

## **Pusher Media Club: Fargo**

Transcriber: robotchangeling

**Ali:** Hi, everybody. Welcome to another episode of Pusher Media Club, I guess? The last one, I explained that I wanted to say Book Club, but we're not reading any books.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** And I can't say movies, because one of these episodes isn't about a movie.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Ali:** So, hi. Welcome.

**Austin:** Did anyone raise that that means that our acronym for this is PMC, like a private military company?

**Ali:** Sure didn't.

**Janine:** I was just thinking that, yeah. *[quiet laughter]*

**Austin:** Private military contractor, rather.

**Ali:** I'm never gonna write that, so we're fine.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* We're good.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Hello, everyone. Today, we're talking about *Fargo*. I'm joined by my beloved coworkers, starting with Austin Walker.

**Austin:** Hi. *[pause]* They know where to find me. *[Ali laughs]*

**Janine:** If you want to find him on Twitter, get bent.

**Austin:** This is a Pusher level thing? Like...

**Sylvia:** Yeah. This is for the real ones.

**Austin:** Yeah, real ones know. *[Ali laughs]* @austin\_walker, you already know what it is.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm. Arthur Martinez-Tebbel.

**Art:** Hey. Definitely don't contact us if you need any military things done. We can't do it. We don't want to. *[quiet laughter]*

**Ali:** Janine Hawkins.

**Janine:** I'm @bleatingheart on the website twitter.com.

**Ali:** And Sylvi Clare.

**Art:** What do you do there? Oh. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** *[mock offended]* Wow!

**Janine:** Mostly paramilitary stuff. *[laughter]*

**Art:** Oh.

**Ali:** Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** Hi. Yeah, I'm Sylvi. *[Ali laughs]* @sylviaurfer on Twitter. Follow me. Thanks, bye.

**Ali:** Hello. Yeah, hi. Okay, perfect. Yeah, so, today we're talking *Fargo*. I initially hadn't seen this movie before assigning it out to people, but I was like, it's mentioned enough. We've played *Fiasco* like three times.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** We might as well kind of sit down and finally like talk about it as a group, and I'm curious on what everybody thought. I don't know if we want to do like a synopsis at the top?

**Austin:** I was thinking, could we do a synopsis of this, like, in five seconds? Not seconds, sorry, sentences.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** Five seconds is really too few seconds. *[Ali laughs]*

**Art:** Crime happens. *[Sylvia laughs]*

**Janine:** Do we do the Just King Things thing, the five sentence, like...?

**Austin:** Yeah, right. *[laughs]* I feel like that's stealing too much from them. Do we do the *Fiasco* thing and everyone puts a die in and says one sentence?

**Ali:** Mm...

**Janine:** Ah...

**Austin:** I mean, what it is— okay. A car dealer is married to— a car salesman is married to a wife, who... *[Sylvia laughs quietly]* who he is very annoyed with.

**Ali:** “To a wife.”

**Austin:** Well. *[laughter]*

**Sylvia:** That’s how I hope to be described one day.

**Austin:** Her name is Jean. You know, what do you want from me?

**Sylvia:** To be fair, that is her character.

**Austin:** Her character is...

**Janine:** Yeah. Wife.

**Austin:** Is makes noise very quickly in every scene that she's in, *[Ali: “Mm”]* in the first 30 minutes, and then gets kidnapped. So I’m spoiling it now. He hires—

**Janine:** That’s what this is. This is a spoiler thing.

**Austin:** He wants money.

**Art:** You're not spoiling it. It’s synopsis.

**Austin:** Right, phew. So, I guess, heads up: we're going to be spoiling *Fargo*. *[laughter]* He needs or wants money for a mysterious reason that never gets answered.

**Ali:** He’s buying a lot? He's buying like a...he says “a lot.”

**Sylvia:** Some investment thing, yeah. There’s like—

**Austin:** But it seems like there— that also seems like a money making thing, in the sense that...I actually don't— well, we'll get into this. I don't know that that’s actually what he's doing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** I think he's in debt, is my read. Or something.

**Janine:** Yeah, I also had that impression.

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Austin:** This is like someone who has like buried himself in debt he's never told anyone about. Anyway, none of this is clear, and that's kind of the point of a lot of it. Anyway. *[Ali laughs quietly]* To get money, he has hired two men to kidnap his wife so that her rich father will pay a ransom, which he'll split with the kidnappers.

**Janine:** Well...

**Austin:** The amount is 80,000— this is the plan. This is the plan.

**Janine:** Mm...

**Austin:** The kidnappers don't know he's splitting it with them. Right? He's gonna—

**Janine:** No, they know.

**Art:** No, they do know.

**Janine:** Yeah, they know that he's splitting with them. He's given them the wrong number.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** He has told the father-in-law, "We need a million dollars."

**Austin:** No, but that doesn't happen right away.

**Janine:** He has told the kidnappers, "We're getting 40k."

**Austin:** Right. Right, right. Yes.

**Ali:** He's also giving them a car?

**Janine:** By the time we hear the number 1 million, it seems like— sorry, what were you saying?

**Ali:** He's also giving them a car.

**Austin:** He's also giving them a car.

**Ali:** Up front.

**Austin:** That he's stolen from the dealership.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** Presumably, right? Fell off the back of a dealership.

**Art:** Definitely, yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** By the time we hear that 1 million number, it is introduced as if that has always been the number he provided the father-in-law.

**Austin:** Right, but—

**Janine:** So, to me, the assumption was he's like giving— he's like paying the lowest amount he can to the guys and trying to keep as much of the money as possible for himself.

**Austin:** One of the things that happens in this movie, though, is that number just rises and rises and rises, because the initial...it's almost one of those things where like, there's all these conversations over and over in the first 30 minutes, where it's like, "I need 40k." Then there's a scene where he needs \$120,000. Then there's a scene where he needs \$320,000, and that's the deal. Then he asks to get \$750,000 for the land deal, and then it's a million dollars for the ransom. That number just keeps spiking over and over again. Anyway.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** The wife gets kidnapped. The kidnapping goes wrong, when, during the getaway, a cop pulls the kidnappers over. The cop gets killed. While they're trying to dispose of the body, Steve Buscemi gets seen trying to dispose of the body. Steve Buscemi is one of the kidnappers. The other one is...

**Art:** Not as Steve Buscemi. He's playing a part. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** He's playing Mr. Pink from *Reservoir Dogs*. *[Art laughs]* And the other kidnapper, who is...

**Sylvia:** Peter Stormare.

**Austin:** Peter Stormare, yeah. Then chases down and kills two people who see Buscemi trying to hide a cop body, and so then a local police chief gets called in to investigate it. She is pregnant, is married to a nice man who paints ducks. *[Ali laughs quietly]*

**Janine:** Marge and Norm.

**Austin:** Uh huh, Marge and Norm, yeah. And she begins an investigation, as the husband—Jerry, the car salesman—realizes this whole plan has gone to shit, and things from there continue to fall apart.

**Art:** As they do in Coen Brothers movies.

**Austin:** As they do in Coen Brothers movies, right? In the end, everyone is dead except for Marge, I guess? The money is hidden at the side of a road, where it will never be found, theoretically. I mean, is that not true? Does that end up coming up in *Fargo* the TV show?

**Sylvia:** I think that happens in season two, yeah.

**Art:** It does, yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Okay.

**Art:** No, it's in season one.

**Sylvia:** No, season one, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** See, because season one is basically just doing this again.

**Austin:** Right, yes.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's a very similar thing, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's been a while since I've seen that.

**Janine:** Also, a thing here...a thing to mention in terms of like, everything falls apart because blah blah blah, like, really a thing that I found interesting about this is that it only falls apart on the one side. Like, the sort of criminal side of it is this constant cascade of things getting worse and worse.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** But Marge's side is this very, like, quiet, contemplative...like, it is so interwoven with her

life and like personal things she does and things like that.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And it is all just so measured and mundane in a really interesting way.

**Austin:** She's hyper competent.

**Art:** Well, except the thing that happens to her...

**Janine:** Things never feel out of control with her, except for—

**Art:** Oh, see, I disa— oh.

**Janine:** Except for that date that she— not date, but...

**Austin:** Mike. Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, that's the only situation that feels out of control, to me, in her whole arc.

**Ali:** Yeah, but even then, she like completely has her wits about her and like handles that perfectly.

**Janine:** Yes. She totally...yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, she totally reins that in.

**Art:** Well, but like, the thing— but then— mm. See, this is the...because she has that call where she finds out about how all that whole story was fake, [*Austin: "Mm-hmm"*] right before she goes to the dealership. Like, right before her like discovering the whole plot.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Like, this like echoing of the distrust in people is very, like..I think that does feel out of her control. I guess it's not out of her control in that it doesn't really affect her, but like, she's being told this gigantic affecting lie that someone she went to high school with is dead [*Austin laughs quietly*] and then finds out that it's not true, because this guy is just lying to get attention from her.

**Austin:** He's just a creepo. Right. Right.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's an interesting thing, because I think it...you know, one of the biggest throughlines here—I think maybe the biggest throughline here—is the kind of niceness facade, right? And I think it's all over both the visual imagery and then like, the kind of dialogue and thematics, the like “Minnesota nice” accent is covering up really terrible, you know, objectives that people have, literal crimes, attitudes, etc., all the way through the movie. And for her, like, Mike, the dude that she sees in the hotel bar downtown in the city. Is she in...? One of the Twin Cities, I forget where. You know, she gets completely taken in by it. Not to the degree that she does anything she regrets or anything, but it's clear that it's, you know, it affects her when she hears that story. And then when she goes to talk to Jerry, William H. Macy's car salesman character, she's just completely ready for his bullshit, right?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And at that point, it's like she can see through it all the way?

**Art:** I forgot that I was gonna suggest that we do this whole episode in the accent.

**Austin:** I don't think I can do that accent. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Absolutely not.

**Janine:** No one can do that.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I'm good.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** The like first time I watched the TV show *Fargo*, I marathoned the first two seasons, and I had to like work so hard not to just actually slip into that, *[laughter]* so it's not happening.

