

At First, It Felt Like Ginger Ale - The Sopranos: Media Club

Plus S03E01

Transcriber: jay (8325)

Introduction	1
Episode 1 [00:11:43]	8
Episode 2 [02:36:07]	105

Introduction

[“[Shame About It](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Sylvi: Welcome to Media Club—Oh, my God, fuck.

[record scratch, music stops]

Keith: Yeah, hey, it's not so fuckin' easy! It's not so fucking easy, is it?

Sylvi: Aw man, I know that's making the edit. Okay, wait. Do it again. Set the music again.

[“[Shame About It](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Sylvi: Welcome to Media Club Plus, a podcast about diving into the media that interests us and the stories that excite us. As always, we're brought to you by Friends at the Table and this season is The Sopranos! [putting on a voice] Woo, yay, we're watching the Sopranos! [normal voice] I'm Sylvi Bullet. You can find me on most social media platforms @sylvibullet. And you can support the show over at friendsofthetable.cash. Joining me through this whole season is Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: [putting on a voice] Greetings.

Keith: The voice is back!

Sylvi: Oh no. The voice is transferred once again.

Art: I think I had it last actually. Hey, it's Art. I'm here. You can support the show at friendsatthetable.cash, where we are going to have way more bonus episodes this season because no one is going to end up feeling weird about any of the material we are going to do or if we do—

Sylvi: We're not watching David Chase's college projects

Art: We will just go to another thing on our list of potential bonus episodes.

Keith: Fair.

Sylvi: Yeah. I figured we could do this while we're introducing everybody. You're the other person on the regular—who's gonna be like on every episode with me who's seen this show already. So you watched it while it was airing, right?

Art: I came in for season three.

Sylvi: Still pretty early.

Art: Yeah. When this started, I would have been a little young. I would have been about to turn 15 when this show premiered.

Sylvi: Had cool parents.

Art: It's kind of a lot for that.

Sylvi: Yeah. Okay, cool. The next two are—Next two regulars this season are both—We've doubled our dunces chairs. Is that what we were calling it before?

Dre: Sure.

Sylvi: Okay.

Keith: The fool's chair.

Austin: Well, the fool's chair.

Sylvi: The fool's chair.

Art: Fool's chair. Yeah.

Sylvi: I'm sorry to call you dunces sitting in their comfy fools chairs. First of all, we've got Andrew Lee Swann.

Dre: Hi, I actually prefer to use the gestalt empty chair as opposed to the fool's chair.

Sylvi: Thank you. Okay. Okay. You're in. You're in your gestalt empty chair.

Dre: Yeah. And I'm, I'm here. I'm really excited about this. I didn't know the show was so fucking funny. That's my main takeaway so far.

Sylvi: I'm so happy to hear that. Yeah. It's like the thing that I always use to pitch people is like, it's funnier than you expect.

Dre: I would have watched this years ago if I knew how fucking funny this show was.

Sylvi: That's a great thing to hear on our first episode.

Dre: Good thing I haven't, because now I can be in the full shared, AKA gestalt, empty chair.

Sylvi: Yeah, you've got the most sort of well rounded media club experience right now because you've gotten to do the—You were on Hunter X Hunter in the knower's seat, like, to the point where I think you would—Because you caught up on the manga, right? Or am I misremembering?

Dre: Sort of.

Sylvi: Yeah, You, you had, like, watched—Even knew even more about it than us. And now you're fully on the opposite end. I fuck with it. And also, of course, you know him. He's Mr. Button Man. It's Keith J Carberry.

Keith: Hi, everybody. I actually, I'm—Me and my internal family system are taking up a multitude of chairs.

Sylvi: Oh, wow.

Dre: Very controversial choice right now, Keith.

Keith: Well, you said Gestalt and that reminded me of IFS. I don't know anything about the controversy of it. I just know that they're similar.

Sylvi: My mom listens to the show—Hi, Mom—And today, I saw her today, and she was like, it made me laugh so much when Dre brought up IFS because she's also a therapist.

Keith: Oh, Dre, you brought up IFS the other day?

Sylvi: I wanted to shout that out. Yeah. I think on one of the episodes it came up [**Dre:** I must have.] Yeah. Yeah. We also have a very special guest here to get things started this season, Austin Walker. Hello. Welcome back.

Austin: Hello. I'm here. I'm here to talk about Tony Soprano. Dre, do you think that Tony will ever do the talking to an empty chair thing in this show? [**Dre:** Ooh.] You think Melfi'll break that one out?

Dre: I feel good about it. I mean, you know, he did a semester and a half of college. He understands Freud.

Sylvi: He did do a semester and a half of college!

Austin: He understands Freud. I think he could do it. Oh.

Dre: I mean, like, in a very real way, not to just, like, start talking about the show. I could see it, like, she's kind of going that way with the stuff about his mom, but.

Art: Well, do you know that in 2001, the American Psychoanalytic Association gave the show an award?

Austin: Wow.

Dre: I would believe it. Two episodes in, it's one of the best representations of a therapist I feel like I've seen so far in a TV show.

Sylvi: Good to know. So, yeah, we're still—You know, it's the first one. I'm so excited that I genuinely don't know where to start. We watched two episodes this week. The pilot, also titled *The Sopranos*. And then *46 Long*, the second episode. Do we want to just talk, like big thoughts like Keith, Dre, first impressions? Or should I do the summary first and then we can get into first impressions?

Keith: I had a really positive impression of the pilot, specifically the pilot. I didn't have a negative impression of the second episode, but I also was like, they have transitioned from trying to blow me away to having to do a serial narrative thing, which comes with some costs in how much they can do every week, I guess. But like, oh my God, the pilot was unbelievable.

Sylvi: I'm so happy to hear it.

Dre: Remember when they called Starbucks Buttfucks in episode two?

Sylvi: They sure did.

Dre: They sure did.

Sylvi: It was a legally distinct Starbucks parody, I believe. But they sure do call it Buttfucks. And it makes me laugh every time because I'm a child.

Keith: Is this—This has got to be one of the oldest examples of like making fun of that, like modern coffee shop stuff, which is still prevalent and increasingly hacky.

Art: The scene toward the end [stutters] But there's a scene toward the end of that episode where if you'd asked me like, where in the show is the scene where this happens? I would have said so much later, because the character is so spot on.

Austin: Yeah, I thought the same thing, Art. I really was like, whoa, that's this episode?

Art: Yeah, yeah. Like that's...

Dre: Which character?

Art: When Paulie takes the espresso maker.

Sylvi: I thought you were talking about Martin Scorsese.

Austin: Spoilers.

Sylvi: Sorry, sorry, sorry. That's not in the summary.

Austin: No, that's fine.

Keith: The famous Italian moka pot.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, it's great.

Keith: It's a huge one too. I don't know why it's such a fucking big one.

Sylvi: [crosstalk] It's like a better visual gag.

Austin: [crosstalk] It's how they were in 1998. Great visual gag, it really is.

Keith: [crosstalk] Yeah, maybe.

Sylvi: [crosstalk] Yeah, it really is.

Austin: '99. I said '98. I guess it would've been shot in '98.

Sylvi: Well, this was shot in '98, I believe. '97, '98. No, '98. Cause then you said there was a 10 month period between... the pilot.

Art: The pilot is shot in late '97 and the rest of the series is shot before any of it airs in late '98. [**Austin:** Rest of the season.] Rest of the season, yeah.

Austin: It'd be wild if they banked six full seasons.

Sylvi: Insane.

Art: They did a great job with the aging makeup on everybody. **[Austin: Yeah.]** Yeah, and, yeah, they come back 10 months later, shoot it all.

Austin: Are there any other pre-talk about what the show is, things that we should say? Art, you've watched a lot of this—You watched this whole show before. I've watched this whole show before.

Art: I've watched this whole show at least three times through.

Austin: Sylvi, you've watched this whole show before.

Sylvi: I've watched this show many times. I think this was the sixth or seventh time I've watched this pilot specifically. But, yeah, this was one of my—I got really, like, obsessive with the show during, like, COVID lockdown, and it just stuck with me ever since.

Austin: Yeah. Like Art, I watched it from a few seasons in as it was coming out. I didn't watch it right away, but I have very strong memories of the late—In the late 90s of being at, like, a wedding where my uncles were all talking about how good it was and how funny it was and like, oh, my God, when blah, blah, blah happens, that type of stuff. Then I think, Art, I got into it one of the years we knew each other. I think maybe you gave me the final push I needed to get the DVDs and start watching through. This was a big TV box set, DVD, season by season show.

Art: Holy shit was it, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, big time. And not cheap, but way more affordable than, you know, it had ever been in the history of the world to own a whole television show season. So big part of, like, where do you want to—What do you want to do with your \$100 Best Buy gift card at, you know, Christmas? Like, oh, yeah, I'll get a season of the Sopranos and I'll watch that shit three times, yeah.

Keith: You know, one thing I noticed, I love this. There's a couple weird, like, like, visibly imperfect shots where it's, like, it was too dark to get a, a nice shot, so it's really grainy. Or they couldn't fit a normal film camera here. And instead of rigging up a whole thing to fit a normal film camera, they used some other shitty kind of camera. And you can tell,

and it's fine. And I really like seeing like, you know—This show doesn't look like Game of Thrones. It doesn't look—

Sylvi: That is a very funny thing to—When we get into credits of people who worked on this, that's a very funny thing to mention.

Keith: But, like, it looks great. Like, it's. It's. I like that they're willing to kind of throw in a couple trash cameras to get a shot they need to get. But they don't need to build a—Build a whole car that can fit a camera in it to get a shot from inside of a car.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah, I find that a lot of that, the sort of, like, imperfect production or, like, seemingly imperfect production adds a lot of texture to things and, like, I don't know, the happy accident is the secret sauce of all filmmaking to me. And so like, a lot of the stuff that's born out of limitations tends to fall into that category.

Keith: Gorgeous camera, really intentional lighting. Not just—I was talking about the shadows in the chat yesterday, but there's also that early scene in the first episode where they're drinking espresso and everything is orange.

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know what's going on there. My note about that is Vince Gilligan saw this and knew how to film Mexico. Yeah, it was really funny how much the filter was on that or felt like it was on that.

Keith: But then it's gone. It's like, you know, it's just that scene. It's just that scene. And that's, you know, love it or hate it, you've made a choice there. And that's fun.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I have a really specific thought about that scene, but maybe we should just get to that scene and we can.

Keith: Yeah, it's really early.

Episode 1 [00:11:43]

Sylvi: Let me go through this summary here. I'm gonna just say up front for the audience, this first episode summary is pretty long because this first episode has a lot of stuff in it.

Art: Yeah, it was—It's 60 whole minutes. And it is packed.

Sylvi: It's packed.

Keith: It's packed. But I wanted to admit now, I don't fucking know these people's names.

Austin: I got them all written down. I got them all written down.

Sylvi: So I didn't have time to set it up, but I wanted to make—We had a little thing we did with Hunter X Hunter, that little working doc with pictures and names and everything. I want to get that set up for this.

Keith: That would be amazing.

Sylvi: Next time we record, we'll probably have that.

Dre: You can't tell the difference between Big Pussy and Little Pussy?

Keith: Okay. Those two I can tell, actually. Well, I don't actually know if we saw—[crosstalk] I don't know if we saw Big Pussy.

Sylvi: [crosstalk] Keith knows his pussies!

Austin: No, we definitely saw Big Pussy.

Sylvi: We definitely saw Big Pussy.

Keith: I thought it was Little Pussy that we saw. No, he was, like, blocking the camera. We have seen both. Okay.

Austin: 100%.

Keith: All right.

Sylvi: Should I get into this?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: [joking] No.

Sylvi: Okay. So like I said, this week we watched two—I'm ignoring Keith—This week we watched two episodes. Both of these aired in January of 1999. As we discussed already, the pilot was filmed in '97 and produced throughout '98. The pilot was written and directed by David Chase and then 46 Long, the second episode was also written by David Chase, but directed by Dan Attias, with Alik Sakharov serving as director of photography for both episodes. He's the guy who also went on to—He—If you look at his credits, there's a lot of stuff that Keith would probably hate. Game of Thrones is on there. So is Dexter.

Keith: I hate them both. I hate them both.

Sylvi: But I think he does a great job here.

Keith: Sorry, and what did he do?

Sylvi: He's the director of photography.

Keith: Oh, okay, okay, okay.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Crazy. That's crazy.

Sylvi: I mean, listen [**Keith:** He's doing great work here] You can work on a bad show and be a good director of photography.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: But those are sort of the main production credits I could find on these episodes right now. Chase is gonna be like, David Chase doesn't direct again. But he's writing on basic—Like, according to him, he had like, a hand in at least—Like, he would do a pass on every script. So even when it's not a writing credit, there is the sort of like unifying authorial voice there to a degree.

Art: He's gonna get a direct—

Austin: —On the first episode and the last episode.

Art: Yeah, he gets directing credit on the very end.

Sylvi: Crazy. It rules. I wasn't sure if I wanted to bring that up or not, but yeah, yeah, it rules. Um, okay. This series begins with Tony Soprano, father, husband, acting boss, question mark, of the New Jersey mob, arriving for his first ever therapy session with Dr. Jennifer Melfi after a particularly bad panic attack causes him to faint. This pilot has a slightly different structure than the rest of the show, with Tony's therapy session being used as a vehicle for voiceover narration, a la *Goodfellows*, while we're introduced to what life is like for Tony Soprano, especially while he recounts the events leading up to his episode, Tony starts by taking some time to explain his growing disillusionment with his lifestyle, explaining that even though he's more successful than his father, who was also a mobster, he feels like he came in at the end of things. He also gives us a snapshot of his family life, waking up on his son's, AJ's birthday and immediately going out to see the ducks in his pool. He loves those guys. His daughter Meadow and her friend Hunter don't get it and are much more preoccupied discussing a potential ski trip to Aspen and having eating disorders. Carmela, Tony's wife, is also not rocking with the ducks, but that's got less to do with the animals themselves and more with the state of her and Tony's marriage, going so far as to throw a little verbal jab at Tony about an affair he's been having once he joins the rest of the family inside. AJ just dunks a croissant in the milk and that's his big moment at breakfast. After that, we get to see Tony at work, getting picked up by his nephew and protege, Christopher Moltisanti, who is late making an important call, then didn't follow up in the morning because he was feeling nauseous. These lazy Gen Xers. I swear, man. After Tony literally hits a guy who

owes him money with Chris's car, he goes to another place we'll be seeing a lot of, Satriale's, the butcher mob front where da boys hang out. This is where we find out about two more things troubling Tony. The first is an issue with one of their garbage routes. This Polish family, the Kolar brothers, are recently taken—

Keith: Not Polish.

Sylvi: Aren't they not?

Keith: They're Czechoslovakian.

Austin: They're Czech.

Art: They're Czechoslovakian. It's also—

Keith: They call them Polish a bunch.

Sylvi: They do call them Polish.

Art: You didn't catch the—it's not Satriale's in the pilot.

Sylvi: Is it not?

Art: It's Centanni's.

Sylvi: Okay. Well it'll become Satriale's.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: Metamorphosizes.

Art: They needed a building they could own.

Sylvi: Yeah. Didn't they buy an abandoned warehouse?

Art: Yeah, but then the pilot, it's just a store.

Sylvi: Anyway. Czechoslovakian garbage pickup company is refusing to play ball with the mob. And the second issue is that Tony's uncle Junior is planning a hit that'll take place at Vesuvio, the restaurant that belongs to Tony's old childhood friend Artie Bucco. Chris volunteers to handle the Koler brothers problem, leaving Tony to deal with Junior's planned hit of Pussy Malanga. Not to be confused with Tony's friend, Big Pussy Bonpensiero. I didn't need to include their names in this episode summary, but I really wanted to. Anyway, those problems are put on the back burner just for a bit while we get to meet the wim—The woman casting a shadow over Tony's entire life, his mother, Livia. We'll get into it as we actually discuss the episodes, but Livia is not happy. Ever. About anything. So when Tony turns up with a CD player, the only thing she does is poke holes in the gift, talk about how daughters are better at taking care of their mothers, and argues with Tony about going to a nursing home, sorry, I mean Retirement Community. AJ's party starts. Livia calls and says she's not going to show up. And to top it all off, Tony sees his ducks flying away while he's grilling, and that's what makes him pass out. We have a scene where Carmela and Tony have an argument while Tony waits for an MRI, with Carmela still understandably pissed off at Tony for cheating on her. That same night, Chris meets with Emael, sorry, Emil Kolar, the nephew of the Kolar brothers under the guise of hashing out the issues between their respective father figures. And this, of course, ends with Chris executing Emil while the latter is doing a line of coke off a butcher's cleaver. Tony tries to talk to Jun—talk Junior into performing the hit elsewhere. Junior does not take that well, getting in a fight with Tony and basically being like, hey, you need to respect me, I'm older than you, while leaving and—Leaving Tony to find another option. Meadow gets caught trying to sneak back into the house. So her ski trip gets canceled and her and Carmela's relationship is put at odds for the start of the season. And then the family take Livia to Green Grove Retirement for a tour. It seems like things are going okay until Livia catches sight of the nursing unit and starts flipping out. And Tony has another panic attack, fainting right in the middle of the retirement home. In an attempt, they try to get Artie out of town while Junior's hit is planned and with Tony giving him some cruise tickets. But his—But Artie's wife shoots down the idea because she doesn't want to get involved with the mob, which I think makes a lot of sense given to what we saw with the guy who owed Tony money earlier. So obviously

being, you know, a good friend, Tony decides to get Silvio Dante to burn the place down. You know. Speaking of that guy who owed Tony money, Mahaffey. His debt gets resolved one night at the Bada Bing, the mob owned strip club that I love the name of, where Tony talks to Chris and Hesh, one of his dad's old associates, to figure out a way to actually get some profit out of this guy. What they end up planning is they're going to bill the insurance company that he works for for medical procedures that aren't actually happening and collect the money. The way they get Mahaffey to agree to this is when Big Pussy not so subtly threatens to throw him off a bridge. Problem solved.

Keith: Oh, that's Big Pussy.

Sylvi: That is Big Pussy. [**Keith:** Okay.] Finally, we're back to AJ's now belated birthday party. The guys are grilling while Artie laments the loss of his restaurant. Chris is seething over not getting a thank you for dealing with the garbage collection job. And Junior not so secretly implies to Livia that he might need to kill Tony while they're driving to the party. The episode ends with everybody having arrived, lingering on a shot of Tony's now empty pool. Do we want to just go into the second episode summary? Or should I save that till after we talk about the pilot?

Austin: That seems—We should maybe—Maybe we should talk about the one and then another, because I don't know. We can talk at length here about this one.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. This one's got a lot of meat. The next summary, I split it into each character's storyline, which is what I'm gonna try and do from now because I think it's gonna be easier. But with this one, I really wanted the audience to sort of feel the pace, the way it bounces through everything in the pilot. So, yeah. First impressions. Keith, you said you loved this pilot.

Keith: I loved the pilot. Yeah. I was happy to see the ducks so soon. I was happy at how important the ducks were because, of course—

Sylvi: Not a druid, unfortunately.

Keith: No, not a druid. We saw—Yeah, I guess we don't know for sure that he's not. But yeah, the ducks were such a big part of the screenshot stream. I was very happy every time the ducks showed up. And this guy really likes those ducks.

Sylvi: He loves those ducks.

Keith: He loves those ducks. I was really impressed with how they bring you into his world through this sort of nebulous relationship with the therapist with whom he's not sure what he can and can't say, or I guess he's fairly confident what he can and can't say and decides over time that he can say more and more. [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] But sort of telling her, telling her—At the very beginning, they talk about how the guy that he beats the shit out of with his nephew's new Lexus, you know, she says, we got coffee. And then it cuts to him chasing this guy down with his car at the insurance company. Like, I don't know—

Sylvi: Like, driving over the pathway and stuff there.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. They're—the campus, that's the word I was looking for. They're like, they're on, like, a campus. And he just, like, runs him down and beats the shit out of him. It's great, really funny. In that scene specifically, I really love—He's beating the shit out of him. And then Christopher shows up and he—Cause he's like, basically his pupil. He's teaching him how to be a mobster. And so he backs off and goes like, you, now you. Now you beat him up. It's really funny.

Sylvi: Also, the part where Chris is like, “This is a \$60,000 car!” is really funny.

Austin: A point, a thing that Tony kind of holds against him because he's willing to spend 60k on a car, but he's not really—He hasn't quite, like, understood the value of a hard day of work yet.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: You know, in the mob.

Keith: That's what—Both of these episodes have, a big Christopher is immature thing.

Austin: Yeah. One of the important things these episodes have to do is explain to you that Christopher is also sort of Tony's kid.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: Like, lowkey.

Sylvi: I mean like, straight up, we can talk about the scene at the barbecue in a bit. But he does straight up say, like, he talks about parenting when he's talking to Christopher. And I think that's very key.

Keith: It's the first time you really see Tony try to bring the therapy into a conversation.

Sylvi: God, it's so funny every time he does too.

Art: Yeah, it's. Yeah, it's something,

Keith: By the way, I also love—He will just repeat back something that the therapist said as if it was his own thing, which I thought was really funny every time it happened.

Sylvi: Even when, you know, learns therapy speak.

Keith: Even when he doesn't understand what it is that he's saying, like the line about the hotels.

Art: That's so funny. You're gonna see a lot of variations on that joke.

Keith: Can I play the intro monologue that he delivers?

Sylvi: Oh, my god, please. I was actually gonna ask.

Keith: I have a lot of buttons for this.

Sylvi: Oh, wonderful.

Keith: If it's too much. I also couldn't bring myself to edit out any of the pauses. There's a lot of pausing because Tony's trying to figure out if he wants to answer questions

being posed by the therapist. That's most of the pauses. So the clips are a little bit longer.

Art: Acting is in the pauses.

Keith: Acting is in the pauses. They're acting while they're pausing.

Dre: So is therapy.

Keith: But this is one of the only things that I had heard from the Sopranos at all. I was familiar—like, when this monologue played, I have heard this.

Sylvi: Okay.

Keith: And so I was excited to hear it. I was excited that I still thought it was really good. I've always really liked this monologue. Sylvi, you already mentioned it in your intro, but I'm gonna play the whole thing.

Sylvi: Please do.

[audio from The Sopranos plays]

Tony: The morning and the day I got sick, I've been thinking. It's good to be in something from the ground floor. I came too late for that. I know. But lately I'm getting the feeling that I came in at the end. The best is over.

Dr. Melfi: Many Americans, I think, feel that way.

Tony: I think about my father. He never reached the heights like me, but in a lot of ways, he had it better. He had his people. They had their standards, they had pride. Today, what do we got?

Dr. Melfi: Did you have these feelings of loss more acutely in the hours before you collapsed?

Tony: I don't know.

[audio stops]

Sylvi: I love it. This pilot, I mean, like I mentioned, Goodfellas is so deeply indebted to that format. Like, you can feel the influence so much, especially with the sort of like, Henry Hill style narration.

Keith: They even—They lampshade it multiple times.

Sylvi: I mean, they lampshade it multiple—Well, cause Lorraine Bracco's in the show. She plays Dr. Melfi and she, she's in Goodfellas.

Keith: True. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: She was Oscar nominated for Goodfellas, right?

Keith: She's the... wife?

Sylvi: Yeah. She's fantastic in both of these. Yes.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: There's like, another thing happening here that I think is great, is Chase is, David Chase, the showrunner here, is a big Twin Peaks fan. And I think opening up with the shot of the forest at night and the house, which is—You hear the owls hooting, is one of the—I would say that this is not a very Twin Peaks-y show in some ways. But increasingly there will be some things throughout where you can be like, oh, okay, there's a model they're following and a model they're deviating from. And we get, for instance, a lot of dream description in these first two episodes. And that's something to pay attention to. And I'm sure that when that stuff comes up more, there'll be some quotes here because Chase has talked about how the dreams of the Sopranos are importantly different than the dreams of Twin Peaks. But I do think that's a pretty clear overlap here. That's just great. And then also, hey, it's the late 90s and it will be the early 2000s. HBO loves to run a show where someone says, we used to make things in America. Americans used to have shit. And it's all falling apart, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I wonder why we all felt that way.

