:** This is an official job, yeah. That's how she she pays her...for food and...I don't know if there's rent on the old creepy boathouse or not.

**Jack:** That's kind of sad.

**Austin:** Oh, it's—

**Jack:** She presumably doesn't know.

**Austin:** [sighs] The tragedy here is beyond her grasp, and it's very sad, yes.

**Jack:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Given that she lost—

**Keith:** Oh, I had assumed the opposite, which was that she would have gotten this job on purpose to get closer to the thing.

**Austin:** Maybe that's true.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Both of those things are...both of those things could be true. It's both very sad.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And both of them are sad!

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** They're both sad, yeah.

**Jack:** I fucking hate metal brushes, any time I interact with one of them. Frightening.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] So those are the stakes. If you fail, you will lose Britney. Britney will get stuck here as a ghost. And the expansion...I mean, the expansion will probably continue anyway. Your kids, frankly. These robots will continue to get fixed. It would be a big win somehow if you managed to like...fix this thing and keep the robots from putting it back off track again, you know? But in the immediate thing, success looks like saving your friend Britney and getting out of here without being hurt. Failure means being captured and debriefed by the Concern, potentially losing your friend Britney forever, maybe getting scared or hurt by one of the robots. So that's what failure looks like. [reading] "Threat level: The game master declares the total number of successes the kids need to beat the trouble. A threat level of twice the number of kids is normal, three times the number of kids is hard, and four times the number of kids is almost impossible." I think this is hard. I don't think it's impossible, but I think it's hard. I think you need twelve successes to to win, fully win here. I don't think it's normal. I'd hear a

case, but this seems like a lot. You've managed to get the Concern on your ass and then also get the...there's also these robots here in front of you, you know? Don't use NPC special abilities. Previous page and extended trouble. It's included in the threat level. That's true. Make a Plan, three. [reading] "The kids decide what they want to do. Agree on which skill each one will use and in what order each of them will make the roll. The kids get to decide which skills to use, but the game master can disallow any clearly unreasonable skill uses." Four is Play the Scenes. "Each kid gets a scene to act and rolls for their chosen skill. Successes go towards reaching the threat level," which again you need twelve successes, four kids times three. It's a lot of successes. If there is time, a kid may roll for Lead to create a dice pool below, instead of adding towards the threat. I will let you. You have time to do leadership shit for sure. So if someone instead of rolling their, like, a single thing, wants to roll Lead instead and produce a dice pool to add to other people's stuff, I'm fine with that. I don't know if that'll be...

**Keith:** I can do that.

**Austin:** I don't know if that's more worth your time or less than doing a roll directly. I'll have to look at the book and see if they have some suggestions.

**Keith:** I've got some Luck.

**Austin:** True.

**Keith:** And so I could do a very powerful Lead roll.

**Austin:** Mmm, wise.

**Keith:** I have three Luck left I think.

**Austin:** Nice. Yeah. [reading] "Outcome: Each kid rolls once, pushing rolls if they want to, and when all scenes are over, the total number of six is compared to the threat level of the extended trouble." We'll talk about what those successes look like, but it is not as cut and dry as did you make it or not. There are levels of successes, like, you know, kind of partial success, that then also can lead you to a compromise. But the way you get complete success, not compromise success but complete success, is to hit that twelve by itself. But if you don't hit the twelve, you want to at least hit six.

**Keith:** I know we went over this last time, and now that I'm thinking of it—

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I can't think of why it would be better to roll Lead rather than something else.

**Austin:** Me either. I'm also trying to figure that out, and I feel like it wouldn't really...I guess if it's all you have?

**Keith:** We must be misunderstanding something about Lead.

**Austin:** I don't think so. I mean, you can get...if you get a lot of successes, that added dice pool is really nice, but...

**Keith:** Yeah. But there's no difference between rolling two sixes in a lead and rolling two sixes in a, like...what's something else I have two in?

**Austin:** There is. No, there are, there is—

**Jack:** Does it advance the threat clock, right?

**Austin:** It doesn't advance the...well, the big thing here is it doesn't...sorry, two successes with a Lead would give you four dice.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So that...four dice in that pool, so that is not...that's not bad.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** Sorry, what did you just say, Jack? I spoke over you.

**Jack:** It doesn't...

**Austin:** The threat level, right? Yes. Yes, you're right.

**Jack:** So, like, Lead is a potential possibility to just get dice almost before the thing starts, right? Where it's like, if we roll Lead.

**Austin:** Mmm, I don't think that that's true. You want—

**Keith:** It did say if you had time. What does it mean by time?

**Austin:** I think, Jack, the thing that you want to make sure— sorry, the thing that is...the threat level is a thing you want to get points towards. That's you beating the threat level. So when it says...

**Jack:** Oh, fuck, okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. At least as far as I'm reading it. "A kid may roll for Lead to create a dice pool instead of adding towards the threat," meaning instead of adding successes towards the threat.

**[Timestamp: 1:30:08]**

**Keith:** But then what is the dice pool good for? It's good for preventing other people from failing?

**Austin:** From failing, yeah, presumably, right? But like, I'm with you, Keith. I feel like if you have a really good other skill that could contribute here—

**Keith:** Wow. (??? 1:30:20)

**Austin:** That just seems like a better thing, you know?

**Keith:** If we can figure out a way for me to roll contact, [laughs] like, then sure, but...

**Austin:** Yeah, ooh. Tough situation.

**Keith:** Mmm, yeah. We could call...we could maybe call Angie and get her to try and tell the people chasing us that we're somewhere else.

**Austin:** Mmm. That's fun.

**Keith:** We impressed her.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** By fooling her so successfully.

**Keith:** By extremely fooling her and stealing half of a grand from her.

**Austin:** Yeah, that could be a fun...that could be a...or what if you do that, and then that roll is also like, also you're gonna get, um...what the fuck is this name? Something Castle? Cameron R. Castle to like lead them on a fake chase.

**Keith:** Yeah. Ooh, that's good.

**Austin:** To get them away, you know what I mean?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That would be...I feel like that's possible, so that's one thing you could do. That's one part of the plan.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Anyone else have a 'what you're adding to the plan' plan?

**Dre:** [thoughtful noise]

**Austin:** Again, you think about this in terms of...a little bit like a montage, right? And we can play it out linearly instead, if that's what you would rather do. But we can think about what your...what does the camera see in your moment of this, like, almost heist situation, you know?

**Keith:** If people are still deciding, I would not be opposed to talking out my thing a little bit more, 'cause I do have a couple other things that might work better. I don't know.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** Elle is here, right?

**Austin:** Elle is on the other side of the...like, is pretty far away from you.

**Keith:** Okay, inaccessible? Okay.

**Austin:** Inaccessible.

**Keith:** Well then, my other—

**Austin:** And you don't even know that she's here. You just...we know she's here, because the camera's seen her.

**Keith:** And we need a total of twelve successes, which means that we each need multiple things to do for this.

**Austin:** Correct, yeah. Multiple successes on a roll.

**Keith:** Multiple successes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But we...do we...should we think of a second thing or should we try to get multiple successes out of that one roll? Is that the— yeah.

**Austin:** Everyone gets one roll.

**Keith:** One roll. Okay, got it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. Well, if we decide the contact doesn't work with what everyone else is doing, then my backup is I can smash some robots with my especially large marble. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, don't forget about your...don't forget about your special...

**Jack:** Yeah, I was also thinking about that.

**Austin:** Your stuff. What could...what could your dog do, what could your your multi-tool do, et cetera. I'm guessing, CC, that you have your electric guitar with you.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I was like, maybe—

**Austin:** Strapped to your back.

**Sylvia:** Oh, of course. I was...so, I can actually sort of run down an idea I maybe had.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** We know that...this kind of depends on whether or not we even need to interact with this entity, but we know that the ghost of Olivia is drawn to like music and stuff.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. True.

**Sylvia:** And so if I try and start playing to either lure her away from Britney or just bring them both somewhere closer to us.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think that could be a thing.

**Austin:** I could imagine that helping with the like, getting the track back on or something, you know?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** Maybe to...because like, that probably sounds like creating a lot of noise, so maybe what Ronnie does is like basically leads the drones and the agents on like a wild goose chase, so—

**Austin:** Or would you do that with the robots instead, since it seems like...

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, sure.

