

[Bluff City 05: There Is No Greater Love Pt. 1](#)

Transcribed by Rain (@ariskofrain) (0:00-45:00) and Alexis (@alexiorsays) (45:00-End)

[“There Is No Greater Love” begins playing]

AUSTIN [as Blake Blossom]: Hey, doc? Yeah. It’s Blake. Blake Blossom. I’ve been having those dreams again. The ones in Bluff City. Yeah. They’ve changed a bit. The bus, it’s a different color this time and, uh, I’ve been wearing a peacoat instead of a windbreaker. But it’s still night time. It’s always night time. And it’s always here, here in Bluff City. Hm? Yeah, that’s right, I’m in Bluff City right now. I’m, uh, shooting a picture, an action thing. Cops, camaraderie, justice— you know, Hollywood stuff?

No, it’s not important that I’m here. I have the dream whether I’m here or not. The dream is what’s important— even if some bits change, the plot, the main events, they’re the same. Every time. Like a drum line in an old jazz standard. The radio man gets killed. Half the town is having a party, the other half is in flames, and I’m walkin’ down the boardwalk, and all around me, people are talking in weird voices. A helicopter goes overhead, and the radio man, his voice comes on and you know what he says? Over and over again, he says, “There’s no greater love.” That’s it! There isn’t an end to that. He just says, “There is no greater love.” What am I supposed to do with that?

No, I don’t want to go walk around the boardwalk, I haven’t been— I haven’t been to the boardwalk since I was a kid. We came for Christmas once, my parents and me. I remember because it was snowing. There was this terrible storm, and it didn’t bother them, because they were here to gamble anyway. But in my mind, even though it was December, I told myself, I was gonna have a beach vacation. So I did.

I went out in a blizzard, I took my shoes off, and walked down the boardwalk, through the white snow, and I closed my eyes and I listened to the gulls, and I pretended it was sand under my feet. And the sky was grey that day. But you know what? When I got back to the hotel, my mom told me I got sunburned.

No, Doc, that’s not the dream, that really happened. The Bluff City in my dreams is different. Fires in the suburbs. Investigators in over their heads— it’s more convoluted than any of my films, but somehow more realistic than the real city I’m standin’ in. The ocean waves sound heavier there. The cars turn the way they used to. And in my dreams, the casinos even let you win sometimes.

[Music finishes]

[00:03:03]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, and joining me today, let's scroll to the bottom of the screen here— Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey! Hi! I'm Art, you can find me on Twitter, @atebbel.

AUSTIN: Keith J. Carberry.

KEITH: Hi! My name's Keith Carberry, you can find me on Twitter, @keithjcarberry, you can find the Let's Plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton, please.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Ali Acampora.

ALI: Hey! My name is Ali Acampora, you can find me @ali_west on Twitter, and you can find the show over at @friends_table.

AUSTIN: Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi, I'm Jack de Quidt, you can find me on Twitter @notquitereal and buy any of the music featured on the show— except Bluff City, but soon?— at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: By now they might be able to get Bluff City.

JACK: That'd be good.

ALI: Yeah, expect it to be up.

AUSTIN: 'Cause this'll be November.

KEITH: Thanksgiving.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

JACK: Check notquitereal.bandcamp.com, maybe it'll be there.

AUSTIN: Maybe it'll be there, we'll see. Um—

KEITH: People will listen to this while they're mad at their family! [laughs]

ALI: [laughing] Well...

AUSTIN: You can find me @austin_walker, and you can support the show at friendsatthetable.cash. Today, we are going to be playing a new arc of Bluff City, we're going to be playing a game called Noirlandia, which is a game by Evan Rowland. It is not, like, maybe a hack is right, of Questlandia, which is a game made by the same company, MakeBigThings Games, and uh, seems really cool. I'm pretty excited, um, about playing Noirlandia.

I've done a little bit of pre-prep, um, because unlike most normal Noirlandia games, we have, we already have a basic setting, but I'm going to let us walk through a lot of the rest of the setup, because it helps kind of communicate who is in charge of what, in terms of, um, who can answer questions about different parts of the setting. This is a GM-less game, I am not going to be playing a GM, I'm kind of going to be playing a facilitator and, being a sort of extra support person, in scenes where you need a character played, or where you need ideas, with a few rare exceptions - like the fact that I've already kind of set up what these neighbourhoods are, set in this fictional city.

[reading from the book] "You'll play each game of Noirlandia in a different city," if you were playing, forward." Some will be quite familiar, some will be unrecognisable. As a group, answer questions about the city, your setting, as your— sorry. As your group answers questions about the city, your setting will take shape.

"Step one: corruption. Maybe your city started with the best intentions. Maybe it was rotten from the beginning. In any case, it's clear that corruption has taken hold. Roll a die. On everyone's character sheet," I'm just going to do this at the top of the page, uh, "record that your city is corrupted by"... someone roll me a one d6?

ALI: Absolutely...! [pauses] That's a two.

AUSTIN: That's a two. "Extravagance!"

ALI: Ooh!

AUSTIN: For the sake of, uh, this city—

ART: Nailed it!

AUSTIN: —for the sake of this game, the thing that is corrupting Bluff City is extravagance. Um, if we're being honest, I think all of these possible things, which were technology, extravagance, deception, isolation, pride and apathy— they're all possible in Bluff City. But, um, I think extravagance is a pretty good one here. So I'm going to write down at the very top—

ART: Yeah, I think isolation just ends up being a real Chinatown game about—

AUSTIN: Oh, it's brutal, right?

KEITH: —about the trains.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, so, corruption: extravagance. "Think about the implications of this corruption as you answer the questions to come. So, there are now four big questions. Noirlandia cities are sometimes contemporary, sometimes from the distant past or future. The people are sometimes alien, sometimes just like us. Answer these four questions to flesh out your city. These questions are: How are the city's people unlike us? What do the buildings look like? How did the corruption take hold? What laws do the people live by?

"Let a different person start each answer. Whoever answers a question takes ownership over that aspect of the city, writing it on an index card. After each question, everyone can take a moment to discuss details and ramifications. Don't let these conversations go for more than a few minutes, you'll have the chance to expand upon the answers as you play. In a three-player game, one person will end up answering two questions and owning two cards."

In this case, that's not true, everyone here will own one. I'm gonna make a little more space on your sheets to let you record what these kind of things are. Broadly, or briefly, I do wanna add that I think I like the notion of this game taking place in a sort of near-future Bluff City. Not far-future, not flying cars, but like, slightly more advanced technology, that like, we don't need to necessarily explain why things are a little bit more advanced. Um, or the alternative here is also leaning into our Dark City shit, and like, having it be still 1970s and 80s beaters driving around the town, but like, also people have some modern technology, or even near-future technology on top of that.

I kinda wanna lean into the, the sort of, unknowability of Bluff City in this episode, so be willing to even be a little bit more mysterious, and mixed up in terms of what our touchstones are here, and like, that shouldn't even necessarily be played for laughs, so much as just like, yep, this is just the way this world works for whatever reason! So keep that in mind. So! How are the city's people unlike us? Anyone have a good answer for that? And, whoever answers, they will be kind of given that thing as part of what their, like, authorship is.

JACK: And these should be informed, in part, by the knowledge that we have that the city, the corruption taking root in the city, is based around extravagance.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

KEITH: I mean, I guess I have a pretty good idea of what the buildings would look like?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm?

KEITH: I'm picturing, like, I— especially during the lead-up of like, hey, what's Bluff City about, I had in my head a lot of, sort of, coastal or cape-y looking towns, where it was like, very boardwalk-y, stores look like houses that are stores, and then there's the inner-city part where it's just like, uh, lots of brick running onto brick, shops and offices, and then it gets more house-y, like it's all stores, but it gets more house-y as it goes out.

AUSTIN: So like a mix, so like, converted residential spaces?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, like, in my head I have, on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, there's like a rule that you can't have like, a regular storefront in some towns—

AUSTIN: Oh, interesting.

KEITH: —so there's a lot of stores that are literally just houses.

AUSTIN: Cool.

KEITH: And so I think, like, that sort of style, but instead of standalone houses, it's just strips of these sort-of house-shaped, like, boardwalk style stores and shops, and...

AUSTIN: And this is a really good thing too, because the, you know, one of the things that I've done already is set up what the four kind of districts of this town are

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And again, as always, Bluff City has a like a base in Atlantic City, and the way Atlantic City works is that it's like, Atlantic City, and then to its north is like a richer town off on this, like, other little island, called Brigantine, and to its south are other cities on the same island, that are also higher income, less directly connected to the casinos, and Margate, and Ventnor, and it keeps going. And I kind of like the notion of, like, yeah, Atlantic City grew, but the local people—or Bluff City grows, but in those luxury, upper class areas, they put that notion into effect, which is like, no, we need to at least remain looking like a cute residential shore town.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: And so, those places have turned into, like, commercial tourist-y places, but they still put on that front of like, this is just someone's house, it's just now you can go in there and buy crystals, and now you can go in there and buy jewellery, and whatever, y'know? And so it's like a slightly denser version of Bluff City than we've seen in that sense, which is interesting.

JACK: So, I think I have an idea—

AUSTIN: Um.

JACK: —go on.

AUSTIN: I was just gonna say, I've given Keith ownership here of buildings.

KEITH: Thank you.

JACK: Keith! You made it!

AUSTIN: You got buildings! You own a building!

KEITH: I have buildings now!

[Ali laughs]

JACK: Um, I think I have some ideas for how the corruption took hold - taking hold is a really interesting, sort of description for how that happens, and I wonder if among the Bluff City aristocracy, there became a trend or a fashion for, essentially galas?

AUSTIN: Mmm!

JACK: And these started out as charity galas, but as is the way of a lot of charity galas, it wasn't just that their original purpose became increasingly unclear, what the charity was, and how it operated, and who it operated for was also very unclear?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay.

JACK: Like when you think about a charity gala, it's very much a case of, like, hang on, wait, hang on, what's happening? What is happening? [Ali laughs] And I think that there was a winter of these. Some years ago, there was a winter in which some senior figures in the, uh, senior socialites in the city, uh, in the, what's the name of the upper crust called? The Shore?

AUSTIN: The Shore, yeah.

JACK: Some socialites in The Shore began to, and I think it was probably just a group of friends, I'm almost picturing like, uh, god. What was that group that Virginia Woolf was a part of? They all sat around the table— the Algonquin! I'm picturing an Algonquin round table who begin throwing these galas for each other, and it just takes off. Um—

AUSTIN: And it's like, pet causes at first, like, it is tied to specific causes, but then bit by bit it becomes that the events are the thing, more than—

JACK: —and it begins to spread down into the... by the time the holiday has come, uh, and this gala season is just in full swing and it's being reported in all the papers, it begins to trickle down to the upper middle class, who are also throwing galas, um, even if they might not be invited to the sort-of Algonquin round table ones, and it kind of grips the city.

AUSTIN: I like that, especially because it is holiday time. This game, obviously, it's releasing in November, probably late November.

JACK: So I think that this, like, the first great gala season happened maybe, two years ago? But because we're in the second anniversary of it, or the third anniversary of it, it is gearing up again.

AUSTIN: Right, okay, so I'm gonna set it for like, early December, that's where I'll put this.

JACK: That works!

AUSTIN: December 7th.

ART: Can I like, take that and use it to try to answer what laws do the people live by?

AUSTIN: Absolutely.

ART: This might be too, like, I wanna take something very specific and generalise it out, and it might be a little, uh. Odd? But, "never be the first to arrive, or the last to leave."

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Okay, so here it's the laws, are like, this is a social law about, um... is that extendable into broader senses, of like, life?

ART: Yeah, it's— yeah, that is the ethos, that is a dominant ethos, y'know. And it gets more and more abstract and vague as it goes into other— you know, most of the time you're not going to a party.

AUSTIN: Right. But you're going to *work*. You're going to, going over for dinner. You're going to the dinner *table*.

ART: Yeah.

KEITH: Are people fuckin' late for work all the time now?

[Ali laughs]

ART: Or is it kinda like, is it like a game of chicken?

[00:15:00]

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Like, it works in business, you know, it works in social things.

AUSTIN: Which, it also contributes to this, cut to the corruption leading to the downfall of the city, right? Which is, the government is like, your council person shows up late to the meeting, and then you only get x amount of time with them, and then they show up late to meet with whatever contractor they needed to build the new gutter system throughout Bluff City.

ART: And then it's also like the governor doesn't want to be the first person to - no-one wants to be the first person to help something, or, you know...

AUSTIN: So it's kind of like this air of indifference, or like, um, you just have to be cool all the time, and being cool means not caring that much.

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: And having other things going on, or at least the appearance thereof.

ART: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Ali, that leaves you with a question.

ALI: Yeah, I— This is tough for me 'cause, like, I was thinking of my character specifically being kind of like down-and-out, but I don't want to make that, like, that's such an easy thing to do, to be like, "oh, our city's corrupted by extravagance, and like, we're not," so lolll. o oop...

AUSTIN: Oh, but this is, sorry— Us in this case, means the people on this call, not the characters.

ALI: Right, oh, okay.

AUSTIN: This is like, unlike us, the us in 2017.

ALI: Ohh, okay, um... okay.

AUSTIN: The example in their, like, fictional city is like, oh, everybody wears masks, like, that's how far it goes, y'know?

ALI: [laughs] I read through that and I was just like, mmm, I dunno if that's gonna work here, so...

AUSTIN: It might! I dunno what happens in, in 20— right now I've written this as the year 20XX, so, I dunno!

ALI: Fair, fair, I just don't, like, I don't think that's the most interesting thing, despite not—

AUSTIN: Me either, but, like—

ALI: —not having a more interesting thing....

JACK: Uh, it could be like, um, and this is like a big one, but we could use it as a starting point to then work down from here— what if the primary spoken language isn't English?

ALI: Yeah?

AUSTIN: My... I'm, I'm interested in that, but my fear is that, that opens us up to readings that we might not intend— we might pick a language thing here, that's like a thing, and then the rest of the story is going to be read through that lens as being a political allegory, even if we did not set out to do that.

JACK: Yeah... which is, again...

AUSTIN: Also, also, to be clear...

ART: I think America might be too fucked up for that.

AUSTIN: Right. And also, English isn't our primary spoken language, right? Like, um, it's the people on this call, but I think they want to go broader than that with "us", they wanna go, "how are the people unlike us" means something more significant than, um, not more significant, but more reflective of a larger change in people, um. I think if this was a Cold War drama, I think that would mean, like, the notion that... I was gonna say that, that nuclear war could happen at any moment. Things have—

ALI: Hmm!

AUSTIN: Hmm! Hm. [pause] In that way, they're a lot like us.

ALI: Um, I don't hate like, communication being the thing like, communication might be less vocal that we're used to? You know, where like—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: —there's more, like, indication happens through more through like, either writing channels, like chatrooms or letters, even. Whereas like, if you're in a place talking to a person, that's like, a bigger deal. Um—

AUSTIN: Is there, like a—

ALI: Like a more professional sort-of situation, whereas the intimacy between people is sort of, um, stretched out in that way.

AUSTIN: So, like, you still have intimacy but it's only through mediation, it's only through letters and texting and, like, like, um, signals, but not through things you say in public.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that a lot. Like, because that again, makes this whole kind of like, the whole world's a party, and you're always in your presentation face. It isn't masks, but it is masks. It is like, you're always just in your most professional mode, or your most, not even professional, professional's the wrong word. Like, your most guarded, and like, um, there's almost something like, throwback to Jane Austen style, like, you're in your public persona, and when you have those moments of deep connection through letter writing or through whatever, that's when you're all the way in on like, deep emotional connectivity.

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly, but like, everything that you say out loud is a performance, and people understand that, because it's like, a thing.

AUSTIN: Because they're also doing it.

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN: Cool. [typing] Language and socialisation, or... communication. Uh, cool! I wrote buildings there, but that's alright. Difference, language and communication. Cool. So! Let me scroll up, find the space again, alright. So those were the big questions, now would be the districts, so, um. For people who are listening, and that's everybody, basically— in front of us, is a big corkboard that I've put up, with four different, like, fake polaroids. Each with a suit from a deck of cards. Each one represents a district in Bluff City, or the surrounding area. In this case, there are, it's always the upper crust, the downtown, the outskirts and skid row. In our case, it's, it is, and this is something that I've decided based on, just like, the history of Bluff City, and I'm using my like, one or two moments of wanting to use GM power here to kind of tell this broader

story about Bluff City. It is, upper crust is the shore, which I've mentioned are towns, kind of on the outskirts of the casino area of Bluff City. They are the, uh, areas that are higher class, like, white-collar workers, moneyed individuals, heirs, and other kind of, in so far as Bluff City has landed gentry, they live at the shore.

Downtown is the boardwalk, it is the casino, it is where the tourists come, mostly. It is these massive skyscr- not skyscrapers, actually, but these tall buildings, dozens and dozens of floors high, um, that have a great deal of commerce and exchange, and is kind of the roaring heart, or would be the roaring heart of Bluff City, but it is the middle of the winter, and it is, also we are in this moment of deep corruption, so who knows what that looks like. Maybe that actually looks like there's more people, I dunno.

The outskirts are the mainland, and on the mainland, is where the people who work in Bluff City, and who are like, middle class, upper-middle class, lower-middle class, like, that whole range lives out on the mainland, so they have to come into work via car or bus or train, and those are, you know, I'm curious how that connect to this kind of gala culture that we've put together, I'm curious what their perspectives are, and we'll have to fill in the blanks there.

And then there's the cove, which is effectively city projects, housing projects, housing developments, for, for kinda, low income people that is on the same island as Bluff City, and that is kind of an inlet to the— it's interesting, it splits where one of the shore communities is, from the rest of Bluff City, so it's like, super rich, and then you come down this bridge, you literally drive down a bridge into, and past the cove. And so, you kind of always have sight down into this little inlet that's surrounded by low income housing. It looks like, it's funny, like, the designs are all based on the same house of a town, or the same house that's in one of the shore towns, so it's just like a cookie cutter, like, over and over again, one family house next to one family house next to one family house, and at the end of some blocks, there are larger structures that do have, you know, apartments, but families get these low income housing houses that are all just like, you can't leave your door without seeing another house that is basically copied off of something someone rich actually owns and lives in and is there for real.

So that is the cove. And those are people who do also work in Bluff City, but they are doing blue-collar jobs, they are doing, you know, maintenance and janitorial work, they are working in transportation, they are working in security, they are not doing the, kind of— they're not dealing cards, they're not taking business meetings, they're not in, you know, small business ventures. Like the people in the mainland are. So that is, that is the neighbourhood, that is the districts. Uh, next we talk about the city's language and name. We have to decide if it's mostly realistic, fairly strange, or alien and unrecognisable. My gut says in-between realistic and strange basically?

JACK: Mm-hm!

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think we have a pretty—

JACK: I kind of, like, an analogue that I think of here, even if it's, we're not talking aesthetically the same, is like, um... the Gotham City in Christopher Nolan's films is definitely an American city, and it definitely has shades of specific American cities. But at the same time, it's distinctly this space, this strange space. Um—

AUSTIN: Right, I mean, I think even Gotham City in the animated series is actually a really good touchstone here, because, like, there's an airship, [Jack laughs] but also, and like people are driving huge Art Deco cars, but also, like, uh... not Tim Drake... um... what the fu—

JACK: Nathan Drake.

AUSTIN: Not— yep, Nathan Drake, who's off to— who's the first Robin? Wow, what have I fuck...

ART: Dick Greyson.

AUSTIN: Dick Greyson, thank you Art. Dick Greyson goes off to play college football, it's still America, it's still very much, has these, these echoes of real America. So, um, Atlantic City by way of Gotham is a really good setup for what this place— especially at the height of gala season, right?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And it's called Bluff City. So now, it's time for the characters. “Put some playing cards out on the table. One more than the number of players, so in a 3 player game, put down 4 cards, in a 4 player game, put down 5.” I've already pulled one for our victim— there's a really cool thing this game does that I'm skipping past, because of me being a jerk.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: I'm going to just draw out a few more. [pause] Two... three... and I think what I'm gonna do is, I'm still gonna draw five, and that way, cause one of the things that drawing five does, is that it means that there's one extra on the table for people to choose a character from, without it being, like, without it being, like, “ugh, I'm stuck with this character,” everyone will always have a choice.

So, uh, you also need to roll a number of die, so I'm going to roll five dice here, three, four, five. Chu-chu-chu, random side, there we go, um. Each of the, uhhhh. One sec. “For each card, roll a die and place it on top.” So yes, I'm going to just do that, I didn't know if it was a before or after kinda thing. There's that one, there's that one, there's that one, there's that one, there's that one.

“Each set of card and die, represents one character. Have someone read out loud what the cards and dice represent using the three lists below, while someone else records the characters' descriptions on a piece of scrap paper.” So, who wants to, who wants to do that? I think that list is in here, let's see. Uh, it is!

ART: Yeah, I got the list!

AUSTIN: So what have we got, Art?

ART: So the seven of spades would be a out-of-towner, who operates out of the outskirts, which makes sense.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ART: And their guiding principle would be "never betray my own." That's an interesting— that's interesting.

AUSTIN: Weirdly, the, the— this is interesting, the principles list on their table in the back of the book, does not have the six in there, so it is, never betray my own, that's interesting, never betray... whatever they are. Cool. Next?

ART: The ten of spades is next, that would be also from the outskirts, of course. This would be a government agent slash intelligence, and their guiding principle is "tell no lie."

AUSTIN: Ooh. Okay.

ART: Yeah. The seven of hearts, seven is again an out-of-towner, this one operates out of downtown, and the five is "justice must be done."

AUSTIN: That's fine, that's not a problem.

ART: Yeah. But that's, that's a strong, strong pull too. All of our remaining characters— both remaining cards are jacks, and jacks are both private eyes.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: We have one that is spades, so that is from the outskirts, who has a four, which is "never reveal my true self." Then we have the jack of diamonds, and diamonds represents the upper crust, they have a five which is "justice must be done." No clubs. No-one here is operating a scam.

AUSTIN: No. So, “at this point, everyone decides which one of these is really interesting to them. Lay out the descriptions where everyone can see them, each player chooses a character

they'd like to be, and takes that description. If multiple people want the same character, politely talk it out. Once everyone has taken a character, there'll be one extra card and die on the table that nobody else chose— leave it there for now.” Are any of these really jumping out?

ART: I have three that I would super happily play, so, I... I feel like if anyone has a more, if anyone's like, “this one is mine,” they should go first.

ALI: I have two that I'd really like, I— I'm gonna say that I don't want the, uh, government agent slash intelligence, so if anyone wants that, go ahead.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

ART: Uh... I mean, I think that's, I think that's a really interesting one, if I'm being completely honest, especially because with “tell no lie,” but I think it's, I think it's in my second tier.

KEITH: I, um, I would like— I think I would like to be one of the two out-of-towners, their other... their other, um, descriptors, uh, each have, like, I could take or leave, in terms, I like some of one of 'em and some of the other.

AUSTIN: Right, so either of them'd work, it's just—

KEITH: Yeah, either of them work for me, so I'm good - if anybody wants to be an out-of-towner, and has a specific one of the two sevens that they like...

JACK: I think, I think I know— I think I have a specific one, I would be prepared to alter, but I would like take one of the jacks, who is, the one from out of town, the one who can't reveal their true self.

[00:30:00]

AUSTIN: So they are not—

ART: The outskirts is still in town.

AUSTIN: Yes, the outskirts are still in town, the outskirts means, like, they live in the suburbs, that is literally what that means.

JACK: Oh, yeah, perfect, yeah. I'm absolutely—

AUSTIN: This is the character who I think it is, Jack?

JACK: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: Okay. Go ahead and—

JACK: I nearly changed my mind, cause I found a better name, [Austin laughs] but I also like her name, so I think I'm gonna take these.

AUSTIN: So go ahead and— what is, what is her name?