Keith: Sorry, I just woke up from a 30 year dream. What are we talking about?

Austin: Don't worry about it. Everything's the same. They never heard the phrase a century of American humiliation when they were making this TV or this episode.

[**Sylvi** laughter]

Sylvi: Oh, my God.

Keith: Yet many Americans are feeling that way regardless. I love that line.

Sylvi: That line makes me laugh for some reason. Just every time. Yeah, it feels the most like TV note they got, like, you should put this line in there.

Keith: They also—Classic, easy way to add some, I would say, maybe even unearned depth to a show is they have him open a newspaper and you just see what is on the front page of that newspaper. I can't remember what it is. I think it was about Medicaid.

Dre: Like, talking about how Medicaid wasn't going to exist by 2000 because it would go broke or something like that.

Keith: Yeah, that's when they were talking about—That was playing during that monologue. He's like, going out to see the ducks, which is, by the way, some of the best acting in the whole thing is James Gandolfini being absolutely thrilled to see his duckling friends.

Dre: I don't know how hard he had to act.

Sylvi: He is so locked in on who Tony is from the first episode. It like, stuns me every time. Like, I think about how he has the same smile on his face when he's playing with the ducks in the pool and when he's running over a guy in his car.

Dre: Yeah, the way in which Tony, and James Gandolfini in his acting portrays Tony, the way that he can so quickly go from glee to violence and mingle them together is just like. It's astounding and it's horrifying, but it's so good.

Sylvi: It's the thing that makes it work. Right. Cause there's a lot of—I mean, we'll get into it because, like, there's a lot of people who are, like, who—They're—It's too—“Tony's too likable!” or stuff like that is like, a thing I have seen people complain about. And I don't think it works if he's not both a likable guy and also if you, you can flip a switch and he will, like—

Keith: Well, why wouldn't a mobster be likable?

Sylvi: Exactly, like—

Keith: Right?

Sylvi: They're sociable guys!

Dre: I would say he's far more charismatic than, I would say, likable.

Sylvi: I guess that's the word.

Dre: But that's kind of like six or one half dozen of the other, like—

Keith: Especially when he's in a TV.

Austin: Yeah. The thing is, I think this episode does so well, and that I guess you'll have to see, as the show continues, how it balances these things. But he is a guy who is willing to do real violence against people who've done nothing wrong and also is someone who is put upon by people who he loves. And his—You know, Keith, he is a dad. He's also a son.

Keith: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: I think that the show is really good at exploring and, like, making you think actively about the power relationships he is in. It is really a superpower of this show for

there to be a person in the show who can point out that Tony Soprano, who just beat a guy in public within an inch of his life, no problem, lets his mother have power over him, instead of being a thing that you have to come to naturally in the kitchen, after watching the episode in conversation, Melfi will just say that out loud. Then you would talk about that. And so I think that was part of why this show was such a success, is that it opened the door to that second level of meaning making for a lot of people who would not naturally do that work, you know?

Dre: [crosstalk] Which is why Melfi is—

Art: [crosstalk] Which is why we're talking about—If we're talking about a group of person who I really disagree with about the show, there are people who say you can watch the show and skip the therapy scenes.

Sylvi: That's insane.

Keith: Insane.

Art: And those are people that you shouldn't trust about—I wouldn't let them watch your pet.

Austin: No, they haven't watched the show.

Art: Yeah.

Dre: No, like, Melfi, as the contrasting narrator, who seemingly is more honest and knowledgeable about Tony Soprano than Tony himself, is, is extremely compelling.

Keith: I just don't know how you can—Because only in these two episodes, you see how much of what Tony is doing in his life is based on the conversations he's having with a therapist. So if you don't have the therapy scenes to tie back his actions to, then it's not that it stops making sense, but that it stops meaning anything.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: People think it's boring. People just want to get to the—

Dre: Like, the whole point of, like, the grill out scene. I mean, there's multiple points, but to me was the thing of, like, oh, like Tony's whole thing about, like, you know, it's—when he just quotes the therapist to the guy whose restaurant he just blew up, and he's, you know, like, it helps to talk and hope comes in many forms. And it's like, oh, you don't know what that means. You don't know what that means!

Sylvi: Yeah, right.

Keith: He's right.

Dre: But he doesn't know what he means. And he just says it, and other people react to it, and he's like, I must have said the right thing. And then, like, immediately goes over to Christopher, and Christopher's like, hey, you didn't give me credit. He's like, you're right, Christopher, I didn't. And then Christopher's like, I think things should be different. He's like, what the fuck are you talking about, Christopher?

Keith: I love that—

Dre: The fact that he just takes things in but doesn't internalize any of it from therapy so far is amazing. And honestly, I think one of the, like—A great portrayal, I'll say.

Keith: One of the things I love about Arrested Development is how much it's a show about parents who can't be parents because they, they haven't finished being children because of their parents. All of the children, the Michael Bluth generation in Arrested Development. I mean, it's in the title. They have Arrested Development. And so they can't live their parental lives for their children because everything that they do is wrapped up in pleasing their parents still. And then Tony Soprano has a really interesting version of this where he's both trying to do what's best for his mother, also trying to make her happy. One of these things is possible, and one of them isn't. And the way that you would attack that issue is contradictory. His father's not in the show because he's already dead, but his whole work life is the same thing. It's like, the same relationship of, like, he's doing this mob thing because it's what his dad—Like, it is his responsibility to his dad in the same way that taking care of his horrible mother is his responsibility to his mom. So even though he's absent, he's like, also, the entire second

half of the show is wrapped up in what we don't know yet about their relationship. And, you know, meanwhile, like, you know, he's out there with the ducks. It's his son's 13th birthday. He's, like, looking for ducks and wading in his pool, feeding ducks bread before he goes and says happy birthday to his son, and then he says happy birthday to his son, and then he leaves. And it's like, this is a guy who is... not got the right priorities, I think.

Sylvi: There is—I don't want to give too much away, obviously. Right? So, like, I might be being. I might be playing too—cards too close to the chest at a point. But there's definitely something to be said about Tony, like, not having fully grown up in a lot of ways, or like, not having been able to grow up normally because of, like, the power that comes with either being in a family tied to the mob or just being in the mob itself.

Keith: Yeah, well, he has so much—

Sylvi: His immaturity I think is really crucial to him.

Keith: He has so much frustration with his mother when she calls his father a saint. And I have a clip I'll play about that later. But he's so mad at his mother for how she treated his father. And I think everybody probably could list the things that Tony's father did that would make him not a saint. I think everybody understands the list of facts about the mobster that would make him not a saint. But Tony's—Instead of being, like, you keep calling him a saint, but he was a mobster criminal, he's actually like, you keep calling him a saint, but you were so mean to him when he was alive. And that's the part that he's mad about. And, you know, it's all—It's, you know, he feels like a guy who is, like, still trying to live with parents who are pitted against each other even though one of them is dead.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: And it's also—It's also, like, it shows how, like, fundamentally skewed his, like, his worldview is on things where it's like the—The more like he—It's a—It's a more subtle way of showing how flexible his ethics are than his work is, right? Like, obviously we get the, like, yeah, questionable morals because he's literally a criminal. But you also have

to have the, like, these are the things he still values and, like, being, like—Showing appreciation for your fam—For—Your wife needs to show appreciation for you for putting food on the table, stuff like that. Or like, even though, like, my dad was a crook, my mom should have been nicer to him if she wants to talk about him this way. I think it, like, I don't know. There's a lot of contradictions within this character, and I think that's one of the reasons why he is such a compelling force from the get go.

Dre: I think one of those contradictions that has really stood out to me so far and I think kind of aligns with this father to son reflection is the idea that Tony is supposedly this—I mean, not supposedly, he is this crime boss, but he's also weirdly passive about certain things. Especially things—I mean, the therapist points out about it with his mom, but it's the thing with his Uncle Junior. Right? Like, he won't directly do anything. And I remember the scene where he talks about his father and he's like, my dad was such a great man. He got worn down to a little nub by my mom. And it's like, well, if your dad was such a great man, why did he let that happen to him? And there's—I feel like there's a lot of that questioning for me too, with Tony of, like, why? What is—What has convinced you that this has to happen in the way that it is and that you're helpless to do anything about it?

Keith: Speaking of Uncle Junior, I have a voice clip about him. Do we want to play that?

Sylvi: Sure.

Art: As long as it's not the last one.

Sylvi: Yeah. Do you have a context for this one before we...?

Keith: Yeah. This is basically the introduction of Uncle Junior, the storyline which Sylvie you already teed up, is that Uncle Junior, who is, is—He's kind of upset about the way that his life has gone. He wanted to be the crime boss, and instead it was his brother and then his nephew. And he seems like he's maybe sort of taking this out on Tony in various ways. You know, neither of them are being direct with each other, really. And he wants to kill his friend, Little Pussy, in Tony's friend's restaurant where they all hang out.

Sylvi: Yeah. I don't know how explicit this is. I think it's supposed to be implied that Little Pussy is some sort of informant or has made a deal and that's why he got out of prison early. [GROUP: Ohhhh.] I don't know. That might be me bringing—So I mentioned this to the crew before we recorded, I watched an interview between Peter Bogdanovich and David Chase, and they refer to him that way.

Keith: So when they characterize Uncle Junior as like, getting older and cranky or whatever. [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] I always—I thought that that was to imply that, like, he's just pissed off at his friend and wants him killed because he's, like, finds him annoying.

Sylvi: Funny to read it that way.

Keith: Maybe this is something that will get more contexted or maybe that it—I think that, he did get out of jail. So I think maybe it is—And also the whole backdrop of this show is like mobsters not having the thing that they say that they used to have, which is that people wouldn't rat. They would go to jail. They would do—He says like, people don't have any time for the penal experience anymore or something like that. And it's like, yeah, part of being a mobster is going to jail for five years and then coming out. And if you didn't say anything, then you're good.

Sylvi: Yeah, there's a really good—The first scene of episode two really expands on that. Anyway. Play your clip.

[audio from the Sopranos plays]

Christopher: You know what it means for Arthur, one of these old mutts gets wet in here.

Tony: Yeah. Ruin his business.

Christopher: You better sit down with your uncle.

Tony: [voiceover] Uncle Junior's my father's brother. Good guy, just getting old. Cranky. Used to take me to Yankee games when I was a kid. I love my uncle. At

the same time, when I was young, he told my girl cousins I would never be a varsity athlete, and frankly, that was a tremendous blow to my self esteem.

[audio stops]

Sylvi: That line is load bearing for this show.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Keith: It's funny how quickly he does get into talking to a therapist. One of the first things that he says in the show is, look, it's impossible for me to talk to a psychiatrist. He proceeds to immediately start talking to the psychiatrist, and it's only a few minutes later that he's telling her about tremendous blows to his self esteem.

Sylvi: She's good at her job.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And he wants to talk.

Keith: He does want to talk.

Sylvi: That is crucial.

Austin: This is the tragedy of Tony Soprano, even in these first two episodes is like, there's a guy who could have not been the guy he is, but he's the guy he is. Right? And part of it is like, yeah, it's actually pretty easy for him to talk about his feelings. He likes talking about his feelings. He also hates it. But he likes it.

Keith: He likes it.

Sylvi: He hates that he likes it too. Yeah.

Keith: The way later on he's like, he's going to admit to his wife that he's on Prozac and it's as if he was telling her that he was dying of cancer. [DRE laughter]

Sylvi: It's really good. A couple things about the scene, specifically the scene that you just played that clip from. I really love that the first time we see Tony and Junior interacting is Tony pretending to put a gun to the back of Junior's head. That's how he greets him, which is like, okay, man. I love when TV shows are just like, here it is.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And then also the way that this is, like, not the only scene where the lighting in this ep—this pilot, like, really, really sings to me. But when Chris and Tony are both sitting at this table having this discussion and each of them have a different, like, half of their face cast in shadow because of where the, like, light is coming in. It looks so good. It's so hard to do dark shots and have them not just look like muddy messes.

Keith: Digital cameras have gotten so good at high dynamic range. And people who are making shows are so into the technology of how those cameras work and they just go like, look, if you can capture everything, why not capture it? It's like, well, that—Because when something is in shadow, it's the best part of every movie.

Sylvi: It looks great. It looks so good. I think that like, the scene of Tony coming in and like, greeting everybody and being the man about town in this restaurant also is really good for establishing where he sits within the community outside of the mob, too. It's like, oh, yeah, he does know people that are civilians. He's got his like—he's got his friend Artie here, who's just a guy who owns a restaurant.

Austin: But, like, that's the other half of this too, right? It's like Tony is... Tony—One of the things that makes Tony Tony is he also wants to protect his childhood friend just cause he's his childhood friend. **[Sylvi: He's really loyal.]** Right? Like, the arbitrary nature of power that Tony has is, like, that's a good thing. Artie is not involved in any of this. His restaurant shouldn't be ruined by being the location of a mob hit.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But the reason that Tony's willing to do that is because he's his childhood friend.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And because he kind of has this code of, like, you know, push come to shove, people who aren't involved shouldn't get caught up in this. But he wouldn't apply that—Someone else is gonna—

Keith: If he learned that Uncle Junior—

Austin: He was gonna kill him. Yes, exactly.

Keith: Was doing this in any other restaurant, he wouldn't lift a finger.

Sylvi: He wouldn't care.

Austin: Well, and if he found out that Uncle Junior was mad at him about something, he might cook up the reason that is like, hey, Junior shouldn't have killed that guy in this other place that's uninvolved, but until it upsets—Until it's some way into his personal feelings, he's not gonna get too worked up over it, you know?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: But it is true, he's trying to protect Artie here.

Keith: He is.

Austin: Which is commendable.

Keith: Sure. Yeah. But again, arbitrary is a great word for it.

Sylvi: I'm gonna talk about Artie and Tony, by the way.

Art: Charmaine is overly—In this case, overly suspicious. Right? Because she won't let Artie take the cruise or whatever from Tony.

Keith: Or appropriately suspicious.

Austin: But just really quick. Charmaine is Artie's—?

Art: Artie's wife.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Artie is Tony's childhood friend who runs the restaurant.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And Charmaine is like, you can't take these tickets. They come with strings attached. And it's one of those, like, well, most of the time, she'd be completely right. And this time she's 100% wrong.

Keith: Right.

Art: Maybe.

Sylvi: Maybe.

Austin: Or is this now a favor that Tony will have done for him, period?

Sylvi: That's the thing, right? You can never know.

Keith: Sure. Yeah.

Art: I've been reading the book *Woke Up This Morning*, the oral history of the Sopranos, which is, I think, just edited transcripts of the podcast that Michael Imperioli and Steve Schirripa did.

Sylvi: That's very funny.

Art: But one of the—One of the things that I thought was really interesting and we're gonna get into some—I have, I have more. But one of them is that when they were testing the pilot, Charmaine was the number one character that audiences liked.

Sylvi: Oh, really? I didn't know that.

Austin: That's wild.

Keith: She only has like three lines.

Art: She's got more than three lines, but—She doesn't have a big part, but she was like—I think it was like most liked, like the most likable or something. Like she, she had the highest score in the episode, which is again, like—So the test audiences also weren't quite into the new era of television that this show was ushering in.

Keith: Because otherwise they would have said [crosstalk] the guy who keeps doing—

Sylvi: [crosstalk] I'm curious about what the makeup of the test audience would be.

Art: Who keeps doing crimes.

Keith: I was gonna say Al Pacino impressions.

Art: Oh, that's episode two.

Sylvi: They didn't test that one.

Keith: Didn't he start doing it in the first one? I thought he did it in both.

Art: Does he?

Keith: No, I think you're right. I think he does it all through two.

Austin: Yeah, it's in the open of episode two—

Keith: At the end and then at—

Austin: the end and in the middle.

Keith: And in the middle. It's all the way.

Sylvi: Yeah, it is. You're right.

Art: That's Silvio, that's played by Steve Van Zandt. I will tell you that those were the. There were two actors that David Chase went into casting being like, you have to cast this person in the show. And one of them was Steven Van Zandt. And the other one—

Sylvi: Is that a spoiler?

Art: The other one was Jerry Stiller.

Sylvi: Oh, my God.

Austin: Wow.

Art: Who was cast as Hesh.

Austin: Ah, that makes sense.

Art: And canceled the Friday before they started shooting because he got a commercial and he decided to shoot that instead.

Sylvi: That's wild. I like Jerry Adler as Hesh. I think.

Art: Yes. I think, I think, I think the version of—The reality where Jerry Stiller is Hesh is a worse one.

Keith: I think that I have to ask by—Is this the same Van Zandt that's in a famous band?

Sylvi and Austin: Yes.

Keith: That's him? That's really him?

Sylvi: That's him.

Austin: Oh, my God.

Keith: That's really him. That's so crazy. I didn't know that at all. I didn't know that that's what Steven Van Zandt looked like.

Austin: For people who don't know, Little Steven is of course part of the E Street Band.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Bruce Springsteen's band.

Art: Which was not a thing at this time. They had supposedly toured for the last time going into this. When the show was cast.

Sylvi: Oh, they were on hiatus. I thought you did—Meant like the E Street Band hadn't formed yet. And I was like, that doesn't make sense to me.

Art: But like, it's a hiatus now because they came back, but at the time it was supposedly over.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: [crosstalk] Steven Van Zandt was supposed to—

Austin: [crosstalk] I'm going to link a document with all the actors names and stuff—

Sylvi: [crosstalk] Thank you so much, Austin.

Austin: [crosstalk] For everybody right now for the reference.

Art: Steven Van Zandt was so pushed by David Chase that he was one of the final three people in the Tony auditions.

Keith: Whoa.

Sylvi: That's interesting.

Austin: Wow.

Art: Wearing the same wig.

Sylvi: Oh.

[**Keith** laughter]

Art: The third person is someone who will show up in episode two.

Keith: Casting is a super important part of television.

Sylvi: I mean, the. This show is all immaculately cast too. We didn't talk a ton about the family. I think maybe we can talk more about Carmella when we get to that MRI scene.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: But once again, I feel like that's a character that feels locked in pretty early on. There's a few things in the pilot that end up feeling more out of character later on. Specifically when she grabs the AK to let—because she thinks someone is breaking in.

Keith: That is crazy because—

Sylvi: Like, incredible visual, but also not actually—

Dre: The shadow silhouette of her in the AK. God, so fucking good.

Sylvi: It's a great shot. But that ends up feeling like as we get in, I think we can come back to it and be like, yeah, doesn't it feel weird that Carmella picked up a gun at any point in the show?

[00:49:50]

Keith: The next big thing that happens is Tony goes to his mom's house. We see Tony's mom for the first time.

Sylvi: Oh, my God. It's force of fucking nature, Nancy Marchand as Livia Soprano.

Keith: The first thing that we learn about her is that she won't open the door for Tony just from him saying, mom, it's me. And she makes him prove that it's him. Then she opens the door. [crosstalk] The second thing that we learned about her is that she has five locks on her door.

Austin: [crosstalk] And that's the whole relationship!

Sylvi: [crosstalk] That she won't open the door for him! [crosstalk ends] And then right after that, she is talking about how she doesn't answer the phone after it's dark.

Keith: Yeah, and Tony, [crosstalk] Tony tries also—

Sylvi: [crosstalk] So funny and also so characterful.

Keith: Tony tries to explain why this doesn't make sense. And she says something like, oh, listen to him, he knows everything.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: And I'm like, okay, this is the worst. This is the worst person.

Austin: To be clear, it's not just she won't answer after dark. It's literally she is like someone called here after dark yesterday, you know? And he's like, well, who was it? And she's like, you think I'd answer? It was dark. It's so fucking funny.

Keith: This is a—It's not hypothetical.

Austin: They're not gonna get me answering the phone.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And that's all within, like, less than a minute or like a minute of this scene starting. This was a really efficiently written pilot.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: In a way that I really admire. And that is kind of a lost art in TV these Days.

Keith: And it's great how quickly they go from Tony's in therapy to why Tony's in therapy. You see—you meet the fucking most paranoid, anxious person you've ever seen. Just someone who is withered into a petrified stump by living a life of anxiety and fear. Before the mob, maybe? In the mob, definitely. I mean, connected to—

Sylvi: Classic mob wife at—This becomes a classic mob wife persona in a weird way. Or like the mob mother. I don't know how common it was at the time, but the sort of like, ruthless, like mom to the mob boss definitely becomes more of a thing. And as I'm thinking about examples, I'm like, oh, yeah, no, that's because the guy who created this

show—I'm thinking of Boardwalk Empire has a character like this. And it's like, well, yeah, the guy who made that show worked on this show.

Art: Everyone who makes a show in, like, the next wave of prestige drama worked on this show.

Keith: Yeah, that makes sense.

Sylvi: And their follow ups are to varying degrees of success.

Keith: I've got another button. This is a mom button.

Sylvi: Oh, please, hit a mom button. People need to hear Livia's voice because the delivery—I can't do it justice with a silly impression.

[audio from The Sopranos plays]

Livia: What's that?

Tony: CD player.

Livia: For who? For me? I don't want it.

Tony: You know you love music. All the old stuff's being reissued on CD. All your old favorites. Pajama Game, Connie Francis. Here. Come on, come on. Move around.

Keith: Trying to dance with her.

Tony: Come on, come on, come on.

Livia: Stop that.

Tony: Might need something to occupy your mind. When dad died, you're gonna do all kinds of things.

Livia: Oh, he was a saint.

Tony: Yeah, I know he was, but he's gone. You were gonna travel. You were gonna get a volunteer job. You've done nothing.

Livia: Stop telling me how to live my life. Just shut up.

Tony: I just worry about you.

Livia: Don't start with that nursing home business again.

Tony: It's not a nursing home. How many times do I gotta say this? It's a retirement community. You're an active senior your own age. You go places, you do things.

Livia: Seen these women in these nursing homes in these wheelchairs, babbling like idiots. Eat your eggplant.

Tony: I told you, I already ate lunch. Listen, you just speak to Uncle Junior about Artie, okay? He respects you. He'll listen to you.

Livia: If your uncle has business with Arthur, he knows what he's doing.

Tony: And I don't?

Livia: Well, all I know is daughters are better at taking care of their mothers than sons.

Tony: Yeah, and I bought CDs for a broken record.

[audio stops]

Keith: Okay, the first thing that I want to point out about this, it's a small detail that I hadn't really put together until much later in this episode. She says that line. It's a complete lie. She's no contact with her daughters.

Sylvi: Yeah. Neither of them make an appearance in either of these episodes we watched.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah. I'm not sure either of them existed in even the minds of the creator. This line was written, and, yes, we are going to find out that she has two daughters who do not speak to her.

Keith: So she's shitting on him for not being a good enough son to her and that a daughter would be better. But she has daughters. And Art, you're right, I don't know if those daughters were in the mind of the creator when he wrote the line. But also, we do know that he has a nephew because he's Christopher and he's a main character.

Art: Oh, but they don't mean nephew like that.

Keith: Oh, they don't mean nephew like that. He's not literally—?

Art: He is not his sibling's child. It's gonna get confusing.

Sylvi: It'll get explained at some point. They do very much ask, like—I can't remember which character asks, like—I think it is probably Melfi who asks about the specifics of their relationship at one point, but it will get it fleshed out about why Chris is referred to as his nephew.

Art: It's interesting because the person that I remember giving the full explanation is Adrianna.

Sylvi: I think it is, actually. You might be right.

Austin: That makes sense to me. Who is in the second episode here, but not really.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And the actor is in the first episode as a different character. It's one of those like, I guess they liked her.

Sylvi: Well, they kind of—

Austin: That is exactly what it was actually, Art. She shows up as the hostess at the restaurant, and David Chase liked her and so cast her as Adrianna, Christopher's girlfriend.

Keith: So another thing that I want to point out about this is that it may have sounded when he's trying to dance with her and she's pushing him off, stop, stop. Like, that's playful. No, she's mad. She hates him, it seems like. She hates her son.