**Austin:** I guess we'll see what happens with the dice is actually the thing. I understand why the book wants us to plan it out. I get it.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But I also feel like to some degree this would be better if we just jumped in a little bit and rolled to see—

**Jack:** Knowing that we had one scene and...

**Austin:** Yeah, and being able to base off that. So it sounds like the initial thing here is going to be the set up a wild goose chase for the agents via Nolan, to me. That sounds like a, you know, you've seen them sneaking up on you, and then Nolan has an idea to get them off your back just as they're closing in on you, you know? They hear the sound of the the radio on or something, right, and start to come down the hallway. Let's just jump in on Nolan. What's this call sound like? Or what do these calls sound like? Also, what's your phone look like?

**Keith:** It is a pay as you go. Hmm. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Sylvi, can you just say what you wrote?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, so it hasn't come up in play at all, but in all these scenes, I've been picturing Nolan as the type of ten year old who just always wears polo shirts. [Keith and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** How many buttons are buttoned or unbuttoned?

**Sylvia:** I don't want to speak for Keith's character. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** One buttoned, two unbuttoned.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** In that order? Is the top one buttoned and the next two are unbuttoned? [Dre cackles]

**Keith:** [laughs softly] No, no.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Bottom one is buttoned.



**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Top two unbuttoned.

**Austin:** Normal. Normal polo shirt behavior.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Alright, so yeah, what's your phone look like and what's this— what type of phone is it and what's the call?

**Keith:** I forgot we're in the future but it's weird, so.

**Austin:** But it's the 90s future, yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** It's 90s future. Ah, fuck it. It is a pay as you go slider phone.

**Austin:** Oh, I love those. Those are great. Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, you dial up the—

**Keith:** From my first phone that got I was Nolan's age.

**Austin:** When you were ten, you had a phone? Jeez.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Different world.

**Keith:** It was an extremely cheap pay-as-you-go phone. It was like—

**Austin:** No, I get you.

**Austin:** They just weren't...when I was ten, we just didn't have...cell phones were not everywhere.

**Keith:** Oh, right. Not like that's too young to have a phone.

**Austin:** No, no.

**Keith:** Just like cell phones weren't around. Got it.

**Austin:** Correct, correct.

**Jack:** They'd just figured out powered flight. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, we had just gotten canned food for the first time.

**Jack:** After the war.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. [chuckles] So yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, all the ten year olds I know now have iPhones, which is crazy to me because I had a...

**Austin:** Right, this is the difference.

**Jack:** Babies have iPhones.

**Keith:** I had a phone that felt like it was going to keep sliding in half every time I opened it. Virgin Mobile.

**Austin:** So, you're calling now, Angie, and...I just said his name, what is it? Something R. Castle. Coo...Cah...Cooaa...Cult? Crud?

**Jack:** It's another C, right?

**Austin:** Cameron! Cameron.

**Keith:** Yeah, Cam. Cam.

**Austin:** Cam. Cam Castle. Yeah, mm-hmm. It wasn't gonna be Crud, ever. [Sylvia laughs] So yeah, you call them. Give me a roll.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** What are you rolling for this?

**Keith:** Contact.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Ooh, one success. Do you—

**Keith:** Uh—

**Austin:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Keith:** So, my options here are spend a Luck and reroll all...reroll six of these seven dice.

**Austin:** Reroll the failed— right. I believe that's a Luck, right?

**Keith:** Right. Or I could take one of the conditions to do the same thing.

**Austin:** Or you could take a condition. I will say, you should not take a condition.

**Keith:** I'm not doing that. I'm just saying—

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Just working through my options for if I am running out of stress.

**Austin:** I don't know that you can take a condition without a...I don't think you can choose to make a failure.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** I think you can buy a reroll with luck. You can buy...oh, yeah, you could push. You could push to reroll failed dice, you're right. You can take a condition to reroll failed dice. That's correct. So, do you want to start with luck?

**Keith:** I'm gonna roll six D6. I took off one Luck.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Keith:** I'm rolling six D6. Ugh.

**Austin:** No success. Brutal.

**Keith:** None. I'm gonna do one more. I'm gonna do one more.

**Austin:** I don't know that you can.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** I think you can only do...I *think* you can only do one Luck per thing. But you can— do you still have your Pride?

**Keith:** I used it at the very beginning of the first session.

**Austin:** Damn. Alright. Well, this succeeds. It's just you didn't get many successes here.

**Keith:** Okay. And I can't do a second Luck.

**Austin:** You cannot. I just double checked. It says you cannot spend more than one Luck on a single dice roll.

**Keith:** But I could take a condition.

**Austin:** You could. Now I'm gonna tell you why you don't want to do that necessarily. Taking a condition. If you take a condition here, you will not get...you will not get anything but a compromised success. If the kids reach the threat level without checking— oh, wait, actually, that's not true. That's not true. It's without checking extra conditions. One of the things in this final outcome stage is that if you haven't made it all the way there, but you've only gotten halfway there, you can start to check conditions at that point to gain extra successes, at which point if you get there, you get a compromised one. But you could take a condition now to roll again. That's actually true. Yes, sorry.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So what condition are you checking? What's that look like? And then we'll roll the dice.

**Keith:** Oh, I was deciding between a few, but I'm actually going to take Exhausted. Because...

**Austin:** Yeah, why?

**Keith:** This has just been a long week for a ten year old boy. [laughter]

**Austin:** Do you get like...can we hear you getting frustrated on the phone as you're trying to explain this to Angie or Cam?

**Keith:** Yeah. And you know how when a kid just is in a mood?

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** I think it just hits you, where it's like, this has been more than you should be doing when you're ten.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**[Timestamp: 1:40:00]**

**Keith:** More thinking, more danger, more stress, and so. [Austin chuckles] And I think Nolan lives with a certain amount of stress anyway, just sort of under the constant weaseling around punishments. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. What's the thing you're telling Angie, by the way, to have her tell the Concern that you're somewhere else?

**Keith:** I'm going to...I'm gonna tell her that they've got, like, some crazy drone after us, like...

**Austin:** Oh, but she might know that.

**Jack:** Doesn't she want that?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Mmm...

**Austin:** I thought that what you were doing was saying—

**Keith:** It's got guns.

**Austin:** "I'm at this other place. That's where we are." And that way the Concern members would go there instead of be here with you.

**Keith:** Oh, you were gonna...you were thinking that I was going to lie to her.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You were going to appeal...

**Keith:** I was going to tell her the truth and use that.

**Austin:** I see.

**Keith:** Use that we are...we successfully and...we're like doing the Blossom Investigations shit that she likes.

**Austin:** That she actually secretly likes still.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** I mean, you succeeded. I'm gonna give you this, and that's a— hey, shoutouts to Angie, you're a real one, actually. You feel bad about this at this point.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You describe this drone thing. She is like:

**Austin (as Angie):** [concerned] Oh, they're not supposed to...you're just kids! Just...you should...wait where you are ten minutes. I'm gonna get them out of there. Then you all should leave.

**Austin:** And is advising you to not be in there.

**Austin (as Angie):** That place is very dangerous.

**Austin:** And she does call them and do the thing where she lies and says:

**Austin (as Angie):** I just heard from these kids. They said they're gonna meet me at the parking lot outside the old Kmart. I need you to drive down there and pick 'em up.

**Austin:** And so you you hear you hear their phones ring, and they pick up and like have that conversation as you're going down this hallway. And...

**Austin (as Agent):** The Kmart. Why are the kids at the old Kmart? That's not even near their school.

**Austin:** And they leave and are arguing on the way. So there's your one success— oh, go ahead and give me your push.

**Keith:** About whether *After Hours* is better than *King of Comedy*.

**Austin:** [laughs] Right, yes, exactly.

**Keith:** Which it is.

**Austin:** Give me your Exhausted condition as you call up Cam, Cam Castle, to see if he can help extend this. [laughs softly]

**Keith:** Okay.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Hi, Cam.

**Keith:** Oh, wait. This is my new roll. I'm rolling again.

**Austin:** Give me your roll. Give me your, again, six dice.

**Keith:** Uh, roll six D6.

**Austin:** Oh my god, no.

**Keith:** Wow!

**Austin:** Miserable rolls. Truly bad rolls out here tonight.

**Keith:** Twelve in a row with no six.

**Austin (as Cam):** I'm sorry, kid. I'm busy, I'm busy, I'm busy. I...

**Austin:** And so he cannot lead them on an extra chase here.

**Keith:** Oh, wow. Well, I did my best.

**Jack:** What is he doing? What is Cameron Castle's busy? This is a man who has a—

**Austin:** He's playing *Sega Bass Fishing* on the Sega Dreamcast.

**Dre:** Oh, hell yeah. That's important.

**Austin:** You hear like:

**Austin (as Cam):** [shouting] I'm busy! I'm bu— [Keith imitates video game fishing sounds] I'm reelin' one in right now, kid! [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Jack:** Oh, what a guy.

