

## Bluff City Movie Club: Streets of Fire

Transcriber: robotchangeling

**Austin:** I was not recording my own microphone in my backup. I am now.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** *[clears throat]* Good job, me. Hmm. Take a sip of water. So, here's the thing: Perrier is actually really good. *[Ali and Sylvia laugh quietly]*

**Ali:** Okay?

**Austin:** I forgot that it was good. And the thing is, I used to know it was good, because I used to drink it a lot, because it was easy to steal from the grad cafe at CalArts.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They used to just have boxes of it, and it was super easy to grab one of the big Perrier bottles and just keep it. *[Ali laughs quietly]* And also, let me be clear: no one who worked there cared. And I forgot, because I haven't had it in years, and this ramen place near me has it, and I was like, "I'll just get a Perrier. What the fuck, why not?" *[Ali laughs]* And I'm drinking it now, like, "Wow, this is like very good."

**Ali:** Uh huh. It's great to have a favorite water.

**Austin:** It's not my favorite, *[Ali: "Okay"]* but it's good.

**Ali:** All right, fair.

**Austin:** I'm a SmartWater person.

**Ali:** Oh, SmartWater is great.

**Austin:** I really— it's like so crisp. I don't know. I don't know what the difference is between it and Dasani, but you could fucking never catch me with a Dasani in my hand.

**Ali:** It's the truth.

**Sylvia:** That's fair.

**Ali:** It's a bad water.

**Austin:** It's a bad water! *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** It's like the worst one.

**Austin:** It's the worst one. It's unbelievable that this is the case. It's the worst one.

**Ali:** It's the worst one.

**Austin:** It's the only one where I'll be like, "No, I'm good, actually. I'll be thirsty." *[Ali laughs]* Or like, if someone was like, "You could have a lifetime of Dasani water for free," I'd be like, "I'm good with tap, actually. Thank you, though. I'm just good with some ice."

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

**Austin:** Have we researched this? Why is Dasani bad?

**Ali:** I think it's saltier than all the other ones?

**Austin:** Is that true?

**Ali:** That's the reason I've made up.

**Sylvia:** I mean, the first thing I wrote, like Google suggested, when I wrote, "Why does Dasani," was "Why does Dasani tastes weird?"

**Austin:** It does!

**Sylvia:** So, like, you know.

**Ali:** It does.

**Austin:** They add magnesium sulfate, otherwise called Epsom salt, that not only has laxative properties but is a known teratogen...wait, this guy might be a... *[Ali laughs]* Okay. This is from someone who claims to have a PhD in biological chemistry and music theory, *[laughter]* which is a great combo. John, former chief chemist at Technical Laboratories Inc, says, "Dasani water is not 'bad.' It is just water. I often see people say it is 'bad,' and they use scientific words and nonsensical ways to prove their claims. The truth is that the amount of added chemicals are far too small to affect our bodies in any way except taste." Yeah, dawg, that's the thing people are saying is bad!

**Ali:** Yeah. It tastes bad. *[Sylvia laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** Oh, he's a Dasani stan. *[Ali gasps]* "I only use bottled water when the convenience is important. When I do use bottled water, Dasani is my choice for two reasons."

**Ali:** Ugh!

**Austin:** “One, taste. Two, Dasani bottles fit the cupholders of my car better than most other water bottles.” *[laughs quietly]*

**Sylvia:** Three, I work in the marketing department.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* Oh, lord. All right. Y’all ready to do this thing?

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And stop reading about Dasani? *[Sylvia laughs]*

**Ali:** Do you have like an intro? Is there a lead-in?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I’m just gonna be like, “Hey, welcome, blah blah blah, Pusher update.” My last one, we did not do like a big summary, but my guess is this is not a movie people have seen, and I feel like we should do a summary for it.

**Ali:** Okay, yeah.

**Austin:** And also just like talk through it, and then the same kind of things I did with the *Sneakers* podcast, which is like, I would love to talk about...so, walk through the plot, and then like things we liked, things we didn’t, standout sequences, standout conversations. And then like connect it to *Bluff* in ways, which we’ll do as we talk through the movie, my guess is. That includes things like the attitude of the movie, the setting, like the weird abstract world it’s in, the ways in which...like, I’m not gonna burn cast, but there’s lots of ways for me with which this movie is weirdly *Bluff*. And then just kind of like weird factoids about that movie along the way. You know, it’ll be very loose. It’s not...this is not a particularly...

**Ali:** Dense, or like...

**Austin:** No.

**Ali:** Well, it’s dense, but it’s not like...

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** There's not a lot of nuance.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Sylvia:** With the plot, at least. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Exactly. Y'all ready to Time.is?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Oh, we do have to do that one.

**Austin:** We do have to do that. Who knew?

**Ali:** Okay. Top of the minute?

**Austin:** Top of the minute. Yeah, sure.

**Sylvia:** All right.

*[they clap]*

**Austin:** That sounded good to me. *[Ali laughs]* All right. Welcome, everyone, to this Pusher update bonus episode of Friends at the Table. Today, we are talking about *Streets of Fire*, a rock and roll fable; another time, another place. I'm Austin Walker. Joining me, Sylvi<sup>1</sup> Clare?

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me— oh, do I do the Twitter thing on this one?

**Austin:** Eh, it's up to you.

**Sylvia:** All right.

**Austin:** You know what this is? This is Pushers. These Pushers know how to find us already.  
*[Ali laughs]*

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

**Sylvia:** You know what?

**Austin:** We're on—

**Sylvia:** For the Pushers?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Fuck Twitter. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** I'm Sylvi. Nice to meet you.

**Austin:** But go listen to Emojidrome, still.

**Sylvia:** That one— yeah, that thing's pretty— we're trying to get that one off the ground. Please.

**Austin:** Reviews help. Go review Emojidrome, please. You already do a lot for us. Do this one more thing, please. Thank you very much. *[Sylvia and Ali laugh]* Ma'am? Ma'am, may I please have an iTunes review? *[all laugh]*

**Sylvia:** Oh no!

**Austin:** Ma'am?!

**Sylvia:** Austin said that one, not me. *[Austin laughs]* Oh my god.

**Ali:** And I'm Alicia Acampora. Let's go. *[others laugh]*

**Austin:** All right. Oh my god. So, today, like I said, we are talking about *Streets of Fire*, a movie directed by Walter Hill, who previously had written and directed *The Warriors*, directed *48 Hrs.*, went on to direct a couple of *Tales from the Crypt* episodes, a *Deadwood* episode, *Brewster's Millions*. And it was co-written, I think, by Hill, and according to Hill— and this is like the setup that Hill gives it. A thing I just want to shout out really quick is the Wikipedia page for *Streets of Fire*, because it is filled with just, mwah, juicy, juicy, delectable quotes. This is one of the situations where the writer, director, people involved with this movie care that you know everything about this movie, and also many of them have clearly updated their own Wikipedia pages also. *[Ali laughs]* Quote, “According to Hill, the film's origins came out of a desire to make what he thought was a perfect film when he was a teenager and put in all the things that he thought were, quote, ‘great then and which I still have a great affection for: custom cars, kissing in the rain, neon, trains in the night, high-speed pursuits, rumbles, rock stars, motorcycles, jokes in tough situations, leather jackets and questions of honor.’” What a fucking pitch.

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

**Sylvia:** Nailed it!

**Austin:** Ali, yeah?

**Ali:** It's funny how specific that list gets, because I was looking at my list of notes, which is two, which is: I love DJ Douggpound, *[Austin laughs]* and there's no cooler way to like establish a character's like attributes than to have a cool guy order a black coffee.

**Austin:** Yes, 100%. *[laughter]*

**Ali:** And I would like to add ordering black coffee to that list.

**Austin:** Yes. Ordering black coffee, jokes in tough situations, leather jackets, Motown music weirdly out of place. *[laughter]* You know, because that list should just be as long as everything. I guess, let's start here. Like, what do we think about this movie as a movie, first and foremost? Sylvi, what did you think?

**Sylvia:** I liked it! Like, it's fun. It's not...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You don't really go in expecting...like...

**Austin:** High art?

**Sylvia:** You go in expecting a rock and roll fable, and you definitely get it.

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

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You know what? Yes.

**Sylvia:** Like, I think it's like...I think it's like a very stylish and very fun movie. It's definitely like, when I found— I didn't know that Walter Hill directed this and *The Warriors* until after I'd seen it.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** And like, the whole time, I was like, "This is kinda like *The Warriors*, but I want to watch *The Warriors* a little bit more."

**Austin:** Yeah. Yep.

**Sylvia:** But like, I still...this movie was really fun.

**Austin:** This is like an inverted *Warriors* in some way. Like, I mean, literally, there's still a segment of them like trying to get home, but like the ways in which it's like just them going to fuck something up instead of running away in terror is there, but still has all of the...I mean, there's other ways in which I think it's reverse *Warriors* around like normie shit kind of being the good guys in a way, which we'll get to at the end of that movie. Ali, what did you think of *Streets of Fire*?

**Ali:** *[laughs]* I liked it. I...the only like touchstone that I had for this movie before going into it was that I've like been to a couple Protomen concerts. *[Sylvia laughs]*

**Austin:** Okay. Sure.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* And they kind of go for that whole thing.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes. I grew up with a mom who loved Meat Loaf, the band and musician, so yes.

**Ali:** Uh huh! So it hit the chords that it needed to, I guess.

**Austin:** Like, literally? Yeah. *[Ali laughs]* Like the prog rock operatic, like, "We are fucking here, and we are singing with our outside voices inside." *[Ali laughs]* So, we didn't...for the *Sneakers* podcast, we didn't do a like point-by-point breakdown of the plot, but I think it's worth doing it here, because I think it will help us kind of focus our conversation a little bit. The movie takes place, quote, in "another time, another place," which I think is so perfect. I think I linked the trailer for this movie around when we launched Bluff, being like, wow, this movie has a thing I love, which is I don't know when it's set. Is it set in the 1950s? The cars and some of the fashion seem to think it is. Is it set in the 1980s? Well, some of the technology and some of the music certainly makes you think that. The hair certainly makes you think '80s. And it opens with a live, I think, charity performance? Because there's this line that Rick Moranis says, where he's like, "Should have never done this benefit! You have any idea how much money I'm losing tonight?" *[Ali laughs]* Of Ellen Aim, who is the lead singer of Ellen Aim and the Attackers is her band, and they are there to play some real fucking rock and roll music, and in the middle of her performance of what is truly a very catchy weird song that includes the lyric— I mean, there's a lot of great lyrics in that song. "There's nothing wrong with going nowhere, baby, but we should be going nowhere fast," is a great hook.

**Ali:** *[laughs quietly]* Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** I also love, "I don't know where I got the bright idea that I was cool, so alone and

independent, but I'm depending on you now," is also very good. *[laughter]* In the middle of this sequence, Ellen is kidnapped— or at the end of this sequence, Ellen is kidnapped by...uh, what the fuck is his name? Why am I—

**Ali:** Raven?

**Austin:** Willem Dafoe. Raven, played by Willem Dafoe.

**Sylvia:** Raven Shaddock?

**Austin:** Raven Shaddock. The names in this movie are so good. *[Ali laughs]* What did you think of this intro?

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. I loved it.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The thing that I...this movie, like...there's a lot of neon lighting in movies, like in 2019 and has been for a while.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** But what this movie gets that a lot of them don't is how gaudy neon can be.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** And it's not trying to be like moody with it. It's just got big, like...the concert hall that they keep going back to is like the perfect example of this, because they've got the like lights that go on in the background behind Ellen while she's singing, *[Austin: "Mm-hmm"]* and like the band can do all this. The band also all looked like if you opened up David Byrne's big suit, *[Austin: "Right"]* these four smaller David Byrnes would come out. *[others laugh]*

**Austin:** Oh my God. They're a real new wave band, by the way.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, Face to Face.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** They're from a band called Face to face that...is okay. They're all right. They're an '80s



new wave band.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I just thought it like...it set everything up perfectly and immediately got me like, "Oh, this is gonna be really fun."