Sylvi: And he's trying so hard.

Keith: He's trying pretty hard.

Sylvi: You can watch his health bar going down throughout the interaction. And it's like, ma, I brought you a gift. It's like he's trying to be jokey with the stuff at the beginning. The way he talks about, oh, no, you don't go outside. You get jumped in the shadows. You get jumped, like, there's like a sing song-y jokeyness to the way he delivers that line. And then by the end of the scene, he's like, oh, God. I mean, you get the, I broke—I brought—I bought a CD player for a broken record, which I love.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Great Tonyism.

Keith: Yeah. And then multiple times, including in this scene, in the middle of her being so cruel to him as a parent, she's also like, trying to give him food or whatever, feed him against his wishes. He's like, don't give me this food. I already ate. Every time he's declining food because he doesn't need it, and then she's like, this is another insult on top of that. You bought me a CD player, which is also an insult. It's crazy.

Sylvi: It's—Yeah, it's—You can tell—Like, Chase is pretty upfront about how the three, the like, three most like, concrete things going into this was the idea of Tony, his mom, and Tony's therapist. And that is super clear in the, like, everything moves kind of around that triangle in this pilot. And, yeah, like this—Like, every scene Livia is in, she is, like, fully, like—She's the star of it. Nancy Marchand, incredible actress, I think, like,

really. She's really doing an amazing job. Especially when you hear about people talking like, oh, yeah, she was great to work with. You're like, oh, okay. She really turned it on.

Keith: I've heard that about the, the actress who plays the mother from Malcolm in the Middle also, who is constantly screeching in that show. And everyone is like, this is the nicest person I've ever met in my life.

Sylvi: I love that. I love whenever that happens, honestly.

Keith: The next big scene is Anthony Jr's 13th birthday, which has—

Sylvi: First time around.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. His first 13th birthday party, which is my—Has my favorite line in it because it's the scene.

Sylvi: I bet I know what it is, but I'm not gonna say it.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: I bet I know what it is too.

Keith: So maybe, maybe, maybe I have—I—You know, I'm not that predictable. He's cooking. We see him, like, at the grill. There's a conversation about, I think Anthony Jr says that Grandma called, she says she's not coming, because he was like, you should drive yourself. It's good for you to drive. And she's like, I won't come unless someone picks me up and drives me back home, and he won't do it. She's also supposed to bring her baked ziti. So Anthony goes, this is not my favorite line—He says, so no fucking baked Ziti? Or something next to the [unintelligible crosstalk from everyone] Right next to the priest, which is really funny. I thought that—I wrote gay priest. I guess the priest isn't gay because it looks like he's hitting on Carmella, but.

Sylvi: He's helping her to be a better Catholic.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: He's staying over late at night and watching movies with her.

Keith: Yeah, they're watching Field of Dreams together. [**Dre:** Spiritual guidance, yeah.] Yeah. Although he's asking a lot of questions about Tony and what kind of movies Tony likes, so I don't know.

Dre: But just because he's a nice guy, he's trying to get to the nice guy.

Sylvi: Conversation with people, too, is just defaulting to talking about movies.

Austin: I mean, that's what I was gonna say. This is a movie—This is a show that loves movies. Tony is a movie lover. We get Marty in the next one, you know.

Keith: Well, this is the first time—

Austin: He's quoting WC Fields in the next episode.

Keith: This is the first time that they lampshade mobster movies. Because they talk about how Tony loves the Godfather Part Two, but not Three. And then the priest asks, what does he think about Goodfellas? To which you don't get an answer because the answer is the very show itself. Obviously, he loves Goodfellas, 'cause the show is the Goodfellas show.

Austin: Well, except no, because they specifically shit talk the guy from Goodfellas.

Sylvi: Well, that's because he's a real guy, right?

Austin: That's right.

Austin: I don't know if he does like Goodfellas.

Keith: Sorry. I mean, that the show is an answer to is the—Yeah, Tony. I didn't really mean the show that Tony himself, but, yeah.

Austin: Yes, yes, Tony—But I think this is a really interesting thing, is that they all love Godfather, but I actually think they hate Goodfellas because of the reality of the guy being a snitch.

Keith: Yeah. They might still love Goodfellas, but hate what it represents.

Austin: They ain't quoting Goodfellas.

Sylvi: The only Scorsese we get confirmation of anyone liking in these two episodes is Kundun. [**Austin:** It's Kundun!] The only canonical answer we have.

Keith: That's really funny. That was a really funny line.

Sylvi: It's a really good bit.

Art: But also, like, Goodfellas is trying to be a more sober look at the Mafia. Whereas Godfather is this like operatic, romantic look at things.

Sylvi: Yes.

Art: You know, in a lot of ways, like when Tony talks about coming in at the end, the Mafia that he is missing is the Henry Hill era of the Mob. But you can't watch that movie and be like, well, I wish I was that guy.

Austin: That's right. I think that's exactly right. Well, in fact, what he says is he wishes he got in at the beginning. What's his favorite movie? It's Godfather 2, which is about the establishment of the mob in the States. Right? And so—

Sylvi: I mean, yeah.

Keith: I've actually never seen Part Two.

Austin: You should see Part Two.

Keith: I only watched Part One, and I didn't like it, so I didn't go any further.

Art: We should.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: I think our first bonus episode has to be Goodfellas, because of the way—

Sylvi: I'm with you.

Art: They talk about this stuff. And that's why I'm reading Wise Guy right now.

Keith: I'm happy to watch as many Godfather movies as exist.

Art: And then. Yeah, for season two, we should really think about it. I don't know.

Keith: So my favorite line is that while this stuff is happening at the party, he's cooking, or he's getting ready to cook, and he's listening to his family, and he's watching as the ducks, which earlier in the episode were trying to learn how to fly. And he was getting such a kick out of the ducks, trying but not quite being able to fly. It's the happiest that he has been in any single moment in either of these two episodes. And while he's setting the grill up, the ducks fly away and leave the pool. And he has the panic attack that we've been talking about for the whole first, I don't know, this is not quite halfway through the episode. And he goes down. And the only line about it is, at first, it felt like ginger ale in my skull. But then we don't get, like, the second half of that. It just—He wakes up in the MRI room. That's like my favorite line, I think, in the whole thing.

Sylvi: Do you have a button for it?

Keith: I don't. I just really like the one line.

Sylvi: It's good.

Keith: Yeah. I have a clip. I do have a clip for the MRI thing because we get a lot of stuff—**[Sylvi:** That scene is great.] Tony Soprano stuff.

Sylvi: Before we move on, I just want to mention something that—a really funny visual was Silvio walking up to the fire. When Tony faints, the fuel for the barbecue lands. The lighter fluid lands on the barbecue. And so when the family runs over and it blows up at one point, and they're like, oh, my God, get back. And then Silvio just walks over with the fire extinguisher and puts it out, and my partner was like, the funniest thing about this show is when it's just mob guys doing normal guy things.

Austin: I was thinking about that in relation to them watching and talking about movies too, is they're dudes in the cult—Like, they live in culture, they live in the world. They have to pay their rent. And also they have—Well, I don't know if they're actually paying their rent, but they—You know, they live in the world. They might be. They might be leaning on someone about rent or, actually, they probably all own—Just own houses at this point. But you know what I mean?

Sylvi: I'm glad they got it.

Austin: Sometimes they have to deal with people who don't know how phones work.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Sometimes they gotta learn how—They gotta tell people how the hold button works.

Keith: Yeah. And they might have interesting ideas on how to deal with that.

Sylvi: We'll talk about it. I'm glad you mentioned, though, that the, like, them existing in the culture, because something that David Chase said in that interview I watched was that, like, he realized while making this that this is the first mob story in a while that isn't a period piece. The Godfather was made—Was set like 20 years before—Well, it was made. It was a 40s, 50s period piece. Right? Goodfellas was sort of 70s, 80s period piece. And then this, it allows them to actually react to what is going on in American culture at the time of it being created.

Keith: You can tell it's modern day because they're watching Field of Dreams on LaserDisc.

Sylvi: And then they're talking about Princess Di.

Art: And CDs—

Austin: Yeah, go ahead, Art.

Art: CDs are brand new.

Keith: CDs are brand new.

Art: Not brand new, but like—

Austin: DVDs are brand brand new because they're talking about the quality of DVDs versus LaserDiscs.

Keith: They have to convince Tony Soprano about DVD versus LaserDisc as a technology.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Which of course, also part of that conversation, which is the beginning of the second episode. So we're moving ahead a little bit here, but the CD player is here too. And Tony is talking about all of the reissues on CD. Like they. Tony cares about the quality of sound and visuals on video, on movies.

Keith: I thought he was being sarcastic about the quality of the sound.

Austin: I don't know that he is.

Art: Yeah, I don't think so. I think as time goes on, we're gonna...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And more importantly, you can't even get to that joke if you don't care at least a little bit. Cause you don't even know—You at the very least know that people care. You're not checked out from the world such that you know—Someone who isn't in that world would be like, wait, oh, do these things have different quality? Is that a thing that people care about?

Austin: You know?

Austin: And so, yeah, people—He knows someone who is, like, excited—Was excited to get the LaserDisc for something at some point.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Junior might not care.

Keith: I thought he was just being shitty to Christopher and Christopher's friend, who I can't remember the name of

Austin: Brendan, yeah.

Art: He is being shitty to those people.

Keith: Yeah. So he may genuinely care about the audio, but he's like, oh, yeah, I care about the fucking audio while I'm watching, you know?

Sylvi: He says, yeah, that's what I want to do.

Austin: Men in Black.

Sylvi: Pop up a bag of of popcorn and listen to Men in Black.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, he's being shitty.

Austin: But he knows enough to be shitty. Like, you can't just, you know—And he knows enough to tell his mom that all her favorites are being reissued on CD, that they exist in time. Which weirdly does make it a period piece for us watching it now. It's obviously—Literally wasn't conceived as one, but it captures the era in that way. Yeah.

Keith: And the. And why does he know about that? Because he's a rich guy that lives in the suburbs of New Jersey with a family. That's why he knows about this.

Austin: With lots of disposable income.

Keith: Lots of disposable income and a huge house and a huge TV.

Austin: Free stuff off the back off of a truck, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Literally.

Keith: Literally. Literally.

Sylvi: I forgot what I was gonna say.

Keith: We reference that the MRI machine is next.

Sylvi: Right, we should talk about the MRI scene. It's right after Tony faints. We just kind of like smash-cut to him laying in an MRI, like, bay, is that what you would call it? I realize I don't know the terminology for an MRI.

Keith: MRI machine?

Sylvi: Yeah, well, it's like, yeah, but I guess just the bed of it. He's not in that room.

Keith: He's not in it yet.

Sylvi: He starts—Is what I'm trying to get across.

Keith: He's in the room on the thing. They buzz in to be like, hey, by the way, if you get claustrophobic in there, you can—There's a microphone. You can tell us, we'll take you out. But if you do that, we're just gonna have to start over. So you shouldn't do that. And that. Is that brought to you by someone who got claustrophobic in an MRI machine? Probably.

Sylvi: Yeah. I would not be shocked if that's just David Chase being like, I'm putting this in here because this happened to me. Fuck that. There's—I love how contentious the relationship between Tony and Carmella is right from the jump. Yeah, like we said—Like I mentioned in the summary, it's not so—It's pretty obvious that Tony has some. Someone on the side.

Keith: A goomar.

Sylvi: A goomar. Yeah. We learned the term goomar. That's our Italian word of the week.

Keith: Put a little sparkle sound effect under Italian word of the week.

Sylvi: You should. Please do, actually.

Keith: Do you want to hear about Tony and his goomar?

Sylvi: Oh, if you have a clip for it. Yeah. I should have asked that first.

[audio from the Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: Think I got a brain tumor.

Carmella: Well, we're gonna find out.

Tony: What a bedside manner. Very encouraging.

Carmella: What, are you gonna not know?

Tony: Had some good times. Had some good years.

Carmella: Here he goes now with the nostalgia.

Tony: Hey, all I'm saying is no marriage is perfect.

Carmella: Well, having that goomar on the side helps.

Tony: I told you, I'm not seeing her anymore. How do you think I feel having that priest around all the time?

Carmella: Don't even go there, alright? Father is a spiritual mentor. He's helping me to be a better Catholic.

Tony: Yeah, well, we all got different needs.

Carmella: What's different between you and me is you're going to hell when you die.

[audio stops]

Keith: She says, she says Catholic, like Sonic the Hedgehog says Emerald. **[Austin:** Cath-o-lic.] Cath-o-lic.

Sylvi: I. When I was watching this, I said that line along with her because that delivery is so stuck in my head. It helped me to be a better Cath-o-lic. Cath-o-lic. She hit every syllable.

Art: This and the gun and a few other things. It's sort of like—And we can get to this when we get to episode two, but these are, like, all the things they have to sort of, like, back off. Where, like, they make the pilot, and the pilot is like, here are all of our good ideas for this show. And they come back. This is—I'm not saying this—This isn't from an interview. This is me editorializing. And they come back 10 months later like, shit. Too many of these characters are at a seven, and we need them at a three.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And I think that this and the gun is like. They bring Carmella way back down so they can start building this again.

Austin: Yeah, it's about a build. She'll get to a seven again.

Sylvi: Yeah, I'd say my only—I don't—Like, I agree with you. But I think the thing with—There's a difference between the gun scene and this scene, because this stuff stays very—Carmella's faith stays very integral to her, and like, Tony's philandering stays very integral to their relationship. But they definitely do sort of dial back. Like you said, they turn the stovetop down a little bit. It stays simmering, but it's not quite at the same temperature. **[Art:** Yeah.] I think part of that can be a—I think the reason why some of the relationship stuff doesn't stand out as much to me as like, oh, they stepped back at this is because they have the scene at the restaurant and that feels like kind of getting them back on track because she's so happy that Tony's in therapy and getting help. But I do think it's—I think they're really good about setting up Carmella's Catholicism in this first episode in a lot of ways, both the stuff with the priest and then also her being like, what'd she say later? Therapy's good, but it doesn't address the soul. I think that stuff ends up—It definitely gets put—It gets dialed down for a little bit,

but it ends up being something that stays really crucial to her. There's some really good—I really like Edie Falco's performance in this scene of balancing between the fight that they're in. They're still in a fight, but then when he's going into the machine, her face is like, she's really concerned. And if you watch her hands, she holds onto his hand as long as she can until he's in the MRI. And so like, you still get the sense that those two care about each other, but you—You're meeting them at a bad point in the relationship and they're definitely giving you the vibe of that type of couple who are like, oh, yeah, we fight all the time. It's how—It's just part of us. And it's like, that's not necessarily good. But like, you do understand the dynamic immediately. And like, when you see Tony's mom, you kind of get the impression that, that he's kind of imitating that cycle of always kind of being a little bit at odds with your spouse.

Keith: Yeah, this is a fairly complete and well drawn relationship in the first episode, I think. I don't—Not that it—I don't feel like it significantly changes in the second one. Obviously she didn't pull out a gun, but they do a really good job of quickly establishing—I mean, we're barely halfway through the episode and there's only one major dynamic that has not yet been introduced to this marriage, and it is that Tony Soprano feels like his wife is the thing that's keeping him distant from his mother, which I think also maybe isn't even true. That is just something that he either says or feels.

Sylvi: Yeah, it's—He displaces a lot, you know, probably kind of obvious, but like, because he's not willing to—I mean, we see it especially at the end of the second episode, but he's not willing to really look the issues he has with his mom in the face, and they end up leaking out into all his other relationships, which, you know.

Keith: Do we want to talk about the first whack of the series?

Sylvi: Oh, my God, please. I fucking adore this scene.

Art: That's a killer scene.

Keith: Literally.

Sylvi: [joking] Ey?

Art: Pun not intended, but I'll take it.

Keith: So while Tony's dealing with this medical stuff, the Czech garbage disposal guys who are undercutting Tony's—Tony or Tony's friends?

Sylvi: They are under—They're undercutting, like, the family, like the mob.

Austin: Can we actually, like—Can we talk about what the situation is with the mob for a second? Because it's—It ends up being kind of important because one of the big recurring things is, like, things are different not just in terms of honor among thieves or whatever, but also, literally, there's not as much money to go around. The situation feels unstable. That seems increasingly important. Like—

Sylvi: [crosstalk] We used to be recession proof is like, a thing talked about a lot.

Austin: [crosstalk] What are—

Art: [crosstalk] Yeah.

Keith: [crosstalk] Can I give my—

Austin: Specifically waste management. But the whole thing.

Keith: Can I give my impression and I could be corrected on what I didn't pick up?

[**Austin:** Please.] Right. [**Sylvi:** I would love that.] So what I understand is that, yeah, it starts with this thing of, like, money is trending downward. It's harder to, like, put the squeeze on people. There's also other competition from other organized crime. And the big thing is that they're in waste management. They have these—They have a protection racket going around in various different industries, it looks like, but also that the waste management is their big one. And someone is being undercut—Someone in the family is being undercut by this Czech mob by thousands of dollars a month. And instead of going lower on that, they want to just not make them a problem anymore. Take that better offer off the table. And so they decide to do this by a murder.

Sylvi: It's—I think the—Yeah, you're not too far off from my understanding.

Austin: “They” is the thing that I would say is strong. Christopher makes that decision.

Keith: Yeah, right. Christopher and Big Pussy.

Sylvi: We should talk about when Chris decides—Says he's gonna handle this because that also has some of my favorite framing of the show. But, yeah, so it is a protection racket. I think the way—It's less that they're paying money to someone else. I think it—That this is a new company taking over a garbage route and they are not intimidated enough by the mob to pay. I think that's—I would believe that they are also—

Austin: I do believe that they are also tied up with criminal stuff.

Sylvi: It's definitely implied. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Different organized crime thing because this guy's here for what he thinks is like a criminal sit down with Christopher that he—And the way Christopher frames it is that they're both representing the new generation of their families in crime. Right? The larger thing I just want to emphasize is, like, Tony. And we'll get into this a little bit next time maybe with Jackie. But the mob has different regions and Tony is in charge of North Jersey, effectively. Right? But then that's part of a larger organization that is regional. I think that's important for understanding how people think about Tony. And it's good to think about that in relationship to the broader state of the mob. Tony is not the New York guy.

Sylvi: He's not the biggest fish in the sea, but when it comes to the little pond, he's not small.

Austin: But—

Art: Yeah, but that's another thing they walk back between these two episodes is Tony is definitely supposed to have a slightly higher rank in this episode, I believe, than he does in the second episode.

Sylvi: That's why when I was doing my summary, I said acting boss, question mark, 'cause he is very much the boss in this first episode. And then in the second episode, he is kind of like, the second in command is the vibe you get.

Austin: Well. And you get Jackie, who is the boss.

Sylvi: Jackie is the boss.

Art: Right, right. Jackie is the acting boss.

Sylvi: I don't need to spend a ton of time talking about it, but I really enjoy the way that Chris is like, put in the background in the shot at the butchers when they're talking—Before—Not the actual hit when they're talking, when he's let me handle it. Because they have this whole conversation about the problem. And he's just in the background listening. And both his posture, his costuming, and the fact that he is further back, it makes him look like a little kid. He looks like a little kid in this shot. And literally at the kids table just looking over. And he's just constantly in the background of this conversation. Especially when you see Tony, he's like, right over his shoulder, but you only, like you're not—The camera doesn't really get drawn to him until after he says, like, let me handle it. And then we see the reverse shot. And, like, it makes the distance between him and the table of made guys feel even bigger. I just—I don't know. I like, I like when...

Austin: We should say that too really quick because, like, there are gonna be people who are watching this, who've never watched anything related to the mob. It's not their thing, but they, like us. [**Sylvi:** By the way, watch Goodfellas.] Exactly. You should totally watch Goodfellas. So in the mob, you have different ranks, just like you would have in a military or something. And there's a really important distinction between guys who are made men and people who are, like, part of the crew. And then people who, like, sometimes do work for people who are part of the crew. So Christopher, for instance, is not a made man. He's not like—It's like, he's not knighted, you know, he's not, like, brought into the fold entirely.

Sylvi: He's Tony's Squire.

Dre: He's not salaried. He's on contract.

Austin: That's right. Well, and—Well, except I don't—I think he is salaried, but he isn't. He's like full time and he's salaried.

Sylvi: He's salaried, yeah.

Keith: He's not management.

Austin: Tenure. He doesn't have tenure. He doesn't. He's not management. Right?

Art: Like, he very literally doesn't have a salary. Right, like, that's the—

Austin: That's true.

Art: Well, they go over this a lot in Wise Guys. What Wise Guys brings that Goodfellas doesn't is the precarity of everyone. Organized crime. But, like, you have to, like, hit a score—

Sylvi: You're working on commission.

Art: Or you're not gonna fucking eat this week.

Keith: Right.

Art: But they talk about these guys go from having, like, tons of money to literally nothing. And, like, Christopher lives with his mom, right? I mean?

Austin: Right. Yeah, right.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Importantly, he's in a different situation than his friend Brendan, who is not part of Tony's crew. He's a guy who does work with Christopher.

Art: Yeah, right.

Austin: And then he's like, own dudes, apparently, you know, so.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Just want to emphasize that there's, like, a structure. Tony in the pilot seems to be at the top of the structure, in the second episode seems to be just one step below that.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah. Hierarchy is so crucial to understanding everything here. Thank you for making us take a minute to lay it out like that. Let's get back to the hit itself. Now that we had our—Do we want to linger?

Keith: Okay. So he brings this guy in. They introduce themselves to each other. The vibe is, we're going to do a bunch of coke and figure this thing out.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: And he brings out. It's like five lines, six lines of coke on a—On a, on a meat cleaver.

Sylvi: Great visual.

Keith: Great visual.

Dre: Sick.

Keith: He's like, yeah, yeah, you go first, man. And he's like, okay, here I go. Bending down to do my coke. And then Christopher pulls out a gun and shoots him in the head and then continues to shoot him multiple times, intercut with who I assume are mob figures that I don't recognize, who are plastered all along the wall in the butcher shop alongside a bunch of naked women.

Sylvi: It's really good. I love—The two little bits of little character acting that I really like in this are at the beginning when Chris is just listening to music and doing fake karate bullshit, basically.

[laughter]

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: He's doing like, tai chi. He's doing the John Blow tai chi in the park, in the butchers. And then after he does the hit itself, he like, gets startled by looking over at the pig's heads in the butcher shop that were like, looking at the hit effectively. Really, really good moments. Also, him not knowing how to pronounce Emil's name and calling him email is funny every time.

Austin: It's really good.

Keith: Yeah. A bunch of butchered pig's heads watching him commit the murder is great. I love it.

Sylvi: It's pretty good.

Dre: Is this Christopher's first time killing someone? Do we know?

Keith: He seems pretty relaxed.

Sylvi: I believe so.

Art: In the next episode, when he talks about how he should have been made after this thing, I believe we are supposed to [stutters] infer that that means that he's making his bones here. This is his first murder committed for the mafia, and he believes that that is why he should be made. I don't—I think they might explicitly say so later, but, but I believe that those two pieces of information are enough for us to draw that conclusion.

Keith: That makes sense.

Sylvi: God. Keith, the screenshot you got of the cleaver splattered with blood.

Keith: It's great. It's great. Wait, there's one more. I'm gonna add one more to this.

Sylvi: Cool. And for anyone who's like, oh, screenshots, check out the Patreon.

Art: I'm pretty sure that's Al Capone.

Keith: Yeah, that's Al Capone covered in splattered blood. This is the only one that I recognize. But also it's the best one because it's the only one that got covered in blood.

Sylvi: It's great.

Art: And this scene looks like a million bucks. They had a lot of time to make this. This is one of the things from the book, is that they say that on a network show you have about seven days to put on an episode. Because they were cable, they had 10 days, 10 to 14 days to finish an episode. But for the pilot, they took a full month.

Dre: Wow.

Art: And I think you can see a lot of that.