**Austin (as Cam):** I'm taking some me time, alright? It's been a very hectic couple days for me. [Austin laugh]

**Keith (as Nolan):** What's meat time?

**Austin (as Cam):** *Me* time! But now that you're thinking about it, meat time. That sounds great. Go out to the barbecue. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Cameron's grillpilled.

**Austin (as Cam):** Get some fucking kielbasa on there. [Jack chuckles]

**Keith:** I can't save these kids. I've gotta grill this kielbasa. It's smoked.

**Jack:** Yeah, this is...again, this is Cameron Castle's interesting moral compass here. [all laugh]

**Sylvia:** Might be my new favorite character.

**Jack:** No coffee!

**Austin:** I love Cameron. [laughs] Yeah, no coffee.

**Sylvia:** Coffee's bad for you, but robots are fine.

**Austin:** Robots are fine. Don't worry about it.

**Keith:** It's not even *Sega Bass Fishing*. It's the Big the Cat levels of *Sonic Adventure*.

**Austin:** [laughs] It's just the Big the Cat level, but he's hooked up the controller.

**Jack:** He has them on save states, so he can just play the Big the Cat levels.

**Austin:** Just jump right in there.

**Dre (as Cam):** Kid, I've gotta get Froggy. Leave me alone. [Austin laughs]

**Austin (as Cam):** Froggy's missing! [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** Alright., well, you really pushed it as hard as you could here, Nolan, unfo— oh!

**Keith:** Yeah, I did.

**Austin:** Oh, no, you already spent your Pride. I was like, "Wait, you can spend your Pride," and no, not true.

**Keith:** No, I can't.

**Austin:** But, hey, listen, those guys are out, aren't on you anymore. But, you know, just as they leave, you can see these other robots kind of come into view between you and them, or between you and the direction you're headed down towards the control track.

**Keith:** Right. It's fine. You three just need eleven successes.

**Austin:** Oh my god. [chuckles] Again, six is really the number at which you can get something like success out of this if you trade a bunch of conditions, which we'll get to. But yeah, they're between you and your goal. One of them is just like sweeping the floor with these metal bristles. The other one is heading down towards the control track. And also, you can see the one that's sweeping the floor is like deflated. It's like...I remember I described it as like a Michelin Man or Baymax from *Big Hero Six*, but like, the synthetic material has lost the air in it on this one, and it's just like pulled taut against a sharp cylindrical metal body underneath, and it's like dragging its own, like, rubbery skin around on it. It's gross looking and kind of scary. And again, it does have a big smiley face on it, much like the drone that was outside, except that it's not...it's like in



the stomach area of the body instead of up where...again, they don't have heads, it's just like big rounded off shoulders or big rounded— not rounded, squared off like a top of it. God, this is also...I'm also pulling this exact image from some old cartoon or something. It had like a uni— whatever this image is in my head is like a squared off robot with a unicycle like thing at the bottom. What is this robot that's in my mind? Why do I just have random robots in my mind? I'm never gonna find this. This is not a thing I'll ever be able to find.

**Jack:** It's a square headed...you know, I think I am also picturing this robot. It like wheels about.

**Austin:** It wheels about! It's from a cartoon. You know, wheels about, has like...I want to say it's like blue and orange or something. It's like a...I'm just gonna draw it really quick. It's like a slightly...I've drawn this way bigger than I meant to. But then it has like a wheel down here. And I want to say it has like an *Among Us*-style window eye. You see what I've drawn here at the bottom? This isn't a Jetsons. I don't know what this is, but it's in my mind. That's the shape of their bodies.

**Jack:** Oh! It's...it's Yes Man from *Fallout New Vegas*.

**Austin:** It is Yes Man from *Fallout New Vegas*!

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Thank you.

**Sylvia:** I saw Claptrap. I'm sorry. [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** It was Claptrap.

**Dre:** I mean, they're kinda similar designs.

**Austin:** They are kinda similar designs. But yeah, Yes Man from *Fallout New Vegas* if instead of a metal body it was this kind of rubberized synthetic body meant for, like, oh it won't hurt you when it touches you, except now—

**Jack:** Its metal horrid bristle arms, and this one's deflating.

**Austin:** Yeah. Do you think that there's an Epic Rap Battles of History between Yes Man from *Fallout New Vegas* and Claptrap?

**Sylvia:** [pained] Don't...don't put that in the world.

**Dre:** I had to spit out water to say fuck you after you made that joke, Austin.

**Austin:** [cackles] Anyway. So. Yeah, this Yes Man looking thing walking towards you. I mean, these also have legs instead of the kind of unicycle body. Walking towards you. Who is up next? Who is up next in this Extended Trouble montage? [Dre sighs] Who's trying to deal with these robots? Or this first robot, at least. I know, CC, you're waiting to do some ghost shit.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I don't have any good robot ideas.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I think this is definitely Ronnie, both because of the stats, but also because we've established that Ronnie is afraid of robots?

**Austin:** Yeah. True.

**Dre:** So I think this could be a cool moment for him. I am just struggling to think of what.

**Austin:** I mean, let's look at your stats and see what...what do you got best?

**Dre:** Uh...

**Austin:** Body: four.

**Dre:** Yeah, Body and Tech and Mind are all good skills-wise.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** I'm good at Force. I'm good at Move. I'm good at Tinker.

**Austin:** If you Tinkered, you could also bring in your leatherman tool.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Which would be a plus two, which would be what, let's say that's...Tinker's two plus Tech is...it's Tech, right?

**Dre:** Three, yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Or is it mind? It's Tech. So that's five, so that's seven. Or you could Body, which is four, and then Move, which is...

**Dre:** Seven.

**Austin:** Seven also.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** [sighs] I think Tinker's cooler.

**Austin:** And you still have your Pride, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I still have my Pride. Oh, I still have— don't worry, Austin. I still have my Pride. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** What's your Pride again?

**Dre:** I ain't stupid.

**Austin:** I ain't stupid.

**Dre:** Which I think also, again, goes with the fear, right?

**Austin:** It does. It does.

**Dre:** Like, no, I'm not afraid of this robot! That's stupid, and I ain't stupid.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's stupid. That's right.

**Dre:** What can I...mmm. So, with this one that's like all like fucked up and deflated.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Man, I'm wondering, does that give me like...I guess I can't puncture it anymore. It's already been punctured. [chuckles]

**Austin:** Yeah, but maybe it means that there's like wiring visible you could cut or something?

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Right?

**Dre:** Or like cross over or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah. I think...yeah. I definitely think that Tinker is harder. I mean, it's not harder, 'cause it's just rolling these dice.

**Dre:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** I mean, it's harder because it's less dice, is actually what it is, but.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or it's the same if you use the multi-tool. I'm trying to figure out: can you use the multi-tool on a Force or Move roll instead to get you maximum dice, you know?

**[Timestamp: 1:50:01]**

**Dre:** Mmm. I mean...I mean, a Force, if I'm just like...I mean, if I'm just using it to, like, stab or break something.

**Austin:** Yeah, you could do that.

**Dre:** 'Cause I mean, yeah, if it's messed up, maybe that like...I see something where I'm just like....I don't know. Punching the robot doesn't sound like a thing an eleven year old does.  
[laughs]

**Austin:** Maybe it's...what if there is...what if...here, I can gin something up for you. What if there is still some part of it that is inflated?

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Right? And it's like, if you can puncture that last inflated part, you believe it'll shut down, you know?