**Austin:** *[sighs]* Though, actually, I'm thinking about that scene now, and one of the most incredible things—this is going back to Janine, your point about the criminal side kind of falling apart almost by its own volition in some ways. Like, Jerry just can't keep it together in any scene in this movie. If he had any degree of like steel or competence, there are so many ways in which...like, I can imagine an audience leaving this movie, when this film came out in '96, just going like, “Why didn't he just do blank?” *[Ali laughs]*



**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Why didn't he just go walk the lot with her and show that the cars are the right number? Or, you know, whatever. There's all of these things throughout the entire— why didn't he just tell the dad, “Okay, drop off the money at this time,” and, you know, there are all sorts of ways in which he could have tried to plot a little cleaner, and it's just not that movie. You know?

**Janine:** I mean, again, I can answer why he—

**Art:** Oh gee, Austin, I don't... *[quiet laughter]*

**Janine:** I can answer why he didn't tell the dad to drop the money off, because like, he didn't want to have to intercept that money, because the amounts were different between what was expected and what he'd asked for. I was just gonna say, regarding the— not to belabor the Mike...I forget his last name. But the Mike scene... *[sighs]* I really, to me, it still doesn't read as like her being startled or necessarily like that's...I think she's surprised, but also, she's really, really quick to recognize what's happening when he's like, “I'm just gonna sit next to you.”

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And she's like, “No, you can sit across from me,” and then she blows it off as like, you know, I don't want to have to turn my head and my neck and all, you know. Like, it feels like she's on top of it, even when she is kind of believing the story. To me, that sequence going into her sort of starting to unravel things in terms of the plot, was a lot of kind of displaying who she already was and not like necessarily a change or priming her to see the deception. It was just very much like a “you trust a person up until a point” kind of thing.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Austin:** Well, the thing that's...

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** Really quick, the thing that I...that follow up to that scene. When I watched that scene, which I had completely forgotten about. I saw this movie forever ago, and then I completely forgot about this like little Mike subplot. When you see that scene the first time—or when I saw it, you know, this time—I thought, “Okay, this is interesting, because it's kind of walking back part of the kind of cynicism around the facade that people put up.” You know, Jerry is such a

slimeball, but it's hidden behind the kind of like, you know...I almost said "Alrighty then." That's a Ned Flanders thing. *[Janine laughs]* But the "You betcha," right? It's the sort of like hyper kind, you know, facade that's covering up cravenness. And you get that Mike story, and you're like, "Okay, wow, actually, yeah. He was clearly looking to make a move here that is slimy, but it's rooted in this real tragic thing, and like, okay. You know, I don't like him, but like, maybe we need to— maybe there is— I can't dismiss this facade altogether," right? And then, you know, three scenes later, you get the reveal that he's actually much worse than you might even think, and I wrapped back around to this thing of just like...you know, the Coen Brothers are from Minnesota, and it feels like there's such disdain for that part of their culture. Not that like— you know, Marge is perfectly nice and has a similar affect, so it's not like a complete dismissal of it, but it does feel deeply distrusting of the way it's used, especially by men to cover up their misdeeds, if that makes sense, or their goals.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah, and I'm...mm, hmm, yeah. Yeah. *[Ali and Janine laugh]* I thought I had something there, and I didn't.

**Austin:** Ali, you were gonna say something before, and you let me go.

**Ali:** Um, yeah, yeah. Well, I just, like, thinking about this movie in its entirety of being this like very capable woman who's just like encountering depravity she did not think that she would ever come across. The like Mike thing, I think, really stands out to me as being like...I don't know. It just feels really fucked up. *[laughs]* It's such a weird thing, because it feels...within the context of the rest of the movie, it feels like such a weird shock thing, that it almost feels like too much icing to like what, you know, it's trying to do. But again, I think I'm with Janine here where it's like, the way in which she's able to just kind of take it on the chin.

**[0:15:25]**

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Because like, there's the...she's like packing and folding clothes, as she's—

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Ali:** A friend of hers who she didn't get to see, *[Austin: "Right"]* instead saw this other dude, is like, "Oh, yeah, they were never married. He's just going through some problems," and she like doesn't miss a beat and is just like, "Oh."

**Janine:** *[in accent]* "Oh, yeah."

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Yeah.

**Austin:** Well, this is the thing that's so hard, is like—

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Art:** I thought we weren't doing it.

**Austin:** I don't necessarily know how to read her. Like, Ali, you just said she's seeing this stuff that she's never seen, this kind of like, you know, deeply disturbing stuff. But she's never really disturbed by it, right?

**Ali:** No, no.

**Janine:** No.

**Austin:** She keeps her cool the whole time, so I actually have no idea how much terrible shit she's seen. *[Ali laughs]* Everyone is so matter-of-fact about what's happening here. There's that bit where she's interviewing a guy, the guy who runs the bar, who talks about Buscemi coming in and threatening him and all that stuff, and he's like, "Well, I thought about the three homicides and thought it might be connected." And the way he just drops that is like, is that how people here talk about murder? *[Ali laughs]* You know what I mean? To have just a random dude with a snow shovel talk about homicide, instead of saying "the killings" or "the murder" or whatever, feels so removed from the actual death, because those are also like kind of brutal killings, you know?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** That there's something clinical about it, and she is able to go to the crime scenes and be clinical in each case, including the finale, or the kind of climax, *[Ali: "Oh my God"]* where she interrupts someone being put into, uh...being killed in a really gruesome way, I'll say. We did not give any content warnings up top, so I don't want to repeat how that death happens.

**Janine:** And takes that guy. She's, what, seven months pregnant or something like that?

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Janine:** Her gun is very small. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** And she shoots that guy in the leg, and the next scene is he's in the back of her cruiser.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** Like, it just worked—

**Austin:** She must have dragged him there? Or...

**Janine:** That's a really good scene, though, in terms of like, that really helped shape my opinion of how to read her interactions and stuff. Like, I don't...I also kind of don't read her as being like shaken or really, really deeply affected by the depravity of the crimes or whatever, because, you know, like the first thing she— the first and the little speech that she gives him, she says, you know, the line she repeats is, "I just don't understand it." But all of that comes after she has, largely on her own, *[Austin: "Uh huh"]* just pieced this thing together in a pretty straightforward way. Like, when she found that car accident, she immediately...or when she was investigating that scene, she immediately was like, "This is what happened, this is what happened, this is what happened," and all of that was correct.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. It rules. She's so good.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** So it's, you know, she's unraveling the layers of where things have been obscured, in a way that's believable, but she also does it in a really direct way, where, at the end, her saying, "I just don't understand it," is like, but she kind of does. Like, she doesn't understand the why, but like, no part of it along the way was a real swerve, you know? For her.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** They also mentioned something about her...someone said they like saw her on the TV or something? I think it—

**Austin:** Mike. Mike says that. Yeah.

**Janine:** It's Mike, yeah. So that makes me think like, you know, what else is she doing?

**Austin:** There was probably a—

**Janine:** Like, what else is...?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** There's a lot of like question marks in terms of what happened in the month even immediately before this picks up. Like, how did Carl and whatshisname meet? And like, why was she on TV? And, you know, stuff like that. Why's he in debt?

**Art:** Oh, I assumed she was on TV because of the dead police.

**Austin:** Yeah. I imagine she did a press conference [*Janine: "Oh, okay"*] that said, you know, "There's a dead cop in my town. One of my cops was killed," right?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But we don't get that, which is an interesting thing, [*Janine: "Yeah"*] because it completely changes the way in which we think about this as a movie with a— like, she's a police chief. She's doing detective work, but it is not about the authority of the police seeking justice, necessarily, right? Like, she feels like a free floating, you know, agent, in a strange way here, trying to get to the bottom of what's happened in her town, in a way that does not...you know, she is not calling a bunch of cruisers to the place at the end, you know, with her. She is not, you know...she never produces a warrant. She never says, you know, "The judge said I could be here," or something like that. You know what she never does is she never appears like the...remember when Steve Buscemi is trying to leave the parking lot the first time and he gives this long speech to the operator at the toll like thing or at the exit thing? [*Sylvia laughs*]

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** About how like, "Oh, you just like to be an authority, huh? You just like to feel like you're—" She is not that, you know? She does not have that thing of like, "I'm here as an authority figure," until she has to, which is [*Janine: "Mm-hmm"*] when she's interrogating Jerry and is like, "Excuse me? Like, what did you just say to me?" [*Ali laughs*] And then at the very end.

**Janine:** And even then, it's Minnesota nice.

**Austin:** Yes, yeah.

**Janine:** She's, you know, "You can't be snippy with me."

**Austin:** Yes! Yeah.

**Janine:** You know?

**Austin:** It's not even "you can't be," it's like, you don't have cause to be or you don't have...

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** She even like— because it even opens the possibility to say like, "Yeah, maybe in certain circumstances you could have gotten snippy with me, but in this circumstance, you had no reason to," [*laughs*] which is very funny.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Is the tollbooth scene why you said he's Mr. Pink, because, uh...

**Austin:** No, I wrote that note earlier in the movie and then later. It's my first note here, is "Buscemi is great here, but he's also just playing Mr. Pink." It's all of his dialog.

**Art:** This is after *Reservoir Dogs*, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, it's after *Reservoir Dogs*. In fact, there is a...it is not the first time I've heard the fan theory that this is...that they they cast him as Mr. Pink post *Reservoir Dogs*, that he gets away at the end of *Reservoir Dogs* and ends up moving to Minnesota. *[laughs quietly]* Which is a bullshit stupid fandom thing, you know? But. For people who haven't seen *Reservoir Dogs*, Buscemi plays a very similar criminal in that, who is fast-talking, is big on these kinds of spiraling claims about culture or about other people in his life. This is the thing where he hates tipping. He does the whole thing about how, "You know, in Europe, you don't need to tip, and they just pay their workers, and in America, I don't see why I have to take that on. I don't know why I have to tip people," et cetera. Buscemi is great in this movie, and I won't hear otherwise.