Keith: Yeah, I can't emphasize enough how great the pilot looks. We talked a little bit about my dipping in and then dipping back out of a lot of prestige tv. And so like, one of the things I was remembering was how much I loved the Breaking Bad pilot. And then sort of only the Breaking Bad pilot? Which is why I was not surprised at how much better and more full and filled out the pilot was than episode two. But I'm more than happy to give it the time. You know—There's just something different that happens when you go, okay, and now it's time to make 12 more. Like, it's just a different way of being in TV.

Art: There's also a funny line. This doesn't really matter. One of these kids—The person I'm talking about, isn't on the show yet, but they're talking to Lorraine Bracco, and she said that she had the best job in TV because no matter what they were doing, she only worked one day an episode. They shot all the Melfi stuff in one day. And she was talking to the one guy who was like, I'm gonna work 15 days this, this episode. And she says, you're gonna work more than I'm gonna work all year.

Sylvi: The benefits of only needing to shoot in one location.

Austin: Two!

Sylvi: Yeah, two. Yeah. We do get a second scene with her.

Keith: We do get a second scene of her, and it's a really good one.

Sylvi: Hey, those decorating tips?

Keith: Yeah.

[musical sting]

Sylvi: They're going on this little tour of Greengrove, the retirement community, with—Again, really praising the—How much they pack into every little interaction. You get a bit of Carmella trying to make nice with Meadow because they're talking about Zora Neale Hurston, and it's like, oh, didn't you read her in school, Med? And then Meadow just walks forward, like, doesn't reply. You get AJ saying a line that was definitely fed to him by one of his parents to be like, this place is really cool, Grandma. But the main thing is that it seems like, Livia's not against it completely. But then she sees the nursing unit and starts freaking out because this is a nursing home. This is where people go to die. And then Tony, while trying to calm her down, has one of his panic attacks and faints in the middle. And it's this sort of, like, static shot on the family while this is happening, while she's freaking out, and he's just like. You can see him getting progressively shorter and shorter of breath until he falls over. And Livia just going, [as **Livia**] Get a doctor. Get a doctor.

Keith: Yeah. Now she's glad there's a—There's doctors there.

Sylvi: It's so funny. It's so good.

Keith: It's really good. And also, she's making such a scene that no one's paying attention to him, even though he's trying to make a scene. Yeah, it's great.

Sylvi: He knocks over a vase or something, and then it's when he's down that they notice.

Keith: So importantly, there's a couple things that happen in between where we just were and this, which is that he doesn't show up to his next appointment. He also hasn't called to cancel. He just doesn't show up because he's feeling kind of good. And there's

a great shot of just the therapist, I think, kind of being kind of disappointed that he didn't show up. She's sitting in her chair from the back. We just see her kind of being like, ah, he didn't show up. And then we see—I think Big Pussy saves Christopher's ass by changing the plan on what to do with this guy's dead body. Because they're going to frame someone for the murder. And he's like, actually, I think this guy should just disappear, instead.

Austin: They're not gonna frame it. They're sending it as a message. They're putting it in one of their own waste disposal bins where they know—Or under it, where they know they will find it, to send a message like, stay away from our streets.

Keith: Ohhhh. I thought it was a way to—

Sylvi: They don't put it in, but they try to put it in.

Art: They were not close. They couldn't have found a bigger dumpster in—You could tell where they fabricated this dumpster for this so that it looked like it had no shot of getting in.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Sylvi: Louis Brasi sleeps with the fishes.

Austin: Luca Brasi.

Sylvi: It's so good. Again, these guys love movies.

Austin: They love movies. It's—They're funny. Yeah. That's what they're specifically. They're gonna find them in one of the bins and they're gonna get out of our business. Are you kidding me? No way. You know?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And yeah, Big Pussy's like, we get—We make them disappear. They know, but they don't know. Yeah, they hope maybe he comes back, but he doesn't. **[Art: If.]** If. Yeah, it's great.

Keith: It's great. It's a great line. Great scene.

Art: It's a great—It's a great performance. I mean, all of, like, Tony's guys are good on their notes, but, but like I said, there were a lot of scenes in these where I was like, wow, this character is really there. And this is, you know, Pussy is really in his character here. This is—A lot of shows take a long time to get their people right. And all of the guys are here pretty quick.

Keith: It's crazy that his name is Big Pussy. It's insane. It's just, like, totally crazy.

Sylvi: I love it.

Keith: It's really funny.

Sylvi: Salvatore “Big Pussy” Bonpensiero.

Art: So this is my only regret, and I hate to spoil this, is we never find out the origin of Big Pussy.

Sylvi: I assumed it was because of his, his surname for some reason. Like, it's like a—Like someone mispronounced it, like Bonpinsiero, some way and-

Art: Oh, okay.

Keith: Bom-pussy.

Art: But then what about Little Pussy?

Keith: Yeah. Whose name does not sound—I don't know, man. I don't remember what his name is.

Sylvi: Malanga.

Keith: He's just a pussy.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: I don't know.

Austin: I don't know. Quick thing. In the, in the not nursing home, in the retirement community nursing home, we're talking a lot about how beautiful the shots are. And I just like, this is a show that's really worth watching through or at the very least looking at Keith's screenshots on the Patreon. There's a great shot of when she is—When the family's walking to the home. We've already talked about that. She notices that there's actually a nursing home wing of the facility, too. But the shot in which it's revealed, she like—We have this kind of nicely lit main shot of them walking through the hallway, the halls of the retirement community. And there's flowers and there's, like, lots of light from the windows. It's a big bright room. But she goes, what goes on behind there? And the opposite shot that we get, so she's pointing at the camera. And then we get a reverse shot so that we see from her perspective. And what we get is a full dark, like, other half of the room where, like, there's a single lamp with yellow light, barely broadcasting enough light to even light up its kind of quadrant of the screen, it's kind of, the right hand of the screen. The left hand is fully in shadow. There's some plaques on the wall, maybe some books on a bookshelf, impossible to really even see. And then someone opens a door, dead middle of the screen. And that opens into the brightly lit nursing home part of the facility.

Keith: It looks like a hospital behind there.

Austin: It does.

Keith: Which still isn't even what a nursing home looks like.

Austin: I wanted—This is a thing where Janine actually talked about this going back to one of the episodes, I think she used the phrase metaphor to describe what's happening in this sort of shot. And I think you could just more broadly talk about something like not surrealism, but impressionism, right?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: I don't think the other part of this—I don't think that it's literally as dark as this.

[**Keith:** No.] But to her, it is. To Livia, this place is dark. And the only truth in it is that there's a nursing home that you're gonna put me in.

Keith: It's proof that they're tricking her. Right?

Austin: Exactly. But, again, it's not even—I literally mean—I think for her, what we're getting is one of the powerful things of visual media, which is that they can communicate meaning through things like light and darkness that you don't have to necessarily take literally, which I think is gonna be important as the show goes forward. The show uses that capacity in a way that, that a CBS crime show never does. It never does, unless it's a special episode. But, like, whatever else is on right now on TV that you're gonna get on the non—This is part of why prestige becomes prestige as TV, is it's like, oh, we can use light and darkness to communicate meaning and feeling instead of just trying to shoot natural light, or, like, you know, traditional TV procedural stuff.

Sylvi: It's not the old sort of adage of making things where it's like, you tell the audience what they're gonna see, you show them it, and then you tell them what they just saw. That's another thing Chase talks about, like—The other network that almost picked up The Sopranos was Fox. And he's talking about, if they went there, that's probably what it ended up being like. Or they would have been doing the like, oh, here's stuff that makes it so Tony's not as bad as he is. And because they're with HBO, they're able to just tell the story they wanted to.

Keith: You know, Fox is also where X Files was. [**Sylvi:** They're so different though.] And X Files is kind of like a progenitor to this. What's that?

Sylvi: They're so different, though.

Keith: They are different. But if I'm talking about a show that uses visual metaphor and has light and dark and uses dark to mean dark and has characters that are un—Who they are is uncompromised by, like—

Austin: I mean, X Files is one of the progenitors of the prestige era, for sure. It's like that, it's Twin Peaks. It's a couple of other things. Right? They're, like, figuring out, oh, we can use filmic language in the television mode.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It makes sense in order to communicate.

Keith: It makes sense to me to be happy that this was on HBO and not Fox. But it also makes sense that Fox was interested in the show.

Austin: For sure.

Art: Well, also, like HBO had done, I think, one TV show when they were making this pilot. And by the time it aired, this was HBO's third TV show. [**Austin:** Oz is one of them.] They had Oz. Oz is the first one. They get Edie Falco from Oz. And Sex and the City starts, like six weeks before the Sopranos. So the pilot certainly wasn't produced in the Sex and the City universe.

Sylvi: There's a really good quote from James Gandolfini about the contrast between the pilot and Sex and the City on the Wikipedia page, which is, this wasn't for pretty women in Manhattan. This was a bunch of fat guys from Jersey. It was an incredible leap of faith.

Art: And they talk about in the book about how the reason it takes 10 months for them to get picked up is HBO didn't want to do it.

Sylvi: Yeah. There's a bit where—

Art: HBO thought the show was too expensive.

Sylvi: Yeah. And there was a period where Chase was trying to figure out how to just shoot like another 45 minutes, I think, is what he says, and turn it into a feature.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: In case it didn't get picked up.

Art: Well, because it's like—And David Chase is like, I want to make this show, and I want you to give me a \$50,000 an episode music budget.

Keith: And this has a great soundtrack.

Art: At some point, you'd be like, what the fuck is this guy talking about?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Weirdly enough, that's something they talk about in that interview where at the time it's cheaper to do licensed music than to pay someone to score. Or like—I think that's what they talk about. Or maybe that might be them talking about sort of how Scorsese would do this.

Keith: I was really—

Art: I'm Mr. HBO, and I'm like, so what we used to be doing on Sunday is just running movies we'd already paid to license. And this guy comes along and he wants, like, what would that be? Like \$1.2 million in music? That doesn't even put any pictures on the screen.

Keith: Yeah. But then, weirdly, it becomes—

Art: But you're gonna listen to the Sopranos.

Keith: Having, like—

Sylvi: On LaserDisc, or DVD!

Keith: Having really flashy or interesting needle drops is what I think of maybe most when I think of prestige TV. That is having a really cool intro song and then a couple interesting picks in an episode is what I think about when I think about this kind of television.

Sylvi: Again, this is kind of the Sopranos setting the trend. For that going forward. I'm not gonna pretend. I don't know—I'm not gonna pretend I know that nobody did it before then. But, like, this is kind of one of the things we're gonna keep coming back to is how this show ends up defining what TV becomes in a lot of ways.

Austin: I would say it's probably not the first—We know it's not the first. It's the first one that I can think of as being like, big is *In The Air Tonight* in *Miami Vice* in the 80s, and *Miami Vice* in general was a needle drop show, but not prestige TV in any way.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's a procedural.

Keith: I didn't mention it at the time. But the chase scene towards the beginning, which is such a good scene, him driving the car, has in the background, it's *Tell Me Why I Love You* by the Four Aces. And I was so excited—Weirdly, that is the music I grew up with. So I was like, very—There was a lot of 50s rock and roll and doo wop stuff happening in these episodes, and each time I was—And then there was some 60s bluesy kind of stuff. And I was all like, this reminds me of my childhood. So that was very exciting. My grandfather worked for the radio, and we had a jukebox in his living room that was full of—There's like hundreds of oldies, and we would just listen to those all the time.

[musical sting]

Sylvi: All right, so this is the therapy session. After—So after the stuff at the retirement community, Tony—It's—Smash cut from Tony fainting to him in—

Keith: Hands in his head.

Sylvi: It's so funny.

Keith: Yes. He feels like a pathetic loser.

Sylvi: He's embarrassed.

Keith: He's embarrassed.

Sylvi: And you have a button for us, Keith?

Dre: I do.

[audio from The Sopranos plays]

Dr. Melfi: Didn't you admit to Dr. Cusamano that you were feeling depressed?

Tony: Melfi. What part of the boot you from, hon?

Dr. Melfi: Dr. Melfi. My father's people were from Caserta.

Tony: Avellino. My mother would have loved it if you and I got together.

Dr. Melfi: Anxiety attacks are legitimate psychiatric emergencies. Suppose you were driving and you passed out.

Tony: Let me tell you something. Nowadays, everybody's gotta go to shrinks and counselors and go on Sally Jessy Raphael and talk about their problems. Whatever happened to Gary Cooper, the strong, silent type? That was an American. He wasn't in touch with his feelings. He just did what he had to do. See, what they didn't know was once they got Gary Cooper in touch with his feelings, that they wouldn't be able to shut him up. And then it's dysfunction this and dysfunction that and dysfunction va fangool!

Dr. Melfi: You have strong feelings about this.

Tony: Let me tell you something. I had a semester and a half of college, so I understand Freud. I understand therapy as a concept, but in my world, it does not go down. Could I be happier? Yeah. Yeah. Who couldn't?

Dr. Melfi: Do you feel depressed? Do you feel depressed?

Tony: Since the ducks left. I guess.

[audio stops]

Keith: That's so good.

Sylvi: It's so good.

Keith: It's so good. I love especially that it's—He doesn't just say, what happened to people like Gary Cooper? He goes, Gary Cooper's like me. If you put him here, he'd be like this too. Which is a second level to that, what happened to, you know, tough guys being tough?

Sylvi: And also like. [**Keith:** It's like—] Oh, no, go ahead.

Keith: Just. Just the line about it be dysfunction this, dysfunction that, you know, like that. That—He gets there straight away, I think is just very interesting. And then the ducks, of course, bringing back the ducks. Since the ducks left.

Sylvi: What I like about the Gary Cooper thing, too, is it—Because it's. It is just very much another thing of like, this is the type of man that Tony is always looking up to is like, the stoic, the just get shit done and carries on with it type of guy. That's who he wishes he could be. And he's not able to.

Keith: Yeah. By the way, not a—I mean, Gary Cooper's a real guy. Those are—He's watching Gary Cooper playing characters in the movies. Not the real guy, Gary Cooper.

Austin: Who explicitly was so depressed that he moved to Europe for a year because he was overwhelmed with his success and the focus that was put on his personal life. So, like, he literally goes and moves to Italy for a year and hangs out with, like, nobles and, like—

Dre: Didn't he hang out with Hemingway a lot too?

Austin: Say again?

Dre: Wasn't Gary Cooper, like, also friends with Hemingway? Didn't he hang out with Hemingway a lot?

Austin: I believe that he was, like, part of that clique to some degree. Yeah.

Dre: Another very famously not depressed—

Austin: Not depressed guy, yeah.

Keith: My two favorite not depressed guys are Ernest Hemingway and Gary Cooper.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: None of the jokes I have would have been good.

[laughter]

Keith: That's fine. If anybody out there had a good joke, just imagine it in your head.

Sylvi: I was just—My favorite not depressed guy was Elliot Smith.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: My favorite not depressed guy. Sorry. See, I've fucked up the joke. I've fucked up the joke anyway.

Keith: It's okay. I'll edit it so that it's right.

Sylvi: Thank you so much. Just like you left out the first time I flubbed the intro.

Keith: Nope, that's in.

Sylvi: Fuck. One more—This is hopefully gonna be the last time I break up this interview on this episode. It's gonna come back to it. But I don't wanna use it as, like, this is the one thing I watched ahead of time. But Chase talks about how the—How one, the ducks were, like, not like, a fully intentional—That was like something they got when they were filming accidentally. They got some footage of the ducks for the intro, I think, and then that became like, the let's get the ducks in the pool thing. I might be misquoting that, but there was something about how that sort of, like, came together naturally. And then when they're creating, like, the things that end up becoming symbols for the show, it's, it's not like they're premeditating them, but they'll write a scene where the scene. For example, it's like when Melfi asks him what he thinks, that means he, as a writer, has to be like, okay, well, what do I think that means? And then that like,

becomes sort of like something that helps keep—That kind of underpins the series in a way, or at least underpins this first season. And I think that's a really interesting way of writing this stuff, is that it's sort of—It's not reverse engineered necessarily, but it is like going through the—They're going through the same sort of thought exercise that Tony is.

Keith: Right, the structure of the show itself invites you to ask questions about why you're writing what you're writing.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's really cool. I really enjoyed learning that.

Austin: Something I love about this scene is Melfi says, do you have any qualms about the way you make your living? Setting up Tony to be like, yeah, you know, I have to do some bad things, but it takes care of my family or something. But that's not what he says. What he says is, yeah, I find I gotta be the sad clown.

Keith: [laughing] It's really funny.

[DRE giggling]

Austin: And then he goes on, which is so funny. And he goes on to, like, his unique perspective. This is part of where he lays out the like, the mob has changed. No one has any values anymore. The way that the government has come down on mobs—

Keith: RICO. Yeah. Talks about the RICO act.

Austin: He talks about RICO.

Keith: Which is—

Austin: Yeah, go ahead.

Keith: The first time he's open with her about mob stuff, she's beating around the bush, being like, by the way, you shouldn't tell me stuff that I would have to report you on. Cause she gets it. She knows who he is the whole time. And so he's been cagey. But

when he says, by the way, the RICO act's really fucking my shit up, that's the first time that he's fully honest with her about what his work is.

Sylvi: It's got a really funny bit where she's like, oh, is that your brother? When he says RICO, that's what I was quoting

Dre: [as Tony] Don't you read the papers?!

Austin: Yeah, I see—Well, yeah, and I think that part of the thing that's interesting here is it's like, you know. Yeah, he does have complaints about his job, but it's not the moral complaints. It's the day to day mundane stuff. And it's the sort of like—It's like me complaining that the games industry isn't very healthy right now.

Keith: You know, he's saying it's hard to be a leader.

Austin: He's hard to be a leader. It's hard to be a leader in a moment where people are really incentivized to go state's witness against you. And it's hard to be. Yeah, it's hard to be a leader because it's hard to deal with people, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Not what she was fishing for.

Keith: Right.

Sylvi: It's really funny.

Keith: There's a—I actually have a second button from this session because it's where he's like, I don't want to talk about work anymore. I want to talk—Or actually, is that what he says? At some point it gets redirected back to family. Oh, it's because he's complaining about his uncle and she's like, well, what about your immediate family? Because she's obviously identified the mother as like an issue for him. He talks a little bit about his mother with her here.

[audio from The Sopranos plays]

Tony: Now that my father's dead, he's a saint. When he was alive, nothing. My dad was tough. He ran his own crime crew. Guy like that, and my mother wore him down to a little nub. He was a squeaking little gerbil when he died.

[audio stops]

Keith: It's funny because in the second episode he's so angry to be accused of having anger. But that is the most resentfully delivered line in any of the episodes, when he calls his father a squeaky little weasel or gerbil, whatever he said.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, there's venom in there.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Do you think that's venom for his father, for his mother, both?

Keith: Both?

Sylvi: I think it's mostly for his mother, but it's definitely a bit of both. Like, I don't see, like, at least the way I interpret Tony Soprano is like, I don't see him thinking like, less of his—Like, I don't see him—Sorry. I can only see him thinking less of his father for the way that he was when he describes him like this, you know, because he's so locked in on like presenting machismo and like, like—I mean, the illusion broke with his dad and like that clearly upset him. He's trying to keep the illusion from breaking about him.

Austin: About himself, right?

Sylvi: Yeah. Like, he knows that he has to keep up the front that he wishes his dad kept up.

Austin: But it is literally going to kill him. Right? That's sort of like the thing that the pilot sets up is like he—As we'll get to in a second, he is benefiting by having these conversations and addressing his interior world, his feelings, what he's thinking about, what his griefs are, what his trauma is, all of that stuff. And if he doesn't do it, he's going to keep passing out from panic attacks that are weakening his physical frame. So he

can't be the machismo filled, like tough guy because doing it will kill him. And so the only thing he has to do is—The thing he has to do to continue being that guy is also sneak here and have these sessions so that he can then go out and front in that way, which is really good.

Keith: It also like, it speaks to another thing that happens later on, this sort of like, this sort of bipolar image that he has of his mother where she's able to do this to his father, but also he won't—He's so dedicated to this idea that she's a sweet little old lady that just needs help. And this is sort of a precursor to, I think what we'll get more of in the next episode where like, like at the same time as he can acknowledge this, he also won't acknowledge it. Like if you, if you made him be like, and what does that mean about your mom? He'd be like, I won't tell you that. I won't tell you what that means.

Dre: No, he threatened to like, kick you in the teeth for making him say something mean about his mom.

Keith: Yeah, yeah,

Art: Yeah, his prickliness about like, just having the very obvious stated back to him is really...

Dre: Because there's things you just—you're not supposed to say. Right? [**Keith:** Yeah.] As a son, you are not supposed to think that way about your mom. You're just not supposed to. It makes you a bad person. Capital B, capital P.

Sylvi: It's, it's like, oh, this is another, another failing that I'm having my nose rubbed in is like really the way I read his reaction to that stuff. [pause] Yeah, I, I think they really hit home runs with all the, the Melfi scenes in this first episode. Like—[**Keith:** She's great.] She's fantastic. She does a really great job.

Dre: She fuckin' crushed it.

Art: Well, she was the only person in the show who had a—Like, she was the only name in the show. They had to—They had to make the Melfi stuff work, right?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. James Gandolfini is like really young. He's like 35 or something.

Sylvi: He's like 35.

Austin: He's a little older than that, but not by much. He's 37 or 38. He's born in 61.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: But still, you know, young guy and, and put on 60 pounds, I believe, after this episode. Between this and the full show. Like, on purpose.

Sylvi: For the role.

Austin: To fit the role, yeah. Do we talk about Meadow and Carmella, who we've barely talked about, but who have their own B plot going this whole time?

Sylvi: We should. I feel like we gestured at it, but didn't really. Yeah.

Austin: Because the next thing is Carmella coming in with the gloves and the fancy outfit to go into Manhattan,

Dre: To go to tea.

Keith: Oh, there's one more thing before that, which is the formation of the plan to—

Austin: Oh, yes.

Keith: To do the—At the strip club. The strip club scene.

Austin: I mean, that is some of the best lighting in the pilot. Unbelievable.

Keith: It's unbelievable.

Austin: And we meet Hesh, right? This is the first Hesh scene.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's where we meet Hesh. Yeah.

Keith: Oh, that's who Hesh is. This is the guy that was supposed to be Jerry Stiller?

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: Oh, my God, that's so funny. This guy's really good.

Sylvi: Yeah, Jerry Adler rules.

Austin: Hesh is an all timer.

Sylvi: Great performance

Keith: Because there was one time that there was nudity in an M. Night Shyamalan movie. And Patreon gave us—They took the photo post down for the screenshots. I did my best to get as little nudity as possible in the screencaps. This episode had a lot of nudity in it.

Sylvi: It's a strip club.

Keith: It's a strip club and it's HBO.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: But the lighting is great, so I still—

Sylvi: The lighting is impeccable. Tony looks like the devil in some of these shots. There's one when stands up and he's like—

Keith: Oh, my God, it's so good. Hold on, I have it right here.

Sylvi: You can't even like. You can't see his face in the shot.

Keith: And then he walks into the light too. He walks...

Sylvi: It's impeccable.

Keith: It's so good.

Austin: Unbelievable how good this shot—

Sylvi: Soft blue background.

Austin: And his plan here. Tony, in the same way that he will later in this episode, start bringing stuff Melfi says to him into his personal life to quote. Here he's again drawing on his own life experiences to solve a work problem. The MRI cost him \$2,000. And so he's like, there's money to be made there.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Which is so good.

Keith: It's a great plan. I mean, you know, let's siphon off some money for these insurance companies. That's—I mean, that's, to me—

Dre: A victimless crime.

Keith: I mean—Yeah, it's a victimless crime. And then also, it's like, there's a lot of fucking money there. Why not? They do a great job of planting the seed of this very early on, too. Because during that chase scene where he's chasing him down with the car and they beat the shit out of him and he's crying and wailing, he says, what are you crying about? HMO. You're covered, you prick. Degenerate fucking gambler.

Austin: And he owes them what, between them?

Keith: \$250,000.

Austin: Hesh 250, them, 100.

Keith: Oh, I didn't. I missed that part. Yeah. He owes so much. Crazy how much money he has.

