

Live at the Table 42: You Can Check Out Any Time You Like, But You Can Never Leave - February 2021

Transcriber: Ishkhan

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[Beginning of episode.]

Austin: Welcome to Live at the Table, an actual play livestream focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. Hi. Today we are going to play You Can Check Out Any Time, or, Any Time You Like, But You Can't Ever Leave, a Hotel California themed Firebrands hack by Card Zero Press. It is available at marns at itch.io [[click for link](#)]. M-A-R-N-S, dot itch, dot io. Ali, you suggested this game. That's my lead, that's my throw to you to say anything about this game.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah, I did. I mean, we, I... I was looking at a bunch of itch games, 'cause I wanted to assemble a library of games that I would like to play, and the tone of this one seems really fun. It seems like a really fun adaptation of Firebrands.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And I'm excited to play Firebrands without like a year and a half's worth of like...

Austin: [crosstalk] Of lead-in, yeah, uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: God, Firebrands is so good, and I will take any opportunity to play things like it.

Austin: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Alright, I'm gonna just read from the front page and then we can kinda go around the table reading set-up stuff, and does that make sense?

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, welcome to the Hotel California, the world's only hotel completely removed from time and space. We are proud to host guests of all time periods and alternate dimensions manifesting wherever desperate and weary travelers need us most. No matter who you are or where or when you're from, your room will be ready just as soon as you step in the door. Please do not be alarmed if your room suddenly shifts floors or several doors to the left. This is simply

the hotel rearranging itself to create more vacancies. Our rates are flexible, so please pay as much as you can afford.

Our amenities include an outdoor courtyard and pool, an indoor gym and a day spa, a ballroom for conferences, an arcade and billiards room, several restaurants, the boiler room, the room with blood-covered walls, the library, a parlor and billiards room, an in-house drugstore, the famous Mckiddie murder room, an indoor croquet court, a presidential suite, a sports bar and billiards room, vending machines and ice machines. Please note that the outdoor courtyard and pool are closed until further notice. All doors to the outdoor courtyard and pool have been locked indefinitely. Please notify the staff if the doors to the outdoor courtyard and pool are breached.

Our staff pride themselves on being on call 24/7. If you find something not to your liking, feel free to ring the night manager at the front desk, and they will try their best to accommodate you. Please note that we will not be accepting any further calls inquiring as to the whereabouts of the day manager. The investigation is ongoing and we have no more information to release at this time.

The Hotel California is newly renovated for the 2020 season, hoping to address recent reviews of the establishment of being quote unquote "haunted" and "sincerely uncomfortable to pass the time in." While we cannot comment on the veracity of these reviews, we have removed wireless internet and cell phone service from hotel grounds to help our guests appreciate the amenities here even more than before. If you have constructive criticism, be sure to fill out a feedback slip at the front desk. Please enjoy your indefinite stay at the Hotel California. We— What's that? A check out time? Well, you are free to check out whenever you'd like. Whether the hotel chooses to let you leave, however... Well, that is a different matter entirely.

Does someone wanna read set-up?

Jack: Sure. Um, set-up. You Can Check Out Any Time You Like requires 3 to 6 players, a handful of coins or any small tokens, and at least an hour of play time. Each player should have their own copy of the rules. To start the game, read through the safety tools, then introduce your characters. Then have everyone play In The Air Tonight on their own.

Austin: That's the name of a game, a mini-game. It's not just, go listen to the song In The Air Tonight.

Jack: Go listen to the song In The Air Tonight.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Jack: Although it's a good song.

Ali: I—

Keith: You all have your own copy of In The Air Tonight, we all know this.

[Ali laughs]

Ali: When I first read this game I was like... Am I just supposed to listen to that song? 'Cause I'd have done that.

Jack: A great drum intro.

Austin: Mmhm.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Uh, playing the games. Take turns around the table. On your turn, choose another player and a game you'd like to play with them. Turn to that game and follow the instructions there. Some of the games are 1 on 1, and some of them can include everyone. You can choose any player you want, but try to keep in mind who has h—who has been in the most and least scene—who has been the most [laughs] and least included in other games. When it isn't your turn, or when you aren't playing the game, or when you aren't playing in the current game, you can flip through the games to plan for what you might want to play next, or play In The Air Tonight quietly on your own. Again, an opportunity to listen to that good song. [laughs]

Jack: Uh-huh.

Keith: And that— I'm gonna say I don't want to nitpick here, but um, the drum bit in In The Air Tonight, it does happen surprisingly late into the song. The one, the drum bit everybody knows is actually three minutes in.

Jack: Right, but I consider it definitive and so to me that is the intro.

Keith: [laughs] Everything up until then is preamble.

Jack: [crosstalk] The song hasn't probably begun yet.

Austin: I see, I see.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: And then there's the intro, got it. Okay.

Austin: Of course, of course. Keith, do you wanna read this next bit?

Keith: Yeah, objects of play, sure. The objects of this game are to create messy entanglements and to inject surreal horror into the everyday. Fight with friends, kiss your doppelganger, ally with someone shady, find yourself in a hotel corridor that stretches farther than the length of the entire building, or play an anomaly who's a walking topiary sculpture. Anything goes. Your duties as a player are to play fair, and always give the other players the space to make decisions for themselves. Whenever someone asks you a question about your character or their circumstances or the situation you're in together, answer it, even if you have to make the answer

up on the spot. Breathe as much life as you can into the hotel and make it your own. Go around the table at least once, or as many times as you want. After everyone has taken at least one turn, anyone may decide to end play at the end of any turn.

Austin: Does that end play of the current... Does that end play of the entire game?

Jack: [crosstalk] I think it means of the whole game.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I think it means of the whole game.

Austin: Oh, well guess what, the next section: ending play. To end play.

Jack: Ah, here we go.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: You have two options. Attempt to escape the hotel for good, or leave your characters living in the hotel indefinitely. For the latter, bring up any unresolved questions you might have about your characters and say what you think possible outcomes might be. Let other players contribute possible outcomes as well. Then vote to decide which outcome is true. To end play by revolting against the hotel, proceed to the final game, Burning Down The House. Do you wanna split up the safety tools thing, one paragraph at a time, maybe?

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Austin: 'Cause it's a longer one?

Jack: This is a horror game, and as such the mini-games within will provide a framework for characters to be frightening, manipulative, aggressive, and violent, either towards one another or in general. However, every horror game is still a *game* and should still be fun and safe for everyone at the table, even when they're being scared.

Ali: Make— [stumbles over words] [laughs] Make clear to each player at the table, perhaps by reading the safety section aloud, that they are free to opt out of any mini-game they choose, even in the middle of said mini-game. No one is obligated to provide an explanation for opting out of any aspect of the game. If they do wish to provide an explanation, play should be paused for an out of character discussion.

Keith: Create a list with all players at the table of concepts, actions, and visuals that should never come up in play, and keep that list in a prominent place where the game is being played. Players may add to the list at any time, with or without explanation. If something added to the list is already integrated into a scene, players may decide out of character how they wish to remove it.

Austin: Uh, I was immediately jumping to that list, but I guess I'll keep reading instead.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Remember to always ask for consent before portraying an act of violence or aggression that impacts someone else's character, and remember that any player reserves the right to say no to you. Rather than allowing that to stop the scene in its tracks, work with the player to decide on what might happen in that scene instead. Take regular out of character breaks as needed to debrief and discuss the game, what parts you liked best, and what intense situations excited you. I'm writing down eye stuff, eye... I don't mind big eyes or like eye...depictions of creepy eyes, but violence—eye violence, eye trauma, no thanks.

Ali: Eye trauma, yeah. Fingernail trauma, sinus trauma. Are my big three.

Austin: Mmhm.

Ali: Those are the no-goes.

Austin: Um, like, graphic depictions of violence in terms of—

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: In terms of like, the—and that's very subjective, I know, but in terms of the camera zoom, so to speak. In terms of like how many words we're putting— Which doesn't mean viol— [sighs] This is such a tough thing. I don't mind someone being for instance attacked with a knife or something—or them being killed with a knife, but I don't need you to go intense detail about how that knife—what that knife does.

Jack: Right, right, right.

Keith: You don't wanna hear the physical movements of...

Austin: Right. Well, I don't, mm. You know.

Keith: Of body stuff?

Austin: That's fine. It's...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: It's really... It's really about, I don't know. I don't know how to do this. I don't know how to explain what I don't want. Like—

Keith: That's fine. It is so—

Austin: 'Cause I'm actually, the thing is—

Keith: [crosstalk] For me at least, I don't know.

Austin: I'm probably okay. What I'm actually saying is... This is not a me drawing a line, this is me drawing a line that I suspect many of our listeners would appreciate me drawing. Which maybe I shouldn't draw. Maybe I should just draw the lines I wanna draw, and—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And leave those content warnings where they are. But, like, you know. This is the difficulty of doing a show like this.

Jack: This isn't a snakes hotel. Oh, sorry, go on Ali.

Austin: [crosstalk] No snakes.

Ali: [laughing] It's okay. I was just gonna say like in general like descriptions of wounds...

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Is different from description of action.

Austin: Sure. Yes.

Ali: In my opinion.

Austin: That's a good line.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: That's the sort of thing where it's like, as you're— Austin, as you're trying—as you were struggling to describe exactly the thing you were meaning, in my head I'm just like, this is not a line for me but it's also something I'm not like looking forward to doing anyway, so it's not, yeah.

Austin: Totally. Um, are there things that are not about physical harm that we don't wanna hit? More broad uh...

Ali: I think Jack was just saying. [laughs]

Keith: Snakes.

Austin: I got that one, that's in there.

Jack: I mean, to me snakes are—

Austin: I should note, this list is in our chat, so make sure you have our— The Roll20 chat, not the YouTube chat.

Ali: Ohhh.

Austin: I'm not showing this, I should show this to the chat. To the—

Keith: Snakes is just a permanent Friends at the Table no-go-zo.

Jack: Weirdly, I think I've mentioned to Austin—

Austin: Yeah, I don't think that's true.

Jack: I'm fine with some snakes in Sangfielle.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: I, you know. I think I wrote some snakes in Sangfielle.

Austin: Yes, you did. [laughs] Well it's one of those things where it's like— You go ahead, Jack. I shouldn't speak for you.

Jack: Yeah, this evening at least, I don't know if I'm interested in like suicidality or conversations or depictions of suicide.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: In an endless hotel we can't leave.

Austin: Mmhm.

Keith: Um, is there a way to... Roll20 is bleeping really loud for me tonight.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Are you clicked on it? If you're clicked on it and have the chat up, it will not—it should not beep at you.

Keith: Okay, I'll keep it clicked then.

Austin: Uh, there might also be something in the—

Ali: Yeah, settings, enable background chat beep, you wanna turn off.

Austin: Yeah, there you go. Boom.

Keith: [whispering] Oh, there we go. Great, love that.

Austin: [sighs] Um.

Jack: Sylvi in the chat said, "St. Patrick blessed this hotel, snake free zone." Actually, Snake Hotel is just further down the endless un-leave-able road.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: But luckily there's a rope on the ground between us and hotel and that really fools the snakes.

Austin: They're like, "Oh no, that's a big snake. We can't cross that snake."

Jack: "Can't cross that. No indeed."

Austin: Yes. Jack, I know that we've had conversations about the like, the snake phobia to where there— It— Just to— I just wanna be clear, because I feel sometimes that there is the understanding that word "snake" upsets you deeply and—

Jack: Oh, no.

Austin: People have told us that we are being bad by mentioning snakes in your presence, and—

Jack: [crosstalk] No, no, no.

Austin: —I want to underscore that I don't believe that that's true. [laughs]

Jack: No, absolutely not. And I would tell these people straight away if that were the case. I'd say something like, "Stop it."

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Jack: Instead, uh, there are some— It's— Sometimes it's funny to talk about snakes. However, if you show me a picture of one or you make a sound or, you know.

Austin: Right, yeah.

Jack: No thank you.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mmhm.

Jack: Not in this hotel.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: You've even seen pictures of snakes that didn't quite look like snakes and been fine with them, and then pictures of things that did look like snakes that weren't. Didn't like them.

Austin: Right. Right. Sure. Um.

Jack: Long—

Keith: Being afraid of snakes seems like, very confusing. The rules of it.

Jack: [laughing] Sure is.

Keith: You're at the whim of the fear, not—

Ali: That's how fear works.

Jack: Yeah. You know that joke about the cat who sees a cucumber and the cat's always react and you're told not to do that 'cause it's snakes. I have intense empathy with those cats because I do that all the time.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: To cucumbers, or to just...

Jack: Uh, hoses.

Keith: Hoses, yeah.

Austin: That makes sense.

Jack: It's a stick.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Anyway.

Austin: Any other things that we immediately now want to X-card? Or not X-card, but um, veto. You know, set up blinds and veils for, just in general say, "Nah, I'm good." [pause] I'm trying to think of anything else myself. I think I'm good.

Keith: My big fear is something that will never scare me in a podcast, which is just swimming in the ocean.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Keith: Never... There's never any way to put that into a podcast that'll upset me.

Ali: Well... [laughs]

Jack: A beach episode that Keith does safely from the shore.

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: Um, alright then, I guess we can move on. Character creation. Complete these steps in any order. Choose your background from the list below and give yourself three traits. Your background will give you a direction for your character's motivation or some general goals for them to pursue throughout the game. Each background also comes with some guiding questions for your character. Not every type of character may be represented in every game and that's fine. Choose a name and pronouns and describe yourself briefly. Write all of these things down on a notecard and position it somewhere the other players will be able to see it during play. Um. There are, I guess I shouldn't skip this getting killed section, huh? Jack, do you wanna read getting killed?

Jack: You will likely know it's coming, but your character may be— [sighs] "Likely" is a word doing a lot of work there, it's great. You will likely know it's coming, but your character may be killed during the course of play. If this happens, you may create and introduce a new character, or continue to play as an already-established NPC. You can also keep playing without a character, asking and answering questions for each group participation game.

Austin: Alright, we should go into backgrounds.

[15:00]

Austin: Keith or Ali? Wanna read this first background?

Ali: Um, sure. The first background is Guest. You are a guest of the Hotel California, either scooped up from the present day or displaced from your time period slash alternate universe. You are on the run from something. It might be a mass killer who chased you into the hotel's doorstep, or the expectations of your family, but the hotel only appears to people who need to get away. You may not know it yet, but you are trapped inside the hotel indefinitely. As a Guest, you are concerned with investigating and provoking the anomalies, solving or ignoring your personal problems, pestering the staff, and finding a way to leave the hotel. Should I read the—? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Go ahead and finish the Guest.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: The questions are: What were you running from when you stumbled upon the hotel? How long have you been a guest here? What do you miss most about where you're from? And then [clears throat] the list of traits that you can choose from are practical, nosy, inquisitive, loud, fashionable, stubborn, obnoxious, brave. Wait, anxious. [laughs] You can also be obnoxious if you want to.

Austin: Yeah, we'll allow it.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Did you manifest obnoxious guests?

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Keith and Ali laugh]

Ali: [sighs] Anxious, brave, haunted, arrogant, gentle, solitary, scrappy, cautious, creative, witty, or naive.

Austin: Mmm. Keith, do you wanna do Staff?

Keith: Yeah, sure. You are a member of the Staff at the Hotel California. Perhaps an elevator operator, a bartender, a maid, or even the night manager themselves. You serve the well-being and upkeep of the hotel first and foremost, and the guests second. Much like the guests, you may be from a place—any place and time, and you are similarly prevented from leaving the hotel. You have been here a long time and know much more about the hotel than you disclose to the guests.

As Staff, you are concerned with running the day to day operations of the hotel, keeping the guests happy, ignorant, and provided for, and preventing the anomalies from making trouble. How did you come to be employed to the hotel? What part of the hotel do you refuse to be in alone or at night? What do you do in your downtime? Choose three traits that describe you: orderly, patient, pleasant, kind, funny, irreverent, charming, thoughtful, melancholy, exhausted, loyal, judgmental, mysterious, empathetic.

Austin: Uh, alright. Jack, do you wanna read the next one?

Jack: Anomalies. You are an Anomaly, someone or something distinct wrong that has manifested inside the hotel. You could be a doppelganger of one of the guests from another place and time, a ghost, an unholy amalgamate of missing staff members, a sinister stalker who slipped in following a guest, a monster, a manifestation of the hotel itself, or some other deeply disturbing thing. Whatever you are, you are not supposed to be here, and yet you are trapped just as everyone else is.

As an Anomaly, you are concerned with scaring the guests, playing them against each other, and toying with them in any way you see fit. You are also concerned with avoiding the staff. What sights, smells, and sounds commonly herald your appearance? Which member of the staff is not afraid of you? Do you envy the guests or see them as your enemies? Choose three traits that describe you: cold, wistful, violent, methodical, capricious, possessive, detached, uncanny, lonely, paranoid, prideful, distorted, slithering—not in *my* hotel—phantasmal, feral, and bloody.

Austin: Okay. We should make our characters, I guess. It doesn't say that it has to be like a mix of these, huh? We just all make our characters.

Keith: It can be any of these, yeah. Well, okay, it does seem— No, I guess there doesn't have to be any Anomalies, right?

Austin: It doesn't say, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, because the games are the thing and it's just how you behave in the games I guess.

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Yeah, there could be like an Anomaly NPC if we needed one.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Well, I'm deciding— I feel like I could be any three of these still. 'Cause—

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Is this your name? That you've written down?

Keith: This is my name.

Austin: I felt it.

Ali: Um.

Austin: You're Indoor Jim Taylor?

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Indoor Jim Taylor. [laughs]

Keith: [crosstalk] There's an indoor gym and I thought that would be a really funny name.

Austin: I see.

[Jack laughs]

Keith: G-Y-M, J-I-M. And so my three ideas is that I could be a workaholic businessman that people reference as Indoor Jim because there's another, more active Jim in the office. And then, I decided well I could also just be the personification of the indoor gym at the hotel, which could make me either a Staff or an Anomaly.

Austin: I think that would make you an Anomaly if you were a... Unless you were— If you were the— [laughs] If you were the embodiment of a indoor gym, I feel like no matter what sort of uniform you're wearing, you're an Anomaly.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: That's my gut. If that what you literally are. I guess maybe not, maybe all you do is do Staff stuff.

Keith: Right. That's the thing.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: But I'm closed. Wait, am I closed? No, I'm not closed. The pool and the spa are closed or something like that.

Ali: Yeah, outdoor gym is— [laughs]

Keith: The courtyard. The outdoor courtyard and the outdoor pool.

Jack: Strange.

Keith: Indoor gym is open for business. [laughs]

Austin: That's what he always— He's always saying this.

[Keith laughs]

Austin: Indoor Jim is open for business!

Keith: See, that's Staff, that's Staff behavior to say something like that.

Austin: Yeah. True. True.

Jack: I have an idea for a mon— Oh, go on, Keith.

Keith: I'm just gonna say, I'm not gonna pick yet. I'm gonna hang back, keep my name.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: And keep my options open.

Jack: I think I have an idea for a monster. I don't know. Um, let me put this in 'cause I like this name anyway. This monster or person is called...Bad Gateway.

Austin: Ah, good name.

Ali: Ohhh.

Jack: Like what you get on the internet sometimes.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, of course. Which we don't have access to here, right.

Jack: No. No. Um, and again, this could be a Staff, this could be a Guest from another magical hotel that has got trapped in this one. I like the idea of a monster that has just come out of the furnace and is just a sort of like slasher movie style hulking big monster. But again, like Keith, I'm flexible.

Austin: Mmhm.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I'm a Guest for sure. So I, that's easy for me.

Ali: [crosstalk] Ohhh.

Keith: I do like the idea of a uh, of at another haunted hotel is in an Anomaly but has taken a vacation to be a Guest at this haunted hotel.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: And is just a normal guest, except they're a monster.

[Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Aw, that's really good.

[Keith laughs]

Jack: That's some Hotel Transylvania shit right there.

Keith: I haven't seen it.

[pause]

Jack: It's fine.

Keith: It's fine? Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Cool.

Ali: It's viewable. [laughs]

Jack: It's viewable. You can see it on a plane.

Ali: Sure. I think I'm gonna go Staff.

Jack: Oooh.

Ali: I was torn between Staff and Guest, and I think I'm gonna go Staff.

Austin: What do you do?

Ali: I think that I'm the kitchen coordinator.

Austin: Oooh okay, sure.

Ali: You know, room service is 24 hours and they need someone to...

Austin: Mm, mmhm.

Ali: Really figure that out.

Austin: That makes sense. Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: 24 hour room service? Jeez.

Jack: 24 hour room service, of what? Is it like a limited menu, or...?

Ali: Yeah. [laughs] Usually—

Jack: Well, this is a magical hotel, so I—

Ali: Sure, sure sure sure. But you know you have a breakfast menu, you have a lunch menu, and then you have a after-hours menu.

Jack: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Austin: Yeah that makes sense, sure, yeah. Definitely.

Jack: Can I get a scrambled egg?

Ali: Uhhh.

Austin: Just one?

[Ali laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Can I get—

Keith: [doing a voice] "Yes, and you can only have *one* scrambled egg!"

Jack: "Oh, this hotel is hell!"

Keith: [monster laugh] Ha ha ha ha ha!

Austin: [sighs]

[Ali, Jack, Keith laugh]

Jack: Oh, my god.

Ali: You can have the scrambled eggs between 11 p.m. and 11 a.m.

Austin: That's *it*.

Keith: Eggs at 11.

Austin: That's what they say.

Jack: Wouldn't 11 p.m. and 11 a.m.—

[Ali laughs]

Keith: [crosstalk] It says in the lobby. [laughs]

Ali: [crosstalk] Well, 'cause it's a post-dinner menu and it's on the breakfast menu.

Jack: Between 11 p.m.— Oh, I see. And I can have it all through the night, if I so desire.

Austin: [crosstalk] All night.

Keith: Oh! I misunderstood. I thought that you could have one egg each at 11 a.m. and then 11 p.m. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, I see. No. No.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: So they roll over.

Ali: You could. But. I'm just saying that's when we have it—that's when we have the grill on, or whatever. I don't know.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: The grills. That's how we prepare scrambled eggs.

Austin: That makes sense to me.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I—

Keith: Well, yeah, flat-top grill! That's not weird!

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. That's I-HOP shit.

Jack: Oh, yeah, you're right I suppose. Yeah. I'd usually make that in a pan and that's why I'm not the kitchen coordinator at the hotel.