**Austin:** There is that— there's two things. One is like, you're right, the neon. I mean, it opens with neon in the fucking rain on the rainy ground, like a rainbow of neon, and it is hard to do that thing and make it cool. It manages to do that. There's some cool rapid cuts up top, and then we get the reveal of Willem Dafoe's character at the end of the song, as like the lights come up, and you see his gnarly fucking face, *[others laugh]* and you're like, "Oh man, this dude is up to no good." I love that moment so much. And also, please just jump in if you have stuff. Like, I don't want to make this like a super formal where I'm like calling on everybody.

**Ali:** Oh, no, no, no. Yeah.

**Austin:** So, please. After that sequence, we...you know, Ellen is kidnapped, and we kind of follow out one of the people who, i guess, in the intro, it sets up. This woman, Reva, Reva Cody. Reh-va? Ree-va? Ree-va.

**Sylvia:** I think it's Ree-va is how they say it in the movie.

**Austin:** Yeah. Who was working at a diner. Who owns a diner? It's not really clear. *[Ali laughs]* Like many things in this movie. Eh, it's...this movie has a very JRPG quality, to me.

**Sylvia:** Yeah! *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Do you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** Everything's all—

**Ali:** Where everyone has like a class?

**Austin:** Yes, everyone has a class, and like NPCs just exist in the world. Like, characters just are— oh, she's in the diner. Whose diner is it? She's the one in it! Who could say? *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** It's like—

**Austin:** People walk around without like...people walk past what looks like just a bombed out post apocalyptic city, as if they don't know that about the city. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

**Sylvia:** It's also got— similarly, it has this quality of like, everything's both very specific and very

vague.

[0:15:03]

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, with all this stuff, that gives it that sort of like, “Was this weirdly localized?” vibe  
[*Austin: “Yes,” Ali laughs*] that a lot of the like PlayStation JRPGs had.

**Austin:** Oh my God, you're totally right. God. And so, we end up following Reva out of the bar or out of the nightclub as this happens, and she sends a letter to her brother Tom, Tom Cody, who is somewhere else in the world—another another time, another place—to come home, because...I don't think she says why, does she, in the letter?

**Ali:** I don't think so, but I think it's important to note, at this point, that the...

**Austin:** Please.

**Ali:** The reason we know that she's writing a letter is because the screen is just completely a typewriter. [*laughs*]

**Austin:** Oh my God. Yes.

**Ali:** And you're just watching the words fill in as like music is happening, [*Austin: “Yes”*] and sometimes it cuts to a guy on a motorcycle.

**Austin:** Oh my God, it's so— oh, I thought he was on— is he on a motorcycle or is he on the train? He's on like the mysterious train home?

**Ali:** Oh, right.

**Austin:** That's just like...

**Ali:** Yeah, this is him traveling into the city while she's mailing him...

**Austin:** Yes. This letter. And he...I have some notes here about him. [*others laugh quietly*] Let's see. Oh, also, I mean, we kind of skipped that like the actual kidnapping is so chaotic and wild. Like, it actually— there's a woman in the street who is just yelling, “Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!” over and over. It's almost scary. Raven Shaddock's band—gang, not band—the Bombers are like just greaser biker dudes, and also greasy biker dudes, and they shouldn't be scary, because they all just look like Tom of Finland rejects, [*quiet laughter*] and yet. And yet, that moment, like, “Oh,

wow, yeah, there's a lot of them. This is kind of wild." The thing is...where's my apology? I don't know where I wrote— here it is. What I've written here is, "My bi representation is thinking that both Reva and Tom Cody are super hot. Sorry, not sorry." I will note: I wrote that while he was on the train, before he opened his mouth. *[laughter]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So, he shows up at the diner, and Reva is being threatened by some local toughs from another gang, not the Bombers—I forget the name of that fucking gang, if there even was one—and he beats the shit out of them *[laughs]* and steals their car. And Reva and he go on a joyride, and she's like, "Yo, Ellen got kidnapped," and he's like, "*[grumbles]* So what? I'm Tom Cody." *[quiet laughter]*

**Ali:** That was the line, yep.

**Austin:** That's basically the line. And ends up...does he go out that night? He's like, "Fine, I'll go rescue her, but I'm gonna get a cut," basically, right?

**Ali:** Well, so—

**Austin:** Or is that—

**Ali:** I think what happens is...yeah, I think so. I mean, the importance here is that it establishes that they were exes.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** We learn that Ellen is his ex-girlfriend.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** And I think, at this point, like left him to get into music.

**Austin:** It's super not clear. I mean, I think there's a dispute as to who left who, because he also went to be a soldier. What war? A war. Who could say? *[Ali laughs]* This is not coming out after *Lacuna*, is it?

**Ali:** Mm...probably not?

**Austin:** Okay. I think...we'll talk about it later. We'll talk about this later, where I can give like a clear spoiler warning for it.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** But in this moment, what I want to say— I forgot one important thing, which is there is a moment where Tom Cody takes off his jacket in that fight, *[laughter]* to reveal a sleeveless cutoff blue denim shirt?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And *really* high-waisted slacks with suspenders.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm!

**Austin:** And in this scene, it looks like he shaved by mistake, and someone told him, “Stop shaving! You have a beard in this movie!” and he's like, “Oh, I'm good. I'm good. I'm sorry.” So he still has a five o'clock shadow but a full mustache, and it is bad look for Tom Cody.

**Sylvia:** There's a lot of bad looks for Tom Cody in this movie.

**Austin:** Oh my God. *[Ali laughs]* It's infuriating.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. It really is, because he's got like...

**Austin:** Yes!

**Sylvia:** The costuming is really what's killing him here. And his speaking.

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

**Sylvia:** But like, it's...I literally like had to— I was like kind of taking notes, but like the second he showed off those really high pants, I had to write down, “His pants are so high!”

**Austin:** They're so high! *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** It's kind of a trend in this move.

**Austin:** Yeah, it absolutely is.

**Sylvia:** There's a lot of really high pants.

**Austin:** And like, it's also one of the first times where you see him as like...so, there are kind of

three cities in this movie, or three districts, I guess. I don't understand where this movie takes place. Another time, another place. *[Ali laughs quietly]* But the...in his district, which I think is called the Richmond or...

**Ali:** Yeah, the Richmond.

**Austin:** Is that right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It is like normie HQ, and so even he— it's like everyone just wears neutral colors. Everyone has like slacks and shirts and blouses and lots of suspenders and maybe a couple of nice vests and buttons and skirts. And like, everyone's normal, like very 50s inspired, just normie bullshit. But even he— he can't be that, because he's the drifter, which I think was the name of the character originally. So he still has to start as that, and then they just have to cut off the sleeves to show he's a badass, which, by the way, at some point in this movie, someone goes, "Tom Cody? He's a badass," or something like that. *[Ali laughs]* I think it was a cop who said that. "He's a real badass." So yeah, he goes out that night to the bar, to a tavern—which apparently is called the Blackhawk—and runs into a soldier, another ex-soldier, another veteran named McCoy, who is played by Amy Madigan. One of my favorite parts of this movie is her performance and that character in general, which is interesting, because this character was originally a dude named Mendez, and Amy Madigan came in to read to audition for the part of Reva, Tom's sister, and during that audition, said, "No, I want to play Mendez. Just make that me. I want to be the sidekick action hero," *[Ali laughs]* and convinced the director *[Sylvia: "Wow"]* to recast and rewrite that role to be a woman, which is super interesting, given the way that that character is like...her being a woman is very key to her relationship with everybody else in this movie, and so that's super interesting. Anyway, she beats the shit out of the bartender *[laughter]* and gives Tom some tequila, and they go to Tom's place, where she is going to crash on the couch, because, quote, "he is not her type."

**Sylvia:** Do you guys know who that bartender was?

**Austin:** No.

**Sylvia:** It was Bill Paxton.

**Austin:** Oh my God! What?

**Ali:** Oh, that's right. *[laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Austin:** Was he not an actor yet?

**Sylvia:** No, he was. I'm looking now. This was like...he wasn't like a major actor yet, but like, he'd been in a couple things.

**Austin:** Oh my God.

**Ali:** Where'd he get that voice from?

**Austin:** Tom Cody or the bartender?

**Ali:** The bartender.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** Every time I wanted that scene, I'm like, "What do you...how do you...why are you talking like that?" *[laughter]*

**Austin:** Oh, man. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I want to know what voice direction in general was in this movie, *[Ali: "Yeah"]* because everybody is on one.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Everybody. The cops are on one. Like, Rick Moranis is on one. We skipped, by the way, Rick Moranis is playing— I said the promoter, and, we've come to find, also the current flame of Ellen, Ellen Aim. Ellen Aim and the Attackers is so fucking good.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Rick Moranis's character is named Billy Fish, also a great name. And I guess the next morning, after crashing at his sister's place, he goes to meet up with...he meets up with somebody else before Billy Fish, doesn't he? Oh, he goes to get weapons. He goes and buys a bunch of guns! *[laughter]*

**Sylvia:** I completely forgot about that scene.

**Austin:** Well, because I remember him saying to his sister, *[imitating]* "Hey, when she gets up, uh, make sure she gets some coffee. I'm Tom Cody. It's me. Hey. I'm a drifter. I don't know where my sleeves went. I lost them on the train." God, it is Bill Paxton. Sorry, I just have this movie running now, so I can see. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's weird, right?

**Austin:** He's doing a head motion in this scene that is unbelievable.

**Sylvia:** There's also—

**Ali:** It's just, it's an entire performance. Go on. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** It is.

**Sylvia:** I just— I couldn't confirm it, because it's such a small role. I think Christopher Meloni was in this too?

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Sylvia:** But I can't tell if it's him or not. It looks so much like him.

**Austin:** Who is it?

**Sylvia:** They meet like a homeless man when they go to the other district.

**Austin:** Oh!

**Sylvia:** And he like— they talk to him for a second.

**Austin:** Oh!

**Sylvia:** And I did watch this really late at night. I could be wrong, but I thought that was Chris Meloni in the moment, and I went on IMDb, and I couldn't find any listings for who that was.

**Austin:** Um...I mean, that character must have a name, right? A bad name.

**Sylvia:** He's in one scene, so I don't know.

**Austin:** Yeah, maybe not. Wait, is that...? Wait. There are a lot of people in this movie. Wait. *[Ali laughs]* I'm now looking— I'm now going back through, and it's like, Ed Begley Jr. is here, and Robert Townsend is in this movie. What is happening? Anyway. I'm gonna back out. He ends up meeting up with...Billy Fish? Billy Fish.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Another thing about this movie is the credits like never stop. It's like 20 minutes of credits in the beginning of this movie. *[laughter]* He meets up with Billy Fish and says, "Hey, I heard that your girlfriend Ellen Aim has been kidnapped. Give me \$10,000, and I will go rescue her," which is a lot of money, but I guess maybe not as much money...I guess like, I'm gonna go to the gang hideout and shoot a bunch of people, *[laughter]* it should be like \$10,000. And while

there, McCoy is like, "Hey, take me with you. Give me a cut. I'm broke. I'm an ex-soldier. You know, I need a job." And Tom says, "Yeah, sure, you get 10%." He kind of says it to spite Billy Fish, Rick Moranis, because Rick Moranis hates the idea of a woman coming to help find his girlfriend? He uses the word "skirt" a lot.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** He says something else. What's he say? There's a phrase.