Austin: It's crazy money. It's unbelievable, you know?

Keith: He's a degenerate fucking gambler.

Austin: He is Shohei Ohtani's translator.

Sylvi: Yeah.

[group laughter]

Art: For real.

Keith: Then we go on the scene of—Yeah, this is—They've been not talking. Carmella and what's the daughter's name?

Sylvi: Meadow. After Meadow is caught trying to sneak back in after—Sneak back into her room after she had slipped out to go to her boyfriend, her boyfriend Patrick's swim meet.

Keith: Oh. She just wanted to give him support before his swimming.

Sylvi: He needed her.

Keith: He needed her.

Dre: He needed her support.

Art: Yeah. Also, what the fuck is this day?

Austin: It was tomorrow. The swim meet is the next day.

Sylvi: Right.

Keith: It was like, I'm going to go tell him. Do a good job tomorrow.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvi: Which is the scene where we get Carmella pulling out an AK cause she thinks someone's breaking into the house.

Keith: Impractical.

Sylvi: Yeah. You know. Come on, just get a handgun or something. Lady, what are you doing? But that sort of is like—That—Basically, Meadow just gets like, I hate my mom mode after this. But there's this—The scene where the stuff about them going to tea, I think is probably the best scene involving this sort of plotline. Because one, you get Meadow doing the extremely teenager thing of being, like, actually this, like, happy thing that we do together? You as like, mother and child, I hated it since I was a kid. And I just did it because it made you happy. And I don't want to do it anymore because I'm mad at you.

Art: It's so fucking mean. It's brilliant. [**Sylvi:** It's brutal.] It's the meanest shit in the fucking world. It's—Oh, my God. It's really one of those, like, one day my kid is gonna do this to me or Jessica. And it's gonna take everything not to just go and drown her.

[hysterical Keith laughter]

Austin: Her, not yourself? In this scenario, someone not liking the thing you like is their fault, actually.

Art: But she's lying.

Keith: I don't know.

Austin: That's true. Here's what I read was for eight years, she loves her mother enough to keep doing it.

Sylvi: Yes.

Art: Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. 'Cause I have a kid.

Austin: We got different perspectives on this one. But I'll tell you, I spent a lot of my life doing things for my parents because I know it means something to them.

Art: I've also told a lot of lies to hurt people's feelings in my life.

Austin: True, true. Yeah. I've also told a lot of truths to hurt people's feelings, though. And those hurt more. When I'm really mad at someone, I tell them a truth they don't want to hear.

Art: My point is, I'm not going to drown my child.

Sylvi: Oh, good.

Art: That was hyperbole for the sake of humor. But holy shit, it's a brutal scene. Our children are going to murder us.

Austin: The other thing is, the subtext to all of this is, of course, how can you—Because there's a bit in here, where—Unless—Do you have a button for this scene, Keith?

Keith: I do not.

Austin: Okay, so Meadow is ignoring her mother and goes and gets on the, on the computer. And Carmella is like, you know, you can't just, like, lie and cheat and break the rules that you don't like. And we get a look from Meadow. And this is actually following up on something in the previous scene that we didn't really talk about, which is when she was getting caught and coming in the Patrick swim meet is tomorrow scene. Carmela says, don't start with me with what other parents allow. You're in the Soprano house. And so this is the second time we've gotten this idea that, like, Carmella is like, we Sopranos hold ourselves up to a higher, you know, level of morality. And Meadow fucking knows better. Her mother pulled an AK on her on the way in the door. She knows. She knows what the family's business is to some degree, at least at this point. And is already like, that's part of the authority that her mother doesn't have anymore is we are not good people. She never comes out and says, but Daddy does blah, blah, blah here. But it's very clear in the way she looks at her mother that she thinks the whole thing is built on hypocrisy. So, Art, as long as you don't do that, I think you're gonna be in a pretty good case—Pretty good situation.

Art: Well, I have started doing some light racketeering.

Sylvi: How fun.

Austin: As long as you keep it light.

Art: And a little bit of numbers running.

Austin: It's 2026, Art. It's all racketeering.

Keith: It's all racketeering. Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: Oh, oh, and. And it's a shame. I get it. But like, we get this big Meadow runner in this episode, and then in episode two, we get almost none Meadow, and instead we get like an AJ plot. Like, they always have to, like, keep the kids sort of like on different fires because of how it is to work with children.

Austin: Oh, is it like an hours of work type?

Art: Yeah, children have very strict maximum hours and they have to have an amount of school when they're on set.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: Although I've—I've sure heard that they're, they're kayfabing the school.

Sylvi: Not shocking.

Art: But that—And so the second episode is less—Almost no Meadow, more AJ. And you sort of get an ebb and flow in this. We are building to a big Meadow episode this season. That was another episode on my list of episodes that could have gotten their own episode.

Sylvi: Yes. I know which one you mean.

Art: But it would have fucked up—It would have fucked up the pacing. I don't know. The—Pacing this show sucks. But yeah, it's good. It's good. They led with Meadow. Meadow is a very strong character early. And AJ is like 11. You can't make an 11 year old act.

Austin: Yeah. She does such a good job. Jamie-Lynn Sigler is fantastic. Also, so young here. I know that there's only a few of us have seen this show at all, but Meadow and AJ are babies in these episodes.

Keith: Yeah, by the end of this show, they're gonna be almost a decade older.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yeah. Full adults.

Austin: Those are big years for changing, for growing.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, they sure fucking are.

Keith: Another one of my favorite scenes coming up is we see—And I didn't know where this was going. We saw Dr. Melfi getting ready to go out and she's going to Artie, Artie's restaurant.

Art: No, this is a different restaurant.

Keith: Oh, it's a different restaurant. Oh, okay. It's just a different restaurant than Tony Soprano goes to. Wait, no, but isn't Tony is there and he gives the tickets to the guy.

Art: No.

Sylvi: Yeah. The interaction I think you're thinking of is Tony talking to the host and getting a table for Melfi and her date.

Keith: Yes. I thought that that was the same time, but I guess it's a different time.

Sylvi: We also get like—Oh, that scene's really good because we get him being chummy with the host and, and then the scene right after. Or maybe not right after, but shortly after, he takes Carmella there and the host who sees him is like. Mr. Soprano, it's been so long since we last saw you.

Art: Yeah, months you don't come! I think this is also a scene in Goodfellas, but, yeah.

[Sylvi: Wouldn't be shocked.] Yeah. they're allowed to steal from Goodfellas.

Keith: Oh, I do have a button for that.

[audio from the Sopranos plays]

Nils: Do you know who that was? Well, I mean, obviously you do. What is he, a patient?

Dr. Melfi: You know, I can't say.

Nils: "Decorating tips." Yeah, right.

Dr. Melfi: Nils, shut the fuck up.

HOSTESS: Mr Borglund, they're setting up your table right now.

[audio ends]

Keith: Nils seems like an asshole.

Art: Yeah, Nils should shut the fuck up.

Keith: Nils, shut the fuck up.

Dre: Here's what a real man with real motion can do.

Keith: Yeah, he can get you seated. Nils has been waiting for a very long time for this table.

Sylvi: He also has the big like, I really showed her. After yelling at the hostess. And then Tony comes in and hits him with the how you doing? At the end of talking with Dr. Melfi. And he just doesn't say a word.

Art: Oh, that is one of the best line readings maybe in the history of acting is Tony saying, how you doing? To that guy after that. It's fucking perfect.

Keith: It's really good. It's really good.

Sylvi: RIP to my goat, James Gandolfini, you crushed it.

Keith: So I guess directly before and directly after this scene, he's given Artie the tickets to a cruise to get him out of here. And then those tickets were returned to him because his wife, like we talked about, convinces him, you don't want to owe something like that to a guy like Tony. I think she even makes the argument, like, if these were free, it's free because of some guy's kneecaps got broken to get these.

Austin: This show has some writing in it. There's two great examples of it, of characters who have decided that they are Shakespearean characters, which is not bad. It's in fact very good. She says, Arthur, please grow up. Does the mind not rebel at any possible scenario under which dentists are sending the Don of New Jersey first class on a Norwegian steamship?

Keith: Its a great line.

Sylvi: You know, I can see why she focus tested so well.

Austin: Yeah, totally. And the other version of it, the other thing is—actually before this, and I think it's. I don't remember exactly where it is or which member of his—Of the crew says this, but it's, so your uncle resents that you're the boss. And then is it Sylvio who goes sadness of cruise?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvi: Yeah, and there's a real. I'm so glad you mentioned this because there's a really good line that I think is. From Hesh that I think is. He says it about Junior to Tony, but it's like the man is driven in total by his insecurities. Cut to Tony Soprano. So there's a lot of really good little, little one lines like that. Silvio, I think, is one of the guys who has some of the more remember—like, memorable, like, deliveries that you aren't expecting from him. The sadness of cruise is definitely one of them.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Or was it him? I don't know. Whatever. Sadness of cruise, it's one of them.

Austin: I think it's in the. I think it's in the strip club scene before they come up with the plan.

Sylvi: It's either him—It's him or Hesh who says it.

Keith: Hesh has the insecurities line.

Sylvi: Yeah, okay. No, not the insecurity—The sadness of cruise.

Keith: Oh, the sadness of cruise. Oh, okay.

Sylvi: Anyway.

Art: But Hesh is very much—Often is the Greek choir in the.

Keith: Oh, yeah. Where are we in this show?

Austin: There's a couple things that we've slipped past that we don't need to spend too much time on here. Hesh and Big Pussy take, what's his name?

Sylvi: Mahaffy.

Austin: Mahaffy to the bridge overlooking the beautiful waterfalls and say they're gonna take him into the woods. They like to go out in the woods. It's very peaceful there.

Keith: Yeah. By the rocks by the waterfall.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Keith: And he watches everyone in the park leave.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Oh, it's such a good—It's such a good sequence.

Austin: The ice cream truck driving away.

Sylvi: I love how much flair he puts on the toss of the ice cream cone. Like his hand all the way up. He's making sure this guy sees it.

Keith: These are guys with a lot of practice threat—I don't—I would be so bad at threatening someone's life for real, because I haven't ever done that. And so I wouldn't know how to go about creating maximum effect. But these guys know how to create maximum effect.

Art: I think. I think you, you come into it.

Keith: Yeah. Just naturally?

Art: I think you start kind of bad.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I agree. I think. I think that these guys have worked to get, get the experience necessary to really make you see yourself in that ice cream.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. And then the next thing is Artie coming to return the tickets to Tony, who is driving—Who's—Who has, like, a driving range behind one of the waste facilities that they own. And he's out there just hitting balls.

Keith: It's the first time we see him take his prozac. He's very embarrassed.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: He's like looking around like it's drugs.

Austin: Yeah. There's also a basketball hoop there. The dudes just hang out and fuck around with various sports equipment while they're—

Art: Yeah, the mobsters are just guys being dudes.

Austin: 100%.

Sylvi: That is a crucial—Yeah. A crucial element of the show is guys being dudes.

Austin: Yeah. He gives the tickets back. And we didn't say this explicitly, but, like, the tickets were the first thing of, like, at the very least, Artie shouldn't be here when things go down, you know, because they haven't put—Put the plan they end up using, which was the explosion, the fire into place yet.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I don't think that that's even come up yet.

Keith: No.

Austin: So at this point, he was just trying to get Artie out of there.

Keith: Yeah. I think the idea is that the restaurant would be closed during the days that Little Pussy was in town.

Austin: That makes sense. That makes lots of sense. I assume someone else would manage it, but, yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Keith: And so you just have to find somewhere else. And then yeah, they're like, well, if we can't get him out of the restaurant, better that we blow it up. Because you take him out at his peak instead of have it peter out into nothing, which is, by the way, peter out into nothing is sort of what the show also is about.

Austin: They come up with that plan while watching their daughters play volleyball at high school.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: So good.

Austin: Which is so funny.

Art: Yeah, them yelling at refs is really the. Like, that was on the line.

Austin: It's so funny.

Keith: One of my favorite bits is after the volleyball game, everything about this from the start of the whole thing with Tony and Meadow, from when they're walking and there's—You're watching them walk through the fence, and then they walk into the church. And then she's like, what do you want from me? Why do you need me to be perfect? And then he, instead of answering, or as an answer instead, explains about how his grandfather and great uncle came and built this church.

Austin: Do you have this button?

Keith: Fuck, no, I don't have the button.

Austin: [dismayed] Nooo.

Keith: I could probably put it in. It's really good. I thought that I had this one.

Austin: Actually, I could—Do you want me to screen share it and just do it? I have it up.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Austin: You won't be able to see it because I don't have the, the thing set up. You know what I mean? But you're able to hear it at the very least. And you're recording local?

Keith: I am recording local. This will come in.

Austin: Splice this.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Great. Okay.

[pause]

Austin: You're hearing this?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yep.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: You know, your mother thinks you have the capacity to be a top student. And I agree.

Meadow: What do you guys want? Perfection? What are you looking at?

Tony: Your great grandfather and his brother Frank, they built this place.

Meadow: Big whoop.

Tony: Stone and marble workers. They came over here from Italy and they built this place.

Meadow: Yeah, right. Two guys.

Tony: No, they—They were two guys and a crew of, you know, laborers. They didn't design it, but they knew how to build it. Go out now and find me two guys that're gonna put a decent grouting on your bathtub.

[audio ends]

Austin: Oh, it's so well shot.

Keith: It's beautiful. Everything is about it. I mean, this is such a good—I mean, we said it about a thousand times. It looks great. If what you want to see in TV is people with cameras and people with lights and everyone knows how to do it.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: This is up there with the best things I've ever seen.

Art: Now find two people who can shoot a bathtub.

[laughter]

Austin: Yeah. The shots of, like, the relief being lit here, and some of the other—Just the wide shot of the whole church. The way he lowers his voice in here.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know?

Sylvi: Yeah. No, for real. It's like, really, like—And it's not—It's not a religious reverence. It's a reverence for, like, the fact that this was made by, like, people.

Keith: People who could follow a plan.

Sylvi: Well, that also a part of his family, too, right? Like, this familial pride that he, like, keeps coming back to.

Austin: How do you think that intersects with the desire? Because, like, part of this conversation is him being like me and your mother think you could be a top student. A top, you know, student with top grades. Do you think that that's him being like, you could do great things. In fact, you could do things bigger than this because you could design this place.

Sylvi: I think so.

Austin: And also, I wish people followed orders still.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: I know that this is the—this was the audition scene for Meadow.

Austin: Oh, wow.

Sylvi: Oh, really?

Art: Yeah. Which I would not have guessed.

Austin: No.

Austin: I would have given it the bedroom scene because she doesn't have too much to do here. But I guess it centers her relationship with him, right?

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: And I—And I think if you think about it, this is sort of like, what—Yeah, being able to react off of Tony correctly might be the most important thing. And also, like, having a bunch of kids give the, like, snotty to their mom scene might just be, like, too, like, maybe everyone can do that?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: It also might, like—I don't know. There's more—I think there's more subtlety in the scene with some of the stuff of, like, not subtlety in terms of, like, the writing, but specifically with what Meadow has to do. I think that there's like, you have to both play the sort of, like, I'm upset with my mom, but I also am really trying to be close to my dad, but he's talking about this thing that just isn't what I want to talk about. There's a lot of different vectors for an actor to play off of, and I think that might be why they chose it. I really, like, these two, have really good on screen chemistry as a father and daughter duo, I think. Meadow is a deeply, I think, underrated character on this show as a whole. She gets her flowers from people, for sure, but it's not like—It's not to the degree where people will talk about Christopher, for example. And I think you could probably put them in the same boat, honestly, at times.

Keith: Speaking about a reverence for someone who built something.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: The very next thing that happens is that Tony pays his friend to blow up his other friend's restaurant.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: I thought you were gonna say something else. I thought you were gonna say Tony loves JFK and his hat.

Keith: Tony does like JFK. Wait—

Dre: The hat is important.

Keith: I know that I have screen grabs of that.

Austin: It's after the dinner. Because he's taken his mistress to the same restaurant that Melfi is at.

Keith: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And afterwards, they go to the Stugots, his boat.

Keith: He takes his goomah to the Stugots?

Austin: He takes his goomah to the Stugots, and then she puts on JFK's, like, naval hat.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: He named his boat The Cock.

Dre: Wait, what's his boat called?

Sylvi: The Stugats.

Dre: Okay, this is only gonna break my brain, but there's, like, a sports radio guy named Stugotz and it was, like, fucking me up.

Austin: Yes. Yes. Dre, that is. That is my stepdad's sports guy. Dan. Dan LeBatard is my stepdad's guy. And so he's often talking to me about the various stupid things that Stugotz has gotten up to.

Dre: Anyway, sorry.

Sylvi: Stugats is an Italian curse word meaning this penis.

Austin: That's right.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Dre: Wow.

Keith: And that's why you take your goomah there.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: I have one button remaining for this.

Art: We got two Italian words this week, so.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Next week.

Sylvi: And two sparkle sound effects.

Keith: You have to double them up. He's back in therapy. This guy fucking loves therapy.

Sylvi: He sure feels strongly about it.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I thought you were gonna hit the button.

Keith: No, no. This is where he—Because I don't have the whole dream, which we talked. Austin, you talked about the dream sequence that he describes where he is screwing. He's unscrewing his belly button and his penis falls off. And he goes around looking for his Lincoln mechanic to help reattach it when a seabird grabs it and flies away with it. That's—

Austin: What kind of bird?

Keith: I don't know, like a seagull or something.

Austin: A water bird? She says.

Keith: What other birds are water birds?

Sylvi: Pelican or something.

Keith: Like a pelican or flamingo.

Austin: He goes—The look he gets on his face when he says flamingo.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: He knows. He knows.

Sylvi: There are moments where Tony Soprano is a little moe.

Austin: It's true.

[audio from The Sopranos plays]

Tony: Ducks.

Dr. Melfi: What is it about those ducks that meant so much to you?

Tony: I don't know. It was just a trip having those wild creatures come into my pool and have their little babies. It was sad to see them go. Oh, Jesus fuck, now he's gonna cry.

[**Tony** crying sounds]

Sylvi: Aggressively taking a tissue.

Keith: Yeah.

Dr. Melfi: When the ducks gave birth to those babies, they became a family.

Tony: You're right. It's a link, a connection. I'm afraid I'm gonna lose my family like I lost the ducks. That's what I'm full of dread about. It's always with me.

[audio ends]

Keith: I love that when she slides the tissues to her, you get a wide shot of her office that had not been used before. It looks like a totally different place than they've been. It's lit differently. It's just like the vibe is totally changed.

Dre: Her office is insane.

Keith: Her office is insane.

Sylvi: Her office is insane. We talk a lot about how sets will change after this with the butcher and stuff like that. But this place is locked in from the beginning. That is Dr. Melfi's office. That is how it looks.

Austin: I love you putting it in the chat, Keith, this picture right under the Last Supper Relief above it, God. Wow. I don't think that's intentional, but it's really good.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. You could match cut this.

Austin: You could match cut.

Keith: You could match cut that.

Austin: I have a couple of questions here. One is what do we think—She says, you're afraid of losing your family. Or he says, I'm afraid to lose my family, whoever—He gets to it eventually. Who do you think he means by his family?

Dre: All. Everybody.

Austin: All.

Dre: I think it's both the crime family and what it represents for him to be a member of a crime family, especially a higher up one, as well as what it means for him to be a husband and a father within, like, that kind of family.

Austin: And a son.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Maybe even most importantly, a son.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, all of it. The second thing is, Dre, I'm curious. Like, you know, we don't have to go too deep on this, but, like, what, what do you think of this type of—These scenes of therapy? You kind of briefly touched on it in the intro, but, like, here we have a character who's making, like, what I think we would colloquially call a breakthrough, right? We get to something that is, like, this is a big point of ongoing concern for you. It's causing you a lot of stress. How does this read to you as a scene? And, like, not just like, is it realistic? But, like, what's going on here, for someone who's never done. Who's never been on the therapy side of this, on the therapist side of this before,

Dre: I mean, I will say just from, like, the—I was very pleasantly surprised, and I think this scene really cemented for me, like, oh, okay. They're doing this with a level of care and intention that I don't see a lot. And, you know, I am not a big consumer of tv, so don't come at me about this. But I don't—It seems like most people who talk about therapy in a TV show or, like, have therapy be a part of a TV show have never fucking gone to therapy themselves, whereas there's just, like, tons of little notes in here. Like, the first time when he walks in and he's like, where am I supposed to sit? I'm like, oh, man, I've had that conversation a hundred times. Because for me, it's so obvious. It's like, well, yeah, I sit in the chair that's mine. But they don't fucking know that. This is the first time they're in here.

Keith: And this is something that I've seen before is that she seems to offer either chair to him.

Dre: Yeah, that's, man. That's all, man. There are people who think really fucking hard about where people sit in therapy.

Sylvi: I know I said I was gonna try not to go back to it again, but in that interview, David Chase does mention that he didn't do a lot of—His research for the therapy scenes was him being in therapy for a long time.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: He makes a joke about how it's finally starting to pay off because of the show's success, but I think it's worth keeping in mind that it is not coming—This is all done from the perspective of someone who has been in therapy but is not doing like, okay—Maybe this changes later. Obviously this is just for the first season, but this is written from the perspective of someone who's been in therapy, not someone who has done research behind what techniques would she use, blah, blah, blah. And I think that makes it feel—Is one of the reasons why it feels a little more realistic?

Dre: Yeah. They're painting with a broader brush, but that brush is highlighting the most important parts instead of the little tiny technical details. 100%.

Sylvi: It's trying to capture what it feels like to be in a therapy session versus the nuts and bolts necessarily of it.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: And I think this scene really captures that. I mean, I think him crying, the way he cries, the way he makes fun of himself for crying, like was just—Was so...

Austin: Fuck him. He's gonna. He's now looking for something. Yeah, fuck him. Now he's crying.

Dre: Yeah, it's like, oh, man. I think it's also funny, Austin, you talking about like the breakthrough because I think like, this is that, but it also just like so isn't. It's him reflecting on like, ah, there's this parallel process and it's like, well, okay, what are you gonna do about it? Well, I don't know, but there's a connection. It makes it meaningful and it's like, well, now, sure, but now what?

Keith: Do you know what I love about the oh, he's gonna start crying thing? It's the exact way that his mother makes fun of him when he corrects her about answering the phone. [agonised sounds from **Austin**] When she says, yeah. She says, oh, listen to him. He knows everything. Oh, look, he's gonna start crying. It's really good. It's really good.

Austin: Good.

Keith: That's writing. They wrote the shit out of this.

Dre: They wrote the shit out of this show.

Art: Yeah.

Dre: So I think like there, there's going to be parts of this where I'm like, oh, that's not how therapy works. But I am very positive and hopeful and like, man, I just hope Melfi doesn't like, fuck Tony Soprano or something. I just hope that's not coming. Don't tell me if it is. I just am really worried.

Sylvi: Does the scene where he's like, oh, my Mother would have been—Would have loved it if we got together. Does that make you worry about—

Keith: She makes him uncomfortable and he immediately switches to, like, doing something. She's like, are you depressed? And he's like, we should have sex.

Dre: Hey, we should fuck.

Sylvi: Oh, it's absolutely him being like, I'm sorry, I'm parrying the discomfort back onto.

Dre: That doesn't make me worry about it because, like. No, but that's what machismo guys do, right?

Sylvi: TV makes you worry about that.

Dre: TV makes me worry.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Ted Lasso's core conceit being, well, this guy went to couples therapy and his wife left him for the therapist. And that's, that's pretty funny and weird, isn't it? It's like, no!

Austin: I haven't seen that.

Sylvi: Ask me anything about Ted Lasso and I will not be able to answer it.

Austin: That is wild.

Dre: That's why he moved to England, because he and his wife were basically getting a divorce. And he found out after he moved that his wife started dating his couples therapist. And that's just like. Yeah, that just happens. It's like, no, it's not! That never happens!

Keith: That guy should have his license revoked.

Sylvi: Yes, 100%. You never work again.