JACK: So this is Florence Slowly. Um, uh, she is a, uh, she used to be a detective, like, working for the police force, but she is now a private eye. She is old. I wasn't expecting this to be a game in the future, um, and when I pictured her in present day Bluff City, you know, present day Bluff City...

AUSTIN: We are— think about Bluff— I'm not saying she can't be old, being old is rad, I'm into it. But, think about Bluff City as always being a little, to quote our friends over at the, the Dark Souls podcast which wrapped up recently, the Bonfireside Chats, Bluff City is a little timey-wimey, right? [Jack and Ali laugh] Like, things are, time moves strangely in Bluff City, would say the narrator. And, it is totally feasible for her to be old here, and also for us to play a game that takes place earlier in time and for her to be even older there. Um, so.

JACK: Huh. I think—

AUSTIN: Play the character how you would like to play her here.

JACK: I think there's a point at which, as a kid, you look at your parents and go, oh, they're old. And then there's another point when you look at them and go, oh, they're old.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Uh-huh.

JACK: I think that Florence Slowly is somewhere between those two points. So I think she's in her mid-sixties? Early sixties?

AUSTIN: Cool.

ART: Alright, if Jack is gonna go with that private eye, I wanna take the other private eye.

JACK: Nice! [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay! So you're the other private eye. What is your principal, Art?

ART: The five, which is, uh, "justice must be done," and represents the upper crust, which, I think there's some interesting potential there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: And the name I have for this private eye is Tyler Taylor Pierce.

AUSTIN: Good name. [Jack laughs] Also, briefly, you don't represent the upper class, you operate in that space, that's an important distinction for rules things. So then, Ali, you have, out-of-towner with "never betray my own" and you operate out of the mainland, and then Keith, you have out-of-towner who operates out of downtown, and has "justice must be done." Do either of you have character names?

KEITH: Yeah, I have a name, should I use my character's name, or their nickname?

AUSTIN: Their nickname— so actually, what you decide here, is what your character, we'll get there actually in a second, because... but yeah, you decide what your character is called. It's not necessarily your real name, it's what people call you. Then, then what I would be—

KEITH: What text— what font were you guys using?

AUSTIN: I'm using... Candle? Candal?

JACK: [quietly] Jokerman.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: That's it! So it's the Jokerman font! So at this point, what I would be doing, is be taking this ten, uh, which is, what's that? A government agent?

JACK: Wait, do we know who Ali is?

AUSTIN: We don't have names for either Keith or Ali.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: But we do know who they, we do know which cards they took. Names and stats are the next step, but the thing that's actually right now is, um, creating the victim, who, uh, is this two of clubs that I've pulled before. Two is actor-slash-performer, clubs is skid row, so in this case it's the cove, um—

JACK: Wait, sorry, I thought three is actor and performer, two is urchin or vagabond.

AUSTIN: Two is urchin, vaga— oh, interesting, okay. Um. I'm just gonna take— uh, you know what, that's fine, I think that's fine, this character has a vagabond-ish quality. Uh, I, for whatever reason, you know what it was, it's like I looked at this list and was like, "oh yeah, the second thing is actor/performer, I drew a two". Um, it's the specific character based on what we've done before, which is like, this character is the character who is the narrator in the first thing. So I could shuffle that card back in? Um, let's see if I can do that, can I do that? Oh, I've taken this card. How does Roll20 work...? [sighs] Well, now I've zoomed in on this card for me.

[Ali, Art, and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: The thing that I need to do, is like, really need to do is get in here and just grab another card, but it's fine. It's fine. I don't want to just like, keep dragging, I'm just gonna leave this two out and just use that. I'm gonna keep this ten out, too, just so that it's out of the deck. And, um, a three, what's a three? Three is... tell no lie? That's interesting. Okay! So.

KEVIN: A vagabond that tells no lies?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so it's a vagabond, radio-person. Priest-vagabond-radioman. Dead at age 36, says the center of our screen. Hector Hu. Priest and radio-man dead at age 36 by, I think her name was Jennifer Jetta, is what I named this reporter. Um, there we go.

"One character is left unchosen; that character is the victim, whose murder you'll attempt to solve together. Give the victim a name. If you need ideas, refer back to your city's language." Uh, [laughs] "write the victim's name and draw their picture, if you'd like, on a piece of scrap paper, and then draw a big 'X' over the name or picture. Pin them to the centre of your corkboard amid all four districts." So, let's draw a big red, red 'X' there, huh? Pchowww. X. Bam.

ALI: Ooh. Rest in piece.

JACK: Wow.

AUSTIN: "At this point, you're done using the cards and dice for now. Shuffle the cards back together, and set the dice aside." So actually, we do just bring all of the dice back now that we know who we all are. Um, we do know who we all are, right?

ART: And all the cards back, yeah.

AUSTIN: Should we write down what our things were, or does everyone know off the top of their head?

ALI: I wrote it down on like, a separate thing, if there's space here on the card, I'd like to do that.

ART: I'm gonna write...

KEITH: Yeah, I can—

AUSTIN: Alright, yeah, you could probably do that on the bottom somewhere, um. So yeah, I can just actually, I can, recall... and shuffle.

JACK: I am a private... eye...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: ...outskirts... do not... reveal.... oh, my principal is here already.

AUSTIN: Yep!

JACK: Nice! God, the text tool in Roll20 is like, a piece of work.

AUSTIN: It sure is.

ALI: Don't like it.

KEITH: And it is not a good piece of work.

AUSTIN: No, it's bad. It's a bad piece of work.

KEITH: Sometimes you'll have a piece of work that's good, and this isn't one of 'em.

AUSTIN: Ugh.

ART: Wait, Are we not going to use the other four names we came up with, or are we?

AUSTIN: Yeah, we're gonna— wait, yeah, we're gonna get there in a second, wait. What do you mean the other four names?

ART: You told us to each come up with five Bluff City names.

AUSTIN: Yeah! And you're, you'll get there in the course of this game!

[Ali laughs]

ART: Alright, I'm really proud of my names, and if we weren't gonna use 'em, I was just gonna read them all out.

JACK: C'mon, Art, you, you cannot just...

AUSTIN: No!

JACK: You can't just frontload all the names, Art!

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ!

ALI: I mean, Bluff City is gonna exist forever, you gotta keep those names!

AUSTIN: Yes. You should— everyone should just have a list of like, thirty Bluff City names to pull from. Um, on your character sheet, transcribe the detail—

ART: Well, I have four now.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay. On your character sheet, transcribe the details given to you by your card and die, your identity, your district, your principal. Make sure you remember what your districts were, too. Do people remember what their districts were?

JACK: Mm-hm!

ALI: Mm-hm!

JACK: I wrote it down in Jokerman.

AUSTIN: [sighs] Okay.

JACK: [laughing, faintly] I did not.

AUSTIN: So then you write down what your characters names are. So let's go again from left to right...

ART: Oh, that got too small.

AUSTIN: Oh boy, that is, that's really small. Uh, Art, you are Tyler Taylor Pierce

ART: Yes.

AUSTIN: Keith, you are...?

KEITH: Patty Fink.

AUSTIN: Uh, okay, what's your character look like? Also, everyone should— we're going to go over appearances, so. Patty, what's Patty look like?

KEITH: Um... Patty is tall, sort-of broad shouldered, and uh, she's got like sort-of mid-back curly hair.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh, Tyler Taylor Pierce, what's Tyler Taylor Pierce look like?

ART: Tyler Taylor Pierce is someone who wants so badly for people to think that he's more well off than he is.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Tyler Taylor Pierce, y'know, he has the most expensive suit that they have at Men's Warehouse, but no-one's really told him that that's not a very good suit.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: But he, he always looks impeccable, he's got the, y'know, he's always wearing a nice co-ordinated tie, his pocket square is always, uh, intact, and he's, he gets his hair cut every ten days.

AUSTIN: Like, on the money.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Even if it's on a Sunday?

JACK: Every ten days?!

ART: Even if it's on a Sunday.

AUSTIN: Wow, okay.

KEITH: Well, not if it's on a Monday, 'cause barbershops are closed on Mondays.

ART: Not if you're, not if you know all the barbershops in town.

KEITH: Oh, wow.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

KEITH: Barbershops close on Mondays, cause people have their day off on Sunday, and that's when they get their hair cut. So barbers close the next day.

ALI: Ah.

ART: I'm sure the barbershops in LA are open seven days a week.

AUSTIN: Alright, Ali...

KEITH: Yeah, so, like a chain, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Ali?

ALI: Hello! Hi! Um, I'm playing Chris Christine Andrews. She's kind of tall and lanky, um, has like, really short cropped hair, that's like pushed to the side, but also somehow always in her eyes. Never wears black pants, cause she has the tendency to, like, rub off her hands on her hips, so they're always like dark washed jeans, or something in the middle.

AUSTIN: So she's of mind enough to know not do that, at least.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay. Florence Slowly.

JACK: Um, I think that when she was younger, uh, she sometimes, sometimes when people retire or move to the suburbs, they soften, they become softer? As they get older? The opposite happened to Florence. She became sharper, she became more— sharper elbows, more bird-like, um...

[Art laughs]

JACK: She's tall... the picture that I imagine is Tilda Swinton in every Cohen Brothers movie she's been in, where she always looks like she has arrived in the scene quickly, but immaculately prepared.

AUSTIN: Great. Okay! So, now, you need to make stats. And this is pretty easy. "There are four stats: Body, Mind, Heart and Rep." Um, they are basically what they sound like, uh, I can go over them more than that if you'd like, but, I think "Rep" is maybe the only one that's a little like, "hm, what's that mean?," but it means, like, your reputation, like, if you're asking for a favour, if you are trying to, to get one over on someone by calling, by saying, "oh, well, I know so-and-so", or if you're trying to like, get a thing, maybe, like if you're trying to buy a thing, I would say Rep, or get some information from somebody. "You assign stats thusly. You have a one black die to add, which is bad. One white die to add, which is good." Very Fiasco style, in that this is how

these two die colours work. The highest a stat can go is one white, the lowest it can go is three black— as we play, they will go up and down.

ART: Is there, can you tell me what page number the stats are all defined on?

AUSTIN: Uhh.... maybe.

ART: Cause I see, like—

AUSTIN: Oh, I think at the very back of the book, maybe, there's a glossary, let's see if that's true.

KEITH: I'm seeing page 36, is...?

AUSTIN: They're there, but are they defined?

KEITH: Oh, they're not like, defined, oh.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that they're pretty... like, Mind is thinking about junk...

ART: Heart is feeling about junk?

AUSTIN: Yes, heart is feeling about junk. Yeah.

KEITH: And body is your junk.

[Jack and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: I mean, and here is maybe the other way of doing it, is.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: Right. What the word is next to these things helps explain. Having a white dice in Body means you're vigorous, having a white one in Mind means you're sharp, having a white one in Heart means you're content, having a white one in Rep means you're trusted.

JACK: I think I have mine ready?

AUSTIN: Go for it.

JACK: You want me to go ahead? So we get two ones that aren't there, one black one and one white one, right?

AUSTIN: Correct.

JACK: So, Florence Slowly is "able" in Body, "conflicted" in Mind, "content" -

AUSTIN: Okay. "Conflicted" is black. right?

JACK: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: And, oh, Body is nothing. "Able" is, there's no dice there?

JACK: "Able" is no, nothing. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I'll write these down once I've said them, so yeah, "able" in Body, "conflicted" in Mind, "content" in Heat, and "overlooked" in Rep.

AUSTIN: Okay, so the good one is Heart, you're content, and the rough one is Mind, you're conflicted.

JACK: Mmhm! And I think those two aren't mutually exclusive, um, I'm happy, there being stuff that she is content about, and genuinely content about, and there's stuff that she's conflicted about and genuinely conflicted about.

AUSTIN: Cool. You can write this next to the thing here instead of me dragging these big dice there, I need these dice anyway.

JACK: I lo-ove the text tool.

AUSTIN: It's great! I use it a lot! Who else has stats?

KEITH: I've got stats ready!

AUSTIN: Okay, Patty Fink!

KEITH: I am, Patty Fink is "able" in Body, uh, that's the neutral. "Sharp" in Mind, that's the white die. "Quiet" in Heart, that's neutral, and then "suspected" in Rep, that's the minus one.

AUSTIN: You're not from around here, so.

KEITH: No, not from round here.

AUSTIN: Oh, can you write that stuff down too, the "you're not from around here" bit?

KEITH: Yeah.

ART: Alright, so Keith, Keith has made my decisions for me.

KEITH: Thank you!

ART: Um. Cause I was also going to be "sharp" in Mind, and I can't then also be the same minus in Rep, and I couldn't decide if Tyler Taylor Pierce had done some dirt, or people just thought he'd done some dirt? So I'm deciding he's guilty, but he's not suspected.

AUSTIN: Okay!

KEITH: Nice.

ART: 'Cause I think Tyler Taylor Pierce, as a private eye who operates out of the shore, he does a lot of "fixing," and I think he fixed something the wrong way. I'm still working on it, but.

AUSTIN: Mm...

ART: I think he, I think he did something.

JACK: Like a "fix."

AUSTIN: Uh, so that is, so that means your Mind is "sharp," and your Heart is "guilty." Good. And the rest of them are normal.

ART: Someone got fixed, y'know.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Ali, how are you feeling, how's Chris?

ALI: The ones that I want for neutral, I think I want Heart to be "quiet" and Body is going to be "vigorous," which is a white die. I think I'm going to put black into "conflicted", which means my Rep is going to be "overlooked."

AUSTIN: And "conflicted" is... Mind?

ALI: Yeah!

[00:45:00]

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. Um. Alright! So, the next thing is, we have to write down what the relationship with the victim is. Uh, and Keith, can you again, just write down what your, what your out-of-towner, plus...

KEITH: Oh, yeah, I've got it, I just didn't click outside of it.

AUSTIN: Oh, gotcha, there we go. What was your, your district? Also?

KEITH: My district was downtown.

AUSTIN: You're downtown, right.

KEITH: Downtown.

AUSTIN: So last, we have to figure out what your relationships were with the victim. (reading) You could be old lovers, or involved in a recent affair, partners in business or in crime, close family, or distant admirers. This relationship -

KEITH: Old lovers with this priest? Dibs.

AUSTIN: Ah, you know. He's... um. He's a weird priest, is what I'll say. Uhhh...

ART laughs.

AUSTIN: I'mma - I'll give you a little bit about him. Which is, he had a morning talk show on WBRK, The Break. He was a man of faith, he said that he was, whenever asked, he was from the one true church. People have seen a number of different, uh, certificates of seminary school and training, and uh, officiance licenses that have all checked out. They've all checked out, it seems as if he has been trained to be a priest of a number of different Christian faiths. Um, he is also a big time conspiracy theorist. Everyone knows and loves him, he is like, kind-of a fixture? He's sort of like what if Alex Jones wasn't terrible, if, if what if Alex Jones...

ART: I have no frame of reference for that!

ALI laughs.

AUSTIN: Okat, what if - do you have an uncle? Do you have any uncles for conspiracy theorists?

ART: No, I actually literally have no uncles.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, well, there's your problem right there. Um! This is a guy who believes in the Obama assassination.

ART: Um. Okay.

AUSTIN: He believes Obama was killed and replaced by a different person, and because of that, has, like, will do a whole, a whole - he's a little Rachel Maddow-y, which is like, you have to follow along with him? And the end result ends up being, like, how do I make people's lives better in Bluff City. But it always hinges on weird old things. Now, the funny thing about all this is, that he had a principle too, it was that he can't a lie. So, um, either he just deeply believes all of the strange conspiracy stuff that he would spit during his AM radio morning show.

KEITH: Also separating him from Alex Jones.

AUSTIN: Right, or— yes, absolutely!

ART: ...or it's all true.

AUSTIN: Or it's all true, exactly. He, of course, famously was part of the reason that the laws were passed that allowed Grey Sand Paranormal to act in Bluff City. He gave a stirring speech about the need for paranormal investigators in Bluff City, and we all know how that worked out. So, he's been right more than once; he's probably been wrong a number of times. And when people confront him about that, he says, you know, "everybody's been wrong once or twice. Jesus flipped the tables." And, like, that's the whole of his defence. So how do you all know him, independently? Chances are there will be some crossover here, and that will be how you know each other, too.

JACK: I worked with him on two cases.

AUSTIN: Ooh! Okay.

JACK: On the first case, this was back in the day, when I used to work for... I guess... BCPD? Is that what they're called?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Yep, BCPD.

JACK: I was told by some other people I worked with that I should go talk to him, and I was like, "this is bullshit. This is gonna be a complete disaster, because I've heard your radio show."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: "You're a nice guy. You're not gonna be helpful." And I went, and I talked to him, and he gave me a bunch of information and he put me exactly on the right track, and everything went great. And then the second time, I was like, "let's go check out Hector," and it was a complete disaster. [Austin laughs] And I got led completely into the weeds. It all fell apart completely.

AUSTIN: It's like a bad Sherlock Holmes game? Like, a bad Consulting Detective game?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Where you talk to him, and he just leads you on some bullshit about lions for the next three hours?

JACK: And like, as far as Florence can tell, this wasn't malevolent, this wasn't Hector going like, "aah, I gave her one; this is not gonna go the same way as last time!" As far as... In the moment, it seemed like everything was going as it did the first time; it just did not result in closing a case.

AUSTIN: Do you know what the thing is that he led you down the garden path on?

JACK: Um, it was to do with a robbery? It was to do with a bank robbery, actually. A fairly big bank robbery that took place, and that I was working on finding out who did it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And trying to piece together some stuff. And he had a very interesting theory about who did it. That—

AUSTIN: Do you know what it is? Do you want me to tell you what it is?

JACK: Oh, you can tell me what it is!

AUSTIN: He thinks it's the Coast Guard. He's certain it was someone in the Coast Guard.

JACK: ...The Coast Guard?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Had robbed the bank?

AUSTIN: Yep. A hundred percent. He was sure of it.

JACK: And they had not.

AUSTIN: They had not. No.

[Keith and Jack laugh]

KEITH: Or, you just never found out that they did.

AUSTIN: Ah, someone admitted to it. You arrested somebody and they admitted to it. They are serving time.

JACK: And the result of that was that I fell out with two people: I fell out with Hector Hu, and I fell out with the Coast Guard.

AUSTIN: Right.

[Keith and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: Who else know Hector, and how?

ART: Uh, Hector and I are close family.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're close family! You're *close* family?

ART: Close family. Close family.

AUSTIN: Like, like cousin? Like uncle?

ART: Like cousins who grew up together?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: He's older than me. He's older by like, two or three years.

AUSTIN: Okay, but that's close enough.

ART: But close enough. Yeah, he was, you know, I... er, actually, I'm gonna do this: My dad's uncle David was like his same age, and they lived together for a while. It was like one of those things where his mom had a, my dad, my grandmother had a much younger brother.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

ART: So this is my, this is my mother's much younger brother, Hector.

AUSTIN: Okay. So your uncle, but is very close in age.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I have one of those.

ART: But has a different last name, because it's a second marriage.

AUSTIN: Okay. Gotcha. Um, cool. Uh... Patty and Chris. How do you know Hector?

KEITH: Hi. I... Patty is a low-level criminal and snitch who was one of Hector's conspiracy theory sources.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Patty knows some stuff.

KEITH: Patty knows some stuff.

AUSTIN: Patty's been out of town, Patty knows stuff about the world.

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: And *Trenton*.

KEITH: "I lived in D.C. for four months!"

AUSTIN: Oh, wow! That's where the politics happen, so you know it's true. Um, Ali. Chris.

JACK: That fake Obama they got.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly!

[Ali laughs]

ALI: I think that I listen... It has to be unrelated, I have to have known him, right?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Well, like... Do radio hosts have like, meetups, in the way that like podcasters do?

AUSTIN: Um...

ART: Well, one of the things is a "distant admirer."

KEITH: Yeah, they do. NPR has parties.

AUSTIN: Ahh. Yeah. Art, what was that?

ART: One of the examples is "distant admirer"

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

ART: But it must be a mutual admiration.

AUSTIN: That's true.

ALI: Okay, 'cause I think that she listened to his show pretty religiously, like not tuned into it.

AUSTIN: Did she write in, or call in, ever? 'Cause I like that notion a lot.

ALI: Yeah! Okay, maybe she called in kind of often, yeah. I think of her as someone who like, doesn't sleep a lot? So whenever his show is on, she is awake, and that is the only thing she is doing, so she, like— oh, also, since the whole communication thing is sort of weird—

AUSTIN: Oh, right!

ALI: He's the only person she's really talked to?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Like, "talked to" talked to?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that's—

ALI: So she calls in a ton.

AUSTIN: I think that's part of what makes him so liked? Is that, because his job is to be a wonky conspiracy theory preacher on the radio, he feels weirdly genuine compared to most people. He is in his presenter mode all the time, but that just means, like, when you call in and talk to him, you're allowed to be in this other mode of conversation. You're still putting on a mask, you're still presenting yourself in a certain way, but it's such a different way than like, the guarded gala way. So I think that's part of what the appeal has always been for him. But also, it's always made him an outcast in his own right, right?

ART: Austin and Ali.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Do you know who Doris in Rego Park is?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: No?

ART: Doris in Rego Park was this low-level famous listener-slash-caller into overnight sports talk radio.

AUSTIN: Mmm.

ART: And she would call all the time. She would always be on. And when she died, it was like a big deal.

AUSTIN: Huh.

ART: And like, she never like, *did* anything, really... But like, I dunno, as someone who didn't sleep a lot as a kid, I would listen to that show. I would listen to that show, I knew who she was. Like, I dunno. That was my touchstone for this

AUSTIN: I like that a lot. Yeah.

ART: But like, I mean, she was very much a local. There is no way Keith has ever heard of her.

KEITH: No.

ART: And a lower percent chance that Jack has.

JACK: Nope.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: But that was my idea for that.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I like that a lot. Heh, apparently she used to always call off, or, you know, say, "Thank you for your time and courtesy." Before she finished.

[Ali, Jack, and Art awww]

JACK: What was her name?

ART: And she was like a big Mets fan, like that's what she wanted to talk about.

AUSTIN: Doris. From Rego— *from* Rego Park. R-E-G-O park. She called into FAN. In New York. So yeah, I think also Hector's show ran from 2:30 AM, you know, there's like the late-night adult contemporary show that runs from like 10— probably from like 9 to 2, 2:30, which is like, I've described this to Jack and Ali before, it's... what the hell is her name?

JACK: Is it Delilah?

ART: Delilah.

AUSTIN: Delilah. Yes. Thank you. And like, after that program ends, on WBRK, that's when Hector Hu shows up, and he runs his show from like 2:30 AM until like, through the morning. There's a moment at which it becomes just a morning show, where he throws to traffic. [Ali laughs] And it's just like a very weird thing, because if you listen at 4 or 5 AM, it's a much different show than if you listen at 8. Where has guests on, and you can hear when the call-ins change. There's a moment at which a bell is rung and the show shifts from being a kind of long-running free-wheeling talk show to being a more produced morning news and chat show.

JACK: It's when the producer arrives, right?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Gets into the office and puts her bag down and puts her headphones on.

AUSTIN: Exactly. One hundred percent.

JACK: Sits forward in front of the mic and says "good morning!"

AUSTIN: Yep. Exactly.

JACK: "How was the night?"

AUSTIN: Yes. And he goes, "ahh! Melissa's here!" or whatever, and like that's...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright! So that's how we know who everybody is at this point. We know who all the characters are. We've done intros. It's time to learn about the murder. I'm gonna shuffle this deck.

JACK: This game is so good.

AUSTIN: And then I'm gonna draw two cards. [reading from the book] "Draw two cards from the deck. These are your first Leads. Leads are people, places, and things that will help you solve the mystery. The first card drawn... is a location." The seven of diamonds. "The scend of the crime. The second—" Or, wait, let's see what is the seven of diamonds? Who has that list open?