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

**Austin:** Why do you believe that? Because you saw a thing before that said—

**Keith:** Bubble wrap.

**Austin:** Because bubble wrap, actually.

**Dre:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** You're right. You know what? That's it. 'Cause bubble wrap.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** If you break all the bubble wrap, it's not bubble wrap anymore.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** [chuckles] Yeah, I'm down with that.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** You gonna charge ahead? What do you...what do you tell your friends as you get ready to do this?

**Dre:** Gosh, what does Ronnie say to try to be cool? [laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Don't worry about me. I'll catch up.

**Dre:** And then just like runs off yelling. [laughter]

**Austin:** I will hit you with a little extra fear. As you get closer to it, you can hear the music from the tape— or, no. You hear the tape recorder— it's your tape recorder!

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Right?

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

**Austin:** [laughing] So everyone else has to stick closer to you than that or else lose the tape recorder protection.

**Dre:** Yeah. Is the robot also playing it?

**Austin:** No.

**Dre:** Okay. Okay.

**Austin:** Tape recording— yeah, no. Robots don't have— *these* robots don't have souls.

**Dre:** Mmm. Yeah, no, fair.

**Austin:** Don't need to worry about being, you know, having their tracking messed up. Alright, give me your roll. It's now nine D6.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** You've got to be kidding me.

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Austin:** Two, one, four, four, two, three, three, one, four.

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

**Sylvia:** Oh my god!

**Keith:** We've been doing so good up until this—

**Austin:** I know.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** —this dumb game show at the end.

**Dre:** So.

**Austin:** You got Luck.

**Dre:** Yeah, so I'll do Luck and I'll reroll it.

**Austin:** Yeah. And you're gonna spend pride on this to get the—

**Dre:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Austin:** To get one success.

**Dre:** I just want to see if I can get more than one first.

**Austin:** Absolutely. Yeah, go ahead and hit reroll.

**Dre:** There we go.

**Austin:** Ayy! Two, two, two, three, *six*, five, *six*, *six*, two. There we go.

**Keith:** Wow. Plus one more from the Pride, right?

**Austin:** Plus one more from the Pride. So that's four.

**Keith:** That's four. Wow. That's a great roll.

**Austin:** What's this look like? Tell me the best way this looks right now.

**Dre:** Um... [laughs] I'm also imagining like, yeah, what does it look like for them all to stay in radius of the...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** So maybe instead of Ronnie like running off on his own, it's like Ronnie leading the charge as all of them run up on this thing. [laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Dre:** And you know, Ronnie is the one that has the multi-tool out and like actually punctures it, but...

**Austin:** If you take a condition, you can roll six more dice.

**Dre:** Woof. And how do...what happens at the end when it comes to conditions and things like that?

**Austin:** This is the moment to take a condition, is what I would say.

**Dre:** Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Because we're not continuing to...

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** I mean, there will be some sort of debrief, like...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Post thing, but like now is the time to get a little busted up a little bit, I would think.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right? Upset, Scared, Exhausted, Injured or— not bro— You don't have to—

**Dre:** Right.

**Austin:** I think broken has to come last, is the thing, right?

**Dre:** Yeah, I think Broken is the last one. Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay, let's see. There's one more.

**Austin:** There's another success. So what do you take? What's your condition?

**Dre:** Um...

**Austin:** And then describe to me, paint me this picture.

**Dre:** I think maybe it's Injured, especially if Ronnie is the first one, like, leading the charge. And so maybe Ronnie gets there first and either misses and like sprains his ankle and has to jump back in, or...I don't know if...I mean, we've said, like, the kids don't get *hurt* hurt, but you know, maybe the robot, like shifts at the—

**Austin:** They can get hurt.

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

**Austin:** They just can't get killed or like....

**Dre:** Yeah, they can't get killed, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Broken bodies or broken bones or whatever.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Broken is one of these things, but...

**Dre:** Yeah. So maybe it's like Ronnie almost gets swatted aside at first and then, like—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** As things are about to go bad, Ronnie jumps up on its back or wherever this kind of this place is. [laughs]

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I got you. That's a back.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And like gets the Leatherman in there, finds the right wire, cuts it as everyone else is like pulling at it in different directions.

**Dre:** Yeah.



**Austin:** And it goes like *bwoom! bwoom. bwooom...* and shuts down and is like *brrrt, clank*, falls over. Those are all my sounds.

**Dre:** Doing my best *Titanfall 2* rodeo impression. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah! So that...hey, listen. Right now, that's one success from Nolan and five successes from Ronnie, right?

**Jack:** Great, we've made it.

**Keith:** Halfway there.

**Austin:** So we're halfway there. We've made it to you could buy a compromised success via more conditions. [Jack and Austin laugh] So, six more successes and you'll be good. Alright. That leads us to CC and Frankie.

**Jack:** So, CC, if you were thinking of like some sort of guitar trick to move ghosts, to encourage ghosts, I was thinking of maybe trying to comprehend the tape, the machines, and try and get the machines doing what we want them to do?

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Jack:** How does that sound as a kind of combo activity?

**Sylvia:** I like that. Would we want me to do my own first so we know they're not like around Frank or...?

**Jack:** That is a good question. I don't—

**Austin:** Or do we need them to be around Frank?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Part of me is like, how do you want to narrate this, Austin?

**Austin:** Mmm.

**Jack:** Where it's like, do you want someone having pulled the wires in place and then we have guitar music? Or do we have someone setting up something with the music and then someone trying to pull the wires in place?

**Austin:** [sighs] I think those are both sick. I think that it's the same time no matter what, right? I think it has to be...huh. What is it? I don't know. Also, actually, I just realized something else. One sec, one second, an important thing. No, this is positive for you.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** You got all those successes on that fight. You get to keep those successes, Dre. You can also get bonus effects, meaning you can use them to...I'm guessing you can't give a success to another kid with them, because that feels like it would just be...you would just force your way through everything.

**Jack:** That's what the pool is for, as well.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Austin:** But I do think what you could do is you don't need to roll to overcome the exact same trouble in the future, meaning we don't need...you could also, when it's time to do this thing, you and Nolan can go deal with the other robot so that we don't need to narratively talk about what you're doing with the other robot. You and Nolan are handling this other robot while CC and Frank deal with the the control track.

**Dre:** Cool.

**Austin:** I just wanted to make sure that was...that way. Visually, that's what's happening in the hallway while Frank and CC sneak in.

**Keith:** Is that how that works?

**Austin:** Is what how what works?

**Keith:** Mmm...never mind. I think it's good. [laughter]

**Austin:** It explicitly says...it does. It explicitly says...ba ba ba ba ba, uh...successes go towards reaching the threat level but can also be used for bonus effects. I guess you're saying you could trade one, but I'm gonna say you've shown that you know how to fight these things and that counts.

**Keith:** Well, cards on the table, was what I was saying was that in the last one we talked about the you won't have to do this again thing.

**Austin:** The exact same thing, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** The exact same, like it would have to be the same door that you're unlocking.

**Austin:** I think fighting the same robot is close enough, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah, i think it's...yeah.

**Austin:** So. Anyway. I think you can...you tell me who wants to roll first. I guess here's where I would say. I think the ghosts have to be here first, because we're gonna fix them on this tape—

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** On this control track. And also it means...uh, hmm. What do you think the final difficulty here is? Is it lulling them back— not lulling them, but, you know, guiding them back home, or is it fixing the machine so that they can cross—

**Jack:** It's gotta be back home, right? 'Cause this is a machine about ghosts.

**Austin:** Yeah, so I think we do the tapes first. Yeah. So, yeah, fix the machine first, and then we can do the guitar solo at the end. [Sylvia and Austin laugh softly] Alright, Frank.

**Jack:** So just like, in this room, surrounded by tape. Nolan is fighting robots around me.

**Austin:** Yeah. And you're like reading through manuals and stuff, basically? [laughs]

**Jack:** Yeah. Just like...the vibe here that I get is like—and I know Stålenhag is also drawing off this—like that big Spielberg movie vibe of like...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** Kid in glasses shining a flashlight down on a big manual in one hand and try to figure out something with the other hand on like some weird alien machinery.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** So I'm gonna try and—

**Austin:** Oh, you get a bonus to this also.

**Jack:** I do, yeah.

**Austin:** From your other Comprehend, right?

**Jack:** I'm gonna roll Comprehend. And so that is...four Mind plus two, that's six plus—

**Austin:** You don't think it's Inv— hmm.

**Jack:** I was thinking about this.

**Austin:** “The ability to find hidden objects, understand clues, *break puzzles*, or survey a place or situation.”

**Jack:** Do you think this is the puzzle?

**Austin:** This is the puzzle.

**Jack:** I just don't see how asking questions here is gonna be relevant to me.

**Austin:** It doesn't matter— well, you're not gonna ask those questions. We're using it in this Extended Trouble sense, right?

