

[Live at the Table 26: October 2019—Anomaly Pt. 2](#)

Transcriber: Kārlis (@townout on Twitter)

Austin: All right, we are back. Janine has fixed the situation. Everything is fine. No one has vanished.

Keith: What did it? What solved it? Maybe that'll help us.

Janine: Unplugging and plugging back in the USB hub.

Austin: It's always the case. You got to unplug and replug it in. It's always the case. The Concern should try that, honestly. Where were we? Janine, you were about to draw card.

Janine: I drew the Knight of Wands. Another fucking Wand (laughs).

Austin: Another Wand. Knight of Wands. This has some bold color, bold fonts in this thing. "A researcher has an extremely dangerous but rewarding plan. Advance all projects then take two anomalous actions. Take another action as normal." Or, "a research plan is scrapped for being too dangerous, advance no projects and don't take an action". We don't have any projects going—

(Janine sighs)

Austin: —is the problem here.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But listen.

Janine: You know I'm not going to resist taking two anomalous actions.

Austin: Two anomalous actions? I know!

Janine: It's so good. OK. Are the anomalous actions happening in response to the dangerous, rewarding plan? What's the caus—ational relation—ship there?

Austin: Maybe it's about discovering new things that are happening?

Keith: Or, specifically, putting something in the path of the anomaly?

Austin: Right. Could be that.

Keith: Like figuring out a trigger of it.

Janine: Yeah. Cause this is the kind of thing where like reading this description, I would, in quite your language, think that this was a card that starts a project. And then maybe fast-forwards the

project. But instead you're advancing existing projects and then taking anomalous actions. So this seems more like a thing that's...

Austin: Maybe one of things to note is that projects don't have to be Concern projects. Projects could have been the project of the anomaly. It could be anomaly projects.

Janine: True, but, I mean, in terms of a dangerous but rewarding plan.

Keith: I totally forgot about that. I'm so glad that you—

Austin: Said it out loud right before your turn? Uh huh. The community can also take projects, by the way. So all sorts of things could happen here. Anyway.

Keith: Right. And that's part of how to end the game, is that the community is like, "fuck these investigators".

Austin: Yeah. That totally could be the way we end— we'll see (laughs). Yup!

Janine: OK. So extremely dangerous, but rewarding plan. I think that Agent Tinker has the idea that... I just realized the thing I was gonna say is a thing that kind of already happened.

Keith: Is it something that could benefit from being dialed way up?

Janine: I don't know. I think. Okay, okay. You know what, I've been thinking about this wrong. I've been thinking about this in the **Janine** way of thinking about it, which is like solving a problem. I'm going to think about it in the "people who are increasingly nervous and don't know what to do and are maybe losing sight of their professional training". I think Agent Tinker lights something on fire.

Austin: Hell yeah. What do they light on fire?

Keith: Like arson style? Or...

Janine: It's a— it's a not a park, but, you know, it's a fairground. The thing that's gonna happen is a garbage can gets lit on fire because someone puts their cigarette out in it or something like that's the thing that happens sometimes, kind of. So I think that they light a garbage can on fire and what they're trying to do is trying to see if there is a danger. Since, you know, if you try and look at the park as a thing that has motivations, a lot of it seems to be about making people happy and comfortable and having a good time, and "everyone stay here forever and have fun". So what happens if there is like a legitimate material danger, not an existential vague danger in that fire.

Austin: Yeah, good plan!

Janine: And that gives way for—

Austin: Two anomalous actions (laughs).

Janine: Yeah, exactly! That gives me room for my two anomalous actions in response to this fire, vaguely. So I think the first thing that happens is that, I think Tinker, when they lit this fire, they deliberately picked a garbage can that had a lot of greasy fried food wrappers and stuff in it. And they checked it out first, they wanted to know what they were setting on fire. That's a reasonable thing to do if you're an agent who is setting a fire in an (chuckles) Amusement Park. But the thing that happens very quickly is that garbage just ends up being full of fireworks.

Austin: Oh, my God!

Janine: (laughs) Which seems more dangerous. But, you know, this is a place where things work out in a way that is unsettling but still kind of fun. You're still kind of having a good time. And the fireworks go off the way fireworks should. The garbage can does not make it out. But, you know, when people see fireworks going off, they're going to back up, they're going to give it some space and they look up, and it's a nice show. And everyone, you know, it's a fun time. Tinker's not happy about it, but everyone else just thinks it's a thing that's supposed to happen.

Austin: I've written down "a garbage can fire turns into an evening fireworks show".

Janine: You know, every Saturday at 6:48 p.m. they have their regularly scheduled fireworks show and it's fine. The other thing that happens, the other anomalous action. Tinker returns to the dark ride in defeat and frustration at being foiled, that their clever plan or what they thought was a clever plan being so easily warped. And they go in what they think is the entrance to the closed-off portion of the dark ride. But that door is just painted on. Like it's supposed to be a door that you can open and go through, and that is a Wile E. Coyote-style painted on door. There is nothing to grab. So they just start wandering through the dark ride, walking along the track.

Austin: (sighs) So it's no longer a dark ride HQ? Or the door to the HQ has turned into a cartoon, has turned into...

Janine: My intent here, specifically for Tinker, this space is being denied them. And they are, you know, this is the scene of like, the camera follows them just walking into the darkness. And then, you know, fade out and then cut in on someone else.

Austin: So, (typing) "is now in the dark ride, having had the door not lead into the HQ". OK, cool. Great. You love to see it! Everything going great here! Mm mm. All right, **Keith**. No wait, sorry, **Janine** still gets an action at this point. That was the Knight of Wands, right? Yes. So what are your things? "Start a project, hold a meeting or, the Wands action, add a fact about something."

Janine: OK. Uh. I'm going to add a fact about Maria Carvagal. And it's a fact that becomes clear when the fireworks start going off. After the fireworks show, someone comes in and replaces Maria at the stand that she was working at. And then Maria is found going from— not "is found"

but this is a fact about Maria that is just existent. The thing that Maria is doing is going from garbage can to garbage can around the area.

Austin: Attending to garbage cans.

Janine: Yes. So previously Maria was working the rides and the booths. And now Maria is specifically concerned with the garbage cans.

Austin: OK. Done. Updated. Cool. All right, **Keith**, now it is your turn. Draw yourself a card.

Keith: Cool, OK, draw a card... I just tried to draw the card from the YouTube screen...

Janine: Haha.

Austin: Not going to do it.

Keith: No, didn't work.

Janine: Someday, maybe.

Keith: Page of Pentacles.

Austin: Wait, where is it? Ah, there it is, it's up there. OK. Page. Look at this. Look at this motherfucker.

Janine: Oh man!

(laughter)

Janine: That kid took your Pentacle specifically.

Sylvia: Evil Snave over here.

(laughter)

Austin: "Page of Pentacles: How populated is the area? Does this pose a problem in any way? What is the wildlife in the area like? How are they affected by the anomaly?"

(laughter)

Keith: OK, well. I know. Tell me if this doesn't count. No, it counts. I figured out how to make it count very easily. So people are trying to get out and the anomaly reflexively is not into that. And so a more intense, seemingly active campaign to keep people in the park starts. And one of the ways that it starts is to figure out how to replicate for people their needs outside of the park. And so people have pets.

(**Austin** sighs)

Keith: And so foxes and coyotes and squirrels are now inside the park and basically acting as house pets for people.

Austin: Very friendly. (groans)

Keith: A moose, bears.

Janine: Can I propose something? You know those invisible dog leashes? I had a fixation with those when I was a kid, I wanted one more than I wanted anything in my entire fucking life, oh, my God.

What if, when you buy an invisible dog leash, the anomaly sees that as tacit permission to assign you a pet.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. Or, here's another one. You ever go to like the toy aisle at the CVS and there's like the ferret on a ball, a gyrating ball, and it's like this weird thing.

Janine: Or those little worms on a string!

Keith: Yeah. "I bought one of those and now I have a river otter here!"

Austin: Right. So that is like "buying invisible leash, ferret on a ball, etc". But it could also be things like looking at a photo of your dog. What I've written here is, "local wildlife begins to act friendly, trying to take the place of pets. For those who take any action that the fair sees as permission—buying invisible leash/ferret on a ball, etc., looking at a photo—"

Keith: It's interpreting desire.

Austin: Exactly. "Looking at a photo of a pet, etc." OK, great.

Keith: OK. So what is my Pentacle action?

Austin: Pentacle action is "introduce a character". Or, again, start a project or team meeting. You seem like you had a project you might want to start. But "introduce a character"—also great.

Keith: Yeah, I'm going to start a project. I think that the anomaly is getting better at interpreting people's actions and one enormous subset of actions, that can be easily categorized with each other, is the Concern trying to investigate the anomaly. And so I want to start a four stage clock where the anomaly is basically giving... How do I phrase this? If people know what I'm trying to say and have—

Austin: Can you start from the top again? What does the end result look like?

Keith: The end result is that the anomaly is providing anomalous actions for the scientists, for the Concern. Because the Concern is actually the group least trying to get out. But what they are doing is trying to observe anomalous actions. So the anomaly's like, "yeah, whatever they're trying to prove, whatever result they want to see, just do that".

Austin: So what happens when this completes? I guess we'll find out what happens, but my thought here is, why does this take multiple weeks? Or not weeks, why does this take multiple turns to do? Is it because it's figuring out how to do it?

Keith: Yeah. Because like it started out with just like duplicating stuff, giving people more of things. And then was giving people better of things. And then it's trying to figure out how to like, not just fulfill desire, but counteract negative desire? It's trying to prevent people from having the desire to leave. And now, this group that doesn't want to leave, it wants this other specific thing. And like, who knows what the anomaly is, but all the different Concern people have these different ideas of what it is. And the anomaly's like, how do I fulfill that?

Austin: Right. I've written "the anomaly gives Concern's anomalies".

(Keith laughs)

Austin: I love it. I'm glad that we have arrived at like... I'll save this commentary for later is what I will say. Anyway. OK. It's my turn! I'll draw card.

Keith: Really tempted to introduce— Sorry.

Austin: No, no, fine.

Keith: I was tempted to use a character and then couldn't— I also really wanted to have a project up there because it's been a while since we've had a project.

Austin: Definitely. "Queen of Wands: An avenue of research just isn't working out. What is it? Why did the researchers decide to give it up?" Or, "the researchers become frenzied working on a new breakthrough, working long nights and ignoring their health to find out more. What's worked them into such a frenzy?" I think it's the first one here, "an avenue of research just isn't working out". Uh, mm? No, I've changed my mind. It's way more interesting to be the latter. Tinker and Barker. I think, actually, Tinker is able to explain to all the other agents here that we've brought up that Maria is attending to the garbage cans at this point and has focused on the fact that the staff is potentially an extension of the park in some way. And so instead of being like, "well, the garbage can fire doesn't work," it becomes "the garbage can fire absolutely worked. It's just it didn't work in damaging the place, it worked in getting attention. And so we're going to have to start trying to communicate. And so at first, it's just like figuring that the thing that's frenzied here is all of the possible ways they can try to fuck up the park a little bit. Setting things on fire, vandalizing the walls, stealing teddy bears from behind. What happens if we take all the prizes from a place? What happens if you knock out someone who's operating one of these things and take all of the stuffed animals, and then a kid comes up to it, wants to win a stuffed animal? What happens? And so they begin working—

Janine: I have a question.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Do they put a penny in the penny machine and then a can of spray paint somehow comes out, so you can tag stuff?

Austin: The penny machine is in the HQ, unfortunately, not here. But, presumably, they find markers, they find sharpies somewhere. You know what I mean? They find spray paint if they need it, right?

Janine: Get those big Molotow markers.

Austin: Yeah! Totally. So I think they become frenzied working on that breakthrough. They work long nights, they're not going to bed, they're trying to identify which parts of the park staff actually are extensions of the park. Are they being communicated to? They're trying to figure all of that out. So that is what they are frenzied working on. And then clocks advance. And I'm going to create a six step clock. You know what? I think five step clock. Five step. Six step? Five step.

Keith: Five step.

Austin: Five step. I'm going to delete this one, just copy one that we've already set up, which is "the Concern learns to communicate with the park". (typing) And that is an extension of this thing, this set of experiments where they're trying to figure out, "OK, this thing sees what we're doing. It is aware of us in some way, et cetera. There we go. OK. That is my turn. **Sylvia**¹.

Sylvia: Okay, um, so, let me draw a card. The Knight of Cups.

Austin: Ooh, okay. Look at that giant cup!

Janine: That cup's as big as a horse's head!

Austin: It's a Knight! The Knight of Cups. The Knight needs a big cup! "Someone on the team has stolen something. What?" Wait a second. Did we already do this?