JACK: Ah, fuck.

AUSTIN: I've got it. It's right here. Seven is a restaurant.

ART: Alright, love it.

AUSTIN: It is a restaurant, and diamonds is the shore. So it's a restaurant on the shore.

JACK: Ooh, like a high... like a fancy restaurant.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Or like a, a hot dog stand. Like, it could be anything.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: Well, no, 'cause it's, this is the fancy neighborhood, right? So, like...

ALI: Oh, okay okay okay.

AUSTIN: So we know that it's something, it's some sort of restaurant. We should figure out what it actually is.

JACK: Well, it could be a fancy hot dog stand.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: It could be! It could be like a, like a...

ART: That Bar Rescue was on recently.

JACK: Fuckin', what's that fuckin' awful burger, it's not fancy, but what's that burger place that we hate?

AUSTIN: Fuckin' Burger Club. Fuck off, Burger Club.

ALI: Oh, fuck Burger Club.

JACK: Fuck Burger Club!

AUSTIN: Okay, and, two, is an item, is an object. And that thing is the two of clubs, which is... a, an official document.

JACK: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Mmmm. "Figure out what the two leads are and where they were found by using the tables." So, the second thing, it does say "a suspicious object found at the crime scene," but maybe it's found at the crime scene, which is in the upper crust, but because it's the two of clubs, that means that it's about something in the cove, so it's an official document about the cove. So that's down here. Are you seeing, do you see where I've written "restaurant" on the shore? Can you see that I've written that?

ART: Yes.

KEITH: Yeah. It's small, but...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I mean, I can't change that.

KEITH: Now that you, now that I noticed that there's words there, I got it.

ART: Well, you can zoom in on the whole thing.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: You can make it really big.

AUSTIN: I can also do this.

ALI: Oh, boy! Oh boy!

AUSTIN: That's too big. That's a little too big.

KEITH: That's a little much, thanks.

AUSTIN: There we go. So, let's see. "Figure out what the two new leads are and where they were found by using the tables; describe the location in a few evocative words. Give it a name, and write it on a piece of scrap paper. Then pin it to the corkboard in the district that shares its suit. Do the same for the object." Um, so, is it like a fancy hotdog place? Is it like, is it...

KEITH: I like that, I like it like a cloth napkin lobster roll place.

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Yeah, is it doing that sort of, almost like the Rosemerrow thing, of like, "we're at the shore, but classically, Bluff City had wonderful hotdogs!" And like, it's very dressed up, like, throwback food?

KEITH: Yes. Absolutely. Yeah, it's like, if you went a little, I forget the geography of this but if you went like, a little bit south, where the worse houses are, it would be the same restaurant, but lower prices, worse food...

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Or maybe not even worse food. Just lower prices and like, shittier atmosphere.

AUSTIN: Right. What's the—

ART: I dunno, I've definitely been to a place that advertised like, a Kobe beef hot dog, which is one of the...

KEITH: [laughs] That sounds crazy.

AUSTIN: That's a good usage.

KEITH: Like the super fancy Japanese beef that's like a hundred dollars?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's the name of this place?

ART: Well, I mean—

ALI: Is it something really condescending, like "The Shack?"

AUSTIN: Yeah, probably.

JACK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

ART: Oh, I was gonna go the other way, I was thinking like, "Show Dog."

ALI: Oh, wow... [laughs]

[Keith, Ali, Jack laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah! Show Dog.

ALI: "The murder at Show Dog" is good! I love it!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Fancy... hot dog... shop. Got it.

JACK: Well that's the, that's what the gala happening there next week is about.

[01:00:00]

KEITH: Is it a dinner theater?

JACK: It's about the... it's raising money for... for dogs?

AUSTIN: For dogs? For show dogs.

JACK: No, Austin.

AUSTIN: Oh. Sorry.

JACK: It's raising money for show dogs that have been kicked out of shows.

[Ali and Austin gasp]

AUSTIN: Noo-o! Like they're past their prime.

KEITH: My cousin's dog is a show dog that got kicked out of shows!

[Ali laughs, disbelieving]

AUSTIN: Well there we go!

KEITH: My cousin had a deaf dog that was a show dog, and when they realized he was deaf, they like, gave him up, they like put him in a shelter.

JACK: Oh, that sucks.

ALI: Oh my god...

JACK: Well, I mean—

ART: That should be...

JACK: There should be some money raised for those.

KEITH: He ran in— he trotted circles around their dining room table all day long.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Show dogs are broken.

AUSTIN: Great. Okay, Show Dogs!

ART: I love that dog! That's my favorite dog, that isn't my dog.

AUSTIN: Okay. Official document. I don't know that we get more on this. Like, it doesn't say, "and then describe the thing more." Um, it just says...

KEITH: What makes it a Show Dog?

ART: Well that's like, part of the mystery, right? Is like, what's the document.

AUSTIN: Right. I think so, for sure. And also, one of the next steps is like, what state is the victim in, is it clear how they died. I don't think you know how Hector was killed. You just saw this news story, or you heard about it. I dunno, how did you, like... maybe he didn't come on that night, Chris. Like... and he never misses a night.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: He rolled into town like four years ago, and then like hasn't ever missed a night.

ART: There was the week he was just hacking coughing into the microphone and everybody hated it, but he was there.

AUSTIN: We should also note, really quick, that this is probably also a good place to talk about how graphic or veiled we want the violence to be; if anybody every feels uncomfortable, you're free to veto a scene, or to pull the shade. Pull back the veil, and say like, "eh, let's not get more gruesome than that." I think we're probably in line with where we've been as a show in general, but if anyone feels like, "oh, we should go a little bit softer this time," or whatever, just feel free to say that. The book wants to encourage us to have that conversation, so.

ART: And remember, people are eating their Thanksgiving dinner.

AUSTIN: Right now. In this moment.

[Ali laughs]

ART: Right now! They're like, "hey mom, I wanna put something on while we eat." And they picked this podcast.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: Hi, we're a podcast about show dogs.

ALI: We like—

KEITH: You don't think—

JACK: Sorry, go on?

KEITH: —Bluetooth earbuds? Like, lowkey trying, pretending, pretending like they're listening, but actually have the show in their ears?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! Could be!

ALI: I, um, because this is an episode without, like, swords and stuff, I would like us to kind of pull back a little bit on the like, graphic-ness?

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That's super fair.

AUSTIN: Uh, okay. The... let me get these dice back up to where we need them to roll things. Um, your goal in this is... alright, I'll just read this whole bit. "By now you've created your city, introduced your characters, and learned a little bit about the victim. The scene is set. A strange city, a foul crime, and a handful of would-be detectives on a doubtful hunt for answers. It's time... to start role-playing. Your goal is to find the truth. Specifically, you need answers to three questions. One: why was the victim killed? Two: how was it pulled off? Three: who did it?

"To get your answers, you'll play out a number of scenes. In every scene, one player character will be the protagonist. This scene will center around the protagonist's action and struggles, and the protagonist will dictate the setup and direction of the action. After some free-form role play, the protagonist will attempt something difficult or dangerous, making a challenge roll. At the end of the scene, after role playing the consequences of the challenge roll, and possibly some more free-form roll play, the protagonist will make an investigation roll, which will hopefully bring you closer to answering the case. Investigation rolls generate Leads and Connections. Leads are the people, the places, and the objects that hint at the murderer's cause. Each time you get a Lead, you'll pin it to the corkboard in the district. Connections are the strings that tie Leads

together. To get an Answer, you need a chain of three connected Leads. These rolls can also generate Answers and Escalations,” which we’ll get to later, as we continue.

So, we just start by deciding who the opening shot is on. “Who is the first protagonist for the first scene? You can take turns being the protagonist in any order, but nobody can take a second scene before everyone has taken their first.” So where do we open?

ART: I have like, a goofy start idea, but like, honestly, if any of you are sitting with “I have a strong idea,” you should definitely take it—

KEITH: No, mine was goofy, too.

ART: Before my pun-based opening idea.

KEITH: Oh, mine wasn’t pun-based, but it was goofy.

ART: Alright, go, Keith.

AUSTIN: Wait, wait, I wanna make sure no one else has a non pun-based or a non goofy start to this murder mystery?

JACK: Um...

ART: I just have a goofy first shot. I want to be clear.

KEITH: Art’s is probably stronger than mine is.

[a few seconds of silence]

AUSTIN: I’m fine with either! Just, you know, whoever thinks they have a strong—

ART: I just want to give Jack and Ali a good pregnant pause to decide if they have a rocket of an idea.

[Jack and Ali laugh]

ALI: I... no.

KEITH: My name’s Jack de Quidt, I can solve this mystery in one scene!

[Jack and Ali laugh]

JACK: Here we go! Consulting Detective... no, I don’t think I have anything?

AUSTIN: Okay! Alright, so either Keith or Art. Give me this opening scene.

ART: Okay. So a thing that, uh, that Tyler likes to do, is hang out at Show Dogs, but he doesn't like spending Show Dogs prices.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: [muttering] Oh, my god...

[Jack and Keith laugh]

ART: So he goes down, to the cove, and grabs himself some alley dogs.

AUSTIN: Excuse me?

ART: That's not a place, that's where people...

ALI: Hmm? Excuse me.

AUSTIN: Oh, A-L-L-E-Y.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Not A-L-I. Not Alicia.

ART: Yeah. No.

ALI: I was like, sure?

KEITH: Well, the, they're alley dogs just 'cause they're in the alley. They're Alicia dogs because the restaurant is called Alicia Dogs.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's called Alicia's.

ART: Well, no, it's, my pull is the bacon-wrapped hot dog carts in Los Angeles, have you ever seen those? Anyone? [multiple mm-hms] But like yeah, you know, yeah. It's a shopping cart with a grill top on it. I honestly—

KEITH: Sorry, Mister Hollywood, never been.

[Ali laughs]

ART: Um... this is *not* a Hollywood thing I'm describing. Uh...

KEITH: You said Los Angeles.

ART: ...It's a real big city.

KEITH: Well, listen, Mister Hollywood, we don't know the geography of Los Angeles.

ART: ...Again. So he gets these, these cheap dogs, and he has some old wrappers from Show Dogs.

AUSTIN: God.

ART: He goes to Show Dogs, and sits, and buys a soda, and eats his other hot dogs.

AUSTIN: Well I think we just get—

ART: And tries to like, scare up some business? So, like—

AUSTIN: Does he actually get in, or not? Like, does he actually get all the way in? Or is this a situation...

ART: No, I think he like, rolls up and like, he has his... he gets out of his car with his dog and he's like re-wrapping, and and he sees the, the crime scene tape.

AUSTIN: Right. We get like, whatever the intro music is, over, over Tyler literally pulling dogs out of a paper bag, putting them, wrapping them in like the wax paper and foil or whatever, and putting them into a different bag, like i his car, and walking up the side— like, he's parked the... these roads go up to the boardwalk, and like, there's little ramps that go up to the boardwalk. So like, you're parked in a place where you can see where the ocean is, you can see the beach, and you can see the walkways up to the boardwalk. And we just get a nice following trolley shot of you walking up. And then what do you see?

ART: I think there's the tape up, and the place is kinda crawling with cops.

AUSTIN: Okay. So.

ART: And when I'm—

AUSTIN: Yeah. I just wanna read this for everybody else at the place here, because, this is what, when you're not the protagonist, you're a supporter. And what you do is, "Once the protagonist describes what they're hoping to do, everyone else at the table will help to bring the scene to life as supporters. Supporters have a duty to describe the world, to introduce conflict,

and to jump in as characters. These characters could be their own, or other characters in your city. Supporters ask each other questions, like, 'what should Painters' Row look like,' or, 'who wants to roleplay as the palace guard?'

"You'll be taking on the roll of traditional game-master, so be ready to support each other and brain-storm on the fly. You're welcome to enter the scene as your own character, but remember, during the scene, you're playing a supporting role. Keep the spotlight on the protagonist, whether you're helping or opposing them. Add conflict if the scene feels like it could use it. You don't have to oppose everything the protagonist attempts. Use your cinematic intuition. If you're not sure how to shake things up, draw a card and consult the 'Dramatic Hits' table, on page 92. If the protagonist attempts something difficult, dangerous, or both, it's time... for a challenge roll." So, Art, what were you saying?

ART: So I'm, he like walks up to the... he's trying to just like, get some information. So he finds whatever cop is like manning the line, and you know, this isn't Tyler's first time at a crime scene. He knows the guy at the tape doesn't really...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Doesn't really have the... That's not the guy.

AUSTIN: So this is about trying to get past the guy? Is that what you're trying to do?

ART: Yeah, I'm trying to get through here to talk to whatever detective is back there.

AUSTIN: Does anybody know what this guy's name is? Or, this cop's name is?

JACK: Uh... I might have a name. Let's see. Yeah, this is Magnolia James. "Magnolia" is a nickname, his first name is James.

AUSTIN: Mmph. Okay, so his name is James James.

JACK: Well, his name is James "Magnolia" James.

AUSTIN: Nah- mm. Okay. Sure. Magnolia James. Gotcha.

ART: Or not Magnolia James James?

AUSTIN: Oh, right! It could be.

JACK: So, James is his nickname?

AUSTIN: It could be like— no, no! ‘Cause sometimes you have a nickname up top! Like, you know, like, uh, like, what’s a good one. Uh, like, “Big Adam Smith.” Or...

ART: Pistol Pete Maravick—ch. Pistol Pete Maravich.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Exactly. Also, “Big Adam Smith,” of course, the capitalist thinker. The great capitalist thinker Big Adam Smith.

[Jack laughs]

ART: Yeah. Big Adam Smith. Big Aaaa—

JACK: The invisible big hand.

AUSTIN: The invisible big hand, yeah. Um, do you wanna be Magnolia, Jack?

JACK: Ah, sure, I’ll be Magnolia.

JACK (as Magnolia): Ah, sir, where are you going?

ART (as Tyler): Oh, uh, yeah. I was just gonna... slip through here for a second... I—

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, the restaurant is closed.

ART (as Tyler): Oh, no, I already got—

ART: And he holds up...

[Keith and Austin laugh]

JACK (as Magnolia): Wait, hang on. Wait. Were you here earlier? Were *you* here earlier? What did you see?

ART (as Tyler): Uh.

[Austin laughs]

JACK (as Magnolia): Those are clearly Show Dogs wrappings, sir.

ART (as Tyler): Yeah! Yeah, I was here earlier. Um. Yeah, of course they are. I was here earlier, I got these, I’m actually...

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, you’re going to need to come with me, sir.

ART (as Tyler): I'm trying to return these? Uh...

JACK (as Magnolia): Well.

ART (as Tyler): These, I don't think meet the Sho— you know what they say, "If it's not a best in show, it's not... um..."

ART: Oh, coming up with an ad slogan on the fly is rough.

AUSTIN: A Show Dog! It's not a Show Dog!

AUSTIN: Says the manager of the place.

ART (as Tyler): A Show Dog! Yeah!

AUSTIN: From behind, from behind you, who's upset that they can't go into work.

ART (as Tyler): Yeah, so, I need to talk to... I just, I'm trying to get my money back, and I know it comes in the form of store credit, you know how it is; they can't just be handing out cash, I could be tampering with these in some way...

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, sir, there's been a murder.

ART(as Tyler): Oh! A murder! Wh— I mean, I think these are a little below standard, but I wouldn't kill anyone over it! How'd you say it happened?

JACK: Oh, can I just answer this? Or do we have to do a...

AUSTIN: I don't think this, this, no, 'cause that would be a Lead, right?

JACK: Oh, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think either this is a challenge...

JACK: This information... Oh, do you want this to be a challenge, Art? Or do you want to get in, and have more challenging challenges?

ART: [laughs] Um, I don't know... Uh, I mean that would certainly get us there...

AUSTIN: So what I'll say, I'll explain a little bit about the structure of this, at this point. If you look at the sequence of play, this explains it a little bit, which is that the, um, whoever the protagonist is in a given scene will do a Challenge roll, and then, some point later in the scene, it might be

immediately after, they'll do an Investigation roll. And the Investigation roll is what will generate the actually Leads, or the negative consequences. In this case, it might be a situation where getting in is the challenge, and then once you're there, there's the investigation, which is talking to people, and trying to figure out, you know, what the...

JACK: Mm.

KEITH: That... that sounds right. I mean, he did just lie to a police officer—

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: And then say like, "well, I'd never kill anyone!"

AUSTIN: Yes. So... [Keith and Ali laugh] So I'm for that being a Challenge roll, if you are, Art.

ART: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Alright!

ART: So I'm rolling...

AUSTIN: So let me explain how Challenge rolls work, because I wanna make sure we actually get this. "Once per turn, when you attempt something difficult or dangerous as the protagonist, you'll determine the outcome with a Challenge roll. You might be convincing police of your good intentions [laughs]..."

ART: Hey!

AUSTIN: "...duking it out with a street gang's bruisers, seducing the mayor, or outwitting the high school chess team's captain. First, decide which of the four conditions best fits this challenge. Body, Heart, Mind, or Rep. Everyone can weigh in, but the Supporters have the final say." Um... this feels like...

KEITH: Feels like Rep.

AUSTIN: I could see Rep... 'Cause you're like, "oh, I'm just a regular guy! I'm just, you know..." [sounds of assent] "I'm just a regular person! Don't worry about me!"

KEITH: A regular person, in my nice suit, with my nice haircut.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. I'll go with— I think Rep's good, Ali, are you okay, are you good with Rep?

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh, so, then, “once you’ve agreed, the Protagonist rolls one white die.” And the way you do that, Art, is you just pull one of these dice down, I’m gonna pull one down here, the one that’s underneath.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: Then right-click it, can you right-click it?

ART: Yeah. Uh, “random side?”

AUSTIN: “Multi-sided, random side.” You got it.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: So that’s a four! “Then, any supporter rolls a black die.” Someone pull a black die down near this white one? And right click it?

JACK: That’s me.

AUSTIN: And then hit “random side.”

JACK: “Multi-sided, random side.”

AUSTIN: That’s a three. “Take a look at the Protagonist condition governing this challenge. If it gives any white or black dice, roll those as well.” You don’t have anything plus or minus in Rep, right?

ART: Uh, right.

AUSTIN: You were “overlooked?” Okay. So no. There’s nothing different there.

ART: “Overlooked.”

AUSTIN: “If you rolled multiple black or white dice, put only the highest dice forward.” In this case, there’s only one. So, “for example, if you’re rolling a Body challenge,” buh-buh-buh... Nope, okay. So! You compare the results of the white die and the black die. If the white die is two higher or more, you succeed unconditionally. Narrate what your success has brought; if the black die is higher by two or more, you fail; and if neither die is higher than two more more, it’s a stalemate. One Supporter will offer you a bargain. If you accept the bargain’s condition, treat the roll as a success, and keep the white die. If you refuse, treat your roll as a failure and keep the black die.”

JACK: Huh.

AUSTIN: So. "At the end of the scene, you'll add your kept white or black die to your investigation roll." So, in this case you rolled a one— or, you rolled a four, white? And a three, black. Which means it is a stalemate. Um, I'm gonna read about stalemates, so that you can know what a bargain is.

[01:15:00]

AUSTIN: "When the protagonist makes a challenge roll and gets a stalemate, a Supporter," that's any of us, right now, "can offer a bargain. By accepting this bargain, the protagonist succeeds on the Challenge roll, but in return, must damage one of their conditions, decreasing it by one step. Supporters, you can choose to damage whichever condition would best serve the story, so that when the protagonist tries to plead their innocence to the police and rolls a stalemate, here are some bargains a Supporter might offer. Here are some examples: If you accept this bargain, they'll leave you alone for now, but they will grow suspicious. You damage your Rep. Or, you can convince them, if you sell out your friend Nicholas, they'll hurt him instead, and you'll damage your Heart. They'll only believe you if you agree to keep a secret microphone in your pocket; having the police listen to everything you say will bring down your Mind to 'conflicted.' Protagonists, if you accept the bargain, you'll take the damage described, then narrate your success and keep the white die, which is going to help you in the investigation stage. If you refuse, describe how failure made the investigation harder, and keep the black die."

So, does anyone have any good examples, or good bargains, for Tyler Taylor Pierce?

KEITH: I uh... I have something.

AUSTIN: Yep?

KEITH: So my initial idea for a scene was, I think Patty Fink was at, at the shore that night, selling fireworks to kids. Um, and...

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Illegal. Illegal, by the way?

KEITH: Yeah, illegal fireworks, yeah.

JACK: So illegal.

KEITH: It's, here's the thing: in Bluff City, you can have the fountain-style fireworks, where they shoot sparks, that's legal.

AUSTIN: Yep!

KEITH: But anything that shoots a rocket is illegal. And that is what I have.

AUSTIN: That is accurate, too.

KEITH: AKA, the good fireworks.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

KEITH: Um, and I so I have the good fireworks, I'm selling them to kids, and I, I can get Tyler Taylor Pierce into the back door at a damage to his Reputation.

AUSTIN: I mean, the thing here is, it doesn't have to be your character who does it. Or like, you're basically saying like, Patty will show up and be like, "hey, I'll get you in the back door?"

KEITH: Yeah, basically. I think I overheard this; I wanna also get in...

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: I know that there's something going on in there, I wanna get— I'm like, "hey, listen. You're that, you're that fuckin', that private eye guy, this, we can, we can do this. We can get in here and figure out what's goin' on.

AUSTIN: It's up to Art. Uh, we can all offer bargains, by the way. We can all like, competing bargains, and then have Art pick.

JACK: Hmm. My bargain is, I will tell you how they were killed. And, you'll be able to see the crime scene. But you'll be able to see the crime scene from a desk, while we interrogate you. Because you said you were here earlier.

AUSTIN: Which would be a damage to what?

JACK: Probably... I think, I kinda wanna say heart, because it would be very disheartening to arrive at a place intending to do this, and suddenly be— like, as far as we know, Art's character has *nothing* to do with this murder.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And has just arrived attempting to eat some hot dogs, and is now basically in temporary custody.

AUSTIN: Which would then turn investigate—

ART: Excuse me, attempting to be *seen* eating hot dogs.

JACK: Oh, yeah, right.

AUSTIN: Thank you very much. Which would then mean that the Investigation roll that Art then does would be at an interrogation table, in which he is trying to get details as the person being interrogated.

JACK: [laughs] Is trying to ask details from him, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: I'm sorry, reiterate what the damage there is?

AUSTIN: Heart. Because you'd be disheartened.

JACK: Uh, Heart.

ART: That's a good— I think, I think Rep is too important to Tyler Taylor Pierce to take Patty's offer.

AUSTIN: Mm. Okay. So you get arrested here, is that what ha— what's that look like?

JACK: So what happens is, Art says, Tyler Taylor Pierce says, "how did he die?" And, Magnolia says:

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, I'd like you to come with me, please.

JACK: And lifts the tape up, and you're like, "nice! I get to go in!" And then he moves behind you and firmly places a hand on your shoulder... [Austin laughs] And guides you into the, into the... into Show Dogs!

ART (as Tyler): Hey, what—

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, you're going to be coming with us; you were clearly here earlier, and "earlier" is when the murder happened, in time.

ART (as Tyler): This— this is outrageous! I am a good customer of this establishment [Austin groans], and I do *not* appreciate this treatment!

JACK (as Magnolia): Well, whether or not you're a good customer of Show Dogs, uh,

you were placed... in fact, *because* you're a good customer of Show Dogs [Austin and Keith laugh], you were placed in the scene of the crime, just prior to the crime. And, you know, look. Look, here's the thing. You strike me as someone to whom your reputation is very important to you. Ah, if you told me a lie earlier, about how you got here, just admit to it now, and we'll be, we'll be fine. But otherwise, I'd like you to come with me, since you were here earlier. We can sit down and talk this out.

ART (as Tyler): I don't know what you're talking about. I was obviously here earlier. Here is the product I'm trying to return.

JACK (as Magnolia): Yes, well, sir, I can see that.