**Jack:** Okay. Yeah, sure.

**Austin:** Where you...you know.

**Jack:** Okay, so that's seven die, Mind plus Investigate plus one from the dice forward. That's eight.

**[Timestamp: 2:00:05]**

**Austin:** I'm guessing Tiny...how would Tiny be helping here?

**Jack:** [sighs] Keeping a robot off my back. There's one robot that's—

**Austin:** Oh, Tiny's helping in the fight! Yeah! Sure.

**Jack:** I mean, I really love that like Tiny isn't explicitly helping *me*, as usual. I mean—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I think Tiny's love works where Tiny's like, I am definitely helping her.

**Austin:** Yeah. [laughs softly]

**Jack:** But he's doing that by watching Nolan's back and watching Ronnie's back. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. And barking, just barking and keeping this thing distracted is useful. So yeah, go ahead and add...

**Jack:** You ever seen a chihuahua fight a robot?

**Keith:** Tiny's such a great dog. [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** That's eight plus two is ten.

**Austin:** It's a lot of dice.

**Jack:** Now...

**Austin:** This could just be it. You could just get the win right now.

**Jack:** My pride...

**Austin:** Save your pride. You can spend your pride after.

**Jack:** Okay, I'm just gonna roll ten D6 here.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Try and figure out how this works. I've used VHS tapes.

**Austin:** Yeah. Ayy!

**Jack:** That is a four.

**Austin:** That's an incredible roll!

**Sylvia:** Wow.

**Dre:** Wow!

**Keith:** Holy moly.

**Jack:** I rolled five and six and five and five and three, and then five and six and five and six and six.

**Keith:** Holy shit.

**Jack:** Total of 52.

**Austin:** You got four sixes. Yeah, you got—

**Keith:** That is unbelievable.

**Austin:** This is an unbelievable roll. So that's four successes. Do you want to spend Luck to reroll the other ones?

**Jack:** Yeah! Fuck it! [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Fuck it.

**Jack:** This is going really well.

**Austin:** Yeah, so that's how many other...one, two, three—

**Keith:** Six!

**Austin:** Four, five, six. Yeah, six. Six dice to roll.

**Keith:** That's a lot of dice.

**Jack:** Let me just check off one of these Lucks.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** On the other side of the room, Tiny has killed a robot. Six dice.

**Austin:** Six dice. No successes.

**Jack:** Ah, and now no sixes. [laughs]

**Austin:** No successes.

**Sylvia:** You had enough. They were like, look, you're pushing it here.

**Jack:** That's it for them, yeah.

**Austin:** And you need...and you spend your Pride. How do you do that? How does this work?

**Jack:** Mmm, okay, what will my Pride let me do?

**Austin:** You just get one more success. Which would be five successes instead of four.

**Jack:** Uh, flashback.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** Alex Trebek:

**Jack (as Alex Trebek):** And here we have Frankie Already from Buffington Beach and what have you— I hear you spent your holiday taking apart a VHS tape machine. Is that so, Frankie?

**Jack:** Frankie:

**Jack (as Frankie):** Yes, it went very well.

**Jack:** Alex:

**Jack (as Alex Trebek):** Great. Thank you, Frankie. Moving on to... [Austin laughs]

**Jack:** RIP.

**Austin:** Frankie doesn't say "It's called a VCR, Alex"? [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Jack:** Yeah, exactly. Well, she does, but her mic has been cut, [Austin laughs] as Alex needs to move on to...

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Roberta Arnold who goes to another high school and spent her summer inventing an ice cream machine.

**Austin:** Oh, wow. That's great.

**Jack:** RIP Alex.

**Keith:** I thought you were on adult Jeopardy. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Why— [Jack laughs] What? [laughs]

**Keith:** I thought you made it onto adult Jeopardy.

**Austin:** That would be incredible.

**Jack:** That would be amazing. I don't think Frankie's that clever.

**Keith:** I thought that's why it was so impressive. You were on kid Jeopardy, then it's not even...

**Jack:** No, it's impressive 'cause it's... [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Dre:** Jeez.

**Austin:** That's all in character. Nolan, not impressed anymore.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Yeah. I thought that you did poorly at adult Jeopardy. Doing poorly at kids' Jeopardy is not impressive. [Austin laughs]

**Jack (as Frankie):** [shouting] Not right now, Nolan! [laughter]

**Austin:** Ah. So, as you're...that's another success, so that's five, so that means you're up to ten successes as we go towards CC. As you're looking through these big, long reams of of VHS cassette tape, you definitely see yourself in them. At first you're like, oh, they're kind of mirrored. They kind of reflective. And then like as they're running through the machines and you're trying to re-slot them onto the right track, you see the Hungry Hungry Hippos ad, like, running. And it's...you know, maybe it's not as scary right here right now. You know, you slip it into the right track.

**Jack:** [overlapping] It's a comfort in seeing myself?

**Austin:** Oh, no, I'm saying it's a terrible cosmic draw. The reality in which you're on TV is right here, right?

**Jack:** Oh. [laughs]

**Austin:** You could just track it right now and slip into that world. You can feel the...one of the things about being on Jeopardy was you didn't anticipate how much it would feel like the sun was shining on your face, so bright are the lights on a TV set. And as you're doing this, you can feel the lights of the Hungry Hungry Hippos commercial set on your face. And you're like, all I have to do is slip this this one place and I can be on I can be on TV again. I can be in the commercial again. That could be real. It could be here. In fact, maybe it is real and you're just not there yet. Maybe that's from a future you haven't arrived to yet. Maybe this is the future on track coming towards you.

**Keith:** I could be that scary Hungry Hungry Hippo player.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes.

**Jack:** [laughs] The world's most frightening Hungry Hungry Hippos girl. Of course I do. I put it in.

**Austin:** Oh, you do! Okay, good. [laughs] Good! Great. Ah.

**Jack:** I'm ten.



**Austin:** Yeah!

**Jack:** And I've also just witnessed a world in which adults are doing this without thinking about it. Like, I mean, they've had to write a lot of PowerPoint presentations, but like they were faking where people go.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Why shouldn't I just make it so that I go on television? Easy as blinking.

**Austin:** [sighs] What's going to be the repercussion— think about how heavy, or how good— think about the repercussion you want from this long term, Frankie.

**Keith:** Hey, I recommend, Frankie, don't think about it. [laughter]

**Jack:** The problem, Austin, is that when you say, you know, there's a sort of cosmic, there's like, you know, staring into the abyss.

**Austin:** Yeah!

**Jack:** That happening to a child—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** —is gonna result in a different outcome, I think, than maybe— well, you know. A university academic from Boston will probably also do the same thing, but.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes! But those are basically children also.

**Jack:** Mmm, mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Alright, well. CC, the tracks are in the right place. [Sylvia sighs] The microphones are on. You can hear the sound of like an amp kicking on.

**Sylvia:** Man. So, just to get to the numbers, what would I be rolling here? I was thinking Charm.

**Austin:** Yeah, charm sounds right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** To me.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool. Good. That's my best one, so.

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's say Charm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Jack:** Charming ghosts.

**Austin:** Charm Heart. So that's seven, plus two is nine, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And you got Luck to spend.

**Sylvia:** I do.

**Austin:** Have you already spent your Pride or not?

**Sylvia:** I think it makes sense considering my Pride is I can play guitar.

**Austin:** There you go.

**Sylvia:** So we got nine D6 I'm rolling?

**Austin:** Yeah, nine D6, plus that Pride is an automatic success. You only need one.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** All you need is one.

**Sylvia:** Fuck.

**Austin:** Oh my god. Okay.

**Sylvia:** I will use a Luck.

**Austin:** Talk to me about what this little downbeat looks like.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Why does this not work at first?