Austin: Mmm. That's why you're Bad Gateway instead.

Keith: Yeah. You need that big flat-top grill so you can do 100 eggs and bacon and you know whatever else, all at the same time.

Austin: Mmhm. Uh, I have my adjectives. I am loud, scrappy, and nosy.

Ali: Ohhh.

Jack: Oooh. I thought that said noisy and that was you further defining loud.

Austin: [crosstalk] Doubling loud. No, no.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I'm gonna play Gabriella "Gabby" DiDomenico. She is a—she/her, she uses she/her pronouns and she is a flight attendant who is running late for the plane that she's going to work on. She is like, a retro vintage like flight attendant. I don't know if she's unstuck from time or what, but like, you know. Blue classic flight attendant uniform, you know? Also just like, keeps—Like, I think her bags are kept at the front desk, you know what I mean? Like, she's already—She checked out before we start the game. She's already checked out. She had her bags brought down already. But she—

Ali: That's too bad.

Austin: Hasn't left yet. She keeps getting held up by something.

Keith: Okay. Um, Indoor Jim is a Guest and also um, pick a Silent Hill protagonist. And I'm that.

Austin: [crosstalk] You pick one.

Jack: You mean like James or Jake or Karen or Bella or—

Austin: You're makin' these up now.

Jack: Or Mick. Or...

Keith: This is a real James. Jim is a real James.

Austin: Jim is a real James.

Keith: Literally. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Uh, do we have any other...names, pronouns, adjectives, descriptions.

Jack: Bad Gateway uses it/its pronouns. Its adjectives are methodical, lonely, and violent. It is like a classic Phasmophobia uh, uh, uh, hm. It's not phantasmal. Remember when we played Phasmophobia Austin and we saw that thing just go there on the stairs?

Austin: Yeah, I do. It's like that? It's just like, "Oh, there they are, there it is."

Jack: Yup. And when I say violent I mean like poltergeist-y shit, you know, knocking down a shelf.

Austin: Right. Right.

Jack: Shutters slamming. Um, our previous guests at the hotel um...use the furnace to open a gateway to hell.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: And Bad Gateway came out and can't figure out how to get back through the furnace into hell again.

Austin: Rough.

Jack: So is lonely, is trapped, is a demon.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And it longs to do demonic stuff, but there's nobody, you know. What's to do? There's no fun in being a demon if I can't then return to the fiery pits.

Austin: I see. Yeah. Did you already do some demon-ing?

Jack: What, here?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, totally. Bad Gateway's been running rampant, I think, through this hotel for at least a couple of weeks.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: I think their first casualty was the person who accidentally turned the furnace into a portal to hell.

Austin: Right, sure. And Bad Gateway was, you know— It was very happy to have been like, "Well maybe this will let me leave," and it didn't, and that just made them angrier and lonelier.

Austin: Sure.

[pause]

Ali: Fuck. I didn't save my title. I was like, finally good to go.

Jack: Kitchen coordinator?

Austin and Ali: Kitchen coordinator.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Thank you, put me there. Um, yeah, I'm going to be playing Blue Hour. Blue is he/they.

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, great name.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Going for the songs again. Keeping in tune with the game.

Austin: Mmhm.

Ali: Blue is thoughtful, exhausted, and irreverent. And he's the kitchen coordinator.

Austin: I forgot that there are these questions. How did you come to be employed at the hotel? Or just more detail. The three questions for Staff was: how did you come to be employed at the hotel? What part of the hotel do you refuse to be in alone or at night? What do you do during your downtime? So just like general, what's up with— What's up with Blue?

Ali: Mmhm. Um. I think that I came to be employed at the hotel because...um, it was near where I was studying. [laughs] I refuse to be in the laundry room at night. And on my downtime I am playing Solitaire in the billiards room.

Austin: Mmm. Okay. Fun.

Jack: No billiards?

Ali: No, no. There's like a card table.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Ali: I mean, there's a table and I have a deck of cards [laughing] that I place on the table.

Austin: [crosstalk] You got some cards, so you're gonna be... Yeah, sure.

Jack: Any table can be a card table if you have a deck of cards.

Austin: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Um, I'll just answer— I'll answer these three Guest ones really quick. What were you running from when you stumbled upon the hotel? I was— The hotel I normally stay at with all of the other flight attendants and the pilots and stuff was booked. There were no vacancies. And so I got the short straw. But that's kind of my fault, because instead of going right from the airport to the hotel—

[30:00]

Austin: —I went to meet up with my lover, who lived in town. And by the time I got back from that, uh oh. There was no vacancies, so I had to go to this different hotel that I never stayed at. Heard some bad things, whatever, it's just one night. And so I've only been here... I've been here— Maybe I've missed one— Mmm, is it more fun to have not missed anything yet, and to see that happen live.

Jack: I— Might be that, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah. So I, I really gotta get out of here, like, any minute now if I'm gonna make it to this next plane.

Jack: Are there financial consequences?

Austin: I could lose my job, yeah, absolutely.

Jack: The biggest financial consequence.

Austin: Yeah. Exactly. I don't wanna move back in with my parents, they already hate me enough as it is. Um, how long have I been a guest here? One night. What do I miss most about where I'm from? I don't miss where I'm from, I miss being on the—I miss going to and fro. I miss the life—I'm like, ready to get out of here just to be back on the plane and go to a different port of call. I'm not, I don't miss—I'm gonna say Gabby is from Brooklyn. Gabby does not miss Brooklyn very much right now at all. So, yeah.

Ali: It's chilly here. I don't blame you.

Austin: I mean I don't like it here either. I wanna not be here either.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Jim, are you— So you're a Guest, so what are your...

Keith: I'm a Guest. Gentle, solitary, and naive. He's an overworked office man about to be laid off.

Austin: Sure.

Keith: He's been a Guest for four days, and the thing he misses is work.

Jack: Oh! [laughs]

Austin: Buddy. Yeah. Hmm.

Ali: We've all been there.

Jack: Uh... There's what sights, smells, and sounds commonly herald your appearance, are the rattling of the pipes connected to the boiler.

Austin: Great.

Jack: Just like, loud violent rattling of the pipes. And you know, just like a massive hulking shadow passing down a corridor near you. Which member of the Staff is not afraid of you? Well, I'm thinking about this. Ali, you are our only member of Staff.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Do you want to not be afraid of the demon?

Ali: Uh, I don't mind demons.

Jack: [crosstalk] Or would you— Huh? You don't mind—

Ali: I don't mind demons. [laughs] You know.

Jack: Why? What is it— Have I just— Are you not concerned about getting killed by it?

Ali: Demons need to sleep, demons need to eat, like everybody else, you know? I'm not bothering you, you're not bothering me.

Keith: I'm afraid of demons as—about as much as I also don't believe in them.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Which is a lot.

Austin: I see.

Jack: Wow.

Keith: I'm very afraid of them and am sure that they are fake.

Ali: Sure.

Jack: Um. Do you envy the Guests or see them as your enemies? Uh, see them as my enemies, but I think that's because Bad Gateway believes that by killing all the Guests, it will be able to leave back out through the furnace again.

Ali: Mmm.

Jack: It killed one, didn't work, couldn't get back out through the furnace. Probably all of them.

Austin: Mmhm. [laughs] Alright, are we ready to play the first game?

Ali: Yeah I think so.

Jack: Let's do it.

Austin: Uh, okay. The first one is In The Air Tonight or A Solitary Dream. Set-up: play by yourself quietly. Conducting the dream: choose what sort of dream you've been having and what happened in it. Choose freely. Ending the dream: because of your most recent dream there is something about you, some detail of your mood, appearance, goals, or actions, that everyone might notice. Decide what the detail is. The next time that you play, announce it to the table. I don't know if we— Do we just do this to I —with ourselves, and then—

Keith: [crosstalk] [whispering] Yes, let's be very quiet. On a podcast.

Austin: And then we explain...okay.

[Ali laughs]

[pause]

Austin: But are we not sharing them?

Jack: I feel like we should share them, right?

Austin: But then it won't be a surprise when the det— I guess the detail will be a surprise. When someone might notice mood, appearance, goals, or action the next game, right?

Keith: I feel equally about either sharing the dream or not sharing the dream.

Austin: No no no, I'm saying we can share the dream, but do we also share this detail, or do we wait until the next game?

Keith: I guess we wait on that.

Austin: Okay. Does anyone have a dream?

Ali: There's suggested dreams by the way.

Austin: Huh?

Ali: There's suggested dreams.

Austin: Oh, I didn't see these prompts.

Keith: Yeah, there's two pages of suggested—yeah.

Austin: [crosstalk] I did not scroll down at all. Wow. Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Um. I have my dream, which is not from one of these prompts. Do you know those shirt folders? Those like—

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: The metal ones that are like industrial, though, not just like the— Not just the ones that are at home, but like, if you owned—

Keith: A robot that does that.

Austin: Yeah. They have kind of like um... [sighs] They kind of have like, arms, do you know what I mean? I'm trying to explain what the hell this looks— I'm trying to find an image of it, to explain what it is. But it's kind of go— It's almost like an H shape in my mind? That's like folding, you know, clothes over and over again, but instead of folding shirts or pants or something, it's all tangled up with yarn. And as it's doing the— As it's like doing the thing where it should be folding a shirt, instead it's basically doing a cat's cradle and other sorts of kind of string figure play with the yarn.

And there's two things happen— Two things happen at once. One is, in the middle, these yarn figures are extremely distinct. Like, okay, here is the cat's cradle, here is a star, here is like a little wavy shape. But each time it does it, it—the excess yarn from the previous one just like, hangs off the side. It's this kind of sky blue or like North Carolina blue yarn, and it just keeps piling up and getting increasingly twisted and tangled on the edges, and then eventually it gets tangled enough in the middle that it's basically just like a messy spool of yarn almost. Or ball of yarn that covers up any of the figures.

And I wake up in the lobby. I was napping, waiting for the cab that the receptionist said [laughs] was coming for me. Or, I said, "Can you call me a cab?" and then I immediately walked away to sit down in a nice big comfy chair in the lobby and immediately fell asleep, so I'm waking up from this dream now.

[pause]

Ali: Um, cool, yeah. I'm gonna choose from one of the prompts that speaks to me. [laughs] Which is, you've been dreaming of murder lately and it's a complicated revenge fantasy. I think Blue keeps having these dreams where it's just like a normal dream, sometimes it's like a stress dream, like he's out at the store and they're out of mouthwash even though he went there to get mouthwash and then he runs into somebody at the store and then they have to go to the baseball park or whatever. [laughs] And it's like, the weird Inception thing of like, every time there's like a climax part of the dream, someone that he used to know keeps showing up and ends up being this like, they get into a big fight and then it's [laughs] like, an altercation type fight, and then...murder.

Austin: And then murder happens.

Ali: And then murder.

Austin: Great.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Not a fan.

Ali: Well.

Keith: I've got mine.

Austin: Mhm?

Keith: I've been dreaming of a phone call lately. It's a dream where I'm sitting by the phone waiting for a phone call and I know already what the phone call's going to be. It's going to be with my mother who's begging me not to do something, and I've changed— I've uh, I've made a mistake, and that I should reconsider. And I'm sitting and waiting for the phone call and imagine it playing out exactly as it's going to, but when the phone call comes I pick it up and uh, it's the—it's just the ten second of the phone call with no other bits of it.

Jack: Oh, god.

Keith: It's just the— It is just like a sad goodbye.

Austin: Yeah. Great.

Jack: Bad Gateway has been dreaming about the outdoor pool in the central courtyard lately. And it always wakes up when it starts to drown. It doesn't really know what drowning is, but it's looking up from the bottom of the pool to the water. To the moving water on the top. And it can see the lights from the hotel.

Austin: Mmm. Okay. So, I'll read the list of games that we have available. In The Air Tonight or A Solitary Dream. Is There Something I Should Know or An Investigation. Hit Me With Your Best Shot or A Conversation Over Billiards. Stayin' Alive or A Chase. Who Can It Be Now? or A Conversation Through a Door. Fight It Out or Meeting Fist to Fist. I Wanna Dance With Somebody or A Dance. I Think We're Alone Now or Stealing Time Together. Time After Time or Memory of the Hotel. And Burning Down The House or Checking Out. Does anyone know where they wanna start with their thing? With their game?

Ali: Um, I do have an idea to start, but do you mind if we take a 5 minute break?

Austin: Sounds good.

Ali: Okay.

Jack: Yes, of course.

Austin: We will be right back. [pause] Alright, we are back with some more Hotel California.

Ali: Hi.

Austin: Hi.

Jack: Hotel California, 2!

Austin: Not— That's not what it's called. That's not what it's called. That's the name of the song.

Jack: No.

Austin: The name of the song is Hotel California.

Jack: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: The name of the game is You Can Check Out Any Time You Like.

Jack: But You Can Never Leave.

Keith: The first line of the book is "Hotel California"—"Welcome to Hotel California."

Austin: [crosstalk] I know. And there isn't a cover so I keep scrolling up and seeing that and reading it as a title. So.

Jack: I think that you couldn't name a game Hotel California without speaking to the Eagles' management. Which sucks.

Austin: [crosstalk] I mean, I don't think you could name it this without— This is probably also litigious. And I hope that the Eagles never find out about it, because— Or the Eagle publishing, whoever publishes.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: That is— This is the terrible world we live in, so.

Jack: It sucks.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Keith: Wait, is the name of the game— Is that a line from the song? I didn't know that. I didn't—

Austin: You can check out any time you like but you can't ever leave? Yeah. That is the hook of the song. Or that is the— That is the— That song goes— I'm gonna get the lyrics in front of me. It's been a minute.

Jack: [sings] Walking down a cold desert road, in a lonely street. [hums]

Austin: That's not that far off. Is this— Is that—

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Was that a joke, or...?

Jack: No, I kind of vaguely know it, but that's all that I know.

Austin: It's "on a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair," so that's very close. You know?

Keith: Yeah. It's just a slightly different kind of place.

Austin: Yeah, the final— It's the end of the song. "Last thing I remember, I was running for the door / I had to find the passage back to the place I was before / 'Relax,' said the night-man, 'we are programmed to receive.' / You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave."

Keith: Okay. I know the song. It was on the radio all the time growing up, 'cause it was the kind of station my family would listen to.

Austin: Yeah, totally, of course.

Keith: But I just never...

Austin: You know the—

Keith: I didn't remember that particular line.

Austin: Is this the song that finally someone was like— 'Cause there's lots of like, "What's this song about? What's it— What's it— Is it about—?"

Jack: A fucking cursed hotel, innit?

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: I believe that they've come out and been like, "Yeah, it's about a cursed hotel." 'Cause a lot of people were like it's about Hollywood, like Hotel California, it's about like—

Ali: Ohhh.

Austin: You know, stardom goes to your head, you can't get out. And a lot of are like, "It's about drug use," "Oh it's about a marriage" or whatever, right? [laughs] You know how people do.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Now, don't get me wrong. Maybe it's about stardom and drug use, but in a cursed hotel that you can never leave.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: It is, yeah. It is inspired by the 1965 John Fowles novel *The Magus*.

Jack: The Mag—

Austin: There we go.

Jack: Did they— Did they really say that?

Keith: Yes, they really did.

Austin: [crosstalk] Apparently. Okay, Don Henley has given a number of—

Jack: [crosstalk] Holy shit, that book's wild.

Austin: [reading out loud] Don Henley has given a number of explanations about the song ranging from quote "a journey from innocence to experience" to a socio-political statement. In an interview with Rolling Stone, Henley said the song was meant to be quote "more of a symbolic piece about American in general," and added, "lyrically the song deals with traditional or classical themes of conflict." [laughs] "Darkness and light, good and evil, youth and age. The spiritual versus the secular. I guess you could say it's a song about—"

Keith: [crosstalk] I— That's like Don Henley's changing his fucking story.

Austin: I think, I feel like this is— I feel like he's coming into a bit of being like, "I'm just gonna keep coming up with shit that it's about, you figure it out." Which I—

Jack: It's a good bit.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I deeply respect this.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Ali: Sure sure sure.

Keith: It's kinda hard to accuse him of just making things up when it is a made-up song that he also just made up because that's not a real—

Jack: With his guitar. He made it up with his guitar, yeah.

Austin: I hate this. [reading out loud] In 2009 interview, the plain dealer music critic John Soder asked Henley if he regretted writing the line, “So I called up the captain, please bring me my wine / He said, ‘We haven’t had that spirit here since 1969,’” because, of course, wines are fermented but spirits are distilled.

To which Henley responded, “Thanks for the tutorial. And no, you’re not the first to bring this to my attention, and you’re not the first to completely misinterpret the lyric and miss the metaphor. Believe me, I’ve consumed enough alcoholic beverages in my time to know how they are made and what the proper nomenclature is. But that line in that song has little or nothing to do with beverages. It’s a socio-political statement. My only regret would have to be explaining in detail to you, which would defeat the purpose of using literary devices in songwriting and lower the discussion to some silly and irrelevant argument about chemical processes.”

Keith: Wow. Extremely— He killed that guy.

Austin: Yeah, that guy is dead.

Ali: Got 'em.

Jack: And he never worked again.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Austin: Anyway.

Ali: Yowza.

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

[45:00]

Austin: So we’re back. Who—

Ali: Right!

Austin: Ali, you said you had a game.

Ali: Yeah, hi.

Austin: You had a game you wanna play.

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah. Pre-break, I had an idea for the game. I don't know if people thought of other ideas since that happened, but I thought that it might be fun to start with Time After Time.

Keith: All I did was eat a brownie, so.

Ali: Oooh! [laughs]

Austin: What is Time After Time?

Ali: Yeah, let me read from the book here. Set-up: set the scene with your chosen partners. Decide which part of the hotel you're in and what you're doing in the moment you—at the moment you begin to notice things aren't the same. Other players may join freely if it makes sense for your characters to be there. What part of the hotel's history or your history are you now seeing? What questions can this flashback answer for you? What might the hotel be trying to convey by showing you this? During the game anyone may ask for— [laughs] may ask for details of the setting, occasion, or circumstances.

Austin: Sure, I'd be happy to be part of that.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: If you'll have me. I feel like that's a starter.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah. No offense Bad Gateway, but this feels like a Guests [laughing] sort of situation.

Jack: Bad Gateway does not experience memory other than the joy of the flames.

Austin: Uh-huh, I see.

Ali: Mmhm. Yeah. Maybe we're in like the lobby?

Austin: Yeah, I could see that. That makes sense.

Ali: [laughs] Okay, I'm gonna continue reading.

Austin: [crosstalk] Is it just— So is it, is it Gabby, Blue Hour, and Indoor Jim Taylor?

Ali: Yeah, Indoor, you wanna be here?

Keith: Sure.

Ali: Sure. [laughs] Okay. Conducting the flashback: whoever the flashback feels most targeted toward—most targeted to goes first. Go around the table and let each person involved in the

flashback describe—present a detail of the past prompt and then choose an option to finish it. Discuss as a group what transpires, or play it out as a scene involving as many people as necessary. Then have the person to the left...have the person to the left present their own prompt and so on. Oh okay, so it would start with...

Austin: One of us, and then we'll rotate through.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Austin: Right?

Keith: Right. From the prompts in the next couple pages.

Austin: The next couple pages, again, have a bunch of prompts.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. What's the last bit—

Ali: [crosstalk] Yeah I'm just— Oh, yeah. Sorry. [laughs] Ending the flashback: end the flashback when everyone has taken a turn, or when you reach a conclusive ending point. Decide as a group how the hotel removes you from the flashback: abruptly, or gradually? Do you bring back— Do you bring anything back to your time with you and does the hotel let you do that? Think individually about what you've learned from your time in the past. And then there's just two pages. [laughs]

Austin: Two pages of things, yeah. I have a really easy opening thing here, right?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: If that's okay.

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: So Gabby stands up in you know her flight attendant uniform. Again, it's a dark blue but the detail from that dream that's come through is a piece of that kind of bright blue yarn just on my skirt, and I'm like:

Gabby: Ah, hm.

Austin: And I pick it up and kind of like flick it onto the carpet, and then I go:

Gabby: Oh, ah shit!

Austin: And I walk over to the front desk and just like, grab my luggage. I have two pieces of luggage, one very large bag that rolls and then a kind of uh, smaller exact duplicate of it that also rolls, and so [laughs] I just have two, you know, very professional-looking pieces of

hard-case luggage. I go to the front door. The front door is locked. I look out the window to get my bearings. Outside I see... Um, a structure or landmark that no longer exists in my own time. The door is locked but out front there is a cable car station. And I see the cable car pull up and a bunch of people get on it. And I wanna say that it's like, it's— What time of day is it, Ali? This is your game.

Ali: Oh sure. Maybe it would be like a 2 p.m. situation.

Austin: Sure.

Ali: I, yeah.

Austin: That makes sense. So then yeah, it's like a bunch of people get on in clothes that are not appropriate for our time, 2021? Nor the time I'm clearly a flight attendant from, which is like mid-century? But in fact is like, early—is like 1920s cable car and there's like a little girl in a big, round, white and blue dress with a lollipop who like, looks up at me and then gets pulled into the cable car by her parents. And then the cable car like, "ding ding ding!" And then leaves, and I'm like:

Gabby: I gotta— I gotta get on that cable— Hm. [sighs]

Austin: It doesn't even register to me that it's not— That that cable car didn't exist here. 'Cause I don't know that this ho— Maybe there's a cable car up front and I didn't notice last night when I first came in. But there was not a cable car here last night when I first [laughing] came in, or a cable car station. Especially not right outside. And I think I just immediately turn around and call to the reception. No one's at the reception at this moment. I go:

Gabby: Hey, the front door is locked! Can someone— Does someone have the key to the front door? [pause] Anyone?

Keith: I sort of pat— I know that I don't have the key to the front door, but I sort of pat my lapels of my suit and then give like a shrug like, "Oh, I'm sorry."

Austin: [laughing] Yeah, if—

Gabby: Do you even work here?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No. No, I'm a guest.

Austin:

Gabby: Okay. Do you know where anybody is who works here?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Oh, um...

Austin:

Gabby: You know, it's fine.

Keith: I just look over at the counter.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like the lobby counter.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I immediately walk behind the counter and start looking at the keys that are hanging up on a wall to look for the front door key, and that's the end of—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Hey, you shouldn't— That's— You can't—not allowed to go behind there.

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Got places to be, buddy.

Ali: Sure. I think in fact someone like, from a back room comes out?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: And it's like someone dressed in a staff uniform, but like not the same staff uniform we've seen?