Sylvia: Have we already done this?

Austin: Did we do this wrong? Did we read the wrong one before?

Keith: That doesn't sound familiar to me.

Austin: The next one is 100 percent a thing we did because the next one is "someone on the team has found a way to use the anomaly for profit". What did we read? Did I read the wrong Knight before? I must have, right?

Keith: I drew Knight of Pentacles.

Austin: Knight of Pentacles. Let's see. Did I read the wrong one?

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

Keith: So I guess if we do Knight of Cups now, we'll read Knight of Pentacles? That's an easy fix.

Austin: Yeah. The team... Okay. Yeah. I don't know what happened there but I read the wrong one. I know exactly what happened. I searched for "Knight of P" and it took me to Knight of Cups because Cups has a P in it. Knight of Pentacles says: "The team discovers a relevant event in the community's history that appears to involve the anomaly. What is it?" Or, "the team discovers when the anomaly first appeared in the area. How long has it been here?"

Sylvia: Oh, God, this is hard. OK. I think I'm going to put in the second one. "The team discovers when the anomaly first appeared in the area" and "how long has it been here?" And this is when they find out that this has been going on for a year. It's been here for a year, but it has felt like they just got here.

Keith: It's like a weekend.

Sylvia: Yeah. It's felt like a weekend, but this has been happening every weekend for a year.

Austin: Right, have they been investigating it for a year at this point? "I just don't remember?" Or just have people been coming to it?

Keith: The people who sort of remembered, "hey, wasn't that last weekend?" Those are the people who have been stuck in the loop the longest.

Austin: I think **Keith's** asking.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I think so. I think that works. That makes sense to me, at the very least, that this thing is less of a new phenomenon that's just started, but is actually a locational phenomenon. The carnival itself is almost able to hide this fact that it's been here for so long.

Keith: The other question that that brings up is, is this the first weekend that the Concern has been there or have they been restarting their investigation every weekend for a year?

Sylvia: I'm open to give this one up to the table here.

Austin: Or do they not know yet? Maybe that's even more interesting is like, "hey, have we been doing this for a fucking year?!"

Sylvia: I think this is when they find out.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: Because the card is "they discover when it first appeared in this area" and they're like, "wait, what the fuck? That is the wrong digit in the last digit of the years column" You know?

Austin: (laughs) Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Totally. Yeah, I like that.

Keith: So fucked.

Austin: It is. Okay. I'm going to advance these clocks and then you're gonna take an action.

Sylvia: OK, so the Cups has "acquire or lose something" as a thing?

Austin: It does. This should be Pentacles because we fucked up before.

Sylvia: Right! It was Pentacles.

Austin: Do you have a really good "acquire or lose something" that you want to do?

Sylvia: I was gonna say that they lose the doubles of Tinker and Barker.

Austin: Right. I think that's. I think that's interesting.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm. But I could also do...

Austin: I'm just going to put these up here. Why is it not doing it.

Sylvia: The problem is I just don't really have a project that's jumping to mind straight away.

Austin: No, that's fine.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: What's the thing for Pentacles? That's character, right?

Sylvia: Yeah. It's "introduce a character".

Austin: I'm going to just drop these actions here also, by the way, that way we just have them on the screen.

Sylvia: I think I'm going to have, actually, a team meeting. And I think, when they find out that this has been going on so long, someone asks, "hey, what's the harm? Why are we spending so much time trying to stop this thing when no one's died, right?" And part of this is like, yeah, we've been doing this for so long. But also, like, it's just a fair. Let's relax."

Austin: Janine?

Janine: Is that a specific statement from a specific person?

Sylvia: I guess it's a specific statement— it's a team meeting for the group? The specific statement, I don't have a character for it, but I think it's just like a member of the team is like, "why are we doing this?"

Keith: Yeah, why don't we just have fun at the fair? (laughs)

Austin: (excited) Does this person say it with a fair t-shirt on? (laughs)

Sylvia: No. But they are holding a stuffed animal they got from the Penny Smasher.

Austin: (laughs) Great.

Keith: Oh, yeah. The Penny Smasher's giving people prizes now?

Janine: I think someone else on the team says like... "I mean it could be a problem, but we don't really have any firsthand experience with it. Maybe we should decide in person."

Keith: Wait, **Janine**, what do you mean, in person?

Janine: "Maybe we should go to the fair and see if feels bad. You know, if it feels bad, then it probably is bad. But if it doesn't feel bad, maybe it's OK. I don't know."

Keith: Oh, I thought this meeting was happening at the fair.

Austin: I think this is back at the true Concern HQ. Not FOB, not Forward Operating Base Concern Park 1.

Keith: OK, I'm going to play Barker radioing in.

Keith (as Agent Barker): We have got to do these meetings at the Egg Scrambler. I cannot *leave* the Egg Scrambler.

Austin: I'm giving this answer as Agent Snave, who says:

Austin (as Agent Snave): I think Agents Barker and the other one are totally right. We got to bring more people here. In fact, I think, if it's OK, I'm going to take a little bit of money out of the Special Operations budget and put out an ad in the newspaper on behalf of this fair to really get the word out that more people should come. They could ride the Zipper, for instance, or anything else. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go check out this park, too, and just get in on the ground floor over there and see how things are going, to see if there's any differences between Park One and Park Two. I hope that makes sense.

Janine (as a Team Member): You should put some coupons in that ad.

Austin (as Agent Snave): I don't have the authority to do that. That would be illegal. I don't want to draw more attention to our investigation. Snave out.

Austin: You get to answer, **Sylvia**.

Sylvia: Oh, right, I do get to answer.

Janine: There's for real no way out there.

(laughter)

Sylvia: I'm gonna answer this one as a character now. And I think this is Trotter who is like:

Sylvia (as Agent Trotter): You're all being ridiculous. For years, this is what we've done. We need to contain these things. We don't know if it's dangerous! But it could be.

Austin: Shoutouts to Trotter. Trotter a real one. All right. **Janine**, time to draw a card!

Janine: OK. How many Wands are left?

Austin: I could check, but I don't.

Keith: We've only had one Major Arcana card, right?

Austin: (nervously, increasingly higher pitched) We got a second oneeeee, we got a second oneeeee.

Keith: Nice.

Janine: Oh, wow.

Austin: You wanna read this one, **Janine**?

Janine: "The World: The anomaly's found to be far more far-reaching in its effects than the team feared. Just how big a scale is it?" This is where setting this in the Bluffaverse gets complicated.

Austin: But also... (excited) Yeah.

Janine: I mean.

Austin: I mean, there's ways to say this without saying stuff— you know what I mean, without spoiling Bluff stuff necessarily.

Keith: Is there something specifically that you two are referencing that I don't know yet?

Austin: I'll just say the thing from before, is that during the last recording that we did, I made a note that the character names that the players were playing, because of where they were from, should not feel especially aestheticized. They shouldn't have alliteration the way that comic characters do. They should have the sort of flow of everyday life of kind of clunky names that people have. Whether it doesn't necessarily sound like an especially cool name, it should sound like something that has all of the reasons a name is a name, separate from sounding cool.

Keith: So my name is **Keith** because my dad's name is **Keith**, not because **Keith** Carberry is a good sounding name.

Austin: Exactly. It happens to be a good-sounding name. And the regular aestheticization that we do in our regular lives is acceptable. But, you know, you also just get, what's that dude's name? Shane— Evan. The guy on—

Sylvia: Sean Evans?

Austin: Sean Evans. That's just a name. You know what I mean? And so the next Bluff game has people with names like that in it, is what I will say. For people who are not caught up, I don't wanna spoil what that means necessarily. But for people who are, you should be able to interpret what I'm saying there pretty clearly. And so what I was saying, **Janine**, that's a way to talk about how far-reaching this thing might be. But there's other too.

Keith: My impression was like, Bluff time is weird, right?

Austin: Yeah. Oh, that's good way of doing it.

Keith: We haven't gone into when exactly this is happening.

Austin: (chuckles) We haven't.

Keith: If we had, in a broad... if we did things like have story-binders, if we planned out 40 years of Bluff, being like yeah, "there was just like eight years where all of Bluff was in a loop, like in the sevent— that wouldn't be that out there".

Austin: Oh, I was going the other way, which was, whatever time we have— in my mind, I've been picturing this as being very— I mean Bluff is time-y wym-y. It's always been a little weird in this way. But there are also clear distinct eras. We've talked about Millennium Alexander Black having had a time in the 70s in Bluff City, whatever 70s Bluff City looks like. We just did that game of Fiasco that was clearly set in the late 60s, early 70s vibes. We've done stuff that has been absolutely set in the future of Bluff City and stuff that has like 80s vibes. It could be as simple as like, people from different eras start showing up. We've had a lot of talks lately internally about what Bluff might look like over different time periods, you know? Time is definitely an angle.

Janine: I have a metaphor that I want to use here. The anomaly is like... The phrase bookworm comes from an actual worm that eats paper. And the anomaly is basically like a worm that has chewed a hole through a book. And every page in the book is an era of Bluff City. So this worm exists on every single page at the same time. Even though that page is distinct, it has its own part of the story. But the worm is the sort of constant of just like, at the exact same point throughout. And it just is, as it is. So I don't think people of different times show up because of the time that the people— you know, the page is the page. So, while it's there at different points in time, all those times are their own page.

Austin: And so there is continuity... People are there for as long as they're there.

Janine: Yes.

Austin: But that means that people must be able to get out. Or is there someone in here who's 90, who has been here for 80 years since they were 10?

Janine: I mean, I think the thing that gets asked there is, are they trapped here as time moves or are they just trapped here in perpetuity?

Austin: In perpetuity. And if so, where is the boundary of what counts?

Keith: I have a sort of, I guess, question or possible... I have an understanding of this and I would like to know if I'm right or wrong? Where it's like... OK. This bookworm is its own timeline in a sense, so it's covering, you know, it's bored through the book in a way where it is in all these different eras, but it's not always in all those eras, it is right now in all of them because of its position in the book. Where it's like, you know, in Back to the Future Part 1 there isn't a Biff future, but there is in 2, in the same way that right now there is a worm through all of time.

Janine: You kind of lost me at the Back to the Future part (laughs).

Keith: OK. This is the... There is currently a worm timeline.

Austin: I think it's always there. It's just that if you're there in 1900, if you're in the 1900 fair, you're not seeing people from the 2019 fair. Even if you stay there for 30 years, you're in the 1900 fair for all thirty years, is the way **Janine** made it seem.

Keith: I figured out how to rephrase my thing. It's always there, but it's been going on for a year. So one year ago it wasn't always there because it wasn't there at all. But this year it is always there.

Janine: I have a way to explain this. So imagine that time is a book.

Austin: Yeah. Always. On it.

Janine: Time isn't all laid out already, necessarily. Time is a book that gets a page added every year and that page is a year, etc.. The worm is eating the pages as they are added. So there is, to some extent, a break where a new page is in the process of being added, it is added, then it is eaten through.

Austin: So has the worm only eaten this page? Like the worm wasn't here a year ago until a minute ago.

Janine: Yeah. And now the worm has eaten through this page and the worm is part of this page.

Austin: It has inserted itself into the year that has already happened.

Keith: I think that we're all on the same page now, or at least us three, I don't know about Sylvia.

(Austin laughs)

Sylvia: Great, I've understood the entire time! Got it right away.

Keith: Unfortunately, I do have one last question. Which is, if you kill the worm, and I'm not saying that's what we're here to do, but conceptually, if you were to kill the worm, does it remove the worm from 80 years ago? Or is that all carnival forever moving forward.

Austin: Can I just say "play to find out what happens" here?

(Janine laughs)

Keith: OK.

Austin: I think that's a "play to find out what happens". I think that's a good question for the Concern to have.

(Janine chuckles)

Janine: Yeah, that's the thing, this is just, "is found to be far more reaching in the effects".

Austin: How do we figure it out? How do we learn this?

Keith: That was like a team meeting, but real.

Austin: It really was, I love that that was like, "I want a whiteboard". In the movie version of this...

Janine: It's a piece of chalk, right? Because like the wall is painted black in the dark ride or whatever. And someone found a piece of chalk and they just have a fucking galaxy brain moment where they're just drawing worms and books and like putting holes and book pages.

(Keith laughs)

Janine: And they're just like going and everyone else is kind of there for it, for the ride.

Austin: Yeah. Can I propose something here, too?

Janine: Yes.

Austin: What if we found someone who's been to the fair twice? Who is like, "yeah, I was here when I was eight. I'm now 48. I've been here before. I got stuck here when I was a child. No one believes me."

Keith: This is my coyote.

Austin: (laughs) This is my coyote. Yes. "I had this coyote 40 years ago."