Keith: I think. I think that there's a couple states where after a period of years, you are allowed to be friends with your patients and hang out outside of therapy.

Dre: That is so.

Keith: But that's the level they're working at.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: That also very broadly depends on. [sighs] I could get into it. There's—But different types of therapists have different code of ethics and have different levels of stringency. For sure.

Keith: But you can see how, like—

Dre: I know the two that I follow are like, you don't do that.

Keith: Right.

Dre: Friendship is okay after a while, but like any sort of romantic relationship. No way. Never ever, ever, ever.

Keith: I think it just highlights how absurd it is the idea that you dating your patient. Yeah.

Dre: I mean, you know, I don't want to say it never happened, because it did. Right? It definitely did. I mean, you know, the history of therapy as a male dominated field is very fuckin' messy. But that's not the reality as much anymore. At least in this very specific example.

Austin: Speaking of male dominated, a thing we didn't touch on, but just want to say Carmella assumes that his therapist is a guy.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah. And he does not correct her.

Dre: Sure doesn't!

Art: He clocks it and lets it go.

Austin: Yep.

Sylvi: I mean, again [**Art:** I'm sure that'll be fine.] It comes back to the whole thing of, like, I need people to perceive me the most optimal, optimal way they can work with Tony.

Keith: Take two on Anthony Jr's birthday party.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: He's grilling.

Keith: He's grilling.

Sylvi: Hanging out with the guys, talking to his friend or not [crosstalk] Tony, sorry.

Keith: [crosstalk] Artie is upset his restaurant blew up.

Sylvi: Yeah. He's upset about the, the restaurant being burned down so damn hard. It's like—Chris has the, like, Chris without a filter is like, what if people stopped coming to the restaurant? You ever think about that? Because he is still so mad about not getting props for what he did on the Triboro Towers job. And Artie's like, what is he talking about? Why would people stop coming to the restaurant?

Keith: Yeah, because it doesn't make any fucking sense why he would say that.

Sylvi: It's so funny, because also, this is when Tony does his, you know, it helps to talk about things. And then all the guys are like, yeah, you know, he's right.

Keith: Yeah, it does. You know, it does help talk about things.

Sylvi: When he's right, he's right.

Keith: When he's right, he's right. So funny. Guy's got a good head on his shoulder.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: That's why he's the boss.

Keith: That's why he's the boss. That's why you're the boss, Boss.

Austin: Hope comes in many forms.

Keith: Oh, whoa.

Austin: Absolutely.

Sylvi: Wise words from a wise man.

Austin: I wish we had more Paulie in this episode, but other than that, it's great.

Keith: Sylvi, earlier you said this was one of your favorite scenes in the episode when he goes and looks at what's wrong with Christopher and he's like, I don't think I got the credit that I deserved. And then, yeah, I really loved how quickly Tony is like, you're right, you didn't get the credit that you deserved, but.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's how I was parented in a way that's like. That's said in a—And it wasn't good way, obviously.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Well. Which is one of the only times that, outside of just complaining about how his mother currently treats him, where he admits that his upbringing was not great,

Keith: But Chris can't let it go.

Sylvi: No. Chris can't let it go.

Keith: And starts bragging about, I could sell my life story and make millions of dollars. And then this is a sore spot for Tony Soprano, so he flips the fuck out at him. It's so funny.

Sylvi: This was apparently—So one—This was apparently, like, the first scene they shot was—Or one of the earliest scenes they shot was the scene in the gazebo with Chris and Tony. And apparently the idea—It was originally written where he'd just, like, hit him in the back of the head or something and be like, what are you talking about? But it was Gandolfini who went to David Chase and was like, I think I'd get really mad at this. I think I'd like, grab him and almost rip his head off at this. And that's like—Yeah. So like, again, again, really locked in on who the character is from the jump. And like, I think something that I really enjoy about this show is how much you can feel the actors influencing the characters. I mean, outside of just, yeah, that's how acting works. But you talk about—I mean, we mentioned Game of Thrones earlier, so I'm gonna just dunk on it again where like, by the time that show was ending, it felt like these characters were just like, the actors were just kind of going through the motions and not really invested in the characters. Meanwhile, with this, it feels like, I think consistently feels like the actors are trying to bring something to the table outside of just reading what they're given. It's not a big like, improv thing, but there's a lot of little bits of body language and stuff that I think really come through. And I think that Gandolfini's physicality with Tony is super crucial to that. And yeah, he does a great job at nailing the sort of like, switch flipping anger that Tony is kind of prone to. This hair trigger that he's got that makes him so scary.

Keith: And it makes sense too, he's—Christopher's saying, I could fuck up your whole life by becoming an author who exposes you for your crimes.

Sylvi: Yeah, this is where we get the Henry Hill line. Oh, you want to go Henry Hill on me? And then also he has to self-aggrandize too, where it's like, you don't think I've had offers? That works.

Austin: That works Christopher back on side.

Keith: It does. For this episode.

Austin: Right. Well, yeah, yeah, exactly. But it's, it's the anger like, startles him and then he's like, you think I haven't had offers too? You know, we got work to do. We have new avenues. Let's focus on the new stuff. You see, Christopher does end up smiling and like, yeah, he brings him back for now.

Sylvi: It reminds me of he's getting brought back into the fold and at the same time also being told, here's a similarity between the two of us, right? Because Tony is his idealized role model. That's the guy he looks up to.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: It also reminds me off—

Sylvi: Sorry, Keith, what are you saying?

Keith: It just reminds me of something that we'll see in the next episode where the loyalty thing is so strong to do what the boss says is so strong that in the middle of what's—Brendan? Is that Christopher's friend?

Sylvi: Chris's friend?

Keith: Yeah. Brendan and Christopher are arguing with Tony. And when Brendan goes one step too far, even though he's currently arguing with Christopher, who's on Brendan's side, he's able to instantly get Christopher to be like, hey, I'm going to throw this guy out of the room and you're going to help me do it. And he just does like, he reads a situation of like, I know that I'm arguing with Tony, but I've still got to help him throw my friend out of the room, onto the butcher table.

Sylvi: That's the boss.

Keith: Yeah. And so there's this sort of thing where, like, even when Christopher is feeling like he's not playing along, he always is.

Sylvi: Yeah. It's also like another, it's another mirroring of Tony's relationship with Livia too. Right? Where like, trying so hard to make the parental figure happy, but like, not always—Not—Like, Tony is a little nicer, but not that much nicer. You know what I mean? Like, he gives him a little bit of credit in a way that Livia doesn't give Tony. But he's still very—Like, we talked about the DVD line. We talked—Like there's the scene in the, in the car where he's just so obviously like, pissed off that Chris is like, making excuses for why he didn't call this guy.

Keith: Well, he had a tummy ache.

Sylvi: He had a tummy ache and then his mom. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I mean, I would be more upset if someone called me to extort me and I was already asleep.

Sylvi: Yeah. That's polite.

Keith: And there's only one more thing.

Art: I don't remember if it was an extortion related call, but, you know.

Keith: There's only really one more thing that happens in this episode and it's that Uncle Junior is driving, uh...

Sylvi: Livia.

Keith: Livia to the party because she won't drive herself and basically is making a plea to help her put him in charge instead of Tony.

Sylvi: Yeah. He can't operate the way he wants to 'cause of Tony. He's pissed about the restaurant getting burned down, so he has to, to like, change plans for this hit. Yeah. He again is like, duh. I think Dominic Chianese, I think is how it's pronounced. Chianese.

Art: Really? Shit, I've been saying it the wrong way for fucking 25 years.

Sylvi: Yeah. I literally also found out last night that I am pretty sure it's a hard K instead of a CH when I was looking. 'Cause Austin posted an ad about Dominic Chianese sings the hits and I was like, damn, he's still alive? So I went on wikipedia.

Austin: I did the same thing.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Hey, good for him. 95.

Austin: I didn't know he sang at all.

Art: Oh, he sings in the show once.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Sylvi: I'm excited.

Austin: And he's mad at Tony. He's also just mad at the whole generation.

Keith: He's mad at the world. He's mad at gay people in the military. This really freaks her out. That's how he says it.

Art: Yeah, we're gonna do some light editing over the course of the show, I think.

Sylvi: Yeah, we're gonna do a lot of light editing.

Art: And as a warning if you plan to go see it, they're gonna use some language on this show.

Sylvi: A lot of it.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: It's sort of a blanket warning for slurs.

Dre: On HBO? In the 2000s?

Sylvi: I know, right? It's so out of character.

Dre: Next you're going to tell me there's going to be butts and boobs everywhere.

Austin: There are also that.

Art: I have to shake my head to assure you that I don't approve of the mobsters.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. We also moved past it. But Hesh is Jewish and is like an associate of the mob. But isn't—I don't think he's—I don't know if that he's in the family in that way. I don't know if he's.

Art: No, yeah, Hesh is an associate.

Austin: Is an associate, but higher, but like an important associate. An important associate.

Keith: He's like a satellite mafia.

Art: He's based on a specific guy.

Sylvi: He is. I was gonna say that too. Yeah. Who. I think I heard David Chase describe him as like, he would have been like a boss or something in the mob if he was Italian instead of Jewish. And I think that's very much like in, ingrained in the way Hesh is written.

Austin: And so there was some, not anti Jewish. There were some Jewish jokes in the mix there. There's a lot of like you old Jew type stuff going on. There will be some anti black racism in the near future.

Keith: In the extremely near future. In the next episode, there is.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So get ready.

Art: And then—That's not the mob, weirdly.

Austin: 1998, you know.

Keith: Sylvie, do you want to read the recap for your next—For the next episode?

Art: Oh, wait, wait, wait. Did we, did we, did we get—

Austin: We didn't close this episode.

Art: Junior says that something might have to be done about Tony and Livia, like seems happy that—

Sylvi: There's like a leg—It's a real like Mona Lisa smile type vibe where you can't quite like, you think she's happy, but it's a little harder to read than just like smiling at the camera.

Keith: She literally looks at the camera, though.

Sylvi: She does literally look at the camera, which I think is very funny.

Keith: This is the shot I was talking about at the very beginning where you could tell it's the worst camera because they had to find a way to put a camera in the car.

Austin: And we just end on this remarkable pan across to the empty pool. No ducks there. As the kids at the birthday party run by with the water guns shooting each other. Not Meadow and AJ. Just some other kids who are at the party. And you just kind of get this great wide shot of the pool chairs all laid out as everyone walks inside for the food. Great, great closing shot.

Keith: God, there's going to be a lot of fucking screenshots for this one. Sylvie, do you want to read the second episode intro?

Episode 2 [02:36:07]

Sylvi: Yeah, I would love to. So the second episode we watched is 46 Long. And this one, I'm going to try and keep it a little quicker. Just go through the three—There's three main storylines in this one, and that's in addition to Tony's ongoing plotline with Dr. Melfi. That's just gonna go without saying that that's an underpinning for everything. So. I'm gonna start with our good buddy Christopher. Christopher and his friend Brendan start this episode by hijacking a truck full of DVD players. Brendan, by the way, total scumbag. I know we've said this, I know that we've talked about how everybody in this show is a scumbag, but this guy's vibes are terrible.

Keith: This guy—This is the guy that the scumbags go, that guy's a scumbag.

Sylvi: Yes, exactly. So the two of them hijack a truck full of DVDs, hoping to impress Tony and the rest of the guys. But unfortunately for these two bozos, the truck they hit belonged to a company that had been paying protection money to Junior for years now. Chris, still upset that he hasn't been made after the Triboro Towers hit, and now having to pay money—pay restitution, I believe, is actually the exact verbiage they use to. Junior, is feeling disrespected by the crew. And it's made even worse by this incident. The restitution is ordered by acting DiMeo crime boss Jackie Aprile, Tony's childhood friend, who is currently undergoing cancer treatment. After this, him and Brendan get really coked up at a club and make a plan to hit another truck, another Comley truck, the company that Junior gets production money from, this time full of Italian suits. The morning of the, of the hijacking, Brendan goes to get Chris, but Chris refuses, trying to show that he is a loyal soldier. When Brendan goes and tries to hijack it without Chris, the driver of the truck is shot and killed by accident, and their plot for the episode ends with Tony ordering them to load the truck back up and return it to Junior, while tension between the two Sopranos, Junior and Tony, continue to rise. Our second plot line, a little sillier. AJ's science teacher has had his car stolen and under Carmella's suggestion, and hoping it'll improve his grades, Tony asks Big Pussy and Paulie to track down the stolen car. Turns out it was boosted by a gay barista and his boyfriend, which means we get lots of Paulie Walnuts, grimacing at cappuccino makers and grousing

about Italian cuisine. It's great. Eventually they track the couple down, break into their apartment, quite violently, and because the car has already been chopped, force them to hijack the same type of car, a Saturn, I believe, so they can make it look like the original. When it shows up in the school parking lot again, AJ proudly declares that his dad's a hero. Right on, buddy. Finally, and I think, most importantly, is the continued push from Tony to get Livia into a retirement community, made all the worse when Livia causes a fire while on the phone with Tony and then later in the episode hits her friend with her car, breaking the other woman's hip. At first Tony tries to just get a caretaker in to help with things, but Livia's so racist that the poor woman quits after a day or two. Despite his attempts to quote his sessions with Dr. Melfi back at Livia in hopes to convince her that Greengrove is a good idea, the two just end up in another fight shortly after. This is when the car accident I mentioned before happens and Tony tells Melfi that his mother has to move into Greengrove because I believe he says a gerontologist says she can't live on her own anymore. The episode ends with Melfi trying to talk to Tony about the possible feelings of resentment he harbors towards his mother, but the idea of hating his mother offends him so much that he storms out of the session. The episode ends with Georgie, the bartender at the Bada—Bada Bing, struggling to use the phone much in the same way that Livia does at the beginning, and Tony beats the shit out of him with the phone itself, ending the episode. A lot more straightforward this time. We are in a serialized storytelling format now. What do you guys think of this one?

Keith: Yeah, it's not something that they were maybe gonna add 45 minutes to, to make it a feature film. Like, it doesn't feel like that's on the table, because it's not.

Sylvi: I mean, I imagine the production time is always gonna be less, too, right? A pilot always is gonna be in the—it's gonna cook longer than anything else with a series, maybe other than finale episodes, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, I mean, they said they spent a month shooting the pilot, and by episode two, they were down to, like, 10 days.

Sylvi: Yeah. I think even with that reduced production time, I still really like how everything, like, moves and stuff. I think the writing is still on point, but it's definitely less visually arresting. We don't really have anything on par with that strip club scene we talked about earlier where, like, we are just—We're all, like, blown away by how well they lit it and stuff like that. Not to say that's going away from the show. Like, the show will still have moments of, like, really arresting visuals. I will, like, stake—I will stake my reputation on that. But it's definitely, you know, it feels a bit more like TV as opposed to a movie, and that's good and bad at the same time.

Keith: Yeah, I was feeling kind of harsh in the first third or quarter of the episode. Yeah, there was—It's, like, a lot of characters who I don't really care that much about yet. Like, Big Pussy and Paulie Walnuts off doing this thing of getting the teacher's car back. And I'm like, I don't really care about this car. I don't really care about them. I think what I wrote in my notes is, why do I care about any of this? That was the third thing that I wrote about the episode. A lot of the comedy is working. I like the dynamic with Christopher talking about, or kind of being torn between trying to prove to Tony that he can do the job by being—By following Tony's orders, but then also trying to prove that he can do the job by like, not following orders and going off and getting a big score. And then this undercurrent of like, he also wants to get even for not getting made after his hit and not being seen as fully respected in the organization. I liked all that stuff. And as the episode went on, they brought the therapist back in. The first half of the episode was kind of therapist light. So by the end of the episode, I was like, okay, I see what's happening here. It was hard to buy into a couple of these threads at the start, but I did get there.

Sylvi: I'm glad you got there.

Keith: Can I play—

Sylvi: When Dr. Melfi isn't on screen, the audience should be asking, where's Dr. Melfi?

Keith: You know, you can actually watch the show by skipping all the non Dr. Melfi scenes.

[laughter]

Austin: Sylvi and Art, you know, I think you and I probably have a similar situation, which is like, this stuff that's Paulie and Big Pussy or even like, Paulie and Silvio in the beginning giving Christopher shit. Like, because we are rewatching. It's like, they're my friends. My friends are hanging out. The boys are on screen!

Sylvi: The boys are back in town.

Austin: The boys are fucking back. Yeah, yeah, exactly. So it can be really hard to come into this and try to put the naive goggles on because, yeah, this is the longest time you're spending with Tony's crew so far. They're all doing their own thing and it's all characterization is what it is.

Keith: The thing that they're doing is in 2026, kind of hack. Making fun of Starbucks for being like, [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] a weird liberalization of coffee. Being Italian guys mad that other cultures like Italian food. Like, this is all stuff that I've seen a billion times. You know, older guys being mad about some change in culture.

Dre: [putting on a voice] Can you even get a normal cup of coffee? Huh?

Keith: And then they say, yeah. And then. Yeah. And then they're still—

Sylvi: New Zealand peaberry, motherfucker.

Austin: To me that's part of how it—That's part of the great bit here is you can laugh at Starbucks or you can laugh at Paulie, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: Like, it's—He's hack. Yeah. He's also a guy who is, like—At the beginning of the episode, he does a whole line of comedy about Christopher's mother giving him a blow job in France. And then he repeats it—

Keith: And then he repeats it word for word.

Austin: He does the whole bit again.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That's who he is.

Keith: That is like the funniest thing, I think, in the episode is repeating the bit. To a guy, if you're not watching along, to a guy that was sitting right next to him when he said it two seconds earlier.

Austin: And again, we have the Starbucks thing or like, the chain fancy coffee place thing is also up against—We already talked about the DVD players. But also the conversation they're having in the beginning is about cloning. They're looking through the newspaper and reading about cloning, and what about Dolly the Sheep and Princess Di, and what have we? Exactly.

Sylvi: Right. [putting on a voice] So I think the Royal Family had her whacked.

Austin: Exactly. So there is a timeliness of the whole thing. It is in its time, which again was part of the appeal, was like, it's a mobster show where people are reading the newspaper and talking about the news stories and watching the TV interview show with—I don't know if it's actually Charlie Rose, but like the fake Charlie Rose show.

Keith: The fake Charlie Rose show.

Austin: But with Leather Bound Dykes From Hell next to them. Because there's porno Hell, yeah, man. All around this place. I wrote some other ones down. I think my favorite one was Deep Throat: The Quest.

[laughter]

Keith: I actually have a screenshot of that one. Yeah, I have that one. Good.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, fantastic. Can I actually—Wait, before we even get into the episode? Because I think we've done a whole episode about the first two episodes of this and we haven't mentioned the intro to the show.

Sylvi: Austin. I was gonna bring up the same thing.

Art: Although.

Sylvi: What?

Art: This episode is a cold open. They don't do cold—This—Is this the only cold open?

Sylvi: I think so. This is another thing that's like—

Dre: Oh, wow, that's crazy.

Sylvi: This is—You can feel them—There's like some growing pain, right? Like, like, it's not necessarily like—I guess growing pains has more of a negative connotation to it, but like, it's interesting how they're still sort of figuring out the format of everything. And so like, yeah, they do a cold open here. And I'm not gonna give too much away, but I don't think they—I think I'm with Art. They don't ever do that again. Maybe a couple more times this season if they do. But I am obsessed with this intro theme. I think it is like—So it's—It's Woke Up This Morning—Is—Woke Up This Morning is the title of the song by Alabama 3. Or A3 in the states because of legal issues.

Austin: Oh, really?

Sylvi: Yeah, because of the band Alabama. This is something I found out recently and was like, it's very silly.

Austin: The second sequel to the band Alabama. It's not the third Alabama band.

Sylvi: Now we need the Alabama 2.

Austin: Yeah. Who's the Alabama 2? Who's Alabama 2?

Sylvi: The Lost—Alabama, the lost levels. Yeah, exactly. I—Yeah. I don't know, like, to describe the intro, it's this sort of like.

Art: Like

Sylvi: Half POV, half like dashboard. Mostly dashboard, I suppose. Driving sequence shot going from New York to across the bridge to New Jersey, correct?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I don't know the geography as well, which is why I'm double checking with people because I am north of the border.

Dre: Can I ask an even stupider geography question?

Sylvi: Yeah, go for it.

Dre: As a non New York person, that is the Twin Towers in the intro, right?

Sylvi: Oh, yes.

Dre: That is the World Trade Center. Okay.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Dre: That also just like, blew my mind to see that, because I was like, oh shit, that's how old the show is. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. I love that shot because it's in his rearview mirror because he's driving away from New York.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: He's going through the tunnel. He's coming back out into the turnpike, the New Jersey turnpike, and then driving down to Jersey

Art: Hold on, hold on. I want to find. I want to see if I can find this, like, this art, this artifact of... I remember very distinctly this, like, after 9/11, you could buy, like, a shirt that was like, they're going to find Bin Laden.

Keith: I believe it.

Sylvi: I believe that.

Art: But I can't find a picture of it on the Internet of, like, like, like a pic—A T shirt, it was obviously a bootleg of, like, like, Tony and his crew. And it's like, they're gonna.

Keith: They're gonna find Bin Laden.

Art: They're gonna find Bin Laden.

Sylvi: Oh, that's really funny.

Keith: That's really funny.

Austin: That's really great.

Art: I don't. Of course, this existed before, man.

Sylvi: Imagine the world where James Gandolfini found out about Obama—Obama, Osama bin Laden dying before the Rock, instead of the Rock finding out ahead of time. That would have been so funny.

Austin: He's get to to announce it.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: But, yeah, Dre, he is driving down from Manhattan into the kind of very nice upper class community he lives in. The McMansion spread that he lives in, but, like, down the. Down the turnpike. I believe it's the turnpike, not the parkway. And maybe it is the parkway. Anyway, this is all stuff I've driven a million times. Like, this is—I'm from South Jersey, but, like, I grew up going up here to see my family in North Jersey, and then eventually I went to school out on Long Island, along with Art. And so whenever I came home, I would drive these roads. I know these like the back of my hand. Like, I—A lot of this stuff is, is nostalgic for me. I drove one of these last year for the first time. I drove my partner's car down to see my mom for Mother's Day. And it was the first time I'd driven some of these roads by myself, or like, actually driving it in years and years.

And it's funny how much this stuff actually truly hits for me, watching him drive through these places.

Sylvi: God, I bet.

Dre: I can't wait until we do the Media Club Plus episode of Elizabethtown, the 2000s rom com with Orlando Bloom. And then I'll be able to talk about driving nostalgia.

[laughter]

Austin: I mean, listen, sneak it in. No one knows.

Dre: How—Because they've talked about. I feel like in this episode maybe they reference that Tony doesn't really, really like get along with New York or fuck with New York. Like. Yeah, how I, you know, I guess—I don't want to ask like, how much does that come up? But like even just like, watching the intro as he's driving around, there's a part of my brain that's like, how much of this that they're showing us is New Jersey and how much of this is, is New York City as a person who isn't from there.

Austin: This is a New Jersey show.

Art: It's all New Jersey. Yeah.

Austin: The shadow is, is heavy.

Dre: Sure.

Art: Yeah. And he's coming out of the tunnel at the first—That's the, that's the Lincoln Tunnel.

Austin: I think it's the Lincoln Tunnel. I believe that that's Lincoln Tunnel because you can see the cliffs right to the right of him as he's coming out. The Holland Tunnel doesn't have those there. If I'm remembering right.

Art: And I believe, if you like, if you want to get really deep into it, that like, you're supposed to believe that he is coming back from being in New York. Obviously that's what's on the other side of that tunnel.

Austin: He was headed out in the tunnel. Right.

Art: From a mafia related activity in the city.

Keith: Yeah, the thing is that I think it is Uncle Junior that says to Tony's mom that he thumbs his nose at New York or something.

Austin: That's exactly right. It's in the car. [**Keith:** Yeah.] At the end of the first episode.

Keith: And sort of an unreliable source. I think Uncle Junior wants something from telling this, but does Tony hate New York? Do we see this in, in the show? I mean, I guess, yeah. I guess I don't want to know.