Austin: Huh.

Ali: The prompt that I'm gonna go from here is, I meet someone from another reality entirely. It is someone I know, but their Guest slash Staff slash Anomaly status has changed.

Austin: Huh.

Ali: [laughs] And this is— This is like a woman who worked here. Who retired like three years ago, and is now like wearing the version of this hotel's uniform but like, old? [laughs] Like if you looked at like— I guess you're a flight attendant right, so you know how like, if you've seen in the magazine for flight attendants it's like, "Here's the history of flight attendant uniforms."

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: You would like, notice like, “Oh that lapel is very outdated” or whatever.

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: [laughs] And she says:

Front desk attendant: Um, excuse me, ma'am. I don't think that you're allowed to be in this area. Can I help you?

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah, I have to get out on the next uh— There's supposed to be a cab for me, someone said they were gonna or— I asked if you could order me a cab. Cab didn't show up. I guess I fell asleep in the lobby. I gotta get to the airport. So, if you could just unlock the front door I will be on my way. I'll get out of your hair, miss, and that'll be a great thing for both of us, won't it?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And I didn't know about going behind the counter. That wasn't...

Ali: [laughs]

Front desk attendant: By all means. Yeah, the doors actually, um, uh...

Ali: Mmm. I'm—I'm a person of the past so I wouldn't say it was an automatic system. So.

Front desk attendant: Let me find the key for the door. I don't understand why it would be locked at this hour. Can you give me your room number so I can pull up your account?

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah, 2—

Keith: Is that a lie, by the way, right now? Or is that not a lie yet.

Ali: What do you mean?

Keith: As an employee, in the—

[Ali laughs]

Keith: You would know that we're trapped here, right?

Ali: I guess I would.

Keith: So you might be lying, but this might be so far into the past that you don't? Or?

Ali: This could have been a time when the hotel let people go in and out, yeah, I could be—

Keith: Also true.

Austin:

Gabby: 227. Room number's 227. I already turned in my key. It's right—

Austin: I point at the wall.

Gabby: It's right there. 227.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Ohhh. 327.

Keith: I hold up my—

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: [sighs] I'm gonna sit down. You can go about looking for the key.

Austin: And she sits down. Let me— Gabby DiDimenico is a kind of tan, Italian woman with perfect lipstick on. Her— She has like dark hair. Like, she— Picture a vintage stewardess in your head, but then like give her like thirty percent more attitude and you got it.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Floor twins.

Austin:

Gabby: No, we're not floor twins.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Floor twins.

Austin:

Gabby: No, you're on a different— You're on 326, it's a higher floor. Room number twins.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's exactly one up.

Austin:

Gabby: Room number twins.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's the same. If you were in the hallway, and you didn't know what floor you were on, it would I— Our rooms would look the same. Identical twins.

Austin:

Gabby: Honey, if I was in the hallway and didn't know what floor I was on, I'd be havin' a bigger problem than that. So, you just attend to your—hoo, okay. Rancid.

[Keith laughs]

Jack: This is big "hey number neighbour" vibes.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Wait, what's "hey number neighbour"?

Ali: Oh, did you not see this tweet?

Keith: No.

Austin: No. Maybe. I've seen a lot of tweets.

Ali: Sure sure sure.

Keith: That's fair.

Ali: There's a lot of them out there. Um. [laughs] So.

[Keith laughs]

Ali: It was a— Jack, I don't know if you—

Keith: [crosstalk] Flashback within a flashback to a tweet.

Ali: [laughing] But apparently what people do is they'll like—

Austin: Oh, I remember this now.

Ali: So, my phone number—

Keith: Ohhh, yup.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Keith: [sighs]

Ali: My phone number ends with 1735, and I would text 1736 and be like "hey number neighbour."

Austin: I hate this. This is—

Ali: [crosstalk] "What are you doing tonight?"

Keith: You say "would." *Would* you do that?

Ali: [laughs] If pressed, maybe. I don't know that I would. I don't wanna meet people like that, but, you know, I could see the appeal if you're in the mood to like fuck with someone, or just curious.

Jack: The two moods.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: Jeez.

Jack: Oh, speaking of the two moods, somewhere deep below you, several floors below you, there is the sound of just like— You can't place what the sound is, but I can tell you for the fact of someone wrenching a metal pipe out of the wall.

Austin: Mmm. Gotta get out of this place.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Keith: So, uh.

Indoor Jim: What— You seem like you're trying to leave but you just got here, what's up?

Austin:

Gabby: I did not just get here. I got here last night. I stayed a night, I'm leaving, I got work to go to.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: We take off for Albuquerque in [sighs] way too soon. Uh. I hope you have a great stay, I don't know if you just got here. If you did I advocate you go up to your room and have a great stay away from me.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] Oh, well. I'm witnessing an event that I lived through or was told of but something's wrong.

Austin:

Gabby: Excuse me?

Keith: That's my detail from the past.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Looking around the room.

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: Are you with someone, sir?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm with— I'm here on a business retreat. Uh, we—

Austin:

Gabby: What's that? What is a business retreat? Is that when you do bad at business and so you walk away with your tail between your legs, or what?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No... No, it's sort of like a team-building event. We all come here and we do two full—we do two days of work presentations and then the last day—

Austin:

Gabby: Oh, it's like a little summer camp for you.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's like a little summer camp

Austin:

Gabby: Ah that's very cute.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And then there's a standup comedian who comes and tells jokes. And they do a great job with telling...

Austin:

Gabby: I bet they're really funny. Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I... I fell, um, they were not—

Austin:

Gabby: You fell? You should sit down probably and rest.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: They weren't that funny but I was getting up to go to the bathroom and I had uh, tripped over my chair leg and everyone laughed and so the comedian, I think rightly, used that for most of the rest of the show. So it was like I was kind of like a part of it.

Austin:

Gabby: Very interactive.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah.

Austin:

Gabby: Very chique and new.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Mmm.

[pause]

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: I'm sorry for you. I guess.

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It didn't hurt so bad.

Austin:

Gabby: [sighs] [to the front desk attendant] You find that key?

Ali: Yeah, Gabby, I was gonna say actually when you're looking around the room I think that you see something really annoying, 'cause now Blue Hour has entered the scene also from the back room and like, has now realized that he's run into this person that like, he knows but is like a twenty year [laughs] age gap between the version of this front desk lady that he knew.

Austin: Ah. Right.

Ali: Versus...

Austin: The version that's here now? So this is the younger one is here now versus the one that—

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: I see. Okay.

Ali: Blue Hour is a guy in his twenties. Has a mullet. Pulling it off. [laughing] I know people have different opinions on mullets but this is a great one.

Austin: What's the uniform situation, 'cause I feel like that can make or break a mullet.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Oooh yeah, mullet is really not wanting to be in a uniform.

Ali: Well, so, I think— [laughs]

Austin: This isn't the front though, so.

Ali: You know—

Keith: Oh, sure, yeah.

Ali: I think that they're wearing like— He has like— It like, looks suspiciously like a bellboy uniform where it has like the little collar and it's like a— I don't know that we've decided on like, colors for this hotel, but it's probably like, you know, like maybe like a soft peach color and then like the lapel has like... Like the green that you sort of see on like old-timey Californian things where you see those two colors paired where it's like—

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Here's a nice peach and here's you know, this sort of deep blue-green.

[1:00:00]

Keith: I could not guess in a million years the kind of green you're describing that goes with peach.

Ali: [laughs] I'll show you in a second when I have the time to Google it.

Keith: [crosstalk] "Classic California soft peach and green."

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: I think I know what you mean. Like, I wasn't gonna go with like a— In my mind, it's like a... The green is like... It's not a dark green in my mind, it's kind of a light green. Anyway.

Ali: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Keith: I'm not doubting that this is a thing, it's just I can't picture it.

Austin: [crosstalk] Not quite a sea foam, but.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Anyway.

Ali: [laughs] I'm sure if you Google "Palm Springs logo" and then just fucking go through it enough, then you'll— [laughs] you'll see something similar. Anyway, over that he's wearing an apron. And—

Austin: Yeah, okay, this is what I had in mind. Yeah. Totally. Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Okay. Okay, yeah. Okay, is it like this color? Uh...buh buh buh, like this color here?

[pause]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I was gonna go with this darker one. This slightly darker one. Even though earlier I said sea foam. Just this like—

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Green, you know? Like...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Anyway.

Keith: Yeah. I know— Yeah.

Ali: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Austin: Glad we ground this one to a halt for this.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: It's worth it for me. I like the little jacks.

Ali: But yeah, they're chatting it up with the receptionist lady. Keeping her looking for your key.

Austin:

Gabby: Bellboy? Bellboy?

Ali:

Blue: Oh, hi. I, I'm Blue, I— Do you need any room service?

Austin:

Gabby: I'm sorry that you're not feeling good, but, yeah, what I need is—

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: —sort of the biggest room service, I need to get out of this room and into outside. So, and I think the receptionist there was just looking for the key for outside.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And do you have fig newtons?

Austin:

Gabby: [sighs]

Ali:

Blue: I could get that for you.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Thank you.

Ali:

Blue: Um, do you want—

Austin:

Gabby: Can't get the key for outside but you can get him newtons?

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: Um, do you want like a sugar free fig newtons, do you want like a raspberry?

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] [scoffs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Full sugar or whatever's closer.

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] My friends said don't go to that hotel, make sure you get checked in to the right hotel early. I thought, no big deal, here we are. Why do they even call 'em fig newtons? Who the hell is Newton anyway?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] 'Cause they're from Massachusetts.

Austin:

Gabby: Then why aren't they called Newton's figs?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Because Newton is the town. It's fig... It's fig town. It's fig town, MA.

Austin:

Gabby: Is this true? Is this... Is this real?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I mean, they don't grow figs there but they make fig newtons there. Nabisco. It's a fig— Nabisco is headquartered in Massachusetts, you don't know this?

Austin:

Gabby: Not really my field. You work for them? Is this... Is this part of the spiel?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No!

Austin:

Gabby: Is this part of your business retreat?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No! I just buy them at the supermarket.

Austin:

Gabby: Well, they—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: If it's got fig newtons, it is a super market. That's what I say.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Closing my eyes slowly.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Putting my— You know the thing where you go from like, dragging your luggage behind you to like setting them upright to be like, "Well. Here we are." I do that.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Has everyone had a chance to act on their...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Flashback? Keith, I know you mentioned yours, but I don't know if you...

Keith: Um. I'm sort of in the— I consider myself in the aftermath of having been publicly embarrassed in front of my whole job? And so that was sort of— Hitting that, describing that was sort of good enough for me.

Ali: Sure, sure sure sure sure. Okay. Okay.

Keith: Oh, we can have a group of my coworkers, um— The thing was I witnessed an event I lived through but something's wrong. This was obviously not the hotel that that had actually taken place in?

Austin: Ah, okay.

Keith: Took place in another hotel. Not the haunted Hotel California hotel?

Ali: Sure.

Keith: But we do see— We see, as this conversation's happening, we do see like, groups of coworkers of mine filing out and just laughing at me.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: I wave to them, and go like:

Gabby: Are any— Do any of you know how to— If there's another exit? To this hotel?

Jack:

Coworker 1: No. No. Going bye.

Keith:

Coworker 2: Don't ask Indoor Jim!

Jack:

Coworker 1: That guy's a loser.

Keith:

Coworker 2: And he's always indoors, he's never, he doesn't know how to get out of doors.

Jack:

Coworker 1: That guy got forty five minutes of good material just from Indoor Jim.

Austin:

Gabby: Uh. Great. Indoor Jim. This is... This is fantastic.

Austin: Sits back down.

Keith: Uh, the chat's saying they can't see the Roll20 screen. Nothing's happening on it right now anyway, but.

Austin: [crosstalk] Nothing's happening on that but yeah, I'll pull it back, but.

Ali: Um, okay, yeah. So... Decide as a group how the hotel removes you from the flashback: abruptly or gradually? Do you bring back any— Do you bring— Do you bring anything back [laughs] to your time with you, and does the hotel let you do that? Think individually about what you've learned from your time in the past.

Keith: Um, I'm gonna bring back the like, the flier for this like corporate stand-up comedian that you get on your way in.

Austin: [quietly] Oh my god.

Keith: Not the sort of thing that any comedian would have unless they were being paid at a corporate retreat.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: And so you just got this thing being like, "This guy comedy! Go to [www dot whatever dot com](http://www.whatever.com) and—"

Austin: Dot this guy comedy. Dot com.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Yeah, this guy comedy dot—

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Keith: Yeah. Um. You know, maybe— Or— You... How did you watch videos before YouTube? Oh, you downloaded them right from the person's website, that's how you do it.

Austin: Real media player.

Ali: Yeah, nice flash player.

Austin: Flash player, yeah, just built right in. Uh, I have the— I have a— If it lets me take it, I have the schedule for the train car, for the—

Jack: Oh, the cable car.

Austin: The cable cars, yeah. And I think the... Can I detail here which is like, there is a clap of thunder and some rain. And I like look outside when that happens and it's become just like a downpour day, and it was like bright and sunny five minutes ago when I was looking out the window, and now I don't see the cable car station and I'm just like:

Gabby: What? [sighs]

Austin: And I look—just go back to looking at the schedule to see when the next cable car will arrive. But of course this is now an ancient schedule so. [laughs] Who knows, is the answer.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: It's like getting a bus timetable from fourteen years ago.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Keith: The next bus comes at last decade.

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: I gotta get a cab.

Austin: What's Blue's thing?

Ali: Yeah, I was thinking— I was wondering, I was kinda twisted up on the gradually or abruptly thing. And I think that for Blue at least it happens abruptly. I think that he um... He's like continuing having the conversation with this woman in like,

Blue: I haven't seen you for a little bit! You're, you know, are you her cousin?

Ali: And then like, you know. It's just— [laughs] In the presence of the scene and with the customers nearby you can't really engage on the like, level that you'd want to with someone who you're meeting who's a different version of them?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: And I, you know, I think she's like refusing to leave the desk and then he's like:

Blue: No, just you know, come in the back, let's just talk for a second real quick.

Ali: And then I think that when they go back there, um, she like... She like melts like a Bloodbourne boss? [laughs]

Austin: Sure.

Jack: Oh, wow.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Ali: You know when you defeat someone in Bloodbourne and they just sort of, you know.

Austin: I do.

Ali: Burst into dust?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um. I think that's what happens.

Austin: Damn. RIP to her.

Ali: [laughs] RIP to her.

Austin: [laughs] It has yet to be seen if I am different or not. We'll see.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: No promises. Does that bring us to Bad Gateway to make a game? Since we— Since both uh, or since all of us—Blue, Jim, and I were all in this last one.

Jack: Yeah. Um, I would like to conduct an investigation.

Austin: Oooh, yeah.

Jack: I would like to play Is There Something I Should Know. It's just a snap cut. Um, I like this idea that like—

Austin: [crosstalk] Wait. Can you read the, what the game is for people who don't have the book in front of them?

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, yeah. Yes. Good point. Is There Something I Should Know, or An Investigation. Set-up: set the scene with your chosen partner. Decide which part of the hotel you're in, and what incident, anomaly, or other mystery you're investigating. Other players may join freely if it makes sense for their characters to be there. What stakes do you have in the case? What lengths will you go to in order to find answers? What are you hiding from each other? During the game, anyone may ask for details of the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

Conducting the investigation: take turns clockwise around the table. On your turn, post an investigative question to the person to your right and flip a coin. On heads, their answer should be beneficial, informative, or something you were hoping for. On tails, their answer should be vague, unhelpful, or something you were hoping against.

Ending the investigation: keep a tally of how many coin flips have come up heads and how many come up tails. After five questions have been posed, check the tally and decide together on the resolution. If more coins have come up heads, the case has a satisfying answer. Maybe you find the scraps of information you were looking for, or confront the culprit. Maybe you find the object you lost or the identity of the figure who appeared in your room late at night. If more coins have come up tails, the case is still shrouded in uncertainty. Maybe you know the who, but not the why and how of it all, or you don't have enough evidence to draw a solid conclusion. Maybe the hotel itself conceals answers from you, or you become otherwise engaged.

So, we could play this as a montage.

Austin: Mmhm.

Jack: As we've all returned to our various rooms, if people are up for that. And we could go around asking questions of each other. I assume people could also go and visit each other's rooms to investigate or narrate in that way, but I think where we begin is that there is a snap cut of the clock on the wall in the lobby, from like some massive amount of time. You know like day to night or something, and the lighting set-up in the lobby doesn't change at all. It's just like the clock is basically the only thing that moves.

And then you know, a, a... A sort of a jagged piece of pipe just bursts through the door on the left-hand side of the otherwise empty lobby. I don't know, maybe— I've been imagining it as empty because otherwise I think Bad Gateway would probably start chasing the people inside? But you tell me if it's empty or not when Bad Gateway breaks the door and comes lumbering into the lobby.

Austin: I think that... I think that Gabby is in a phone booth. Like a closed, like a door closed phone—you know what I mean, phone booth? Not a bright silver and glass one, but one that's like... You know how hotel lobbies sometimes have little personal phone booths that you can close a door on and like sit down in?

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Professional?

Austin: Like a, yeah.

Jack: Professional conversations.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. So I think I'm in one of those, calling—trying to call to say I'm running late and won't make it for this flight and can I meet up in Albuquerque with the next flight 'cause I'm having an issue with the hotel I'm staying in. And so I don't— I don't see this happen. The camera sees me go in and place the—do the rotary phone thing, the like ts-ts-ts-ts-click, ts-ts-ts-ts-click, ts-ts-ts-ts, and then—

Jack: Put in some quarters.

Austin: And then— Right, and then in the background [laughing] this pipe just comes in through the door and I'm like on the phone not hearing it, looking the opposite direction. So I'm still technically in the lobby because I don't have a room to go back to at this point, but I don't see this happen and maybe Bad Gateway can't see me 'cause I'm in this, this...

Jack: Yeah, hasn't noticed yet I don't think, but I'm gonna ask some investigative questions so I guess we'll see. Bad Gateway is very tall, is very big. I sort of picture them as just like, the classic um... God, what's his name? Is his name Michael Meyers? From...? From, uh—

Austin: From Halloween?

Keith: From Austin Powers?

Jack: From Austin Powers.

Austin: From Austin Powers.

Jack: The same name as the guy from Austin Powers?

Keith: Yup.

Austin: That is correct. Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Ah, wow, great.

Ali: No relation.

Austin: Are we sure?

Jack: I'm thinking— Ohhh.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Haircut... You know?

Jack: Um, burned boiler suit from the furnace. Massive, broad shoulders. Work boots. Some sort of mask, like a dark mask over its face. It has two small little stubby little curling horns? And it's carrying a pipe. And it comes lumbering into the lobby and starts looking around. So I'm going to ask a question of the person to my right, who is... Keith. I think.

Austin: Mmhm.

Keith: Sorry, what is it that you're investigating? Or are we about to find out?

Austin: We're about to find out. We're about to get this question.

Jack: Bad Gateway fixates its attention on one specific piece of information, detail of the room, or object, trying to learn as much as it can from it. What does it have to tell it?

Austin: You then flip a coin, right?

Jack: I suppose we do, yeah.

Austin: On your turn—

Jack: We ask the question, and then flip a coin.

Keith: And then flip a coin.

Austin: 'Cause that determines whether or not the answer...

Keith: And then I know if it's heads, I answer good.

Austin: Right. [laughs]

Keith: Okay. Correct.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Let's say roll a 1d2, a one is a heads, a two is a tails. [pause] That's a heads!

Jack: Oooh, that's a heads. This is useful information to the demon.

Keith: What...does the demon need— What is useful to it?

Jack: That's a good question.

Keith: Right.

Jack: The demon wants to escape.

Keith: You wanna escape the hotel.

Jack: More than anything else. And it views any of the inhabitants of the hotel as possible ways to sort of free it from its prison?

Keith: Okay. Am I— And— I am physically here as Jim. Jim is in the lobby.

[1:15:00]

Austin: I thought you were not.

Jack: Oh my god! Are you?

Austin: Oh, you are. Okay.

Keith: Oh, okay. Well.

[Jack laughs]

Keith: Um. There you go. You see Jim.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

Keith: I think that I am... Um. Oh, I know. I have two copies of the same book. Like, a mass market paperback, like, you know, bargain bin novel. I have two copies of the same one, but one is kind of... One is kind of tattered? And I'm in the desk at the lobby— They have like a little work area in the lobby? And I am copying all of my highlights and liner notes from my old copy to my new copy. And, uh, the thing that this tells you is that—and Jim does not, maybe even looks at you and sort of looks back at the books to be like, "Forget about that."

[Ali, Austin, and Jack laugh]

Keith: "Push it out." Jim is not a threat to you. Jim is not afraid to you—afraid of you. But only because Jim doesn't—fundamentally doesn't understand what he's seeing.

Jack: Mmhm. [laughs] Okay. Uh, yeah, I think you know Bad Gateway's immediate response is just sort of like, some fury turns in its chest and it reaches out with one hand and just crushes a vase that is on a— I'm looking at this excellent picture of the Roll20.

Austin: Yeah, it's a good one.

Jack: You know, crushes some sort of vase. No, I tell you what it is. It reaches out and it grabs the stem of one of those ferns [laughs] in one of those pots. And in one motion pulls upwards, pulling all the leaves off this fern, threateningly and lets them fall to the floor. It's not clear whether it's trying to intimidate Jim in this moment or whether that a deep anger is possessing it and it is destroying...

Keith: [crosstalk] Well, I can tell you how he reacts to this, which is how he might react if uh... It's sort of like, imagine if someone, some human had walked in and Jim had gone like, "Well that's a bit of a rough character, better continue to not look."

[Jack and Keith laugh]

Jack: Um, and then play passes to the next person, right?

Austin: It does, I don't understand... I don't quite under—

Jack: [crosstalk] Yeah, it turns clockwise around the table.

Austin: Something I don't understand about this game. About this mini-game. Which is...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: You go around the table, everyone's asking a question, you're posing a question to the person to your right and flipping a coin. On heads, it's beneficial for you, presumably. On tails, it's vague, unhelpful, or something you are against. And then at the end you tally up those totals?

Jack: This also confused me.

Austin: And you say, "Ah!" Well, I think part of this is, we did not do the thing at the top of this game, which is decide what you're investigating. Decide which part of the hotel—

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, decide what's next specifically.

Keith: [crosstalk] I did—

Austin: Yes.

Keith: I did ask what...