Janine: The answer's to Benedict in everything.

Austin: Yeah. "Benedict? (robot sound) That's Benedict." God, I'm not drawing the worm diagram. I think **Janine** has done a great job of drawing a picture with her words. You still have (laughs) two— uhh, we have to advance clocks. Which I'm doing now. Which was, what let me make sure I'm right. **Keith.** Advance one on my turn. Advance one on **Sylvia's** turn. Now advance one, yeah. Okay. Boop. And then mine, bop. Now, **Janine**, you can have a conversation, start a project or, with the major arcana, take an anomalous action!

Janine: Hang on. I have to quickly Google "New Jersey folklore".

Austin: There's a bunch.

Janine: (laughs) Oh, OK. Damn, that's a good one right off the bat. All right. There's a giant statue of Captain Kidd. In the middle of the fair now.

Keith: What is Captain Kidd?

Janine: So I Googled "New Jersey folklore" and the second thing here after Jersey Devil, which, I don't care, played out, is Dem Bones: "My granny was told as a child that Captain Kidd, knowing the law was on his trail, traveled up the Jersey coast looking for the perfect spot to bury his stolen booty. And he found it near a grove of gnarled, windswept pines on Sandy Hook. One moonless, dark night, the adventure galley—" Okay (laughs). "The adventure galley, slid silently into harbor at Sandy Hook." Adventure Galley sounds like a ride that's already at this place (laughs).

Austin: Yup, 100 percent. Is it in front of the Adventure Galley. Is that where this—

Janine: Yes.

Austin: (laughs) Okay.

Janine: This is coming from the big statues of like Paul Bunyan and shit like that, sometimes there's just a weird roadside... Is a giant statue of Captain Kidd that is hollow, you can climb up inside it. It's that kind of thing. It is just there now. It's just there.

Austin: Is Captain Kid as in William the Kid or Captain Kidd the pirate? This is the pirate, right?

Janine: Well, the title of this New Jersey folklore entry's Dem Bones. So I'm gonna say, yeah. I'm gonna say pirate. I mean, cowboys and whatever didn't have stolen buried booty, so.

Austin: I love the comments on this, which seem like things Jack has written. "Cool, if you say it right, you could make a song!" "Wow. I heard about that before I read this." Wow. That's a good story." "Great story. Haven't heard it before! Thanks for sharing." "It's not often you hear that aftertales regarding pirate activity hauntingly different." "OMG, there's even a song called Dem Bones by Alice in Chains. I love that song!"

(**Austin, Janine** and **Keith** laugh)

Austin: Anyway. OK, **Keith**, it is your turn. Draw a card.

Keith: Yeah. First, I want to say that **Janine** just Googling “New Jersey folklore” made me realize that I don’t know any Massachusetts folklore, which seems nuts because I feel like there probably is a lot. That’s something I should read about. But here, let’s draw a card. (pause) Am I supposed to be able to just drag it from the deck?

Janine: It has to be the card that sticks out. You have to draw that.

Keith: Three of Cups! We have not had very many Cups, have we.

Austin: We have not! Three of Cups: “How are members of the team paid for their work?” Or, “what personal luxuries do members of the team not have access to?”

(**Sylvia** laughs)

Austin: Oops, I didn’t mean to draw (laughs).

Janine: Well, they have to use carnival toilets for one thing. That sucks.

Austin: Yeah. And showers?!

(**Janine** laughs)

Sylvia: Oh, God.

Janine: They just have to wash in the Porta Potty sink.

(**Austin** and **Keith** groan)

Keith: OK. This is interesting. I was trying to figure out because I was like, both of these actually are difficult to answer, based on the fiction that we’ve come up with. Because there’s like, how is Barker getting paid? She can’t leave the Egg Scrambler. And then the rest of the agents of the Concern probably have money paychecks. And then the other side of it is like, what do they not have what they want? Which is like, well, that’s exactly what the anomaly is trying to solve. So let’s talk about what they don’t have. Because maybe then they’ll have it soon. **Austin**, you said showers? (laughs) That’s gross. That’s a good one. Showers is a good one. Somewhere to sit down.

Austin: Like benches.

Sylvia: Beds!

Keith: Beds, benches, couches. Like, yeah, when was the last time you went to a carnival and they were just like— or even like going to Six Flags, there's not a lot of places to just stop for 10 minutes.

Janine: Do they have to fake being sick so they can go to the medical tent or whatever? And sleep?

Austin: God.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Wait, time out. Who said— why fake? People have been stuck here-- Some people have been here for, now that the exit has been removed, days?

Janine: I mean, the medical tent's not just gonna let you use their cot because you're like, "I'm sleepy".

Austin: I bet they would. I bet if you were like, "I haven't slept in twenty five hours".

(**Janine** laughs)

Keith: "I haven't slept in two days." But I think it's also just like people sitting on the ground lined up to sit on the bench. Or like people inside of... **Janine** you said that the dark ride was actually not in use?

Janine: It is, but just a section of it was blocked off. That they were using.

Keith: Oh, okay. Well, yeah. Maybe they, you know, find somewhere where there's a free area where you can just lie down on the ground or lie down on whatever the floor is of a section of the dark ride. But yeah, beds, medicine, places to sit and relax. Especially because part of the thing that the anomaly's been doing so far is like "get prizes, go on rides, there's fireworks. Go, go, go, go!"

Austin: Yeah, the opposite.

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: The fucking Sailor Moon villain.

Keith: (laughs) It is! It's even a small business.

(**Sylvia** laughs)

Austin: It is. You're right.

Keith: (laughs) Yeah, I think it's incredibly basic stuff. Food that isn't carnival food. Everyone's been eating hot dogs and fried dough for days. And it's like how long—

Janine: One mom snuck carrot stick or celery sticks in her purse for her kids.

(**Austin** laughs)

Janine: And a riot broke out (laughs).

Austin: Until they realized that if you drop it inside of the Zipper, you can duplicate it and get a salad (laughs).

Keith: (laughs) A good salad.

Austin: A good salad.

Keith: But it's like, yeah, one person can make salads for people. And there's now, what, hundreds of people in here?

Austin: Hundreds of people in here and that's just Park One.

Keith: And, speaking of the medical tent, it's like even a kid, who is like, "hotdogs and fried dough all day. Only meal—fried dough". How long until you start to feel physically gross because of that.

Austin: I can't finish a funnel cake without feeling I should never eat again because of how bad it made me feel. And also, I would like another one because it's good, but I will not.

Keith: This one can have ice cream on it.

Austin: Someone asked earlier if we like funnel cake with toppings or not, and I'm just like powdered sugar is all. That's funnel cake.

Keith: I like if it's powdered sugar and I like it with cinnamon.

Janine: I've never had funnel cake.

Austin: Oh, we should get funnel cake. It's terrible for you, but it's so good.

Keith: Here, we mostly have just like fried dough.

Austin: Ours is like latticed, you know what I mean?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. We don't get that here.

Austin: Really? Wait. What's—

Keith: Yeah. Almost not at all.

Austin: I don't understand what your funnel cake looks like, then.

Keith: Imagine instead of a latticed dough, it's just like someone poured dough in. So sometimes it's like a centimeter thick, sometimes it's puffy, like a couple inches thick and it just like this or like almost like a pizza with no toppings. But it's fried dough.

Austin: Oh, is it not bumpy? It's not like this picture...

Keith: It's a little bumpy.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's almost like a pie. I just Googled funnel cake. It should be on the stream.

Keith: Oh, it's on the screen?

Austin: Yeah. Some of it's almost like big cookies.

Keith: So that bumpy thing? It's not bumpy like that.

Austin: This is mine. Mine is just 100 percent this vibe of deeply latticed and inner-woven funnel cake. But yours is like flat.

Keith: If you do a Google Image search for "fried dough", it's that.

Austin: OK. (typing) Oh, OK. That's completely different. Yeah, I see. That looks good too, though. I'd eat this.

Keith: This good as hell. Honestly, it is the exact same thing as funnel cake. This is like slightly doughier. There's less bits that are crispy. But it still is plenty crispy. I think it's just as good, it's great. Fried dough all day. Until— (laughs) until you're at the fair for two days and then, "where is that mother with her salad bag?"

Austin: (laughs) All right. That is your card. We still need to advance clocks.

Keith: Cups is facts.

Austin: And then Cups is facts. Your clock finished, **Keith**. "The anomaly gives Concern anomalies."

Keith: Oh, OK.

Austin: So we're gotta know what that looks like. And then, yes, Cups— No, Cups is "acquire or lose something".

Keith: You know what I think it is? I think that the way that it manifests is like, all of the Concern agents, at the end of the day, come together and they all think that they've cracked the case.

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: But it's like, no, all they've done is just like each had the exact— It's like their confirmation bias manifested in each of them getting the result— Whatever their gut feeling of what this thing was at the very beginning, they have now proven that to be true, each independently and, thus, disproving all of their theories. But except for one person, Agent Barker, who has only been able to reduce in size the area that she is allowed to go in.

Austin: Oh, my God. Now it is just the, like. It's not even the game... Whatever the kind of carnival game, is not even part of it anymore.

Keith: Right. Right. It's like the Egg Scrambler and then a little patch of grass outside of that.

Austin: God. "Never want to ride that Egg Scrambler again. Don't care how boring it is."

Keith: (laughs) I like the Egg Scrambler!

Austin: I'm just saying, if that's the only thing you've been at for four days. All right. Now, yeah, you can start a project, have a team meeting or acquire or lose something.

Keith: Hmm. OK. We are going to acquire the suspicion of the community.

Austin: Oooh. Love it. What's that look like?

Keith: It looks like... Everybody's totally freaked out and there's a bunch of suits wandering around doing tests on shit.

(**Austin** and **Keith** laugh)

Keith: And people talking to people outside of who they came with. Like, how long are you stuck in a carnival before you and your two friends start talking and gossiping with some other folks who are also stuck here?

Austin: I mean, at this point, the question is, now people understand that they're stuck here? I guess so. We talked about salad tricks, right? So it's been long enough.

Keith: People understand that they're stuck. People understand that each other are stuck.

Austin: Has it gotten violent? Have people tried to force their way out only to find that they can't? I guess so. All of that stuff has happened.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. That's already established that people are trying to walk out and instead are walking into a ride.

Austin: Right. Right. Yeah. OK.

Keith: They fell out of the ride and into the ferris wheel or into the Egg Scrambler.

Janine: Honestly, it's one hell of a meet cute though.

(Austin and Keith laugh)

Austin: All right. "Where'd your parents meet? Well." (laughs) All right.

Keith: "They warped into an Egg Scrambler."

Austin: God. I'm drawing a card. The Seven of Swords: "How does the team treat authority? Are they respectful or resentful?" (laughs) "How do members of the team treat those they have power over?" God. OK. Well, on the heels of that, on the heels of that, I think that they're going to turn... On the heels of, two things, one is the people who're growing suspicious. I'm doing the second one, "treat those that they have power over". After people start treating them with suspicion, but also after they realize the anomaly is giving them fake anomalies to be Concerned with, there is this sort of streak of like: "All right, we're all going to go back to the Woods of Woe, where we have our base. We are going to lock that place down. We are going to have patrols to make sure no one comes in or near us. We're going to locate, the..."not velvet ropes, but you know, not ropes, but the things that have like a vinyl fabric-y "pull out to make a line" thing?

Janine: The seatbelt pulls?

Austin: Yes. The seat belt pull, those things "and cordon off our HQ".

Keith: You're talking about setting up a stanchion.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Setting up a stanchion and keeping everyone away. And they are like, you know, Concern members, as you may recall, from previous games, especially field agents, are pretty capable. Capable in like an action movie way, capable in a violent way, capable in an espionage way. They have all sorts of talents. And at this point, they're using them to intimidate people who try to get too close to them, who are suspicious of them. Or hide themselves, and both. So I think we start to get more of them. And also maybe the suspicion starts to go both ways where it's like, "hmm, maybe some of these people aren't to be trusted. Maybe we should start tailing these so-called families in this park."

Keith: Yeah, the Concern is already suspicious of that one employee.

Austin: Right. So maybe it's not just the employees, maybe it's everybody else. And so we get a, not a dark turn. I think at the bottom of all this is, "we are so close to figure out how to talk to this fucking park. Like we just need to keep it together for a couple more days and everything is gonna be fine. So let's just try to make sure no one here is plotting against us. Let's make sure that anyone who is stays the fuck away from us", et cetera.

Keith: "Put any schemes on hold."