Art: You will not have you—But when this is all over, you will, you will know, have clarity.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Art: And you won't be waiting long. But like it's not happening now.

Austin: Yeah. But it is important. He is the New—He's from North Jersey. He—There's some relationships in the New York mob and Jersey is a satellite. Right? Like just like in many other issues of the economy, right? Like it's important that he's the guy from North Jersey and he's like important in North Jersey, but he's not important in New York. That relationship is—You've keyed into something real there. Right? In terms of attention, in terms of attitude. You know, there's a lot of ways in which I think that's important in the same way that *The Wire* taking place in Baltimore and not in, not in New York, not in D.C. not even in Philly. It's in Baltimore, you know, and Baltimore has its own culture and its own connection to these other places. The specificity of these places was very real and important to Chase. Again, I read a thing about David Chase and *Twin Peaks*

before we watched this because of the connections feeling really strong. And he said the thing about *Twin Peaks* that he loved was that it felt like a real place, even with all of its weird, surreal characters and its comedy, he could trust—He felt like he trusted that that place was real, and that was something that he carried into his work before *The Sopranos* and then definitely wanted to bring in to *The Sopranos* specifically. He also talked about that was part of the appeal for him when he worked on *The Rockford Files*, which was a detective show, was that he was like, yeah, sure, I'll do it, because it feels like a real place.

Keith: Mm-hm. Do we have much to say about this first scene here where they're listening to fake Charlie Rose and former Mafia soldier Vincent Rizzo?

Sylvi: I think there's one important thing that I sort of gestured at, which is people—Like, the sort of drug charges are becoming much more of a like, intense sentence. And that's led to the stuff that Tony complains about in the first episode about like, guys don't have any space for the penal experience, you know?

Keith: Right. It's a hilarious line.

Sylvi: And, like, we covered the sort of, like, the banter that kind of goes on. They love breaking each other's balls. But I think other than, like—Other than, like, getting that dynamic, I don't know how much we need to linger on this scene.

Austin: The only other thing I'd say is it's clear that it's not the pilot anymore. Christopher's hair is better. Tony has put on weight. Everyone's costuming seems a little more dialed in to what I know it as and what I think of it as.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, that's funny. I didn't even notice Christopher's hair changing.

Austin: It's a big change. I think if you go between the two episodes, it's, like, so much more voluminous here, and it feels like it has, like, the curve in it.

Keith: Oh, sure. Yeah. Yeah. It's less just pushed back.

Sylvi: He has less of a—In the pilot, he almost has a sort of, like, Michael Corleone at the beginning of The Godfather thing going on. **[Austin:** Totally.] And then in this, he's more—Less so.

Art: Yeah, yeah, we get a lot of good Paulie in the cold open.

Austin: Yes, we sure do. The thing on the TV that's interesting is that this is a guy who's saying a lot of what Tony told Melfi, even though he's contemptuous because of being a snitch, right? He's saying to Charlie Rose or whoever the interviewer is, like, the golden age of the Mafia is over. They only have themselves to blame, et cetera. All of the stuff that Tony was talking about is caught up here down to, no one wants to—Like you said, no one wants the penal lifestyle or whatever.

Sylvi: And specifically, this is no space for the penal experience. That's right.

Keith: This is what the guy on the TV is talking about. Specifically, because of drug charges, the sentences were getting so much longer. And so it's not the thing of doing six months, one year, two years. It was doing 10 years, 15 years, 20 years.

Austin: 35 years is the number he gives.

Keith: Yeah, like, that's not. That is a different ask.

Dre: Yeah, I guess this is also prime, like, war on drugs continuing to, like, escalate and explode. Right? Like in the 90s, yeah.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Dre: So is this that the—So it's not that the mob started doing more drug stuff, it's that the penalties for doing drug stuff was getting exponentially worse. Or is it both?

Sylvi: I think it's a bit of both.

Keith: My understanding from only having watched Goodfellas is like—In Goodfellas, they're trying to get the lower level guys to not be involved in drugs. I don't know if that's unique to that movie, but that was the connection to me watching this was being like,

oh, it's like Goodfellas, where they tried to get them to not do drugs because of how bad the sentences are and how much heat there is on it, but they wouldn't not do it because they were doing drugs.

Dre: Well, and it also turns you into a dumbass like Brendan.

Keith: It also turns you into a dumbass like Brendan.

Sylvi: I don't know if—I don't know if I'm gonna blame the cocaine for Brendan. Yeah.

Dre: Which came first?

Keith: Well, say—Well, the show's position is that Christopher was gonna do something stupid on the cocaine. And then the next morning, he had changed his mind because he—

Sylvi: I think—Was he smoking weed in that scene?

Art: I don't think—

Sylvi: I think it might have just been a normal cigarette.

Dre: Sometimes it's hard to tell if he's smoking like a blunt or a hand rolled cigarette or a joint or something, it's. It's tough. They're just smoking all the time.

Austin: It's worth saying also, really quick, the other part of this is the success of the RICO act, which is the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations act, which effectively allows you to spread blame around from the person who did an act up through the organization, basically, around racketeering specifically. But the other, the other, the kind of key context for this is Gotti, only six years prior, was convicted via the RICO Act. Gotti, John Gotti, was the head of the Gambino crime family or damn near the head of the Gambino crime family.

Art: Yeah, I think he was the, he was at the very least acting boss.

Sylvi: Yeah, boss of the Gambino crime family in New York.

Austin: And so this just like, the real life New York Mafia is going through it during the production of this. There's lots of material from that case that's available for Chase and everyone else on the creative team to work through. Obviously some of that stuff had already begun filtering out into pop culture. But like, that is, that is part of what is shading in some of this stuff is the real life New York Mafia just took a big hit.

Art: For contrast, I'm reading Wise Guy right now, which is Henry Hill's story. And he's just talking—All of his people are doing crimes all the time and they're getting like 30 and 60 day sentences because they can't—They're like, legally not allowed to draw these connections. So it's like, yep, I did 30 days for smuggling cigarettes. And then I did—And like that just happened to me every like four months or whatever. I would get picked up for smuggling cigarettes. But like, okay.

Austin: Exactly, yeah. So, yeah, I think that's probably it from this scene.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: And that's the cold open?

Sylvi: That is the cold open. Yeah. And also I think it's really funny when Chris thinks they're talking about cloning phones. I think it's—

Austin: That's funny.

Sylvi: Chris always having a little bit of like not quite being on the same page with the made guys, I think is like even in like, little funny moments, I think is really good. Let me see.

Keith: Well, the next thing is that like the, the big A—The A plot crime thing that's happening is Christopher and Brendan—

Sylvi: Christopher and Brendan hijack this truck.

Keith: Hijack this truck. Which I have a really funny clip from because it starts off with them basically saying like, cooperate and we won't hurt you. And the guy is like, no, no,

no, no. You have to hurt me. If you don't hurt me, I'll get fired. If I look like I cooperated with you, they're gonna think that I was in on it and they're gonna fire me. And I need this job. So you guys have to—I can't—He says that I can't be unscathed or something. Which leads to—

Austin: Because we get the great follow up right after they kick his ass. This is scathed!

Keith: Here. Let's hear it.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Brendan: Painless. Nobody wants to hurt your ass.

Driver: Okay, but you gotta tie me up.

Christopher: You gonna be a jerk off now?

Driver: My boss is gonna think I'm in on it.

Christopher: What do we look like, we're trying for a merit badge? We travel around with rope?

Driver: I've got some in the cab. Please, I need this job.

Christopher: Okay. Jesus Christ. Get him the rope.

Keith: This guy's—

Driver: I don't know who in the company gave up the route. But there's no way I could walk away unscathed without being fired.

Christopher: You want to be scathed?

Driver: Yeah, so it looks like I didn't give up without a struggle.

[punching sound]

Driver: Oh, oh, that's cool. Thank you.

Keith: That's good. Thank you, man.

Driver: No, wait.

[sounds of being beaten up]

[audio ends]

Keith: Really funny. Really funny.

Austin: So funny.

Keith: That guy is 100% ADR. Another guy maybe, or it might, might be him, but it like, every single line of his, like completely desynced from his mouth. It's very funny.

Sylvi: I didn't notice that.

Austin: That's funny.

Art: Michael Imperioli is so good in this show.

Sylvi: Oh he's—This is incredible. He's incredible.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: I'm probably going to say this a lot, but.

Keith: I encourage anybody who can hear me right now. Never start trying to figure out when something is ADR. It is very annoying to watch TV and be hyper aware of the ADR.

Sylvi: I think it's fun. It's a little game, for me personally. I like picking it out.

Keith: It is cute.

Sylvi: I do get it.

Keith: Well, then I start thinking about the quality of the microphone and you never want to be in that position.

Sylvi: Yeah. That is very you.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: That is a very Keith problem.

Keith: Yeah. But yeah, this sets up the big tension in the show—In the episode of like, they're doing this because they need money, they need to score. They also want to impress Tony and they've done it in the exact wrong way. There seems to be a little bit of ambiguity over whether or not Christopher knew that this truck was technically part of Junior's business.

Sylvi: Yeah. In the scene in the club when they're planning the second one, it does sort of feel like Brendan's the one who's been going out and finding these to hit. Maybe that's just me interpreting that scene in a way that's, like, not intended, but it does kind of feel like—The first one feels like it was unintentional, or at the very least, they didn't realize how much of a shitstorm it would cause.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And it does—Does anybody have the exact amount that they end up having to pay back to Junior?

Austin: Yeah, I know it.

Dre: 15,000.

Austin: Yeah. Because is it actually 15,000, Dre?

Dre: Well, they hand \$15,000 to Tony.

Austin: That's right.

Dre: And then Tony takes about 5,000 out of that bag before he takes it to Junior.

Austin: Yeah. The thing that. The way that I read it is, yeah, Tony takes the 5K out. He's going to give Junior the 10K. And then based on the way that Brendan and Christopher talked about, they were like, we'll be lucky if we see 2k, because Tony's gonna come back and be like, I talked him down from 15 to 13 and give them back each a grand, and he's gonna pocket three for himself.

Keith: So he's taking the money and he's also getting credit for helping them out. Even though actually what he did was stole from him.

Austin: That's correct.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Though also, he is—I mean, he is—Maybe it's a finders fee, you know?

Keith: Maybe it's a finders fee.

[Sylvi laughter]

Dre: He would have to cover for their dumb ass.

Keith: Dedicated to Chris.

Austin: That's correct.

Sylvi: Which makes it Tony Soprano's.

Keith: You know, guys, I think that Tony Soprano might be stealing.

DRE Doing crimes?

Keith: Yeah, I know that we mentioned it before.

Sylvi: Might be kind of flexible.

Keith: I know we said this before. The thing that they're stealing is DVDs. I think it's so funny that the last episode they're hyping up LaserDisc and in this episode, they're stealing DVD players.

Sylvi: It's very fun.

Keith: I didn't think that in 1997 when this was being filmed, that people were hyping up LaserDisc.

Art: This would have been filmed in '98. And I remember the first DVD I owned was of the Matrix.

Austin: Same thing.

Keith: Yeah. I guess if you're rich, then you're on—Then maybe you would be on LaserDisc instead of on VHS.

Austin: And let me tell you, I knew a lot of people who were, like, into AV equipment.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: There were people who were like, LaserDisc is the best it's ever gonna get. Sure. It's expensive. Sure, every single plate, every disc is super expensive. But, like, it's the best. It's movie quality. It's cinema quality. And there was skepticism about DVD from those people at first.

Art: My dad was one of those people. We had a crummy TV, but a LaserDisc player. I don't, I don't know.

Keith: I only watched LaserDisc one time because my chemistry teacher in high school had a LaserDisc player and we watched a movie on LaserDisc because that's the only format that he had it in. And am I crazy that movies were not always entirely on one disc in LaserDisc?

Art: That is correct. The Star Wars trilogy, when they came out on LaserDisc, were on five sides. You had to get up twice to change the LaserDisc to watch Star Wars.

Keith: I mean, so there's, there's where DVD kind of gets you.

Art: They were the size of LPs, you know?

Austin: Yeah, LaserDiscs are huge. That's the other thing. I don't know. Maybe that's not.

Keith: They were the size of vinyl records.

Austin: Yes. Yeah.

Keith: Which is that like a psychological thing? Like, is it just like. Well, if they're already the size of what people know of as vinyl, then it won't be crazy to try to sell this to people.

Sylvi: Real shit. That's the only thing I know about LaserDiscs. That and they failed.

Dre: I'm assuming they're that big because they needed, like, the physical space to be.

Keith: Yeah, but if you could make it 50% bigger and then also not have to get up to change the side.

Austin: Yes.

Art: I do think there is something that, like, people's shelves were designed for records.

Keith: Records. Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: If you were 50% bigger, you were really...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Asking a lot of people's living room storage shelves.

Austin: I wouldn't say that they failed. I would say that they were niche, but they lasted for two decades or something.

Keith: Yeah, that's fair. That is a wild

Dre: LaserDisc just did better than HD DVD is what I'm hearing.

Keith: Oh, way better.

Austin: Way better than HD DVD.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And better than, like, Beta. Betamax.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know, I believe. I believe BetaMax was quicker out of the market than LaserDisc was. Maybe I'm wrong.

Keith: No, the good old BM.

Austin: BetaMax continued to get produced in some format for quite some time. The recorders were discontinued in 2002 and they stopped making blank Betamax cassettes only 2016, so. But commercially it was destroyed by the 80s, so.

Sylvi: I'm trying to—This conversation's got me trying to figure out how to get some gut machine shit on BetaMax now. Cause that'd be funny.

Austin: I mean, you could get some. I bet you could get some blanks on. On ebay.

Sylvi: I bet we could. I bet I could lose so much money doing that.

Austin: So much money like this.

Keith: Yeah, you. I mean, you could get most of the way they're putting it on VHS. People all already don't have that, do you?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Do you mean tapes? Yeah, yeah, we already do that.

Keith: Oh, you do put it on. I didn't know that you already did that.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Dre: Wait, you do.

Art: You. Do you do videotapes?

Sylvi: No. Oh, no. I thought Keith was talking about. I thought Keith said VHS but meant cassettes.

Keith: No, no, no VHS. No, I meant. No. BetaMax is the VHS competitor.

Sylvi: I'm so sorry.

Keith: I was like, you're putting songs on VHS? Sounds sick. I don't know.

Art: You should make 8-tracks.

Keith: Because I've been trying to get Kyle to let me—

Sylvi: That's what I was thinking of.

Keith: I've been trying to get Kyle to let me put Run Button videos on VHS to send to patrons for 10 years almost, for—How long has Patreon been around? Yeah, like 10 years.

Dre: Oh, man, I forgot how fucking cool 8-tracks look.

Austin: 8-tracks have such a cool look.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: They were also pretty successful. It just eventually, defeated.

Keith: Yeah, they were. They were around for a while. They were in cars.

Austin: They were in cars.

Keith: That's how you know. So one of the funniest things that's happening in the background of this episode.

Sylvi: Yeah. We should talk about this show.

Art: Yeah, remember you thought we could do this in 30 minutes?

Keith: Yeah, we'll get there.

Dre: Well, one of us thought that.

Sylvi: Yeah. Keith, the person I was talking to.

Keith: Look, if you say 30 minutes. Minutes, then maybe you hit an hour. If you go, well, we can't do it under an hour, then maybe it'll take 90. So you, you try to undercut so that then you can hit where you want to hit. It was a strategic under—.

Sylvi: The Friends at the Table guarantee.

Keith: It was strategically optimistic. Overly optimistic. Okay, so Tony Soprano. There's two people in his life that don't know how to use a phone.

Sylvi: Yes. One of them's his mother.

Keith: The bartender—His mother and the bartender at Bada Bing. One of these people is just kind of a dumb guy. And one of these people is a malevolent force in his life.

Sylvi: I don't—Don't talk about Georgie like that.

Keith: He seems like kind of a dumb guy.

Sylvi: Oh, no, I meant the malevolent force thing.

Keith: Oh. [laughter]

Sylvi: No. Yeah. I mean, Georgie has real, well meaning [**Keith:** Patrick Star.] Yes. That is perfect. That's exactly it. I was—Thank you so much. He is Patrick Star. Holy shit.

Keith: He's a little bit like Patrick Star.

Sylvi: [as Patrick Star] I don't know how to work the phone, SpongeBob. Hey, SpongeBob. Did the operator answer?

Keith: Yeah. Both his mom and Georgie don't know the difference between an answering machine and an operator.

Sylvi: An operator. Yeah.

Keith: They also, you know, he struggles the whole time putting people on hold, even though Tony keeps being like, you just press hold and hang up the phone.

Sylvi: It's one button.

Keith: It's one button. But they're at Bada Bing. What's her name? Livia. Livia's setting her house on fire because she also can't use the phone. Oh. She needs to take her mushrooms off the stove. But gets distracted by a black postal worker who is very kindly putting a package in between the front door and the screen door so that it's obscured from the street. And Livia's at the window being like, [as LIVIA] what is she doing?

Sylvi: She's so horrible. She really does feel like a cartoon witch in that scene peering out the window.

Keith: And, well, instant karma, her house almost burned down. Can't trust her to call 911 on her own. Although I think in the end, he did trust her to call 911 on her own. I wouldn't have. I think after the exchange that I had with her. [**Austin:** He calls too, though.] I thought that he calls his wife to be like, my mother's calling 911 because she's burning her house down and can you meet her there?

Austin: I thought he did that and then also called 911. But no, I guess you're right. You're right.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Importantly—Or maybe this is—Maybe this is up for—I'll phrase this as a question because I actually don't, I actually don't remember what the show wants us to feel here. It feels like she can't keep track of things in this scene.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Sorry, it feels like she what in this scene?

Austin: Can't keep track of things.

Keith: That she's losing track.

Austin: And I want to make sure that that's maybe clear to the listener who isn't watching along. She's slipping in and out of awareness of even the things that are happening right in front of her.

Sylvi: There's definitely. They're definitely trying to do a thing where they're—Both the paranoia and her sort of absentmindedness are tied into a cognitive decline. I think that ties into when she accidentally drives the car forward. Or is it accidentally? But when the car accident happens and it's like, was that just her losing the plot for a minute and not realizing she had to reverse the car or what? And like, yeah. I think that's something to earmark going forward too. Is like, the sort of ambiguity in her actions becoming more and more pronounced because you don't know how much of it is due to old age and how much of it is like, yeah, malice. Or like—

Austin: Her being a bad person.

Keith: Or like other non-age related mental illness.

Sylvi: Sure.

Keith: Tony is dealing with his stuff by going to therapy. I don't think that Livia has been in therapy for her obvious paranoia and anxiety. This is a woman who's continually giving away all of her stuff because she believes that she's about to die. And she's like, spinning nightmares to Tony about how when she dies, the junk man's gonna have to

take all of her stuff to the dump if she doesn't give it all away. And he's like, ma, you're not dying. You're not dying. You're fine.

Austin: Yeah. Also, just want to shoutout that the show never gives up on comedy. Throughout this scene, not only is it partly funny because the strippers are coming up and asking Tony if his mom is okay.

Keith: Is your mother okay? Yeah.

Austin: Is your mother okay? But also there's this incredible beat where Georgie, who is the bartender here, has been struggling with the telephone system. And he's waiting to hear back from some sort of criminal associate named Serge. And while he's on the phone, like—Before he's on the phone with his mother, Serge calls and he does it. He manages to put Serge on hold while he's able to talk to his mother, while Tony's able to talk to his mother. And we get this great shot of Georgie looking on as Tony switches over to the other line. And the relief that passes onto his face, the big smile he gets is so good. He's so happy he pulled it off.

Keith: Well, because he can't add to Tony's day.

Austin: No, yeah. Because Tony is like, this can't continue like this. And he means the mother, but he also kind of means everything.

Keith: Yeah. He very quickly identifies Georgie as like my mother. You're just like her. You can't use the phone. And the only difference is that you're not an old woman.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: And this is, I think, the only plot beat that is carried over from episode one to episode two is, is trying to get Livia to go to **[Art: The retirement community.]** The retirement community.

Sylvi: That's not 100% true. Chris's stuff is carried over too.

Art: Yeah. And I would say that the Junior-Tony tension is carried over from the pilot as well.

Sylvi: I think it's maybe the most obvious of them though.

Keith: It's like the most specific sort of—It's not an A to B evolution. It is literally the same thing—

Sylvi: Yeah, that's very much because—Oh, sorry, finish your thought.

Keith: Oh, just that I just think it's grounding for the episode to have this through line where the evolution is, okay, she won't go to the retirement community. We have to get her some in-home help. They have decided that like, if you're not gonna go to the retirement community, you need somebody else in your home to prevent you from burning it down.

Austin: Right. Well, and importantly, this particular part of the story does get resolved by the end of this episode. The question of will she or won't she move? In the first episode, the answer is no, she won't. And then in the procedural television show version of this, she wouldn't for the next 12 episodes. And then at the mid season break or at the finale, she would, she either would decide to go in or would come to a new stability in her own home. And then by the next season it probably wouldn't be a thing anymore. She would just be at home, one or the other, and the show would continue. Whereas here it comes back up, it resolves towards her getting into the retirement home and then we can keep moving forward from there. It doesn't mean that the relationship between her and Tony is resolved, but this particular arc is. And that's the difference between—This has elements of a procedural, the stuff with the B plot of the kids—Of AJ's teacher's missing Saturn, his car is a classic procedural B plot or C plot, you know? And it still ties into the characterization, ties into who are Tony and Carmella as parents. It ties into what is the relationship between the Sopranos and the crime family and the rest of the world and all that stuff. But it resolves. It's intro'd It resolves.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Whereas a lot of this other stuff, and I think Sylvi, one of the things you're gesturing at is—The ongoing Christopher relationship is can Christopher earn enough trust to become made? That's a carryover from the first episode, but it's reframed in a new situation. Right? And that's the ways in which it draws from procedurals and sitcoms and et cetera.

Keith: Before we get to Big Pussy and Paulie Walnuts out on the town going to Buttfucks to steal Moka Pots, there's an interesting scene between Livia and Carmella which.

Sylvi: Oh yeah, this is great.

Keith: Tony had—I don't remember a ton of the specifics from this, but the part that stuck in my mind was like, Tony, kind of in other parts of these two episodes, has been offsetting the blame of, like, I can't take my mom into our home because Carmella won't let me. My wife doesn't want her there. But we have this scene where she invites Livia to stay at the house, and Livia declines to stay. Like, you don't actually want me there. And she just says, I'm inviting you to come. I'm not gonna beg you to come. Which is a totally different thing than what we—when we hear from Tony, which is like, you know, my mom's a big problem, but it's actually my wife that's preventing me from solving it. Because the real solution would be for me to invite my mom to live with us. But it's my wife that doesn't want that. Her, not me.

Sylvi: It's crucial that he says this to Melfi after already being like, I can't have my mother living with me. But then immediately when he's like, oh, I might be losing face with my therapist, I need to say, well, it's my wife's fault. It's—Carmella doesn't want to. I'm a good son. I have to be a good son.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: If I'm not a good son, what am I?

Keith: Losing face with his therapist. But I think also is, like, absolutely avoiding the reality of how he feels about his mom.

Dre: Oh, for sure.

Austin: Oh, 1000%.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And let's complicate it even further. Also, his mother is probably telling him Carmella doesn't want me there.

Sylvi: Probably. Yeah.

Austin: Because we see Carmella invite her here, and she says, you don't want me there. So it's this—I just don't think there's any—No one—And also, I don't think Carmella wants her.

Keith: No, of course not.

Austin: Why would she?

Keith: But would she stop Tony?

Austin: Probably not. But would Tony impose that on Carmella?

Keith: This is all—

Austin: I'm not excusing Tony's way of explaining the situation to Melfi. Tony doesn't have the perspective we do. But from our perspective, it's very clear that it's actually like, everyone wants a thing different than the thing they're saying at every point. Yeah. That is, we don't know what Livia wants. Livia wants her old life back.

Keith: Right. She wants her husband to not be dead, but if she had her husband not dead, would she want that actually?