Austin: Well it sounded to me like the thing that's being investigated is where can... Where can Bad Gateway get out or get people to eat? Question mark?

Jack: Well, nobody said anything about eating, Austin.

Austin: Kill.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Hurt. Harm.

Jack: Um.

Austin: And so I don't want positive. I don't want positive coins towards that end.

Keith: No.

Austin: I guess I do want— I guess I want positive coins to get out.

Jack: [crosstalk] On some level, Bad Gateway has now— Yeah, that's true, but Bad Gateway has actually gotten something here that it didn't have before, which is that there is this extremely blithe weirdo copying pages.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: That is good news for the monster, I assume.

Austin: Uh-huh. So I don't know how—

Jack: But you—

Austin: —we interce— I don't know how play continues. I don't know what the... At this point—

Keith: Someone else ask a question, right, is that the thing?

Austin: Well, is— Okay, but my point here is, let's say it goes between all of us and we end up with a good outcome. Does that mean that Bad Gateway gets what it wants?

Jack: [laughing] The monster just—

Austin: Even though the rest of us have also gotten what we want through positive outcomes on the way?

Jack: I mean at that point, right—

Austin: [crosstalk] Or, do we excuse—

Jack: It can be an escalation, right, we can start movi— We can crank up the danger in the hotel and—

Austin: I'm just saying, I might excuse myself from investigating anything, because I don't know... I don't know that Gabby's part of this scene in that way. Not every character needs to be part of every scene, presumably. Right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: Gabby is on the phone right now and—

Keith: I sort of gaffed Jim's way into this scene by...

Austin: [laughing] Right.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Which is very Jim.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Though I will say, I guess the thing is if part of what Bad Gateway wants is a way out, Gabby is clearly aligned with it in that way at least. But that's a very unspoken [laughs] alignment, let's say. In any case, if we do rotate, it would be Jim's turn, right? Jim... I guess we have two different orders here. We have the bottom order and we have the card order and that's a little confusing.

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, I've been reading the bottom order.

Austin: Me too. Let's stick with that, so, which means it would be—

Keith: Bottom order?

Austin: Keith's turn.

Jack: Who we know is in the scene.

Austin: Yes. Correct

Keith: Who is here, definitely.

Jack: Who is going, "Oooh, I'm not gonna mess with that rascal."

Keith: [crosstalk] My question is, are we all investigati— We're all investigating...

Austin: This is what I'm saying, yeah.

Keith: I'm not— I don't have to be—

Jack: This is why I pitched a montage, right?

Keith: Right, okay, so we're all doing our own little thing.

Austin: Then how are we gonna resolve the outcome? Like I just wanna know this so I know what the stakes are when scenes get brought up.

Keith: So my— I'll pitch you what, where I was going with this which is that I was going to ask, uh, I was gonna ask Blue if... So my question here—

Austin: Blue is also here.

Keith: Yeah. I picked the brain of one of my investigative partners.

Austin: [crosstalk] You put Blue in this monster scene.

Keith: Hoping they might have picked up on something that I—

[Ali laughs]

Keith: That I haven't.

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh, Jim is great!

Keith: Do they have any observations to share with me? So, so I was gonna be like, Blue, there's th— [laughs]

Austin: Just to be clear— Wait, really quick.

Jack: Oh!

Austin: Ali, you're good with Blue being in this scene? Because we did not establish that previously. There is a monster in this room.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Who is looking to kill people?

[Ali laughs]

Austin: So I want— That should be an active choice we make. We should not— We should not nominate other player characters to be in the scene.

Ali: Yeah, I, I don't mind being in the scene. When I thought that this was gonna be... When Jack described it at the top of being like, everyone in their own room, and then we each ask a question of a different player, I was, I know where Blue would have been.

Austin: Mmhm.

Ali: But like—

Keith: I can go find you. I don't think I have to stay in this room.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: But then this brings up Austin's problem, right?

Ali: Which we, you wouldn't be in the scene anymore.

Jack: No, Austin's problem is... We get to the end of this— Let's say we've all succeeded.

Austin: Right. Then, who does Bad Gateway kill? Because Bad Gateway wants to kill someone. Bad Gateway has set out... The— In— My suggestion's that we just play this as a Bad Gateway scene, and see how the coins go, to determine...

Keith: So this one... Here's I think where we went wrong. Set the scene with your chosen partner.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Decide which part of the hotel you're in and what incident. We only did one of those three things.

Austin: [crosstalk] What incident, anomaly, or mystery you're investigating. No, we did—

Keith: We didn't set a chosen partner or—

Austin: Correct.

Keith: Describe which part of the hotel we're in. Or, sorry—

Austin: We're in the lobby.

Keith: Describe what the incident or anomaly we're investigating.

Austin: The mystery is where can I kill people or how do I get out. So we did both of those. It's just that I think this game is set-up for people who are aligned to...

Keith: Yeah. Yes.

Austin: Investigate a shared thing, instead of one of them wanting to eat— I keep saying eat people. I don't know why. You know why? It's 'cause I picture the furnace's mouth wide open, waiting for fuel to go into it, and associate that with Bad Gateway, even though— And also gateway is like, in my mind is—

Jack: Ah, I see what you're doing here, Austin.

Austin: [crosstalk] You know what I mean?

Jack: You're conflating hell with its demons.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Correct. That's correct. I'm con— Well, and you have "gateway" right in your name, so I'm imagining you as a sort of gateway to hell.

Keith: A mouth. A big mouth.

Austin: A mouth. A big mouth. Yeah, so that's the problem.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: In any case—

Keith: Yes. So, the thing is that this scene has no chosen partner and so there's no multiple people investigating. There's only Bad Gateway.

Austin: [crosstalk] Well, we could all be partners. We, the players, can be partners to Bad Gateway's investigation.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? Even if we're not aligned on the— Or, we can read this broadly and we could all be investigating a way out together.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Even though it's not—

Jack: [crosstalk] That's what I was, yeah.

Austin: —literally together, right?

Jack: That's kind of I think where my brain was going, right? Which is that like everybody here has a shared goal. It's just that—

Austin: I don't— Does Blue have that goal? Does Blue wanna get out?

Jack: Oh, yeah, good point.

Austin: Also does Jim want to get out?

Jack: [crosstalk] So maybe it's the escapees. [laughs] Does Jim know he's trapped?

Keith: No.

Austin: No.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: So in fact, maybe this is...

Keith: Jim is on vacation.

Jack: Oh, Austin, this might actually work, because you're in the phone booth, right?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. What's that mean? Why's that work?

Jack: 'Cause we are both actively trying to...

Austin: Right. So yeah, actually maybe this is a Gabby and Bad Gateway scene in which both of us like, we gotta get the fuck outta here. [laughs] Um, but I— So what is the next step, is my question.

Jack: Or we just wipe this completely. We just start again from—

Austin: No, I like the scene we did. I like that so much, I don't wanna lose that. I just wanna make sure I know what the out— Not what the outcome will be.

Jack: [crosstalk] Okay, I'm just making sure that's on the table.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Um, alright, let's figure this out.

Keith: Well, it does, even if we wipe it, it exists as the podcast.

Austin: This is true. This is true.

Keith: It still— It could have still happened and not have been part of the investigation. It could've just been a scene.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: If it ends up being easier to just start again.

Jack: [crosstalk] Uh, you could have an opportunity here to slip out of the phone booth, Austin, if you want to specifically ask a question—

Austin: From this investigative list.

Jack: Elsewhere on the list.

Austin: Towards the goal...

Jack: That we can answer—

Austin: Towards the mystery we're investigating is—

Jack: Of escape. The shared—yeah.

Austin: Escape. Okay. I will do that.

Jack: Or find a point of leverage against the hotel, right?

Keith: Sorry Jack, real quick again can you remind me what it looks like? What Bad Gate looks like?

Jack: Yeah, it is an enormous— It looks like Mike Meyers but from Halloween. It's an enormous humanoid masculine figure in a burned boiler suit carrying a length of sharp pipe, wearing some sort of dark mask over its face.

Keith: 'Kay.

Austin: From the back you just look like a big worker. Like a big boiler room worker.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Like if I open the telephone booth door and looked over at you I'd just be like, "There's a big guy talking to Indoor Jim."

Jack: Yeah, absolutely.

Austin: That's what I would assume. Okay.

Keith: Just Jim's fine.

Austin: Sure. That's not what they called you. Um, that's not what it says here on your name card. [laughs] Do you have a name tag on that says "Jim Taylor" but someone's written "Indoor" on it?

[Keith laughs]

Jack: Oh, it's from the comedy retreat as well. It's the—

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, everyone has their nicknames on their name tags for the retreat. That's, yeah.

Austin: Alright, let me do an easy one. So I'm on the phone and I hang up and I'm frustrated because I couldn't get in contact with anyone who knew me or had my employee number on hand. I gave them my employee number, which is 226, just like my room number. Don't ask why that number is so low for the number of employees at an airline or why it happened to be the same number as my room number. I haven't thought about that yet, but I'm about to because I meditate on all the clues we've already found, hoping to find connections or inconsistencies. Does anything stand out? So, is there anything about the hotel that stands out. One is heads, two is tails. That's a two. Tails is bad. I guess I'm asking this to my person on my right, which is Ali. Uh...

Ali: I was muted to cough, sorry.

Austin: No worries.

Ali: What was the question?

Austin: It was do I... Have I found any c— I've mediated through everything I remember about staying here so far, and looking out and seeing this weird guy— I guess I haven't done that yet, I'm still in the booth. And I also called my airline to be like, "Hey. What's— I'm gonna be late," and they were like, "We don't know who you are. We don't— You're not in our records," basically. And so now I'm trying to figure out if there are any clues or connections or inconsistencies about this hotel in my time staying here. I flipped tails, which means the case is still shrouded in uncertainty. Maybe I know the who but not the why or the how of it all, or I don't have enough evidence to draw a solid conclusion. I should say that's the end. So tails is, sorry. Vague, unhelpful, or something I was hoping against, is what you need to give me. When I think over the clues of this situation, what is something vague, unhelpful, or hoping—something I was hoping against?

Ali: Um, sure. Yeah. I think it occurs to you that when you had checked in you had like, got there really late. It was like, you came into the room and there was like a newspaper sitting on your desk. And it was like, yadda yadda yadda, whatever. And then [laughs] the next morning there was a newspaper outside of your door and it was the same exact newspaper but the— The date was exactly the same, but the like, articles and shit were different.

Austin: Huh. Okay. But the date was the same.

Ali: Mmhm.

Austin: Okay. Interesting. I think it's back to Gateway? Again, unless someone else is trying to solve "How do I get out of here?" [laughing] Which, I don't know, maybe Jim is now, in this situation, feeling different, I don't know.

Keith: How to get out of the hotel because of there's a monster now?

Austin: That was... Potentially.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Um... [pause] Um... [pause] No.

Austin: Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: I dabble in strange and mystical forces in my search for answers. What price do I pay, and what do I learn? I'm gonna narrate the describing the dabbling? And then I'll roll the die. Which is, Bad Gateway turns and sees Gabby in the phone booth, and then looks back at Indoor Jim Taylor, who is I assume still copying from one book to the other.

Keith: Nervously, now, though.

Jack: Nervously now. And with a shrug that is you know one part frustration and one part confusion, turns and stoops and steps into the fireplace. And the fire instantly you know, catches them and they go up in smoke, instantly, up into the chimneys of the hotel. They are scouting about in their horrid smoke form, up in and around the chimneys. So I'm gonna roll a 1d6 to figure out what price do I pay and what do I learn about potential escapes.

Austin: That's another two.

Jack: Oh shit, that did not go well for the monster.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, another two.

[1:30:00]

Austin: Which is again, Keith, vague, unhelpful, or something you were hoping a—
Something that it, Bad Gateway—

Jack: [crosstalk] Oh shit, send me through an air purifier!

Austin: —was hoping against.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Um. Jack, could you repeat the exact thing you were looking for in that investigation?
From that question? The after dabbling?

Jack: Having gone into my horrid smoke form, which is one of Bad Gateway's horrid
monster powers, I am basically like, I guess probing the inside of the hotel's chimneys and
vents and networks for a weakness or an escape. And it does not go well. And I pay a price
for it.

Keith: Okay, so the— Okay, so the bad resu— The thing that you didn't want, um...is that—
Something you were hoping against that happens is the... The passageways of the hotel,
something about them makes you unable to hold that smoke form the way that you're used
to being able to do.

Jack: [laughs] Just a— This is, bang and a seven foot nine person appears in one of the
vents.

[Austin and Keith laugh]

Keith: Just crash through the ceiling.

Jack: Strangled cry.

Austin: Yeah. Into a room, yeah.

Jack: Coughing.

Keith: I'm freely— Can I freely join? I would like to freely join.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Wait, let me— Can I just please do this punchline really quick?

Keith: Yeah. Sure.

Austin: And then you can have the next turn, I'm begging you?

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I have, where is it here... Is it this one? Is this the one that's...? Uh, yeah, it's, I pick the brain of my investigative partners, hoping they might have picked up something I haven't. Do they have any observations to share with me? I just open the phone booth, walk back in the lobby, and go:

Gabby: Anything happen while I was making that call, Jim?

[Jack laughs]

Austin: [laughs] That's it. That's the whole of—

[Ali, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Jack: The chat— The chat has also pointed out that I rolled a 1d6 just on instinct.

Austin: Oh my god, and you still rolled a two? [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Exactly?

Jack: An exact failure.

Austin: I still think that that's a failure, because that's—

Keith: 'Cause it'd be one, two, three.

Austin: It'd be one, two, three—

Jack: I specifically rolled a two.

Austin: —Or four, five, six, right? Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Oh wait, that would be a success then, wouldn't it? 'Cause it would be in the front half of one, two, three.

Ali: No...

Keith: Okay, this has— I think this is maybe a re-roll scenario.

Austin: You think that it's—

Ali: No, it's—

Jack: I don't wanna re-roll.

Ali: It's odds are tail—heads.

Jack: Thank you, Ali.

Austin: Ah, I see.

Ali: Evens are tails.

Austin: There you go. Good call.

Keith: Okay, but I—

Ali: It's easy to do.

Keith: Okay. But I think we've got— I think we've— 'Cause I would never do it that way, so I think there's at least plausible grounds for a re-roll.

Austin: If Jack wants to.

Jack: I don't want to re-roll.

Keith: [crosstalk] I would never say, one, three, and five—

Jack: I just fell through a vent in the statue room upstairs. [laughs] Bad Gateway got up, mostly out of shock, punched the head of one of the statues in the statue room.

Austin: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Jack: And is now looking around itself with some confusion.

Keith: Do you sound like a thwomp? I feel like you sound like a thwomp.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: What does a thwomp sound like?

Keith: [grunts]

Jack: One more time?

Keith: [grunts]

Jack: God, he really can make any sound.

Austin: Any sound, yeah.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Jack: By the way, I sound like rattling machinery.

Austin: I rolled 1d2 and got a two. Jim, can you— [laughing] I've asked you if anything interesting has happened while I was on the phone, and now I need vague, unhelpful, or something I was hoping against. Also I'm guessing Keith can answer this even though Ali's to my right, because I feel like this is a direct Jim one?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Um. I was doing my book.

Austin:

Gabby: You were chewing your book?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Doing! Doing my book. I was just doing my book.

Austin:

Gabby: Why does it sound like I caught you with a hand in the cookie jar, Jim? What book were you doing? What was the book, Jim?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Um. Uh, uh. Solved Mysteries of the 19th century.

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah, well. 19th cen— I was gonna ask if there were clues about this one in there, but I guess not.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Nope.

Austin:

Gabby: Well. Crap.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's good, I— Do you want my old copy?

Austin:

Gabby: You got two copies?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: When I'm done transferring my notes I can give you my old copy. Most of the... Most of it's— It's intact, the pages are all there. It's just old.

Austin:

Gabby: You bought another copy of the book to write your notes in. The same notes.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Mhm. Yeah. It's a relaxing way to reread a book.

Austin: I think the first— You say that, she does the thing of like you know, putting her lower lip out to consider like, hm.

Gabby: You know what, that does sound pretty relaxing. Yeah, I'll take a copy when you're done.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Keith: Um, I would like to freely—

Austin: Yes.

Keith: To freely join. Uh, and I would like to find uh, Blue Hour and talk to him about um...the scary guest.

Ali: [laughs] Sure.

Austin: What is the... Is it basically the same question of...?

Keith: I'm...

Austin: I corner— Is this I corner someone who I think knows more than what they're saying about the case? Is it, uh... I question a witness, fishing for details they remember?

Keith: Um... I, god, I had picked it out and I thought I had high-lit it, but I lost my highlight of it. Uh, what was the first one? That one seems fine.

Austin: I corner someone who I think knows more than they're saying about the case. Do they spill anything useful?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Indoor Jim: And so I just would feel...I didn't— This is new. I don't mean any offense, but I was for a brief moment not exactly feeling...safe. And if maybe I could transfer my reservation to next week, come back, or get a refund for the remainder of my stay? I don't— I don't want— You don't have to tell— You don't have to bring up anything to anybody.

Austin: Where is this happening? Where is this conversation happening? Where do you find—

Keith: Wherever Blue Hour might be hanging out. I guess the kitchen, right? Oh, you said— Ali, you said you had somewhere where you thought you would be.

Ali: Yeah, I guess that this works fine as a bridge because I was thinking that Blue Hour would have went to go into the back to find those fig newtons, and is in like a—

Keith: From the flashback? [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Good.

Ali: Well, you know. You go into the back room, you see something terrifying.

Keith: [crosstalk] [laughing] Three years ago you—

Ali: [laughs] Well you came out of the flashback. And you see something terrifying and then you just think to yourself, "Okay, I gotta find those fig newtons." Walking into like one of those stockrooms of like, that looks like one of those like— Have you seen those TikToks where it's like, come [laughs] organize my kitchen with me."

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And it's like the most terrify— Well, it's not terrifying, it's great to have that.

Austin: Mmhm, I get it.

Ali: But just like drawers of snacks and shit like that. Blue comes back to the lobby.

Keith: It's always emptying— I've seen these. It's always emptying a container into another container. Like, it's always— It's already—always something already,—that's already put away.

Austin: I poked fun at these— I'm gonna say this, I poked fun of these on a Waypoint radio and got some emails from parents being like, "Don't make fun of this. This is the only way I get through my fucking week."

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I was like, "Alright. I'll back the fuck off."

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Fair enough.

Ali: I understand that you'd need your fruit rollups in a specific place, and like you buy them in bulk and yadda yadda yadda, it's just...a version of having a—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: A stock that is terrifying to me for some reason.

Austin: I— People wrote that in and I was like, this is why I'm never having kids. I can't live that way.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: I'll— Hey, I'll say this, I was a kid and that's not how I lived either.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, different times.

[Jack laughs]

Ali: Okay. Wait, we'll talk about this after class 'cause I just remember like—

Austin: You said it again. You said "after class."

Keith: [crosstalk] "After class"?

Austin: Again.

Ali: Yeah, what's wrong? [laughs]

Austin: [laughing] We're not in class!

Ali: But it's a fucking—

Austin: We own this business!

[Keith laughs]

Jack: It's an idiom!

[Keith and Ali laugh]

Ali: It's a way of being like we'll talk about this later.

Jack: When we say, "I don't want to talk—" When we say "shop talk," we're not in a shop.

Ali: Exactly. See? Um. Anyway, Blue reenters the lobby.

Keith: But it would be talk about work that also happens in a shop.

Jack: [laughing] Blue, what are you doing in the lobby?

Austin: I just don't think we should characterize play as classwork, that's all.

Ali: To, um... Those like travel size fig newtons thing. You know when you get it and it's like a normal fig newton, it's like a two and a half inch long and there's two of them.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, there's two on each side. There's two by two things.

Jack: Fuck those things.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: That is one— It's one fig newton less than the minimum amount of fig newtons that you would want.

Ali: Mmhm. It's like four, four and ha— Anyway, um.

Blue: I, um, I don't handle reservations.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] I know but I can't find any— I have not been able to find anybody else that works here. And... Which is fine, I'm sure they're very busy, but I do, um... I do feel bad about saying it, but I am scare— I am not... I don't—I do not like it insi... So I would like to not have it here.

Ali:

Blue: Again, that's not really something that I can control.

Austin: Uh, we should roll a die to see if that's actually true.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah. 1d2.

Austin: Wait, Keith should roll that. It's Keith's thing.

Ali: [laughs] Sure.

Keith: Sorry I'm just trying to find Roll20.

Austin: We could keep this fail, this failure, but.

Ali: [quietly] No.

Austin: I feel like we should let Keith...

Ali: Luck of the draw, yeah.

Keith: One!

Ali: [gasps]

Jack: Oh!

Keith: Maybe the only one. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: The first one was a one. The first one was a success.

Keith: [crosstalk] Okay, yeah.

Ali: Okay. Um. Oh, now I have to be...

Austin: Yeah, this is why I was like we gotta roll that.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: 'Cause now you have to be helpful.

Ali: I was ready to play irreverent about safety, but here we are. [laughs] Um... I think Blue lowers their voice and is like:

Blue: Listen. I haven't been able to find any other staff members either.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's—

Ali:

Blue: And I don't know—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] That's extremely irresponsible.

Ali:

Blue: I—I get that you're scared, and I think that you should be.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] *What?*

[Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I...

Jack: Oh, this is the worst thing to hear.

Keith: [laughs]

Indoor Jim: Can you not— I was just, I was, I thought that I was [whispering] being rude.

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: I mean, no. Like, there's something fucked up happening. You know that woman who was here like ten minutes ago?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No, I don't know her.

Ali:

Blue: Well, I did. And— But I didn't know *her*, and now she's gone. She just...faded. So. Whatever you have going on that you're afraid of, I fucking get it. But I can't help you.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] F-A-T-E-D?

Ali:

Blue: Wait, excuse me?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: F-A-T-E-D? Fated?

Ali:

Blue: Fade, like she fuckin', she burst into light, bro.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [offended] Excuse me.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali:

Blue: I'm not talking to like a customer anymore.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Excuse me?

Ali:

Blue: I'm saying—

[Austin laughs]

Ali:

Blue: If you wanna go back to your room, if you want apple cider I can get it—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] I would like to go back to my room in my home, please.

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: I can't help you, buddy, I don't deal with reservations.