Austin: "Right. And especially the schemes of other people who (chuckles) might try to break into the Woods of Woe to find out what we got going on in here. I don't want anyone to see my worm drawing. Okay? It's *my* worm drawing." (chuckles) So that's one. Two is, I'm gonna tick

this clock, we only have one clock up. And then three, what was it, the Seven of Swords, and Swords is “secure or endanger something”. (pause) I think, at this point, the state of the thing that this is has gotten to the point where... We talked about the mood turning inside of the Concern. We talked about... OK, this is going to go good. The Concern disappears agent Snave. Agent Snave walks into Park Two only to learn that this is not actually Park Two. It is a sting operation to stop agent Snave. The Concern has set up a fake one of these parks to— Park Two exists. They’ve also set up a fake Park Two, to get agents Snave caught in his scams and he is secured and disappears. Somewhere agent Trotter is very pleased.

(pause)

Sylvia: Is that it?

Austin: That is it. Secured.

Sylvia: All right. So my turn then?

Austin: It is your turn.

Sylvia: The Knight of Swords.

Austin: Ooh. Staying with Swords. I am suddenly very glad I got rid of agent Snave. The Knight of Swords: “Someone seizes an opportunity and takes a place of power in the community. How does the team think the anomaly was involved and why does this worry them?” Or, “someone seizes an opportunity accomplishing something incredible despite the risks. What do they accomplishing and who was endangered to do it?”

Sylvia: So my knee jerk reaction is to go with number two. The thing they accomplished being they got out of the park.

Austin: Oooh.

Sylvia: And I think who was endangered to do it was either... Trying to think. I think it was just other guests in the park. I think it was a guest who did this. I think it was someone who was just fed up of fucking being here and they like... I don’t know, I’m trying to think of the specifics of how they got out, but I think maybe it has something to do with the garbage cans that have been set on fire or something. I’m trying to think of a way to make it dangerous.

Austin: Did it have to do with... We introduced this giant statue, this Captain Kidd statue in front of the... What was the name of the ride again, **Janine**?

Janine: I don’t think I...

Austin: Did we not just decide it’s called the Adventure Galley?

Janine: Oh, right, right, right. Yes. The Adventure Galley is the ship mentioned in that, and there's definitely a ride called that for sure.

Austin: Is it to do with...

Sylvia: I know what it is. I think they have to go into the inner workings of the ride nearest to the Captain Kidd thing.

Austin: The inner workings, meaning where the machine— where the gears and shit are?

Sylvia: Yeah. Where maintenance workers would go. And I think they try and bring a few other people and people stop or get hurt in some way because like you're not supposed to be going through there while this is running. And they open a door and when they go through the door they are in the middle of Bluff City somewhere.

Austin: Huh. Interesting. Cool. Do they get word back? Do they try to get word back?

Sylvia: So, part of me wants to be like, no, they just kind of forget about it. It's established that this is something that the anomaly works with, where it kind of slips in and out of your awareness. So, I think maybe they went home for a bit and were like, "wait a minute. Where is everyone I know?" And then maybe they try and— I don't think they can make contact, though.

Austin: Okay. But they do remember being there?

Sylvia: After a time, they do remember, yeah. It's not immediate though. It's like the, "oh, wasn't that here last weekend?" thing for a lot of people.

Austin: Right. I've advanced "the Concern can communicate with the park," which now completes. God, what does this even look like? (sighs) Is there a person that they can speak through? Is it just about focusing their desires? Is there a Ouija board? What is the parking lot fair carnival equivalent of a giant Ouija board?

Keith: Wait, sorry I missed something. What is the Ouija board for?

Austin: Communicating with the park. "The Concern now can communicate with the park." Is it a fortune telling machine? What's an interesting way to do this? Does anyone have any ideas on this?

Janine: I have some ideas. My number one idea is an impulse to move away from the increasingly obscure... As much as I would love to do some bullshit with a claw machine or a fortune flying machine, my impulse here is Maria shows up and hands them the keys to a trailer. The kind of trailer that staff would...

Austin: Like a little white trailer that you'd hook on the back of a—

Janine: Like a Aero Stream? Is that what they're called? One of those silver pod ones from like the 70s.

Austin: Oh, nice. Yeah.

Janine: She just shows up, just tosses it at Trotter or something.

Austin: Yeah. What's inside? What do we— who speaks—? They go in. They open the door. Is it inside of it, is, again, kind of era-appropriate, midcentury...

Janine: There's like a kitchenette, you got some curtains that have a rod at the top and the bottom so they don't flap around when you're driving.

Austin: There's like the smell of percolated coffee and a toast—

Janine: And damp plywood because when you do the dishes in the sink, it always kind of leaks a little bit. And like chemical toilet— has to smell like a chemical toilet.

Austin: Has to smell like a chemical toilet. Is there like a carnival... The person who's in here. Is it, where was the person's name...

Keith: Peter or something?

Austin: Peter. Is it Peter? Junior?

Janine: Mm, I got an idea, but then I was like, "oh, that's just Control. I can't do that".

Austin: (huffs) OK.

Janine: My thought was that there was like an antenna TV. I'm drawing so specifically on my childhood here, where we had a trailer and there was a fridge and the fridge was set into a wood compartment and there was a little shelf on top. And we put a TV with an antenna up there and you could really not watch anything. All you could watch on that was like, basically the news and Jay Leno and MASH. (laughs) For some reason, that's all I remember ever receiving on that thing. So I'm picturing like an antenna TV that has one of those clicky dials even.

Austin: Yeah. Like the click.

Janine: From back when there were 10 channels so why wouldn't you use a dial? That kind of thing.

Austin: Yup. John Peter Foster was the person whose name you introduced.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. And then you can click it and maybe it's like you find the channel that he's on or maybe it's like you have to keep clicking it like one of those signal searcher things, to hear the response.

Austin: Yeah. Every time you ask a question, you have to click through to find the answer. And by the time you get there, you're a little bit too late for the very beginning of it.

Janine: Then you're like "did he just say 'apple tater'?"

Austin: He said "apple tater"! He definitely said "the apple taters provide—" (laughs) "—a generous amount of the vitamins needed to survive", et cetera. God, what do we learn from this? Is this... I think the conversation begins and happens. I mean, this is a big one, right? Because, at this point, we can just have the conversation, but having that conversation means defining the anomaly in a real way. You know? How are you feeling right now?

Keith: So my gut leans more towards not personifying the anomaly specifically.

Austin: We're at the point, though, where they can communicate with it, so, this can be a middle—

Keith: Well, they're communicating with John Peter—

Austin: No, because the project was "can communicate with the park".

Keith: With the park, okay.

Austin: Yeah. So that's an established thing. Maybe, John Peter Foster is a middle man or can only... Do you know what I mean? I can meet you halfway there, but that was the six step clock was, "they figure out—" Because we know that they were already communicating, they were already having communication, it was just not clear communication because of things like setting a fire and having the fire turn into fireworks. Stuff like that is communication. So there was already an avenue between the two. The thing here ends up being— The other half of this is, we should start wrapping up sometime soon and also, presumably, we will wrap up in a way that does not erase Bluff City from the map. (laughs)

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin: Who knows? Maybe we're done. Maybe this is the end of Bluff City. We only need to release what we've already recorded.

Keith: Yeah, sorry, on a Live at the Table, we canceled Bluff City.

Austin: (laughs) You know, weirder things have happened. But I am definitely struggling with like how much do we just say out loud? Versus how much do we abstract in terms of like, here is what they get from this. And I'm mostly curious if someone has good ideas at this point about what they think the anomaly is or would communicate with the Concern. (pause) Given what we already know that they know about it, which is that it's lasted throughout—

Keith: Do I have good ideas? No.

Austin: (laughs) But we have ideas. Let's start with ideas and we'll work on them until they're good. That's what we always do on this show. I feel like... I feel like the conversation here is pretty matter-of-fact. I don't know that the park is trying to hide anything.

Keith: It doesn't need to. Presumably, who knows that this hasn't already happened 52 times.

Austin: Right, exactly.

Keith: Or 5200 times.

Austin: Right. If it's happened for 100 years, right?

Keith: Right. It's happened for *a* year, but it's also happening forever.

Austin: Gonna keep happening after the fact, forever. But we also know that people have gotten hurt, genuinely, trying to escape. Presumably people have gotten worse than hurt in previous incarnations of this thing. Is this the beginning of a negotiation? Maybe I start...

Keith: OK. Here's my question. Does the anomaly get something out of people being here? What does it get out of that? It's giving people things and it, you know, arguably doesn't do that great a job of it. But like, if it's keeping people here and it's able to communicate, then it must be getting something out of it. Even if that, in a weird way, is just like, "oh, I'm just trying to give people a good time", which I don't think is the case, but.

Austin: Right. Again, you brought up Sailor Moon before, there could be something parasitic happening here...?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: **Sylvia** and **Janine**, any thoughts here?

Janine: I don't know.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I feel like it's something we could punt because it could be like, "hey, the communication has begun, but it's the first step in a longer process of figuring out what it wants". Do you know what I mean?

Janine: What we have here is that they set out to find a way to communicate and then the park was like, "OK, you want to communicate? Let's sit down".

Austin: Right. Well, I guess the larger answer we're gonna give here is, is it giving them that? Or is it giving them what they want so that they stay?

Keith: In a new, smaller area, too.

Austin: Right. And I think we, the players, should actually answer that so that we know going forward we're all on the same page on that. Knowing that we have to start moving towards an end shortly because it's 8:23.

Sylvia: I guess the only thing I'd say to that is that like... I mean, I guess the clock was just "the Concern can communicate with the park", it doesn't necessarily mean it has to have its intentions on the table, never mind.

Austin: No, but I do think that you're right, which is like the spirit of that thing was, this should this should be the Concern succeeding at getting the thing that they want, which is to communicate.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: We didn't draw a card that said "a thing completes but not in the way that the person who started it intended" or something like that.

Keith: I guess that's true, but if you like learn a language to talk with someone, they can still lie to you.

Austin: Absolutely. But then, at that point, I feel like I would rather that come from a card that says that thing, you know? Than not. Also part of this is, we shouldn't no-sell the Concern.

Keith: That's true.

Austin: You know what I mean? This is a group that will continue to exist in Bluff City and be successful at this thing that's happening.

Keith: Specifically this sort of thing.

Austin: Right. This is not the FBI stumbled into this and they're over their heads.

Keith: Right. This is the Men in Black.

Austin: And, like Men in Black, they can be fucked up on the way getting there. They can stumble their way towards it and one of them gets caught up in a weird scheme and blah, blah, blah.

Keith: But eventually the mailman gets his memories back.

Austin: Yes. I don't know why more people don't say, you know, SCP Foundation, Men in Black, The X Files.

(**Keith** and **Austin** laugh)

Austin: So I'm going to lean towards real communication starts happening.

Keith: I think that's true, especially if like this anomaly is like, well, the thing that they want is to actually know. And also if it feels like there's no stakes in telling them.

Austin: Right. Because it feels like it's in control.

Keith: Right.

Austin: All right. I'm happy to say "the process begins here" more than "we have an answer as players". But this is a vector by which fictionally we can start moving towards answers as we continue. This is **Sylvia's** turn still, right?

Sylvia: I think so.

Austin: Yeah, you still have...

Sylvia: Well, so I was actually gonna set up a clock but if we were gonna do the ending, I think this idea could roll into it.

Austin: Oh, I was not saying we have to end right now by any means. I was just saying in terms of thinking about pacing. I would love to be done by 9:00 so I can eat dinner.

Keith: Okay, so we've got time for a clock or two.

Austin: Yeah!

Sylvia: I was just going to say, what if they start trying to bargain with it? They don't need to get rid of it. It can still be a fair. It just like... "Can you let a certain number of people out and we will look the other way while a certain number are trapped in your loop for an amount of time?"

Austin: Right.

Keith: So negotiate just like a cycle?

Sylvia: Basically, yeah.

Keith: "You can always have like 100 people here."

Sylvia: Because they don't need to— the way I'm thinking of the Concern is they don't necessarily need to eradicate it. They just want to be in control of it.

Austin: Right. They need to know what it is, how it works, if it's involved with their other big cases and whether or not... So, yeah, do you wanna start a clock for negotiations?

Sylvia: Yeah, sure.

Austin: And again, this could go bad. We could draw a card immediately that fucks this up. Yeah. How many steps do you want?

Sylvia: Uh, go with like— well, I don't know, four or five?

Austin: Yeah, I'd say let's—

Keith: I think four sounds right?

Austin: Four sounds right to me.

Keith: We already have the communication.

Austin: Yeah. (typing)

Sylvia: All right.

Austin: OK. Boop. Misspelt "the". Classic. That's Internet humor right there, folks.

Sylvia: Yeah!

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin: Welcome to LiveJournal— All right.

Keith: I like it because it's inherently funny, but also I recognize it.