AUSTIN: So, I think you get led to, like, what's the... like the break room, basically? Where there's been an impromptu interrogation room set up.

JACK: It's an Angle— it's just a desk with an Anglepoise lamp, except the Anglepoise lamp is now facing towards the other side of the desk.

AUSTIN: Perfect. Good. And uh, there is a detective there. Does anyone have a good detective name? 'Cause I do, but, but, y'know, I wanna make sure everyone gets their good... gets their names in.

ALI: Um, I like Dean Malco.

AUSTIN: Ooh, Dean Malco.

JACK: Ohh, really good. How's that spelled?

ART: That's great.

ALI: M-A-L-C-O.

AUSTIN: Detective. "Detective Dean Malco, thank you very much." [Ali laughs] What's Dean Malco look like? Ali?

ALI: Umm, I think he is... like, early fifties... Wears his pants up, like, really high?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ALI: Like, shirt tucked in like above his belly button. Has... he usually has a coat that he's wearing, but it's on the chair, and he's standing to the side of the room, 'cause he kind of just wants to watch... to start? [Austin mm-hmms] I think that he... like, salt-and-pepper hair that has been combed over that he like clearly dyes black.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good. [Jack laughs] Uh, so, how do you go about trying to get information here, Tyler?

ART: Um, I think a thing that happens a lot, in like cop shows, is they'll like, show you pictures of stuff, to try to make you feel like guilty about it? [Austin mm-hmms] But I guess this is too soon to have any photos.

AUSTIN: Eh! It's the future! Maybe Polaroids are back.

ART: [laughing] It's the future so Polaroids are back?

AUSTIN: Yeah, like, phones can just print now.

ART: Mm. I don't think that's the way phones are going, but...

AUSTIN: I— things go, things go weird.

ALI: No, those exist.

AUSTIN: See?

ART: Really?

ALI: Yeah.

ART: Mm. Alright! Then, yeah. Um, you know, I'm just kinda like, I'm trying to like, act... Here's the thing. I don't think, I don't think I did this. [Ali and Jack laugh] And I'm trying to like, use, well, I'm trying to just be really obstinate about it. I'm trying to get them to think that I can be broken here? And I'm sorta like slow-playing my alibi. Which is that these hot dogs obviously didn't come from here, and that's where I was.

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly. Um, maybe we should just jump to the investigation roll, and just base it from that. And how that scene plays out.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Also, remember that you have a negative 2 in Heart, now, not a negative 1.

ART: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Your Heart has been damaged.

ART: Everyone's *favorite* thing to do is figure out how to edit text in Roll20.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. I can just do it really quick. I'm pretty... I'm capable. There. Done.

ART: Alright, why don't you grab that for me.

AUSTIN: Alright, so it is Investigation roll. So. [Deep breath] "At the end of every scene, the protagonist makes an Investigation roll. This roll can affect the progress on the case, the protagonist's conditions, and the city at large. The protagonist can call for the Investigation roll at any point after their Challenge roll. Sometimes, the Investigation roll will be part of an active challenge, like interrogating a witness, or searching the basement for clues. Other times, the roll will happen after the scene's actions have resolved, and will tell you about the surprising consequences. To begin, give the protagonist two white die. Give any supporter three black dice." So I'm just gonna drag two more down here... There we go!

"Then, add another black die for each escalated district," which we don't need to do, because that hasn't happened yet, "then, again, the supporters decide which condition best fits the investigation in this scene: Body, Heart, Mind, or Rep. Award any white or black die indicated by the governing condition." This feels like... it's either Mind or Heart, right? I think it's mind.

JACK: Mm-hm. I feel like you're trying to outwit these people.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Yeah.

JACK: Started out on real great footing.

AUSTIN: One more white there. Um, ah... "then the supporters..." duh-duh-duh, we did that... "If the protagonist succeeded on their challenge roll, and for each answer your group has found," which, there are no answers that you've found, yet, "give a white die to a supporter; preferably, someone who hasn't had a big role in this scene." So I'm gonna put that over here. "If there are multiple white dice to give out, divide them as evenly as possible among the supporters. These dice are called Bargain dice and don't matter quite yet. See the 'Changing the Outcome' section below.

"Everybody rolls their dice. Black dice on the left, protagonist white dice on the right, Bargain dice below." We're not doing— for us, it's, left is protagonist, middle is, is like challenge or investigation, and far right is the extra dice. So... Art, you're rolling these one at a time. You could do them all at once, but that's okay. Do 'em one at a time.

ART: It's happening now.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh, who wants to roll the black dice?

ALI: Um, how do you do them all at a time? 'Cause I would love to learn how to do that.

AUSTIN: You... you like left-click and drag, to get 'em all. Then you right-click, and hit the selected box, and hit multi-sided, random side.

ALI: O... kay! Oh, that's only two.

AUSTIN: You missed one. So don't get the 6, or the 2. Get the one that's number 1, and then re-roll that one.

ALI: [Laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: There we go. And then, Jack or Keith, roll this last white die on the far right.

JACK: I'll do it. Here we go. That's a 6!

AUSTIN: Alright. So. Whew. Now we have to pair these off, which is fun. "The opposition always—" Okay, one second. "Everybody rolls their dice. Bargain dice..." blah-blah-blah. "The opposition always puts forward their three highest dice, in this case a 3, 4, and 6." That's not in our case; in our case, 2, 6, and 5. So... there we go, 2, 5, 6. "Then the protagonist puts forward any two white dice, pairing each white die with one black die. If one of the bargain dice looks appealing, the protagonist can make a bargain with the supporter and get it."

KEITH: Now—

AUSTIN: Now I'm gonna— yep, go ahead, Keith.

KEITH: This part of the book has something confusing that I didn't quite get.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Where it was saying, like, you don't always just want to put your dice with the highest black dice?

AUSTIN: You definitely don't!

KEITH: Okay. What is—

AUSTIN: Ah... I'll explain why in a second. Because the outcomes are not like, like that. And also sometimes you wanna get a different outcome. So, the way this works is, you get a "hit" if your white die is higher than the opposing, the black die that you're assigning it to. Right? So,

Art has two 6's and a 1. You're gonna put forward those two 6's, I'm guessing, Art. Right?

ART: Yeah, almost certainly.

AUSTIN: So, when you get a success, when you get a 6, when you get a hit on a 6, you're going to be able to find an answer or add a new... or add and connect a new lead. "Create a lead from scratch or connect it to any other lead"... blah-blah-blah, we'll get to that in a second. "If you're losing," and you will lose on one of these, right? So you have a 2, a 5, and a 6 out. "On a 2, you will pin a new lead to the board— your own character— in the district that they operate in, and you damage your rep, decreasing it by one step. If your lead is destroyed, your character then dies, as if you'd missed on a 1."

Because, there are other things that happen. So like, the 5, on a 3 to a 5, on a miss, where the black dice is a 3 to a 5 and you're not blocking it with one of your positive dice, you damage your condition. And on a 6, if one of these had been... One of these is a 6. So if you don't block that 6, you either escalate a district, or you destroy a lead. If you destroy a lead, then it can't be used to, to connect... you can't connect to it in order to answer a question, because it's been destroyed. Except, there's like a little, there's like one little side thing there, which is, if you operate in the district where the lead is, you personally can still use it to connect to it. Because you're from there.

JACK: You're there.

AUSTIN: You know how to work through it. Yeah, exactly. Which is why it's important to know which one of you is where, right? So like, we have a lead in skid row, but none of you operate in skid row. None of you operate in the cove. And we have a lead in the shore, and one of you, just Art, operates in the shore. Right? Just Taylor. Tyler.

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: Tyler Taylor Pierce. So in this case you have two 6's and a 1, and then the challenge has a 2, a 5, and a 6. Um... where do you wanna match those up?

ART: My impulse is to do... that.

AUSTIN: 6 on the 2, and 6 on the 5?

ART: Yeah. And I let the 6 miss.

AUSTIN: Which would mean that— right. And let the 6 miss, which would mean... Uh... you... Okay, sorry. I have to, I should walk that through more carefully. "Draw a *card*, look at the district that shares its suit. If it has any undestroyed leads, destroy one of those leads. If it has no undestroyed leads," so it's a one-in-four here, or not really, because we've already drawn some

cards, but, y'know, it's basically a one-in-four, "if it has no undestroyed leads, escalate the district." And escalation means things... things happen. In that district, that make it harder to win there. There are riots in the streets, or fires, or who knows what.

I will say that there is another thing that you could do here, which is, uh... So one is that, pairs go to— or sorry, ties go to the challenge, not to you. We don't have any ties here, but if we did tie with that white die, the two 6's, you could break your principle to um, to successfully break it, to win that tie. I don't think that that comes up here, necessarily.

[01:30:00]

And the other thing that you could do is, you could now look at the bargain die, from over on the right. "As a protagonist, you only roll two or three white dice. However, if your group has found any answers, or if you succeeded on the challenge roll, the supporters will also roll white dice. These are the bargain dice. On any investigation roll, any supporter who rolled a bargain dice can propose a bargain." So in this case, Ali, you rolled one, you could propose a bargain.

"These bargains work like the bargains on challenge rolls. So supporters can propose how you'll get lucky in the investigation at the cost of harming one of your conditions. However, unlike in challenge rolls, the bargainers in investigation rolls can propose a purely narrative cost. Accepting a narrative bargain doesn't harm a condition, but you'll still have to fulfill the end of the bargain to the best of your abilities. Narrative bargains might look like, 'you have to lose your lucky hat to the abyss,' or 'you have to adopt every single one of these abducted dalmations,' or, 'you'll need to vow to put every single member of the corrupt monarchy behind bars— even your father.' Sometimes there'll be a few good bargain dice available, and you can hear the proposals for each of them, and take whichever one you prefer, if any. However, you can accept just one bargain dice, and even after taking it, you can only put forward two white dice."

So no matter what, there's always going to be a miss. There's always going to be like, the downside hitting back. In this case, that doesn't matter because you rolled two 6's, so.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But glad to have all that out there, basically.

ART: Well, there's some things you might want, right? Like, there are hits, results, you might want more—

AUSTIN: Totally. That's totally true.

ART: In this case, because it matches, there's no... there's like literally no reason to take it.

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally. So, now that we have the outcomes... "You get three outcomes: two from the pairs, and then one from the unpaired dice for each white die that's a hit." And you, Art, get to narrate what that hit is. "Then, each black die that's greater than its paired die, or is an unpaired black die... Any supporter can narrate the miss. Tied dice count as miss."
Blah-blah-blah. Um, I think we do... we do the positive ones first, and the negative ones second. Let's see.

ART: So we're gonna create some leads to destroy?

AUSTIN: To destroy! Exactly. Missing on a— yep, okay. Alright, so.

KEITH: Real quick— if ties go to, if ties are a miss, how do you beat a 6?

AUSTIN: You break your principle.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: And so you tell me how you break your principle—

KEITH: So a 6 is like unbeatable without doing something.

AUSTIN: You need to have— exactly. And so, the other thing there is, you can only break your principle twice, that's what those two circles are next to your principle. And also, breaking your principle will lower your result in the end. Your epilogue will be worse— or maybe not *will* be, but you'll have a lower chance to get a good result. Or, it's not a lower chance. It is, it will be worse. You'll have more negatives in your end narration, based on how many times you've broken a principle. So.

KEITH: That's rough.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's rough! So, let's talk about finding new leads! "Create a lead from scratch and connect it to any other leads, or, if there is a chain of three undestroyed leads connected on the board, you can create an answer." I'm gonna pull up the thing about how that works... Because I... the thing that I'm not sure about, is like, when you add this lead, you're not drawing it, right? It's not a random lead. You're *not* drawing a card. You're just introducing a new lead from scratch. So what do you find, Art?

ART: Great question. Um... I mean I think the obvious first one, and I'm probably gonna need help for a second lead, but like, I get a, I get a cause of death, right? They do the thing that I was hoping they would do. Which, they like tip what happened.

AUSTIN: Okay. What is it?

ART: Um, he was shot. By someone else in the restaurant.

AUSTIN: Okay, so, "gun." Was shot to death...

ART: Yeah. Shot by a gun, close.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: You know, there's the powder burn.

AUSTIN: Oh, oh, like the gun was close. Is what you're saying.

ART: Or is that, is that lead-y enough?

AUSTIN: Yeah! I think that's definitely lead-y enough! I'm just gonna add it to the table, one second. This is gonna be in the Upper Crust area, because that's where it's happening, it's gonna be at the shore. ...Cause of death... gun... close range. And do you connect it to... let's see. Let's read this thing, again. Ahh... Find an answer, or, add... connect. So yeah, you also connect that. So I guess that's connected directly to Show Dog, obviously.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. So now you can add and connect another new lead.

ART: Anyone... anyone?

JACK: Maybe it might be worth doing something with the document that we have.

AUSTIN: Oh, right, you could connect something to that document. Totally.

ART: Yeah. Um...

AUSTIN: Um, did the— go ahead.

ART: Can I like, talk, can we like, find, maybe it's—

AUSTIN: Yeah. We can talk it out.

ART: Maybe it's one of the— one of the detectives slips up and like, says something about the document. Like, you know...

JACK: Mmm.

ART: You know, um, you know, the mayor has to come get that, you know...

AUSTIN: The mayor's good.

ART: And then... and then we can link it to what I assume is downtown? That's usually where the...

AUSTIN: Right. It's like...

ART: That's usually where the mayor is.

AUSTIN: It's a situation where the guy says, like, wha— the detective says, "No one except— no one who isn't from the mayor's office is gonna know what's in that envelope." Or something like that. Which is like the worst thing. Dean! Come on, Dean Malco [?][01:35:17] [Ali laughs]... You gotta do better. So yeah. The mayor, or mayor's office. Which one, which one, Art?

ART: I think it's the mayor. I think...

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I think the mayor wants to know about that.

AUSTIN: The mayor! Put an exclamation point, that way everyone knows.

ART: Have we discussed the mayor?

AUSTIN: No!

ART: Do we have a mayor yet?

AUSTIN: No, we don't, let's have a mayor.

ART: Aw, that's gonna be fun.

AUSTIN: Can I make a suggestion?

JACK: Mm?

ART: Sure!

AUSTIN: The mayor is... named... is named Ali Frasier. [Art laughs] He is played by Steve Harvey. Uh... and he is from the town, which is an improvement over the last mayor, who was

basically installed by the governor. I mean actually, I think there was years when, when Bluff City just had like a...

KEITH: A city manager.

AUSTIN: A city manager. Exactly Keith, yeah. That was just like, the worst sort of shitty oversight that doesn't understand anything about the local community, and like doesn't care about the local community, and only cares about getting the casinos more money, and making like, business changes, but not actually like, making sure the water is clean, or that the schools are good. And then Ali Frasier roared into office the second that the city manager was gone and Mr. Frasier, Mayor Frasier, is a big fan of the galas. Big fan. Like, strides in to every gala, like right in the middle of it, the perfect time. Does a lap, shakes everybody's hand, gets a little too drunk, eats a little big, and then leaves.

JACK: Sample the shrimp.

AUSTIN: Absolutely. And then leaves. And is like... [sighs] I don't know that anyone likes him, necessarily, but there is a sort of like, respect to his game. Like, he hustles, you know?

JACK: It's like, he sure is a Mayor!

AUSTIN: Yep, exactly. Here's a side question: What does interrogation sound like in a world where we need, where the social mores have it that you're always at this kind of distance of communication? Like, what does putting pressure on Tyler Taylor Pierce look like? Because it can't just be like, good cop bad cop, right? Or if it is, "bad cop" means something different, here.

ART: I mean, maybe that's it. It's like, there's the cop that's giving you the social experience you're comfortable with, and the cop that's like not doing it. [Austin mmms] The cop that's like, all the way in your face.

JACK: What do you think, Ali?

ALI: Umm...

AUSTIN: Yeah, does Ali, that's true, this is Ali's ownership thing.

ALI: Yeah, I, I like that more than my first idea, which was like, that instead of saying his piece, or whatever, Tyler was really brought in to just write a statement. [Austin mmms] But like, the timer on that goes like, shorter each question they ask him.

AUSTIN: Oh, I love that!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: That's really good!

ART: Yeah, that's great.

JACK: Wow.

ALI: [Laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: So like, what's the first question?

ALI: Um, I mean, so the first question is like basically like, when you were here, lay out the scene for me. And he has like ten minutes to write that. But then they ask like...

AUSTIN: Right. [Laughing] Which is great, because wait, wait! You have ten minutes to write this answer, and they keep looking at you, and you keep writing it, Tyler. So what do you say, when they're like, describe the scene when you were here, hours ago. What do you write down?

ART: Um... I'm gonna— 'cause of course, of course he wasn't there...

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

ART: Like, um... Y'know! What day, what day of the week is this?

ALI: Thursday.

AUSTIN: Thursday. [Laughs]

KEITH: Is that in character?

[Ali, Austin, Art laugh]

JACK [as Magnolia]: It's Thursday, sir.

ART [as Tyler]: Okay. Great. So it was Thursday, I was here. For...

KEITH: It's still Thursday.

ART: It's late, I've been in this interrogation a long time, I don't know if it's still Thursday!

ALI: [laughing] It's been three minutes, sir.

ART: Um, rude.

[Keith and Austin laugh]

ART: Time, time stretches on you, when you're locked down!

JACK [as Magnolia] Indeed it does, sir.

ART: You only do two minutes in an interrogation...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Fuck off!

ART: The day— the minute you come in, and the minute you go out! [laughs]

ART [as Tyler]: And you know, I arrived in my motor vehicle. And I, I parked, I got a good spot. You know, you don't want to be too close, you don't wanna be too far. You know, you know how it is. [Ali laughs] I got out, I went to the counter. And I, they gave me the greeting, the like, you know, "hello, welcome to Show Dogs. What'll be your pedigree tonight?" [Jack and Austin sigh] And, I was like...

[Ali laughs loudly]

ALI: A picture of Steve Harvey just appeared. And it was bigger than anything. And it— sorry. I was startled.

[Austin and Keith laughing]

AUSTIN: I didn't— I wanna be clear, I didn't look hard for this picture. This picture just appeared to me. It's Steve Harvey in a bad blue suit, with a big ol' cigar.

[Ali laughing]

AUSTIN: Alright, we can continue.

ART [as Tyler]: ...What'll be your pedigree tonight? And I said—

AUSTIN: [laughing] Fuck!

[Ali laughs]

ART [as Tyler]: I said good evening! Thank you. Sir. Or madam. For that, uh, for that greeting. And I, uh, I inquired about the specials. They told me they don't do specials on a weeknight, you gotta come on the weekends for the specials. And I was like, "I'm sure I was here last Thursday and you had a special!" And they're like, "no. We didn't I, assure

you.” And I was like, “are you sure? ‘Cause, you know, Jimmy was here, and Jimmy’s always about the speci—” “Sir, Jimmy doesn’t— Jimmy *never* works Thursdays. Jimmy’s here—”

AUSTIN: Well the thing is, remember, this is written, which means you turn it in, they read it, and they go, “sir. Jimmy never works here on Thursdays.” [Ali and Jack laugh] And then turn it back over to you, at which point you then have to answer that, but instead of ten minutes, you have six. And then four. And then eventually, it’s like, “how do you know the killer?” And you have thirteen seconds to write something down.

ART: Yeah. And at that point, it’s like, I don’t, I wasn’t here, I was at the— I was in the alley. You can check, they don’t sell these here.

AUSTIN: Right. Uh... so, the other thing there is just that the um... the... duh-duh-duh... what the fuck am I gonna say, I’m trying to say, I’m trying to say a thing, and I’ve already—! Oh, it’s through those questions that you find out the information, which is that like...

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: You know, how close were you when the, when the gun went off? And, like, did you see anyone from the mayor’s office here? Et cetera. And that’s how you get those leads. Now, we either escalate or destroy a lead. Draw a card, look at the district that shares its suit.

ART: Aw, man, are we gonna destroy the mayor right now?

AUSTIN: Five of spades. Nope! We’re going to escalate—

ART: No, it isn’t— escalate the mainland.

AUSTIN: The mainland. Alright.

JACK: Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: That’s quick!

KEITH: Can a, can a zone be de-escalated?

AUSTIN: I believe so. I believe one of the options is to— yes. If you hit on a 1, which I guess requires you to roll a 1, use it—

ART: And break your—

AUSTIN: Yeah. And break your, um, principle. That's really good, actually. Um, so let's talk about escalated districts. And why they're—

KEITH: Couldn't you just attach a 2 to a 1?

AUSTIN: No, because you get a hit, your hit— whoops, I didn't mean to do that, I just drew this "2" by mistake, fuck. Uh... hm... how do I get rid of cards... I don't know how... [Ali laughs] Mmm... hm... hah.... It's fine. It's fine, it's fine.

ALI: It's fine.

AUSTIN: We just lost this 2. Maybe we'll use that for whatever the next thing is, that's what we'll do. Ah— no. Because your, your hit is what determines what happens. In the same way that the negative thing— it det— the purpose of the— what the dice is, determines. So a 2 hit heals a condition, only a 1 hit de-escalates a place.

KEITH: Ohhh, I understand. So the hit isn't when you... the hit isn't just you beating the black die.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: The hit is what your white die is.

AUSTIN: Exactly. So there's a 1, a 2...

KEITH: That's what I was...

AUSTIN: A 3, 4, 5, and a 6. Those are the— there are four different outcomes. Like, a 1 outcome, a 2 outcome, a 3, 4, or 5 outcome, and a 6 outcome, for both hits and misses. I hadn't realized that the de-escalation thing literally requires you to break your, to betray a principle of your own. Which is great. So... "Escalations represent a part of the city becoming unstable. It could be a riot, a military lockdown, a manmade disaster, a mass exodus, or whatever is appropriate for your city. Escalations make things harder for everybody. Each one adds a black die for every investigation roll."

JACK: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: Shit.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Thanks, Art.

AUSTIN: So, what is this escalation? Also, if three districts ever get escalated, the investigation is over.

ALI: Oh.

AUSTIN: And we jump to the epilogue. So, what happens? How did this escalate?

ART: How did... this caused the outskirts to escal— I have no...

AUSTIN: Or like, this death, maybe? Caused it? Not you, necessarily. How does the death, maybe...

ART: Oh, not like this interrogation?

AUSTIN: Yeah, not the results of this specific— I mean, who knows, maybe you did something here that we don't know about, yet, but, um... anybody have ideas?

KEITH: Man, 'cause the outskirts, I feel like, is the hardest place to... be escalated.

JACK: So like... okay. Okay, so. I'm trying to think about this in terms of the like, a montage now happening?

[Austin mm-hms]

[01:45:00]

JACK: So, a body of a radio DJ has been found in a fancy hot dog place. [Austin mm-hms] He's been shot. What is the response, either by the police, or the mayor's office, or the... citizens in the suburbs, that responds to this thing?

AUSTIN: Could I propose a thing?

JACK: Yeah, go ahead.

AUSTIN: You know how, Chris, you were saying that you don't sleep? And that's why you know Hector? [Ali mm-hms] That is like, you listen to Hector every night. That's a lot of people. And, a lot of them listen until they fall asleep. And they don't have his voice tonight. A huge percentage of the mainland, thirty, forty percent, don't sleep. They stop sleeping. And they kind of go into, um, what's that show about the rapture, and people who are left behind?

JACK: The Leftovers.

ART: The Leftovers.

AUSTIN: The Leftovers. Go into the sort of like, you know the, not catatonic, but like, very... uh... kind of... there's a word I'm looking for and I'm not finding it. Um...