[Jack laughs]

Ali:

Blue: You want a beer?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] No, I don't. I'm trying to not— I'm—

Ali:

Blue: Why are you whispering?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: —on vacation and I guess— [shouting] 'Cause I'm scared! I'm scared of the thing that I saw and I pretended not to see it and it worked but I don't know if it will work two times!

[Ali laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yes I will have a beer, fine. [pause] I'm sorry, yes. Thank you.

Ali:

Blue: Great, yeah. I don't know. Stick to groups?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [sighs] There is no— There's like four people that I— I haven't seen— One of them is— One of the four scared me, and now I'm... I mean I thought that I was just being rude! I thought I was being sort of uh, persnickety!

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: Let's back it up here. What was— What was scary?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's not supp— You're not supposed to be afraid of other people.

Ali:

Blue: Sure. What was scary?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: J— I— Tall, meat, breaking things. Extreme overwhelming presence?
Negative, sinister presence?

[Ali laughs]

Jack: A howl of fury from somewhere else in the hotel.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [shouts in fear]

Ali:

Blue: [sighs] I mean, you're describing a hotel guest, is really what you're doing, but I've given this—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I know, and I feel extremely bad about that, but it's true. All of the things I've said are true.

Ali:

Blue: I don't know what to tell ya. I've given you the—

Ali: [laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You can tell me if you have a— If you have a suitable light beer.

Ali:

Blue: Um, yeah, I— Would you like like a Heineken or a Corona?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Dealer's choice.

Ali:

Blue: Okay. I'll be right back.

Ali: End the scene.

Austin: Yeah. And that's three failures, two successes, so. What's that mean, Jack?

Jack: Aw, this— This ain't good. This, um... This is bad for everybody, right? This is, this is— [laughs] This is no progress made, and in fact I think that the hotel is probably gonna react. Rather than it just being a sort of an inert, no progress made, I think that... I think that we all see something very strange happen. Bad Gateway looks out of the window.

[1:45:00]

Jack: And we get like that reverse shot of the movie monster standing motionless in the window? Except when we look out, we can just see that the surrounding buildings and the forest surrounding the hotel, and the cable car are on fire. They're burning. And they're burning with the heat and intensity of hell, and Bad Gateway puts its gloved hand—its wearing fingerless gloves—it puts its gloved hand on the glass. And its cold to the touch.

There is the security and the presence of hell on the other side of these windows, but it's not there. I think elsewhere in the hotel— I, yeah, I suppose what do other people see that says to them that your situation has become worse? You are further from escaping than you thought you were?

Austin: Um, I— [sighs] So, I go to the front desk, I try to call a cab company using the hotel phone, I can't figure out how to dial out, I get frustrated. I put my bags back, you know, near the front desk again, I go to take a cigarette out of my cigarette case, I see a no smoking sign. I'm frustrated, it says smoking zone this way, I've never heard of a smoking zone before, but I follow the sign. I follow it to a courtyard— Which is the courtyard you're not supposed to go in?

Ali: The outside courtyard.

Austin: I go to the outside courtyard which is an inside— It's an inside— It's like a quad?

Jack: Oh, no.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? It's like a—

Jack: It's like Dominic Johan's liminal space? The photo that um—

Austin: No, it's not that bad. It is out—actually outside, it is not liter— It is not an inside outside. Like, it's a—

Ali: It's just a place with like a half fence, right? And like—

Austin: No no no, I'm saying imagine this hotel is a square?

Keith: [crosstalk] The middle of the square.

Austin: The interior of the square is like—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: An outdoor courtyard. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Ohhh.

Keith: My high school used to have one of these for eating lunch in.

Austin: Yeah, it's like an enclosed little park area, right, where there's probably a pool and some other stuff.

Ali: Yeah, maybe a gazebo.

Austin: That is not the smoking zone. It says smoking zone ahead, but I see the door to go outside, and I'm like if I go outside I can smoke. It says don't go through this door, I don't care. I open the door, I step outside, I light my cigarette— I go to light my cigarette, I realized I dropped my lighter just on the other side, on the inside of the door. I go to open the door to go back in, it will not open. I am locked in the outdoor courtyard, and I see the smoke from the fires all around the hotel rising up. Like, I have to look straight up in the sky 'cause the hotel is around me [laughs] now. And I've locked myself in the outdoor courtyard.

Ali: Wait, so the hotel is now burning?

Austin: No no no, the forests around.

Jack: Uh, the exterior, the forests around the hotel.

Ali: Ohhh, sure sure sure.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yikes.

Jack: What about Blue or Indoor Jim Taylor? How has it gotten worse? How are you further from escape? I suppose— Blue wasn't really— Blue wasn't investigating. This is really just for Jim, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: So I guess it's just me, yeah, so. [sighs] Um, let's see, further from escape. I'm trying to think of what Jim's means of escape were, which were pretty slim. Um, but... Um... Oh, okay, so I have lost... I have mysteriously misplaced— I have a padfolio.

[Jack laughs]

Keith: [laughs] I have a padfolio of contact— It was sort of my address book, and so it's a bunch of names— Oh, it's all the names of all of the different people that I know, and their numbers and emails and fax numbers and home numbers, and addresses and birthdays, and that has gone.

Austin: Huh.

Jack: Great.

Austin: Love to lose a connection to the outside world.

Keith: And it was my padfolio! It's leatherette!

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Um, okay, what is the next— What is the next game?

Austin: So this is a Jim scene.

Keith: Who's turn? Jim scene, okay.

Austin: Or a me scene? One of us. If either of us have ones. I think we—

Keith: I have a game. I wanted to try Who Can It Be Now or A Conversation Through A Door.

Austin: You wanna read those rules?

Keith: Yeah. Only you and your chosen partner can play. Choose which of you has shut yourself in a room of the hotel, and who is on the other side of the door. Ask your partner how you came to be in this situation together. What do you know about each other? What do you want from each other? During the game, anyone may ask for details of the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

Conducting the conversation: the person inside the room begins a conversation. First say why you distrust the person on the outside, and what you're most afraid might happen. Lead the other player through a series of four challenges. During the conversation, each player will gain coins representing the influence you currently have on each other.

And then ending the conversation: after four challenges, compare coins. If the person inside the room has more coins, the person on the outside gives up and leaves them be, or they are able to find an alternative way out of the room. If the person on the outside of the room has as many coins or more, choose one: too exhausted to keep up my barricade, you can open the door without resistance; you've convinced me to trust you, I open the door and let you in; you go quiet, luring me into a false sense of security, I leave the room not long after and stumble into you; you find a secret way into the room or the hotel itself shifts to allow you passage inside.

Austin: Who is your partner?

Keith: I feel Jim is a trapped inside the room kind of guy.

Austin: So you've gotten yourself trapped into a room in between asking for that beer and now?

Keith: Yes. Well, I think it's more like a forward— Yes, we're moving forward.

Austin: I see, there's like a time jump.

Keith: This is a time— Yeah, this is a time jump. And... I feel like I could distrust anyone right now. I feel like maybe, most— I feel like I maybe most trust Blue, because I could tell that even though he was unhelpful and scaring me, was being honest.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: [laughing] And uh, and I'm most distrust Bad Gateway.

Austin: Because of—

Keith: For obvious reasons.

Austin: For being a monster.

Jack: Because you think it's gonna kill you.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Right. Um, so I have— I can bring that to Bad Gateway as a hey, Jack, you've trapped me in my room and you're trying to convince me to let you in for some reason. But Austin, if you have a reason for Gabby to be wanting to get in—wanting to convince me to open the door.

Austin: The thing there would be, I would be in the outdoor courtyard, trying to convince you to open the door.

Keith: Oh, right.

Austin: And let me back in.

Keith: Oh, that also works! We can have—

Austin: Which could work.

Keith: That also could work.

Austin: Especially given the rule is don't open the door to the outdoor courtyard, right, and I've broken that rule clearly 'cause I'm here.

Keith: Right.

Austin: So we could do that. But I don't know—

Keith: Yeah, I like that.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So then I am asking— Wait, I lost the page. Alright, here we go. So there are challenges, right? Okay.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So I'm—

Keith: I'm setting challenges upon you.

Austin: I see. I am in... You are in— You distrust me. Okay. Yes.

Keith: I distrust you.

Austin: Yes. Gotcha.

Keith: I have— So the trick is that instead I have shut myself in a room, you have shut yourself out.

Austin: Right. But it's still the same.

Keith: But I am still the one—

Austin: You're the distruster, so we should keep it that way. Yeah, that makes sense.

Keith: Yes. Yeah, totally. So what do we know about each other? Very little. I know that your name is Gabby and I know that you're a flight attendant who's trying to get out of here.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: And I don't want anything from you except that— Except to basically I think, I wanna not be in the situation where I have to decide whether to let you in or not.

Austin: Right. And probably, do you want me to not be as mean to you as I've been?

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Uh, nnooo.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Okay! Great! [laughs] Well, that won't change.

Keith: I don't think it's— I— 'Cause I don't think that there's... I don't feel like Gabby is an atypical occurrence for Jim.

Austin: I see. Yeah.

Keith: I don't think Gabby has been—

Austin: Add Gabby to the list, yeah.

Keith: Right. Gabby—

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, right. So like, I think that for most people, Gabby is meaner than usual, and for Jim that's not quite true.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: Uh, okay.

Austin: What's interesting about these questions is they're going to suddenly, retroactively give us an interesting history, that we seem to have not given ourselves. And I think we can roll with it.

Keith: The challenges, you mean?

Austin: Yeah. You'll see. [laughs]

Keith: Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Go ahead and pick one of these.

Keith: So, okay. So I'm starting the conversation by uh...telling you why I distrust you. Presumably you said, "Can you let me in?"

Austin: Yeah. I'm like, knock knock knock knock. Knock knock knock knock knock.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: W— Hi. What are you doing out there?

Austin:

Gabby: Jim! Indoor— You're— Ha-ha. Ha, ho. Ah-ha-ha.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [laughs] I know, it's— It follows me.

Austin:

Gabby: Can you, uh— Can you, uh... Listen. I came out here for a quick smoke, and you can see right there on the ground there's my lighter.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Th— You're not supposed to go out there, is what it says.

Austin:

Gabby: I thought it was the smoking zone. I thought it was the smoking area.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Why? It looks like it is a smoking zone—

Austin:

Gabby: You would think—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: But it also looks like it's off limits.

Austin:

Gabby: That's true. And in fact, I think it should be, and I should be inside.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: It's gonna— It's raining. It's gonna rain, and—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Gosh.

Austin:

Gabby: [whispering] There are some weird sounds out here, Jim, and I—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Right.

Austin:

Gabby: And I would really like to be inside, so if you could just open the door, ha-ha, it'll be great.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I tell— I'm tell— So, I'm so sorry. Um, but—

Austin:

Gabby: You're sorry.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: There's been a lot of—

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm sorry because I've had s— I've had a bit of an unusual last half an hour, I'm a little shaken up, and I'm, if I'm— If I am coming off as— If I'm coming off as rude than I do apologize, but I can't... I don't know if it's—if I should open the door? I'm worried that that's going to end up being bad for me.

Austin:

Gabby: I see. It—won't. It won't, 'cause—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I don't know that? I don't know that—

Austin:

Gabby: Do we ever really know anything?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] I don't even know who you are.

Austin:

Gabby: I'm Gabby. Gabby DiDimenico.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Sure.

Austin:

Gabby: I fly Delta. You know.

Keith: Um. [laughs] Wow, these questions really—

Austin: I told you. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Um. [laughs] Um, well here's one. Let's start— We can be a little gentle.

Austin: Let's start easy, yeah.

Keith: We've met before.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: And you left me with a bad first impressive—impression. Throw. On heads, you make it up to me and gain two coins. On tails, you only dig yourself deeper and I gain two coins.

Austin: So should I roll 1d2, one is heads, two is tails?

Keith: Uh, y— Uh, yes.

Austin: Okay. Hey, that's one. Is one good? I make it up to you and I gain two coins. I go:

Gabby: You're right. You know what, you're right. I was a little agitated. I get agitated from time to time. I'm running late for the plane. In fact, I probably missed it now. I'm due in Albuquerque. I got a connecting flight, it's a whole thing.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You're doing Alb— What is doing Albuquerque?

Austin:

Gabby: I'm— Ah, sorry, I'm *due* in. My mom always said I talk too quick for my own good. I'm *due* in Albuquerque.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: This afternoon. Next aft— Well, I mean, what time it is anymore... Anyway, I'm sorry, and you know, once I started to get to know you, you do the book thing. It sounded very relaxing to me. I p— I think I got the wrong first impression o' ya. And I think I made the wrong first impression of me.

Different circumstances, Jim, I bet we woulda gotten along mag—magnificently. You know? Just a couple of peas in a pod. In another time, you and me, I could tell, we would— You got the business thing going, you do travel. I do travel. We coulda compared notes of the places we've been, the people we met, all that. The comedians, you, like— I like comedy, who doesn't like comedy?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I don't—love it. [sighs]

Austin:

Gabby: Okay, well, some people don't love comedy, what can you do.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Right.

Austin: Uh, I guess-

Keith: I—

Austin: Wait, who gains two coins on this?

Keith: You gain two coins.

Austin: Okay.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And I hear you. And I would love if this—if it were—if it was true. I know two things. One is that sometimes when some people need something from you they make apologies that they don't necessarily mean. And then the second thing is that I was talking to one of the employees of the hotel about transferring my stay to another date, and he said to me that something is wrong with the hotel and that I should be afraid and that I, I shouldn't—I should not trust— Maybe I should not trust people? And that I need to stay safe and stay alone.

And so I don't know you and I don't know if this is about you or not, but it seems like he thinks that there's something extremely dangerous in the hotel, and if maybe one thing is dangerous is already stuck outside, then I can sleep a little bit easier and I do need to get my rest, I'm trying— I'm on a vacation, I've been working a lot, and I just need to just have this week—

Austin:

Gabby: I get it.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Or two or three to myself.

Austin:

Gabby: Two or three, that's a g—

[2:00:00]

Austin:

Gabby: You know what, you deserve a vacation like that. Think we all do, all of us living the life right now.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah. Yeah, I agree.

Austin:

Gabby: I think you are right about the thing about being worried about this place. I'm worried about this place. The thing that you just said, the person who told you that ah, this strange thing's afoot and all that.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Right.

Austin:

Gabby: That sounds exactly right. And here's the thing.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah.

Austin:

Gabby: That I think you should consider, is you're right that maybe if I'm out here and I'm a bad thing. Which I'm not but if I were, that'd be one less bad thing to count on, to worry about. But if I'm in there and I'm a good thing, then that's one more good thing you got on your side. And if I'm good and I'm out here, that's one less good thing.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: That I have— That you have on your side, do you know what I'm saying

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I know— Okay.

Keith: So that's— That's the challenge—

Austin:

Gabby: You know what they say about the bear and the runnin' from it? Do you know what I mean? You don't wanna be—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Play dead. They say play dead.

Austin:

Gabby: They do say that. But that's not what I was— The thing about, if you're running from the bear you don't have to be the fastest.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: They say play dead from a brown bear.

Austin:

Gabby: Right.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: With a black bear—

Austin:

Gabby: You climb a tree.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You need to make yourself big.

Austin:

Gabby: Oh, okay.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No, it's make yourself big and make a lot of noise.

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] You don't climb a tree?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And it's tricky because, if you don't know the difference between the two bear— 'Cause it's not just a black bear's black and a brown bear is brown—

Austin:

Gabby: Is that so?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And there are overlapping territories, so it's, you do have to know the bear, because the strategies are the opposite and that is why bears are terrifying.

Austin:

Gabby: I never knew this much about bears. Not a lot of bears in Brooklyn, I gotta tell ya. I thought you just climb a tree, you get away from a bear. Bears don't— That's not it?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: What was the saying about bears? No, that's not it. You do wanna tie your food up and yank—

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] The saying is you gotta be faster than the slowest person who's being chased by a bear. And so if I'm in there, [laughs] I'm slower than you, then you get away from the bear. Do you see what I'm saying?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: But if you're faster than me, then nothing's changed.

Austin:

Gabby: I'm pretty sl— I got all this luggage to carry, you don't have much. With you, it's in the room presumably. I guess you got luggage.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: So you're saying that if we were in danger there's a chance that—

Austin:

Gabby: Fifty fifty.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You will die, and I will live.

Austin:

Gabby: I'm not talking about dying, I'm just saying, you know.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's what you said. A bear's not gonna— The bear's not gonna just tease you.

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah, I suppose.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Especially if you got food on you, which is the tree thing. You do wanna wrap it up in a bag and hook it over a tree and lift it, because they won't be able to get up there.

Austin:

Gabby: Well, here's the thing—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Younger bears can climb, and then they sort of I— They get too big and heavy, they can't climb.

Austin:

Gabby: Right. I don't have any food on me. I know you got those fig newtons earlier, that could be a little bit of a problem.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I do.

Austin:

Gabby: So maybe you should eat those before. That's a suggestion.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'll try to find a tree.

Austin:

Gabby: That's a suggestion of a proof— To prove that I am in fact not a thing to be worried about here, for instance.

Austin: This is fail, I failed this one.

Keith: This one— Oh you did fail it?

Austin: [laughs] I did, just now.

Keith: Okay. [laughs] This was challenge two, I heard a terrible rumor about you. The rumor was the implication that you might be the bad monster.

Austin: Uh-huh. I cannot convince you, unfortunately.

Keith: You cannot convince you, so I gain two coins. So:

Indoor Jim: I just don't think that math works out for me. I just think it's safer, for me, to not have another person to worry about. I don't even know what the situation is.

Austin:

Gabby: Me either.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Right. So what if you stay out there? That seems like it's safe out there.

Austin:

Gabby: It does not seem safe out here. There had to be a reason for them to say not to come out here.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] It's so small out there.

Austin:

Gabby: I'm so small out here?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No, that enclosure is such a small place to keep tabs on.

Austin:

Gabby: I feel so small out here.

Keith: Which one of these things...

Austin:

Gabby: This place don't feel small, Jim.

Keith: Okay, this is a— Let— This is a... This is a wild one, maybe I'll just go with it because the rest of them are— I think— [laughs] I think I saw you somewhere in the hotel recently doing something gruesome. [laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh?

Keith: On heads you provide me proof that it wasn't you and gain coins.

Indoor Jim: I've been having these dreams. [whispering] And I can't remember which of them are dreams.

Austin:

Gabby: Are you alright? Jim?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] Yes! Sorry. I do this when I'm nervous.

Austin:

Gabby: What are the dreams of?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] I saw you... I think that I saw you kill— I think that I saw— [regular voice] I think there was more people in the hotel. And that you [whispering] took them and I'm sorry. I don't mean to—

Austin:

Gabby: I *took* them.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] I don't— I'm sorry. Yes.

Austin:

Gabby: [shouting] You think I *took* them? Where would I take them?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

Austin:

Gabby: No, I don't—I'm not yelling at you! I'm yelling at the situation!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I know, I just really think that you—

Austin:

Gabby: What is— What d'you— What d'you think I did? What do I, what do I—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm pretty sure that you killed—! I'm pretty sure that [whispering] there was more people in the hotel and that you [whispers even softer] maybe killed them!

Austin:

Gabby: How many people?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] I don't know.

Austin:

Gabby: You know more people than me. You came with a whole group of people! I came— I'm the only person that I know.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That was— That was a— [whispering] That was like— That was like—twelve years ago! What are you talking about!

Austin:

Gabby: What do you mean it was twelve years ago, you said you went to the comedy club?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [whispering] It was a flashba— It was [shouting] twelve years ago that that happened! It was twelve years ago! And this is what I'm saying!

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] And you're still crying about it now?

[Ali laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No—

Austin:

Gabby: You didn't get over it? What— Comedian tells you a few jokes—?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's the only other time that I've met you!

Austin:

Gabby: [shouting] When did I meet you before?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Twelve—

Austin:

Gabby: [shouting] I've— What are you talking about?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Twelve years ago!

Jack: There's a— One of the windows in the upstairs courtyard just breaks. Like, glass showers down.

Austin: [laughs] God. Uh. [laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That was— That was a flashback that I had to twelve years ago!

Austin:

Gabby: You're saying we met before!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yes! When you were in the hotel, trying to go to Albuquerque, twelve years ago!

Austin:

Gabby: I'm trying to go to Albuquerque *today*!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Well why were you... I mean you— How long have you been a flight attendant?

Austin:

Gabby: [sighs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Surely you've been stuck at a hotel two times trying to go to Albuquerque twice. I'm here on vacation. It was twelve years ago that I got embarrassed in front of my entire office for tripping over my shoelaces and then the comedian that was there who was bombing spent the next thirty five minutes making fun of me specifically, and then I was a laughing stock for the rest of my life, everywhere I went.

Austin:

Gabby: I have been a flight attendant since 1953. This is the first time I have ever gotten stuck in a situation like this.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And this is why I can't decide if when I saw you killing people in my dreams—

Austin:

Gabby: Oh—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: If that was dreams or not.

Austin:

Gabby: It was dreams.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And I'm sorry—

Austin:

Gabby: It was— Jim? Jim? I'm putting my hands on the glass. Jim, put your hands on the glass with me. I want you to feel my warm hands on the—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No!

Austin:

Gabby: J-Jim—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No!

Austin:

Gabby: Just put your hands on the glass with me. I swear it's not a trick. Look, look at my hands.

Austin: I show you both.

Gabby: You know what, here. Let me take off my jacket.

Austin: I'm taking off my jacket, rolling up my sleeves.

Gabby: Nothing up my sleeves, I'm not a magician but there's nothing up my sleeves.

Keith: Okay, while you're taking off your jacket I'm testing the glass and making sure that it's like there and that if I put my hands up to the glass, you're not going to grab my wrist and [shouting] pull me through!

Austin: Put my hands on the glass real quick! So you can't pull it away quick enough, but you can feel that my hands are— Oh, I'm gonna roll the dice and see [laughing] if this...

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Is a connective moment [laughs] or a nightmare. That's another two. It's another two. It's another two.

Keith: [crosstalk] Another two.

Austin: [laughing] You can feel my skin against your skin through the glass.

Keith: [laughs]

Indoor Jim: Ahhh! Ah! Ah! [sobs] Ahhh!

Austin:

Gabby: No, no no no no no no no! Ahhh! That wasn't supposed to happen! That's not what I wanted to happen, Jim!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crying] If there's no glass there why can't you just open the door!

Austin:

Gabby: I can't! Look— I'm trying to open it, it won't open.

Ali: [laughs] Oh my god.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Put your arm through the window, and reach down and open it yourself.