(**Austin, Janine** and **Sylvia** laugh)

Austin: All right, **Janine**. Time for you to draw card.

Janine: Temperance.

Austin: (huffs) Ooh, I have no idea, I'm very worried. Oh. Oh! Wow!

Janine: That's nice, it's great!

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: Temperance: "A calming energy resides over the region. What conflicts are halted by this? What urgent matters are neglected?"

(**Austin** and **Sylvia** laugh)

Janine: Um, hmm. I'm trying to think of what is the thing that calms people at a fair or a large event. (laughs) This isn't an answer to my question, but it's very funny to me, so I'm just going to do it. So things are a little tense and it feels like they're maybe reaching a breaking point. And the anomaly has a certain reaction to this, which is... It feels like they originated from a point, but no one can say what the point was. It's just, suddenly there are a bunch of them and they're disseminating through the crowd. There are so many clowns.

Austin: I hate it.

(**Keith** laughs)

Janine: Some of them are like traditional clowns, some of them are like—

Austin: Don't ever start a sentence like that with me again in your life.

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: "Some of them are traditional clowns?? Comma??

(**Janine** laughs)

Keith: How traditional? Do you mean traditional like Bozo? Or traditional like French, like commedia dell'arte stuff.

Janine: Americana clowns like, you know, red nose and copyrighted makeup and all that stuff. (laughs) So like, you know, a good number of them are like this. Some of them are more on the contemporary mascot-y side because, you know, clowns are a little bit old school. Most people now want to see like an off-brand Tom and Jerry show that kind of thing. So, you know, again, there's the impression that they all maybe came off a truck or something because they all do just kind of fan out through the crowd, they just disperse, but no one can say where they actually came from. And they all have their own little special— you know, some of them are balloon animals, they miraculously find the people who are going to respond well to balloon animals. And some of them are just like, "hey, here's some fresh bottled water". A nice bottle of water. Everyone likes that. You know, other ones are like, "I'll braid a friendship bracelet on your wrist" and like, sing a goofy song and, you know, that kind of thing. And there are a lot— I want to say that the clown-to-guest ratio here is a lot higher than you would think.

Keith: Two to one. (laughs)

Austin: Oh, my God.

Keith: 500 clowns. (laughs)

(**Austin** groans)

Janine: The clown-to-guest ratio is definitely higher than the teacher-to-student ratio in the school system.

Austin: This is utopian.

Janine: You can get personal clown attention.

Austin: I would never... Another thing I would love for you not to say—

Keith: Small groups, everyone break into small groups, you each get a clown.

Austin: Personal clown attention... God.

Keith: OK, I do have a question. I guess it's more of a statement with a question mark at the end. This is calming???

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: The water...

Janine: Here's the thing. You're in a situation where a person can be generated that deals with your specific needs. If you're the clown skeptic, you're gonna get the clown who's super meta and is like, "look, I know, I'm just doing this for the Summer job. I'm a visual arts major".

Austin: Right. A 19 year old... Right. Exactly.

Janine: "You want to smoke with me behind the Adventure Boat or whatever the fuck it's called (laughs)?"

Sylvia: You know, that helps calm some people.

Austin: It does.

Janine: Yeah!

Keith: One of the all time funniest things I've ever—

Austin: CBD clowns.

(**Austin, Janine** and **Keith** laugh)

Keith: One of the all time funniest things I've ever seen in my entire life was, I was in line at a fairly popular haunted house years and years ago and there was this clown, this like scary clown, bloody clown with a machete or whatever. And a couple of these types of characters were scaring people in line because the line to get in was so long. And they were these two teenage girls that were terrified of these clowns that were bothering her. And the guy takes a step towards her and she fell and twisted back, like, basically did a somersault backwards over the stanchion. The rope over the line acted as a fulcrum to twist her around and slam her on the ground. And this guy immediately broke character.

Austin: Good.

Keith: Immediately was not being the scary clown that was like like lunging at people. He was like, "oh, my God, are you OK? Are you?" And she was fine, but she was still like, "no, I'm not—" So terrified of this guy. And she was okay, stood back up. And then, as he was walking past me

and my family, looked at us and took off his little clown nose and did like a “hee-hee-heee” and a little skip.

(**Austin** groans)

Keith: And seeing this clown in three different modes in the span of about 8 seconds was so hilariously funny to me.

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: And I guess, long story short, this is what these clowns are doing. They’re probably not ever murder clowns, but they’re just like, whoever is looking at them, whoever needs whatever, the clown is adapting to that.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: As long as no one says “what I need is a murder clown”.

(**Keith** laughs)

Austin: An entire line of query we did not go down and will not go down. Anyway, I was laughing earlier because I was thinking about this 19-year old visual arts major working here for the Summer as a clown with a shirt on that said “**Got CBD?**”, question mark, in the Got Milk font. And then underneath it said “the C stands for clown”.

(all laugh)

Austin: Which doesn’t mean anything. Anyway. (laughs) It’s not that type of abbreviation, it’s a single word!

Keith: Clown-BDoll. Clown-bidiol.

Janine: Clown, Bozo, Duncie. Those are all types of clown.

Austin: (laughs) Uh huh. Clown-bidiol. Oh, all right. I’m gonna advance negotiations with the park, aided by the clown water. **Janine**, you get to take an action.

Keith: It aggravates your clown-abinoid receptors.

(**Austin** and **Sylvia** groan)

(**Austin** and **Janine** laugh)

Janine: So major arcana is...

Austin: Anomalous Action. Start a project, team meeting or Anomalous Action.

Janine: Yeah, you know what I'm gonna— Like, I'm going to do weird shit. That's... People wanted me to play this game and they didn't want me to play it so I could make clocks.

Austin: No. Well...

Keith: No, it was to make 400 clowns.

Janine: They could be good clocks, but...

Keith: And the clowns have stretchy limbs!

Sylvia: Oh, my God.

Austin: Mm-hmm...

Janine: Anomalous Action. Sorry. Annie's like wailing outside my room.

Austin: Annie! Hi, Annie. I'm sorry about the clowns, I'm sure they're really scary.

Keith and Sylvia: Yeah...

Janine: I bet she wouldn't handle a clown very well.

Austin: No!

Keith: Squiggle has been bringing a friend by.

Austin and Janine: Ooh!

Sylvia: Is it a clown?

Keith: No, it's a very small, very loud cat.

Sylvia: Okay. Which you could have insulted by calling a clown, but you didn't. Appreciate that.

Keith: This small loud cat is a total clown. I like to think of her as like his... Like Squiggle is her mentor cat, because she's much younger, I think. She's way smaller.

Janine: It's so hard to not do an anomalous action that directly piggybacks on the thing I just did.

Keith: There's no rule against that.

Janine: That's true.

Austin: Yeah. Definitely not.

Janine: Now I'm trying to think of a way that the thing I want to do makes visual sense. What's that game that just came out where it's like all perspective-y? It's like you pick up a block and move it close to your face and then you look down and it's big?

Austin: Superliminal?

Janine: Yeah. I want to do something like Superliminal, but with clowns.

Keith: You pick up a clown, bring him close to your face and then he's a giant clown. (laughs)

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: I think it's called that...

Janine: So I think the Anomalous Action is that I immediately want to kind of explore how the clowns come and go, because I think this is a thing that our agents would probably look at, the second they realized a bunch of clowns appeared from somewhere. They would probably follow the clowns a little bit as the— the clown's not going to stick around when it has satisfied the people who are going to be satisfied by that particular kind of clown. That clown's work is done for the moment. That clown is going to leave. So.

Janine: Y— Never mind. It's bad. Never mind. Sorry. I'm going to say it but I'm going to say it in our private thing.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Mm-hmm. So the thing that happens is like, you know, from that particular person's perspective, from the perspective of the person who just had a relaxing time with that clown, it just looks like the clown is just walking away and they're going into a door in the side of a temporary building. And from anyone else's perspective, if they are looking in that direction, which most people wouldn't be because they'd be distracted, but agents, who are paying attention, would look. The thing you see is that like, no, that door is not actually that far away. That building is just like weirdly small and it's like close. And the clown is actually shrinking and it just gets smaller and sort of disappears into this like thing that's just like a—

Keith: Like the Willy Wonka hall?

Janine: Kind of. Yeah. Basically, yeah.

Austin: (typing) "The clowns come and go all weird..." Is what I've written.

Keith: So it's like a hallway clown car.

Janine: Kind of, yeah. I mean, this is basically a situation like, this is how a clown car could work.

Austin: **Sylvia**, I'm sorry I stopped you from ending the game.

(**Janine** and **Sylvia** laugh)

Sylvia: It's fine.

Austin: Uh huh. Great.

Sylvia: I mean, you know, it's not like I had a fear of clowns since I was a child. So, you know, we're good.

Austin: We're good.

Sylvia: No, I'm... I'm not looking at them. It's fine.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: It's just the idea of clowns.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: **Keith**, it is your turn. Draw a card.

Keith: OK. Got it.

Austin and **Keith:** The Page of Swords.

Austin: (huffs) "Someone new joins the team. Where were they sent in from and what's their agenda?" Or, "someone new joins the team? What must be neglected to train them?"

Keith: OK. Snave is back!

Austin: Oh no, this motherfucker.

(**Janine** laughs)

Keith: But it's... "What is their agenda?"

Janine: They meet a clown that just lets them rob it.

Keith: (laughs) This Snave...

Austin: *This* Snave.

Keith: This Snave.

Austin: This knave.

Keith: This knave. Hark.

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: This Snaves sure doesn't want much out of the negotiations. Their agenda is to low-ball the Concern in terms of what they want from the anomaly.

Austin: Great, great.

Keith: Great. And what do I do with Swords?

Austin: Scroll down, there should be a thing for you to look at. Swords is "secure or endanger something".

Keith: Oh, it's right there, duh. (pause) I want to endanger everything that's been duplicated.

Austin: Ohhhh. How so? What does the endangerment look like?

Keith: I think some of the things that have been duplicated are removed from the worm timeline. I think that there's probably something with the supercharging that created more duplicates than are sustainable.

Austin: Oh, interesting.

Keith: And so people are eating food that is then, like, gone.

Austin: Do they get hungry suddenly?

Keith: Yeah. Yes.

Austin: It's like when you fire a bunch of bullets in a video game against the wall and then eventually your first bullet hole disappears?

Keith: Exactly. It's literally 100 percent that same thing.

Austin: Hit the cap of what the RAM can handle?

Keith: Yep. And if it's— sticking with food, sometimes it disappears before you're able to eat it. Sometimes it disappears after you've eaten it. But it's gone and the effects that it had on you are gone.

Austin: Great. You love that. That sounds good. Great.

Janine: I feel like this happens in real life because every time I eat a salad, I'm immediately hungry again.

Austin: (laughs) Fair.

Keith: More salad! Gotta get some more of that salad!

Janine: All the salad's gone!

Austin: I'm going draw a card for my turn. The Wheel of Fortune. That's another Major Arcana there.

Keith: I wish I had drawn a Major.

Austin: Huh. "The anomaly baffles all predictions. Roll all project dice. If there are no projects, everyone at the table starts a project." So I'm gonna roll 1D4. And whatever it lands on is where we're at for those negotiations with the park. It's a two, it's where we already were.

Keith: Oh, it doesn't add two? It stays...

Austin: I think it stays at two. I think?

Keith: So what does it mean if the anomaly is unpredictable but nothing changes visibly?

Austin: Well, the funny thing is it's still gonna tick in a second because we're about to go to that stage. So it's like... God. Is it like... It feels like we've done a day of negotiation. We haven't, but we're about to. So it's fine. It's like you get up to finish the test, you know what I mean? You finish your finals. You turn them in. You walk out the door and your professor is like, "hey, seat's right there for you. Glad you could make it. Fill it out and go ahead and do it again".

Keith: So it's like a deja vu.

Austin: It's like a deja vu. But the deja vu was for the entire day. So there's a looping happening. They're noticing the looping happening.

Keith: Is it maybe... Oh, okay, meh, never mind.

Austin: Right?

Keith: Yeah. I was going to say, like, if you take a nap and you wake up and you don't know what time it is and you're worried that you missed a whole day but actually, it's like 6:00 in the morning still.

Austin: Right— Oh. Yeah, right. Yes. Carter notes that if we're playing physically, we would mark the project with a D6. So I would actually need to roll D6 here not a D4.

Keith: Oh, OK.

Austin: And we'd be counting down. So I'll reroll it if that's more interesting.

Keith: Yeah, reroll.

Austin: Let's reroll it because I think it's more interesting.

Keith: Counting down, what does that mean.

Austin: Because, if it was a four-step clock, you'd put a D6 down and you'd set it to four and then every turn you would subtract one. So you'd go down to three, then to two, then to one. And when it advances and when it's on one, you would take it off the table. You know what I'm saying?