**Ali:** I think that he says like, "I'm not paying you all this money to bring a sweetheart with you," or whatever.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* He does say that, yes.

**Ali:** There's also a really specific thing that we learn about Rick Moranis's character in here that's like such an incredible worldbuilding thing, that like, if there was like a side AU comic book about Rick Moranis's character's like teen life, I would buy it. *[laughter]*

**Austin:** I'm listening.

**Ali:** But specifically that he just wants to pay off Tom and like have him go kidnap her— or un-kidnap her, I guess. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Uh huh. Rescue, yeah.

**Ali:** Kidnap her back. *[laughs]* But Tom insists that he comes with, because Billy Fish grew up in the weirdo gang district that the leather people are from.

**Austin:** Yes! Yes!

**Ali:** And it's like, how did that happen? How did he get out of there?

**Austin:** Yeah. He has this great moment where he talks about how— I mean, like, he's gone from living in the Battery, which is the name of that district, to wearing a suit that is worth more than what Tom Cody made in a year, right? And it's just like this amazing— I don't even know if it's a herringbone suit or what, but he has a bow tie. Rick Moranis is just— okay, so here's my like thesis about this movie at this moment. I can give it to you, now that we've talked about both McCoy and Fish. When you make a mistake when making a movie, in casting, you can make one of two casting mistakes. One is you could get boring leads. Two is you can get boring supporting cast. This made the right mistake, which is boring leads, *[quiet laughter]* because all of the supporting characters are incredible, and it like...I don't care about— Tom Cody's— we can talk about Tom Cody. But like, it is just Tom Cody and a band of really interesting characters, which is again why it's like a JRPG. *[laughter]* It's just a super bland lead dude, and then



everyone else around him is incredibly cool. You're right, he does say, "Hey, I know where the Battery is. I grew up there." I would love to see that EU comic– or that AU– either EU or AU. Alternative universe where he stays there.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Billy Fish getting out of the Battery, like...

**Austin:** Yes! And so he leads them to the Battery. McCoy drives the stolen red '50s convertible there. And here's where I don't understand the time of this movie. And I– listen, Pushers. I know I'm not– I, Austin Walker, I am not allowed to be critical of the way time works in fiction. *[quiet laughter]*

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** But it is noon when he takes that meeting. It's very clear that he's meeting Billy Fish at noon. He meets him at noon. That conversation is about six minutes long, probably shorter. Let's say 10. Let's abstract it out. 10 minutes. He then drives them...they drive to the Battery, which is another district, either– I believe in the same city. They act as if it's one big city. And by the time they get there, it is the middle of the night. You can get to Boston from New York in like four hours. *[laughs]*

**Ali:** I don't think that it's the same city.

**Austin:** Then where is it? And it's like midnight.

**Ali:** Because there's that whole later scene where like Tom and Ellen are taking a train to another transfer to like leave, and then–

**Austin:** Yeah, but it's like a subway train. It's like a L. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He's like standing– it's the train he's standing on to begin with, where he's holding onto a pole. It's the Chicago L or something.

**Ali:** Okay, yeah.

**Austin:** I'm not opposed. I'm not– you're not– like, is it like Detroit and Chicago? Is that what it maybe is? Is it like a bunch of Midwestern cities, maybe? Where like, you could imagine a rival gang coming into town? I guess it must be. You know what throws me off?

**Ali:** *[laughs quietly]* There's like such strict borders, right?

**Austin:** Yes, yes.

**Ali:** That like, yeah.

**Austin:** What throws me off is they're calling it by a neighborhood name. They're like, "Oh, yeah, we're from the Richmond. We're from the Battery." They're not from Battery City. You know what I mean?

**Ali:** Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Also, is it called the Battery because it's just like a bunch of power plants and shit? Because that's cool. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Oh, that is cool.

**Austin:** They find out– or actually, there's, I guess, a moment where Billy Fish says like, "They're probably keeping her at Torchie's," which is a great name for a bar in a power plant factory district. They're probably keeping her at Torchie's. They somehow park the car and end up sneaking across a warehouse rooftop, where they do meet a homeless man who tells them that she's being kept at the second floor of Torchie's, and there's just an incredible moment where he's like, "Why are we paying this guy to tell us that she's on Torchie's? I already know she's at Torchie's. I said she's at Torchie's." And someone's like, "Shut up, shithead," and he walks away, and he's like mumbling under his breath, and finally he goes like, "I *am* a shithead." *[laughter]* It's so good. It's so good.

**[0:30:40]**

**Sylvia:** He's really good in this.

**Austin:** And then we get to Torchie's, and we get to see what the Bombers are all about, and it turns out it is...God, what even is it? How do you describe Torchie's?

**Sylvia:** It– *[sighs]* It's like a greaser saloon?

**Austin:** It's like a greaser saloon.

**Ali:** It's a greaser saloon strip club?

**Austin:** Strip club, where they're singing a song about hot studs, and...

**Sylvia:** *[laughs]* That's...

**Austin:** And also, when I say songs, it's like rockabilly. It's like rock and roll. Like, it's not even rockabilly. It's just rock and roll, right? Like, it's sort of rockabilly, but in the setting, nothing about

this screams like, “Ah, yes, retro,” or like revival. This is just what music sounds like in this world. And, yeah, there's a stripper. *[Ali laughs]* There is a stripper who has a thong and who's doing all sorts of interpretive dances on the bar.

**Ali:** Oh, it's so good.

**Austin:** But also, people are dancing. People are also dancing. It's amazing.

**Sylvia:** By the way, that's also a real band, I found out last night.

**Austin:** Thank God.

**Sylvia:** That was also another real band. I didn't know about the other one, so I wouldn't be shocked if they had just a lot of musicians that they worked with on this.

**Austin:** Yeah, that makes sense. The dancer in question, by the way, is the stunt dancer from *Flashdance*.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Austin:** And if *Flashdance* didn't happen, *Streets of Fire* probably wouldn't have happened. This was like partially...*Flashdance* let them know like, oh, we can do a music-heavy movie, and also we can do— this is a quote from them, that *Flashdance* made them feel like they could do a movie that really focused on a woman. And I don't know that that's this movie, *[quiet laughter]* but that is certainly something that they said about making this movie. There are certainly women in this movie.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Most of them aren't treated great, but they're there.

**Austin:** No, no. And we get one of those sequences here, actually, in which we get Willem Dafoe. Again, the pants are so high.

**Ali:** Incredible. Just a real... *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Where do you think...where would you say those pants come up to?

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Austin:** Because I would say the titty.

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

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** They're basically like perfect over-the-nipple overalls.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* That is exactly right. Black—

**Ali:** Completely made out of black leather.

**Austin:** Yep.

**Ali:** And Willem Dafoe, already a very specific face structure.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah.

**Ali:** Just at an 11, a 13 in this movie. *[Austin laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You mean in hotness or do you just mean in intensity?

**Ali:** No. No, no, no, no. Just in, if you— okay, if you had a video game with a Willem Dafoe slider. *[Austin and Ali laugh]* They just made sure every feature that they could bring out to make you think, “Oh, this guy's a villain,” they do.

**Austin:** The most Dafoe. Oh, yeah, absolutely. I think he's pulling off this thing that I absolutely thought was a dress at first. *[Ali laughs]* It's...it's a show of power that he wears this outfit around Torchie's. The straps are so wide.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They're so wide. *[sighs]* He goes to menace Ellen, along with other people? Does he go in that— I guess he goes in that room by himself to menace her, and like, it's gross, and...and like, there's nothing that happens. There's nothing shown on screen, but it is a woman chained to a bed, and that shit sucks, and it is like the most— it is like the one moment when this felt so of its time, where he like leans in to try to kiss her, and she moves her face away, and it's just like not necessary, you know, in establishing this dude as a bad guy. They've already established him as a bad guy in a much stronger way in the intro, when the light fades up on his face, and he just storms the stage to kidnap her. I felt like that sequence was like just like, ah, you've lost

the fantasy element here, right?

**Ali:** Yeah. There's something about like the pettiness to the crime, though, that this scene manages to like put through.

**Austin:** Mm. Yeah.

**Ali:** Which is like, where he's like, "I'm just gonna keep you here for a week, and you're gonna get out of here. Like, just play along."

**Austin:** Right. Yeah.

**Ali:** And that's like such a gross thing to say to somebody, but it's also just like, I think sets up the sort of like territorial aspect to like the gang thing.

**Austin:** *[sighs]* Yeah. He's beating his chest, really, right?

**Ali:** Right, yeah.

**Austin:** There's no— this isn't like a victory in some ongoing conflict. This is just, like you said, pettiness and grossness, you know? And so, Tom Cody has a plan. *[quiet laughter, Sylvia sighs]* Tom Cody's plan is: hey, I'm gonna go up top. I'm gonna go— he has like, again, a very specific line. It's like, "I'm gonna go up topside." I think he says, "I'm gonna go topside." *[Ali laughs]* And he tells McCoy to go through the front door, which, to me, is a bad deal for McCoy. And he tells Billy Fish, "In 15 minutes, you be out front with the car. 15 minutes." He's like, it better not be 14 minutes. *[Austin and Sylvia laugh]* And so he goes topside, and McCoy goes inside. We get more of the bar, and McCoy is great. McCoy is such a fucking pro.

**Ali:** So good.

**Sylvia:** Ahh. She steals the show here. She's so good.

**Austin:** A hundred percent. I felt bad for her, because it was like, she showed up and did her part while Tom Cody is on the roof just like zoning out in his feelings. *[Ali laughs]* Oh, I guess we skipped one thing. He decided he wanted to do this and go rescue her after looking at a photo in his wallet of her, the night that he meets up with McCoy for the first time in the tavern. Like, they go back to his sister's place, and he's like— I don't know if he's in the shower or what. He's like looking at a photo. He doesn't have a shirt on, and he's looking at a photo of Ellen, and it's like, "Oh, yeah, right. Okay, I'm gonna do this."

**Sylvia:** I think that also triggers another musical sequence.

**Austin:** I think it does.

**Sylvia:** Which has a lot of him looking sort of hunky and conflicted. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yeah. Those are the two directions he absolutely got.

**Ali:** This is also the first of many shots of the two of them just like looking at each other from across the scene.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes. That is how develop— that's how romance happens, Ali.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Take notes for Friends at the Table.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Well, they were in love once, and that's enough, right?

**Austin:** That's enough. That's all you need, the seed of it. Speaking of being in love, there's a gang member who is so sure that he is about to make the moves on McCoy. McCoy makes the move on him, and by "the move," I mean hits him in the face with a gun *[Ali: "Uh huh"]* that she pulls out of her jacket just so fucking well. It's so good. And knocks him the fuck out, and then just charges into the gang poker game that Willem Dafoe— sorry, I should stop saying Willem Dafoe. I should start saying Raven Shaddock. *[laughter]* That Raven Shaddock and his BFF, um...God, I forget the name of that other character. There is another name for his like side— for his like second-in-command. But they are playing poker, and she just holds them up and is just kind of like killing time waiting for Tom Cody to do something! And so Tom Cody finally does something, and that thing is start shooting explosive rounds into motorcycles, I guess? *[laughter]* I was confused, I'll be honest.