**Sylvia:** He's such a little piece of shit. It's the best.

**Austin:** Ugh, it's incredible.

**Sylvia:** The two hitmen are fantastic.

**Art:** He was on a great run in the early '90s.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I don't like when he says "daddy" a bunch of times in a row. *[Austin laughs]* Personal preference, I don't like that. It was creepy.

**Sylvia:** I thought it was fine. *[loud laughter]*

**Art:** Can I lead us on one more brief Steve Buscemi aside?

**Austin:** Always.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Art:** Do you think it's like weird that it used to be like you could get to be like a sort of famous actor being just sort of like a weird ugly dude *[Austin laughs quietly]* and now that seems to be closed?

**Austin:** Do you mean a little strange looking dude, the way that two different people describe

him? *[laughter]*

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Because they can't get any more specific?

**Sylvia:** Isn't that how he's hot?

**Art:** But like, him and like...I feel like you can't get another Steve Buscemi. And like, I'm not saying Steve Buscemi like isn't an attractive person, but like, you'll get Steve Buscemi. You'll get like Danny DeVito. It feels like that line to being an actor is closed somehow.

**Austin:** I think that you can make a case that Steve Buscemi is traditionally hot in *Reservoir Dogs*.

**Sylvia:** I agree.

**Art:** Well.

**Austin:** This is a traditionally hot man.

**Art:** Ah, I...

**Austin:** I think that there— I think that Art is right, generally speaking, which is we've seen a contraction on the type of leading men that exist, with the caveat that that contraction had already happened with leading women 60 years ago or something.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And Hollywood hot is finally catching up with men, to where there's a slightly more limited variation than there used to be, but I...I don't know. I think that there's been a trade, which is like, now there are slightly more Black and brown leading men who just fit the same basic shape and face structure that is allowed? I don't know. I feel like there's been some trades.

**Janine:** I think a thing that happens is that like also a lot of like doofy comedian dudes are getting like *[Austin: "Yes"]* Marvel muscled up and going that path.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** There was just the conversation about this with...who was in that video who was like, "Honestly, I do think that I'm more attractive than him, but it's because..."

**Sylvia:** Oh, um...

**Austin:** Right. Yeah. Uh, Hasan Minhaj?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** No, that's not his name. What's his name? Is that his name?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that is his name. Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay. It was him talking about Dax Shepard.

**Ali:** Yes. *[Ali and Austin laugh]*

**Austin:** And he's right, by the way.

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

**Austin:** Hasan is hotter than Dax Shepard.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** I used to know that dude.

**Austin:** But Dax Shepard is also not Steve Buscemi, doesn't have that that facial structure, that look, that distinct look of Buscemi, right? Anyway.

**Janine:** Oh, Toby Jones. That's who I was trying to think of. Toby Jones is...

**Austin:** Who's Toby Jones? Oh, okay.

**Janine:** He's an actor.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like, he's been in stuff. He's kind of...like, the reason I don't like "ugly" for this description is like, to me, most actors don't look like human beings.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And the actors that we're saying are like ugly or weird-looking are the ones who look



like real human beings to me.

**Austin:** The people in my life, yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, just like, this is just a person.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** You're not allowed to count Steve Buscemi as someone who's in your life because you used to live in his neighborhood, though.

**Austin:** Listen, he wore that green jacket. I could always tell. *[laughter]* "That's Buscemi, walking into the Barnes and Noble." The scene, just for the record, where I first wrote down the Mr. Pink thing was the pancake scene, was him being upset at Peter Stormare for wanting pancakes, *[laughs]* which is a great sequence. The two of them together are just very good, and Stormare as the like walking embodiment of violence is very good and a recurring bit in Coen Brothers films. Like, there's a lot of the malevolence of Anton...what's the—?

**Sylvia:** Chigurh?

**Austin:** Chigurh? Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I think it's Chigurh.

**Austin:** From *No Country for Old Men* here, without any of the philosophizing, obviously, right? But it was interesting to revisit that years later. Are there any other big scenes that we want to call out as like, specifically?

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** Because we've talked a lot about the Mike one. Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** I really wanted to quickly shout out the guy playing the father-in-law for being probably the funniest part of this movie to me.

**Ali:** Oh, yes.

**Sylvia:** Just like the most bullheaded, like...

**Austin:** God.

**Sylvia:** I don't know why I want to call him old— I mean, I know why I want to call him old fashioned. He clearly is. But also just like, the gun he uses at the end, when he gets shot.

**Austin:** I know.

**Sylvia:** It's like a World War II pistol or some shit. *[Austin laughs]* Like, he is such a weird antique, and he's so much fun in this.

**Janine:** The line of his that really...that sticks in my memory is when he said, "Jean and Scotty never have to worry."

**Ali:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah. Ooh.

**Ali:** It's so good. *[laughs]*

**Janine:** Just saying to someone, like, "I'm worried about my family," and being like, "Yeah, THEY don't have to worry."

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** It's so good.

**Janine:** "I don't give a shit about YOU, but..."

**Austin:** It's so good.

**Ali:** Yeah, that's one of those things with this movie, where like, I...the like thesis takeaway for me on this thing is like, I like *Fiasco*. I like our podcast. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** But I think that if somebody was like, "Oh, do you want to play *Fiasco*? It's kind of like *Fargo*," and I'd watched it before I played *Fiasco*, I'd be like, "I'm good." *[laughter]* The thing that the movie does really well is that like, as soon as you're introduced to somebody, like, you got it, right?

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** When a character is introduced, you understand their whole deal immediately. And I really love that, especially for the father-in-law, where it's this like tight camera on his face, slightly below, *[laughs]* and he's watching like a hockey game.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** While Jerry is over his shoulder being like, oh...I don't remember what they were talking

about, but he's just like grunting through the conversation. He like has a response first, which is like, "Oh, hey, what's up?" And then he asks him another question, and then he just grunts in response to the game that's happening, and I was like, "Aha, this is wonderful." *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Uh huh. It's very good. You're right. I mean, this is— every character has some sort of tell right away. Jean, the wife who gets kidnapped. I said this already, but like, in the first scene, she is chopping vegetables super quick. Then, in the next scene—I think it's the next one—she's whisking super quick and loud. And then the third time, she's knitting. She's doing physical things. Peter Stormare, in the first like three scenes he's in, has a cigarette with the longest fucking ash, and he will not...he like will not deal with it. *[laughter]*

**Sylvia:** It's so good!

**Austin:** It's so bad. And yeah, it's like, you just get a very clear picture of who these people are with very efficient, you know, visual storytelling often, which is great.

**Janine:** Another good one is Scotty, when it's the shot of— Jean has been kidnapped, and Jerry's like, "Oh, right. I have a son who might be sad," *[Austin laughs, Ali sighs]* so he goes back to his house to talk to his kid. I love that the kid...the three things we know about the kid is that this kid loves hockey.

**[0:30:08]**

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** This kid loves Whitesnake, because he's got a big Whitesnake poster above his bed.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** And also, this kid loves Accordion King, *[laughter]* because he's got an accordion on his bed and an Accordion King poster the back of his door.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** It's amazing.

**Austin:** It's amaaazing.

**Janine:** Also just like, man, whoever— the set dresser for that house did a great job.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Janine:** Did you count how many ceramic pigs there were?

**Austin:** Oh, I didn't.

**Janine:** There's so many ceramic pigs in that house. There was one in the medicine cabinet that gets knocked out. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Oh, amazing.

**Art:** Actually, a fun trivia fact: it's one ceramic pig. They just kept moving it around. *[laughter]*

**Janine:** And changing its size with a ray gun.

**Art:** Yeah, they had no ceramic pig budget. It's all camera tricks. *[laughter]*

**Austin:** I did make that note for Norm's art desk area with all the ducks and stuff, because it reminded me of...

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** One of my favorite Coen Brothers movies is *A Serious Man*, which I think does not get a lot of love, and that has some very incredible set design in a similar way of specifically really messy areas— or not messy, but cluttered, right? Like, just a lot of stuff. There is a rabbi's office in that movie that is like some of the best set dressing that I've ever seen in my life. People should watch *A Serious Man*. Can we go back to the *Fiasco* thing? Because I think that's like a—

**Janine:** Actually...

**Austin:** Oh, go ahead.

**Janine:** Sorry, just one last thing. I want to actually point out that like, sometimes the “what you see is what you get” thing with the characters really sucks. Shep Proudfoot *[Austin: “Yeah, totally”]* would be my example here of like a super quiet, industrious Indigenous dude with a long braid and a narcotics history who the scene he's most prominent in is one where he beats up a sex worker and the only Black guy in the movie.

**Austin:** Uh huh. And then they ADR him yelling at the end.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which I don't know if you caught that, that like, he's not...the actor is not yelling at the end of that scene, so they purposefully go in at the end and redub in lines, so that he can be cursing out Steve Buscemi as he's whipping him.

**Janine:** That sucked. That sucked.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** That sucked so bad.

**Austin:** Yes. I mean, in general, right? Like, again, there are three people of color in this movie, right? It's Shep.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's Mike, who is Asian, Asian American. And then it's the guy that Shep beats up, the Black guy that Shep beats up in the apartment, you know, complex that he's in or whatever.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** None of them particularly good characters. *[laughs]*

**Janine:** No, or particularly fleshed out.

**Austin:** No.

**Janine:** I mean, Mike— not to belabor Mike, but Mike is also presented as sort of...you know, he cries.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Like, his big thing is he breaks down crying, which is traditionally a non-masculine, feminine thing. The feminization of Asian men *[Austin: "Mm-hmm"]* in media is like a whole huge, massive thing. It just...this is not a good movie, in terms of how characters of a different race are represented. That's probably not what a lot of people are going to Fargo for, *[Austin: "No"]* but...sucked.

**Austin:** No. Honestly, I was surprised to see any characters of color at all, which is not me being like, "It should get a pass."