Austin:

Gabby: Look, I'm pushing! Against! The door! I didn't *kill* anybody, and I didn't—I can't reach through the *door*!

Keith: I'm taking two more coins. Wait.

Austin: Yeah. I did. I gave you two more. So you're up to four.

Keith: Okay, so I've got four, you've got two. We only have one more challenge.

Austin: [crosstalk] I need to get this one right. I know. [laughs] [sighs]

Keith: Let's see.

Indoor Jim: Not to mention! This is not even to mention the hallway.

Austin:

Gabby: What d'you— What? What? What? What? What?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: This is, I'm only here because you, you— It's, I'm only here because you chased me. It's, I'm only here because of—

Austin:

Gabby: [groans]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That I was, that you were following me in the hallway, and I took a turn I don't normally take. I've never even been down here. And then there you are.

Austin:

Gabby: James. Jim. James. I was—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Jim. It's Jim. It's on the— On my birth certificate. Jim. Just Jim.

Austin:

Gabby: I was not following you. I was— You— How w— [sighs] Jim. This place is messin' with us a little bit, I think. I think it's the fumes or the smoke or something else. Wish I could have a smoke. It is messing with us. How can I—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You came out there to smoke, why can't you have a smoke?

Austin:

Gabby: 'Cause I left my lighter on the other side. If you could hand me the lighter, that would be great.

Keith: Could I kick it under the door?

Austin: Nah, it's like a closed door thing.

Gabby: Just slip it out to me real quick. I'll just take it.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No, that's opening the door. I won't— I'm not opening the door.

Austin:

Gabby: Eh, open it, you're just gonna slide me the lighter real quick. Just slip it through real quick.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No. You'll push it. You'll push—

Austin:

Gabby: I won't! I won't. [pause] Fine. Fine. Fine, fine. Maybe I can find a lighter out here in this huge courtyard. The-

Keith:

Indoor Jim: So having dreams that you're— You're saying I'm having dreams that I'm killing people in the hotel.

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] You're saying you're having dreams! You're saying that.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm— No, you're saying—

Austin:

Gabby: [crosstalk] You're saying I'm following you, I'm not following you. You were behind me!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] This is a longer— This is a compound sentence. Can I please— Can I please do my comp—

Austin:

Gabby: You were behind me! How would I follow you if I'm here first?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's why this is a terrifying situation for me. This is a compound sentence. You're telling me—now wait for the part where I say the part that you are telling me.

Austin:

Gabby: [grumbles] —gonna tell me what a compound sentence is.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You are telling me that I'm having dreams of you killing people in the h—

Austin:

Gabby: Saint Bartholomews did not know what a compound sentence is.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [sighs] God.

Austin: Is this—

Keith: [laughs] I'm changing it to you did something recently that made me too angry to think straight!

[Austin and Jack laugh]

Keith: Interrupting me. [laughs]

Indoor Jim: You're telling me that I'm having dreams of you killing people, and that I'm having hallucinations of you chasing me down the hallway, only to find you here in the door, and that that is in my imagination.

Austin:

Gabby: That's not what I'm saying. That's not what I'm saying. I'm not saying that you're a liar, I'm not saying that you're having hallucinations. I'm saying what is true and is not true is I didn't chase you and I didn't kill anybody. I don't know what you saw, I don't know who you saw, I don't know what you dreamed or didn't dream. I can't see what's in that beautiful little brain of yours there, Indoor Jim, but I do know what I did do and I didn't do. What I did is, I came downstairs this morning to check out so I could get into a cab and go to the airport, so I could get on a plane to Albuquerque.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That. Was. Twelve. Years ago.

Austin:

Gabby: It wasn't, Jim. Jim—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That was not—

Austin:

Gabby: Jim, where have I been then for twelve years? Twelve years, twelve years.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You obviously went to Albuquerque—

Austin:

Gabby: No, I didn't! I—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And are back at the hotel.

Austin:

Gabby: I've never been to Albuquerque before today. [through teeth] This is why I'm so upset.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You're a flight attendant who's never been to Albuquerque, okay.

Austin:

Gabby: They just *made* the airport.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's the New York of the southwest.

Austin:

Gabby: [shouting] It is now! And I'm finally gonna get to go! Except that I already missed the plane to Albuquerque!

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: Today was my day! The big day! Sick of flying Delta! I wanna move to the New York of the southwest, Albuquerque, and make a life for myself!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You live in the New York of the northeast!

Austin:

Gabby: And I hate it! I'm sick of it! I want the open air, I want the stage coaches and whatnot. They still got those in Albuquerque?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Stage coaches? I don't, I don't know. I think— Novelty, but the same as in New York, they have like, novelty ones.

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah, I guess there are. [pause] Let me in. I-

Keith:

Indoor Jim: You— You wanna move to a city with stage coaches, you already live in a city with stage coaches. It's famous-

Austin:

Gabby: I was a— It was a— It was—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Any movie that's been, that's about New York has a stage coach in it.

Austin:

Gabby: Any movie that's about New York has a stage coach in it?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I cannot think of a single movie about New York that doesn't have a stage coach.

Austin:

Gabby: New York?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: New York City.

[Ali laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Manhattan.

Austin:

Gabby: I don't know that one. I haven't seen that one.

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: Let me in. Please?

Austin: This is— We've pushed this as far as we can. [laughs]

Keith: Can you roll a dice for that?

Austin: Yeah, I can— I think I can do— That I kept. I lost my lighter but I kept the dice. I [laughing] mistyped it. Ah, that's a one.

Keith: Ope, it's a tie.

Austin: It's a tie. What happens in a tie? [laughing] I'm sinking against the front door or the door at this point.

[Keith and Jack laugh]

Keith: Just, crying about what happens in a tie.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Still feel her hand through the glass. [laughs]

Keith: After— It doesn't say. If the person inside the room has more coins, the per— Oh! Uh, if the person outside the room has as many coins or more—

Austin: Ah.

Keith: Choose one.

Jack: Oooh.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: [sighs] Either— I guess you choose from these.

Keith: I choose, yeah. Okay. Um.

[Austin laughs]

Keith: You've convinced me to trust you. I open the door and let you in. Because...

Austin: [crosstalk] I give you a big hug.

Keith: Uh, I am— I am startled by the hug because I don't know that it's not an attack.

Austin: Right, sure.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: [laughing] And I kind of freeze. I tense up like a fainting goat.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: And then— [laughs] And then I relax and I say:

Indoor Jim: Thank you for not killing me now. Or the future!

Austin:

Gabby: Can we just focus on getting out of here?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yes. Do you still want a fig newton?

Austin:

Gabby: I never really did before, but in this particular moment...

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] Have you not had fig newtons? Is that why you don't want one?

Austin:

Gabby: I've never had a fig newton, I don't know what a newton is.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Try a fig newton.

Austin:

Gabby: Why is it— This is very distinct.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah, it's extremely singular.

Austin:

Gabby: I've never had something quite like this before. They make these in Massachusetts? The Albuquerque of the northeast.

Keith: [laughs]

Indoor Jim: Yes. They make it in Newton, Massachusetts, the Albuquerque— The, the New York of the southwest of the northeast.

Austin: [laughing] Of the northeast, okay.

Keith: Newton, Massachusetts.

Austin: Yeah, great. Alright. I think that's a scene. I think that's a scene? That feels like a scene.

Keith: Yeah, it's a scene.

Austin: Can we take another five minute break?

Ali: Sure.

Keith: Sure.

Jack: Yeah, let's do it.

Austin: Alright. BRB.

[pause]

Austin: Alright, we are back! With some more. Probably near the end here of our journey into this hotel. This haunted hotel.

Jack: Hotel California has three or four verses, right?

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Jack: That's about right.

Austin: We've done three, so here's a fourth. Um, we... It's my turn. I've not done a scene yet. I sort of feel like... I sort of feel like I should do a chase scene. I kind of feel like we wanna get a Bad Gateway chase going.

[2:15:00]

Jack: [crosstalk] I wanna see what these look like.

Austin: So I think what happens is, Gabby says to Jim:

Gabby: Jim, I still gotta have that cigarette. Do you mind if I go smoke that? I'll meet you back in the lobby. Can you get me a light beer? Dealer's choice?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Sure, yeah.

Austin:

Gabby: Thanks.

Austin: Hand on shoulder for a second. And then I turn to walk, actually following the signs to the smoking area this time. And now I'm gonna read *Staying Alive, A Chase*. Only you and your chosen partner play. Choose who is the hunter and who is the quarry. Ask your partner how the chase began. What is your history with each other? Does the chase start fast or begin slow, building to a crescendo as you progress through the hotel? During the chase anyone may ask for additional details about the landscape, what's ahead and behind, or what course the chase may make.

So let's just start, before I get into the rules: Jack, are you happy to be my chaser as *Bad Gateway*?

Jack: Absolutely. I can tell you how the chase begins as well.

Austin: Yes, please.

Jack: Weird. You arrive in the smoking area and there's already smoke in the air.

Austin: Mmm.

Jack: Um, and I think you light a cigarette—

Austin: [crosstalk] What is the area? Is the area like, a different outdoor area that doesn't have doors so that I can get in and out easier? Or do I do the thing of like, putting a trashcan in the way so that it definitely won't close on me this time?

Jack: Oh yeah, it's something like that, right? It's like um, yeah. And there's um, there's like a cigarette ash trays on kind of like— They're in like an irritating place. Like you have—you either have to stand somewhere you don't want to stand.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Or you have to go over to the ashtray and then go back to— There's like a bench. And, in fact, over the bench—it's like a picnic bench—there is smoke hanging. And as you watch, it's about ten feet away from you, the smoke coalesces into the form of *Bad Gateway* standing on the top of the picnic table.

Austin: Mmm.

Jack: And it just jumps down. It's like, its boots on the I guess gravel underneath the picnic table, and like its head turns in your direction. And there's a demonic... There's demonic light in its eyes.

Austin:

Gabby: Ah, shit.

Austin: Um, I think we might have a history together. One of these is what is your history with each other. I don't think this is the first time I've run from you. Um, and I think to build off of the thing earlier when Ali was like it's a different date—or it's the same newspaper, but a different date.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Right? I think I've been in this chase with you many times in the past. I guess you've only been here for three— You've only been stuck here for three weeks, right? Before that had you been here before? Or is this your first set of—

Jack: Yes. This is— No, 'cause you can't, 'cause I couldn't have left before.

Austin: You couldn't have left. Right. Okay.

Jack: No, this is my first time in the hotel. Although! What is three weeks to a demon?

Austin: Sure. Totally.

Jack: You know, the—

Austin: Totally.

Jack: I might have been here for a hundred and fifty years or something.

Austin: Yeah. I'm starting to think— Austin is starting to think that the reason that Gabby is here is because... You're like a smoke monster? I guess you're al— You're a furnace monster right?

Jack: Mmm. Mmhm.

Austin: Um. I think—

Jack: Crawled out of a furnace from hell.

Austin: Yeah. I think we get a close-up on the newspaper to help answer this "what is your history with each other" question. And the newspaper— One of the newspaper stories is about a hotel burning down. And at a— Gabby was in that hotel—

Jack: Oh, shit.

Austin: When it burned down. And no one else on the flight attendant crew was there because they were at the right hotel, and I was in the wrong hotel on the wrong night and a furnace broke bad and caught me there. And so in some ways— That didn't have to be *you*, but that is the thing, right? It's... I'm stuck in that feeling of why the fuck didn't I just go to the right hotel.

Jack: Ha ha ha.

Austin: Never got to Albuquerque, et cetera.

Jack: And on some level, the hotel— This hotel—

Austin: Right, yes.

Jack: —has sort of like, Tinder matched these people very well.

Austin: Right. [laughs]

Jack: One is the smoke demon from hell, and the other one is someone who perished in a—

Austin: I was confused because you said two fire-related words in a row: tinder and match. Both of which [laughs] are fire, which I guess is why it's, you know. That's, yeah, uh-huh. Someone made that app name thinking that at some point, that I'm only just getting. I'm having a Phoenix Down moment.

Jack: And they made more money from it—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: Than I will ever make in my entire life.

Austin: We don't know the person who came up with the *name* will make more money. That person probably got screwed too. Whoever invested in it made a bunch of money, you know?

Jack: Yeah, that's— [laughs] Yeah, that's true. Apps... I've had quite a—

Keith: Ad exec is a pretty well paying job, right?

Austin: Yeah, but did they— I'm curious if they hired an ad exec.

Keith: Right, just some staffer.

Austin: Or if some staffer came up with—

Keith: You just pay ten cheap staffers to come up with four thousand combinations of things.

Jack: Or did they hire, like, McGillicuddy and Glick.

Austin: [crosstalk] I found it. It was called Matchbox.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: And then it became Tinder.

Keith: Right, it can't be Matchbox because that is a band and a brand of toy car already.

Austin: Which we all love both of those, and so we couldn't. They were like, "Well we can't—"

Keith: We all love Matchbox 20 and having twenty Matchbox cars.

Austin: Exactly.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And so they looked a thesaurus. The founders of Tinder looked at a—consulted a thesaurus. They stuck with the fire theme, liking the idea that their app could create a romantic spark. Ugh.

Keith: Which is not fire. That is electricity.

Austin: That's electricity, even. Yeah. Mhm. Well. Anyway. Chase! Chase.

Keith: Chase does sound like the name of a guy you would match with on Tinder.

Austin: It— It does.

[Jack and Keith laugh]

Austin: You're not wrong. Um. The quarry conducts the chase. First, say where you're going. What safe destination in the hotel is your end goal? Why do you think you'll be safe there? If you don't know yet, that's okay too. Lead the hunter through a series of four challenges and admissions. Choose freely, but the third must be an admission. During the chase you and your hunter will gain coins representing the distance you've gained on each other.

I'm going to the lobby where there's a cold beer waiting for me. I am escaping fire as much as I'm escaping you, right? And in my mind, this is a— This is tied to the outdoor fire, this is tied to— This fire isn't real, you know what I mean? I just have to get to the lobby. There's a cold beer waiting for me at the lobby. If I get there, it's gonna be okay.

After four turns, unless you choose an option that ends the chase early, compare coins. If you have more coins than your hunter you break away and escape. If the hunter has as many or more than you, choose one. So. Um. Time to do a chase. A challenge— It's a challenge or admission, is that what it is? Choose freely, the third one must be an admission.

Jack: Must be an admission.

Austin: Challenges and admissions, okay. Um. [sighs] So, I uh... The first thing I do is I run th—from the smoke— This smoke zone is right across from the kitchen, because people who work in the kitchen wanna take a smoke break real quick, right? And so I pass through a cluttered room with plenty of obstacles to throw in your way. Follow me if you want, but throw. On tails you have to find another way around and I gain one coin. Blue, I burst through the kitchen doors [laugh] and immediately start throwing silverware, pots and pans, you know, spice racks behind me as I try to make my through the kitchen as quickly as I can. Sorry to Blue.

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: Hey hey hey!

Austin: Bad Gateway, you have to— [laughs]

Gabby: Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry! We gotta get outta here! F-fire!

Austin: And then I guess Bad Gateway, you throw. 1d2. Roll—

Jack: Heads!

Austin: Heads. On heads, you— What happens? Oh, you succeed. So no one gets a coin.

Jack: You know.

Austin: On tails— Yeah.

Jack: A carving knife comes off a rack and, and Bad Gateway catches it. It catches it out of the air and flings it in your direction and you just duck under it as Bad Gateway comes crashing through, you know, heavy work boots on the china, past a plate of fig newtons.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. Perfect.

[Keith laughs]

Austin: They're like an appetizer here, they're on the menu. Um. Well that didn't work.

Keith: A rack of Reebok shoes? Reebok, another Massachusetts brand.

Austin: Oh! You know all of these, huh?

Keith: It's very near Nabisco. It's very near the Nabisco headquarters.

Austin: Sure. Um, I— Have we been imagining this lobby as a single floor because of the image in front of us, or is there a second floor up there?

Jack: Oooh, I bet there's like a mezzanine or like a— Yeah, like a—

Austin: Um, so I— In this case I am going to slide into an elevator. Are there elevators here? I feel like there's not elevators here. So instead I am going to edge towards the high ground on a thin or unstable ledge. Follow me if you want, but throw. On tails you have to move with caution and gain one coin.

I like, rush up these stairs, or—maybe even the kitchen. I get confused coming out of the kitchen and just like, go the wrong way and end up climbing some stairs and then looking down on the lobby, I like try to like— I kind of like, "Well maybe I could just jump down right onto the desk from here." I'm like, "Oh, maybe this is too high." And I find myself just edging along to try to get around the corner above the mezzanine to like get back on solid ground, and maybe the other set of stairs, so that I can run the rest of the way down. You should flip a coin.

Jack: Hm. Oh, my god. I nearly put it in the Twitch chat. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: That's not right.

Jack: [laughing] That wouldn't have worked.

Austin: It would not have worked. [pause] Hey! That's a tails.

Jack: Oooh.

Austin: So I get one coin. You have to find another way around. Okay. Or wait, do— And I gain one coin, right? I said that, right? Yes.

Jack: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: And I gain one.

Jack: You get a coin.

Austin: Alright, third one.

Jack: [crosstalk] I have to find another way around.

Austin: Third one, this is bad. I think I've already lost, Jack. Let's see. I come to a dangerous climb or leap and hesitate to steel myself. Throw. Okay, here we go. Throw. On heads you appear behind me and seemingly from nowhere and gain two coins. I have this— I have to make this leap of faith down to the lobby. I have to do it. Otherwise, you're gonna catch up with me. Let's see if you appear behind me in time.

[pause]

Jack: Oooh!

Austin: On head— So—

Jack: That's tails!

Austin: That's a tails, so you don't gain any coins. Right?

Jack: No!

Austin: Okay, I leap! Down to the lobby, behind the reception area.

Jack: Oooh, shit.

Austin: And I... At this point if I fail I lose on either a challenge or an admission, right, because you'll tie and ties go to the chaser? So I'm gonna actually do an admission 'cause I think it's interesting, 'cause it doesn't matter if you get two coins or one coin here, you've won. So I'm going to do, I risk hiding and staying quiet as you stalk past me. Throw. On heads your intuition leads you straight towards me and you gain two coins. So I'm like, I've jumped down there and then I've— I, you know, get as small and quiet as I can behind the reception area. And I'm just like trying to hold my breath which is hard 'cause I'm loud? [laughs] Um, and I'm like—

Gabby: [deep breath]

Austin: And I'm looking up at the keys and I can't help but look— I'm like, "Where is that front door key?"

Jack: Uh, Bad Gateway is uh... Furnace pipe lands in the floor before it does, shattering the tile-work of the floor and Bad Gateway comes down you know, boots first, lands heavily. Stands up. And you know, it's shocked, because it can't see you. Turns its head slowly, you know. Um, you know, cracks the—cracks its neck, its shoulders. And I'm gonna roll 1d2. Oh!

Austin: Ah! Another two!

Jack: And it just turns and stalks out of the room. Its footsteps disappearing over the sound of rattling pipes, as it moves away into the distance. Holy shit!

Austin: Whew! Close one.

Keith: You with one coin left?

Austin: That's it. All— If that had come up one, that would have been it. It would have been over. So.

Jack: I mean, that's how it works in slasher movies as well, right? Like.

Austin: That is how it works in slasher movies, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: That would— It turned out, you were the final girl in this situation.

Austin: [laughs] It seems. So far. Yeah, uh-huh. We're not— I'm not out of it yet though. [laughs]
Um.

[Jack laughs]

Austin: Alright, we've all done it, so we could— We could try to wrap this up if someone doesn't have another scene that they wanna do. I guess in terms of just open free play at this moment, do you come back with that beer? [laughs] Or do you show up in the lobby— Do we invert our lobby situations and now you're the one coming out being like, "Hey, did anything happen?"

Keith: Y— [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Just shattered tiles.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: "Here's a Heineken?"

Keith: Yeah. I say that I couldn't find an opener, that's why it took me so long, and I hand it to you and you just twist it off. It's a twist off.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: 'Cause it's a light beer and they don't make like light beers twist off.

Austin: They don't do those, yeah. Um. Alright, what are we— What are we feeling? I guess I'll re-read at this point. We have... We've all gone around the table at least once or as many times as we want. After everyone has taken at least one turn—

[2:30:00]

Austin: Anyone may decide to end play at the end of any turn. To end play you have two options: attempt to escape the hotel for good, or leave your characters living in the hotel indefinitely. For the latter, bring up any unresolved questions you have about your characters and say what you think is possible. Say what you think possible outcomes might be. Let other players contribute possible outcomes as well, then vote to decide which outcome is true.

To end play by revolting against the hotel, proceed to the final game, Burning Down The House. Does anyone wanna do another scene, though, before we make a decision about the end of the game?

[pause]

Keith: Uh...

Austin: There's still a bunch of games in here we haven't played.

Keith: [crosstalk] I don't know if we were thinking of wrapping up?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: It kind of feels like we're not at a wrap-up spot, but I feel like we can fit it in if we don't wanna do more scenes. So.

Austin: My big question is about—

Keith: [crosstalk] I could go other way.

Austin: —Blue, who I feel like hasn't gotten enough scenes, but, you know.

Keith: Yeah, I agree.

Austin: But that's up to Ali, obviously.

Ali: Um, sure, yeah. The only thing is that I um... I don't think that they wanna leave.

Austin: Ah. I see.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Right, you're— 'Cause you're an employee.

Ali: Which is sort of the thing of the Staff of sort of being like, well.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I'm in on it. So then—

Jack: I mean, that could be billiards. That could be... Right? Like, does billiards have a— Billiards doesn't require leaving.

Keith: [crosstalk] Yeah, I think most of these are done so that any of the types can do them.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Although, if you would prefer not to do anything, that's also a point.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Right, yeah, I mentioned that to say that I don't know if that cuts off Burning Down The House for us, or if we just wanna do an epilogue.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: I'm not sure.

[pause]

Austin: Yeah, I guess it's not a— I'm reading Burning Down The House now to see if it's a, like—

Keith: No no, it says in it, um—

Austin: If it's PvP or if it's... Right.

Keith: Each person gets one turn and may challenge the rest of the table, who will act as the voice of the hotel— Oh, okay. Nevermind, I misinterpreted that.

Austin: Yeah, see, that's not really... Yeah. Um. Then yeah, maybe it's— Hm.

Ali: Yeah 'cause I mean, I could do like a billiards scene I guess, but I don't know that he wants anything from any of the characters so I— It would be like a scene but it wouldn't get us any closer.