**Sylvia:** It kind of...yeah, like, the whole time...he says he's got a plan, right?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** And then it turns out that the plan is just explosions.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Which, I'm not complaining. I think this is probably my favorite part of the movie, is this like whole sequence.

**Austin:** *[laughs]* It's really good.

**Sylvia:** It's really well done.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But it is also just like the most— you know what? We've compared this to a JRPG a lot. This becomes *Uncharted*, because if he sees anything that possibly could have fuel in it, it will explode. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yes. It will, absolutely.

**Sylvia:** With the most minor impact.

**Austin:** Including a moment where he he shoots a dude off a bike, or like shoots the tire, and the guy falls off, and then the bike goes like falling into other bikes, and then they blow up. He didn't even shoot it. *[laughter]* It just— oh, it's so good. Also, we should note he has like a repeating rifle, like with the lever action repeater situation. It's not like he has like an assault rifle or a...you know what I mean? It's just like a Civil War gun. It's so— it's like a— in fact, he kind of has— his plans are only as good as Dutch van der Linde's plans, and he just definitely has a John Marston-esque repeating rifle.

**Sylvia:** I was actually— yeah, I was gonna say, this movie definitely has kind of that old west vibe to it, with him specifically.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, he's always in dusters.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** He's the like guy who comes wandering into town to fight off the outlaws. So, it was a little— like you said, it's really funny that he has a repeating rifle, even in this weird time period, because it felt like...

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** I'm like, okay, I got it already. This is on-the-nose, at this point. *[Ali laughs]*

**Austin:** Yeah. You know, one of the things that was also on this Wikipedia page was that this was kind of conceptualized as a comic book movie, but, quote, since Hill—the writer/director—“didn't like any of the comic books he had read, he wanted it to be an original character.” Quote, “He wanted to create his own ‘comic book movie’ without the source material actually being a comic book, and that is what led to the creation of Tom Cody.” He feels like every rejected like Vertigo Comics hero I've ever seen. He is like half *Preacher*, half throwaway Neil Gaiman character. Like, it's just...he could be in *100 Bullets* in a second, and no one would blink. Rick Moranis shows up with the car *[Ali: “Uh huh”]* and is very happy to have everybody

back together and almost immediately realizes, or I guess, I think maybe McCoy mentions it, is like, "Yeah, these two used to bone. *[laughter]* Your girlfriend and him, they used to— they go back like that." And I somehow had missed that Billy Fish didn't know that somehow. I just kind of assumed he knew, and he does not.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Again, they keep it very fuzzy with that, until they want to drop the other foot with it, because I didn't catch that either that they kept that from him.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But McCoy does like bust his balls over it a few times, and it's really fucking funny every time.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** *[whispering]* God, it's so good.

**Sylvia:** She's just giving him shit about it.

**Austin:** God.

**Sylvia:** She's the best.

**Austin:** She is the best. Tom Cody stays behind, as the three of them drive off, and starts hitting things with a gun, *[laughter]* starts hitting people with a gun like a baseball bat. At one point, he starts hitting some pipes with a gun, so they start leaking fuel, and then shoots them. I don't know what those pipes are for. Why are there just fuel pipes like pointed up in the middle of the street? Who could say?

**Ali:** So, another conversation that really stood out to me while watching this movie is there's a specific moment where Billy Fish is like, "If you go in there and kill people, you know, it's gonna go really bad. We can't just do that."

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** And Tom is like, "Well, my plan is to go blow up a bunch of motorcycles," which he did successfully.

**Austin:** He did do that, but it's as if he didn't understand that that might kill some people.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Well...

**Austin:** Well, you know, I think it's fair to say—and in fact, Willem Dafoe says this—that Tom



Cordy likes to play rough, you know?

**Ali:** He does.

**Austin:** And Tom Cody stays behind. He's like, "I want to..." is like, "I want to hit more people." I forget exactly what he says and why he's staying behind, but he does stay behind, blows stuff up. And Raven Shaddock walks through the flames like Sephiroth and says, "Looks like I finally ran into someone that likes to play as rough as I do." And Tom Cody is like, "Yeah. Good one."

**Ali:** "I do like." *[laughs]*

**Austin:** I do like. Oh, says like, "Yeah, this must be your lucky night." And basically, you know, Raven menaces him and says like, "I'm gonna come for you. I can get a lot of guns." And Tom Cody is like, "I have a gun. I'm the one with the gun," and Raven's like, "Yeah, I can get guns. Like, I'm in charge of a huge gang, you idiot." *[laughter]* And then, they go their separate ways. They meet back up. There's a great tiny moment here or a tiny fact that I love, which is during the bit where Tom Cody is telling his friends to leave— or not his friends, is telling McCoy, Fish, and Ellen to leave. He tells her like, "Meet me at the whatever overpass, the Grant Street Overpass," and Billy Fish is like, "The Grant Street Overpass? I don't know what that is! I've never heard of that before," and it's just...small, tiny details like that mean so much to me, because they end up filling in the world a little bit. In my mind— here's my extended universe answer for what the fuck that means.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** I think that place used to be called something else. Like, it used to be called Grant Street or whatever the name of it that he told them where to meet him at. But only he and McCoy would know that, because they're like wandering drifter soldier types. And so like, you know, in the old days, that's what it was called. But Billy Fish wouldn't know it, because he's just a record promoter and money guy. That's my headcanon.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Sorry, I had to just explain that.

**Ali:** I like the lore.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. I looked it up. It's the Grant Street Underpass. They meet up, and we get our first sequence of Ellen and Tom kind of trying to work through their history together. It is difficult, and I mean that in terms of it is not very intriguing or interesting to watch. *[laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They just like have it out inside of a little warehouse hallway, and it becomes clear that Tom left to become a soldier, and she wanted to become a music star, and also, he's only doing it for the money, and that offends her. Is that really the gist of it?

**Ali:** Yeah. So, Billy is the one who initially is like, "Why are we even waiting for him? You think that he's doing this because he loves you?"

**[0:45:04]**

**Austin:** Yes. Yes.

**Ali:** "I'm paying him a bunch of money." And then she has like a pull aside with him, which is basically like, "Hi, what's up?" *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** He's like, "I'm Tom Cody," and that's basically it.

**Austin:** Yeah. That is what he says, "I'm Tom Cody." *[Ali laughs]* Tom explains that they have to bury the car, and Billy Fish is like, "Why do you have to get rid of this car? This is a nice car that you have. Why would you do that?" And he's like, "Oh, it's not...that's not my— we have to get rid of this car, obviously." And they bury the car—I think that is actually when maybe Tom and Ellen get to talk—and that means that they need another way home. And so...do they go from here to like the Strip, the Vegas-y district, the like red light district? Or do they go...yes, then they go to the red light district; "the Strip" is what I've heard it called in like interviews about this area, which is just like hyper neon row. And there's another musical number that is revealed to be a recording that's on a screen, which I love that effect. And then, within the course of two minutes, it's just like, it's crowded streets. It's sex workers. It's lots of lights. It's music playing. It's lots of signage. The song is about a sorcerer. The song has some truly wild lyrics. *[Ali laughs quietly]* "Sorcerer, who is the master? Man and woman on a star stream, in the middle of a snow dream." Uh...

**Sylvia:** Do you guys know who wrote that song?

**Austin:** I do, but I'm gonna let you say it.

**Sylvia:** Stevie Nicks wrote that song.

**Ali:** Huh.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** And does background vocals on it.

**Austin:** Yep! There is another musician of note who worked on this album. Do you know who it is?

**Sylvia:** Um...I know the main like songwriter, but I'm like...

**Austin:** Tom Petty co-wrote a song on this album.

**Sylvia:** God!

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

**Ali:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Because...if we're just going to talk about the soundtrack really quick.

**Austin:** Please.

**Sylvia:** Jim Steinman, *[Austin: "Yes"]* the like head writer, he did a lot of— at one point, I was like, "This sounds a lot like 'Total Eclipse of the Heart'."

**Austin:** A hundred percent.

**Sylvia:** And then I found out, oh, that's because the guy who wrote it wrote "Total Eclipse of the Heart" and like worked on *Bat Out of Hell* and all this stuff.

**Austin:** Okay. Yeah, that makes so much sense. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And it totally does sound like all that stuff. Jimmy Iovine was the music like producer on the album, I guess, or like the soundtrack lead? I don't know. I forget the name of what that actually is. And I think, in general, the music works so well, and partially because it has such a clear core in terms of what Ellen and the Attack's songs sound like, but it is not afraid to go wide when it comes to using music for worldbuilding, right? Like, it is willing to do some like rockabilly shit in the Battery, or when they need a ride and stop a bus in the middle of the Strip and go inside, and it's just a Motown group called the Sorrels?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, the Sorels, I think?

**Austin:** The Sorels. Yeah, the Sorels.

**Sylvia:** I love those guys.

**Austin:** Yes, yes, yes. Which like, why is there a touring Motown group? Why does a cop use a now-archaic racial slur with them? *[laughs quietly]* Who could say? They get on— this whole sequence again feels like a JRPG for me, because of the like, blink and you miss it, now there are two new members of the party.

**Ali:** *[laughs quietly]* Uh huh.

**Austin:** They walk down the street, and a fan of Ellen's shows up and is like, "I love your music. Can I be here?" and no one stops her?

**Ali:** *[laughs]* They really try to, but once she's like, "Hey, I know the cops are chasing you," they're like, "Oh, the cops. Yeah, join us." *[Austin and Ali laugh]* Which is like, I don't know why that made them change their mind, but she's great, and she's there for the literal rest of the movie.

**Austin:** It's unbelievable! She's just in the crew now! Like, I know it seems like a stretch to be like...we just did the *Sneakers* podcast, and I know that there's some times when it comes across where I'm like stretching to make comparisons to tabletop roleplaying games, but this feels so much like, "Hey, uh, do you guys mind if Samantha comes through tonight? She hasn't played one of these before. We can just throw together a pre-gen for her, right?" Or it's like someone new joined the game. You know what I mean? Like, "Uh, why is she here?" "Uh, she's a fan. You meet her in the street. She's part of the group now." *[laughs]* "Okay, good enough. Let's have fun."

**Ali:** God.

**Austin:** They get on the— go ahead.

**Ali:** I just want to mention, because her presence is like so weird, because like there's even a moment where like... *[Austin sighs]* later in the movie, where it's Ellen, Billy Fish, and her in like the hotel room that they have? *[laughs]*

**Austin:** In the hotel room! How did she get in the hotel room?! What is going on here? Are they in a triad now? Like, what happened? *[laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Like, she has like one conversation with Ellen, and then they're best friends, I guess? I mean, I'm for it, but it's...

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, that conversation was meaningful, right? That conversation is her being like, "I love all your songs. How do you write them?" and Ellen is like, *[laughs]* "I don't write them. Billy writes them or buys them or whatever. I just sing them." And this other character—whose name I forget, because that's the way that character works—is like, "It doesn't matter that you don't write them. You sing them, and it means something," or something like that, right?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** God, what is her name? I'm trying to find the name of this character.