**Janine:** Sure.

**Austin:** But I was like, "Oh, wow, I forgot that this even..." Yeah, I was like, I thought this was a fully white movie. *[laughs quietly]*

**Art:** I mean, I'm only doing three seconds of thinking about this, but that's sort of the Coen Brothers...

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Art:** Can you think of a prominent...?

**Austin:** No. Uh...hmm.

**Art:** And they don't get it like other...they don't get it like their contemporaries do, like Wes Anderson and, uh...who am I really thinking of? Who's the guy who's like, "I don't imagine Black people in my movies"?

**Austin:** Is that not Wes Anderson?

**Art:** No, it was, um...who's the guy who works with Johnny– Tim Burton.

**Austin:** Oh. Wow! Really?

**Ali:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Fuck off.

**Janine:** Ugh.

**Art:** Oh, you didn't see that?

**Austin:** No.

**Art:** Yeah, Tim Burton sucks, it turns out. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Miserable.

**Art:** *[sarcastic]* You never would have guessed. *[Austin laughs]*

**Ali:** Yeah...

**Janine:** The number of things that dude can imagine, none of them a Black person.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, scissors for hands but not Black people. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

**Janine:** Yeah. Yep. Cool.

**Austin:** Anyway.

**Ali:** Austin, you were gonna talk about *Fiasco*.

**Austin:** Yeah, just I— for me, the *Fiasco* connection...or not the *Fiasco* connection, but I took a lot of notes that was like, how does— because *Fiasco* very openly takes a lot of inspiration from this style of crime movie, from the Coen Brothers specifically. I ended up feeling like interested in the ways in which that game can and can't represent certain things and then also how our table like style tends to map or fail to map to a movie like this. And so, one big one is things in this movie go bad way quicker than what happens when we play *Fiasco*, which is part of why I always think the *Aftermath* feels so strange when we play *Fiasco* is because I feel like we often play more screwball comedy than dark crime comedy. It's rare that a character dies early in one of our games, right? Whereas, here, like, we get the three murders, and then we get...Jean is just not a character, right? Jean would not have been a player character in one of our games, or if she was, she would have been handed off or something early into play, because she is not a factor after the kidnapping, basically.

**Art:** Austin, did you bring us here to give us notes on our *Fiasco* performances? Is that what this— *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yes. *[Art laughs]* Yes. What? Always. And me too. I just think it's an interesting thing about like, it's so easy to play *Fiasco*...and think about like the fan response to our *Fiasco* games, one we get a lot is like, "Whoa, that ended way darker than I thought it would." Whereas, when you get to the end of *Fargo*, you're like, "No, this honestly wrapped up kind of clean in the end." *[Art chuckles]* It sucks for Jean. Jean got screwed over the most, obviously. But like, Marge is back in bed with her loving husband, who is great, by the way. Shoutouts to Norm. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Oh my God.

**Austin:** The fucking—

**Sylvia:** John Carroll Lynch finally gets to play a normal man in a movie. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Right?! Right?!

**Art:** This was his first role, so he decided he didn't like it.

**Sylvia:** I love John Carroll Lynch, but also like every time he shows up in a movie, I'm like, "Oh, something fucked up is about to happen." *[laughter]* And in this one, he just makes stamps! And it's lovely!

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And eggs! The scene where he's like, "You gotta eat breakfast, Margie."

**Ali:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** “I’ll make eggs,” and gets up. I like cried because of like this open...between him just like dragging himself out of bed at like the ass end of the morning and her smiling when she realizes he’s like going to do it is just so good and pure and loving, in a movie that does not have a lot of that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. All those scenes were like little oases.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, during it. Like the one where they’re watching TV, and he is already asleep when she says, “All right, I’m turning in,” *[laughter, Austin: “Uh huh”]* and he like wakes up and pretends he’s awake?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It’s great. It’s perfect.

**Austin:** It’s really good. Damn, need me one who’ll bring ME Arby’s at work. *[laughter]*

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** There’s...I really, really like the scene at the end where, you know, where they’re in bed and it’s, you know, I think it’s the very last scene of the movie.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Not to derail from *Fiasco* and just go on about how great Margie and Norm are.

**Austin:** No, no, no.

**Janine:** But that scene at the end, where like, my first reaction to that– like, he just says, “Oh, they made the announcement today,” or whatever about this stamp competition that he’d entered.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** My first reaction was like, “Really? This is what you’re going to talk about, after all of the stuff we just saw?” And then my immediate follow up to that was like: no, of course.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Like, of course, this is what they’re talking about.



**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** This isn't him being like self absorbed in the stamp stuff or whatever. This is like, why would she want to talk about any of this when she's in bed with her husband?

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

**Janine:** Why wouldn't she want to talk about, "Oh, your duck won the three cent stamp thing? Well, people have to use the three cent stamp whenever the postage goes up."

**Austin:** Oh, it's so good. *[Ali laughs]*

**Janine:** Like, of course that's the thing. Of course you don't want to bring the shitty stuff in the front door with you.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. They're the best.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And there's definitely something to unpack there about her fondness for the three cent stamp and also for Norm, who...it's like those little things are the things that get you through the day, and that is— Arby's is kind of the three cent stamp of food, you know? *[laughter]* We're not going to ever get that Arby's sponsorship now.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** I'll say it, and I think it has to do with making good choices when you're there. I've never had a bad meal at an Arby's.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Me either! I think you're right. It is about making— you're right. You have to be a responsible shopper when you go to the Arby's. *[laughs]* Don't buy the weird new thing they put on the menu. Buy the thing you know that works for you.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I just realized I've never had Arby's. *[Ali gasps]*

**Janine:** I don't think I have either. They're not as much of a thing up here.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** There's an Arby's in the mall near Western University in London, so if you're ever in town.

**Janine:** No, they're around.

**Austin:** Oh, okay.

**Janine:** Like, I know there's one in town. It's just like, it's in a weird area that I never go to for food. I feel like I went there as a kid. Like, I know the smell of an Arby's.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I know the smell of a mid-'90s Arby's, I guess I should say.

**Austin:** I know the smell of an Arby's. *[laughter]*

**Janine:** I think it's...like, a bunch of cold cuts on a bun is a tough— hot cold cuts on a bun is a tough sell for a thing I'm gonna pay money for.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** It's not always hot.

**Austin:** It's not.

**Janine:** *[sarcastic]* Great.

**Sylvia:** *[sarcastic]* Yeah? Okay.

**Janine:** Then why don't I just stay home? *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Because you don't have cold cuts at home. *[Austin laughs]*

**Janine:** I always have cold cuts. I would love to not have cold cuts sometimes. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** It's just, every day, we open up the fridge: more cold cuts. We don't know where they're coming from.

**Art:** Sometimes you're driving somewhere. You gotta stop. You gotta eat.

**Austin:** You gotta eat. You gotta eat, and there's an Arby's.

**Art:** I'm so mad they fired H. Jon Benjamin, though.

**Austin:** Oh, did they end that campaign?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Hmm. He's doing fine.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** My other big *Fiasco* thing that's interesting is it underscored for me something that's missing from *Fiasco*, which is you need— there are needs in *Fiasco*, but they're always between people, right?

**Art:** Mm.

**Austin:** So, you don't get the thing where you have a character who is motivated to a point of self destruction over a thing that they need. So, for here, it's like Jerry needing a million dollars, right? He, at no point...there are points where he's talking to Carl, the Buscemi kidnapping character, at which he— you can imagine, again, a world in which he tries to say, "Listen, there's going to be more money. Can we work out a different way of doing this?" Doesn't even try to go down that road. With Peter Stormare, there's like noise. Any amount of noise is going to set him off, and he's going to do something incredibly violent or destructive because of it. And with Buscemi too, right? The final thing that Buscemi does is he doesn't give Stormare the extra money for the car, right? But he knows there's a million dollars waiting for him down the road. He could have just said, "Fine. Here's another \$15,000. I'm keeping the car and this 5k. I just want to get out of here," and could have left, but he makes this very self destructive choice to draw a line in the sand on this. And there's nothing in *Fiasco* to encourage you to do that, in which you say, "These are the things..." It's almost like— *Burning Wheel* has these things called Instincts that are things that are just true about the way your character acts. We've talked about them before, where it's a thing where it's like, "I always have my sword at the ready. Even when I'm asleep, it's right near me," or "I always know where the nearest exit is." And sometimes they can be— it's almost like programming your character for something, and sometimes they can be more character driven than that, which is like, "I always rise to an insult," "I never let someone take my Lord's name in vain," or something like that. And I wonder if *Fiasco* had something like that if you would end up doing bigger, more dramatic things in the early game. Because that's something that's in this movie in a big way, because that's what leads to like the cop getting killed and then those two randos getting killed right after that, are really impulsive decisions. And *Fiasco* doesn't encourage that necessarily.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I think the...like, something I was thinking about while watching this was like, well, *Fiasco* has like the Tilt mechanic.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** What would that be in this? And I think the thing is, is that there's a lot of— it's just constant.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** This does the constant little things going wrong. Meanwhile, *Fiasco* sort of hinges on one big event happening.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Which I don't think it's a bad thing necessarily, but it is like a way that it doesn't necessarily emulate the tone that it wants to, since it's so inspired by this.

**Austin:** You're right. Yeah, because here, it's like— go ahead.

**Sylvia:** The one I got closest to landing on was when the handoff for the money goes wrong.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** But also, I'm like, that could be a conclusion.

**Austin:** Totally. And everything after that feels like it could be...yeah, right, right.

**Ali:** Yeah, I feel like...when I was thinking about it, I felt like the tilt, for me, was like the killing of the first cop and then those two other people, right? And it's like so early in the story that it feels like that isn't the case, but you still—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I mean, if you're going around the table, you still have like three or four scenes before that happens, right? And then like, the new things that you introduce are like dead bodies and this cop. *[Ali and Austin laugh]*

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Ali:** But yeah, I don't know. It's such a tough thing. The body count in this movie is definitely a high one. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Ali:** And, you know, not one that I tend to lean towards when I'm playing a game. *[laughs quietly]* The— oh, God. I'm just thinking of the horrible neck wound that Steve Buscemi gets, so.