Jack: Right. Yeah.

Austin: Mhm. Yeah, I don't even— What's that game's... What are the games we haven't—

Keith: Well, I guess part of is the thing that you want is to keep people from trying to leave.

Austin: Right.

Keith: So you would maybe try and calm down...the two that are not monsters and trying to leave.

Ali: [laughs] Sure. Or I don't mind like, bending the rules and having y'all try to escape if that's what you guys want from the finale of this?

Austin: Mmm. Could go either way.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I'm trying to read— What— So what's the summary on the billiards thing? Is it just you're playing billiards now, or is it? There are questions.

Ali: Basically. It's basically um... It's Firebrand's sword fight, I think?

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: I hope to persuade you that blank.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: It's like, yeah.

Austin: It's like the argument one. It's like you're trying to convince—yeah.

Keith: [crosstalk] I accidentally let slip that I blank—

Austin: Right.

Keith: But I cover with the rest of my ability.

Ali: Right right right.

Keith: Do you let me recover, or.

Austin: Right. I don't mind that as the idea of like, you trying to convince us to stay. That doesn't sound... That's kind of interesting to me. Given what we've seen. I don't know. But I don't know that the—

Keith: 'Cause that's sort of the thing is that I feel like you and I and to some extent Bad Gateway, have been building up to an escape.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Or some sort of like, confrontation. It could— This totally could have gone a way where Jim is not trying to escape at all, and it didn't go that way. So... But then of like, Ali, Blue, is not—is obviously not doing that because he's Staff.

Austin: True.

Ali: Sure, yeah. I feel like this is more of a decide what ending we want situation, 'cause I don't have—

Austin: The thing is, I wanna play to find out what ending we get. That's the thing.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Right? Is like, I don't wanna—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: 'Cause if we're gonna decide that we all just stay, then we should just do the epilogues at that point. Whereas if there's a game we can play that can situate how that decision is made, that feels more fun to me.

Keith: Yeah, that's what I think billiard does for like, me anyway, is that it decides whether Jim wants to escape or not.

Austin: So yeah, maybe we do that. Is that...?

Ali: Sure, yeah. Um, let me. Yeah.

Austin: It's Hit Me With Your Best Shot or A Conversation Over Billiards.

Keith: 'Cause what is the other— The other thing is just like, you decide that the game is over, tell whether you escape or don't escape.

Austin: No, I think it's—

Ali: No, it's you decide everybody stays, and then you like, wrap up any loose ends you want to. But it's they're here indefinitely.

Keith: Yes, it says attempt to escape the hotel for good, or leave your characters living in the hotel indefinitely, *or* do Burning Down The House.

Austin: Burning Down The House isn't... Maybe I misunderstood that then.

Keith: Yeah, I think it's either escape, or stay there forever, or do Burning Down The House, and Burning Down The House is the one that you do only if everyone wants to screw the hotel.

Austin: Okay, to end play you have two options. Okay. [pause] Mmm. See, I—

Keith: It says attempt. Then I don't know what they—

Austin: Yeah, my read on this is that B— I can't imagine you've made a game called You Can Check Out Any Time You Like—

Keith: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: And then just at the end of it goes, "Okay I'm leaving." [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Keith: It just, it just— [laughs] It just, it feels weird that you can only do the escape thing if everybody wants to escape.

Austin: That does feel weird, yes.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: But I, but I... I'm not opposed to that part of the—to that design, do you know what I mean? I think that there is something interesting in saying the only way you get out of this is if everyone has aligned themselves on that. And then—

Keith: Right. As long as one person wants to keep people here, then it happens.

Austin: Then you're stuck in this place. That's saying something about the metaphor of this hotel, right, like that's—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I like that, in some way. And it's one of those things where it's like, if I knew the game better, would we have been already playing towards that sort of end. Do you know what I mean, and like trying to push and pull in that way. In any case—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I do like the billiards thing, because the billiards thing, whether or not we end up— The billiards thing will at the very least shape what we think of as the epilogue in terms of do we feel— Do we end up feeling, "Yeah I could stay another couple days," versus "No we have to get out of here." And we close on us failing to get out, or struggling to get out, or whatever. Like, I do kind of like this idea of like, we come in with these two light beers. [laughs]

[Keith laughs]

Austin: And Blue Hour is at the pool table.

Keith: Yeah. Ah, before when I said everything was bad, I was just, that wasn't for real. Come on.

Austin: Yeah. Um.

Ali: Okay. Sure. So, set up the scene with your chosen partners. Decide which billiards room you're in and how you came to be playing a game together. Other players may join freely if it makes sense for their characters to be there. What do you notice about each other at first glance? Have any of you encountered each other before? What is the same? What is different?

Austin: My hair is messier 'cause I've been running.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: And it's out of place, and um, in general I think you can see the smoke...the smoke on my uniform now, you know what I mean? It's like smoke damaged. That's what's different about me.

Keith: Um, nothing's different about me.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: I have... I'm carrying... I have, I'm carrying two books. They're the same book.

Ali: Sure. I think that Blue has like scrapes on his knuckles.

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: So, playing billiards. Take turns. For the first turn, everyone must decide one question, the break, to be answered by every character in the scene. Number yourselves and then use a random number generator to determine who will break first. Then, proceed around the table until everyone has answered the chosen question. The player chosen to break first will also perform the break on the billiards table. After the break, proceed clockwise around the table. On your turn, flip a coin to see how many balls you sank—heads for one, tails for two—and choose that amount of questions from the list. Ask them to any other player and s— [laughs] strike them from the list. Oh, strike the question from the list I guess.

Austin: Right, yeah.

Ali: [laughs] I was like, strike them where? Um. [laughs] You may also engage in improvised conversation around these questions, or describe your play style at the billiards table, or leave the game at your discretion. On your turn, you may alternatively choose to scratch and immediately eliminate one question from the list.

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: This question cannot be asked or answered by anyone for the duration of the game. Um.

Keith: Um, do we wanna use the table order for the randomly generated quest— Or do we want me to like, a roll a 1d3 for alphabetical.

Austin: Let's roll. Let's roll—

Keith: Like Ali, then Austin, then me.

Austin: Well, we can do—

Keith: One, two, three.

Austin: Clockwise once we rolled, right, once we picked. Let's do a bigger number, it's a random number generator, let's roll a d100. Whoever gets highest breaks.

Keith: Well I just mean because it's— Oh, we each roll— I was trying to do a one, two, three, and then that would be either a one for Ali, two for Austin, and three for me 'cause of alphabetical. But I— We'll do a big, we'll do a giant big roll.

Austin: Let's be a—do a big roll. That's fine.

Keith: d1000.

Austin: d1000.

Ali: Wait, how many pool balls are there though?

Keith: Three. There's the billiards room, the parlor and billiards rooms, and then—

Ali: No no no, I'm talking about pool balls on the table.

Keith: Mm!

Ali: Is that twelve, 'cause that's what this number represents later, right? Or no, am I—

Austin: No, this number just represents who goes first.

Ali: Okay.

Keith: Yeah, this is just who answers the questions first.

Austin: Who breaks, yeah.

Keith: Oooh, 644. Love— That's a great...one.

Austin: We're going high? High wins? High breaks?

Keith: Yeah, high wins. Yeah.

Austin: Well, not me.

Keith: So it's me, then Austin, then Ali.

Austin: Well, Ali and I—

Keith: Or, oh no, you— Okay.

Austin: Both in the 400s, so yeah let's just do Keith and then it's— Yeah, clockwise. Keith, then me, then Ali.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Which happens to also be the numbers descending. So either way you wanna do it?

Austin: Uh-huh. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: And then after all the questions have been struck from the list is when we...end, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: All the questions. That's fine, whatever.

Austin: Yeah. Unless you scratch them. So then you break, which means flip a coin, 1d2, to see how many balls you sink.

Keith: Oh.

Austin: And that's how many questions you ask us. Right? Is that right?

Keith: Okay.

Austin: No, it's after the break. That's after the break. So, no. We first decide—

Keith: So I'll get that one anyway.

Austin: Yeah, we first decide... We first decide a question together?

Keith: Everyone must decide on one question together. Okay. So we did this out of order where it's not an important order. Anybody feel strongly about a question?

Austin: I share an opinion about someone else in the hotel. Do you agree or disagree? Bad Gateway is trying to kill me.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

Austin: I am disheveled and scared.

Keith: [laughs] And scared, yeah.

Austin: Who is that? Et cetera. Is that fair?

Keith: Do we all agree? That's fair.

Ali: Sure.

Keith: Yeah. Okay, so, I'll go first. Which question is this? I'm not seeing it.

Austin: It's "I share an opinion about someone else in the hotel. Do you agree or disagree?" There is a—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: —monster trying to kill us.

Keith: Okay. Ba— There is— Yes.

Indoor Jim: There is a mon— I saw the thing and I know that, I know that Blue Hour told me that yes I'm right to be afraid of it. I thought I was just being a persnickety guest. I'm sometimes told that I'm, I have, I am too ready to share an opinion on... It's fine, I just am scar— I— I don't— I'm not happy about it. [pause] Do you agree or disagree?

Austin:

Gabby: Agree!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Thank you.

Austin: Blue?

Ali:

Blue: Well, weird things have been happening in the hotel.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yes, that's what I'm saying! That's what the two of us are s— I think all three of us have said that.

Ali:

Blue: But again the person you described just sounded like a person... People come to hotels and they like to break things.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I came to you specifically and said I know that it's rude to complain about a person but I'm scared and I'm trying to be honest and I'm trying to be assertive and I'm trying to make sure that I am advocating for my— And you—

Ali:

Blue: [crosstalk] Right. I— We don't have to go over this, I remember the conversation.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And you said that I was correct.

Ali:

Blue: [crosstalk] You should be scared. I'm just saying, I don't know this person we're talking about.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I— But I should be scared, you're saying, still.

Ali:

Blue: Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay, so this person's scaring me.

Austin:

Gabby: It's a big—just huge, figure. And it got a pipe, and it's got a little bit of a, a... I think, I think into s— I think it can turn into sm— I think it can turn into smoke.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And it was destroying the greenery in the lobby while looking right at me.

[Austin laughs]

Ali:

Blue: You think it can turn into smoke.

Austin: [laughs] And it was destroying the greenery in the lobby.

Gabby: I, it... [sighs] With the fire going on and all that, I...

Ali:

Blue: Yeah, exactly, you don't know. Person with a pipe, they have a uniform on.

Austin:

Gabby: And a mask.

Ali:

Blue: Well if there's smoke you have to wear a mask.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [crosstalk] I thought that was just its face.

Austin:

Gabby: [sighs] It was trying to kill me.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It could have been a mask. It didn't look like a good— I'm s— It didn't look like a good face.

Austin:

Gabby: I didn't get a good look at its face.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm sorry.

Austin:

Gabby: That's not...

Ali:

Blue: I— You're sounding more persnickety.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I'm sorry, but I am aware that, that the way that I'm talking sounds mean, and I really don't mean any offense.

Austin: [laughs] You keep sayin' this. Um. Alright. Now is the dice roll. One or two.

Keith: Okay, 1d2.

[2:45:00]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Is Keith starting, or is it—yeah?

Austin: I guess.

Keith: Yeah, it's me.

Austin: I don't— I'm not a hundred— Let's say yes, right?

[Ali laughs]

Keith: It was me, 'cause I got the roll. So it was—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Decide on the break, we did that. To be answered by every character in the scene. Number yourselves, use a random number generator to decide who will break first.

Austin: Right. Then—

Keith: That was me. Proceed around the table until everyone has answered the chosen question, we did that. The player chosen to break first will also perform the break. And so I did the break.

Austin: Now flip a coin.

Keith: And I don't know what that— That's where I don't know— Okay, flip a coin to see how many balls you sink.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: Heads, so I got a heads.

Ali: So you sink one, and then you get to ask one question.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Okay. Ask them to any other player and strike them from the list. Okay. Um. So. Um... Okay, so let's get this out of the way. I saw you in the kitchen earlier telling me that I should be afraid and I should be trying to get out of the hotel, and you're now telling me that that's not true, and I'm suspicious. How do you react when confronted?

Ali: Is this one of the questions? [laughs]

Keith: Yes. Well, it's "I saw you blank earlier."

Austin: [crosstalk] "I saw you blank earlier."

Keith: "And now I'm suspicious."

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: How do you react when confronted?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Um.

Blue: I— Listen. Weird things happen here.

[Keith laughs]

Ali:

Blue: You wanted to leave to another hotel. You couldn't do that. So I was just trying to give you your options, which is yeah, you should stick to your instinct.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: My instinct is, is for you to help me leave.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

Austin: It's a good instinct.

Ali:

Blue: Well. I mean. What do you want me to do?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [sighs] I don't know.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali:

Blue: Aww.

[Keith laughs]

Ali:

Blue: I don't work in reservations.

Keith: Um...

Jack: I don't work in reservations, bullshit.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: [quietly] And immediately eliminate... Okay.

Austin: Yeah, so that one's crossed off.

Keith: That's crossed off. I wasn't sure if there was like, a resolution to this?

Austin: No, you don't— That's it.

Keith: So yes, someone else's turn now.

Austin: Alright, now it is my turn.

Keith: Austin's turn.

Austin: Gonna see if I— I also only sink one. Um. [sighs] I'm hoping to find common ground with you about leaving this hotel. [laughs] Is there any? I say:

Gabby: Uh, Blue.

Keith: To whom?

Austin: To Blue.

Keith: Blue, okay.

Austin:

Gabby: Blue... Your name is Blue, right? I didn't get that wrong?

Ali:

Blue: Yeah yeah yeah, Blue Hour.

Austin:

Gabby: I just—just to be clear. Are you also as far— Uh, hesitate to use the word stuck here, like we are. Because I can't imagine that life is very entertaining. You're just in this hotel day in, day out, forever? You don't wanna go see the world? Go get a hamburger? Go get a... Go see a jazz club? Go to Albuquerque, go to New York, go to the world? The world is out there.

Ali:

Blue: The kitchen makes a fantastic burger.

Austin:

Gabby: Okay, but—

Ali:

Blue: And uh, I could book a jazz perform— I mean, I could ask the person who books performances to book a jazz performance.

Austin:

Gabby: You don't book the performances, you don't do the reception. Yeah, yeah, uh-huh.

Ali:

Blue: But the burgers though, that's on me. And they're great here.

Austin: [sighs] Alright, that's my question. It's your turn, Ali.

Ali: [laughs] Sure.

Austin: 1d2.

Ali: 1d2. Oh. Yay. I sink two balls.

Austin: Oh you get t— Yeah.

Ali: And I get to answer two questions.

Austin: Or ask us, right?

Ali: Yeah. Um... Okay, my first one is I'm feeling nostalgic. What story from my past should I tell?

Austin: Who are you asking?

Ali: Oh, that seems so open-ended that um... I guess Jim.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Um, you should tell me the story of the last time you left the hotel.

[Austin laughs]

Jack: Excellent question.

Ali: [laughs]

Blue: Um, sure. Yeah yeah yeah. Um...

[Keith laughs]

Ali:

Blue: It was, uh... Mmm... Yesterday?

Jack: Fucking got 'em, Jim. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: It was yesterday?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It was yest— Excuse me, it was yesterday?

Ali:

Blue: I had to— I had to, um... Someone asked me to do, to bring their dry cleaning out. To drop it off at a place in town. And I said I don't do that. Um... But, you know, slip me a forty and [laughs] I, uh—

Austin: A forty? Slip them— [laughs] Wait. Like. Wait. [laughs]

[Keith laughs]

Austin: Do you mean— You mean— Do you mean slipped you forty dollar— Forty doll— Okay. Forty dollars inside of a set of, of other bills? A forty dollar bill, which as far as I thought did not exist, or a forty ounce beverage?

Ali: [laughs] You know when you watch a movie and there's something that seems off-putting about the dialogue and you're like, wait what does this person mean?

Austin: This— Yeah, uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Hol— So my question is not about the bill. But is it... Is this true? Because you—as— The book says you are similarly prevented from leaving the hotel. I don't know if you're allowed to lie.

Ali: Sure. Um...

Austin: Do you believe it's true?

Keith: And is there no laundry in the hotel?

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Hamburgers but no dry—

Keith: [crosstalk] Oh, it's dry cleaning. I'm sorry. It's dry cleaning.

Austin: Come on. I guess so. I guess dry cleaning.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: You don't keep a dry cleaner in a hotel, obviously. Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Ali: Um. Yeah, I think he thinks that it's true. I don't— I mean, I can say as a player I don't think that it is.

Austin: Right, right.

Gabby: They let— They let— They let him leave. They let him leave. They let *him* leave.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: They get to leave. We don't— We get— We. We— They get—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: We.

Austin:

Gabby: They get to leave!

Keith:

Indoor Jim: They get to leave.

Austin:

Gabby: We—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: We—

[Ali laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: —can't leave.

Austin:

Gabby: Can't leave!

[Keith laughs]

Ali: Um.

Keith: So what is your second question?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, uh-huh.

Ali: Yeah. Um...

Keith: Can't believe you just lied to us for that— [laughs]

[Ali, Keith, and Austin laugh]

Ali: I was just thinking of things. I was gonna say like two weeks but then I was like yesterday is scarier.

Austin: It is.

Ali: Um. [laughs] Um... [pause] Okay, let's— We can round this up, [laughs] which is that, um, Jim, you've been here for a couple days, right?

Keith: Four... Three days, four nights.

Ali: Three days, four nights, okay.

Keith: Or, sorry. Yeah. Wait. That doesn't make sense. But that's— I'm sure that that's true.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: That works. Depends on what time you get there.

Ali: Right, 'cause this would be the fourth day and then you're checking out on the fourth day.

Keith: Three days, four nights.

Austin: Four nights. You show up, you sleep one night.

Keith: Is that possible?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Ali: Mmhm.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: Yeah, that's what hotels work.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: Um—

Austin: You get there Thursday night. You go to sleep, that's one night.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Then Friday morning, Friday, you know, et cetera.

Ali: [laughs] Anyway.

Keith: But the night never happens. The night— You always have to— 'Cause it would be, it would be one night. You get there a night, right, then the next day you're there, right?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh?

Keith: It's not— But you'll never get to— You'll never get to more nights, 'cause it's the night now, but you don't count that night 'cause I haven't gone to bed yet, so it... That doesn't...

Austin: Four sleeps. You've gotten four sleeps? Three sleeps.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: No.

Austin: Four sleeps?

Keith: Yes, I have. Explain to me how I could have gotten four sleeps but only had three days here. You can't.

Austin: You get here Thursday. Night.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Go to sleep. One.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Then, you get a day.

Jack: Going to die.

Austin: Friday. Friday.

Keith: Friday.

Austin: Friday night. So then you get two nights, one day. See, already we're there. Then Saturday, you get that night— Saturday, that's another day. Saturday night, that's another...

Keith: Saturday.

Austin: That's another night. Three days, two nights.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Then— No, three nights, two days. Then, you go to sleep one last time, Saturday night, four nights.

Keith: Okay. And then— But— But now— But it's not—

Austin: It counts that day.

Keith: —the night. It's the day now.

Austin: Yeah but that's your third day. Third day.

Keith: But I haven't gone to sleep to get that last day.

Austin: Yes you did, it was the fourth time you went to sleep.

Keith: Third night, sleep, wake up. 'Cause you can't be awake to say that I've had four nights and three days, without another day being added onto that. Do you see?

Austin: No, that's the third day. 'Cause you started at night. You didn't start in the day.

Keith: This hotel's— This hotel is doing this to you. That you can't see what I'm saying.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Austin: Yes. Night— This is like that bodybuilding argument, seven day week.

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali: Um. I'm— I'm so lost. I am—

Austin: We're looking for a question? You were gonna ask—

Ali: N— Yeah, I was about to—

Keith: I'll do a char— After we play pool I'll do a chart.

Ali: No no no, st— Please. [laughs] I admit to being afraid of not being able to leave again. Do you reassure me? And I am gonna ask Gabby.

Austin: What was that again? One more time?

Ali: I admit to being afraid of not being able to leave again.

Jack: Oooh!

Austin: How do you do that? What do you say?

Ali: Um. Well I guess it's the thing of being like, when Gabby was like, "Oh, they're about to leave—they're allowed to leave but we're not allowed to."

Austin: Right. I see.

Ali: Of being like:

Blue: Well, you know, yeah, of course I could leave. Well you guys can leave too.

Ali: [mumbles]

Austin:

Gabby: Listen. This is what we're saying. Blue. Maybe we can all leave, together. And then it's not a big deal. We just need your help, because you have left here recently. I don't remember leaving here. I don't know how to open the front door, I don't know where the key is. But you do. Which means you're important to us, in this way. And if you went out and did the dry cleaning, it sounds like it's not a big deal. We just go out and then we're out, no big deal. I have the luggage right here. I have the schedule for the cable cars. We could just sneak out to the next cable car, hop on, and we're gone.

Ali:

Blue: There isn't a cable car.

Austin:

Gabby: But what's— I have the schedule right here.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah, they got rid of the cable c— It's been twelve years since there's been a cable car.

Austin:

Gabby: What'd I see this morning?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That was twelve years ago.

Austin:

Gabby: This morning.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's what I've been trying to tell you.

Austin:

Gabby: Oh.

Ali:

Blue: Might've been longer.

Austin:

Gabby: It felt— It didn't... No one was dressed—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Well it was my first week of the new company, and that was twelve years ago.

Austin:

Gabby: I see. Somehow I am now less assured. I was trying to reassure you and now I'm the one...

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Back around to—

Ali: Funny how that works.

Austin: Yeah. Back around to Keith.

Keith: Okay. Um, I'm breaking—

Austin: 1d2. Yeah. I don't think that's called breaking.

Keith: No, it's not.

Austin: But. [laughs]

Keith: It's just called having a turn after the first one.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Two!

Austin: Alright, two questions.

Keith: Okay. So. [clears throat] The lights flicker and we feel the hotel shift around us while we play. Blue Hour, how do you react?

Ali: Um... I think that I kind of um... Like, look up at the light, and then I start putting the like chalk on the end of my thing.

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: No big deal?

Ali: Not a huge one.

Keith: Okay.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Um... [sighs]

Austin: Second question.

Keith: I... Expansive. Um, hm. [pause] We're losing... We hit a lot of the questions that I like.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Keith: So. Let's see. Gabby, I... Have we done hope to persuade? We haven't done hope to persuade, have we?