**Sylvia:** It is...you know what happens? It's the thing that I did a lot when I was a kid and I'm better about not doing now, which is when you mess up playing a song, you go, "Oh, shit, wait," and then start it over again.

**Austin:** [laughs] Aww.

**Sylvia:** And that happens like two or three times before...

**Jack:** Do the ghosts respond?

**Austin:** What's the song you're— oh, yeah, wait. What's the song you're playing?

**Sylvia:** Okay, so I...this is something I've been thinking about a while. The second I was like, well shit, I gotta think of both a—

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** —song that a...someone could learn—

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** —and not be a super experienced but still be kinda like good. So I was thinking either it would be just something going along with whatever composition is playing on the tape recorder.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** That's sort of like the safer one.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** The other thing I thought of was “Heart Shaped Box” by Nirvana, ‘cause we’re going for our little 90s thing. [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Oh.

**Jack:** Oh.

**Keith:** Mmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Let's do it.

**Sylvia:** (??? 2:07:48)

**Keith:** Any ghost would love to listen to that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah! You know.

**Austin:** Agreed. Yeah, absolutely.

**Sylvia:** So, I'm just rolling all of these again with this Luck, right?

**Austin:** Spend that Luck and reroll the nine D6.

**Sylvia:** I already checked it off.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, you're good.

**Sylvia:** Fuck.

**Austin:** Oh my god. Three, four, five, two, three, five one, two, two.

**Sylvia:** Can I, uh...take a condition?

**Jack:** Want some of my sixes?

**Austin:** What is going wrong? Tell me what's going wrong. Now, second time.

**Sylvia:** I think she's nervous. Like, her fingers are sweaty, and she...it's hard enough like...when you're playing with the whole band, you're playing with the whole band. When it's just you up there—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** —things feel a lot more like intense. It's a lot like Frank's experience on Jeopardy.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Feels like the sun's shining on you.

**Dre:** Do you forget to tune into drop D?

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah. I have to like, figure it out on the fly.

**Austin:** [sighs] Alright.

**Sylvia:** Conditions.

**Austin:** You can take a condition here.

**Sylvia:** What...

**Austin:** This is it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, this—

**Austin:** Like, you're gonna get a...you're going to definitely be able to get a compromised success at this point. But if you get a success on this next roll, you'll get a full, uncompromised success.

**Sylvia:** Alright.

**Sylvia:** So this is...

**Keith:** All you need to do is roll one six out of nine dice.

**Austin:** On nine dice!

**Sylvia:** Sorry, it will be one six out of 27 dice by the time we're all done. [laughter] I just want to put that in perspective.

[catching breath, then celebrating]

**Austin:** Ayy!

**Sylvia:** Alright! [laughs]

**Austin:** Three. Three successes.

**Dre:** Whoop!

**Austin:** Three successes.

**Jack:** In 27 dice.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [conversationally] Hey, wait. I've got a new complaint. I got one D6 for each roll.

**Austin:** Forever in debt to your priceless advice. [Jack laugh]

**Austin:** What happens?

**Sylvia:** Uh...I guess I might ask you for help with some of this, Austin, because it involves some NPCs, but I think it does like bring the sort of attention of the ghosts over, right? And like, they're...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm still sort of...you said that the whole system with the ghosts and Bluffington and everything was confusing for 10 year old. It is also confusing for 27 year olds.

**Austin:** [laughs] It's also confusing 'cause it's a confusing thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, a hundred percent.

**[Timestamp: 2:10:00]**

**Sylvia:** So, I'm still sort of thinking about like what it would look like to start being brought out of that, but I think like if we've gotten—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** We've gotten our sixteen successes. Was it sixteen?

**Austin:** More than.

**Sylvia:** Whatever.

**Austin:** Twelve.

**Sylvia:** Twelve.

**Austin:** You've gotten twelve. You've almost gotten sixteen. You're at fourteen now, right? So.

**Sylvia:** I was real stressed. I was like, man, we need to get...I need to get six of these? 'Cause Jack was like, "We've got ten." No. I only needed two.

**Austin:** No, you're good. You only needed two.

**Sylvia:** Great. Yeah, I think at the very least, maybe Britney starts to lose that like VHS type effect on her that we've seen?

**Austin:** Yeah. Do we think— so like, do they show up...you start playing the first time—

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And they just appear in front of you, and that's when you have to restart, 'cause you get shook.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And then, yeah, do you think the success is like, yeah, the effect just starts to—

**Keith:** Where does the body go?

**Austin:** I don't know. It's here now. [brief pause] It's a good question. Where does the body go?

**Sylvia:** That's written on a whiteboard somewhere. [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah, where— exactly! Where does the body— definitely on a Concern, you know, in the Concern somewhere. Where does the body go, uh huh.

**Keith:** It makes me think that it might *seem* like nothing happens to your body when you drive through the thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. But something happens to your body.

**Keith:** 'Cause it's got...if you can just disappear—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** —and then reappear, something is happening to your body.

**Austin:** Something is definitely happening to your body.

**Keith:** I mean, it's going— I think it's going somewhere.

**Austin:** The phenomenological experience does not feel like losing a body.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You can keep track of the body the whole time. Is there missing time?

**Keith:** But you could be cloned in a cloning machine, and they can murder the original person and make you think that you're the original one, and that also doesn't feel different.

**Austin:** I will say, there's...there is not lost time in the sense of like meaningful human time. There's no...the trick of this is not “and in the middle, everyone gets hit with knockout gas.”

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** “And then they pull you out of the car.” It is a weird...this is a capital W weird effect happening.

**Keith:** But if you can disappear and reappear—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Then you can have a perfect one fades out and another fades in and you would never know looking or feel seeing any change. This is just me.

**Austin:** And that’s—

**Keith:** This has nothing to do with this.

**Austin:** I get you. Yeah, uh huh. In any case, Britney, yes, begins to fade back in as you're playing. And as you're playing, you can feel like...I mean, one, let's just say that the music...let's just say that the saxophone is there in this. This is a cover of heart shaped box that is two instruments, electric guitar and saxophone.

**Keith:** [imitating “Heart Shaped Box”] Bum bum bum bum, bum bum bum.

**Sylvia:** I've gotta be honest, I was trying to find a ska song, but I just couldn't figure it out.

**Austin:** I appreciate it. I do appreciate that. Write in with your favorite...what ska song CC should have been playing.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Just a “Heart Shaped Box” cover.

**Austin:** Uh huh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** That exists.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That exists, for sure. A hundred percent.

**Keith:** Heart shaped ska...ska...heart shaped ska, yeah, that's it.



**Austin:** Just, that's what it's called. Skax. As Britney solidifies in front of you, the same effect begins to happen to Ollie, but it just can't, like, can't hook. You know, it doesn't...it can't quite...just won't happen. But as soon as Britney materializes, you all remember her completely, a hundred percent.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I already did, but I'm glad everybody else does.

**Austin:** Right. Yes, the group a hundred percent now, it clicks in. Britney is here. You remember missing Britney. Like, you remember Britney...*you* remember Britney vanishing, but I don't know that anyone else will. At this moment, as Britney comes back into being, the lights in this place flicker on, and you hear someone yell. You hear the voice of Elle yelling down the hallway:

**Austin (as Elle):** Ah— you goddamn kids again!

**Austin:** And you hear her footsteps beginning to run this direction. What do you do?

**Sylvia (as CC):** Should we run?

**Jack:** We could try and get out of the...out of the...I doubt that the agents are there.

**Austin:** The agents are gone. Yeah.

**Dre:** I mean...

**Jack:** Back the way we came.

**Dre:** Would it be nice for her to see her friend again like this? Or is that even like a...

**Jack:** We can't repair her for it.

**Austin:** We know that— yeah, we can't—

**Dre:** [sadly] Yeah.

**Austin:** You know you can't repair her friend. We also know that she saw her friend, or we believe she saw her friend in that first night out in the woods.