**Austin:** It's so good.

**Art:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I love it. It's like someone cut him with a sword, more than...

**Janine:** And then he like...

**Austin:** I know. *[shudders]* Ugh!

**Janine:** He has that scrap of Christmas-printed paper towel.

**Austin:** It's unbelievable.

**Janine:** That he puts over it and peels it off. Like, that little detail was like... *[Austin sighs]* It called back to Jerry's house so starkly for me, of just like this whole country kitsch, "this is every aunt's house" kind of vibe.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** And just like having that scrap of paper towel that like, it just felt like that could have even been from that house, like...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. My last *Fiasco* note is shout outs to this chase sequence, which we have used specifically in— I want to say in "Hard Luck" is when we used it, the one where there is a chase going on, but the end of the chase is a car pulls off to the side of the road and crashes, not because of any big final conclusion, but just because it just didn't go as well as we wanted it to. I think that was in "Hard Luck". And then the kind of like, the killer is at the door of the overturned car thing. That was the— I think that's "Hard Luck", because that's the horse one, right? The horse was in the truck when it flipped over, right?

**[0:45:33]**

**Ali:** Yeah. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** I had that— I remember doing a diagram to prove the horse was okay. *[Art laughs]*

**Ali:** I drew that diagram.

**Austin:** Thank you. Oh, that was your diagram.

**Ali:** Thank you.

**Austin:** Thank you. But that that specific, like, “The killer is coming for us. We are trying to drive away. Uh oh, we flipped the car,” is such a fun variation on car chase.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What were you gonna say, Ali?

**Ali:** Oh, no, I was just gonna say I drew that diagram because no one would believe me that like *[Austin: “I see”]* there would be another door that could open in that truck that the horse could get out of. An important aside. *[Austin chuckles]*

**Janine:** I've got a controversial opinion I want to throw out.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Psyched.

**Janine:** *[laughs quietly]* In my opinion, the most scary...the most like scary and dangerous character in this movie is Jerry.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And he's the villain of this movie. Yeah, absolutely.

**Janine:** Sure. Yeah. I mean, he's...yes. Okay, sure. I'm glad it's not that controversial then. *[Ali laughs quietly]* For me, I was kind of like on the fence about how I felt about like...well, I wasn't even really on the fence, actually. I was pretty firmly like, Jerry is the worst person here.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Jerry is worse than Carl. Jerry is worse than other guy who I can't remember the name of. Steve Buscemi's character.

**Austin:** Oh, he has a great name. Uh...

**Sylvia:** It's like Gaear or something, right?

**Austin:** Gaear. Gaear Grimsrud.

**Janine:** Right, yeah. I also made a note in my notes here, of like, the names are so interesting here, just in terms of like demographic name choice [*Austin: "Mm-hmm"*] was done really smartly and is really evocative of like the backdrop. But no, that scene where the money handoff goes wrong, and you just see...like, you get Jerry driving past the booth, where, you know, that person's been shot after that argument. Like, we don't see the end of that argument. We just see that person is dead. He drives, and he drives up to the top of the parking structure, and his father-in-law is dead, and like, we don't get any shot of the inside of the car at that point, as he's pulling up. All we get is the car stops, and then the trunk gets popped.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And it's just this like totally smooth, like...another good example is like, you know, when he's talking to his son, or, you know, when he's practicing what he's going to say on the phone.

**Austin:** That's the scene.

**Ali:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Austin:** That's the scene for me. Ugh.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's so bad.

**Janine:** Yeah, it's all just...it is so much like he...in some ways, he really thinks he's mastered the niceness as a facade. And he's kind of mastered the niceness as a facade for like truly not giving a shit [*Austin: "Mm-hmm"*] about anything but himself, but it's the second that he's the one in trouble or on the line that the facade crumbles and he can't put anything together.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** But yeah, he's— like, I would even argue he has less emotional response to things in the world than Carl.

**Austin:** Oh, totally.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like, we see Carl being shocked at like the soap opera reveal and stuff like that, or like, even moments where he's really—

**Austin:** Or wait, no, Carl is...I was also confused about this and had to check. Carl is Steve

Buscemi's character's name. There's a weirdness because of the way–

**Janine:** Is it?

**Austin:** Yeah, that's what Wiki says. I just checked it. Gaear is the other guy.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** Which means that Shep knows Gaear, not Buscemi. Buscemi is the wild card in this.

**Janine:** Yeah. Yes.

**Austin:** Which is wild!

**Janine:** I remembered that at the end. Yeah, that was kind of...I think that was why he beat up Buscemi, right? Because he was like, "I don't know who the fuck you are. You're no one to me, and you're fucking this up."

**Austin:** Right. Right. I think that that– yeah, yeah.

**Janine:** There's something at the end that made me realize that that was the thing and that...yeah.

**Austin:** But totally.

**Janine:** So, Gaear is the one who like, even though he has those moments of like being quiet, he does seem kind of like...you know, when Jean falls down the stairs or something, he doesn't feel totally cold and blocked off in that moment. He just feels like, "Well, fuck." *[Ali laughs quietly]* Whereas Carl like makes a joke out of it and has his own reactions, but I don't know.

**Austin:** My like big brained thesis thing is that they're the same person. Not– it's not a Tyler Durden situation, *[laughs]* but that...so, Paul Bunyan weighs heavily on the screen here, right?

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Because Brainerd, Minnesota is the home of Paul Bunyan. I don't know which Paul Bunyan. As you know, as Pusher level backers know, there's lots of Paul Bunyans. *[Ali and Austin laugh quietly]* There's a lot of different Paul Bunyan mythologies. But like, Paul Bunyan is this stand-in for like the great American man *[Janine: "Mm-hmm"]* who helped, you know, forge the West but actually is like, you know, chief deforestation and colonizer and killer, right? And we get both of those things in a way, in which it's like the mythologized good husband in Jerry, *[Janine: "Yes, yeah"]* who is covering– whose actions lead to death by giant ax, right? That like, those two things, that Jerry is kind of the American facade of Gaear, that those two things are not two separate men, that like that is the American project, especially the American masculine



project. This is what American masculinity is, or these are the versions of American masculinity that exist, maybe. I don't know.

**Ali:** I mean, the thing for me, with Jerry, that like makes him a worse and like more despicable character *[laughs quietly]* than anyone else is that like, there's no point where the niceness works for him *[Austin: "Right"]* or where he's ever pulled the wool over someone's eyes. Like, his father-in-law sees completely through him. His customers see completely through him. *[Austin laughs]* Like, somebody tells him that he's like a fucking liar in like the beginning of the movie.

**Janine:** Yeah. Because of the TruCoat. You have to get the TruCoat.

**Ali:** Yeah. Oh, God, that's such a good... *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Ohh.

**Ali:** I'm just gonna explain this scene. He's sitting down in his car dealership's office with this couple and insisting that they need to get this like special sealant for the car. The customer is like, "We've already discussed this. I already told you that I'm not getting this. I don't know why you're trying to tell me that I need it or that it's already on my car, or why you're lying to me." And then Jerry is like, "Okay, well, I'll go talk to my manager," *[laughs]* and then he goes to talk to the manager and is like, "Oh, are you going to that Gophers game? Do you have an extra ticket?"

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** And we just see the manager say, "What?" or "Are you serious?" might be what he says, *[Austin laughs]* and then it cuts back to Jerry going back into the office and being like, "Well, he's only gonna do this the one time. I'll take \$100 off the sealant for you." *[Austin laughs]* And then he just gets fucking cursed out, and that just like— *[laughs]*

**Janine:** Isn't he the manager, too?

**Art:** Well, that—

**Janine:** Doesn't he tell Margie later that he's the one in charge, like under his— because it's his father-in-law's business?

**Austin:** It's his father's, yeah, right?

**Janine:** And I think he introduces himself as like the sales floor manager or something like that.

**Ali:** Yeah, he's—

**Art:** Well, he doesn't actually ask about the clear coat, right? So it's all—

**Janine:** No, yeah, yeah, that's...

**Art:** Everything in the car dealership is razzle dazzle, right?

**Janine:** Yeah, it's totally a...

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's all fake.

**Janine:** Yeah, because if people know he's the manager, then maybe they would be like, "Well, YOU make the deal. You make me a good deal. You're the manager. Like, do it."

**Ali:** *[laughs quietly]* I think he tells her that when he's starting to unravel, when she's like, "Well, I was thinking about it, and how do you actually know that you're not missing any cars? Like, what is the process in terms of..."

**Janine:** Yeah, that's true. It could be that.

**Ali:** Yeah. And then he's like, "Well, I know. I just know that there's not one missing. I'm the manager here," which is such a pathetic horrible thing. *[Austin and Janine laugh]*

**Austin:** Ugh.

**Ali:** But yeah, it's just all of the little stuff like that where it's like, he's not well liked in any circumstance, so...nightmare person. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. Like, we've never had a character on our show as fundamentally unlikable as Jerry. *[Ali laughs]* It's incredible.

**Art:** There's always next season.

**Austin:** Yeah, there's always... *[laughs]*

**Janine:** Mm.

**Austin:** The thing that's like so incredible about him is he's so pathetic that there's like, for me, there was something instinctual—or not instinctual, but trained by Hollywood—that you're supposed to root for the underdog, but you can't. He's not—there's nothing about him to root for, because every time he's on screen, he doubles down at being the worst person in the movie, you know?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Whereas like, again, yeah, Buscemi is like, you know what? Yeah, they shouldn't charge him four bucks. He just drove in here! He's right! *[Ali and Austin laugh]* Why do we—

**Art:** Most places don't.

**Austin:** Yeah! God.

**Art:** I think it's the problem is that's computerized now. The computer can be like, “Well, you were here for five minutes. Get out of here.”

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** But people, people are like, “Eh, give me five bucks,” or whatever it is.