**Ali:** Is it Baby Doll?

**Austin:** You know, it could easily be Baby Doll.

**Ali:** I'm looking at the IMDB, and I think that it is.

**Austin:** This character, I just need to let you know, just straight up does not exist in the Wikipedia summary of this movie. *[Ali laughs]* They just skipped this part entirely. This whole section of the movie, which is like 20 minutes, is just summed up as: "They return Ellen safely home, where she initially rejects her hometown, as well as Tom." That is it.

**Ali:** They don't go into the whole bus stuff? Or the like...

**Austin:** They don't talk about the bus. They don't talk about the cops that get bribed. They don't talk about any of that.

**Ali:** Oh, the bribe scene...

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Ali:** The bribe scene is so good. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Do you want to explain the bribe scene?

**Ali:** Well, so, I... *[sighs]* The thing that's really interesting about Billy Fish's character is that he is such an actual shithead.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Like, if there is a moment for him to like provide some tension or some like annoyance or to just be like, "I don't want to do this. I don't want to do this thing that we're doing, but I'm doing it!"

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** He's there to say it. So.

**Austin:** Yes. Like, if there's ever a gap in the conversation, he will fill it with a complaint.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Right. With being like, "I'm spending a lot of money for you to do a good job," or like, "Wehh, I have a lot of money."

**Austin:** "And you don't." *[Ali and Austin laugh]* Yeah, as you said that— I just have the movie running in the background with captions on, and as you said that, I looked up, and it was Tom Cody looking in the distance and trying to like look tough, and then it cut to Billy Fish, come around and says, "You keep your hands off this suit, buddy." *[Sylvia laughs]* and then he turns again and looks at other people, and then it's like, he just says, "Come on. Hurry the hell up with a flat tire. Let's get going." And it feels so much like Rick Moranis just decided to do the job and do it right and just ad lib that character.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Like, maybe some of that was written, but so much of it is just presence he brings.

**Ali:** God. Anyway, to the bribe scene. We have our party, essentially, riding this bus that they...

**Austin:** Which is now nine people or something ridiculous.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Yeah, so they're walking down the street, trying to find a way back to the neighborhood, and then the new girl is like, "Hey, the cops are chasing you," and then Tom's like, "We have to get a new car," and Billy's like, "I bought you a different car, and then we buried it! Why do you need another one? We just had a car we buried." *[laughter]* And then Tom has the incredible idea to walk into the middle of the street, stop a bus, *[Austin: "Yep"]* and say, "Hey, I have to get onto this bus."

**Austin:** Also, briefly: not a tour bus.

**Ali:** Mm-mm.

**Austin:** It is just like a busted up school bus.

**Ali:** *[laughs quietly]* On the bus, of course, is another band, which you said.

**Austin:** Yeah, the Sorels. Is that right? The Sorels?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** The Sorrels? Sorels. I looked up what a sorel is, and I've already forgotten what it is.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** Some sort of bird?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Maybe? Oh, no, it's a deer. It's like a type of deer.

**Ali:** Hmm. Okay.

**Austin:** Anyway.

**Ali:** So, there's basically a police stop, because they're looking for the people who went into the Battery and shot up—

**Austin:** Blew a bunch of shit, yeah, up. Yeah! *[laughter]*

**Ali:** A bunch of pipe wires that he beat with his gun and then shot. *[laughter]* So, this is when McCoy is like, “You know, the cops are really tough. I had a run in with them, because I beat someone up in a bar,” which is how we are introduced to the character, so we believe that story. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Yes. Yes. Again, it's a great little bit of worldbuilding there, right? Where she is just like, it's not just that. It's not just like, “Oh, I've run into— like, the cops don't like me.” It's that these specific cops from this road or this area— I forget the name of them. They're like the...they're not like the armored cop. They're like the Amrad cops or something? I forget the exact thing.

**Ali:** Well, because it's such a weird thing, because I think they're specifically like...they're like outer city cops.

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** Whereas, when we run into like the police station, the police chief of Richmond, he is like a member of the community.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Whereas these guys are like, “Oh, they make me take them off.”

**Austin:** Right. Also, the police chief of Richmond is just in all blues like a patrolman and just

drives around!

**Ali:** Ah, it's so good.

**Austin:** I have a theory about the world. I just came to it.

**Ali:** Okay. New lore.

**Austin:** And I...this is a post apocalyptic setting.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** This is like *Fallout: New Vegas*. Like, that's it. There are two cops in Richmond. All of Richmond are the people who went to that show. There is no greater city that we're not seeing beyond what the camera has shown us. There is a diner. There is a music hall. There is a police station. And then like, I guess maybe there's— like, there's the gun dealership. *[laughs]*

**Ali:** There's the gun dealership. There's the other bar with the weird (??? 55:49)

**Austin:** Yes. Yes, there's the other bar. Yes. But like, that is it. It is a tiny place. And then there are two other ones, two other cities or three other cities out in the world, and it's connected by this big weird old train line, and everything is far away, and it is just a post apocalyptic setting. I think that if you zoomed the camera out enough, you would just see huge craters across the wastelands. We never zoom the cameras out that way.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** We're always on highways or in tunnels. Please, Obsidian, make this game. *[Ali and Sylvia laugh]*

**Ali:** Anyway, so, they're stopped by the police.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** McCoy, at this point, is trying to like make— okay, this is actually— I want to zoom in at this point, because this was such a like tabletop game, *[Austin: "Yes, yes, yes"]* "I'm playing the fuckup at the wheel," sort of situation. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Because McCoy immediately is like, "Oh, I'm just bringing the name of this band that's actually the name of this band to the place that we're actually going." *[laughs]*



**Austin:** *[laughs]* God. Yes.

**Ali:** Which, why lie? You know, if you think that they're gonna believe you, you might as well say the truth.

**Austin:** You might as well say the truth. There's a great moment in here where Tom Cody goes, "All right. Fish, McCoy, you guys are with the band. McCoy, you're the manager." And McCoy's like— or not McCoy. "Fish, you're the manager." And he's like, "I'm way ahead of you, Cody. *[laughter]* Do you think I gotta be a genius to know what you're going for?" Like, yeah, of course I'm the manager.

**Ali:** Anyway, not even like a minute and a half of McCoy trying to convince the cops, Billy is immediately like, "Hey, why don't I just give you some money?" And the cops are like— it's such a good moment, because he takes the money, and then he leaves his hand open and says, "Keep it coming." *[all laugh]*

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

**Ali:** And like, gives him more money, and then the cop says, "Great. You were really quick to pay us off. Everybody has to get off the bus."

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah. That's where he says like, "Oh, yeah, you have a lot of money. You got a Black band with you." He does not say Black. There's something fishy going on here, basically. And that's not what he says, because that would have been really corny, given the guy's name is Billy Fish. And then, is that when Tom Cody decides to continue being a fucking, quote, unquote, "badass"?

**Ali:** Yeah, he was weirdly like behind the cop while this conversation was happening, and just jumps out of the dark with his weird musket. *[laughter]*

**Sylvia:** The only way I can like figure out where he was, was that he's like just crouched down, like laying down on the seat behind the little like thing, the like divider between the door.

**Austin:** I don't understand. I'm watching this scene now.

**Sylvia:** Like, it's so hard to see where he's been, but he just pops up out of nowhere with his like cowboy gun ready to go.

**Austin:** It's amazing. We should note, there's another quality of this sequence that we skipped, which is the lead-in to it is the Sorels doing a like doo-wop number called "Countdown to Love", which is a great song, and that is when the cops interrupt them. It's in the middle of this great song. And then, yeah! They went outside with guns and just stick the fucking cops up and put them all on the ground and throw their guns away! *[Ali laughs]* And McCoy says, "You know

what, some of you guys have some cute little asses,” which...what a fucking hero. *[laughter]*  
And then Tom Cody blows up their cars with his gun! He just...and kicks over their motorcycles!  
It's unbelievable! What a good— oh my god, what a great...

**Ali:** A real anti-motorcycle agenda out of this guy. *[Austin and Sylvia laugh]*

**Austin:** They get back on the bus and bust through the barricade. The cops call it in. The cops call it in and are very much like, “We can't go after them. They have guns. Help.” The Sorels are pissed, which like, obviously. They end up needing to dump the bus, which again, Fish gives him shit for. *[laughter]* Like, “We had a car. We had a bus. Now we need another ride. Great.” And the whole crew escapes onto the mysterious elevated subway train, which is leading them back home towards Richmond. And we get another sequence of Tom and Ellen making eyes at each other from across the train, and McCoy tries to like figure out...not figure it out, but like kind of direct them to talk again. And instead, instead, Ellen goes over and kisses Fish to try to make him jealous, I guess? There's lots of looking.

**[1:00:45]**

**Ali:** Yeah, McCoy like tries to make Ellen more like appreciative of the gesture.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Like, I guess at this point we don't really understand why she's so mad. The...

**Austin:** I guess she hasn't said the money thing yet, right?

**Ali:** Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** But you can tell that that's sort of being brought up all of the time and is a point of tension.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** So yeah, but she gives her kind of a hard time, and then she's like, “Well, you should go hang out with your new boyfriend, if that's who you like,” and Ellen's like, “Yep,” and does that. *[laughs]*

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Good for her, I guess?

**Austin:** Good for her, honestly. They get back to the Richmond, and you can tell it's the

Richmond, because people have on suits and plaid and gray, and like, those are the colors of the Richmond. The bartender Bill Paxton shows up, goes back to Reva's place and is like, "Guess who's back? Tom's back with Ellen!" and then they go to the police station to be like...I don't know why. Here's the thing. I don't know why they go to the police station. I guess to be like, "She's back"?

**Sylvia:** It was a very public crime that happened, when she got kidnapped.

**Austin:** I guess that's fair. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And like, if you remember that sequence, the cops were very involved in that whole firefight too.

**Austin:** *[chuckles]* That's true.

**Sylvia:** At one point, they just like ran over some shit.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And like were destroying as much property as the motorcyclists were.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So, that was kind of how I explained it.

**Austin:** That makes sense. The entire town runs out to the crowd the entrance to the police station, and they kind of just talk through, "Hey, we're back now. We're gonna get the fuck out of here." Ellen is like, "Yeah, I'm gonna get out of here. I want to get back on the road. Like, fuck you, Tom Cody." Tom Cody tries to smolder, but he doesn't know how to do that. I think he lost the S, and so he just kind of molds. I don't— it's not good. *[Ali laughs]* He has nice eyes. He has really nice eyes. I wish he was a better actor. And Baby Doll just leaves with them. Again, she just sneaks out with them as if she belongs! It's incredible.

**Ali:** She does belong.

**Sylvia:** Fake it till you make it.

**Austin:** You know what? You're right. She does belong. She should have been on the fucking stage at the end of this movie. I'm mad. What fucking happens then?

**Ali:** This is when Ellen—

**Austin:** Is that when Raven shows up?

**Ali:** Well, so this— oh my god, what a good...oh, what a good scene. So, this is when Ellen says, “I hate you for taking money to come save me,” and like storms off.

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** And then we get the police chief, who is just such a handsome person.