Austin: We have not, no.

Keith: We have not. Okay.

Austin: Holding that one to try to hope to persuade either Blue or have Blue do that with us, but we could try to persuade each other.

Keith: Hm, that's a good use for it, but my... So, okay. Mine is not helpful in that sort of larger way. Well, maybe it is. So, yeah, let's hold onto that. Um, okay. How about this. I remind you of someone else you knew once. Who is that, again? Who is that again?

Austin: Um. It is you. From when we first met.

[Keith laughs]

Austin: That I think finally clicks in my head, you know what I mean? It finally hits that like, oh yeah.

Gabby: We— You were here twelve years ago.

[3:00:00]

Austin:

Gabby: We were at the same hotel twelve years ago, and I remember thinking you were kind of a shmuck, but you know, you kinda... You had a certain sort of uh... There was a degree to which everything came off your—slid off your back, do you know what I mean?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah.

Austin:

Gabby: You were like a well-treated car. The rain just slipped right off you. [laughs] You know what I mean?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's a really nice way— 'Cause some people have said the same thing but they've said like, um, like you're a walking mat or something.

Austin:

Gabby: Nah! No. I mean, I— I don't know how much you walk. So I couldn't really say.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Right.

Keith: Walking mat? Is that the expression?

Austin: [laughs] I know what you mean, no, I was again [laughing] misunderstanding the thing on purpose. So yeah, so there, that's who you remind me of.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Uh, is that your two?

Keith: Uh, yes. That's two. Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Gettin' through 'em. I'm— At this point I've stopped playing the game and I'm drawing up a calendar.

Keith: Doormat. Thank you reptile[dragon age?] [3:01:18].

Austin: Doormat. Yeah, there we go. I got one.

Keith: Walking mat.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

Austin: This is— I am not doing this, but just pretend I'm doing this for a second. Jim, I hope to persuade you that you can [laughing] stay four nights and three days.

[Jack, Keith, and Austin laugh]

Austin: No.

Keith: You can't. I'll— After the pool I'll draw up a diagram.

Austin: Um, yeah. I've already drawn it. It's on the table. I'm drawing one right now. Um... I hope that you, Blue, don't bring up that I've been here for years. That I'm like, a guest who hasn't— I've just been here for years at this point. Every day I get up, every day I try to get the train to Albu—or the [laughs] cable car or the cab or the Uber or whatever the thing is that day, a bike, you know? A—what do you call that when you have a bunch of people on the same bike?

Ali: A marathon?

Austin: No, there's like a—

Keith: I know what you mean.

Austin: There's a word for this, when there's like a five person bike?

Ali: Oh, sure.

Jack: A tandem bike?

Keith: Tandem bike, yeah, that's it.

Austin: A tandem bike, yeah, I take the tandem bike to the airport. Every day I try to take something to the airport. I never go. And I'm hoping you don't bring that up. Do you?

Ali: I think so. 'Cause at this point you said you stopped playing the game and were like, looking at a calendar?

Austin: Yeah, I'm drawing up a [laughing] calendar. But yeah, maybe I'm looking at a calendar.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: I'm looking at an old calendar. Yeah. That's what I'm doing.

Ali: There's like one on the wall.

Keith: Once—

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Whatever the room—

Austin: Yeah. Like a classic, vintage calendar.

Ali: Um. I think that I do, yeah. I think that he... He— [laughs] Blue kind of scoffs as like...

Blue: Listen, it's easier if you're just comfortable. Every single day you're stressed out. The days aren't gonna add up. Just, you know, enjoy it while you're here.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: They literally don't add up.

Austin:

Gabby: They do. They do add up. I'm gonna show you.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Four days, three nights? It's literally impossible.

Austin:

Gabby: One. One, two. And, and Blue, I get what you're saying, but I gotta get out of here. There's no way. There's no way. There's no way. Oh, that's a bad—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's already the evening now, so today's day has already happened. The only time you can have had more nights than days is if you just woke up.

Austin:

Gabby: That's not true.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: But we didn't just wake up.

Austin:

Gabby: That's not— That's not true.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: We've been awake for the whole day.

Austin:

Gabby: Here, look, I drew it for you. There you go.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: One night.

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Two— Okay.

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Four. Right there! Four. You just wrote four!

Austin:

Gabby: Yeah. Four. Right there. That's my fourth night.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: But it has— That— Tonight hasn't happened yet, 'cause I'm still awake.

Austin:

Gabby: It's hap— You're gonna go to bed tonight and tomorrow we're gonna both I— No, we're gonna leave now. We're not gonna leave tomorrow. We're gonna leave now. We gotta get outta here.

Austin: That's my one question.

Ali: Is it me again?

Austin: Uh, yeah.

Ali: I...also [laughing] almost typed that into YouTube instead. [singing] Roll20. Okay. I get one more question. Um...

Austin: Oh I forgot to copy the one in there which is I hope you don't bring up. I should copy that in.

Ali: Yeah, I have...

Austin: Boop. There we go.

Ali: Um.

Keith: Oh, was I supposed to be putting my questions in there?

Ali: That's okay.

Austin: I think I've been doing it, or Ali. One of us has been trying to keep up with it.

Ali: Um, instead of asking a question I'm actually gonna scratch.

Austin: Oooh, okay.

Ali: And it's "I'm feeling expansive. What do you wanna know about me?"

Austin: Cut that one. Okay.

Ali: Uh-huh.

Austin: Um, it's back to Keith. Or do you do something special when you scratch? No. You just scratch.

Ali: I don't think so.

Keith: No.

Austin: Okay. Presumably you do scratch though, and the ball goes flying and—

[Ali laughs]

Austin: And it's 'cause we're arguing about this calendar. [laughs] I'm also getting together a list of the ones that remain, just so that we have them.

Keith: Okay. Great.

Austin: If that makes sense.

Keith: Um, I...

Austin: Did that one.

Ali: Yeah, I actually have them.

Austin: Oh, did you?

Ali: 'Cause I've been deleting them off of a notepad that I have next to me.

Austin: Oh, awesome. Cool.

Ali: I'll post the ones in play.

Austin: Thank you. So we have one, two... Wait, one— Oh, you got rid of that one. So we have from "I hope to persuade" down, basically?

Ali: Yeah, sorry the— Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: [crosstalk] Two, three, four, so we have five left.

Keith: [sighs] Um. [pause] I... Jeepers creepers.

Austin: You can also scratch and eliminate one if you wanted.

Keith: Yeah. Okay, so these are the ones that are left.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Okay, great. Um... [pause] I know a secret or saw something that I wasn't supposed to. Do you encourage me to share details? Let's say to Blue. It's a...

Austin: How do you signal that you have some sort of secret?

Keith: Um... I think it's during— It's part of a sort of, we should try and get out of here argument, and he said something about us like... Try— Doing more to try to imply that the hotel is like, regular. And I'm like:

Indoor Jim: It's not regular. Everything that I've seen is not regular.

Austin: Mmm. Mmhm.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And I know that you know this, because I've seen you doing stuff that's not regular.

Ali: Ohhh.

Blue: What kind of in-regular things do I do?

Keith: So you do— You're encouraging me to share more details?

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Um...

Indoor Jim: I, I, I saw— You're the kitchen coordinator. I saw... I saw foo— I saw food— It wasn't prepared and then it was prepared, it took no time at all.

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I've seen— I've seen no other employees at all. I've seen you talking to people that aren't there. I've seen— I mean really, the eggs. I ordered... On my first day—

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: After two nights I was there one day—

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And I ordered— I ordered an eggs benedict, and it was d— It was— I do— I honestly don't remember there being time before me ordering it and me finishing it. I don't even r— I don't even know if I— I remember I ate it.

Ali:

Blue: Sounds like a you problem.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Sounds like a me problem? You think that for the first time in my life I just don't remember the time between ordering and finishing my meal? Eggs benedict? It's my favorite breakfast.

Austin:

Gabby: He always says this. He always says it's his favorite meal. He loves them. Eggs bene—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I love eggs benedict so much that I will go to a r— I will go to a breakfast place with the full intention of not ordering eggs benedict.

Austin:

Gabby: And then you get it.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: And being like, gosh I just can't not get that benny. I won't even get the specialty benedicts. Lobster benedict?

Austin:

Gabby: Regular benedict.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Steak benedict? I always— It always appeals to me but I'm like, no, I just want the— I just want the classic benedict. And I wouldn't— You think I wouldn't remember this?

Ali:

Blue: So you're telling me, your entire life you've been eating eggs benedicts?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yes!

Ali:

Blue: And you want me to f—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Oh.

[Austin, Ali, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Ali:

Blue: And you want me to think that it's strange that this time you didn't remember the experience of eating it? It was like the, all the other eggs you had.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: If I had my padfolio, I would show you that my—that I didn't even take notes on it. Which is something that you don't—you don't know but that I do every time I get one.

Austin:

Gabby: That's what's in that padfolio. All your egg reviews.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: That's one of the sections that's in the padfolio. It's— There's several dividers dividing up different parts of it, and one of them is the eggs benedict reviews section. I lit— I can't tell you if you have, if you have pre-made or homemade hollandaise. Do you know what that's like for me to not be able to tell *you*?

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: If you have pre-made or homemade hollandaise sauce?

Ali:

Blue: You want me to go make you an egg benedict and then we can settle this?

Austin: That's— “I'm feeling generous, what favor do you ask of me?” [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Keith: It's Ali— Hey— Oh, it's not Ali's turn. But I will take—

Austin: It's not. You also didn't roll. You needed to roll to see how many questions you got. We just kind of assumed it was one.

Keith: Oh. Okay. Slash roll 1d6.

Austin: Nope. Well, [laughing] you got a one anyway.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: I got a one anyway.

Ali: [laughs] That's so weird that that happened twice today.

Austin: It did. That's very funny.

Ali: Ew...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: One. There we go.

Austin: Ugh. Rancid vibes.

Ali: That's scary to me.

Austin: Yeah, I don't like it.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: This is...

Keith: The ones? You don't like the ones

Austin: I don't like that—

Ali: Well I just don't like that like, yeah. In the spirit of Roll20, Roll20 knows that we're fucking up but it's still only giving us one or twos.

Keith: Oh. [laughs]

Ali: Like, that's— [laughs]

Austin: We've rolled two d6's.

Keith: Roll20 is the ghost.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. It's deeply haunted.

Jack: We've spent so long on this app.

Ali: [crosstalk] Roll20 is the stack.

Jack: It knows us now.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, it's true. It's true. It also heard us badmouthing it earlier.

Keith: Roll20 is the bad gateway.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. So that is your question.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Ali, if you wanna skip— If you wanna flop with me this turn so you can say "I'm feeling generous, what favor do you ask of me" about going to get this eggs benny.

Ali: [laughing] Get this egg benedict.

Austin: I won't complain.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah, I guess I sort of— Like, the— I don't know what the intention of that conversation was besides like, it's weird that sometimes I'm not actually served food.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Um.

Keith: Yeah, just ghost hotel stuff.

Ali: Sure.

Keith: Losing time, are you actually even the kitchen manager if the food...

Austin: Right.

Keith: If you're not cooking and preparing food, and actually that time just gets deleted?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: So do you go and make that eggs benny?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah, show me.

Ali:

Blue: Yeah, why not?

Austin: Okay, while that's happening, I am going to scratch um... I accidentally let slip that I blank but I cover it to the best of my ability. Do you let me recover or hold it against me? I like, go to say something to you, Jim, and then like, take a step back and just go back to looking at the calendar.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So that is scratched here. Which now leaves us with: I hope to persuade you that blank; and you've seen me do something strange and out of character. Do you ask me to explain? Those are the only two remaining ones, huh?

Keith: Yeah. So one of me or Ali—

Austin: Yeah. Or—

Keith: —has done something weird.

Austin: Well I—I— It's not— That's not n— Is that true? Yeah, I guess so. I guess that's true.

Keith: 'Cause you scratched.

Austin: 'Cause I scratched, and now it's— And Ali already went this turn 'cause it's— So now you're rolling 1d2 to see how many—

Keith: Well actually— Well, let's talk about the benedict. Is— How does— What is my experience here?

Austin: Sure. You know what, yes, yes, good call.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Do you— Do we watch you prepare, start to finish, an eggs benedict? And do we remember that?

Ali: Um... I mean, I feel like it's one of those things like in the moment, because you're focused on it, you do, you know? It's not one of those, like—

Keith: So you are actually cooking the food.

Ali: Yeah, probably.

Keith: Probably?

Austin: Probably?

[Ali laughs]

Keith: I'm— I should know from watching whether definitely or not.

Austin: Or is it a hazy thing, where we can kind of tell?

Ali: Sh— I mean, if you wanna follow me into the kitchen and watch me do it, we—

Austin: I think we're in there.

Keith: Yeah, we're in there.

Ali: Okay. I thought y— I—

Austin: I'm like, absent-mindedly picking up the things I knocked over before.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: Okay. Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Get a— Get a pan, show me you've got eggs in there.

Ali:

Blue: Sure. Yeah. Here I am.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Ali:

Blue: I'm making food.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Step one?

Ali: I don't— Keith, I don't know anything about eggs benedict. [laughing] Don't do this to me.

Keith: Hm, suspicious!

[Austin laughs]

Keith: In character suspicious, that you don't know how to make an [laughing] eggs benedict.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali: I'm sure he's fine at making an eggs benedict. I personally don't know how to explain to you the—that's the—

Keith: Okay.

Ali: But as a person—

Ali: Blue is a person who has worked at a hotel for a really long time, and you're probably not the only person who's ordered it here.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: I don't think that he makes great one, he's not like a line cook?

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Okay.

Ali: But, you know. It happens.

Austin: Is the hollandaise sauce homemade, or is it...bottled?

Ali: It's probably bottled.

Austin:

Gabby: [whispering] Fuck. Write it down.

[3:15:00]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Yeah, it's bottled.

Austin:

Gabby: Write it down, Jim.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I don't have my padfolio, it's gone.

Austin:

Gabby: I'll get you a new o— I'll get you a piece of paper.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Keith: It will m— It will soothe me to just write it.

Austin: It's the back of the cal— I ripped a calendar page out of that calendar from the room we were in before. And I just put it down and the— And I say:

Gabby: Write on it.

Austin: [laughs] Like I go to flip it over, but when I flip it over I realize that it's like, the truck of the month or whatever. I think it's a fishing thing. I think it's a big, big-mouthed bass is on the other side, 'cause it's the flip-side of the page, do you know what I mean?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It's like here's a calendar page. On the other side is the next month's you know, art. Artwork of the calendar.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And it's a big bass. And I go:

Gabby: Ah—mmm. I guess, just write it underneath where I've done the day chart.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Okay.

Keith: So I write, "hollandaise," question mark, "store-bought." And then sort of like...sort of like side-mouth like, little emoji. I draw it.

Austin: Okay.

Gabby: It's a little face you drew. I like it.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: [quietly] Thanks.

Austin: Alright, roll your die.

Keith: Oh, me again.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Slash roll 1d2. Oh, I could have two. It didn't even occur to me that I have two.

Austin: You could have two.

Keith: But I don't, so it's fine. Um. I hope to persuade you that we should all break out of the hotel. Because our lives are in danger. I don't know about your life. *My* life is in danger.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

Keith: And it's—

Indoor Jim: It's pretty clear to me, benedict or no, that some—that you know that something weird is going on here. I don't care that sometimes you cook a ghost benedict and sometimes you cook a real benedict, I'm not convinced that it's safe for me.

Ali: Um. Yeah, I guess. I [laughs] um. I don't know. This scene doesn't feel like it has like a climax, but at the same time like, being locked in a room with forty minutes for people being like "can you just help us?"

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: Feels like... I don't know.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I mean, you don't h— You don't have to.

[Ali laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Sorry. No, I've been a ghost here for a long time. Or you know, whatever you are. I think you're a ghost. Which is saying something 'cause I don't believe in them.

Ali:

Blue: I'm not the one who's talking about being here for twelve years. I did that [unintelligible] [3:18:08] thing.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: No, I was here twice, I— I'm pretty sure that I was here twice.

[Ali laughs]

Austin:

Gabby: But that woulda mean you left.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I—

Austin:

Gabby: Maybe you— I think we met somewhere else.

Ali:

Blue: "Oh, I'm so sad, those people made fun of me." You've been thinking that for twelve years, buddy.

Austin:

Gabby: Okay, well—

Keith:

Indoor Jim: It's— That's not— That's just— That's—extremely...

Ali:

Blue: When you leave here what are you even gonna do?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Go... [pause]

Jack: Oooh.

Ali:

Blue: Exactly.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: To work, go back to work!

Ali:

Blue: Exactly.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: What do you—

Ali:

Blue: Just fucking order another eggs benedict, go upstairs, rent the pay-per-view you do every night. I'll bring you your can of Diet Coke and some popcorn, like I do, and it can just keep being the thing that it is.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: But I gotta get ba— I gotta get b— I gotta see, you know. I have a— I have— I wanna go to the movies, I wanna go...

Ali:

Blue: We have movies. You could rent Home Alone upstairs.

[Austin laughs]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: I like to buy... I like you, you know, stand in the line and see on the big screen. And I like to, like—

Austin:

Gabby: Jim. Jim, Jim. Jim, he's right. He's—

Austin: And I light— I like, lower a cigarette to the flame of the kitchen stove.

Gabby: I know I'm not supposed to smoke in here, I don't care.

Austin: And I go:

Gabby: We can be floor twins. Huh?

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Floor twins.

Austin: And I reach up to like, take a drag off the cigarette, and I scratch the last question. Which is, “you see me do something strange and out of character recently. Do you ask me to explain?” And then it becomes Ali's turn to end billiards, at which point you get the eight ball. You may ask an original question to further your own agendas, to any players you choose. Maybe one specific player, or maybe all of them. You also sink the last ball and end the game of billiards.

Ali: [laughs] Um. I may ask an original question.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: No one's ever asked this question before.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali:

Blue: Listen, you're all stressed out. It's been a long day for the both of you. How can I make you more comfortable?

Austin:

Gabby: C-Can you get someone to carry the luggage up? Uh, 226.

Ali:

Blue: Yeah.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Have you seen my padfolio?

Ali:

Blue: Uh, you know, I think that you probably left it in the conference ballroom.

Keith:

Indoor Jim: Is that an allowed room?

Ali:

Blue: Yeah.

[pause]

Keith:

Indoor Jim: ["alright" noise]

Austin: And I think that's that scene.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: To end play you have two options. [laughs]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Attempt to escape the hotel for good, or leave your characters living in the hotel indefinitely. For the latter bring up any unresolved questions you have about your characters and say what you think possible outcomes might be. Let the other players contribute possible outcomes as well, then vote to decide which outcome is true. I'm just here. I'm just here. Maybe things get a little easier because I make peace with—that I'm not leaving, finally? That I've gone through this cycle—is my suggestion for my character—endlessly since the fire, and this is the first time that I'm like, I just live here now.

Keith: Yeah.

[Ali laughs]

Keith: Uh, well, I think— I think there's the question of the anomaly. I think it's probably something—

Austin: Yeah, that's a big question.

Keith: I think it's a lot like living in the first corridor of Resident Evil 7 for your whole life.

Austin: [groans]

Keith: Yeah. And uh, I think for Jim— I think that Jim could have easily stayed here forever. And instead, like, I think Gabby like, almost— Almost feeling like maybe we could have decided to escape with Gabby—

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: —made the next little while much harder for Jim.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Ah, the proximity.

Austin: I introduced the idea, and then...

Keith: Right.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Who could have very easily just been convinced that it's always just like been the third or fourth day.

Austin: Yeah. Right.

Keith: Um. And so like, spends a lot of time just sort of like, fruitlessly trying like windows and stuff like that, instead of copying from book to book little liner notes.

Austin: Bad Gateway and Blue?

Ali: [laughs] You know, I think that I'm still working here. [laughs]

Austin: Same job? You don't get a promotion, you don't get...

Ali: Yeah. I'm here to support the hotel, you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: That was— It got stressful for a second there and I— I was able to make the guests happy.

Jack: [laughs] Uh, Bad Gateway is furious.

[Ali laughs]

Jack: Is excited about the possibility of maybe being able to kill Gabby and Jim?

Austin: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Jack: But, you know, is no closer to escape. Has not even been able to articulate that Jim and Gabby were able to articulate over billiards, because this is a demon from hell. So I think what happens is, um... It's just a shot of the camera moving slowly through the boiler room way down in the basement of the hotel or whatever, and suddenly a flash fire you know, breaks out in three or four rooms, burns for twenty seconds, and then stops completely. And then there's you know a long period of silence, and then it burns for another twenty seconds and stops completely. Just this like, this entity of fire basically throwing a tantrum down in the basement of a hotel.

Austin: And the credits hit, presumably.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: You love it.

Jack: What's the credit song? Oh is it fuckin' Hotel California?

Austin: It has to be that, right? Unfortunately.

Keith: It would be very funny if it was something different.

Austin: Yeah. A different hotel song. [typing] Songs about hotels. It's Hotel Yorba [laughs] by The White Stripes.

[Keith, Ali, and Jack laugh]

Austin: [laughing] It's Hotel Room Service by Pitbull.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Alright. That's gonna do it for us here at Friends at the Table. Thank you for watching or listening. friendsatthetable.cash is where you can go to support us. friendsatthetable.net for all the episodes. Friends_Table on Twitter. Um, thank you again, I hope you enjoyed. This again was You Can—

Keith: El Hotel by They Might Be Giants?

[Ali and Jack laugh]

Austin: That's it. That one works, actually. That one, I think—

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: This was You Can—

Keith: Well, the band isn't quite there, but the name is good.

Austin: Right, sure, the name. You Can Check Out Any Time You Like, But You Can Never Leave by... The itch is marns.itch.io. The pub— The like, studio— The— I don't know what to call— What do you call— What's the word I'm looking for here? I guess Card Zero Press is the name of the company, the designer company. But again, marn, M-A-R-N-S dot itch dot I-O for You Can Check Out Any Time You Like, But You Can Never Leave. We should go to time.is.

Jack: Let's do a clap.

Austin: Would love to clap.

Jack: The M key on my keyboard is not working very well, so I just went to tie dot is.

Ali: Awww.

Jack: A site to buy all your ties. I actually don't know what that is.

Austin: Sure. Sure.

Jack: Tie.is does not exist.

Austin: Okay. Good to know.

Jack: Uh... Let's do, uh, forty five?

Austin: Sounds good.

[End of episode.]