**Austin:** Yeah, I'll pocket it. Other note here, this is an important one: the buffet is so gross. *[laughter]*

**Janine:** There were so many different kinds of chicken that all just looked like the same kind of chicken, actually.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's a lot of chicken types, and then there is a—

**Janine:** Also the music.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I put in my notes, “Is buffet restaurant music a genre?” *[Austin laughs]* It just felt very...

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** I felt like I could smell that place and like feel the heat off the warming lamps.

**Austin:** Ugh.

**Janine:** I could taste the Shirley Temple.

**Austin:** Oh yeah, definitely.

**Ali:** I want a Shirley Temple.

**Austin:** Shirley Temples are good.

**Janine:** Shirley Temples are good as hell.

**Ali:** Damn.

**Austin:** It's true. It's true.

**Art:** Oh, the accent use is weird. People in the Twin Cities don't have that accent. I feel like they just like wanted to have more people with the accent, but like, Jerry shouldn't have had it.

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** Oh. Jerry shouldn't have had it?

**Art:** Yeah, because Jerry lives in the cities.

**Ali:** Ohh.

**Art:** I mean, he could be from somewhere, but...

**Austin:** Yeah, they're in the burbs, right? That's the thing, is...

**Art:** Yeah. But they're in the suburbs.

**Austin:** Right, that's still...

**Art:** That's a rural accent.

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, that's a...you have to be south or north to get that accent.

**Austin:** But that's why I like the scene where he's practicing it, right? He's not practicing the— he IS practicing the accent, but he's not exact— in the scene where he's preparing to call Wade, the father-in-law, he is trying on different variations of the accent, along with different cadences with the delivery. It's not— like, each time is not the same presentation, and it—

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Like, the whole thing is just fake. He's just a phony, you know?

**Janine:** And the father-in-law doesn't have it as strongly, right? Like, other than the, “Oh—”

**Austin:** The father-in-law feels super Canadian to me? *[Austin and Sylvia laugh quietly]*

**Janine:** Yeah. I think the strongest is like when he says, “Oh, jeez,” when he gets shot, he doesn't really sell it in the way that everyone else would sell an “Oh, jeez.” *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** It felt more like...it felt more like a sort of... *[sighs]* like a latent part of him that he'd buried, like the young man in him who was maybe a little more provincial or whatever you'd want to call it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Coming out in that moment, because he felt a little more...he does feel Canadian. You're right. I mean, that's...I often find that accent kind of Canadian anyway, but.

**Austin:** He reminds me a lot of a Canadian cowboy and ice hockey player I met at a Starbucks in London, Ontario with his wife.

**Sylvia:** Oh my God.

**Janine:** What?

**Ali:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Oh my God!

**Austin:** This is like— I don't know that I have like record of it anymore, but I definitely— because it was probably on Skype when I told Janine about this years ago. But, so, I usually went to the Starbucks in the Chapters near me.

**Ali:** Right.

**Austin:** But for whatever reason, I went to the one at the mall instead, and I ended up being seated next to this big fucking, like, incredible, you know, like stereotype of a man.

**Janine:** Horse?

**Austin:** Horse of a man, *[quiet laughter]* who looked like Wade, who looked like this guy. Just like, you know, like a hulking, just— he probably was 75, but he looked like he could have beaten the shit out of me. And his wife also was there, and she had like big glasses, and it looked like she had a hat on that she knit herself. And, you know, I'm working on my master's program shit at the time, so I've got my computer and I'm typing. And like, they're here to talk. That is what they are here to do *[laughs]* is to people watch and talk, and so he strikes up a conversation with me and like tells me, you know, their life story together, basically, which involves him being a cowboy and an amateur ice hockey player in Canada, and the time he got shot? And like, it

just— he just is an incredible character. *[Janine laughs quietly]* The highest tier of Starbucks people, honestly. And, you know, they wished me well on my future career and were very nice, and I genuinely think they were kind of surprised to see like a Black kid doing like grad school work and were kind of taken and charmed by the idea, in the way that's like a “I would have voted for Obama for a third time” way. *[laughter]* That was the vibe, but they were so nice that it was fine. Anyway, that's what Wade reminded me of, even though I think Wade is also kind of an asshole in this movie. *[Ali laughs quietly]*

**Art:** Definitely.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Art:** You definitely wouldn't like Wade in real life.

**Austin:** No. But also, you're not a Jerry, so you wouldn't get...you would get a different Wade than Jerry gets, right?

**Ali:** Yeah, you would get the Wade that his daughter and— well, probably not, because you'd be a stranger, *[Austin: “See?”]* but he's such a nicer person to them, and he's also— I guess he's kind of nice to the guy who works under him.

**Austin:** Stan, right?

**Ali:** Stan, yeah. Which is such a funny dynamic within that movie, especially because like, when Jerry initially tries to talk to him about the money that he wants from him, he's like, “Well, why didn't you tell Stan this?” And then there's the meeting with Wade, Jerry, and Stan, where they're initially talking about the ransom to start, and the conversation isn't going well for Jerry, because Wade, of course, is like, “I'm not letting you handle this. You're a fucking idiot.”

**[1:00:10]**

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** “We should just call the cops. The cops are professionals who will tell us what to do.” And then Stan, sort of like reluctantly, is like, “Well, I think I'm on Jerry's side here,” and that feels like such the first time that that's ever happened to Jerry, that he—

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah. He's the like broker.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Well, to the point that he like wields that fact to his son later. *[laughs]* Like, the first thing—

**Janine:** Mm. *[Austin sighs]*

**Ali:** He comes across his son who's like literally crying over his mom being kidnapped, and his son is like, "I think that we should call the police," and the first thing Jerry says is, "Well, Stan agrees with me that we shouldn't, we should just take care of it ourselves." And I was like, what the fuck? *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Yeah, it's such a picture of a man. Ugh. *[Sylvia laughs]*

**Austin:** God. I'm sorry, I'm now falling into a math pit, trying to put together the money in this movie. *[Ali laughs]* Because here are the numbers we know. We know that the ransom is 80k, plus the car. Theoretically, he tells them that they're going to split that ransom. Then there's the \$750,000 loan that he asks for, for the lot, right? for the parking lot.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But there's also the \$350,000 that he owes GMAC, whatever the loan thing is tied to the cars.

**Janine:** GMAC?

**Austin:** To GMAC, right.

**Art:** Yeah, GMAC, yeah.

**Austin:** Sorry, not "G-mack."

**Janine:** I don't think you say "g-mack."

**Austin:** You know, "g-mack." What? *[Austin and Janine laugh]* The GMAC, who keeps calling him to be like, "Hey, these cars aren't real. We gave you money or we're giving you money off of this idea that you have these cars as collateral," right?

**Ali:** Right. That was...

**Art:** No, no.

**Austin:** Or is—

**Art:** It's they financed them. He faked selling the cars, I think it is.

**Austin:** I see. I see.

**Janine:** And then wrote the...

**Art:** Because that's General Motors financing arm, yeah.

**Austin:** I gotcha.

**Janine:** Yeah, and then he wrote the numbers in pencil and faxed the thing over.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* Right.

**Janine:** I love that scene of him softening the tip of the pencil to get the numbers like smudgy and hard to read enough. Like, he's got a scrap piece of paper and he's he's rubbing the pencil on it like you would rub a pen that's not working, but it's a fucking pencil, and then like practicing writing out these numbers to get them to look smeary, when Marge comes in to interview him.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** That was an interesting touch.

**Austin:** So, what happened to the— so those cars don't exist.

**Janine:** Yeah, he just faked the numbers.

**Art:** Or the cars exist, they just weren't sold, I think is the...

**Austin:** Right. What's he...what's the GMAC relationship, then? Can someone unpack that for me?

**Art:** Well, he works...it's Oldsmobile or something, right? It's, uh...

**Austin:** Yeah, he's an Oldsmobile dealer. Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or something like that.

**Art:** Yeah, so that's General Motors.

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** And General Motors finances purchases of their own cars, right? So if you put in this financing paperwork, they theoretically like transfer money over to you to pay for the car.



**Ali:** Oh.

**Art:** But you didn't sell a car. You put that money in your pocket.

**Ali:** Or gave—

**Art:** Again, this is what I think it is, from a movie that doesn't really tell you.

**Austin:** Wait, why do they finance— why would they be faxing him— or, “faxing him money.” Why would they be sending him money? This is the thing I don't understand. This is the bit that I— this is why I thought it was a loan, right?

**Art:** It is a loan, but the GM— the dealerships aren't owned by GM.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** They're affiliated with GM. So they sell a car, they still need to take in the money.

**Austin:** At that point? Wait, they have to take in the money— but wait, they have to take in the money from who?

**Art:** From whoever buys the car, and in this case, theoretically, the General Motors financing arm is buying the car, the same way whoever lends you money to buy a car is technically buying the car.

**Austin:** I see. I see. So, he has fake sold the money, or fake sold the cars, and is saying, “Hey, I sold these five cars. Here are...I need you to sell a loan, basically, to the individuals who would have bought this car from my lot,” basically?

**Art:** I believe that that's what's happening.

**Austin:** Or something like that?

**Art:** Again, this scam is not explained in the movie, of course.

**Austin:** It's not. But that's \$350,000 or \$325,000, whatever it is, and then there's the million. *[laughs]* That's a lot of money that we...which is more than the 750 for the lot, all said, right?

**Art:** Well, I guess I always assumed that he was going to take this money and use it to like make this right, with like, “Oh, you're right, these numbers aren't right. Here's the money back.”

**Austin:** Right. Right. Right. What else does that? There's something else I've watched recently where that exact plot happens, where it's just like there's a buildup of the debts just keep

stacking. Hmm. It doesn't matter. Anyway, let me stop— let me close this Quora page about the money in this movie. *[Ali and Janine laugh]* Janine, you said that you had a list of like themes and visual notes?

**Janine:** Oh, we've covered— I've like wormed them into the discussion pretty thoroughly so far.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah. My two favorite shots in this movie definitely are the wide shot when they're all sitting at the dinner table and you see the like behind the couch table with five—very similar but in separate ceramic containers—houseplants.