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

**Austin:** 'Cause she was coming from that direction, but...I mean, maybe this is what happens, is as you all start to try to get distance, you know, Olivia, Ollie does come between you and her. And just kind of gestures a sort of like "let them go" type of thing, and you see that Elle is like shook at the fact that you've been here where there's the ghost and you're all in this place, and what the fuck is going on? But you're able to get...like she comes to a halt, having seen Ollie

again. And I don't know if they're...I don't know that you stick around long enough to find out, like, are they talking to each other? What is their relationship at this point? But yeah. The song on the tape continues to play here as you leave. And also she 100 percent has the same song playing on— but like a different version of it, you know?

**Jack:** Is it the same record— it's not a Conc—

**Austin:** It's a different recording.

**Jack:** It's not a Blossom?

**Austin:** No, no, no. In fact, it's an official Tri-City Tunnel Project version of it.

**Jack:** Oh, it's orchestrated and everything, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. Maybe it's...it's like from a previous ten years ago school band, you know? Which is fun. Or, you know, churchy, like youth church choir.

**Jack:** “Cosi fan tutte” is a classic school band performance.

**Austin:** Yeah. Classic. Classic. [laughs softly]

**Sylvia:** I was gonna say somehow it's also “Heart Shaped Box.” [Jack laughs]

**Austin:** It's also “Heart Shaped Box.” [laughs] And yeah, you're able to kind of cheese it and get back out to your hideout. Britney doesn't remember anything. Britney remembers leaving Blough City from the competition, the band competition [laughs softly] and that's it. She doesn't remember what, you know, what was going on. But when you get back to your...when you get back to your hideout, you know, on the radio, it's like:

**Austin (as radio host):** And we're entering day three of the search for Britney Namor.

**Keith:** Hey, bullshit!

**Austin:** The world has shifted. Now, the world has been missing this person for three days. You know the truth. You know a day ago, no one but you knew who she was. There are helicopters in the air, you know, looking out in the marshes and stuff. And people in, you know, police jackets and stuff combing various other parts of this island.

**Jack:** Like a big line, walking in a line.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Yeah.

**Jack:** Does she make herself...you know, does she go back to her house and then she's on the news the next day?

**Austin:** No. I think she says "I'm not..." I think she says to you, like:

**Austin (as Britney):** [hushed] I'm not ready yet.

**Austin:** And is still processing everything that happened, but by that night, she goes back.

**Jack:** Yeah. God.

**Austin:** Nolan, when you get back, your mom is like:

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** I'm so happy you got back. I've been so worried about you. This missing Britney case has all the parents so scared. And it's spaghetti spaghetti night, so... [Sylvia laughs] I just, you know.

**Austin:** And gives you a big, big hug.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Tha— I'm not in trouble? I mean, thank you. I mean...

**Austin:** I mean, you're not that late, 'cause you snuck out during school.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So she's grateful to just have you back, you know?

**Keith (as Nolan):** Can't wait for spaghetti spaghetti.

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** It's your favorite kind. Of spaghetti.

**Keith (as Nolan):** Oh, spaghetti spaghetti with meatball meatballs? [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Meatball meatballs, spaghetti spaghetti. Garlic bread garlic bread. Everything's here.

**Jack:** Family Guy Monopoly. [laughter]

**Austin:** And Family Guy Monopoly!

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** If you really want, we can play American Dad Monopoly tonight instead.

**Keith:** And *Goodfellas* on VHS.

**Austin:** [laughs] And *Good*—

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** You're too young to watch *Goodfellas* on VHS.

**Keith:** No, but we just sit with it.

**Austin:** We just— it's just on the table.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like a...yeah, uh huh. So that's Nolan. Everybody else, what's the...what's this immediate response for y'all as you go home that night?

**Sylvia:** I think that because of the way things have shifted a bit, CC's parents have been—at least to their recollection—more present, because a kid's been missing. So they've been making— they haven't just been letting their daughter and son wander off.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So I think she kind of gets yelled at about it, but is like...weirdly relieved, because they're actually paying attention to her.

**Austin:** Yeah. How do you feel about the idea that you're gonna be like driving through that tunnel in a week or whatever?

**Sylvia:** [sighs] Scared, but less scared, because she's like, well, my friends were able to get somebody out of there before. If something goes wrong, they'll find me. And like, she kind of knows that's like not true?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But it's the thing you tell yourself to feel better about, like, having to leave your friends and stuff, you know? She does start packing her room, too. Yeah.

**Austin:** Finally, yeah. I think your brother checks in on you and says like:

**Austin (as Theo):** You've been out more lately. Are you good?

**[Timestamp: 2:20:00]**

**Sylvia (as CC):** Uh, you know, eh. Just trying to, like, see everybody before we gotta go, you know?

**Austin (as Theo):** [sighs] Yeah. Yeah, I feel you. Well, um. If you need help packing up, I got my room done, so. We'll put on some music, and it'll be done before you know it.

**Sylvia (as CC):** I'd love that.

**Austin:** He like, gives you a thumbs up and he heads out to...

**Sylvia:** The Upper Crust Pizza or whatever. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** And I think he says, like— I was gonna say pizza! I was gonna say to go get a slice of pizza, a hundred percent!

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And I was like, is that too sad? But no, it's honest.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's different, reheated pizza.

**Sylvia:** God.

**Austin:** Uh huh. There's a place in Atlantic City that has good pizza called Tony's Baltimore Grill. And that's where the pizza is from tonight. So it's not—

**Sylvia:** Hell yeah. Much better pizza that's in this universe.

**Austin:** Than the— yes, exactly, yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** It's not close to Baltimore, is it? Atlantic City?

**Austin:** No.

**Jack:** No? It's just a mystery.

**Austin:** Well, I mean, close is... [laughs softly] Close is a relative term, you know?

**Jack:** Sure.

**Austin:** [laughs] I don't know why it's called that, either. [Jack laughs] So that's CC. That's Nolan. Unless, Nolan, do you have anything else you wanted to do with spaghetti spaghetti? I felt like that was like where you were.

**Keith:** I spilled a meatball on my shirt, and I ruined my nice polo.

**Austin:** Oh no!

**Dre:** Oh, your nice polo. [laughs]

**Austin:** Your— [laughs]

**Keith (as Nolan):** Um, mom, I ruined my polo. Can I go put on my T-shirts now?

**Austin (as Nolan's Mom):** No. [Keith laughs] You can put on another polo. [Jack laughs]  
It's dinner time. We dress up for dinner here.

**Keith (as Nolan):** [disappointed] Fine.

**Sylvia:** Mom is also wearing a polo.

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's talk about this commercial, Frank. What happens to you? How does you doing that change your life in the near future?

**Jack:** It doesn't. I mean, I made 450 dollars that my parents have put into...they are holding onto that money until they know I will be able to spend it on something responsible.

**Austin:** Sorry, but do you go shoot the...do you go shoot this ad, this commercial, or has it just happened?

**Jack:** It's happened. I can remember it.

**Austin:** So you don't...you remember it. It's as if you've changed the past now.

**Jack:** Yeah. I can...I have...all my family. You know, I'm able to say at the dinner table, you know, remember when we went to...it was up in New York. We went to New York to do it.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And my parents are like, oh yeah, absolutely. That's when you went on that trip to the American Museum of Comics, to uh, magazines.

**Austin:** Nope, it's different now. Now it's Comics and...

**Jack:** The American Museum of Comics. And in my head, I'm like, yes, of course. I mean, I can put these two stories together.

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** It's bizarre, because...and I think this is really what we get of Frankie in this scene, is that, like, she is obsessed with magazines and with people's stories and with, you know, what's been going on in the soap operas and everything. And now she has just been told, oh, reality is mutable. It's like...anything can be real, basically.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Jack:** Anything can be real, and that is just sort of like a cold, comfortable feeling. She doesn't even really feel like, oh wow, so I can do whatever I want. It's more just like, oh my god, anything can be real. I can just make it up. We just need to put it on the tapes, and we can do anything.

**Austin:** That's a healthy relationship.

**Jack:** I don't know how the image got on the tape, but we just put it on the tape and then it's real. You know, that money is waiting for me. The commercial...that was a few years ago, so the commercials no longer airing, but the copy of Hungry Hungry Hippos in my house has my face on the front of it.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's great! I love that. And we cut from there to the overcrowded home of Ronnie Lee Highsmith's Jr. You know, it's a cramped place. There's too many people living in that little place. And now you're back. How's this go? What do you find when you get home? Is your dad home the hospital today?