**Austin:** He's so fucking handsome.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Just like, such a good police uniform, for what this movie designs outfits as.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ali:** Being like...oh, God, what is it? It's like— oh, somebody comes in and is like, “Raven wants to talk to you,” and instead of like wasting all of the time to like do anything else a movie could do, *[laughs]* it just has like a weird screen change, where like the screen just kind of gets like scratched away.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** And then it cuts to Raven having a conversation with that cop, which is basically like, “I want to kill Tom. I want to cut his head off, and you're gonna let me do that, and then we won't bother you anymore.”

**Austin:** Yeah. Do your job. Keep the peace.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** I don't know where that conversation happens. I don't need to know.

**Ali:** Who cares?

**Austin:** Who cares? God, I had not noticed that literally goes from the dude from the gang directly to that conversation. You're right. It's amazing. They just completely hand wave it.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** I—

**Austin:** This is— God. Go ahead, Sylvi.

**Sylvia:** I don't mean to— I think— so, what I thought happened there was that the cutaway was to

be like, *[Austin: "Oh"]* the other guy is saying this, but he's repeating it verbatim, so you're— and we like Willem Dafoe more than this actor. *[others laugh]* And like, I think it could be either, but I really liked the way that they cut that, because it felt very like...

**Austin:** I can see that.

**Sylvia:** I don't know. It injected a lot of personality into it.

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, I think, in general, this is one of those movies that's like...and I mean, I'm gonna go back to the thing I was talking about with time and space and distance, because the actual point that I wanted to make there was like, it doesn't matter. Sometimes you want there to be a night scene, and this movie lets you do that. How far away are these two districts from each other? Who could say? Far enough for there to be a night scene, and let's do hand waving until we need otherwise, right? Like, it's totally fine for it to just be raining in one place and then sunny immediately after in the same set of sequences, if it produces a certain effect. The movie wants that flexibility, and it wants to be in this kind of abstract world and it has a lot of fun with that. And I think that sequence with the cutaway to Raven is similar in that way, just like, either you're totally right, Sylvi, and this is like an effect to suggest that this is what was being delivered, this is the message; or it was magic, and he was there, and who cares? I don't need to know why. *[Ali laughs]* Someone just said, "I want to do a cutaway. Can we cut away to this conversation really quick? I just have to say one thing really quick," and the GM said like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Go ahead. What do you say?" *[Ali laughs]* And like, yeah, done, okay. We don't need to like check the fuel score to see if you can get over there or whatever. What's important is that the message was sent, and it's interesting, so. It reminds me a lot of the...this is the thing we talked about recently, the Hadrian letter to Hella from season one of Hieron, where it's like, how did that letter get there? I don't need to know.

**Ali:** Right.

**Austin:** You know?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Did it get there? Yeah. Somehow, sometime, at some point. You know? *[Ali laughs]* Important small detail I like about this next sequence, which is them, it's McCoy and Tom and Reva at the diner. One: McCoy is always blowing smoke rings. *[Ali laughs]* Two: Reva just takes a small like cut of what honestly looks like a very not so good piece of pie. *[laughs]* And I thought she was gonna bring it over to Tom, to be like, "Hey, buddy, cheer up," but actually, I think that's just her own slice of pie. *[laughter]* She's like, "You know what? I need a fucking slice of pie." And she goes over and lectures Tom. I guess, actually, McCoy kind of gives him a little mini lecture, and then Reva goes over and is like, "You don't care. You're just the same as Billy Fish. You're supposed to fight for something. You're not just supposed to fight. You're both selfish," you know. And at that moment is when Ed the police chief comes in, who's the one who

originally said that Tom Cody was a badass and he belongs in prison with all the other delinquents. He comes over and goes like, "Look, Raven's gonna come try to kill you. You should get out of town, and I'm gonna get Raven," which, noble police chief, local police chief thing to do, you know? It's still funny that he's the police chief, to me, because he is just in a patrol uniform. *[laughter]* I love that his hat has a raincoat on.

**Ali:** *[gasps]* Yes.

**Austin:** It's amazing. *[laughs]*

**Ali:** It's so good, because it's like clearly removable.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** It's like elastic at— like around the like bill of the hat.

**Austin:** Oh, it's so fucking good.

**Ali:** And then like comes down and is like a hood?

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** And it's like, it really points out like how specific and how bizarre the movie is getting with how it dresses people.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Because like, Tom is the strongest, coolest guy in this movie, but like is always just wearing a weird coat *[Austin laughs]* and like really looks kind of pathetic compared to him in this scene.

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah.

**Ali:** Because he's just—

**Austin:** He's like beige. He's all beige.

**Ali:** He's beige. He has his suspenders. He's traded out the *[Austin: "Ugh"]* nice denim like light blue cutoff shirt for just like a weird henley.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yep.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* And it's getting all wet, across with this like, just so handsome and so well dressed police chief. *[laughter]* And then like, the rest of the movie, he also just interacts with people who

are like much better dressed than he is, and like—

**Austin:** Right. He goes across the street to this hotel to have the door opened. One, Rick Moranis is wearing like a very nice striped shirt with a vest and a bow tie. Ellen has on like a kind of green shirt with like a nice scarf. And then Baby Doll is just straight up in like a black body suit or something? It's great. It's fantastic. Sorry, Ellen has like a red bandana on. It's very good. And then, yeah, Baby Doll is just in their hotel room, *[laughs]* and Tom is like, "What are you still doing here?" And, as if Baby Doll is afraid someone else will suddenly ask that question to themselves, sneaks away. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

**Sylvia:** Oh my God.

**Austin:** And Tom is there, and Billy Fish says, "I know what you want. You want your money," and gives Tom the money, and Tom counts out the money and goes over to talk to Ellen, and he goes, you know, "Hey, it's me, Tom Cody. You know, nobody ever made me feel like you did, or whatever, but I would have done anything for you. But not anymore, babe." *[laughs]* And he walks back over to Billy Fish and throws \$9,000 at him and keeps the other 1,000, because that's what he's promised to McCoy, and leaves. And I expected this to be like, that moment would linger and would pay off in 20 minutes when Ellen's like, "He gave the money back..." *[Ali laughs quietly]* Instead, she immediately leaves to chase him out into the rain. As we know, the writer of this movie *[laughs]* loves all the same things he loved as a teenager, like kissing in the rain.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And she finally kind of lays it out. "I didn't hear from you in two years. You left. You joined the army. What was I supposed to do?" And then there's a kiss, and there's the lighting from the...it's either lightning or the train above them. And then we cut to them in bed, all just soaking wet from the rain, and she is like, "All right, that's it. Like, we can just keep— we can go. Both of us can go. Raven won't bother these people anymore. Like, we can go wherever we want to go." And to this moment, I'm still not sure why the answer there wasn't yes, based on— I mean, I guess I am. I don't know why the answer from him wasn't yes. I think she could do better. *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Phew.

**Austin:** She's like, "Let's get out of here together," and that doesn't happen. We cut instead, and it's...is it the next day at this point? Oh, he goes back and like re-recruits McCoy. He goes back and goes like, "Here's your money." We're all friends now. You know, we're all in better moods. Bill Paxton is here too, and we're all just drinking together. Everyone's smiling.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* I don't have to beat up Bill Paxton again.

**Austin:** Yes, exactly. And then, I guess it's— is it the action day? Does it cut to the next morning?

**Sylvia:** Uh...he tries to leave, doesn't he?

**Ali:** Oh, there's the— oh, God. We reveal the reason that McCoy was involved in the plan was so the three of them could take a train halfway out of the city.

**Austin:** Right.

**Ali:** He would smack his now-girlfriend [*Austin: "Yeah, Jesus Christ!"*] across the face to knock her out, instead of—

**Austin:** Honestly, smack is light, Ali.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He fucking punches her in the face! Which is not what you should do, ever!

**Ali:** No. Mm-mm.

**Austin:** Also, I'm looking at these trains, and these do look more like commuter trains. This could be— it's not the LIRR, but it could be a commuter train more than a subway. You're not wrong.

**Ali:** Yeah, I don't know.

**Austin:** The...you're right. So, he knocks her out, which is extremely a movie fucking thing, and it's bad.

**Ali:** Yeah, it's like...there's no excuses to be made.

**Austin:** No!

**Ali:** Like, at all. Like, it's just so weird and so gross and so sudden, and like, so unnecessary. Especially when it's the thing it's like, "We could just get out of here and be in love with each other," and he's like, [*Austin: "Right!"*] "Yeah, I would love to do that. Wink." And then this is his master plan? Like, uh...

**Austin:** Is knock out his fucking girlfriend? Fuck off, Tom Cody. And it happens in such a flash, right?

**Ali:** Yeah.



**Austin:** Like, McCoy kind of gives him a little bit of shit for it, but it is not a real amount of shit. It is not like, “Yo, don't do that.” And his plan also immediately falls apart, as he goes back up to take the train back the other way, and the MTA employee is like, “Yeah, no, our trains aren't running. The Bombers have shown up and made it impossible for us to move the trains,” and he looks at the horizon, and it's just on fire? *[Ali laughs]* And they've sealed off the Richmond, presumably with fire and smoke and other things apparently. Real quick, just to go back. The thing is: what Tom Cody needed to do in that moment was just say, “Hey, look, I know this is rude. I'm lying to you. You're gonna go this way, and you'll be safe. I'm gonna go deal with Raven.” That's the thing. That's all he needed to do, but to not do that, he fucking knocks her out, and it sucks!

**Ali:** Yeah, it's so bad. It's like so weird, because it's supposed to be like, “Oh, they're in love with each other. They've been away for a long time, but they're so in love with each other.” But like, their chemistry is so bad in all of the scenes.

**Austin:** It's terrible.

**Ali:** And then for this to just be like a complete lack of communication, quote, unquote, “cool guy” thing to do is just like, oh, I don't get it anymore.

**[1:15:11]**

**Austin:** Anymore, at all. At all. No. We cut back to the next morning again, and Raven shows up with a couple of his guys, and the police chief is there with a couple of his guys. And Raven is like, “Hey, where's Tom Cody?” and the police chief is like, “That's not what we're doing. Tom Cody's out of here. They're gone.” And he says like, “Get off your bike,” and Raven gets off his bike and goes, “I'm not too crazy about jails, chief,” *[Ali laughs]* and picks up the oldest air horn that's ever— like, the first air horn. *[laughter]* I think it's just wrapped in tape? It's just...

**Ali:** It's like brass?

**Austin:** It's like a steam— it's like brass. It's like a steampunk air horn wrapped in duct tape. It's hideous. Also hideous, Willem Dafoe's hair in this scene.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** I don't even know what it's doing!

**Sylvia:** They're doing— they go for the— I think they're trying to make him look very like reptilian in his profile and stuff and in his like silhouette.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Because I noticed—

**Austin:** There's a cobra vibe here, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Literally, I wrote down, “His hair makes him look like a cobra.” *[Austin laughs]* And I think they do—like, it's really smart to do that with a guy like Willem Dafoe who can back it up with the facial expressions, but when it's just like in light and you see his hair, it's really weird.

**Austin:** Yeah. It's very weird. Briefly, a thing I want to go back to that I really liked was the bit where the chief went to Cody and was like, “Get out of town, or you're in jail.” I really like the clean stakes of that, where it's like, “Hey, you want to be in this fight to protect your honor, but what I'm telling you is if you do that I'm putting you in jail.” There's just like a very nice sharply delineated stakes on the table for Tom Cody to deal with, and it's one of those things I'm taking a note for myself. *[Ali laughs]* And so, the horn happens, and of course, out come the rest of the Bombers, just hundreds of bikers appearing as if from nowhere, some of them standing on motorcycles, carrying guns, some of them...I don't know. Bill Paxton runs away and starts yelling about the Bombers, and everyone is very scared.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Very important mention about Bill Paxton here running about the Bombers is because, later in the scene, there's like a very brief standoff with the police, where like, I guess they give Tom the time to come back and enter the scene, and then Bill Paxton comes back with literally the entire neighborhood.