**Janine:** Oh, yeah.

**Ali:** That was a great house moment. And then, at the very end, when you see the...the final death that we're kind of not going into.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. *[Ali and Sylvia laugh]*

**Ali:** But it is Marge the police officer sort of walking through the forest, the trees, walking through the trees, getting closer to the scene.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** And you just see: there's somebody standing there at a machine, *[Austin laughs quietly]* there are trees blocking the view, and you just see red snow on the other side of it. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Oh, God.

**Sylvia:** It's so good!

**Ali:** And that was like, oh.

**Art:** I didn't know you were gonna say "red."

**Ali:** No.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. *[Ali laughs]*

**Art:** It's so much color. It's such good use of color.

**Austin:** It's so good.

**Ali:** Yeah, it's...yep.

**Austin:** Ugh. Ugh!

**Art:** I assume it sucked to make. I assume that someone was just out there like pouring red liquid on the ground for like an hour.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Art:** While someone was like, “No, no, no. Make it—” *[Ali and Austin laugh]*

**Austin:** “That’s not right.” Yeah.

**Art:** Well, because I read the— they planned to like shoot it closer to where it’s supposed to be, and they had like an unexpectedly not snowy winter.

**Austin:** Oh.

**Janine:** Hmm.

**Art:** And so they had to go further north to shoot it.

**Austin:** Huh.

**Art:** Which means it was colder.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That’s interesting.

**Art:** And so everyone’s just out there like...I don’t know, or maybe it was easier to just like kill someone and spill their blood all over the ground. *[Ali laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** Yeah, it was probably that.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that’s probably what they did.

**Austin:** Here’s one.

**Art:** Hollywood, you know?

**Austin:** *[laughs]* This movie is like 90 minutes long and is better than so many crime movies that like really want to extend that length to like fit in more complicated twists and turns or a last minute reveal, and this doesn't do that at all. It's like such a straightforward film, in terms of character— maybe not motivations, but just like, hey, here are— the things are moving, and what's interesting is how they collide into each other, more than some deep mystery, right?

**Art:** Sure.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Art:** Any movie more than 110 minutes should have to like tell you why. *[Austin laughs]* Should have to like justify that decision in writing.

**Ali:** We can't say that. We're not allowed to say that. *[laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah, like...

**Janine:** I was really surprised at how...this is gonna sound weird, especially since we keep dancing around the end scene, but anyone who knows anything about *Fargo* knows what that end is.

**Ali:** Well, we can just say it. I can put a content warning in the text.

**Art:** Or just right here.

**Janine:** I mean, but also, anyone who knows anything about it knows what it is.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Janine:** But, so, despite that, I found this movie like strangely comfortable?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Like, I felt like I could kind of trust it like a little bit, even though, you know, half of the storyline is super, super harrowing, but the half with the people that you actually care about feels really like...there is like a sense of security there that has moments where you're like, "Is this going to turn? Is this going to go bad? You know, I've seen enough movies and TV shows with crime to not entirely trust this." But it all just kind of...it isn't as like...you know, there are a couple of scenes in *Zodiac* that I still sometimes think about and just kind of think like, "I liked that movie, but also, I wish I hadn't seen that."

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah. Speaking of John Carroll Lynch.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah. And this doesn't really have...it doesn't really have that. It's just like, yeah, there are some really, really gruesome moments, but also, it's not like...maybe this says a lot about how movies have aged and, you know, how it was received at the time versus how it is compared to stuff that's come out since, but it's not harrowing in that way. It's kind of just like a stark crime story that is, you know, rough at points, but also not— I mean, another thing I noticed is that a lot of the violence against Jean is either literally or figuratively shrouded.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like, you know, when she falls down the stairs, she's covered in a shower curtain. She dies off screen. You know, a lot of her distress is, again, it's hard. It sucks. It's bad. But also, you know, she's like shrouded in those moments in a way that kind of obscures the worst of it from you.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah. And with the exception of Jean, there's very little peril for characters they want you to really care about.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Art:** Right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Building on that really quick, one of my favorite things about this movie and a thing that I end up...a thing that I realize I like more here than...or one of the things I think this does better than the first season of *Fargo* the TV show is the way violence is handled.

**Ali:** Yes. Yeah, yeah.

**Janine:** Mm.

**Austin:** *Fargo* the TV show, which I— there are things I like about that show a lot, to the degree that I'm like, “Ooh, do I want to go back and revisit that show?” But like, there are some moments in that first season that really luxuriate in big gun fights—not even gun fights, but shootings—or there's the like...is it the scene where the cops go to break into the place, and then everything just goes really bad for them?

**Sylvia:** Uh...I think it—

**Austin:** Sylvi?

**Sylvia:** Are you thinking of the part with the like fitness trainer?

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

**Ali:** Oh! Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because that is like the most that show like revels in it, I think, is that whole setup there.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But I just remember there being a lot of those moments where there are...you know, the kind of antagonist in that first season, they really want to sell how capable he is at doing a great deal of violence, and it never really felt interesting to me, whereas all of the violence in this feels like it's doing character work and not just doing...

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Not just being its own object, if that makes sense.

**Art:** Prestige cable is very up its own ass when it comes to shit like violence, though.

**Ali:** Yeah, I...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** I should be a little closer to my mic.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* I was thinking, definitely, because what Janine was saying was making me think a lot about the *Fargo* TV show and that like, it's a very similar story, but in the extra time that it takes definitely uses it to focus on worse parts.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Whereas, like, in the movie, Marge always gets to feel...she always feels really capable, and she also always feels like really valued and respected by her community, which is not the case for the leading lady in the TV show, in a way that is sometimes successful and sometimes isn't.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** The show also— I think it's more so in season two, but it does definitely— *[laughs quietly]* there are two very specific scenes where it's like, oh, the thing that's happening in this scene is that a woman is getting hurt, but the only thing that we care about is how like a man is reacting to it, and—

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** The elevator scene is is coming to mind.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** For *Fargo* the TV show. Like, I think a lot about *Fargo* the TV show...

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Janine:** That elevator moment, contrasted with, in the movie, the moment that has the same body count, *[Austin: "Right"]* which is the one with the trooper and the two people in the car. Same body count but completely different runtime, completely different tone, completely different purpose.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** But I think— I feel like that speaks a lot to like the purpose of the violence in each thing.

**Austin:** Totally.

**Ali:** For sure.

**Austin:** I'd forgotten about that elevator scene. Jesus.

**Art:** I forgot about so much I don't know what you're talking about. I haven't seen this show in a long time. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. How was that new season? The Chris Rock season. How's that going? Anyone watching that?

**Ali:** Oh, I want to.

**Art:** I heard a bad review, but...

**Austin:** Hmm.

**Art:** But it was one person. One person didn't like it.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** Sounds like we should skip it, then. *[Art laughs]* Any other notes? Any other thoughts? I had one, and I've lost it, and that's— oh, I want to know what people think about the music in this movie, because I...it opens with this like, kind of booming, broad, epic score, and I'd forgotten that it got that loud. I'd always remembered *Fargo* as being a very quiet film, musically, and I'm just wrong. *[laughs]* Like, it's just not true.

**Janine:** To me...I remember that opening scene and then a few other parts of it. It kind of reminded me of— there's like a quality to the music that made me think of *[sighs]* kind of like Russian, Siberian kind of motifs.

**Austin:** Totally.

**[1:15:00]**

**Janine:** Like, sort of lightly mixed in there. Like, there was not a Christmassy quality, but it...I don't know. It's kind of like the names, I think, where it seems like it is sort of pointing to the background of the area in a really specific way, and it's not just a run-of-the-mill kind of movie soundtrack.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** There's like something to it that I don't know enough about music to really like pin down.

**Austin:** Totally. I definitely think it's working in that same space, at the very least.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm. It feels like... *[sighs]* It feels other? Like, it feels...you know, even though I consider...even though most of this movie to me was like weirdly nostalgic *[Austin laughs]* for like living in Canada in the mid '90s, early '90s, whatever.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Like, so many of my notes are just like: oh my God, I remember living in a house with this much wood and crepe and crystal, *[laughter]* and like, I remember having all of these wildlife printed sweatshirts. Why did we all wear these? *[Austin laughs]* The granny square knitted blanket on the couch. Like, all of that stuff is so, so nostalgic, but like, that music makes it feel very much like it is...magical is not the right word either, but there's like a layer of strangeness or like a layer of something there.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Totally.



**Janine:** Not fantasy. I don't know. *[laughs quietly]* It's like...I don't know.

**Austin:** Well, yeah, I think that there's something interesting there. Like, for me, it was like, this sounds like something out of Doctor Zhivago, like that style of, *[Janine: "Mm-hmm"]* you know, period epic or something.

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And those very much are often, in Hollywood, positioned as like other places, other times. And which is interesting about this is, of course, the thing we have not mentioned is the claim at the top of this movie that this is a true story.

**Ali:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** Not "based on a true story."

**Janine:** It's really not, though. It's really not.

**Ali:** No.

**Austin:** "This is a true story," is what it says.

**Janine:** It's not.

**Austin:** Which is interesting.

**Janine:** There are multiple crimes that people will be like, "Oh, this is the crime that *Fargo* was based on." *[Ali laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** There's like a guy who put his wife through a...

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Are we gonna put a content warning?

**Ali:** Yeah, just say it.

**Janine:** Yeah. There's like a guy who put his wife in a wood chipper, but there's also a guy who like arranged for his wife to be fake kidnapped so he could ransom her, *[Austin: "Mm-hmm"]* get the ransom from her wealthy dad to pay off his debts. Like, there's a lot of crimes that are very, very similar to parts of this, but also they have— you know, I think the Coen brothers have said since then that like...they've given different sources of inspiration. They've claimed that things

that sounded similar and were from nearby areas they'd actually never heard of. *[Ali laughs quietly]* They've claimed that it was all just a story.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I don't know.