JACK: It's almost like they're in a fugue.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And just, thousands of people, in the mainland. The people who come to do, who come to the... Bluff City, downtown, to the boardwalk, to deal cards. The ones who work in restaurants. The ones who do all that stuff. They don't come in. And maybe it's even more than there should be, aren't coming in. Like, Hector did alright. But, a lot of people are not coming in to work. For days. For a long— for, days go by, and it's like, the only people who are showing up for work are people who either commute from further in, or people who are already in Bluff City, or in, you know, the various actual islands thereof, and not the mainland. Or, they come in, when they do come in, they come in really late. Like, later than is even socially appropriate. And, and they don't leave early. They like stick around, and are just like, dead on their feet. So we just get this like, zombie class emerging. That is my proposal.

JACK: I'm up for that. Um, and I think—

AUSTIN: I'm not gonna write "zombie class," but...

JACK: No. I wonder if it also is reflected in some sort of... and I wonder if this is a reflection of extravagance to an extent, some sort of public mourning?

AUSTIN: Oh, sure.

JACK: Like, like you see when Bowie died, of like, a mural is quickly made. And candles are left. And people spend time there. Listening when they can to old recordings...

AUSTIN: Recordings, yeah.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: I've written down "fugue parade," which just gestures at what we're talking about. I wouldn't even mind if it was like, what if it's like a mark on a door, or painting like, his name... on something?

JACK: What if it's like a tag that begins showing up?

AUSTIN: Like what?

JACK: Um... it's not like— Marking the door in the way that would evoke sort of plague symbolism is... too much of an escalation, I think?

AUSTIN: Mm, yeah. Totally.

JACK: I think that that's like, it might be something that would be good in the third act of this game, but it feels like going a little too far, too quickly. [Austin and Ali mm-hm] So I wonder what sort of... it's like, it's the voice on the end of the telephone stopping. Um, and, it's... I think that that is going to have an effect, regardless whether or not there's some sort of visual symbolism associated with it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I just didn't know if you wanted like a specific visual. Like, it sounded like you wanted like a mural, or something like that.

JACK: I think that yeah, like a mural of, of his, like a mural of...

AUSTIN: What if it's that thing that's around my neighborhood? That we always see, whenever you visit?

JACK: Oh, like chalk drawings?

AUSTIN: The like, the infinity symbol plus the heart? Which is like, the cheesiest thing? Of just like, "infinite love, man!" And it's always like, "if you give love, you'll return it!" But whatever that is, but for weird conspiracy... guy? Or maybe it is just, infinite love? Maybe Hector Hu always signed off by saying, "infinite love."

[Ali laughs]

JACK: "Infinite love. Goodnight, good morning!"

AUSTIN: Good morning. Yeah, "goodnight, good morning, infinite love. I'm Hector Hu." Alright.

ART: I can't believe I got interrogated by the police about a murder and never mentioned that the murder victim was my uncle.

AUSTIN: I don't know how that happened, but you didn't. Which is great.

[Ali laughs]

ART: Yep! Good work, everyone!

ALI: Do you think—

AUSTIN: No one said, "what's your relation?" Like...

ART: Yeah, no one asked. I didn't offer it.

AUSTIN: Alright!

ART: Of course I didn't kill that man, he's my— I mean, of course you wouldn't say that. Family are people who kill people.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. Ah... who's next?

KEITH: But in restaurants?

AUSTIN: With guns?

KEITH: Does family kill family in restaurants? I don't think so.

JACK: "Of course I didn't kill that man, he's my uncle" is like, [Austin and Ali laugh] the thing that a police officer hears that and they're like, "oh my god. A gift has been presented to me from the heavens."

ART: Yeah, you say that and you don't even know what happens, you're just in jail when you're done saying it.

AUSTIN: Um, okay. Who has a second scene? How do the rest of you get involved?

JACK: Um, I think I would like to go...

AUSTIN: Sure!

JACK: And see... the mayor's office.

AUSTIN: How do you put, I mean, at this point, has Florence just, by herself put this together, that the mayor is involved?

JACK: Um, I think that I... [sighs] I wonder if there's been some coverage, in the news?

AUSTIN: My guess is... that coverage did not say a secret document from the mayor's office was involved.

[Ali laughs]

JACK: No. Um, that is a good... that is a good point.

AUSTIN: Do you confer with Tyler Taylor in some way?

JACK: Well, because we're both private eyes, aren't we?

AUSTIN: You're both private eyes, yeah.

JACK: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: Is there a message board you're part of, or a group chat?

JACK: There's a forum, yeah, there's a forum. It's like, it's like um... it's less Disc— it's less a Discord group, and more a NeoGAF forum.

AUSTIN: Oh, no.

JACK: For private eyes.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, buddy.

JACK: Um, yeah. It's ba— it's... it's bad.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: What's it called?

JACK: Oh, god. It's called, um... Oh, I know what it's called! It's called "Elementary."

AUSTIN: Ooh!

JACK: And it's full...

AUSTIN: I follow Elementary new threads on Twitter. I don't really visit the forum that much, but it's good to stay.... On top.

JACK: It's called Elementary, and it's fullllllll... of shitheads. Florence, ah, doesn't spend a lot of time there. But when she does, she always manages to leave in a fight. [Austin laughs] Like a temporary ban, or something. And I think that I heard about it, I don't know whether... Tyler, did I hear about it from you, or did I hear about it from someone else talking shit about you?

[Austin laughs]

ART: It's definitely the second one.

JACK: [Laughing] Okay, right. So some other private eye was like, "he didn't mention that it was his uncle. Which is a thing that I've written down."

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: They're like, "something's going on with the mayor. There was a piece of paper linked to the mayor."

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: "Nobody steal this lead. This lead is mine."

AUSTIN: "I'm posting about it for some reason."

JACK: Well I think it's because, the forum is both... massively under-used, and way more used than you'd think it would be. At the same time.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Everyone who's on it thinks that it's a bigger group than it is.

AUSTIN: But also.

JACK: Um, or rather, thinks that it's a smaller group. Everyone on it thinks that they're just hanging out and chatting with like, a very close group of people that they fight with all the time.

AUSTIN: Right, right right right. But there's lots of lurkers?

JACK: There are lots and lots and lots of lurkers.

AUSTIN: So do you get there, are you there at like the break of dawn, then? To be the first... of the private eyes, here to bust this open?

JACK: [laughs] Yeah. I am. Um, well, no. Ah... I'm trying to think. Yeah, I think that the, that the... I'm in the waiting room before people have arrived in the room that I'm supposed to be going into.

AUSTIN: You're in City Hall, basically.

JACK: Mm-hm. I'm sitting on a chair that, the chair doesn't have any armrests.

AUSTIN: What's City Hall look like, Keith? As someone who is the owner of "buildings?"

KEITH: I, yeah. Since I own buildings, and I own all the buildings... I think that, I think City Hall is one of those types of buildings where city halls kinda look the same wherever you go? [Austin mm-hms] The difference is that it's just surrounded by, like, the weirdness of the rest of Bluff City. Um, it's maybe got like, um... you know what, I bet it's got, I bet it's got a nice big green front lawn, that's supposed to have like, it has the pedestals for like, like ornaments and decorations and art that never went up.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's good.

KEITH: Ah, but it's, it's, you know, it has a dome...

AUSTIN: Does it have plaques, that still say, like, "this monument was donated by so-and-so," but there's no monument there?

KEITH: [laughing] Yeah, they donated, yeah. It's like, hey, I'm gonna donate this money for this monument, and so they put the pedestal up, but the money never came. So they.... [laughs]

AUSTIN: Or they spent it on something else—

KEITH: The pedestal!

AUSTIN: They spent it on parties, instead of spending it on...

[Keith laughs]

JACK: Oh, yeah! They did! And there's definitely been a monument gala.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

JACK: But no one knows where that money's gone.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Um, yeah. So there's like, space for all this like, ornamentation that never happened.

AUSTIN: Great.

KEITH: And so you just have like, very standard marble floors, columns, dome with a weathervane... That's common, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: All city halls have weathervanes, I think.

AUSTIN: Um, so, I did just realize that we jumped right into that first scene without walking through how to frame a scene, which we should do... much better, this time! Because I'll actually read those rules, instead of skipping over them. Um, which is that you need to tell me how, or tell each other how, where, which you've done, Jack, uh... what, and with who, you are, at the beginning of a scene. And that will help us kind of frame the activity.

[Keith makes a calm, distant "oh, no" sound]

JACK: Oh no?

AUSTIN: What was *that* noise?

KEITH: I have spilt hot candle wax. On me and my desk.

ALI: Oh!

JACK: Oh, no! Are you okay?

AUSTIN: That's not good.

KEITH: [away from microphone] Yeah, I'm good, I'm just... covered in, I'm good, I'm covered in wax, though.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Covered! Covered in wax.

KEITH: It smells delicious! It smells like mulled cider.

JACK: [happily] Oh!

AUSTIN: [unhappily] Oh. That took a turn. That took a good, a positive turn.

KEITH: Delicious— it is a really...

AUSTIN: I thought you said it smelled like mold. And I was like “eugh! That’s the worst!”

KEITH: It’s the most aromatherapeutic thing I’ve ever spilled.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: Great. Uh, so yeah, Jack, at the beginning of a scene, you describe... I’m just gonna read again, from this thing... “Starting the scene. Where are you, what are you doing, who are you with.”

JACK: Okay. So, I am at. The. Mayor’s office. I am here, to... um... I think that I have probably... When you arrive in the, like, the reception room, there is a piece of paper that says, like, “are you here to see so-and-so?” Write down their name, because of course we can’t— There’s less face-to-face communication, so they want to be prepped, for this. [Austin mm-hms] Um, write down your name, write down who you are, write down which person you want to talk to, and write down roughly how long you’re going to be talking to them for. And I think I’ve written down that I want to speak to like, an aide. But I want to speak to the mayor.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay. Um, so is the challenge for you this scene like, working through the bureaucracy to actually get to the mayor?

JACK: Ah... I wonder if it’s that, or if it’s, when I get to the mayor, the mayor just stonewalling me completely.

AUSTIN: That would be the investigation, right?

JACK: Oh, right. Sure. Yeah!

AUSTIN: Or I mean, it could be the other way around, in which case the investigation would be what follows after that. But. Who are some other people who are here, at the mayor’s office? I’m looking at support for this, because... that’s what our role is.

KEITH: [away from microphone] It’s all over my new sweater.

AUSTIN: O... kay.

ALI: [sighs] Can you get it out?

AUSTIN: That’s not good. You just got that sweater.

KEITH: I just— literally yesterday, I got it.

ALI: You’ll get it out. Hot water...

AUSTIN: Do you wanna take a wax break?

KEITH: No, no. I'm already covered, so. No.

[Ali laughs]

ALI: Hmm... who else would be at the mayor's office? Uh...

AUSTIN: Like, who is the aide? That, that... Florence ends up speaking with?

ALI: I think they're like an intern? Do mayor's offices have interns?

AUSTIN: Okay! This one can.

ALI: They do now. They do now.

AUSTIN: Let me tell you, Mayor Frasier has, is all about introducing new ideas to Bluff City. And one of those new ideas is, "I need to have three interns."

[Jack laughs]

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly. It's an accessibility thing. They're like, recent high school graduates—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: —that come over, who are able to work the summer for him, yeah.

AUSTIN: "Don't need to go to college. Gotta go into service, gotta go into service for the community."

[Ali laughs]

JACK: And it's also an extravagance thing.

ART: Also, political interns are *definitely* a thing. I don't know if you guys were around for the *nineties*.

[Ali and Austin laugh darkly]

AUSTIN: Ugh. So yeah, who's the intern? Let's see. Any good intern names out there?

KEITH: I've got a preppy intern name.

AUSTIN: What's the preppy intern name?

KEITH: Christian Wolcotte.

AUSTIN: Oh, my god.

ALI: Wow.

ART: Oh, I hate that guy.

AUSTIN: ChristiaIn Wolcott is definitely— can you please be Christian Wolcott? In this scene?

KEITH: [sighs boredly] I suppose.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Yep, that's Christian.

JACK [as Florence]: Yes, well, I was rather hoping that I would be able to speak to... to the mayor.

KEITH [as Christian]: Listen, a lot of people hope a lot of things around here.

[a beat of silence]

JACK [as Florence]: Does that mean that I'm not going to be able to speak to the mayor?

KEITH [as Christian]: It means I'm a little busy? [Austin laughs] I... spilled something. On my— [breaks character voice, laughing] sweater!

[Austin, Art, and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: He's— I've never seen method role-play before, but here we are.

[Ali laughs]

JACK [as Florence]: That looks, that looks uncomfortable.

KEITH [as Christian]: You can talk to me, but I'm gonna be, I'm gonna be picking... bits of wax.

JACK [as Florence]: No, I don't want to talk to you, I want to talk to the, uh...

KEITH [as Christian]: I spilled the town seal. [Ali laughs loudly] When we send out letters, I spilled it all over my... sweater...

JACK [as Florence]: [incredulously] Sorry, how old are you?

KEITH [as Christian]: S... seventeen.

JACK [as Florence]: Right, well—

AUSTIN: But an old soul.

[Jack laughs]

KEITH [as Christian]: But my father's rich *and* old.

[Austin laughs]

JACK [as Florence]: What's your, what's your surname?

KEITH [as Christian]: Wolcott.

JACK [as Florence]: I think I know— P... Pa Wolcott.

KEITH [as Christian]: Oh, Pa? That's my grandfather.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

JACK [as Florence]: You could say I worked with him, back in the day.

KEITH [as Christian]: I mean, you could say that. I don't know.

[02:00:00]

JACK [as Florence]: Look, Christian. I'm gonna make it very easy for you. I used to...

KEITH [as Christian]: A lot of things are very easy for me.

AUSTIN: [muttering under his breath]: Oh my fucking god. [aloud] This fucking guy.

[Art sighs loudly]

JACK: I think I'm going to just walk behind the desk, and start aiming for the mayor's office.

AUSTIN: So you're just forcing your way?

JACK: Yeah! I think so.

KEITH [as Christian]: I played rugby. I'm not afraid of... standing in your way.

JACK [as Florence]: You played rugby?

KEITH [as Christian]: Mind the— mind the ink, and the... wax.

AUSTIN: Mind the wax. Uh—

ART: "Mind the ink."

[Austin laughs]

KEITH: Listen, I said— I'm busy with the wax. I said ink, instead of wax.

AUSTIN: Uh, that sounds like a Body. It sounds like you're just forcing your way in?

JACK: Yeah. I guess, yeah. I'm about to do that.

AUSTIN: Alright. What is your Body score?

JACK: My Body score is...

AUSTIN: Regular.

JACK: Zero. Empty. Regular. Able.

AUSTIN: Zero, so that's just... that's just one? I think? Right? Is this the...

JACK: One die.

AUSTIN: I'm trying to remember if we're right on dice again, let's double-check. Ah... "Investigation roll procedure..." Here we go. "Challenge rolls." Yeah. "Supporters choose governing condition—" People agree, this is body?

JACK: God, there's just dice fuckin' everywhere at this point.

KEITH: Yeah. I totally agree.

AUSTIN: There are. "Protagonist rolls one white die, supporters roll a black die, adding any extra white or black from governing conditions..." Oh! Oh. Does this—

KEITH: Oh, so I get— we just roll one more, right.

AUSTIN: Is that true? Or is that only for investigations, I need to double check.

JACK: Oh, I think it might be just for investigations...?

AUSTIN: I, I hope so. For the sake of the investigators.

KEITH: No, I think that you're right.

AUSTIN: Ah... yeah. Just investigation rolls. So yeah. One white and one black... I think.

JACK: Okay. Right. So should we just move all these... away?

AUSTIN: Yeah, just pick the middle ones, is what I kind of did there.

JACK: Okay, right, so I got this one?

AUSTIN: Yep, and this one. Two in the middle.

JACK: Alright, let's roll this. It's like a little dice arena that we've made for ourselves here.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Uhh...

JACK: Uh-oh...

KEITH: Uh, I think I rolled the wrong 2?

AUSTIN: You did, you did, you rolled the high 2. Someone needs to roll that low 2. But I can't click...

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, am I in the wrong—

KEITH: I got it, I got it, I got it. There we go.

AUSTIN: You got it?

KEITH: One.

AUSTIN: Alright. So 3 vs. 1. That's just a success! That's a straight-up success!

[Keith sighs loudly]

AUSTIN: 'Cause it's two more!

JACK: So I think—

AUSTIN: So what's that look like, 'cause you get to narrate that, Jack.

JACK: Um. So I think what happens is, as I go to move to the door, Christian says, "I played rugby." And Florence just puts a hand on his shoulder and pushes him back down into his chair and opens the door.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Good, and just walks right in?

KEITH [as Christian]: [under his breath] I don't have time for this. [aloud] I don't have time for this. I'm busy.

AUSTIN: And... you walk right into the mayor's office! So you keep that white die. So let's leave that, like, here... I'll get rid of this black one. Just move those away.

KEITH [as Christian]: [under his breath] I decided to let her past.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah. The mayor is inside. He is practicing his putting, obviously. [Jack laughs] He's putting into a projector screen... which then generates a result, and it doesn't say, like... It doesn't show you what happens, it just generates a result. And he has like, thirty golf balls lined up that he putts again and again. Like, it's not a game, do you know what I mean? Or, it's not a visual game.

JACK: [laughs] Yeah.

AUSTIN: He putts it, and then it says like, "nice birdie!" Or, you know, "Ah! You got it in the rough!" And it also just gives you conditions over and over, like, it'll be like, you know, [synthetic voice] "there's a slight incline." And there's just a voice in the background saying that, while this whole conversation happens. Various golf things. Art, if you wanna be that golf voice, I'd *really* appreciate it.

ART: I'm on it.

JACK [as Florence]: Mister Mayor.

AUSTIN: Do you know the mayor? Have you and the mayor ever interacted, Florence?

JACK: Uhh... Uh, no. The mayor was, the mayor... I was before the mayor's time. Or the mayor was after my time.

AUSTIN: Okay.

AUSTIN [as Mayor Frasier]: Madam! How can I help you, are you with the... What are you... you're a constituent! You're a constituent.

JACK [as Florence]: I'm a detective.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: You're... with the PD?

JACK [as Florence]: Ah... formerly.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Had a falling out? Not a big fan of the cops?

JACK [as Florence]: I worked for them for the majority of my professional life, and then I decided—

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Well, that's great. That's fantastic.

JACK [as Florence]: Time was come to—

ART [as golf program]: Eagle!

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: If you talk out to my assistant, Mr. Wolcott, he'll help you with anything you need.

JACK [as Florence]: I'm here to talk to you about Hector Hu.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Who? [a beat of silence] That's the only time I'll do that joke! 'Cause any more times is racist!

AUSTIN: Says the mayor.

JACK [as Florence]: Please sit down. We have a lot to talk about.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Now, hey...

ART [as golf program]: Good par!

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: I do my best, machine.

AUSTIN: And then hits another one.

[Keith laughs]

ART [as golf program]: Bogey.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Also, “good par” is a good one.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: It’s a little too congratulatory.

JACK: [laughing] Oh, god...

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: I don’t know what you’re looking for here... You should just go down to the office, the police station, and let them know that you’re interested, they’ll update you to anything you need.

JACK [as Florence]: You’re very confident.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: I believe in my officers. They protect us, they serve us, they protect us and serve us.

JACK [as Florence]: Well, uh...

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: That’s their motto!

JACK [as Florence]: They protect us and serve us. Yes, I know it was on my badge for—

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Nope! It’s the whole thing, actually. It’s, “We protect you, we serve you, we protect you and serve you.”

AUSTIN: Putt!

ART [as golf program]: Water hazard.

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Aw. Damn. Can’t believe they put a water hazard that close to the green.

JACK [as Florence]: Sir, I need you to focus.

ART [as golf program]: It's a tricky course.

JACK [as Florence]: At the time of Hector Hu's death, in the Show Dogs restaurant...

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: Aw, they didn't kill him in Show Dogs?

JACK [as Florence]: This is the first you're hearing of this?

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: [sighs] I didn't know it was in Show Dogs. Show Dogs—

JACK [as Florence]: Well, he was killed in Show Dogs. He was carrying a document that the local police seemed to think that you'd be interested in.

AUSTIN: Putt.

ART [as golf program]: Birdie!

AUSTIN [as Frasier]: [sighs] I have lots of interests, I have lots of aides. Maybe one of my aides was interested in the document that you're talking about, you talk to them, find out... move on! With your day.

JACK [as Florence]: No, my contact specifically, sir, my contact specifically said, "the mayor."

AUSTIN: Give me a thing! Like, what are we... what is this challenge? You're trying to talk him into it, huh?

JACK: Yeah, I think... I think...

AUSTIN: This feels like Heart, to me.

JACK: Yeah...

AUSTIN: It's like, force of personality?

JACK: I think it's a Heart talk. I think at first, it was force of body...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And then force of personality.

AUSTIN: Other supporters agree?

ART: Yeah!

KEITH: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: Okay!

JACK: So we get, I get one, because...

AUSTIN: You get two, to start with.

JACK: Uh-huh. And then I get one because my Mind is good, because my Heart is good.

AUSTIN: Because your, your Heart is good.

JACK: My Mind is bad.

AUSTIN: Your Mind is bad. Your Heart is good.

JACK: Wow, same.

AUSTIN: And then— [laughs] And then the bargain dice come from the one that you kept. So put a bargain die over there. And then we get three... negative investigation ones? Plus one, because of the...

JACK: Oof.

AUSTIN: Because of the escalated district. Ali, do you wanna roll these bad dice?

ALI: Um, sure, these four ones right here?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the four...

JACK: I should roll these good dice.

AUSTIN: You should roll the good ones! And then, Keith, can you roll the bargain one over to the right?

KEITH: Yeah, totally.

JACK: [laughing] Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!

AUSTIN: Alright! That ain't bad. [pause] [laughing] Phew!

JACK: [laughing] Oh, it is bad.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's kinda bad. Alright, let's see. So the highest three, which is what the black dice always put forward, it's 4, 6, 6!

JACK: So I can only beat one of them. Yes. I can beat the 4.

AUSTIN: You could beat the 4. And then you're gonna lose the other ones. Brutal. The bargain dice was a one, which means there isn't, like, a bargain you can take here, that's better.

JACK: Yeah. Ugh, wow.

AUSTIN: That is a good roll from the mayor.

KEITH: Although, like, the best I could have done was roll a 6, and you still would have had to do some other shit.

AUSTIN: True. True, you would have had to have broken a principle here, and your principle again...

KEITH: Yeah, you would have broken a principle and still still lost to a different 6.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: My principle is "don't let them know who I really am."

AUSTIN: Yeah. "Never reveal my true self." Whatever that means. So, let's go through the good one. What's the good one? A 5?

JACK: Yeah, I'm just trying to find the table again... Alright, so the good one is— sorry, a mosquito just flew directly into my face. [Ali laughs] The good one is a 5, so I can add a random lead or connection with that, right?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Yeah! So, you draw, or, or, you can connect. You can string together any two leads.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: So do you wanna get a new lead, or do you want to connect anything? The thing to remember... two things to remember.

JACK: Would this— oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: One, I just remembered an important thing. Hector Hu is a lead. So, you could connect something there and get a three connection lead, and then...

JACK Which would let us, in theory, begin to answer a question.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly. Or, you could draw a new lead and add it to the table.

JACK: Mm-hm. Okay. Um, I'm going to... [long pause] Hm. [long pause] [inhale] I'm going to add a new lead.

AUSTIN: Okay. Pshew... I don't know what to do with this one card, still. Uh, we could flip this card over and we can see what it is, or we could draw a new one, Jack. It's up to you.

JACK: Umm—

AUSTIN: That I pulled out, by mistake before.

JACK: Let's draw a new one. 'Cause I think I remember what that one is.

AUSTIN: Alright. Drawing it... Boom. Three of diamonds.

JACK: Alright. So a three of diamonds is... a...

AUSTIN: It is either... do we have to decide if it's a... I guess we can pick, either from identity, places, or things? Right?

JACK: Mm. MM-hm.

AUSTIN: If it's... a person, it's an actor or performer. If it's a place, it's an office, and if it's a thing, it is a family heirloom.