Keith: Got it. Yeah.

Austin: So I'm going to roll it. (laughs) Now it's a five step clock. I now actually have to delete this clock, so it's like.

Keith: Oh, you're changing the length of the clock.

Austin: Yes, that is what is happening there.

Keith: That's bizarre.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: So now it's like the day of the test and you just handed the test in and then you walk out the door and it's Sunday and your friend is like, "why are you here? The test is to make the test is tomorrow".

Austin: "The test is tomorrow. And also all the rest of the tests you've done this finals week, you have to redo also." Because now there's five steps left instead of two, which is where we were. Great. Good. All right. God. What am I doing? Well, I'm advancing a clock, so now there's only four weeks left.

Keith: I was gonna say this makes perfect sense though, because Snave's back.

Austin: Yeah, definitely Knave is part of this. I'm sure. I'm fucking sure.

Keith: Snave is back. Quote unquote "back".

Austin: Back. Yeah. Totally. I'm starting a team meeting is what I'm doing. I'm not going to do an anonymous action. Hey, this is like high level Concern. This is like, you know how in, I don't know if people remember this, but in the Lacuna book, there's like a whole thing that's like, a tier of agent that you're not even allowed to talk about because they're that high up. It's like white level, or whatever.

Keith: It's literally like retracted from the book.

Austin: Yeah. This is this person talking to those people.

Keith: Hard to look at.

Austin: Yeah. And I'm going to lift something from the chat here, a couple of people suggested this. And this person is going to ask...

Keith: That's rare.

Austin: It is rare. But I think this is a really good note. And basically, one of the two things I'm gonna say originated in the chat from a few people... I need to find it so I can... Yeah, here we go. Both from Mastion11 and WeAreFoxhound both suggested one of the two things that I'm about to say. You know, people low in the Concern have conversations like "what should we do about X" or, "hey, you know, what a good idea would be is blah". At this tier of the Concern, it is like put to... These people don't fuck around with that stuff. And so this person says:

- **Austin** (as a White Level Concern agent): "As far as I can tell, we have two options. One is to destroy Park One and Park Two. We could attempt high explosives or biological agents. Or perhaps we could bring in a mystic. Or, we could use it as a prison. What do you think?" And the prison thing is lifted from the two people I said.

- **Sylvia** (as a White Level Concern agent): I mean, it would be foolish for us not to look at possible uses for such an interesting phenomenon, right?

Austin: Janine?

- **Janine** (as a White Level Concern agent): Kill the worm and the hole remains, but it's an empty hole. There's nothing to fill it. It becomes much more complicated, potentially.

Austin: Keith.

Keith: We're all this level?

Austin: Oh yes, they would not ask this to the rest of the Concern.

(pause)

Keith: Jeez. **Sylvia**, what did you say?

Sylvia: I said something along the lines of like, it would be foolish for us not to take advantage of such a unique phenomenon. Real scumbag shit, you know?

Austin: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Keith: Real scumbag shit.

(pause)

- **Keith** (as a White Level Concern agent): If we used it as a prison, we have to be careful about who we chose to send in. Anybody that we'd fear losing probably shouldn't be sent.

Austin: And my answer is:

- **Austin** (as a White Level Concern agent): No one is irreplaceable.

Austin: And that is my turn. **Sylvia.**

Sylvia: All right. Let me see here. That's the Three of Swords. Ooh, look at that card! It's a heart with three swords through it.

Austin: Oooh, that's a fancy card.

Sylvia: Where is this? There we go.

Austin: You got it?

Sylvia: Yeah. "The team has an insider in the community. Why is this person helping?" Or, "someone in the team is stealing resources. What do they need it for? How are they hiding this?" Oh, I have an idea for the second one. And I've kind of established like, Trotter a little bit as the old curmudgeon here, and I think that maybe he gets wind of some of this. Because he's been there for a while, I imagine he's got connections and stuff. He gets wind of this plan to make use of the anomaly as a prison, basically. And he starts stealing research from this so he can eventually render it obsolete.

Austin: Right, like a counter-something.

Austin: Mm-hmm. And how are they hiding this? Does anybody have any suggestions for that? I can think of something, but.

Keith: Wait, is Trotter helping or working against the prison?

Sylvia: So he's working against the prison. He doesn't want the prison. He thinks that this is too dangerous to still be around, is his stance on this. So he doesn't want to see it used in a way that could result in more damage being done.

Austin: My answer is obviously going to be one of those things where, you know, at the top of the thing, we we're like, "hey, don't worry about continuity". But I think that there could be a radio station where there's a contact that Trotter has who can keep it in a safe place.

Sylvia: That definitely works for me.

Austin: Do you know what I mean, they have a contact who is someone who works against the worst of the Concern shit. And, "yeah, yeah, I'll put this in a drawer. It'll be safe". And there are lots of types of drawers. You know what I mean? Some drawers don't open. Or they only open when they're supposed to.

Sylvia: Yeah, I like that.

Austin: And then we could return— You know, listen. (laughs) What we've done here is world-building so we can always wrap back around to this bullshit.

Sylvia: Exactly!

Austin: So what is the type of research that's being kept here?

Sylvia: Oh, the type of research. I think it is like records of everyone. Like what's gone in, but, more importantly, everything that's come out. I think that with him in his suitcase, he's got things that came out of the Penny Crusher just as samples. "I don't know if there's anything in here, but like, I will put this—" (crosstalk)

Austin: Just like a coach bag filled with...

Sylvia: "—came out of this thing in here."

Austin: Yes. Yes, totally. Open up this fuckin really good satchel. Like the heavy satchels that have like metallic cinches and stuff. Like a thumbtack comes out, a jack from Jack's like the little metallic, you know—

Sylvia: Like a little Hot Wheels car is in there.

Austin: Yeah, totally, totally. Each of which could be imbued with their own weird anomalous energy.

Sylvia: Exactly. And that's why he's like, "no, I'm keeping these and sending them to someone who isn't going to ignore it".

Austin: Yeah. Cool. And then you get to, with the three of Swords, start a project, have a team meeting or secure or endanger something.

Sylvia: Let's see. I kind of want to secure something here that gives the Concern a bit more leverage with their plan. Because we've quickly pivoted where they're the bad guys. (laughs) I mean, there wasn't really much of a pivot, it's kind of been implied.

Austin: (laughs) Yeah.

Sylvia: But like, I'm being more out now with it. So I think maybe they... You know what I think they do? I think they secured... They managed to like... They secured the media narrative around the Funfair in a weird way, like the advertising and stuff and the radio ads. And they haven't gotten rid of them, but they're tuning them so it is less... Because I don't think that they can just get rid of them, I think that would be against the spirit of the anomaly. But I think that they're tuning them to be more manageable, so it's not like this thing is overflowing while they're trying to figure out how to control it.

Austin: Right. Is it like... Do they edit them so that it's like, "maybe you came last weekend", in a way that reminds people, "oh, yeah. I was just there. It's okay. I don't need to go back yet".

Sylvia: It's stuff like that. It's stuff just like, they changed the music in the background because they weren't sure if that was an effect that was happening on the radio ads. It's a bunch of little things that basically make the effect of the old ads weaker.

Janine: They should say something is under renovation.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Because that's the thing, it's just like "oh, my favorite thing, aww".

Austin: "The Zipper is under renovation? Ugh."

Janine: "Why even go?"

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: You know what it would be? They'd actually say the one where the escape is, they'd say that's out of order.

Austin: Ohhh, interesting. Yeah. The Adventure Galley.

Sylvia: Right? They want to control all of this.

Austin: Yeah. Totally. And there might even be an unconscious thing happening here where someone goes like, "well, I can't go if the Adventure Galley's broken. I don't know why I feel like that, but it feels like I wouldn't want to go, unless the Adventure Galley was operating," you know? Great. **Janine:** Do you want a draw card?

Janine: I do. The Moon, I'm on a Major Arcana streak.

Austin: You are. We hadn't hit them in a long while.

Sylvia: Look at the lobster on the Moon card!

Janine: It's a Moon Lobster. "Something mundane is revealed to be another aspect of the anomaly. How was this discovered and how does it make the situation more perilous?" Immediately, my thought— because of the nature of this anomaly, this should be a difficult thing in a way. Immediately, though, my thought is this entire parking lot... The anomaly is not on the parking lot, the parking lot is not just the place that it's in. The parking lot itself and maybe even, did we decide what it is attached to? In my head, it's a department store because for me, the only fair I had like this locally set up in the parking lot of the mall. Specifically adjacent to the Sears anchor store.

Austin: Department store works.

Keith: Yeah. Mine was in the parking lot of a Jewish preschool.

Austin: Mine was with church. I mean, mine was also a church, also a mall. I grew up with these all over the place, this is such a thing that was part of my childhood.

Janine: I like the idea specifically, though, of it being... I like the idea of it being attached to a mall with an anchor store in a big parking lot. And it's not the entire parking lot, but specifically a section of the parking lot and this one anchor store. So it's like a fading department store that—

Austin: Right, like a Boscov's.

Janine: Yeah, exactly. (laughs) Exactly.

Austin: And the Boscov's is now part of this.

Janine: Always was.

Austin: Always was. It turns out—

Janine: To an extent. That's like, the Boscov's is the first bite of the worm.

Keith: So is it like, if you were trying to get out to leave, you can't. And someone figured out that if they try to get out just to go to the store, it works?

Janine: Yeah. I mean, you can leave the Boscov's.

Austin: (excited) Oh, so is this another door out, then?

Janine: I mean, I think, to me, "in" isn't until you're within the fence enclosure of the fair, and the rest of it is like you're walking on its back.

Keith: Ohhhh, OK.

Austin: Is this like a thing where the Concern effectively... "It is *revealed* to be..." Is this The Shining thing of like seeing the photo and being like, "oh, shit. The same thing is here the whole time" type thing? And it's like you start looking through a scrapbook— in the middle of these negotiations, you're looking at the scrapbook and seeing the department store used to be a flea market, but that was there first. And then it gets turned into an outlet, whatever the 1920s version of a mall or a department store—

Janine: 1920s version of a department store is a department store.

Austin: —is a department store, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know. It's that. And then the department store is always there in all these different photos in the background. Maybe it's a different name.

Keith: I wonder what Park Two is attached to.

Austin: Right. Yeah. I don't know. Maybe a different or the same department store.

Janine: Outlet mall.

Keith: What if Park Two was just on the other side of the store?

Austin: God.

(**Keith** and **Janine** laugh)

Austin: Yeah. We've had weirder things in Bluff. I just want to double check something. So before I rolled a five. That was during your turn, **Keith**? Or that was my turn. My turn it was a five. I advanced it once, it was four. Then **Sylvia**'s was three. Now **Janine**'s, two. OK. Yeah. That's good, **Janine**. I like that a lot. I've now advanced this clock. You can take an action.

Janine: OK. I really like Anomalous Actions a lot. And you know how I said that thing about like "people aren't getting trapped in the department store!" The idea of getting trapped in a Boscov's (laughs) is very funny to me.

Keith: (laughs) Yeah, I don't even know what a Boscov's is.

Austin: It's a shitty department store that I also grew up with. It's like a mid-Atlantic...

Janine: See, I didn't grow up with a Boscov's, I just know them from watching so many dead mall videos on YouTube—

Austin: Yeah, it's extremely dead.

Janine: —because it's an American chain.

Keith: Is it like a Sears or is it like...?

Austin: I'd say it's like a JCPenney that's more affordable and also deeply... I've never been in a Boscov's where I didn't think that this Boscov's wasn't 20 years stuck in the past. Even when I was a little boy.

Keith: So they sell mostly clothes, they don't also sell like grills.

Austin: No, they sell grills. They have like a smaller... It's a department store. They sell clothes, they sell jewelry and perfume, there's a perfume counter. They sold, you know, outdoor supplies, there was a gardening center. There were sporting goods, fishing rods, that sort of stuff. Shoes. I'm now walking through my Boscov's. Dinnerware, even like some Boscov's had furniture sections where you could get like a love seat or a chair or whatever. Et cetera. There's only a few left. 50, there's 50 left. It's been in existence for 105 years. Founded by Solomon Boscov. Great name.

Keith: "Name this after me, that'll be normal in 100 years."

(**Austin** laughs)

Janine: So I think that the action, specifically... Because I need like a reason that this would change. I think normally the department store is not really a part of what it's doing with the fair, it is just an extension of it as a thing. But I think the thing that happens is that... Most people haven't— How many people have discovered the exit, is it just that one person?

Austin: Uh, it sounds like more because we talked about the radio being effective at saying if that thing is...