**Austin:** Yes. I've written down, “Tom Cody's normie mob,” here. *[laughter]* Also, Tom Cody shows up wearing wool brown pants *[laughs]* and just like, yeah, a white like long sleeve undershirt—this is the henley you were talking about—and it is hideous. Never has there been a less attractive outfit. It's the worst. And then, before they can fight...you know, he kinda shows up for this one-on-one duel. One, the police chief just goes like, “Well, my plan fell to shit, so let's see how you do,” which is great. *[Ali laughs]* No cop has ever been this cool. Then, the Bombers' second-in-command dude shows up with two, like...they're not pickaxes, exactly? Like, I don't know what they are. They're just big like hammers?

**Sylvia:** They're like sledgehammer type things?

**Austin:** But they're like a little sharper.

**Sylvia:** They look like they should be used in a forge.

**Austin:** Yes. Yes. They're like sledgehammers with like slightly longer points on them. I guess they are just sledgehammers, now I'm looking at them again. And they have a sledgehammer fight as the rest of the town—like you said, Ali—shows up, also with guns. Right?

**Ali:** The town has five stores, and one of them sells guns. So. *[Ali and Austin laugh quietly]*

**Austin:** Like, every motherfucker has a gun! It's unbelievable! *[laughs quietly]* Where were these people when the Bombers were here a week ago stealing Ellen?

**Ali:** Well, you don't bring the guns to the benefit.

**Austin:** Well, that was your first problem right there, wasn't it? *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Maybe the benefit was so they could afford guns. *[laughter]*

**Austin:** You know, I could see it. I could see it, you know? The benefit was so that you the player could get the 25 gold pieces you needed to upgrade your town with guns. *[laughter]*

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They have a sledgehammer fight in the street. And I'm not gonna lie, like, Raven just gets the shit kicked out of him the whole time. He never really looks like he's in command of this fight. It's embarrassing. It's...I wanted this fight to be cooler.

**Sylvia:** It was kind of a letdown, yeah. Like, it sucks too, because Willem Dafoe is really putting in the effort here.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I wrote down, and I don't know— I'm sure it's a stunt double, but he does like a roundhouse kick at one point.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Like, before this, earlier in the movie, I think, and like, that really impressed me. But then this fight is just kind of like clanging two hammers together.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But I really liked how it ended.

**Austin:** Do you want to explain that?

**Sylvia:** So, they... *[sighs]* If I'm remembering correctly, they both get like disarmed, and they fistfight for a little bit.

**Austin:** Well, so, Tom Cody disarms him.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Austin:** And then he does the honorable dude thing and is like, “I’m gonna toss away my own sledgehammer, and we’re gonna do this like men, hand to hand.” He doesn’t say that, but that is what his face says.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and then like, Raven Shaddock rushes him, and there’s a bit of a fist fight for a bit, but again, Raven kind of just gets his ass handed to him.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And he gets back up, and Willem Dafoe’s like standing there snarling like a demon, covered in blood, like hunched over, and Tom Cody just pushes him over, and he just kind of falls down exhausted.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And it’s really funny, and I really liked the body language that Dafoe used, *[Austin: “Yeah”]* because he still cuts a really imposing figure, even when he’s getting punked out by like a discount Stallone. *[others laugh]* It definitely was like, after the stuff in the Battery and even the like hijinks with the cops and stuff, it felt kind of like a letdown that this was the big villain confrontation.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, totally. We should note that Billy Fish tries to confront the villain first and get punched in the face.

**Ali:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Austin:** In the end, the Bombers load up their wounded onto their motorcycles and drive away into the sunset, as Tom hugs his sister and is like, “Hey, I’m still here.” And then we cut immediately to a Sorels performance of...God, what is the name of that song? It’s like a good song. It’s like an actual song, again. Like, this is, uh...oh, fuck. It’s gonna kill me. Anyway, it’s like an ‘80s...this is just like an ‘80s pop R&B song. “I Can Dream About You”! The song is “I Can Dream About You”, which has like been in other movies and shit. It’s a Dan Hartman song. And they just like do some dances. They look great on stage. *[Ali laughs quietly]* And Billy Fish gets his epilogue line here, where he goes, “You know something, Waldo?” which is his like sound or lights guy. “We’re gonna be rich.” *[laughter]* Great. Mwah. Shout outs to you, Billy Fish, the biggest shithead in this movie. I love you. Can’t wait for your success. And the rest of the movie is basically a musical performance, right? It’s just another 13 minutes of music?

**Sylvia:** There’s like a dialogue between Tom and Ellen while the Sorels are singing.

**Austin:** You're right.

**Sylvia:** Where he like...it's like right at the end, and he's like, *[impersonating]* "I'm not gonna hold your guitars," and I'm like, okay, what are you—

**Austin:** *[laughs quietly]* Wait, one more time, Tom? What was that?

**Sylvia:** "I'm not gonna hold— I'm not the type of guy who's gonna carry your guitars for you." *[others laugh]* And like, what do you have going on, Tom? is my question.

**Austin:** That's what I'm saying! What the fuck are you doing?

**Sylvia:** Like, what are you so busy with?

**Austin:** She's a famous rock star and is in love with you, and you have— you like her! You're saying you would do anything for her, but the one thing you won't do is be in her— like, be with her!

**Ali:** Support her like most baseline aspiration of being a musician.

**Austin:** That she's good at!

**Ali:** Yeah, and—

**Austin:** That she's good at! *[Ali laughs]* Successful! Not just good.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** She's famous! She's a tour—

**Ali:** She's an icon. Like...

**Austin:** Everyone knows— you were walking down the street with her, and someone was like, "I love you." You were walking down the street with her, and the TV behind her was playing her song, Tom! *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** Ugh.

**Austin:** Anyway, then he walks out into the fog of backstage, and she—unperturbed, because she is a professional who deserves better than Tom Cody—goes out on stage and performs a song called "Tonight Is What It Means to Be Young", which is incredible.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And Tom Cody walks out through the crowd, and Reva holds back tears and stays in the crowd, which: good for you, don't fucking chase that asshole. *[Ali laughs quietly]* And then we get a seven minute performance of this song that's incredible, which, again, has some incredible lyrics in it. *[Ali laughs quietly]* I gotta pull them up, because they're that good. *[sighs]* "I've got a dream about an angel on a beach..."

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** "And the perfect waves are starting to come. His hair is flying out in ribbons of gold, and his touch has got the power to stun. I've got a dream about an angel in the forest, enchanted by the edge of a lake. His body's flowing in the jewels of light and the earth below him starting to shake. But I don't see any angels in this city. I don't hear any holy choirs sing. And if I can't get an angel, I can still get a boy, and boy, that'd be the next best thing. *[someone claps]* The next best thing to an angel, a boy would be the next best thing. I've got a dream about a boy in a castle, and he's dancing like a cat on the stairs, *[laughter]* and he's got the fire of a prince in his eyes and the thunder of a drum in his ears. I've got a dream about a boy on a star, looking down upon the realm of the world. He's there all alone and dreaming of someone like me. I'm not an angel, but at least I'm a girl." *[Ali laughs]*

**Sylvia:** You know, I was wondering earlier why she was so quick to admit that she didn't write her own music, and, um... *[others laugh]* Question's been answered.

**Austin:** Question's been answered. It's a bop. I don't give a fuck. It's so good.

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

**Sylvia:** Every song in this movie is catchy.

**Austin:** Yeah, 100%.

**Ali:** I just want to say, in response to this movie, that it's an important reason why Aria Joie exists, and there is an important reason why Aria Joie murders her ex-boyfriend. So. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

**Austin:** God. Fuck. And this is why.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** The secret history of Aria Joie. *[Austin and Ali laugh]*

**Ali:** Sometimes it's what you have to do in a story instead of letting him walk off the stage coolly

after knocking you out.

**Austin:** After knocking you out! She has like a throwaway line where she's like, "Haha, yeah, I remember you. You're the boy with the right hook." Fuck off!

**Ali:** Ugh! What?!

**Austin:** Fuck off, whoever wrote this movie!

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This song is good. They sing this song. She's sad. He's gone. He walks out the door. She says, "I'm not going to stop you crying alone," or whatever, because that's the lyric that's on my screen right now. And "Ellen Aim and the Attackers," it says on the marquee, and he leaves. Do you think this is a second performance? Do you think like they were scheduled for this, or do you think they booked this as a second benefit concert?

**Ali:** I think that this was scheduled, because it's like, there was specifically that scene before where the Sorels were like, "Hey, do you need an opener?"

**Austin:** Yes. Okay.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, that makes sense. Anyway, Tom is gonna walk out of town slowly with his luggage. "[*gloomy*] I'm Tom Cody. It's me, Tom Cody." [*Ali laughs*] And McCoy drives up in a car and is like, "Yeah, I found this. Someone just left it in the middle of the road, weirdo." [*laughter*] And he gets in the back, and he's like, "This is my big chance, I guess, huh?" And she's like, "I already told you, you are not my type." And in my mind, that is not a joke. In my mind, she is gay as hell and is just super done with shitheads like Tom Cody but knows that he will continue to find work and the two of them can ride off into the distance and bust some noses and some heads. What a weird movie. I really like this movie, minus the handful of things we called out as being shitty.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Oh my God.

**Austin:** I know. So, I guess—

**Sylvia:** Now, sorry—

**Austin:** No, please.

**Sylvia:** I just found out that that last fight scene we talked about took four weeks to shoot.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** Oh my God.

**Sylvia:** Between Raven and Cody.

**Austin:** How? What were they doing?

**Sylvia:** Apparently, this shoot didn't like go great.

**Austin:** Right, so...

**Sylvia:** Like, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, that's one of the things I've read here, is that specifically Michael Paré—I guess is his name, the lead—was like hard to work with and also not good. There are so many good quotes on the Wikipedia page about this, about this movie in general, like about how the director didn't know how to shoot live music.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Just about every— about how much Michael Paré didn't like Rick Moranis, because Rick Moranis kept making jokes at his expense.

**Ali:** *[laughs]* Good.

**Austin:** Which, mwah. So good. I'm gonna just read this, because it's extremely good. "Rick Moranis drove me out of my mind. There's this whole wave of insult comedy. In the real world, if someone insults you a couple of times, you can smack them. Or punch them. You can't do that on a movie set. And these comedians walk around, and they can say whatever they want. I'm just not that handy with that. Comedians are a special breed. They can antagonize you and say whatever they want, and you can't do anything to stop them. He's this weird looking little guy who couldn't get laid in a brothel in a—" he says in a whorehouse. He says, "in a whorehouse with a fistful of fifties. He would imitate me. The first thing he says to me is, 'Do you just act cool or are you really cool?' *[laughter]* That was the first sentence out of his mouth to me in Joel Silver's office. And I was like, 'Oh, this is not going to go well.' But he was one of Joel's dear friends, and he ended up making a bunch of movies for Disney. I just wasn't that sharp. I wasn't ready for that kind of crap." Fuck you, Tom Cody! Fuck. So, great quotes all throughout it, and one of the big ones is like, yeah, Michael Paré was not a great actor and was not great to work with.