JACK: So, it's an office.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And... what happens is, stuff is about to go badly wrong, for Florence Slowly. We know that because of the rest of the dice.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: So I think that the mayor actually gives her his full attention. I think he puts down the golf club and he closes the program on the projection screen. And as he sits down, for a second, what was on the screen before is visible.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's good.

JACK: Which is an email. To a place, to a... to a... office. And the name of the office is, and I'm just looking for a name here, it is called the Ollerenshaw Office of Requisitions.

AUSTIN: Say that first one?

JACK: Ollerenshaw.

AUSTIN: Spell—

JACK: O-L-L—

AUSTIN: O-L-L.

JACK: E-R— [repeats self] E-R-E-N-S-H-A-W. Ollerenshaw.

AUSTIN: S-H-A-W? [Jack mm-hms] Gotcha. Ollerenshaw. Office. Of...

JACK: Requisitions.

AUSTIN: Requisitions.

JACK: And the mayor has sent an office— ha, sent an office— sent an email, to the Ollerenshaw Office of Requisitions that I don't see, because the mayor looks at it and closes it very quickly—

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JACK: And then turns and gives me his full attention.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. And *then* bad things start happening, because there's two...

JACK: Oh, I can link that lead, right?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Oh, no, I would link—

AUSTIN: Right? Is that... yeah yeah yeah, you either add a random lead—

JACK: Or—

AUSTIN: Or a new connection. Yes.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So in fact, maybe you don't see that it's from the mayor's office. He has an email up, but you don't know for sure if it's from him, or it's one that he's looking at—

JACK: Or to him... yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or to him, right. Exactly. One of his interns has sent, and he's reviewing it, who knows. Two bad things happen, though.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So... Draw a card. And either, we're gonna draw two cards. And if it is in a place where there is a lead, we destroy a lead, and if it is in a place with no undestroyed leads, we escalate the district.

JACK: [laughing] Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: This one, I'm gonna do the one that we already drew, so I can get rid of this. Flip card! Two of diamonds! So we're gonna destroy one of the upper crust— the shore leads! And then what's the other one... let me decide how to do that narratively. Ooh! The ace of spades comes out. Uh... which means, we're going to... oh, buddy! It's already escalated once! Does it double escalate?

ALI: Oh, boy...

JACK: What happens here?

AUSTIN: I don't know! Let's find out from the rules!

JACK: It's like a double outbreak in Pandemic!

AUSTIN: I— it *might* be!

KEITH: I'm guessing it's not just a freebie.

AUSTIN: It might be a freebie!

KEITH: It might be a freebie!

JACK: I'll take a freebie.

AUSTIN: Ah, here we go. "During an investigation, a single district can be escalated multiple times, and each escalation adds another black die to the investigation rolls."

JACK: Fucking shit. It's not a freebie. It's an expensive.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Well, at least it doesn't further—

AUSTIN: Correct.

KEITH: 'Cause like once, it doesn't further us towards the epilogue, though, right?

AUSTIN: Correct. So, but what does it— so, first of all, how does one of these get destroyed? How does one of these other leads get destroyed?

JACK: Do you narrate this, or do I do?

AUSTIN: One of us does, one of the supporters does. So how does one of the upper crust, the shore, leads get destroyed for our parts, for our purposes.

ART: Is there like, an explanation of just what destroying a lead means?

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally.

KEITH: Oh.

AUSTIN: "During an investigation roll... a miss on a 6 might destroy a lead. Destroyed places are burnt, collapsed, or otherwise ruined. Destroyed objects are lost or broken. Destroyed people are killed or otherwise rendered inert. Destroyed leads keep their connections but aren't counted towards the chain of three connected. Unused leads necessary to find an answer. Sorry— to the... Destroyed leads keep their connections, but aren't counted toward the chain of three connected *unused* leads necessary to find an answer. A destroyed lead can still be part of a chain used to find an answer, but the chain would have to include three other, undestroyed, unused leads. If your character operates in the same district as a destroyed lead, you treat the lead as undestroyed. Your character knows how to make use of the fragments that remain."

So maybe it's just— we just get, when he says, remember when he was like, “oh, Show Dogs? It was in Show Dogs?” And then it's like, smash cut. Show Dogs on fire.

JACK: [laughs] Oh, wow. Yeah. I like that a lot.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And burns down. Mysteriously.

ALI: Yeah. Boy howdy.

AUSTIN: Flip that card. Um... cool. How does it escalate in the mainland? [pause] Thoughts?

ALI: Phew-y. Okay, umm...

[02:15:00]

KEITH: Um, maybe the zombie class... like, maybe they get worse. In terms— like, less, even less cooperation with their daily schedules.

ART: The graffiti goes from “infinity love” to “omega love.”

AUSTIN: Oh no. [Ali laughs] Omega love.

ALI: You never go full omega love.

AUSTIN: Omega love...

ART: I'm also adding “omega love” to my name list.

AUSTIN: Please. Thank you. Uh-huh! [Jack laughs] Let me flip that... whoop! That's not what I wanted to do... flip it. Flip that card. Boop. Um, and like, maybe it actually does gain a sort of class action vibe? Like, it... there are, maybe part of this is like Hector, Hector had a revolutionary streak in him. And there's like, one of the things he talked about was omega love. And, sometimes you have to force people to go to omega love. You know, he signed off, “infinite love.” But, omega love is when you have to, when you try to change the world. When the world's okay, you can sign off “infinite love.” But you know, right after the second Obama assassination, he started signing off “omega love” for a year, until finally, thankfully, the righteous agents got the impersonator and replaced him with first impersonator, who is like, a decent person. Very complicated.

ART: Oh, man.

KEITH: So the original Obama was assassinated—

AUSTIN: Correct.

KEITH: —and replaced with an okay replacement—

AUSTIN: Okay replacement!

KEITH: Who's then replaced with a really bad replacement.

JACK: Much worse replacement.

AUSTIN: You don't wanna— it was a crab man. So. You don't wanna...

ALI: Oh, eugh.

KEITH: Right. And so it's like, I, I wish for the days when our worst problem was just that we had an okay Obama replacement in office—

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: —and not this horrible Obama replacement.

AUSTIN: Exactly.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: And then they got it, and he stopped signing off “omega love.” And started signing off “infinite love” again.

JACK: And these things are definitely linked, in that like, probably, once news gets out that Show Dogs has burned down...

AUSTIN: Yep. People know.

JACK: A bunch of people are like, “okay! Alright!”

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: “That's what happened, apparently!”

ART: Well, you know why they got Show Dogs, right?

AUSTIN: Why?

ART: Come on. Come on. They didn't want us... they didn't want us to know about Show Dogs.

AUSTIN: They didn't want us to know what was happening at Show Dogs.

JACK: Yeah...

AUSTIN: The *real* gala, the *secret* gala....

ART: Yeah.

JACK: Oh...

ART: But I wanna, right now, say that I am not going for that whole "pizza" thing. [Austin scoffs] This is not a reference to that, [Austin and Keith laugh loudly] and should not be taken as that.

AUSTIN: Good. Ugh... Alright! New scene.

JACK: Wait, doesn't a second bad thing happen? Or, there's two...

AUSTIN: No, the second bad thing was the destruction of... it's the destruction of the Show Dogs, and then it's the omega love. It's the escalation to where this is taking on a sort of revolutionary character.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: To where people are, people start going into work, and sabotaging work.

KEITH: Oh, no.

AUSTIN: And leaving behind the omega love symbol.

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, I'm up for that.

AUSTIN: Which is an omega with a heart in the middle. Or, a heart with an omega in the middle. It's the second one. That's better.

ART: Is it an upside-down heart, with the omega things... it almost looks like an ace of spades?

AUSTIN: Ooh... yeah! Yes! Yes! Like, yeah, that works! Especially since it was literally the ace of spades that we drew.

ART: Yeah, I don't know if that was me coming up with something, or if I've just been looking at card suits for two hours.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: Yup. Could be. Alright, Patty or Chris.

ALI: Hmm...

AUSTIN: You got something?

ALI: I don't know, I'm like... the outskirts is my beat...

AUSTIN: Yeah. And things are goin' wild, here.

ALI: And things are gettin' kinda wild, um. Yeah, I'm just trying to think of a scene...

AUSTIN: It's a who, a what, and a where.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Has she checked in with the radio station at all?

ALI: Um, yeah, I was thinking maybe that would be the thing, um... Do we know, should we say where the radio station is?

AUSTIN: I think it's on the mainland. Like, he worked on the mainland, so. Or, I guess he worked in the cove, actually. Now that I think about it, right? I think maybe he worked in the cove, but he's fr— do you know what I mean? The radio station... Ah, nah, we drew the cove. He's in the cove. So he's in like, the kind of, skid row, the kind of low income housing, and local, like actual local real people, who live in Bluff City, and who have to deal with all of this expansion, and who have not been treated well by the government. But there is this old run-down radio station that is WBRK the Break, and, people, again, the Break is the Break. You don't fuck with the Break. So, it's just an old— I dunno, I guess Keith, what's the Break's HQ look like?

KEITH: Oh. Uh, I think that the Break's HQ is like, um, it was... it's two, it's two sort of small office buildings that have sort of been remodeled to look like one building?

AUSTIN: That's good. I like that a lot.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Cool. So what do we— so that's the "where." Are you alone, or are you with somebody, Chris?

ALI: Um, I think that I'm alone, unless anyone wants to tag along... this seems like sort of a personal thing...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Like "I have to go get to the bottom of this show that I really like" is kind of like a thing that you don't call up your PI that you know for?

AUSTIN: Right. No...

ALI: She probably doesn't know anyone. Um, I think that... hmm. So I think that she probably goes like, really late at night. [Austin mm-hms] Like, maybe like an hour before the show would usually be on?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Just to kind of like, check the doors and stuff, and make sure that this isn't like, a cover up, that he's not really alive, and...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah.

ALI: He isn't being like, snuck in and out of the building.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's good! That's a thing— you're real! You're a real one! That's exactly what he would say!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: You didn't see the body, shit!

ALI: Yeah, I—

AUSTIN: Even if you did see the body...

ALI: I listened to the show for a really long time, I know how these work. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Um, is there somebody there, who is like... or maybe you just get in. Is it, it's a late night shift, so maybe there's like, security is there, but... with him gone, are they just, you're in charge of communication, in a way, right? So are they just running, like, repeats? Or something like that? Or is there another DJ there. Art seems to have a DJ person name.

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, I don't—

ART: I do.

ALI: I don't know if it would be... it probably feels really disrespectful that they're like, oh, our new show! 2 AM! With this other guy!

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: But like, I feel like that's the more honest thing to Bluff City, where they would wanna cover up really quickly, [Austin mm-hms] rather than pay respects to this host.

AUSTIN: Right. Alright, Art, who is your radio person?

ART: Gabby Gabs.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Love Gabby Gabs. And is Gabby just there, finishing her shift, and just like runs into Chris?

ALI: I think it would be right before she starts it, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, so she's taking over this next, okay, this slot. Gotcha, gotcha gotcha.

ALI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So this is an hour before he would usually come on, so she's like there to sort of like corner her and ask about, like, the terms of her like employment or... not that specific, but like...

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: You know. How'd you get this job, how'd they figure out that you were gonna be the guy to replace him...

AUSTIN: Right...

ALI: Right before, this is her first big show.

AUSTIN: I bet they just let you in, right? Like, you're a known fan. You're not trying to get in... you're not... this isn't a hard thing to sneak, you're not even sneaking past. You show up at reception and the receptionist says like, says like:

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: Oh, Chris! I'm so sorry, I know you were... Chris... Oh... Christine... [Ali laughing] Chris... You... you should go to his office. Gabby's in there now, obviously, but, I'm sure she'd love to say hello and let you see, you know, where he made his magic. Where he made the magic happen.

ALI [as Chris]: I, I would appreciate that, yeah. For sure.

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: Are you— Chris. Are you doing okay?

ALI [as Chris]: Yep. Every day, infinite love, you know?

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: Yeah.

ALI [as Chris]: Gotta keep it going.

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: You know what? *Omega* love.

ALI [as Chris]: Mm.

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: Mm? That's where I'm at. That's what I'm talking about, I'm talking about that omega love. Do you like this? This is my radio voice. I thought maybe one day I'd be able to go on, you know, he was such a big inspiration to all of us. So.

ALI [as Chris]: Um, yeah, very smooth. Very, no bumps or ridges there. I like it.

AUSTIN [as Receptionist]: That's me. Jackson. Jackson Malone.

ALI [as Chris]: Mm.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: That's my radio name, it's not my real name. My real name isn't as good.

ALI [as Chris]: Jackson is a little... tough?

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: *Jackson*.

ALI [as Chris]: There's some rough edges there. Uh...

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: I'll just smooth them out.

ALI [as Chris]: Yeah. Mm-hm.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Jahhhsss... Jacks... Jag-son.

ALI [as Chris]: Yeah. You're getting this.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Put a curve in the "ck." *Jaghson*.

ALI [as Chris]: Mm. Mm, yeah. That's, uh...

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: *Malone*...

ALI [as Chris]: You know, I'm not one of the people who make the, uh, decisions. I just listen. You know, I can't really say for myself, but I would listen to your show.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Some people would pronounce it "Jason." But I don't. I curve it. I don't make it smooth.

ALI [as Chris]: You gotta stand out.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Jaggin.

ALI [as Chris]: Mm—

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Ja— Dragon. Dragon Malone.

[Keith laughs loudly]

ALI [as Chris]: Ooh.

AUSTIN: He like licks his lips.

[Jack laughs]

ALI [as Chris]: Oh... W-wait. Dragons...

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: They call me the Big Dragon. [Keith laughs] Dragon Malone.

ALI [as Chris]: Might wanna get off dragons, you heard about the dragons that work in, uh, recycling, right?

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: The... What?

[Keith laughs loudly]

ALI [as Chris]: You heard that episode?

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Dragons in recycling...

ALI [as Chris]: You head that whole episode, about how the recycling...

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: [very serious] Oh, how they all, they eat it up! They eat up the recycling. That's right.

ALI [as Chris]: [barely restraining laughter] Yeah.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Yeah.

ALI [as Chris]: They're supposed to recycle the cans... And they...

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: And I'm gonna— But they don't—

ALI [as Chris]: They get eaten up. And then now, they don't have any of the metal to make more cans. It's like a real big problem!

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: It's the same cans! They're using the same cans over and over again, that's what Hector told me.

ALI [as Chris]: Right, exactly. Do you know how much gas it takes to make a can? That's why you have to recycle them!

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: And you know where they get the gas from! From the candy corn. So. It... [sighs]

ALI [as Chris]: It's wild. It's wild. It's wild stuff. I'm gonna miss him!

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: I don't know what we're gonna do.

ALI [as Chris]: How am I not gonna know these things anymore?

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: Who's gonna tell, / am! Dragon. Dragon Malone.

ALI [as Chris]: Ah. By all means. I support you.

AUSTIN [as Jackson]: A-anyway, I think Gabby's right, I think Art's back from going to the bathroom or whatever, so... [Ali laughs loudly] You can go in the back now and talk

to Gabby. See, I'm really good at filling! I got a note from Gabby that said, "hey, could you fill for a little bit?" And I said, "I got you." Rawr.

ART: I had to coax the dog back into the house.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay. Shout-outs to Keith, for reminding me of the way you soften a "C" sound is "sss," so it could be Jason, in the chat. Would not have gotten to Dragon without Jason, so...

KEITH: Thank you!

AUSTIN: Alright!

KEITH: Dragon was funny. I fuckin'...

AUSTIN: Dragon's good.

KEITH: I almost choked on my tea that I was drinking. [Austin laughs] I wrote in the chat, I'm still at max one spill per sesh. [Austin and Ali laugh] So.

AUSTIN: Good. Alright. Ah... So you go back to talk to Gabby. What's that like? What's the room like? Like, this is, this is Hector's office that Gabby's since moved into. So I bet most of Hector's stuff is still in there.

ART: Yeah, I bet it does, it's like... full of his ephemera, right, which is probably some radio stuff, you know, like, here's your listener's choice award.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: But like, it's also probably some like, here's the newspaper that shows the Obama imposter... number two. With like the circle and the line pointing to the other one.

AUSTIN: [grimly] Mm-hm.

ART: Look, he's got a different jaw bone!

[Austin laughs]

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: There's a couple other things in here: there are... there's a full standing suit of knight armor in here, like, medieval knight armor? There is a wall that is just horseshoe crabs, like

eight of them, on the wall. There is a corkboard with like, strings and stuff all over the place, but there's not stuff up. It's just strings. Like, strings onto pushpins, onto thumbtacks, but not... there's no pictures, there's no newspaper clippings, there's no names... but there are, it very clearly is connecting something. So, those are three things in here.

ALI: Does it look like anything's been torn down, like there was supposed to be something there?

AUSTIN: Oh... I dunno, is that what's happening here? So, let's get a little bit of Gabby and you, is the notion here that like, you're talking to Gabby while scanning the place to look for things?

ALI: Yeah. For sure.

AUSTIN: What's Gabby like, Art?

ART: [with a faint "valley girl" tone] Um, Gabby's just really excited to have this opportunity. Gabby's been—

[Ali laughs quietly]

AUSTIN: Wait. Question, was that in character, does Gabby say, "Gabby's just really excited?"

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mm-kay.

ART: Um, I was like starting that sentence as if I was like, gonna struggle to find her, and then she was just *right* there.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

ART [as Gabby]: Um, you know, Gabby's been working really hard at the station, you know, I interned here outta Rutgers, they didn't really have a spot for me, so I did like, some producing, and then... you know, I was in Trenton for a little bit, working outta there, and they got some weird stuff up in Trenton. You wouldn't believe it. And then—

ALI [as Chris]: Yeah, what's... what's going on in Trenton?

ART [as Gabby]: And then I came back here, and I've been filling in on Drive Time, when they need— afternoon Drive Time, of course, Hector, aw, I loved Hector. Hector did our morning drive... And yeah, this is just such an exciting opportunity. I really wanna get to know the community a little more, play some good records, I really wanna get us back to some *music*.

ALI [as Chris]: Music. You think that's, that's what the city needs, is music?

AUSTIN: [laughing] Oh-ho!

ART [as Gabby]: Everyone needs music!

ALI [as Chris]: [sighs deeply] There's enough music in Bluff City. Uh... when did you... when did you... you said you've been interning here for a bit. When did they uh...

ART [as Gabby]: I interned here back when I was in school. I've... I'm not... That was probably seven years ago? And yeah, I tried to get a job and they didn't have it, I was in Trenton for a— didn't I just say— who are you again?

[Ali and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Alright, go ahead. Go ahead.

ALI [as Chris]: I'm, um, Chris Andrews. I don't know if it's... I'm not like a big deal, but, if you listened to Hector, you might have...

AUSTIN: [laughs] I can't believe you made a big-name fan!

ART [as Gabby]: I mean, Hector did the overnight, and I, it's really hard for me, it's really hard for Gabby to adjust her schedule to doing the overnight, 'cause like I said, I was available as a fill-in for Drive Time, so I was kinda living a normal schedule, and now I have to start at 2:30 and stop at 10, and it's really been a challenging adjustment, so no, I wasn't a big list— Gabby wasn't a big listener to Hector, so I don't, Gabby doesn't know who you are.

ALI [as Chris]: [bitterly] Right. I see. A "normal schedule," whatever that is.

AUSTIN: [scoffs] So judgy! So is this a challenge, to see if you're gonna be sharp enough to like, find junk in the environment? Or are you trying to like, what's, what is Chris's goal here? Is it to like, be there when Gabby leaves? Is it to get details during this little interaction?

[02:30:00]

ALI: Um, yeah, I think I initially went into the scene trying to ask more about like, if they had been trying to put her in his seat, before he died?

AUSTIN: Mm, I see.

ALI: Um, but I think that maybe now that I'm in the room and it see that it maybe looks like it's been tampered... that's maybe more focused?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: But it's either one. I dunno.

AUSTIN: That seems like Mind, to be paying attention in that way, while keeping up a conversation.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Does that add up, for people?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: All right. So, again, I think it's one white and then one... black? You don't have a higher Mind, right?

ALI: I have low Mind.

AUSTIN: Oh, in fact, you have a lower Mind, so that means that black gets an extra one. Oy.

ALI: [laughs] Oh...

AUSTIN: Good. Good and great.

ALI: Oops. Whoops.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Um, alright.

ALI: I just roll this?

AUSTIN: You just roll that white one.

ALI: Okay. [pause, clicking sounds] It's a 2.

AUSTIN: Ah, it's a tie. Tie goes to the defense. Unless, someone has a bargain. Right?

ART: Oh, you have to win by two, so anything less than a 4 is a...

AUSTIN: Oh, you're right, anything less than a 4 would be a stalemate. Right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, you could take the stalemate, which means that there'd be an extra black die during the investigation, or you can harm— someone could suggest a thing to harm one of your stats in a bargain.

[Ali sighs]

ART: It's hard to think of what the negative outcome for trying to notice something... this is a rough...

AUSTIN: Oh, I think it's Rep. I think, I think it's that you get to stay. I think it's like, you walk out, you walk her out, and then you go back in. But you get caught, like, poking around.

ALI: Mm.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: And so your Rep goes lower because it goes down to "suspected," 'cause like, what are you *doing* in there? And, your investigation just becomes you looking around, in this room while no one is there.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: That's my proposal. Happy to, like, seriously, genuinely happy to hear other proposals.

JACK: Um, I think the idea of being caught in the room of the conspiracy theorist radio station person is very much in character, for Chris.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: [laughs] That's true.

ART: And what if it's not being caught by like, it could— you— not even being caught by the, radio station, it could be like, "why are you in this"— it could be like a police officer shows up, and you're going through this dead guy's office.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. "Who are you?"

JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Exactly. What do you think? Do you accept the bargain?

ALI: Um, mmm... Oh, so there's two bargains. Which is like, either an employee or a police officer?

AUSTIN: Well, no matter— either of those would be Rep. Right?

ALI: Oh, yeah, yeah yeah. Um, yeah, I think the bargain is probably more interesting.

AUSTIN: Alright. So take that white die, or like, leave it out, I guess, because that'll go into the investigation, and then I think we should probably just jump right into the investigation roll. Right, like you do that thing, where like...

JACK: Mm. Like, poking around the...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You do the fake good-bye, sneak back in, and then start seeing what you can find.

ALI: Yeah, for sure. I still just have this one die.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess so, right? 'Cause it's... it's Mind again? Unless you're like, what's it look like? What do you do, to look around this place?

ALI: Um, I think that it's... it's tough, right? Because I think that it's like, appreciating the things that are there. Because she was like, legitimately a fan.

AUSTIN: Hm... Okay!

ALI: And I think that like, a familiarity with the stuff that's there lets her know what to look at.

AUSTIN: I actually like that.

ALI: 'Cause it's like, oh, or it's like, she could find this outcropping that's like this news report on like a weird fish that was at a restaurant or whatever, and instead of being like, oh, were they serving this at Show Dogs, she could be like oh, I remember that episode.

AUSTIN: Right. Mm-hm.

ALI: So.

KEITH: This almost sounds like Heart, then.

AUSTIN: It does sound like Heart.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is zero. So that means there is not a black die added to the negative side.

ALI: I appreciate that.

AUSTIN: There are two added, because of the double-escalated outskirts, though.

[Ali laughs and groans]

KEITH: I'm glad that—

JACK: Oh my god.

KEITH: I'm glad that this episode is just gonna end with the city burning to the ground.

JACK: Mm-hm!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! And that was the end of Bluff City!

ALI: Thanks for supporting us, everyone!

[Austin and Jack laugh]

KEITH: Well luckily this episode takes place in the future, so.

AUSTIN: Oh, and there is a bargain die. Yes, thankfully. Right, so we can fuck around with that bargain die, at least. Someone wanna roll that bargain die?

KEITH: Sure, I'll do it.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna roll these, all these black die all at once.