**Ali:** Yeah, I looked into this, I think between seeing the TV show and the movie, because I was just like curious about that claim. And I think what they ended up admitting is that, like, when you put that on top, in front of a movie, you can make people's, like...you can get them to buy in more, and you can get them to believe more absurdity, so.

**Janine:** They also— they specifically say, “This is a true story. *[Ali laughs quietly]* The events depicted in this film took place in Minnesota in 1987.”

**Austin:** Love it.

**Janine:** “At the request of the survivors, the names have been changed.”

**Austin:** Love it.

**Janine:** “Out of respect for the dead, the rest has been told exactly as it occurred.” *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** It's perfect. I love it. *[Janine laughs]*

**Art:** The end credits have, “This is a work of fiction. All similarities...coincidental.”

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Janine:** Yes. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Of course. Including the part where we said it was true. *[Austin and Ali laugh]* That's the part that's fiction. You know. *[Janine laughs]*

**Art:** Any resemblance to a real credit is coincidental. *[laughter]*

**Austin:** I love it. We need to do a season that starts with, “This is a true story.”

**Ali:** Yeah. And immediately, it's talking birds. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Right, exactly. Exactly, 100%. God. The quote here is, “If an audience believes that something's based on a real event, it gives you permission to do things they might not otherwise

accept.” Which is interesting, right?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Which is a little bit of a hand washing, you know? You're kind of saying, “Hey, if I didn't— if they knew that I invented the woodchipper, they would be mad at me, but...” *[laughter]*

**Janine:** I mean, that's true, right? That's 100%...there is that degree of like— you get this if you listen to a lot of true crime podcasts, like I do.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** There is a degree to which, when the story that is too strange to be believed happens, it's the story you believe the most, because like, who would come up with that?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** So if you introduce that as fiction, it's like, well, that's...you know, you really do discount it as like, “Well, that's impossible,” but when you attach that note of truth to it, it's just like, you do really believe it. It does feel like the realest thing you've ever heard, somehow.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Anyone else have any final thoughts?

**Ali:** Not especially, yeah. I am...not a huge *Fargo* fan. *[laughs]* But otherwise...

**Janine:** No?

**Ali:** I'm glad that we sat down to do this, yeah, but I was like, eh.

**Janine:** Didn't do it for you?

**Ali:** I don't like neck stuff. I just don't like it. *[laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** I thought it was his face and not his neck.

**Janine:** I thought it was his like jaw.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think it's his like...

**Janine:** I kind of read it as like the underside of his jaw, where it like nicked the vein there, but not...

**Ali:** The vicinity is not...

**Austin:** We don't need to... *[Ali laughs]* Yeah, uh huh.

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, it's really close enough, I think. *[Austin laughs]* I mean, I'm just curious what Coen Brothers movie we're gonna do next year.

**Austin:** Uh huh. I'm gonna put— I think *A Serious Man* would be really good, because no one's seen it.

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

**Art:** Well, but on that note, we should do *Intolerable Cruelty*, the Coen Brothers movie that only I like.

**Austin:** Ugh. God.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* I said this to the last group, and it was, you know, if we do more of these, I would love to do like somebody else assigns the stuff, and we should definitely do that. Everybody choose the one Coen Brothers movie that they like. *[Ali, Janine, and Art laugh]*

**Austin:** Yeah. *Miller's Crossing* is really good.

**Janine:** I've got a question just for you, Austin.

**Austin:** Uh oh.

**Janine:** How are you going to break it to Vinnie Caravela that he stole his clip-on tie insult?

**Austin:** Oh, jeez.

**Janine:** Someone calls someone “King Clip-on Tie” in this movie.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. *[laughter]* That's one of those things that could totally worm its way into your brain.

**Janine:** Oh yeah. No, 100%.

**Austin:** And then, 20 years later— you know what I mean? God. I mean, this is the— my favorite version of this from...my favorite similar insult is from *Miller's Crossing*—my favorite from another Coen Brothers movie, I mean, is from *Miller's Crossing*—which is kind of like noir film, hard-boiled—well, not hard-boiled detective, but it's sort of in that space—in which a John Polito

character always says that he hates it when people give him the high hat. "You're giving me the high hat!" And that doesn't mean anything. It's like he means to say, "Don't ride in here on your high horse," but he says people give him the high hat, and it's so good. *Miller's Crossing* is great. People should watch *Miller's Crossing*, also. Gabriel Byrne is fantastic in it. John Turturro is in it. It's good.

**Art:** Looking at a list of Coen Brothers movies. These are mostly all right.

**Austin:** Oh. Yeah.

**Art:** You can't really go to far wrong here, yeah.

**Austin:** Totally.

**Sylvia:** The Coen Brothers: mostly all right. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Mostly all right.

**Sylvia:** Don't know if you've heard of them.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** B+ or better almost all the time.

**Austin:** There's a lot of these I haven't seen. I haven't seen *Ladykillers*, which I didn't want to see. I didn't see *Hail, Caesar!*, which I've heard mixed things about.

**Sylvia:** It's okay.

**Art:** Yeah, it's fine.

**Austin:** I didn't see *Ballad of Buster Scruggs*.

**Sylvia:** I didn't like *Buster Scruggs*.

**Austin:** I didn't see *Intolerable Cruelty*, which I heard was terrible. I heard anyone who likes *Intolerable Cruelty* isn't good. *[Austin and Art laugh]*

**Ali:** Watch out.

**Art:** I mean, seriously, me, my mother, and my wife are the only three people I know who like it. And Jess might be lying. *[laughter]*

**Janine:** Sometimes you gotta fit in.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Art:** Because I definitely introduced it as, "This is a movie that only me and my mom like." *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yeah, well, that's... *[Ali and Janine laugh]* What you actually introduced was, "Here's a movie you need to like or else."

**Ali:** Yeah. *[Janine and Austin laugh]*

**Art:** I don't know. We'd already been married for several years. *[laughter]*

**Austin:** God.

**Ali:** Is that going to do it for us tonight?

**Austin:** I think so.

**Ali:** Perfect. Well, this has been—

**Art:** It's quarter to two in the afternoon. *[Ali and Art laugh]*

**Ali:** Well.

**Austin:** Ah, an early evening. A West Coast evening. That's what they call it. *[Art laughs]*

**Ali:** Yeah, it's not even 5:00 over here, so yeah, this isn't even...I wouldn't call this the night. Would you call this the night?

**Austin:** No. No! No. It's just dark outside, because the way time works.

**Ali:** Yeah, the sun is setting. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. It's always the night now.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Yes, indeed. Well, this has—

**Janine:** Hashtag season seven. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Listen, it doesn't matter anymore. It's out there.

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

**Art:** It's not "out there."

**Austin:** *[grumbles]* Yeah. *[others laugh]* Not pleased.

**Ali:** Yeah. Anyone just want to talk some more shit before we...? *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Nah, we're good. Let's go. *[Art laughs]*

**Ali:** Well, this has been—

**Austin:** Let's try to get out of here before it's night.

**Ali:** Yeah. This has been the Pusher Media Club or whatever else you want to call it, because apparently we're not allowed to call it that. *[laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** *[laughs quietly]* No, it's good. I like it. We're sticking with it.

**Ali:** Yeah, sure. Thanks for supporting us, everybody. Thanks for listening. If you're interested in watching *Fargo* yourself after listening to this, I believe that it is streaming on Netflix. I think it might also be on Amazon Prime? So, it's available out there. And then the *Fargo* TV show is definitely on Amazon Prime, and I think, Hulu?

**Art:** I believe it's on Hulu.

**Janine:** I think it's on Netflix.

**Sylvia:** It's on Netflix up in Canada.

**Janine:** In Canada, yeah.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Janine:** Canada is weird for that, because we don't have Hulu, so.

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

**Art:** American Hulu, Canadian Netflix. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Got it.

**Ali:** Yeah. So, go find it. You know, again, thanks for supporting us, and we're gonna go. I have been Alicia Acampora, and I've been joined by Austin Walker.

**Austin:** Hi. Still me. *[Ali laughs]*

**Janine:** Bye, this time.

**Art:** Well, it's "bye" now.

**Janine:** It should be "bye," yeah.

**Art:** It's over.

**Austin:** I didn't say "hello." *[Ali laughs]*

**Janine:** Hi. We're doing a second two hour podcast about a different movie!

**Austin:** You know. Well.

**Sylvia:** Oh my God.

**Austin:** I hope everyone has a nice day. I don't know. Hi. What do you want from me?

**Ali:** Yeah, the outro, uh...

**Austin:** You can't just say "bye." *[laughter]* If you were like, "I was joined by Austin Walker," and I was like, "Bye!" Like, that would not read either! *[laughter]*

**Art:** Just like, "Uh huh."

**Austin:** *[laughs]* Yeah, what do you want from me?

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Okay, beep!

**Austin:** I didn't go like— because if this was professional, what I would say is like, *[professionally]* "Thanks so much for having me. I'd love to come back again one day."

**Ali:** Sure. Right, right, right.

**Austin:** But I'm not— that's not— you know.

**Ali:** No. This isn't it.

**Austin:** I'm in a t-shirt. What do you want from me?

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Okay, now that we've identified how the outro introductions are not working, I'm just



gonna say: goodnight, everybody! Thank you!

**Sylvia:** Bye!

**Austin:** Bye! *[Janine laughs]*

**Art:** I'm wearing a full suit, I want to put on the record. *[loud laughter]*

**Austin:** Oh, just a very clear image of Art. Three piece. Oh.

**Art:** Yeah, I've got a vest, and a...

**Austin:** With a vest, like a little gold watch chain.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Art:** Yeah, a little chain?

**Austin:** Ohh. He has a hat on the desk. He's not wearing it, but it's there. *[Ali laughs]*

**Art:** Yeah, the top hat just here.

**Janine:** Well, it's rude to wear them indoors.

**Art:** I'm podcasting— I'm on the radio. The computer radio is what I'm on. *[Austin laughs]*