[1:30:31]

**Sylvia:** There's a whole paragraph that begins with, "We all knew in our hearts that Michael was disappointing," *[others laugh]* under Reaction on the Wikipedia page.

**Austin:** Oh, God.

**Ali:** God.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, so.

**Austin:** But the thing about that, that is like one of those things that...that whole section you're talking about, that whole quote is actually really good, because— I mean, I think they were wrong about the rest of the quote. The rest of the quote is like, "We knew Michael was bad, but we thought that it was visually really stunning, and we thought that we created a world." What he says is like, "We all knew in our hearts that Michael was disappointing. We felt that we had compensated adequately in making a fun, exciting, stylized world," and I think that that is 100% true, except that I think this movie completely flopped, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Oh, did it?

**Austin:** I'm pretty sure.

**Ali:** It...

**Sylvia:** It made...oh, go ahead.

**Ali:** It's like a cult classic, so from this perspective of being like, oh, we're still talking about it, it was well liked.

**Austin:** Yes. It cost 14.5 million to make.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** It brought in 8.1 million. It did not make its money back.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Maybe, in the time since, it's done all right? I don't know. I don't know. I like— there's the quote here of him taking credit for other shit, which is always good, and maybe he's right. This is

Larry Gross, who was, I think, one of the co-writers on the thing? Yeah, he was one of the co-writers. Says...where'd it go? I just lost it. Legacy. Here we go. "Whatever is good, bad, or indifferent about *Streets of Fire*, it had a huge impact on other filmmakers. The two movies that came out in the years after that are completely saturated in the iconography of *Streets of Fire* are *Robocop* and *Se7en*. *Se7en*'s taking place in another world. It's not New York. It's not Chicago. A world where it's raining all the time, always dark, always night, just about. Those are two very successful movies that figured out how to do the stylization with the appropriate amount of gore that they hooked the audience. And I think if we'd done more gore, our chances of hooking the audience would have been greater."

**Ali:** Yeah...

**Austin:** I don't think so. I was very happy for this to be a PG movie. I like didn't need blood and guts in it at all, and I think that's like an important note that like, it still felt dangerous and dirty, and all it needed was explosions.

**Ali:** Yeah, for sure. There's like— the fact that the only time that anyone actually like draws blood is Willem Dafoe at the end of the movie is like really striking [*Austin: "Yeah"*] and like one of the pros of this that it feels weird to be like, "Oh, we should have done that more."

**Austin:** Yeah, right? Totally. You know, obviously, for me, it's like, this is a movie that we, again, had been talking about watching at some point since we started Bluff City, because it felt like it was so on point, and I think it definitely was a good pick for that. Like, all I want is for Bluff City to be this but gayer and like a little more...a little bit more overtly revolutionary in its politics. Less friendly cops. Or at least less friendly cops who are like...for every friendly cop, at least five shitty cops, [*laughs*] which I guess this movie might have, actually.

**Ali:** Yeah, I think that that's the ratio that we see this film. [*laughs*]

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. But like, things like the "What year is it? What place is it?" aesthetics over setting is really nice or is like very much in line with some of the stuff that we try to go for at moments. The *Lacuna* game isn't up yet, but so much of this place reminds me of that city, but in...maybe not in reverse, but like, Sylvi, it was either you or Ali were saying that this place feels like it's so— like the main city that people are in feels both very specific and very abstract at the same time, and *Lacuna* is a lot of that, and this is kind of like reverse *Lacuna* in that way. And the other thing I was gonna say earlier—and this is the minor spoiler. If people want to miss this, just skip ahead, but this place feels like...you know how *Noirlandia* Bluff is Bluff with some Blough City influence?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** This place feels like Blough with some Bluff influence, like Bluff is just breaking through and changing things, but without it, without rock music, everything would be just 1950s, you

know? Because one of the things I love about this movie is that like everywhere in the world is the 1950s, except for on stage. On stage is where it's so clearly the future, right? It's the '80s. It's bigger hair on stage. It's, you know, bigger costumes on stage. At least in Richmond, right? I guess if you go to the Strip, that is just what life looks like, but in Richmond it is this like, oh yeah, diners and...gun stores. *[laughter]* It's like your friendly neighborhood mid-century gun shop. But music is the place where everything is bright and colorful and it's attracting everybody to it. So, look for those themes as you go into *Lacuna*, our next Bluff City game. *[Ali laughs quietly]* Any other big thoughts about this or about how it connects to Bluff or to our work in general? Or just about this in general that we didn't get to. I have a note here that says, "Someone give me a *Streets of Fire* TV show," and then I follow that up with, "You know how Riverdale had the big DnD thing this season? Well, I want next season to just be a *Streets of Fire* season."

**Ali:** Oh, they already have all the gangs set up.

**Austin:** I know! They already do!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, they kinda...but like, okay, so here's my problem with— are you gonna have Cole— like, the— I can't remember which Sprouse is on that show.

**Austin:** One of the Sprouses.

**Sylvia:** Jughead.

**Austin:** Cole?

**Sylvia:** Are you gonna have him be the tough guy?

**Austin:** No.

**Sylvia:** Or are you gonna have Archie do it? *[Austin sighs]* Because like, I don't think either works.

**Austin:** Yeah. It could be a new— hmm.

**Ali:** Riverdale sort of already did *Streets of Fire*, when they have the season finale when the Ghoulies show up.

**Austin:** Yeah, season two is, you're right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Season two finale, which is so fucking good, *[Ali laughs]* is already *Streets of Fire*. But I

want more.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I want there to be...what I want is for the show to open and— I want it to be *The Warriors* but a post apocalyptic urban wasteland that is as big as the country is, and they have to cross it, and they're just drifting from place to place like sliders or whatever, and it's this whole crew. It's the whole crew. It's in the bus. It's the band. It's everything. And it's— I'm gonna be honest, it is a shitty white dude lead who is terrible, *[Ali laughs quietly]* and he's surrounded by better people. One of the O'Connor's must be around. You know, bring him back. I would watch that show.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Anything else?

**Ali:** I do think that this movie is an incredibly good pull for Bluff City, in the terms of like, things not needing to be explained.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Things like style over substance in a lot of ways, in terms of like, you know, we don't need to understand the ins and outs of these cities exactly, but we know *[Austin: "Yeah"]* in this part of town, people listen to this type of music and wear leather, and in this part of town, people wear tweed and listen to this kind of music and feel this way about the people in it or whatever.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Also, in terms of it being like, "A Rock & Roll Fable," I really love how like simple this story gets to be.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Ali:** It would have been great if they had like a single woman look over the script, I guess.  
*[laughs quietly]*

**Austin:** Yep.

**Ali:** But just in terms of like, you know, "Man and woman are in love with each other. They broke up. She gets kidnapped. He has to help her, and then there's a fallout from that," is like, that's all it has to be. *[laughs]* I've been thinking about that a lot, because...this isn't like a full *Lacuna* spoiler, but like in terms of Chris's affection for Hector Hu...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** And like, she's in love with him. It's not like a romantic love, but that's like [Austin: "Yeah, yeah, yeah"] a main kind of driving point for that character. Like, if it's as simple as like, "Oh, well, there's affection there," like how far you can push a character's actions [Austin: "Mm-hmm"] without having to be like, "Oh, well, they had this conversation once, and they knew each other for this long, and this is the history they have."

**Austin:** Right. It's a thing I think about a lot with...I mean, so, I think part of this actually helped work out things actually a little bit in *Lacuna*, but...Sylvi, this is going to be news for you, but we used the *Technoir* system to generate a mystery in *Lacuna*, in the *Lacuna* Bluff game, and we also used that to set up relationships with NPCs. And I think yours was not the Hector one, right? Was it a different one? It was technically...

**Ali:** Oh, I was sympathetic to, um, the boxer.

**Austin:** Achilles Apollo, from the *Fiasco* game.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally. Lots of old NPCs back in this *Lacuna* game. It's a very good game. [Ali laughs quietly] I'm really excited for people to listen to it. If you're a Pusher level, you could have already seen the dossier that has all this stuff in it anyway. But I love that, because it was immediately like, okay, you are sympathetic to him. We don't need to know the ins and outs of that sympathy. It is enough for the viewer and the listener and us as players to start at: you have a sympathetic relationship. Same thing with Hector, where you're right, like, I knew you loved Hector, or at least had like this admiration—or more than admiration, less than romantic love, or different than romantic love—and that carries out into the action, into the play, in the same way that like I get why Tom Cody is going out to save this girl, even though we've never seen them talk in a convincing way in this movie once and never will, right? [Ali laughs] So. God. Any other final thoughts on *Streets of Fire*? I'm so glad I watched this movie. [Ali laughs, Austin sighs] I'm gonna listen to the soundtrack tomorrow, probably.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's kinda— I kinda just like really— yeah, that's kind of my takeaway, is I'm just glad I watched this, because it was such a like aesthetic overload of so many things [Ali laughs] that it's like...it's got so many little things that I can just pick out of here as like, oh yeah, I can— like as influence later on for whatever down the road.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because it does so— like, for everything it does wrong with its writing, it does a lot of stuff really right with its scene building [*Austin: “Yeah”*] and its like design and everything, and I think that like that's going to be my biggest takeaway from it.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** Cannot wait for the leather overalls to show up in *Friends at the Table*. [*laughs*]

**Austin:** Oh, cannot wait. Cannot. Just thick straps; high, high, overalls.

**Ali:** I do want to make a correction, because when we described it before, I think the actual like shirts of the overalls are below the nipple, [*Austin: “Oh”*] but the straps are so delicately placed and so thick [*Austin: “Mm”*] that you don't see them, because they're covered by the strap. But there's this like—

**Austin:** I see. You're totally right. Yep. You know, here's the thing: we don't see the nipple. We couldn't know how low his nipples are. We can guess.

**Ali:** This is true.

**Austin:** Scientists can only estimate— wait, there's a side nipple at 30 minutes 32 seconds. Somewhere in there, you can see it. It's the strap. Strap's got it covered.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Shoutouts to the strap. [*Ali laughs*] As “One Bad Stud” plays in the background. [*Austin and Ali laugh*] Fuck. All right, everyone. That's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for your support, again. We will be having all sorts of other *Pusher* stuff coming up this year. We wanted to kick things off with this, right away. I think maybe one of the first ones, going to be really exciting, is going to be— by the time you hear this, you will have already heard a song that Jack wrote for a *Spring in Hieron* episode, and we are going to give you a little insight into how that was written and the kind of back and forth between Jack and I on that one. So, look forward to that and some other stuff, as the year continues. Thank you again for your support. We could not do this without you. I already did the big spiel about that in another episode, so I won't repeat myself. As always, you can find me on Twitter at @austin\_walker. Oh, we're not doing this. We don't need to do this.

**Ali:** Mm-mm.

**Austin:** You're the *Pushers*. We're friends. So, you know where to find us.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** If you have any questions, go ahead and ask. That's not a quote from this movie, but I kind of made it sound like it was one. *[others laugh]* Let's clap.

**Ali:** Sure. Top of the minute again? Ooh.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

*[they clap]*

**Austin:** Mm...

**Ali:** I think I was late, but that's fine.

**Austin:** That's okay. *[Ali laughs]* All right.

**Sylvia:** I'll be honest, like, you said the first one was good, but it sounded like three distinct claps.

**Austin:** Oh no!