KEITH: 4, not bad, not great. Not bad.

AUSTIN: That ain't bad!

KEITH: Eh, not bad.

ALI: Alright, what's my roll. 6 and a 3.

AUSTIN: Okay, 6 isn't bad either!

KEITH: That's not bad! That's not bad!

AUSTIN: Ah... multi-sided, random side. Uh, we gotta 4...

KEITH: We've got a five out of six chance of rolling a 6 on the, uh, black dice.

JACK: Mm.

ALI: Mm!

AUSTIN: A 2, a 4, hey, this isn't, listen, 4, 4, 2, is not bad!

KEITH: No, this is not that bad. I didn't realize you had already rolled those.

JACK: Hey!

ALI: Wowee!

KEITH: Look at that!

AUSTIN: In fact, you got a 6! You can get an answer!

ALI: Ah!

KEITH: Holy moly!

ALI: Hot dog!

AUSTIN: So you got a 6 and a 3. How are you pairing these off?

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: Let's see what the options are. Again, the outcome reference is over in the other spot... I'm gonna put these in a better order.

ALI: Yeah, I have super not internalized those, which is why...

AUSTIN: 2, 4, and a 4. So. If the 2 succeeds, you will pin yourself and damage your Reputation. You will become one of the leads, which means that if you get destroyed, your character dies. As if you died.

JACK: [laughs] Oh...

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: And you will damage your Reputation. That's if the 2 succeeds. If the 4 succeeds, you will damage a condition governing this investigation roll, which was Heart. So your Heart, if the 4s... One of these 4s is going to succeed, right?

ALI: Right.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right— oh, oh oh, did we roll the... Reput— did we roll the bargain die? Yes.

KEITH: I did. Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: So we could often the bargain die as a 4... but I guess that wouldn't...

KEITH: Yeah, you could just do the 6 to the 4, and the 3 to the 2, and then you just take the hit on the...

AUSTIN: Right, on the other 4?

KEITH: Yeah. And there's, there's nothing the bargain die can do.

AUSTIN: You *could*... you could accept the 2, but the 2 seems rough. You could take the bargain die from a bargain that we come up with...

KEITH: What's the miss on a 4 do, again? It damages... something?

AUSTIN: It damages a condition. But like, so you could theoretically... there is like a weird interesting die game in this. You could take the bargain die 4, break a principle, and break a tie with one of these 4s.

JACK: Hm. What's your principle?

AUSTIN: "Never betray my own."

[Ali laughs]

JACK: Ohh, hoo hoo.

AUSTIN: Which could be interesting in this moment.

JACK: Oh, there's some really sad stuff here.

AUSTIN: Yeah, there would be. Um...

ALI: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: On your side, you have a 6 and a 3, which means you can, with a 3, you will add a random lead or connection, which, once you add a connection, there are ways in which you could connect this together that would give you enough to then score an answer. Because the 6, with the 6, you can either add your own custom lead from scratch, or, if you have three connected things, find an answer. Which—

ART: Do we have three connected things?

ALI: No.

KEITH: We do not have three connected things.

AUSTIN: You will, you will with the 3! The 3 is gonna get you a third connection!

ALI: Ohhhh, oh, oh, oh.

KEITH: Ohh, right..... Okay.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Because, remember, Hector is also... so you could go, Ali Frasier, to the official document, to the office of requisitions, or to the gun... not to Show Dogs.

ALI: Oh, so it has to be— I wouldn't be able to make a thing that becomes...

AUSTIN: Or to Hector.

ALI: Becomes three.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: And then... 'cause that would be... okay.

AUSTIN: No.

ART: Wait, no, it still isn't, because the new lead isn't... oh, you can connect, you use a 3 to connect...

AUSTIN: You can connect. You can connect. You can use a 3 to connect. Yes.

ART: Okay, got it.

AUSTIN: A 3 to a 5 on a success either adds a new random lead, or, strings a connection between any two leads.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Oh...

KEITH: So we would take care of the 3, and then use the 6 to make the answer.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

KEITH: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: I know, this is a weird game.

KEITH: We all get it. We we all get it exactly the same amount.

ALI: [laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: I think it's cool that this is how this works, and just, we're still early on in this game. So.

ALI: Yeah. Um...

KEITH: That's, that's true.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: So in terms of, like, am I also litigating which damage I take here, or should I just be focusing on, like—

AUSTIN: No, we'll decide that.

ALI: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: So you do the white ones first, and then we'll do the black ones.

ALI: Okay, so I use the 3 to add a thing? And then I'm gonna use the 6 to make a connection...

AUSTIN: [overlapping Ali] You, yeah, so you assign the dice against things.

KEITH: [overlapping Austin] You draw a card.

AUSTIN: So you'd go, like, 3 to the 2, and then a 6 to a 4. Right?

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then with the 3, you can either draw a new lead and add it to the table, or, connect a set lead already. Do you see like, there's a thing called "outcome reference" in the drawer?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's what you're looking at. Um, so, with a 3, you're adding a random lead or making a connection, and with a 6, you're either finding an answer, which, you can do if there is a chain of three undestroyed leads connected on the board, or, you could create a new lead that you want to from scratch. So like, you could say, "well there's a new lead in the outskirts," just to add a lead to the outskirts, if you wanted, for instance. But, you know.

KEITH: Or you could connect something to... official document, cause of death, or the mayor.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. You could add a new thing that connects, right.

KEITH: Right. Life if, like, official document and the mayor and, uh, Ollerenshaw, were connected, then that would be an answer for the 6.

AUSTIN: Totally. So maybe that's the thing you do—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Maybe you connect to one of those two, and then do an answer with whatever that is.

ALI: Yeah, that was my plan. I don't know which is more interesting here, if I like find what that document is, or like something leading to it, or if I find some like, information on the mayor?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Um, I...

AUSTIN: Could go either way.

ALI: Yeah... I'm also open to suggestions.

AUSTIN: I think, if you connected to the Ollerenshaw, I will pull my GM card and tell you what it is, because it connects to a larger Bluff City thing.

ALI: Oh, okay. But then we won't...

AUSTIN: Um, if you connect to just—

ALI: Get three.

AUSTIN: No, you will. That'll be three.

KEITH: That'd be three.

AUSTIN: 'Cause of the official document, to...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ollerenshaw. And then the official document to mayor, and that's three things connected.

ALI: Oh, oh oh okay. So I'm just thinking... they're actually not...

AUSTIN: They don't need to be a triangle, they just need three connected, yeah.

ALI: Oh, okay. I didn't realize that those were, okay.

AUSTIN: Or, you could connect it to Hector. Or you could connect it to the gun. You know? Like, maybe there's an official document that is... the gun registration, and it's in the mayor's name. You know. It's up to you.

KEITH: Wait. Is Hector not... is that still valid as a lead?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: I thought we X'd it out.

AUSTIN: Yes, Hector is a lead. Hector is a lead.

KEITH: I knew it was a lead but I thought it got destroyed, 'cause it has an X over it?

AUSTIN: No, that's from the beginning of the game, you X out the victim in the middle.

KEITH: Okay. Oh, okay.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: That's just for show? Got it.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: Hector's dead. That's...

KEITH: Hector's dead. That means he's dead.

AUSTIN: Hector's dead, yes.

ALI: Then yeah, let me... I can do it that way.

AUSTIN: Okay! So this is the one time that I have a thing that is like... [Ali laughs] I think you find a copy of this document. We get another... picture of... What we get a picture of is that same email, that we saw on the mayor's projector. And then we see there's an attachment. And the attachment is the same thing that was in that document, that was in that file. And I think we even get a note from Hector, that places it in... that says, like, "I'm bringing the document. I'll meet you at Show Dogs. [Jack laughs] And I'm gonna give it to you." And like, this is— or it's in like his, um, most recently printed thing. Or if you open up his PDF, if you open up Adobe Acrobat and hit "recent," and this is there.

ALI: [interested] Oh...

AUSTIN: It is a *highly* redacted file. It is a... a document that has, it's like, in a... it's a scan of something, what looks like... a dozen years ago? It has like, very light text on it. Like it's been printed through, actually, it looks like it was printed by one of those old printers? Like one of the old... bit— dot-matrix printers? And it's been faded and then redacted. So there's lots of big

censored black things. And you catch a few words here or there. You catch words like, um, “squire,” and “knight.” You catch— there’s a word that says, there’s a bit where it says, like, “the investigation of the Concern,” with a capital C, like “the Concern,” “is ongoing,” or, “by the Concern is ongoing. We are sending an agent to... we are sending green-level agents as soon as possible.” You see a thing that says that... something about the Institute, something about crab-men? Classic Hector Hu shit.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: And then you see what you think is a typo, at first. And then you’re pretty sure it isn’t. Because it keeps happening. And it is another way to write Bluff City. It says, B-L-O-U-G-H city. Over and over again. And deeper and deeper into the document, what you see is that, somehow, Hector has been to a place called Blough City, that’s a different city? Deep in the document, there is a description of it. He talks about having, eventually deep into this document is a, is an interrogation of Hector from a dozen years ago. And it talks about a blue, a bright blue jitney that he doesn’t, that he woke up on, as if in a dream. He talks about how the ocean was orange, and how the city was different. It didn’t have any connection to the outside world. Everything there was like, reflecting in on itself. Like, there were local bands, but no bands from overseas. There were movies, but only independent movies, filmed in Blough City. Or, he writes sometimes, Blue City, instead, as if you would pronounce this “blue,” like “through.” Like, T-H-R-O-U-G-H.

And, after this whole interrogation transcript with him, about this place, at the end, at the end, actually, at the very end, he talks about the crab-men. He talks about how the crab-men came for him, and that was when he slipped away. And afterwards, in the email that he’s written to this person, he says, like, “I don’t remember *any* of this.” And it’s a voice of his... it’s that moment where you realize, like, he’s writing in his real voice. And it’s dialed down, just a little bit. And is scared. And I don’t think that Hector... Hector is concerned, often, on the radio, he has worries, he has, you know, he’s interested in helping people. But he’s not scared for himself, ever. But in this letter, you know, there is something that makes him seem truly afraid. And you have a copy of it.

[02:45:00]

And it is like, he’s gotten it from the mayor’s department, or, I think maybe he found it from... Somehow he took it from the mayor’s department, and he knows he’s not supposed to, so he’s printed it out and was going to give it to an unknown contact. The unknown contact’s name is Page. P-A-G-E.

JACK: So this, this is the document from Ollerenshaw? Or...

AUSTIN: Yeah. It’s from... Ollerenshaw, like, originally, but it was, he got it via the mayor’s department.

JACK: He has—

AUSTIN: Basically. He like, stole it from the mayor's department, which had access for some reason. Maybe it was from that email you saw, right, like it was... he hacked into the mayor's department to get this? Or, like, somehow gave it away?

JACK: Huh.

AUSTIN: And that's why he was killed. Was because he got this document.

ALI: Whew-wee. Okay.

AUSTIN: So you got one answer. A strange thing pointing to a place named Blough City.

JACK: Woof.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And we have one more turn for our turn, and then we can wrap. We have an answer! Which is really good.

JACK: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah!

JACK: We have a *big* answer.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ART: Yeah, we have an answer that is... that is "we got some bullshit coming."

[Ali and Jack laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ART: Keep your subscription updated, people.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Uh, Patty.

KEITH: Hi.

AUSTIN: Also, just like, what's this look like? Like, what's Chris's response— Chris, is this just like, yeah, of course the crab-people. Of course a place called Blough City but Blough is spelled, or Bluff City but spelled Blough, like...

[Keith laughs]

ALI: Yeah, I think that it's like shocking, 'cause it's, you know, whatever, but it's also like... it's not surprising so much as it is, like, upsetting, right?

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Oh, shit, what was that last...

ART: With a little bit of like, thinking-head-gif, right?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yes. Uh, and then a black thing happens, right? A bad thing does happen, also. I'd almost forgotten. Whoops.

KEITH: Oh, yeah. Good thing.

ART: No!

AUSTIN: There was a black, a black 4. So damage a condition. "Damage your condition governing this investigation roll." So yeah, it sounds like it was heavy. Your Heart goes down by one.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So from "quiet" to, uh, whatever's under quiet.

ALI: Do I just delete to change it...? Or do you...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I got it, I got it. I got it, yeah.

ALI: I have now taken that black die... and... like, when I roll that...

AUSTIN: Say that again?

ALI: So like, because it's... I dropped down, so I have one black die in that?

AUSTIN: You're at— yes, you have one black die. Exactly.

ALI: So when I roll Heart, I— okay, okay.

AUSTIN: When you roll Heart, you're gonna add one black die to the pool, basically.

ALI: Okay. Just checking.

AUSTIN: Exactly, yeah. Instead of adding nothing, yep. You got it.

ALI: Just trying to think of the...

AUSTIN: You've got your head around it. [Ali laughs] It's tough. It's a weird— it's not like most things, for sure.

ALI: Yeah, no.

AUSTIN: Do you know what it's a little bit like, is Tech Noir. Actually. Where you would get a pool of dice, and what you were trying to do is get a high dice inside of a pool, just that the pool is built in an interesting different way.

ALI: [sighs] Alright.

AUSTIN: Patty. Patty Fink.

KEITH: Hey!

AUSTIN: You're from out of town. But you're downtown. What are you doin— you're a snitch, I remember.

KEITH: I'm out of downtown. I'm a low, I'm a sort of low-tier criminal snitch... that is also a conspiracy theorist that was one of Hector's sources.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Okay. So what are you up to?

KEITH: I'm pokin' around. Um...

AUSTIN: Who, what, and where?

KEITH: Man, that's a tough question for me. I've been sort of trying to figure out what my sort of thing was gonna be for a while. Um, and I'm sort of grappling with... like, what I found out on my own, and how I can sort of... connect that to what we've been doing.

AUSTIN: Right. Is there just a world here where you've brought together the detectives? Like, have you worked with these other detectives before, as a snitch? Or as a source?

KEITH: Um... I think I've met, at least I know them, right?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Like, I definitely, I think Patty is one of those people, she knows... she knows a *lot* of people.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And a lot of people know her. But I don't think that she's got a pool of friends or allies.

AUSTIN: No, no. Is this a situation where she's like, I have all of this information in the, in the bulk sense, like, I have all of these files, and maybe like brings people over to work through it with her?

KEITH: Yeah, I think that that's possible. Um...

AUSTIN: I'm trying to get people on screen together, is what I'm trying to do.

KEITH: It's tough— yeah. It's, yeah. Yeah. I agree. Um... I think that's also fun, I bet, 'cause I think that like, like, Patty doesn't deal information as much as she deals in dirt, right?

AUSTIN: Right... Right.

KEITH: So, like, the cost of doing business with Patty [Austin laughs slightly] is that like, some of your shit is gonna show up somewhere.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And it's like, it can be a huge help for you now, but later on, someone, like, and nothing... it's not like major stuff, but like, it's embarrassing stuff, or slightly compromising stuff. And it's just like, ah, well, you know, you deal with Patty, that's what you get.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: So having everybody in the room together, especially if we have like, Taylor and Florence, and it's like, I know dirt on them, they know dirt on each other because of me, and they know that I have more dirt on each of them...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Maybe, can I propose a scene?

KEITH: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Which will get all four of you together, which would be good, for the rest of this game.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Chris, would you share what you found, or not that you found, would you share that you found something, and want to talk to other serious fans of Hector?

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean, like, a sort of like, but we don't see that scene from Chris's perspective. We see it from Patty's, as like the person who wants to show up and get dirt on people, like, "yeah, I know some stuff, I'll bring over my files," but like, and then no other fans show up? It's Patty, Tyler, and Florence, that all show up. [Ali and Keith laugh] 'Cause there's no one else who's as serious as you are. Also 'cause like, the fandom has now turned into this omega love thing.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: The fandom's moved off of Hector and onto like, fuck these parties. Burn it all down.

ALI: Right, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Unless you have something on that.

ALI: It's, I like— I posted it on the same forum that like, Florence uses—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: To get that to other PIs, but it's like a different, like, category on those forums.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a conspiracy category, instead of the actual reporting category.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's great. So it's still Elementary.

ART: Well, I mean, Hector was my uncle. So.

AUSTIN: Right. True! Yes. So—

ALI: Oh, yeah. So you see that I have something, and you're like, oh, you know, I loved him. Like... [laughs] And then like... [laughs]

[Keith laughs loudly]

AUSTIN: [laughing] I forgot. I loved him. Right.

[Ali and Keith laugh loudly]

AUSTIN: Family.

JACK: Look. Grief, grief takes people in different ways.

ALI: [laughing] It's true. It's true it takes some time.

KEITH: I mean, it takes a lot of mental energy to be pulling weird on scams that make you look slightly richer than you are.

JACK: That's— yeah. That is true.

KEITH: Like, sometimes you forget that you have like, a family and loved ones, when you're spending all your time buying cheap stuff and dressing it up like fancy stuff.

ART: Hey. They wanna hire, they wanna hire a PI who looks like them. I'm not— I'm a symptom, I'm not the disease.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Hey, I didn't say, I didn't say nothin'. But, yeah, I'm all for that scene. That sounds good to me.

AUSTIN: What's it look like? How's this start? Patty.

KEITH: Um, I wanna meet... Well, we gotta meet at a neutral place. We gotta meet somewhere neutral.

AUSTIN: Oh, so it's not over at Chris's house. This is... So, yeah. Where is the neutral place? Tell me what it looks like.

KEITH: Um, I think that the neutral place is actually not a neutral place. It's a coffee shop where I've payed off people...

[Jack and Austin laugh]

KEITH: [laughs] I've payed off a couple people to sort of keep ears out on conversations that I'm not... well, I'll go to the bathroom and see what people are saying while I'm in the bathroom, but I've payed off some people to look like just regulars. That's my neutral place.

ART: [incredulously] What line of work are you in?

KEITH: I'm a snitch and a low-level criminal. I do things... I sort of, I just sort of slightly blackmail everybody and sell, like, fireworks to kids.

ALI: Hm! It's a living.

KEITH: That's kinda my... and, and, I'm a conspiracy theorist, that I sell information to Hector and people like Hector.

AUSTIN: This is how you're introducing yourself?

KEITH: Oh, no, I thought that Art was asking out of character.

ART: No, that was, that was...

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. How do you, like, let's just go in. What's your... how do you introduce yourself?

KEITH: Uh, I think to Chris specifically, I'm, I, 'cause I think I know Chris. Um... I think I'm an actual avid listener of Hector's. So I think I know Chris. And I'm, uh, I introduce myself as one of Hector's sources. I'm one of Hector's sources.

ALI: Right, yeah, I think I would know from like...

KEITH: I'm a main source.

ALI: I don't think that Hector, like... like says your name on air, obviously. But he's a source.

KEITH: No, no, no, no. He's protective of his sources.

AUSTIN: Is there a codename for Patty? Like, where Hector would be like, "oh, I talked to the, I talked to the Fink." But not the Fink. [Keith laughs] Because that's, given, that's the last name.

KEITH: Honestly, I think that the codename is Patty's actual last name, which is Finkle. And so no one...

AUSTIN: Oh...

KEITH: No one has ever even heard "Finkle" before.

AUSTIN: Kay. Okay.

JACK: And they don't put two and two together.

AUSTIN: [laughing] No, not at all! It's impossible!

KEITH: No, it's... yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Um, I think the...

KEITH: Well, it's hard, 'cause he's not saying "Patricia Finkle." Just, you know, Finkle. Who knows who that is.

[Ali laughs]

ART: Yeah. Who could crack that code?

[Jack and Austin laugh]

JACK: In this room of—

AUSTIN: It's too obvious, Art!

JACK: In this room of two detectives, a conspiracy theorist listener...

[Austin sighs]

ART: You would need some sort of "list of names..."

[All laugh]

KEITH: No, I'm saying he's *not* saying Patricia. He's just saying Finkle.

ART: What kinda magic is that?

KEITH: Listen, this is a city! Lots, there's more than one, more than the person that goes by "Fink" can be called Finkle.

ALI: Yeah, also it's Phinkle with a P-H, so nobody gets it.

AUSTIN: Mm...

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And he really leans into the P-H.

ALI: [laughing] I think that Chris shows up—

KEITH: [quietly] Pee-Hinkle.

ALI: —at the meeting or whatever with a condolences greeting card, [Austin laughs sympathetically] that's like, that she gives to Patty and just like, you know, it's a genuine, like, I hope that you're having, like... I know that you're having a rough time but I hope it's okay, and whatever else. Um...

ART: Hey, my uncle died. I dunno.

ALI: [laughing] I just, I don't know who you are. I don't know you, I'm sorry!

[Art laughs]

ALI [as Chris]: I came here to talk to...

KEITH: I open it up and I sort of wave... I wave something over for it, and I'm like, it's clear, okay. And I sort of read it, and I'm like, "that's very sweet."

ALI [as Chris]: [laughing] Okay...

KEITH [as Patty]: Well I wanna make sure it's not bugged. This is a neutral ground, it stays a neutral ground.

ALI [as Chris]: True, true, true. I understand, I mean, I check every card that I get, too. But, I, I just thought, you know... Because of, you know.

KEITH [as Patty]: A fellow traveller.

ALI [as Chris]: Right.

[All snort and laugh]

ALI [as Chris]: So I... are you... you've checked that this place is neutral, 'cause this is kind of a big thing... and I... it's a coffee shop, and you know...

KEITH [as Patty]: Yeah. Rest assured. [pronounced "a-syew-ered"]

ALI [as Chris]: People listen to things that are talked about in coffee shops... And I just...

KEITH [as Patty]: No, there, this is... this is absolutely a neutral place. This is, we're just four people drinking a coffee.

ALI [as Chris]: Okay.

KEITH [as Patty]: We're just four people splitting a coffee.

ART [as Tyler]: Yeah, I think we would be way less conspicuous if we had four drinks on the table.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

KEITH [as Patty]: Do you want me to go get... three more drinks real quick? I'll go— you know what, I'm gonna go pick up three more drinks. Real quick.

ALI [as Chris]: I would love that.

AUSTIN: What are the drinks?

ALI [as Chris]: Can I get chai...

ART [as Tyler]: [getting cut off] A— I— a lot off coffee shops have table service! I just don't know how you picked this place, I don't know what makes it special to you...

KEITH [as Patty]: A lot off coffee shops have *table* service, what sort of fancy-shmancy, what is this, Show Coffee? Is that where you're going?

[Austin sighs, Ali laughs]

JACK [as Florence]: [seriously] What have you brought us?

KEITH [as Patty]: [lightly] What have you brought us?

ALI [as Chris]: Oh, um. I, sorry. I thought you were taking about drinks, I really want that chai latte, but. I, so, I went to his office... to, you know, kind of scope things out. None of this makes sense. It doesn't smell right, and you know, he always said, "trust your nose." Um. [laughs]

KEITH [as Patty]: I taught him that.

ALI [as Chris]: Really, oh my god.

KEITH [as Patty]: Yeah.

ALI [as Chris]: Okay. Anyway, we'll talk later. Um, I, there was this document here that, it's big. It's really big. It's like, really big.

ALI: And I think that she has it printed, mmm...

KEITH [as Patty]: Is it— it's large?

[Ali laughs]

ALI [as Chris]: It is a large document! And a lot of it is missing.

ALI: And I think that she... [sighs] I was wondering if there was maybe like a more interesting far-tech thing than just having a printout, but that's probably more... maybe it's like a... god, okay, no, you know what it is? It's that she... she, [laughs] you know how, like, Snapchat works?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Where like, you send someone a picture, and then like, it expires.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: I think that she specifically wanted to set this up, this meeting up, so she could share it with people, but didn't want it to be, like... she wanted to be the only one who had it.

AUSTIN: I see.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: So does she like, send them like a degrading digital copy that they can look at?

ALI: Yes, yes, yes yes. That expires in like...

AUSTIN: Okay. But also not online. Like, it's like, closed, near-field communication, like you tap your various devices together?