**Dre:** Yeah, I think everybody's home.

**Austin:** Yeah. Your dad, like, ruffles your hair as you come in, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Hey, how was school, champ?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** It was...it was pretty good.

**Austin:** And is like:

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Yeah!

**Austin:** You know, there's not...he does, you know, he's tired.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And he's like:

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Oh, you uh, you had a lot of homework?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Nah, it's been a pretty light week this week, as far as as far as homework goes.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** But that's given me extra time. Aunt Jozy, I fixed the tape recorder like you asked me to.

**Austin:** She gives you a look that is like, she knows that you...that there's something up at this point, you know? And she says:

**Austin (as Jozy):** Oh, thanks.

**Austin:** And like, reaches out to take it from you. You know? And like, eyes just connect, and there's a lot unsaid here and like, not even...it's not necessarily clear that both parties are on the same page, but. She goes to ask you something, but then I think looks over to your dad, who's like switching, putting the game on, and thinks better of saying something here, and then your dad is like:

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Oh, do you wanna watch the game while we eat?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** Yeah. Actually, I wanted to see if we could order pizza? I did like a after school job, and I made like 20 bucks.

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** You did an after— hey! My boy is an entrepreneur. You hear that? Making 20— What'd you do? What was the job? What was the job?

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I have a friend who, um, won a photo contest, and I helped her take photos.

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Ah, [mumbles] that's a...you're an artiste! You're taking photos. I...ah. We're gonna get...you know what? Save— put the 20 bucks. [hushed] Put the 20 bucks away. Don't tell your mom about that. That's yours. You should get something you like with that.

**Dre (as Ronnie):** I like pizza.

**Austin (as Ronnie's Dad):** Yeah, I like pizza, too. That's why we're gonna order one. [Austin, Sylvia, and Jack laugh] Call the Upper Crust. Get us two pies.

**Austin:** And the pizza is ordered. Any other final shots here of the group? Do we get to see CC head off her final day?



**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm down with that. I think it's like...maybe they had like a big like, they invited...I was going say they invited people over the apartment, then I was like, wait, no, it's kind of depressing to invite people over to like your empty home.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So maybe like they went out for dinner somewhere with the families of like all of CC's friends and stuff.

**Austin:** Yeah. A little place on the cove maybe where there's the shops and stuff—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Looking out over the marshlands, so it's kind of still kind of creepily too close to the Tunnel Project.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Perfect.

**Austin:** But none of the kids— the kids can't say anything. They're like, oh, we don't want to go over there. [laughs] Yeah, and it's like, you know, maybe you go on some rides. You do some, like, kid shit, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's like a little...like a little baby boardwalk amusement park or ride, you know, with like the tiniest little roller coaster you've ever seen. It doesn't do any loops. It just kind of goes up and down a few times. One of those things where, like, you sit in the chairs and it spins you. Do you know what I'm talking about?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I think I do.

**Keith:** Zipper?

**Austin:** No, I don't think it's a zi— I don't think that's...

**Dre:** Like the teacups?

**Keith:** It is free spinning cages, and the thing rotates vertically—

**Austin:** No, none of those.

**Keith:** —and you spin around, like...it's wild.

**Austin:** [typing] It's the ones that are just like a bunch of chairs— oh, the swing ride.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** One of the scariest rides, in my opinion.

**Dre:** Mmm. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Jack:** I don't know this.

**Keith:** Just 'cause you're...yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, 'cause your legs are dangling out the swing, right? While it like, you go faster and faster and almost go like horizontal.

**Austin:** Yeah, you just...because... [laughs] You 100 percent go horizontal. Because this image I'm sending you is the swing ride. This is what they look like.

**Dre:** Yep.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Awful.

**Austin:** And that's scary to me. [laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah. See, it's the thing...the thing about them is that the thing that it does seems extremely tame, but the thing that it is, is children being whipped around, [Austin laugh] tied only by a couple chains.

**Sylvia:** I'm not sure what the problem is. [Keith and Austin laugh]

**Dre:** I mean, as someone who has ridden that many times, it was very fun, but.

**Keith:** Yeah. They're fun. They're fun!

**Austin:** Yeah, I a hundred percent did it a ton as a kid, so. Yeah, anyway. Alright, yeah, you have this farewell dinner. Everyone has a good time. And I think, yeah, we maybe...do we close on, CC, your family kind of loading into this car and...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** A song playing as you drive towards the tunnel, and like, accept that there's a dice roll coming, you know? I mean, you're probably the safest anyone's ever been, because you've just fixed this thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. We know it's working. [Austin sighs]

**Jack:** But they...the robots might have just gone back in.

**Austin:** Well, you broke both of them. So now you know there's this window where they have to be repaired, right?

**Jack:** Oh, true.

**Keith:** And the plus side is that it seems like most people are going where they mean to be going, right?

**Austin:** I mean, I said three out of ten go the wrong...go to Bluff instead of...

**Keith:** Oh, that's high. I missed that.

**Austin:** That's high. 30. That's...yeah, 30 percent is a lot.

**Keith:** And where are you trying to go, CC?

**Sylvia:** Uh, I don't think we actually ever said.

**Austin:** We didn't say. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think we were keeping that vague.

**Austin:** God, there's like different ways to do it, right? Like...god, if your family is moving to Blough, what a depressing move that is.

**Sylvia:** I know.

**Keith:** Do people know?

**Austin:** I think it just clicks, you know what I mean? They don't...they know it like...I'm not dissing our friends in Cincinnati, but like moving to Cincinnati in the height of Cincinnati having a negative reputation. Here's one: it's like moving to New Jersey, right?

**[Timestamp: 2:30:06]**

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** New Jersey does not have a positive reputation in the States, you know?

**Jack:** With the difference being, though, that like...Blough is kind of the closest we've made to like a waking nightmare in the show. It's like it's a—

**Keith:** It is supernaturally bad.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Jack:** Fucking horrifying.

**Austin:** It is supernaturally bad, correct. But the people there are living lives in such a way where they're like, yeah, I gotta make rent, buddy, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like yeah, I know my life is bad. Fuck off.

**Keith:** But when you move to Blough, do you know that you're moving to someplace that sucks?

**Austin:** Again, if you're moving to New Jersey, do you know if you're moving to someplace that sucks? Yes. But there's reasons people move places.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And now there is an entire industry of convincing you that each of these cities has something great to offer.

**Jack:** Mmm. And there are people for whom Blough, you know, works. I'm thinking about the casino family, right? Those...

**Austin:** Right.

**Jack:** Those two kids and their mother. Who seem like they have a bad time, but they're making money there, and you know.

**Austin:** Right, the...Nebraska family?

**Jack:** Yeah, the Nebraska family.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Enough money to send assassins through the Tunnel Project.

**Austin:** So, yeah. I don't think that assassin went through the Tunnel Project, by the way, Jack.

**Jack:** Oh, that was pre-Tunnel Project.

**Austin:** That was pre-Tunnel Project.

**Jack:** Yeah, they got through...

**Austin:** That assassin went across the desert that separates these places, the strange metaphysical super desert. Anyway.

**Jack:** Yeah, they had to do that thing where it's like turn the radio to a certain frequency and reverse your car down the something or another.

**Austin:** Yes, yes. Or they paid someone like Miss Maxwell, one of the devils, to get them across. So.

**Jack:** Huh.

**Austin:** Which I don't think we said out loud on this call, that Miss Maxwell...

**Jack:** Only after the fact, right?

**Austin:** You asked me—

**Jack:** What's her first name?

**Austin:** You asked me what Miss Maxwell's first name was.

**Jack:** It's Amy.

**Austin:** And I just linked you to— yeah, the page for the demon named Amy, who is a demon described in demonological grimoire such as the Lesser Key of Solomon. It's Amy Maxwell. Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** I'm sad she didn't appear in this episode, but the good news is that we get to make more Bluff City.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes. The good news is, yeah, she'll be around.

**Keith:** She briefly appeared.

**Speaker 3:** Right, yeah, remember she said you could— [laughs] absolutely, you could print a ghost. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** Try printing a ghost without getting marked, though.

**Jack:** “Can you print a ghost?” “Oh, child, absolutely.” [Austin laughs]

[music plays: [“To Be Young Near the Shore”](#) by Jack de Quidt]