Janine: Right.

Austin: So more people, at this point.

Janine: And the radio is discouraging people from coming. So, I think maybe the department store exists as kind of an extension for like, you know, it... It's a thing that is largely dormant until it is necessary to draw more people in. Because the ads are being run to discourage people from going to the fair, but not to discourage them from going to Boscov's to get some perfume or cheap jewelry that is expensive for no reason.

Austin: Right (huffs). This is the other half of this, is it also not active because who cares about the Boscov's.

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: Like it's not effective, so why—

Janine: So normally, it probably used to be super effective. It probably used to be back when department stores mattered. It probably was like a huge, reliable thing that it could draw on when things waned for whatever reason. But now it's desperate.

Austin: A hold out, you know, or whatever. And people weren't going to go— even though the park could make the weather nice at the park, people still weren't like, "oh, it's snowing out. We should go to the park". But if you happen to be at the Boscov's and you step outside and you're like, "hey, it's kind of nice out. Oh, look, there's a carnival here! We should go get some funnel cake!"

Keith: Does it become harder to ignore the carnival, the magnetic draw from the beginning, when you're at the Boscov's?

Janine: Yes, it does, because department stores are depressing, especially now. So you are going through a Boscov's and you're like, "God, I remember when I was little and I used to come here with my mom, and then we'd go get a chocolate chip cookie and like sometimes we'd go to the fair or something. Oh, the fair's here! Man, sure, I got time. I don't have to pick up Stephen until 7 p.m., I can just go."

Keith: "They probably sell funnel cake!"

Austin: Right. "I should get Stephen a funnel cake."

Janine: "He loves funnel cake!"

Austin: "It'll be a good reward for taekwondo class!"

Keith: "They have Dippin' Dots!"

Janine: "Sometimes you just have to treat yourself, you just have to give yourself a little treat and have fun like you're a kid again." So you go to Boscov's and it depresses you existentially because the childhood you remember is dead and so is retail.

Austin: Yeah. "Uh oh, I'm stuck here."

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: That's how it goes. All right. Let's keep moving. **Keith**, draw a card!

Keith: OK. By the way, Dippin' Dots are great because I bet that turns into a whole bunch of different kinds of small foods, like rice and Cheerios and quinoa. Three of Pentacles.

Austin: Where is— oh, there it is, the three of Pentacles. Hoo. "A local has been killed by the anomaly. How? How does the community react to their death?" Or, "a local husband killed by the anomaly. How? How does the team cover up the death to better investigate? Introduce a character who wants to find the truth."

Keith: I'm gonna pick number two, that seems very Concern to me. "How does the team cover up their death? How does the anomaly kill someone?" OK, I think that the anomaly kills someone because, while it's not necessarily the ideal outcome, that is basically what the anomaly does. The anomaly needs people in the same way that, in the game Snake, the snake needs those dots to get bigger. And in some... I guess, sometimes you use up one of those dots and it dies.

Austin: Does that lead the park to get bigger when someone dies inside of it?

Keith: Um.

Austin: Does a new ride open?

Keith: I think that having more people inside— I guess it's the difference between taking a shot or drinking through a straw. You know, like drinking a milkshake through a straw you can have like two ounces of this drink all at once and you can drink it really fast, and then it's gone. Or you can, like, slowly sip on a milkshake. And I guess killing people isn't ideal, but the benefits happen all at once. So where maybe it slowly grows or maybe grows in more of a way that it can direct, versus, you take a gulp or, you know, the snake eats the thing and you can watch it grow by one.

Austin: Right. Well, that's why I asked if it was a new ride, because, part of my question here is, is this a reaction to— is this, like turning the Boscov's back on (laughs), a reaction to feeling like it's under threat of losing people where it's like, "now I can run an ad that says 'Come play the snake game, come ride the new—'"

Keith: It's a new ride.

Austin: Right. You know, the whatever is broken, the Adventure Galley is broken, but the Snake-osaurus is up and running.

Keith: I know exactly what kind of ride it is. And I can tell you exactly when the last time the anomaly killed someone was. The newest ride is that. And like, everything looks old, I don't think it's killed anybody in a while. And this new ride is now totally out of place because, I don't know if you've ever seen one of these kinds of rides, but it's the kind that you can see— you can see them at Six Flags sometimes, they were popular like ten years ago, but they've always been dumb as hell. They are like the moving chairs in like VR goggle rides. Like you sit in a chair that shakes and it shoots you through like a virtual roller coaster. Have you seen those?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I've been on one.

Keith: Yeah, they're very strange. It really is nothing. It's like if someone was like, "how do we make these dark rides something for now".

Austin: There's even a kind of a thing here, right, which is like, "hey, the dark ride is allows privacy for someone like the Concern to do the shit they're doing". No.

Keith: This does not.

Austin: This does not. You're outside.

Keith: It's 15 chairs all next to each other, in two rows.

Austin: In the light of day.

Keith: And everybody's wearing goggles.

Austin: Exactly. Exactly.

Keith: And it does two things. It doesn't cramp the rest of the space, there is a new patch of area where this ride is.

Austin: Yeah. That's definitely what I imagined, more of the parking lot gets used up for this.

Keith: And the other thing is, it gets to show you whatever it thinks can keep you in that chair, too.

Austin: Right. We're in some Black Mirror shit. (laughs)

Keith: Never seen it. Don't hold me accountable.

Austin: Okay. Fair. Fair.

Keith: Should I see Black Mirror? Probably, right?

Austin: There's some stuff in there that's all right. I'm not like fully against it. A lot of it's very Banksy, but, you know. But there's some episodes that I'm like, "oh, okay!".

Keith: Yeah. OK. So it killed someone—

Austin: I advanced the clock. Oh, how does the Concern...

Keith: How does the Concern cover it up.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I guess where were they when this person... I'm going to say that it happened as soon as they entered the territory. Like, maybe it's even just like there's a chance that the second you cross the threshold, it gets you. It's way of turning you into a cup that it sips on doesn't work.

(**Austin** chuckles)

Keith: And because of that, it happens in the parking lot. Not in the fairground.

Austin: Interesting. OK. Will they eventually build... Could it eventually build a fence around this and bring it into the body of the park, so to speak?

Keith: I think so. But this is how the Concern covers it up. It covers it up by, that's where the least amount of people are. If anybody saw it— that's the last part of the thing, someone did see it and someone saw the one of the members of the Concern was there, grabbed the body, took it away.

Austin: Black-bagged it. Like a fuckin Hitman level.

Keith: Yeah. Put it in a locker and nobody opens it. Or brought it into, maybe there's like a backup— There's a second team here, right? Grabbed by the second team.

Austin: Yeah, there's all sorts of teams out here. Definitely. I'm sure, to have it be studied, you know. "Hey. This thing got killed by this."

Keith: Well there's there's a second HQ in the break room or the— What is it?

Austin: Boscov's?

Keith: Boscov's, there we go.

Austin: (laughs) Right, yeah, yeah. They're like the mall security or whatever. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: So introducing...

Austin: Yeah, so now you can start a project, hold a team meeting or introduce a character.

Keith: No, this is part of the card, I think. Introduce a character that...

Austin: Ohh, it is. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. So, does somebody have a name for someone who sees this? I have a list of names that I have on my phone for Bluff, but I don't have my phone near me.

Austin: Also, it's like, you know, do we really need to burn one on this person who saw this thing?

Keith: You never know with Bluff.

Austin: Yeah, you never know with Bluff.

Keith: Is there someone that we've met already who this could be?

Austin: Nobody jumps to mind. How about this is...

Keith: This is a funny name. I scrolled down and it says Crisis Tarot at the end of the thing and I read it as Chris Tarot.

Austin: Chris Tarot.

Keith: Yep.

Austin: Is that just one name?

Keith: No, it's two names, first-last name. Christopher Tarot.

Austin: Spell Tarot for me.

Keith: T-A-R-O-T.

Austin: Oh, like that. OK.

(Janine and Keith laugh)

Austin: Chris Tarot.

Keith: That was a genuine misreading from 15 minutes ago.

Austin: Gotcha. (typing) “Saw the Concern disappearing a body that the park killed.” OK. Great. Now, I advanced the clock already, you get to take an action, which is start a project, hold a team meeting or introduce another character.

Keith: Um. I’m gonna start a project. This is, uh. This is a project started by the high-level Concern?

Austin: Can we make it a little short? Cause I’m starving at this point and would like to wrap up A.S.A.P.

Keith: Sure. Let’s do two. Let’s do a two-stage clock. Figure out the maximum capacity of Park One.

Austin: (laughs) OK.

(Janine laughs)

Austin: (typing) OK. Boom. All right. There we go, two steps remaining. All right. I’m drawing a card. This is the five of Pentacles, a very cool card. “The locals have a legend that might be connected to the anomaly. What is it?” Or, “how do the locals feel about outsiders?” (laughs) A word we’ve not used before.

(Janine laughs)

Austin: God. I kind of like... Here’s what I like. So we’ve started setting up this idea, in negotiations we’re about to finish... I think we introduce this idea of outsiders, and the outsiders are the people who are either stumbling in and are tourists, and that’s what they start calling them— Okay, so. The locals. Locals is different than community. Community, really broad. Community is...

Keith: Anyone that’s not the Concern.

Austin: Anyone that’s not the Concern. Locals I’m now using to define specifically the people who have figured out what they’re doing here and want to stay. This is now a community of people who live here, who are happy to live in the park.

Keith: Oh, they’re not locals to Bluff, they’re locals to the carnival.

Austin: No. They’re locals, to— We’ve used “locals” to just mean locals to Bluff before and “outsiders” to mean from other places. Here, I mean, locals to the carnival, locals to the the Spannheuser Funfair. These are lifelong Spanners. Right?

Keith: And the outsiders are the people who are trying to get back to Bluff.

Austin: Well, no. No, I think that those people are— I mean, I’ll say those people, they’re like, “hey, if you want to get out of here, you get out of here. I’m not trying to keep anybody here who doesn’t want to be here”. Outsiders are new arrivals, which will momentarily fall into two

categories. One, people who show up because of the advertising or the magnetic draw. The locals feel that those people are naive but should be brought into the fold. They should be convinced. They should be, “hey, this place is great, isn’t it? Oh, we should go on one more ride. Oh, did you know that they just open up a new VR thing? You should check that out”. And they start like effectively proselytizing to new arrivals in that way. The other group of outsiders are prisoners put here by the Concern. And they leave them 100 percent alone. They have no interest in keeping them here if they want to get out. They don’t help anybody get out, but it is like finding a rotten apple in a bunch. And they’re just like, “I don’t even want to touch it. Get this away from me”. It’s not hostile— well, it’s hostile, but it’s sort of passive hostility. It’s not a violent hostility at this point. But when they see the Concern drop someone off or when someone shows up confused about where they are, it’s like, “oh, we don’t talk to those people. We don’t deal with them”. And I think this eventually begins a geographic split in the space, in the fair, where the locals, the people who live here, take up parts of it. And then the prisoners end up in a different place, like the other half of it. You know, like they’re over near the merry-go-round and blah, blah, blah. And sometimes prisoners who try to escape show up in the local town, in the local village, inside of this endless carnival. And the locals will chase them back. I guess that’s the point at which things get hostile, is like, “you stay over there. You don’t come over here. If you climb a fence, you climb it back until you’re back in your side of this park. It’s gonna be a great place to live indefinitely”.

Janine: Request.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Can the local village be one of those little model villages that’s all like kid sized?

Austin: Absolutely.

Janine: But if you’re an adult, you can like curl up like a cat inside one of the houses.

Austin: Yes, definitely.

Janine: Cool.

Austin: Uh huh. It’s like a miniature Bluff City? (laughs)

Janine: Yes, totally.

Austin: Ellis G says, ‘what happened to the two locations thing?’ That is another location that’s just happening. I think a lot of what we’ve said is happening on delay in that second park, except that the Concern has definitely gotten involved there maybe quicker and that place is mostly going to be a prison. The negotiations with the park have completed. And I’m gonna say that those negotiations have gone *well* in the sense that the top people of the Concern are getting what they want and the anomaly is getting what it wants. Between the top-level people and then, specifically, this Snave... If you’re Barker, I think you get out of this place eventually, maybe, but you’re not happy with how this went. Or if you’re Trotter, who is one of the people

who has been working against the high level Concern here or whatever. The agreement is basically, “we will put a certain number of prisoners in here every year for you so that you can continue to grow at a certain rate”. And maybe that rate is higher than what would have been negotiated even by the terrible Concern leaders than it—

Keith: And this is like an extrajudicial prison.

Austin: Oh, I mean, the Concern is extrajudicial. The Concern is already self-appointed.