ALI: Right, it's like Apple Drop, or whatever that is.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Where you can like, where you can like take it away.

ART: Air Drop but worse.

ALI: But it's like on a timer or whatever. Yes. Yes. So I think that she does that, and kind of sends it to everybody, and like, it, you know, takes a little bit with Fink, 'cause she has like an android device, but they figure it out.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Um, so, I'm gonna do a thing we haven't done yet. Which is— so does that, does everyone start poring over this thing, I guess is my question?

KEITH: Yeah, I think so.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: So I'm gonna do a thing that we haven't done yet, which is that I'm gonna introduce some, some, I forget what they, how do they phrase it. Do you remember, how to like, introduce drama?

JACK: Oh, like a diversion— like a dramatic turn, or something.

KEITH: Dramatic hit.

AUSTIN: Yeah, something like that.

JACK: Dramatic hit.

KEITH: It was dramatic hit.

AUSTIN: I drew this, which is a joker. Um, and there are not rules for drawing jokers.

JACK: [laughs] Ah...

AUSTIN: So what I'm gonna do is draw two more cards, and both of these things happen.

JACK: It's the adversary!

AUSTIN: It is, and, two things have been stolen. A four and a four. "Something has been stolen," twice.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: That's really good.

KEITH: Is it the same thing has been stolen and then stolen again, or is it two separate things that have been stolen?

AUSTIN: I don't know, but like, so what goes, how does it, how do we get two things stolen, is there something missing from this document, like, immediately?

JACK: There's a page missing. Yeah. There's a page missing.

AUSTIN: And what's the second thing?

JACK: Hm.

KEITH: Oh. I know what the second thing is. Is, or potentially. Um, that, someone has stolen the whole of the document, via the near-infrared communication, and has like, made it permanent.

AUSTIN: Oh! Like, another copy gets made.

KEITH: Another copy. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: That's good. So like, what we get is like, one of you going like, "hey, where's page 212?" And then a second later, it goes like, [musically] "ba-da-da-da-da-da-da." To tell Chris that someone else has downloaded the document.

[03:00:00]

[Ali gasps]

KEITH: Thank goodness for push notifications.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: [sighs] Um, Patty. This is your scene. How do you deal with these problems? Which problem do you deal with?

KEITH: This coffee shop's on lockdown.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing loudly] What's that— what?

KEITH [as Patty]: This coffee shop's on lockdown.

AUSTIN: You just get up and say that?

KEITH: I just get up and say that. This coffee shop's on lockdown. The three people closest to us get up and bar the doors.

AUSTIN: Okay. How many people are in the room totally? Or in this coffee shop total?

KEITH: Um, not including the... wait, including or not including employees?

AUSTIN: Not including employees who you've paid off? To make this your private... den of fuckin' inequity?

KEITH: ...Three.

AUSTIN: Alright. There are three people.

KEITH: Yeah. There's fifteen people in here, and three of them are legitimate patrons.

AUSTIN: [under breath] Jesus Christ.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: I feel like this is a lot— Hector gave you a lot of money, in his will, and this is a bad way to spend it!

JACK: [laughs] Oh...

KEITH: On, hey, hold on! On, uh, on my principle, which is that justice must be done?

AUSTIN: Fair! Fair, fair! Um, so there are three people in here. What's one of them look like... Jack?

JACK: One of them is a...

KEITH: You know what, let's do four people. Just 'cause there's four of us.

AUSTIN: Okay. Four people.

JACK: One of them is a Black woman in her thirties; she is holding a child.

AUSTIN: Okay!

JACK: The child is not a baby, they are like five, they are sitting on her lap.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Five people including the baby.

AUSTIN: Okay. Child. Ali? What's one of these people look like?

ALI: Um, I think that there's a teen girl, like seventeen, in a school uniform.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: That's like sitting down doing her homework.

AUSTIN: Okay. Art?

ART: Uh, on the clear other side of the cafe, there's like a teen boy who's pretending to do his homework but is really trying to just leave at the same time as the teen girl.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Keith, do you have one, or do you want me to get the last one?

KEITH: No, you can get the last one.

AUSTIN: Alright. There is a... fifty something year old man, who is in Coast Guard gear. He is in like, a Coast Guard ad— does the Coast Guard have admirals? What's the Coast Guard ranks?

JACK: [laughing] No, I don't think they have admirals.

AUSTIN: Coast Guard admiral...

JACK: Coast... Guard... ranks...

AUSTIN: They might.

JACK: I don't think—

ART: I don't know, what is the, what is the highest ranked person in the—

AUSTIN: Commandant. Commandant.

ART: Ooh, that's good, everyone go join the Coast Guard!

AUSTIN: Oh no! The Coast Guard is— the Commandant is an admiral!

JACK: Oh my god. Wow!

AUSTIN: The admiral is a four-star commissioned Navy flag officer rank in the US Navy, the US Coast Guard, or the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

JACK: They make fifteen thousand dollars a month!

ART: Wait, what?

KEITH: That's a lot. It's also a pretty good Mountain Goats song.

ART: I mean, they're probably very old and have dedicated their entire career to their one job, they probably should be well paid for it.

AUSTIN: Yeah! So not an admiral. That's probably too high. Maybe a, what's under a vice admiral? What's, what's a one-star?

KEITH: Rear admiral.

AUSTIN: Is it a— is that...

JACK: No, wait, hang on.

AUSTIN: Rear admiral is two different ranks, flag officers, rear admirals... What's, I wanna go under, captain. Captain? Just a captain. Just a captain.

KEITH: No, oh, commodore. That's what it is. Commodore is below...

AUSTIN: Is that—

KEITH: Yeah, so it goes, commodore, rear admiral, vice admiral, admiral.

AUSTIN: Are there commodores in the Coast Guard, or just...

KEITH: Yes, there are. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Well then, there's a commodore in here.

KEITH: How old is he?

AUSTIN: Eh, fifties.

KEITH: Fifties. Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh... like, thick grey hair.

ART: So he's not great at his job.

AUSTIN: Big nose, big moustache. Um, wearing a... is in dress uniform, but jacket on the chair, and has like an IBM, like an IBM laptop that, like a ThinkPad from 1998.

KEITH: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: And is looking at it over his... over his glasses.

JACK: I think I'm going to stand up—

KEITH: [laughing] I think I know who stole this document, by the way.

JACK: I'm gonna stand up and wheel over towards him.

AUSTIN: Okay. Just a reminder, that it is Patty's scene, in terms of like, who gets to do a thing.

JACK: Oh, super true, yeah, sorry Keith.

AUSTIN: Also, Patty's the one doing this lockdown, right? So...

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JACK: Mm. Oh, but I've got a connection to a Coast Guard.

AUSTIN: You do.

KEITH: How does... how does the Coast Guardsman react to the lockdown?

AUSTIN: Uh, keeps doing his work!

KEITH: Keeps doing his work.

AUSTIN: Eyes on the prize.

KEITH: I say, I say, "this restaurant's on lockdown," a bunch of people go and bar the doors, and this commodore is just typing away on his laptop?

AUSTIN: Yep.

KEITH: I shut it.

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay. What do you, what are you trying to do. What's the, what's the—

KEITH: I say, I say this: "What are you tryin' to do?"

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: He looks up to you and he says, "I'm a very busy man!"

KEITH [as Patty]: This restaurant's on lockdown. That means no one leaves, no one works.

AUSTIN [as Commodore]: Please remove your hand from my device.

KEITH [as Patty]: Please remove your device from my friend's device, huh!

AUSTIN [as Commodore]: I don't know what you mean.

KEITH [as Patty]: You're the Coast Guard. Everybody knows what the Coast Guard does.

ALI [as Chris]: Everybody knows what the Coast Guard does.

JACK [as Florence]: What does the Coast Guard do?

KEITH [as Patty]: The Coast Guard—

ART [as Tyler]: Guards the coast.

KEITH [as Patty]: The Coast Guards has their little fingers in all the pies in this town.

JACK [as Florence]: What?

ALI [as Chris]: Mm-hmm.

JACK [as Florence]: That—

AUSTIN [as Commodore]: Ma'am, I'm a member of the U.S. Armed Forces; you will remove your hand from my device.

JACK [as Florence]: Patty?

KEITH: I re— I turn, I say, "okay," and then I walk behind him, and I open the laptop. "Let's see together what you were working on."

AUSTIN: Um, I think this is a Body challenge. 'Cause he's gonna, like, throw back the chair at you. He's gonna stand up very rapidly and push back on the chair and like... take a swing at Patty!

KEITH: Alright, let's do it. I'm able-bodied! I'm Patty! I'm Big Patty!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: That's what they call you! Big Patty!

KEITH: That's what they call me, Big Patty Fink! Ready for fightin'!

AUSTIN: Alright... [laughs] Uh, so, it is challenge time. I think it is one-on-one, what's your Body?

KEITH: Uh, "able."

AUSTIN: I think this is Body, everyone else, I think a fight is Body? I think that's a fair...?

JACK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Okay, just making sure that we're good...

KEITH: [laughing] I— aren't you sure this isn't Mind, which...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Um...

KEITH: It is very... it's very smart to pick a fight with a commodore!

AUSTIN: [laughs] And there is not any... I don't think there's any, what do you call it, dice, right, there's no bargain dice here?

KEITH: Um, I don't know, is there not?

AUSTIN: 'Cause you don't have it. What's your Body?

KEITH: Able.

AUSTIN: That's just zero, right? That's like... neutral?

KEITH: Zero, yeah, able. Neutral.

AUSTIN: Okay. So I think it's just one on one...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Pretty sure... Like, I'm still trying to get these, get these ol' dice, to understand, the dice, I'm trying to get these ol' dice to understand the rules.

KEITH: Trying to get these ol' dice to understand the dice. Alright, not looking good for me.

AUSTIN: Alright, so then I'm gonna roll... nope. Uh, then random, but hey, maybe it'll be... mm, nope! That's a five.

KEITH: Nope, that's a five!

AUSTIN: That's a, that's a negative. Um, so, on a black, black dice, two higher or more, you fail.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Right, you only get a bargain, right, if this part of the die is tied, is the stalemate, right? Yeah. Alright, so what happens? What happens when this old...

KEITH: I make a big show of falling over and say [shouting] "I'm being attacked by an officer of the U.S. Armed Forces!" That's what I do.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh, that's fun. Supporter has to say what the result of this negative is. Besides the fact that you get to keep this black die down here.

JACK: Um... God... I don't know whether or not he does something really sinister.

AUSTIN: The, the Coast Guard.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The commodore.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: Like what?

JACK: I think he picks up his coat, as you're lying on the floor, and he puts his dress coat on, and he straightens his shoulders, and then he bends down and whispers something to you, and then just sits back in his chair again.

AUSTIN: Mm.

KEITH: What does he whisper to me?

JACK: Um, I think what he says, is, "you have the document and I have the document. But I have seen them."

KEITH: [whispering] The crab-men!

[Ali laughs softly]

AUSTIN: Alright. Does he just walk out? Yeah, I, he just walks to the door, and unbars it, and leaves.

JACK: Yeah, he just— and leaves. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? Yeah.

KEITH [as Patty]: Oh, come on. I'm not paying you guys if you're not gonna keep people from leaving.

[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]

AUSTIN: Shoulda rolled Rep instead of Body, I guess! We shoulda, that shoulda been that way. Ugh. That would have been worse, actually. Your Rep... your Rep would have been one more black die! Jesus Christ!

KEITH: Yeah, Rep is minus one. Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, but you do still have the document. So.

JACK: Mm.

KEITH: Hm.

AUSTIN: Do you pore over it for more? What do you do, now that this guy's gone? What's the investigation part of this look like?

[Jack sighs]

KEITH: I, uh... I think probably the most useful thing would be to, like, cross reference the stuff that I find in this document with other stuff that I have.

AUSTIN: Okay. So that sounds like Mind, for sure. Right?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Does anybody ever bring y'all drinks? Do you ever get drinks? 'Cause I want a drink. I want a coffee, real bad.

[Jack laughs]

ALI: I would love one.

AUSTIN: That'd be good.

KEITH: Is this in character? We're in a coffee shop.

AUSTIN: You are in a coffee shop.

ALI: I said that I wanted a chai latte like twenty minutes ago. This is really stressful.

[Austin laughs]

JACK: Oh, I think—

ART: Do people still bring drinks when the place is in lockdown?

JACK: Uh, yeah. I—

ALI: Well, what else are we gonna do? We can only drink the drinks that are here.

KEITH: They work here. Yeah! [laughs]

JACK: I think one of Keith's, I think one of Patty's, like, heavy inverted commas, "one of of Patty's people" shows up.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: Who's just like, who's a real big guy. Called Herbert Bix.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

ART: Ooh!

JACK: B-I-X. And Herbert Bix has got a tray with drinks on, and...

KEITH [as Patty]: Aw. Herbert Bix, you're gettin' paid!

JACK [as Herbert]: That's what we agreed to, yes. Here are your drinks.

JACK: Slam!

KEITH: [laughs] Um, I—

JACK [as Herbert]: Patty, did you punch that man?

KEITH [as Patty]: I, no! He was, I was attacked by an officer of the U.S. Armed Forces, you all saw it!

KEITH: I extend my hand to get, to get pulled up by Bix, and in, palmed him forty dollars, which is the only way I've ever paid anyone, by shaking hands and it's just suddenly there.

JACK [as Herbert]: [sighs deeply] She just gave me forty dollars.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Good.

KEITH [as Patty]: That was— that's what we agreed to!

ALI [as Chris]: Thirty dollars isn't bad.

JACK [as Herbert]: [sourly] Wasn't expecting any commodore punching.

AUSTIN: [laughs] What was the first name on Bix?

JACK: [in deep Bix voice] Herbert.

AUSTIN: Herbert. Thanks, Herbert. Uh, here's the chai latte.

ALI [as Chris]: Oh, thank you so much.

AUSTIN: Now that you have that, do you all go back to your various devices to look over this document?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Patty. It's time for a, the investigation roll.

KEITH: Yeah. Starting at two?

AUSTIN: This is definitely a Mind, right?

KEITH: Yeah, this is Mind.

AUSTIN: So then you get a third one, goes over here for the bargain, uh...

KEITH: Kay.

AUSTIN: The bad dice are, there are three of them. Oh, there's two over, for the bargain, 'cause you've got an answer now! 'Cause you got one answer!

KEITH: Oh, awesome!

AUSTIN: Which is good.

KEITH: Great.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna, I'm gonna mark—

KEITH: And there's also actually five... five for the...

AUSTIN: No, there are in fact six, because...

KEITH: Six, right, yes. Sorry, I meant, I said five, I meant six.

AUSTIN: Yeah, which is bad. Um, because of the negative before. And because of the two bad places. Alright. Who wants to roll what?

KEITH: Man. I feel like, uh... I'm gonna roll the white dice.

AUSTIN: Okay. I'll roll the black ones. Someone roll the bargains.

ALI: I've... got the bargains.

KEITH: 4 and a 5, not bad!

AUSTIN: 4 and a 5, not bad!

KEITH: Pretty okay!

AUSTIN: Ain't bad.

KEITH: 4 and a 5, ain't bad. Oh, wow!

AUSTIN: This was, this was a bad roll on my side!

KEITH: This was a bad roll, for you!

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

[pause]

KEITH: Somebody roll the, um...

AUSTIN: The, yeah. I think Ali got 'em.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's a 5 and a 3. Which is a— mm. Mm.

KEITH: Alright. So that's fine, I get one miss...

AUSTIN: Oh, I see what you're gonna do.

KEITH: There's no way I can beat the 5.

AUSTIN: Right. Except for breaking your, your principle! "Justice must be done."

KEITH: Which is... I'm, no, I'm not gonna do that.

AUSTIN: You're not ready to break that? Okay.

KEITH: Don't do that. Not ready to break that. So what do I—

AUSTIN: So that means that you're, you're gonna get to add a random lead or make a connection, twice. That's the two things you get.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: The 4 is that, the 5 is that.

KEITH: Okay. I'm gonna, I'm gonna do one of each.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh, and then, just so you know—

KEITH: And then, 5 is damage a...

AUSTIN: A condition.

KEITH: A condition.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Whichever one that you did, so, your Mind, in this case

KEITH: My Mind.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah. Okay. That's totally fair.

AUSTIN: Okay, so, 2, you're adding... you're adding one new lead. Ooh!

KEITH: Yeah, I'm gonna draw a card. Okay, you drew a card.

AUSTIN: It's the king of diamonds!

KEITH: King of diamonds, what does that mean for me?

AUSTIN: That means... that it is... I have to look at a table for that, is what that means. It is either a former detective or officer, "the lion's den," or a priceless object.

KEITH: And do I get to, do I get to pick?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you get to pick any of those three.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh, and it is in the upper crust. The shore.

KEITH: Wait, it's in the upper crust... okay.

AUSTIN: Or it's related to that, whatever it is.

KEITH: Lemme look—

AUSTIN: What the *fuck* is the lion's den?

KEITH: —real quick, it's the Noirlandia table... What is the lion's den? I think the lion's den... is the lion's den a place?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a place. The place is the lion's den, the person is a former detective or officer, and the thing is a priceless object.

KEITH: Wait, so, my immediate, like, gut reaction to the lion's den is, like, the place where, like, the...

ART: The place where the bad thing is happening, right?

KEITH: Yeah!

ART: Like, "going into the lion's den."

KEITH: Yeah, like the headquarters of the bad guys.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure, sure sure sure. That makes sense.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: Um. Uh... So I think that... Man, that sounds pretty good. What was the, um...

AUSTIN: Though, there is also just the former detective or officer, "officer" is broad. Commodores are officers.

KEITH: Fuck yeah. Yeah, let's do that, I like that.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Yeah, so we're gonna do this...

ART: Well he's not a *former*...

AUSTIN: Eh.

JACK: I'm a former officer.

AUSTIN: You are.

KEITH: Yeah. You're a new lead? No. I, I need a former officer.

JACK: I have something to hide.

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: I think Art's right, I can't do former officer for a current officer.

AUSTIN: True.

KEITH: But I... Priceless object and lion's den are both really good.

AUSTIN: They are.

KEITH: Or, former officer could be a different Coast-Guardian.

AUSTIN: Right...

ART: Is "Coast-Guardian" it?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yep! It's Coast-Guardian. That's it.

ART: Okay.

KEITH: Yeah, it's Coast-Guardian.

ALL: [laughs] Guardian of the coast.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's the evolution from custodian. [Keith laughs] Custodian, Coast-Guardian, and then there's the third one, that's...

KEITH: Yeah. That's why some people call them "coast janitors."

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: It's the same root. Um... [laughs]

AUSTIN: So, lion's den...

KEITH: I'm gonna do...

AUSTIN: A former officer...

KEITH: Yeah, I'm gonna do former, former officer. Former, former officer of the Coast Guard.

AUSTIN: And do you find, and that's what you find, is a name?

KEITH: That's what I find, is the name. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... lemme get you a name. One second.

KEITH: Ooh, I don't have to spend one of my names?

AUSTIN: If you have a name, that you think works for this, that's good. Uh...

KEITH: I have one that works with it, I think, in a way that is a joke...

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh, mine is "Strada." Captain Strada.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: S-T-R-A-D-A.

[03:15:00]

KEITH: Mine was "Warrick Formerly."

AUSTIN: Hm? Yes. Former Captain Strada.

KEITH: No, sorry, "Warrick Formerly" was the name.

AUSTIN: Oh.

KEITH: That I had.

[Keith and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah. I don't have a first name. Anyone have a good first name, here?

JACK: Hm...

AUSTIN: Lester? Leslie? Leslie. Leslie Strada.

JACK: Yeah, that's a good name.

AUSTIN: Uh...

KEITH: That's good.

AUSTIN: Okay. How does it appear in this document?

KEITH: I think, um... I think the redaction was done in a, in a pretty hurried way. And so, there's parts where it refers to, um... like, "former Vice-Admiral," and then it's, or, "former Captain," and then it's redacted, and then we can see, like, a bit of the first letters.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: The first couple letters. And a bit of the last couple letters in a different spot. And then we get, all of those people are public record.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: We can just look up.

AUSTIN: Cool.

KEITH: So that's how we found Captain Leslie Strada. Um, and then I have a connection. Do I get to make the connection?

AUSTIN: You get to make the connection.

KEITH: Or...

AUSTIN: It's not a random connection, though.

KEITH: It's not a random... okay, so.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Add a new lead, or string a connection between any two leads.

KEITH: So, um... I'm going to... oh, this is, I know what to do. I'm going to make a connection between... wait, hold on. This is, I should ask this question, 'cause it might be so dumb that why would I even do this.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

KEITH: Cause of death, gun, close range. You can just connect that to Hector Hu, right?

AUSTIN: Totally can connect it right to Hector Hu. Absolutely.

KEITH: [laughs] Yeah. Okay. So I'm gonna, I'm going to, with that being said, I'm going to connect Captain Leslie Strada with Hector Hu.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay! You're doing that one! You're not doing the gun one. Okay.

KEITH: No, no. Which can, which can be done.

AUSTIN: Yes. You have to do it, but yes. That's pretty obvious, actually. Yes. Totally.

KEITH: Yes. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. Cool. How do you make that connection? It's just in this document, right. Okay. Cool.

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: Is it a name that Hector says, in the interrogation? Or is it just in the...

KEITH: This is the interrogation that he, like, lost from his memory?

AUSTIN: The document is a transcription from an interrogation...

KEITH: Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: It's a bunch of other information, but is it, yeah, I think that's a good connection. Okay. So, where we are right now, as we wrap. We have one answer. Which is "why was the victim killed?" Which is, had stolen some, a piece of strange evidence that, from a... communication

between the mayor's office and Ollerenshaw office of requisitions. Uh, and that's one answer. Two, we have, the cause of death is a gun at close range; it happened at Show Dogs, the fancy hot dog shop that's since burnt down. We have Captain Leslie Strada of the Coast Guard, a name that you found in this document. It's connected to Hector Hu. We have the outskirts in omega love condition? Alert? Omega love?

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: And we have... and we have some people in some places. We have some people who are, who are a little more beat down than you, so. In fact, we have to end on that. Which is that you have a 5 in black, which means that you have to lower your Mind by one. From Sharp, to just, whatever the zero one is.

KEITH: Yes, I do.

AUSTIN: To no black, no white. So, that's gonna do it. We'll be back next month. Do we have like a good closing scene here? Like, do you just delete them after we found that, Chris? Or do you make this document? Do you basically open up an app that is this screen, and start drawing these out?

ALI: Yeah, I think that, like, she spends time re-creating it.

AUSTIN: Mm. Okay.

ALI: In terms of, like, re-filling in those blank spaces.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think maybe we just get four, like, we get the montage shots of you building up this corkboard with string. We get, what do we get from everybody else? What's like the one image?

ART: Tyler Taylor Pierce takes a sip of his coffee and like, adjusts his hair, in his front-facing phone camera.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

KEITH: Patty Fink has a... pad of sticky notes that has the words "reduced pay" already on the pages, and I'm sticking those on ten-dollar bills and handing them to each person in the coffee shop. [laughs]

[Austin scoffs]

JACK: Florence Slowly has turned in her booth chair, and is just, like, staring at the booth chair where the Commandant was.

AUSTIN: From that shot, and this is the shot that we end on, is you looking out the window. Like, you're seeing, you're looking at the, you're looking at that chair; behind him is a window. Like, going to the front, out the exit.

[03:19:30]

["There Is No Greater Love" begins playing]

AUSTIN: And, it's out of focus. And then it comes into focus, for like a half of a second. You blink your eyes, and it comes into focus, and you see Hector Hu getting onto a bright blue jitney. And behind him, the sea is orange. He like looks back at you for half a second, his like, wire-framed glasses, his soul-patch, his eyes looking deep into you. And just like, steps on. And the jitney drives away.

[Music continues to end of track]

[Episode ends]