Keith: That’s what I’m saying. That is like, you’re directly enemies of the Concern or whoever has the Concern on speed dial that’s like, “hey, do you have a place to hold someone?”

Austin: It’s mostly members of the Concern, presumably. Right? Or enemies of the Concern. But I don’t think anybody else tends to— Some people have worked with the Concern we’ve seen on screen before, but they are like so in a different sphere of influence.

Keith: There’s like an organization elsewhere that’s big enough to call like, “oh, the Concern. We don’t know much about it, but we do know that they can disappear someone”.

Austin: I think what you would get is you would get corrupt members of the Concern doing that for people. Do you know what I mean? Whereas I think the people who run the Concern think of this as a deal they are making to put people who are dangerous for Bluff City or for other places, that the Concern is active. Places to put agents who have gone rogue. I think every angle of the Concern is involved in this. We’ve talked about the Concern as sometimes being at war with itself. And I think everyone involved inside of the Concern— not everyone involved, leaders of every side of the Concern at the high level are like, “yeah, this is good. This is a neutral prison we can put each other’s agents into when it’s appropriate”. Does that make sense? Do you know what I’m saying?

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: “It’s not even so bad in there. People get personal clown attention, it’s fine!”

Austin: “Exactly, people get personal clown attention! It’s fine.”

Janine: “They get a pet raccoon. They get a personal clown. What’s the problem?”

(Austin laughs)

Keith: Juggler clowns.

Austin: Yeah!

Keith: Massage clowns.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: “Get a raccoon— (laughs) You’ll get a clown that’ll pretend to be like a silent movie spy and do mime stuff where you have to chase it down. It’ll satisfy your professional needs.”

Austin: I don’t like that.

Keith: “You like Charlie Chaplin? You can get a Little Tramp!”

Austin: (laughs) Ughh. Anyway, yeah. Carter in the chat says, “I cannot wait for Concern agents to menacingly say ‘send them to the fair’”.

(**Janine** and **Keith** laugh)

Austin: Great euphemism for black site (laughs), the fair. Anyway. What the fuck did I draw? What was the— Nothing. Did I draw that turn? I did. I drew the five of Pentacles so I can... Was that me? Did I draw the five of Pentacles? Yes. Pentacles is introduce a character. I’m not gonna do that. I’m not going to start a project. You know, I am, I’m gonna start a one step project. Now that negotiations are finished, you can start a one step project. And it’s “extract any agent who wants—” No, they wouldn’t. Would they do that? Would they extract the agents?

Keith: I think they would extract the agents that they wanted to extract.

Austin: Yeahhhh, right?

Janine: I feel like the agents who are in there already probably know too much in terms of, if you’re gonna send prisoners, you want prisoners sent in blind.

Austin: Oh, I see what you’re saying, you’re saying you don’t want the prisoners to potentially meet up with Agent Barker or Tinker or Trotter.

Janine: Actually, here’s a thought. Maybe— because I see what you’re saying too, in terms of like, the people who were in there know too much. If they are out, then maybe that information... What if they take the people who are in Park One and move them to Park Two and take whoever is in Park Two and move them to Park One.

Austin: Yeah. 100 percent. Yep. Yep. That is the new one-step clock. (chuckles)

Sylvia: Oh, because they definitely don’t call them agents. They call them assets, right?

Austin: Yeah, absolutely. I’m just going to write “asset extraction/flip”. All right. One more turn, I think, maybe. **Sylvia**, if you want to draw a card. You know, maybe it’ll be a wild card that really fucks us up.

Sylvia: The magician!

Austin: See, I don’t know what that means.

(**Janine** laughs)

Sylvia: Me neither, let's find out!

Janine: A kind of clown, is what I know!

Austin: (laughs) It's not true!

(**Janine** laughs)

Sylvia: "Someone is discovered actively using the powers of the anomaly for their own ends. Who? How did they discover this power?"

(**Janine** laughs)

Sylvia: Problem is, we've kind of answered this question this entire session.

Keith: Yeah, kind of everyone has been doing this. It's just that the anomaly corrupts people's ends.

Austin: Right. Right. Right. I mean, yeah, you go first, **Sylvia**, you tell me what's on your mind.

Sylvia: Like, I wonder if like, because the keyword for me here is "discovered". Like they are found out using the powers here. And part of me wonders if this either causes a sort of rift in the Concern or if it leaks out into the public a little bit. Not the Concern, obviously, but a government agency is involved with this.

Austin: Yeah, but it's like... Is involved in using a fair as a...

Sylvia: Yeah! It's a little hard to justify that one. I think the one I'm gonna go with is that it's just like, this was like kept very close to the chest by higher-ups within the Concern. And then just people got talking, people came back from being in the anomaly. They're like, "oh yeah, that's a prison now, don't you know about that?"

Austin: What if this interrupts the asset extraction? Like, there is a white van driving from a Boscov's across the highway to the north side of town, where these people will be deposited in Park Two. Also, Park Two, great euphemism for a black site. And then there's like an explosion or another car rams into the thing. And, you know, different people show up who do the asset extraction. I mean, this is— did we name the group at the end of Bluff City Season 1? The new group?

Sylvia: I don't remember.

Austin: OK. Well, whoever they are, they show up and pull out Barker. And Barker can leak this to other agents at this point and begin a rift inside of the Concern. Between, like you said, the leadership and then the kind of like day-to-day agents.

Sylvia: Yeah. All right.

Austin: I like that.

Sylvia: So clocks?

Austin: Well, that's asset extraction. I think, you know.

Sylvia: Was there another one though?

Austin: Yeah. Figure out max capacity of Park One. (laughs)

Sylvia: Oh, right.

Austin: Which completes.

Austin: Who's was "figured out—"

Keith: That was mine.

Austin: Yeah. Do they do it?

Keith: No!

Austin: Oh! Even though it completes, they...

Keith: The reason is because they couldn't get enough people... The capacity is really high!

Austin: Oh, is that the— the answer is, there is no maximum capacity? Cause it just grows!

Keith: Yeah. There is no, because the size of the park is determined by the amount of people in the park.

Austin: So it's a happy discovery for these terrible people!

Keith: Right. Yeah. "Wow, we could really just keep doing this."

(**Austin** groans)

Keith: "Sometimes their food will disappear out of their stomachs."

Austin: "Gotta be careful with that!"

Keith: "Sometimes the bed that they got out of the vending machine—"

(**Austin** laughs)

Keith: "—disappears in the middle of the night. But, you know, they all fit!"

Austin: Hate when that happens. Yeah. They all fit. Is that our game?

Sylvia: I don't really like have a move to make here. So, if we wanted that to be our game, I wouldn't complain about cutting my turn short. (laughs)

Austin: I'm down with that. We could start an infinite-long clock called "continue to use this as a terrible black site prison".

Sylvia: Yeah, pretty much.

Austin: Fantastic. Any other final thoughts here? Do you want to talk about any other repercussions? I'm excited now, this is a thing we can return to at some point in the future.

Keith: They stop investigating. They're like, "we've learned everything we need to know about this. There's nothing else..."

Austin: Case closed, right?

Keith: Case closed.

Austin: "We know how it works. We know why it wants people."

Keith: "It works really well, that's how it works."

Austin: "That's how it works!"

(**Janine** laughs)

Austin: Right. "Put it in the fucking— You have to file this, you put it in the like..." Oh yeah. We have a new asset. This is a new asset. The park.

Keith: Well, what was my question that you had said "play to find out what happens" is the way that we should answer this?

Austin: I don't fucking remember, I'm starving. (laughs) My head hurts.

Keith: I was just curious whether we answered it, but I don't remember the question.

Janine: It was like how to kill it or something.

Keith: If you kill the worm, does it fix it from— was there still a worm 80 years ago or is everything from before...? And it's like no, no one's curious about that or anyone that's curious is dead or stuck.

Janine: Eating funnel cake forever.

Austin: (laughs) I still think it's a "play to find out what happens", but that's gonna be for a game where we play as the people who go, "we have to shut down this terrible Concern black site" (laughs) and they have to decide, if we shut this thing down, what happens of the people stuck

in it, right? And I'm not promising that we do that anytime soon, but that's a fun game to put out there as a potential thing to return to.

Keith: That's a fun.

Austin: That's a fun! You know.

Keith: Got one fun, over there.

Austin: One fun. Exactly. Thank you for joining us today for this game of Anomaly. Again, a game by Carter Richmond. You can find this game on itch.io by going to sniperserpent.itch.io/anomaly or by doing a search on itch.io for Anomaly. What else, what else? Thank you for joining us as always, and follow me on Twitter **@Austin_walker** and the show **@friends_table**. Support the show at friendsatthetable.cash. As again, a little tease, we will have a cool holiday merch drop sometime in the next few days. If you're listening to this, that's a secret. That's just for you. But yeah, it'll be a fun thing. That we were hoping to show off here today, but it's like one of those things where it turns out launching merchandise is a whole fucking thing. And so it takes a minute to make that happen. Look forward to that in the next few days. **Sylvia**, where can people follow you?

Sylvia: Yeah, you can find me on Twitter **@captaintrash** and you can listen to my other show, Emojidrome on whatever podcast app you choose.

Austin: **Janine!**

Janine: You can find me **@bleatingheart** or on YouTube, watching the Apple Tater clip of BuzzFeed Unsolved over and over again, because it always makes me laugh.

Austin: It's so funny.

Keith: I don't know what this is.

Austin: Oh, do you not?

Keith: No, I... I didn't understand earlier when someone said "Apple Tater" either.

Austin and Janine: Apple Tater.

(all laugh)

Austin: So funny!

Keith: It is funny!

Austin: Just give me the link. We're doing it.

Keith: That says spaghetti ghost, that doesn't say apple tater.

Austin: I'm going to count everybody in, get ready to watch.

Keith: All right. All right. And then I'll say what my YouTube is.

Austin: Yeah, go ahead. Ready? Are you ready to watch this? Three, two, one. Play.

BuzzFeed Dude: "Anybody here that was here before this house was filmed?"

Keith: Oh, yeah. Okay. (laughs)

Sylvia: Yeah, I've seen this.

BuzzFeed Dude: "Spaghetti?"

(Janine and Austin laugh)

BuzzFeed Dude: "Tell us your name."

Spaghetti Ghost: "Apple tater."

(all laugh)

Austin: Oh, it's so good. Thank you. Thank you, BuzzFeed. What's it called? BuzzFeed...

Janine: BuzzFeed Unsolved.

Austin: Unsolved. Not Reports.

Keith: That's a BuzzFeed thing? That's not like Ghost Hunters.

Sylvia: They're ghost hunters.

Janine: They're ghosts and also true crime, they alternate. It's a thing.

Austin: Keith, where can people find you and your work?

Keith: You can find me on Twitter @KeithJCarberry. And you can find the let's plays that I do at youtube.com/RunButton. Also, Run Button Podcast is in... it's on YouTube, also. But it's also in, you know, all the different podcast stuff.

Austin: Yeah. Perfect. Good. (laughs) People are saying "clown water" in the chat. Presumably in the same exact affect that it said "apple tater". Clown water. What is your name? Clown water.

(Janine laughs)

Austin: Alright, everybody, that's going to do it for us. I hope everyone has a great holiday weekend, if you're in the States. If you're not, I hope you've a good weekend anyway! And also, if you're in the States and you are working retail, food service, any sort of service, working anything, please, have a good safe weekend. If you're out shopping or eating or anything, be

really kind to everyone during the holiday season. I know it can get frustrating, but as somebody who's been on the other side of that shit, it is the worst. It is the worst. It is exhausting. People are mean all the time. Like, tip extra well. Please, I'm begging you to be kind to people throughout this season because it's so exhausting. And also, it's just, holidays are exhausting and stressful already. So just an added layer.

Janine: Be the easy spot in someone's day. That's the way I tend to look at it. Like I don't want to be special, I just want to be an easy thing that they just breeze past and it's just no complication.

Austin: That's it. For real. All right, everybody, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you again for joining us. We'll be back hopefully soon with— we really want to finish up that Stewpot game, so hopefully we'll be able to do that shortly. And if not, then sorry. (laughs) No, we are going to try to—

(**Keith** and **Janine** laugh)

Austin: We are gonna try to... I mean, listen, sometimes life happens.

Keith: Sorry, that's something that I hear on Run Button a lot, is this Run Button all of a sudden?

Austin: It's Run Button, we're running it like Run Button now. We were gonna do Stewpot today, but there was a scheduling conflict. So do know that that's a thing we do want to just knock out pretty quick. So look forward to that. All right. Have a good one, everybody. I'm gonna go write the description for today's Friends at the Table episode, so, bye!

Keith: Bye.

Sylvia: Bye!

Janine: Bye.