Austin: Right.

Keith: Hard to say.

Austin: Would she like living with Tony and Carmella?

Keith: No, no, I don't think she's in a position to like anything. [**Dre:** Yeah, no.] She's been positioned as incapable of liking something.

Sylvi: Well, we have. We do get the happy memory. And, like, if we want to keep. I think, like, staying on the Livia, Tony and like, the family as a whole, we could talk about that. Where when Melfi asks Tony, like, do you have any, like, happy memories of when you were a kid? Like, what, what are the—I think she specifically says, what are the kind and loving memories you have?

Austin: Which is a little pointed because, because while he's being like, my, my mother is an angel.

Keith: Yeah. Sweet little old lady.

Dre: This is some good therapy shit right here.

Sylvi: Hell, yeah.

Dre: The way she phrased that question, it's fucking great.

Sylvi: I don't have the exact wording, unfortunately, but I think that's close to. It was, what are the kinds of—

Dre: Yeah, it's what Austin said.

Keith: And he spends a long time thinking.

Dre: It's not just, what are your happy memories? It's what are your kind and loving memories of your mom?

Keith: Does he find one?

Sylvi: Does any—Yeah, I was gonna say, does anybody wanna tell. Well, he has a memory that he gives us. Does anybody have it or do you?

Keith: I have a button, but I believe the button takes place right after this part of the conversation. He finds a memory. I wouldn't call it a kind and loving memory. Dre, do you wanna say what the memory is?

Dre: It's—they're on vacation when he's a kid, like a big family vacation, and his dad falls down the stairs. And everybody laughs at his dad for falling down the stairs.

Keith: Including the mom.

Dre: Including the mom.

Keith: So this is the level we're working at. This is—I remember one time my mother laughed. And what was it at? My father's pain.

Sylvi: My father falling down the stairs while we were on vac—Like down at the shore.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And we all laughed and laughed and laughed.

Keith: By the way, it had been 30 years.

Austin: Yes, that was 1968 or something.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Do you have the button for what happens right after that? Is that the button you have?

Keith: I believe so. Yeah. Let's see.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Dr. Melfi: So you're carrying all this guilt, when your mother is clearly someone who has great difficulty in maintaining a relationship with anyone.

Tony: But she's my mother. You're supposed to take care of your mother. She's a little old lady.

Dr. Melfi: Not to you. She's very powerful.

Tony: Bullshit.

Dr. Melfi: You accord this little old lady an almost mystical ability to wreak havoc.

Tony: Well, let me tell you something. You definitely don't want to get her started.

Dr. Melfi: There are some people who are not ideal candidates for parenthood.

Tony: Come on.

Keith: Hell yeah.

Tony: She's a sweetie pie.

Sylvi: So true.

Dr. Melfi: What were some of the good experiences you remember as a child?
Loving, warm ones.

[long pause]

Sylvi: The pause.

Tony: One time, we were down to the shore about '68, '69. The whole family. My father, he tripped and he fell down the stairs, and we were all laughing. The whole family was laughing. My mother was laughing.

Dr. Melfi: Any other loving experiences?

Tony: Hey, she's a good woman.

Sylvi: God.

Tony: She put food on that table every night. I'm the ungrateful fuck. Because I come here and I complain about her and I let my wife exclude her from my home.

[audio stops]

Austin: Man. Well, he is an ungrateful fuck but maybe not for the reasons—

Keith: Yeah. Maybe not for these reasons.

Austin: Oh, it's tough.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: She's also a thing that was right before the button press that Melfi is gesturing at, because Melfi in the button says, you know, it sounds like you're not the only one who has a problem staying connected to her. Like, she has a problem connecting with people in general. He has sisters, she has daughters. They've all cut her off entirely.

Keith: Yeah. That's exactly what precedes that, is him saying, like, oh, I'm the only one that still talks to her.

Austin: Yeah. Which, of course, also adds pressure to him because he's the only one. There's no one else carrying that burden with him and no one else he can shrug it off on, which is the other half of it. Right? Like, you can imagine a time when he wasn't attendant, maybe, and other people were, and now it's all on him, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: This stuff is also—As someone without siblings, I haven't lived this, but I—All of my parents have siblings. This shit is so real.

Dre: Yeah.

Sylvi: No, dude. Oh, my fucking God. It's the realest.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Let me tell you. Situations where only one child out of three is talking to a parent. Weird. Weird to be in. Yeah. I, I think this stuff is so good. I know that that's, like, very. No, duh. But, like, we talked a lot in the first episode about how Gandolfini is able to flip the switch with Tony so easily. And this is another context in it that I really enjoy where it's not necessarily his anger, it's his guilt that gets him going whenever it's got to do with his mom, if he ever—Because the, I have to be a good son, is so like, ingrained in him, despite the fact that he clearly hates it.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And, like, I don't know. I think it's a great way to, um...

Keith: Do you remember the very next thing that he does?

Sylvi: Uh, refresh me, Keith.

Keith: He brings her a big bouquet of flowers.

Sylvi: He does, that's when he goes to visit—

Keith: And she says, I'm not dead.

Sylvi: [crosstalk] It's brutal.

Keith: [crosstalk] She's just awful. He also—she has a new nurse. The nurse is black. He immediately says, don't smoke weed in the house.

Dre: And then she immediately says, she's been stealing my plates.

Keith: Yeah. Yep, yep.

Austin: And not just my plates. Where is the plate from?

Keith: Oh, it's the stolen plate.

Dre: Yeah, it's a stolen plate that they stole from a restaurant in Rome? Right? Didn't she say that?

Austin: That beautiful plate that Aunt Settimia took from the restaurant in Rome, it's gone.

Keith: I'm the only one who can steal.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: That's how we do things in the Sopranos fam—The Soprano family. When you're under the Soprano roof, Meadow, don't sneak out.

Keith: Oh, my God.

Austin: God. What's the next Livia—If we want to stay on this?

Sylvi: I would love to. It's, oh—I think it's after—

Keith: So she says something. I don't think it's ever clear what she says. But this nurse quits in a rage. The nurse who seemed like a very nice person who is happily singing to herself while—

Art: Happily singing to herself, Tony comments on it.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Then the next time we see her, she's like, at a 10 mad and leaves.

Keith: Yeah. And I don't think we ever get any clarity on that. But the next, next thing is—

Art: We get a little bit of clarity.

Keith: Oh.

Art: Because Livia's like—They're so like—

Keith: Oh, yes, you're right.

Art: The blacks are so sensitive like that—Like, you never know what you can say. So she's said something horrific, right?

Austin: I mean, like, for sure.

Sylvi: Yeah. There's a lot of slurs getting thrown around this episode.

Keith: And then this is a way to set up that they've got to get her back into this retirement community. Because Tony's like, I don't know why she'll never do anything for herself. Because she drives around her little old friends who can't drive any anymore. And then it cuts to—

Sylvi: He's proud of that too.

Keith: Yeah, he's very proud of it.

Sylvi: He's like, oh, you know, I give her a lot of flack, but, you know, whenever one of her old friends needs a ride, she's out there doing it. And he's like. You can hear how happy he is in his voice. And then it cuts straight to her like, one, being paranoid again with her friend, being like, make a lot of noise, you never know who's in there.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And then a second later, hitting that woman with her car.

Keith: Yep. Breaking her hip. Breaking her own wrist. And the doctors are like, she can't live alone anymore.

Sylvi: Yeah. The smash cut to Tony's reaction in therapy is so fucking funny. That happens, and then it's—If I'm not mistaken, him with his head in his hands.

Dre: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Not the first time that something has happened, and it cuts to him with his head in his hands. After his second fainting, they do the same smash cut.

Sylvi: It's a really good bit. I don't get sick of it. It's really funny. Just any sort of smash cut from something that I know is causing Tony Soprano stress to him in therapy is already hitting for—Like, already hits for me. But when you see him so obviously defeated by it, it's great.

Keith: Of the four buttons that I have today, three of them are about Livia.

Sylvi: I mean. Yeah, that sounds about right. She casts a bigger shadow on the show than New York does sometimes.

Keith: But one of the best things that—And I said, I was harsh on this episode towards the beginning, and towards the end I was bought in. And a lot of it is because of how well they tie in Tony's stress at work to his tension with his mother, with what he's talking about in therapy, and there's a scene when he—After the accident, she's got her wrist casted up. She's gonna go to this retirement community. He's sort of breaking the news to her that she can't tell him no anymore, she has to go. And he kind of stands up to her for the first time that we see in the show. I have—

Sylvi: Is this when we—Should we talk about what Melfi says before this scene? 'Cause I think this is another scene of him repeating—Just very briefly, I think some of the stuff in this scene is him repeating things that Melfi says to him in therapy when he's talking about Greengrove. Did we bring that up already? Okay. Sorry.

Keith: Yeah. The hotels—It—Captain Teeb? Me and Tony both don't know what that is.

Austin: Cape d'Antibes is like a cape—It's a cape in France. Antibes, A, N, T, I, B, E, S that's like a fancy—I think generally speaking, it's thought of as being like a resort location for rich older people. It's like on the Riviera, you know? It's one of those places.

Keith: She's given him food. He has ham and tomatoes that does not look very good, but that he seems to be enjoying.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: But you're not going to die. Your stuff's not gonna be hauled off to the dump. But you do have to start planning for your future. You got the most rewarding chapter of your life coming up.

Livia: You know my good jewelry?

Tony: The stuff Dad gave you? Yeah. Some of those pieces came right out of Cartier's window, huh? Listen, Carm doesn't want it. Not now. What we both want is for you to live long and wear your sparklers to your grandchildren's graduation.

Livia: I gave it all to your cousin Josephine.

Tony: What the fuck? The good jewelry?

[MCP cast laughing]

Livia: They don't have much money.

Tony: You gave a fucking cousin Cartier dinner rings and you give me a vibrating chair?

Livia: Your wife never showed any interest in my jewels. She never complimented me on any of it, as I can remember.

Tony: You listen to me now. Before you do any more serious damage to yourself or your grandchildren's inheritance, you're gonna stop living alone right now.

Livia: I'm not going to that nursing home.

Tony: Green Grove is a retirement community. And it's more like a hotel at Captain Teeb's.

Livia: Who's he?

Tony: Captain owns luxury hotels or something. I don't know. That's not the point. Mrs. DiCaprio over there, and she says she's got a corner suite available with a woods view. It's available now, but it's gonna go fast.

Livia: Of course it's available. Somebody died.

Tony: Oh, Ma, you gotta stop. You gotta stop with this. This black poison cloud all the time because I can't take it anymore.

Livia: Oh, poor you.

Tony: You know, I got problems at work. I got problems at home. I got a friend who's been diagnosed with cancer. Most parents would be grateful if their yuppie children put as much thought into this as I did.

Livia: I'm not going to that place.

Tony: Then I will go to court and I will get a durable power of attorney over you, and I will place you there.

Livia: And kill me now, go on. Go. Go into the ham and take the carving knife and stab me here. Here. Now. Please. It would hurt me less than what you just said.

Tony: You know, I know seniors that are inspired.

[audio stops]

Keith: The uh, you're entering the most what phase of your life? And then the, I know seniors who are inspired and inspiring. That is all stuff taken from the therapist, right? From what she said to him. It's really funny, the idea that—The assumption that, of course, this expensive jewelry, the big—These costume rings, the Cartier dinner rings, whatever would go to his wife, that makes sense to me. But that, that's the thing, that they went to his cousin instead, that really flips his switch here is so funny. You gave away, well, you know, probably tens, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of diamonds to cousin Josephine? What the fuck?

Austin: Yeah. This stuff is so real and so knotty, you know?

Keith: Yeah. The...

Art: His, his switch turn there is so good that—it's really funny. I mean, we all laughed. That's a good sign.

Keith: In a hundred years, I couldn't say community the way that he does. How does he say community like that?

Sylvi: [as **Tony**] Retirement community!

Keith: [as **Tony**] Retirement—[as **Keith**] It's so good.

Art: He's just.

Keith: Yeah. I can't do it. You've got to. You got to close your nose in a way that I can't do.

Sylvi: Yeah. [giggles]

Austin: God, the stuff that he finally—He digs into, the sort of like, I can't keep doing it. This black poison cloud.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know, is just, so real.

Keith: It's real in a way that Tony hasn't been, even in the therapy session a lot of the time. Like, this is a breaking point for him. The cumulative stress of dealing with his mother gives us something real from him in a way that he can't be at home, he can't be at work. He rarely is even at his most vulnerable in the therapy sessions. He just sort of, you know, the dam just kind of breaks on it.

Austin: Yeah. It's interesting because later, Melfi basically says, like, it's okay to be sad, but it sounds like part of the thing that you're dealing with is that you're kind of bottling up anger, too. There's this stuff that's boiling over. And she didn't see this scene, but it's very clear that he's angry about his mother. Which then, of course, cashes out in the final shots of the episode where he kind of displaces the anger towards his mother,

towards this person, Georgie, who we've already described as having traits like his mother, right?

Sylvi: I mean, specifically, he says, you're just like my mother. That's the first thing he says to Georgie in this episode. It's not subtle about it.

Austin: Nope.

Keith: That scene with Melfi happens to be the last button that I have. Do we want to save it or—Because we just played one or?

Austin: There's only, what, two more scenes between here and there within this A plot. Right. They take her to the retirement, Greengrove. They meet—I love the Italian, like, retirement home director who's like, trying to connect to her.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: With Italian.

Sylvi: Oh, my God.

Art: It's so—Three of them. Just the blank look. It's—

Sylvi: What's that mean?

Keith: And when she explains what it means, they're—

Dre: Tony did a semester and a half of college, okay.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: He only had time to understand Freud and the concept of therapy. They don't—They look resentful about the Italian, if anything.

Austin: Is it because they don't know what it means? Is it because—

Keith: Yeah, because she doesn't like her trying to reach out. Yeah. It seems like she assumed that they would know Italian because of how they are.

Dre: Because of how fucking Italian they are.

Sylvi: They are.

Keith: Yeah. And they don't—And then they're just like—She doesn't explain. And they're like, well, what does it mean? And she explains, and then they just, like, keep staring. Staring at her.

Austin: Yeah. What is the saying again?

Keith: What's the translation given time? Mulberries and silk mulberries and whatever make silk.

Dre: Mulberry leaf turns to silk.

Austin: Yeah, right. Time and patience turns mulberry leaves into silk. Yeah, something like that. Yeah, that's—Yeah, they don't.

Art: Very astute.

Austin: Livia does not not love it.

Keith: No, no. She's silent during the whole thing. And she's supposed to sign it.

Sylvi: What? Livia doesn't love something?

Keith: She's supposed to sign this thing. And she eventually just, like goes like, yeah, Tony, you sign it.

Austin: I don't even know if she does. She just kind of—He just does it. Right?

Keith: Oh, I thought. She gives him a look like, go ahead, you can sign it.

Dre: No, no, the, the, the nursing home lady—I'm sorry, the retirement community woman gives him—Because, like, when she won't sign it, Tony looks at the retirement home woman and she's like, yeah, yeah, you just sign for her.

Keith: Yeah. She gives like a little finger, like it's okay. Because he—I mean, presumably he went and got power of attorney. How—

Austin: Well, we don't know that he did. He's just Tony Soprano.

Dre: Yeah.

Art: I don't even think it's a Tony Soprano thing. I think that just might just happen.

Austin: Yeah, right. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: He threatened to do that. And then the next thing we know, she's here. So. But, you know, that's the—

Art: Well, he threatened to do that and then the accident happened, right?

Keith: No, no, no. He threatened after the accident because that's when she'd already fired—She had already insulted the nurse to quitting. Then the accident happened. Then the doctor said that she can't live alone. And so he goes, you gotta go to the retirement community.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Dre: Yeah, 'cause he's having that conversation with her while she's convalescing on her couch.

Art: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Okay.

Austin: With her broken hand. Yeah, her wrist or whatever. But yeah. Then the next thing here with this plot is he's in the house alone. Her house alone. With all the photos.

Keith: Yeah. Looking at himself being held by her as a baby. Or looking at pictures of her smiling in a wicker chair that my grandparents absolutely have an identical set of

chairs. Or did 25 years ago. Weirdly, because the next scene is about how he's not just sad, he's angry, but he is sad here. He's like, feeling the results of what he did, which was what he thinks is the best for her is to go to the retirement community. But also now, he's like, fuck, now this house is empty.

Austin: Yeah. I love that shot of her in the wicker chair with the cigarette. That is so a picture of a person.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Like, everything about her is in that photo. She's smiling, but there's, like, there's still just a little bit of, like, mean playfulness in the smile. It's just such a perfect—They found a really good one.

Keith: Really good one.

Austin: —Younger of the actress, presumably. Yeah. That fits so nicely.

Keith: Yeah. All of the photographs are really great. I love. I mean, as soon as I saw that chair, I was like, she's my grandma. This is my grandma.

Austin: Oh yeah. You know these people, Keith, for sure.

Keith: Yeah. And, like, I really like that this scene is part of it where he doesn't just go, go like, okay, I did it, all done. He gets to kind of stew in this. And then he has the only panic attack that he has in this episode where he doesn't faint. Unlike all of the previous panic attacks where he blacks out. He just sort of gets short of breath and he sits down on the coffee table and just sits there. And then it cuts back to Melfi's office, who is like, hey, look on the bright side, you didn't black out in the middle of driving a car and crash and die.

Sylvi: What's she say? Sad is good, unconscious is bad, or something?

Austin: Yeah, I know.

Sylvi: Like, yeah, girl, I'm with you.

Keith: I have this, but I don't know. I don't remember how much is included in that. That might be in there. Let's see.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Dr. Melfi: You've done the best for her.

Tony: She won't speak to me.

Dr. Melfi: That is sad. But whose choice is that?

Tony: Well, somehow that doesn't make it any better.

Dr. Melfi: Can you admit to yourself that, yes, you're sad, but you're very angry and full of rage?

Tony: I'm sad.

Dr. Melfi: It's hard to admit that you might have feelings of hatred towards your own mother, isn't it?

Tony: You're out of your tree.

Dr. Melfi: Listen to me carefully. Of course you love her. But what I'm trying to say is own the anger instead of displacing it. Otherwise, it defines your life.

[**Tony:** You know—] It needs to be acknowledged.

Tony: It's a good thing. Time is up. I don't want to talk to you anymore. Hate your mother.

[audio of **Tony** leaving]

[audio stops]

Keith: I'm sad. [**Austin:** I'm only sad!] I'm only sad. That's the only thing I am!

Austin: That there's a spit earlier in one of the conversations that we didn't mention, but she says something like, it's interesting that that's what you would take from what I just said.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And it's another great example of it here where he's like, hate your mother. Like, that's not what she said, but it's what he felt.

Keith: Yeah. The, the, the mother stuff is so good. It's such a good part of the show. He's not just depressed about, you know, that being a mobster isn't as cool as it was 20 years ago. He's not just depressed about that he's got a weird relationship with his wife right now. He's not just depressed about that his mom is mean to him and has always been like that. It's all of these things and they are all kind of feeding into each other. And he's just like, he's had enough in a way that he didn't know that a guy like him could have enough.

Austin: Yeah. Also, he's the only one who's sad about the ducks.

Keith: He's the on—They didn't even—No one even cared about the ducks but him.

Austin: No one else cares. He once again tries to connect to Meadow—

Dre: Everyone makes fun of him for caring.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Like, not only that. Meadow says, like, remember how pissed you were when they got in the pool filter? It's like poking holes in his own, like, memory of enjoying the, the ducks.

Dre: I will say, in everyone else's defense, it doesn't seem like Tony is very often trying to connect with people about what they're interested in either.

Austin: Oh, not at all. No, not at all. But I do think

Keith: He was at his daughter's volleyball game.

Sylvi: Sure, sure, sure. He was also planning an arson during—

Austin: To help his friend.

Keith: To help his friend. His non mob related friend.

Austin: Yeah, I. I think that there is something here that's a real recurring thing across every single character in this show, is, does anyone else care about the shit I care about or am I the one, you know? Carmella and the priest, you know, her catholic advisor. Her Catholic advisor or whatever. You know, Meadow wants to go skiing. The parents don't understand that. This will—Christopher loves film, you know?

Dre: Christopher wants to get fucking made. And seemingly Tony doesn't care about it.

Austin: And Christopher wants to meet Marty Scorsese.

Keith: And almost did. And almost, almost did. Is the—Are the books really closed? Like, if Christopher actually did something that everybody really respected, would they do it, or is that just—?

Dre: Christopher believes him. I mean, Christopher very pointedly says Tony's not lying about that.

Art: Yeah, it's hard to say.

Austin: Do we want to talk through the Christopher stuff next or do we want to quickly hit cars or missing car?

Sylvi: I think maybe we do the car missing...

Art: Yeah, do the cars and end with Christopher. There's a little more meat there. We don't want to—

Dre: Are we wrapping up Olivia's storyline with the final scene, or are we doing that?

Austin: I guess. Yeah, we should wrap with the final scene, which we kind of just—

Dre: Just because that—The comedic timing of the women who work at the strip club are incredible in this episode. Oh, it's so good.

Sylvi: Unsung heroes.

Art: And it's weird that, like, they're really funny. There's nothing sexy about any of the dancing in the set. It's just like it's always three women. There's no one in the club.

Dre: No.

Art: The music except at the very end is very. And they're sort of like, standing there.

Keith: Just kind of hanging out on the stage as if they were about to do a show.

Art: I guess there's no one there. Maybe that's what you do. You stand there and if someone comes in, you start doing it.

Keith: Yeah, there's some guys there.

Austin: I think that they're dancing at the front of that scene. But after he bashes Georgie in the head with the phone, they were—

Keith: It was very minimal dancing. It was like, not a performance. It was more like, we're up here, the song's on. You know, there was no featured performer, but they were.

Austin: There was no featured performer but they were—they were idol animation dancing!

Sylvi: Oh, yeah. This is. This is where they got all the dance animations from the Mass Effect series.

Austin: Yeah. What they're doing up there.

Keith: Yeah, I need a. I need a Twi'lek to teach these girls how to dance so that they can get off Taris.

Sylvi: I don't wanna do this.

Austin: Yeah...

Keith: The—Sorry, we said what happened, but did we talk about it?

Sylvi: We didn't really talk about it. Georgie is—

Keith: Even after success earlier with the phone, he's still having trouble.

Sylvi: He is.

Dre: Well, he's having to learn something different now. Now it's somebody else's phone that's giving him trouble.

Keith: Right, he doesn't know the difference between answering machine and operator.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: He's like one of the, like robocall, like, press zero for help, press one for this. He does not know how to do it.

Art: And again, I want to just be—Just to be fair, this was a newer technology in 1999.

Keith: Yes, it does say what to do. [**Austin:** It does say what to do.] And it's one of the main things.

Art: I'm not saying I was struggling with it, but it was newer.

Dre: Sure.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: Yes, one important thing here. This is not an important phone call that Tony's waiting on. No, he is not involved in this seemingly at all.

Keith: He's just there not being mad about his mom.

Austin: That's right. He's not mad about his mom at all.

Keith: He's not mad about her at all. This is just about Georgie struggling with the phone.

Austin: No displacement is happening.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Don't tell his therapist. Don't put it in the newspaper. He's not mad.

Keith: Don't tell his therapist that he hit Georgie because his mom was mad. He hit Georgie because of Georgie. Tony just takes the phone out of his hand and starts beating the shit out of him with it. And the girl sort of awkwardly watch it happen and go like, I guess that's what happens when you work at Bada Bing. Every once in a while someone gets the shit beat out of them in there.

Dre: And then just morosely start bouncing again. [**Keith:** Yeah.] That part was just so fucking funny to me, was the pause and then the like, well, I guess we just gotta start doing this again, huh?

Austin: Yeah, I guess we just gotta go back to work.

Dre: Back to work!

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: Let's talk about the coffee and the car.

Sylvi: Yeah, so this is sort of set up right after the theme song, I believe, where it's another breakfast scene where AJ is talking about how his science teacher, Mr—Biology Teacher? There's something—I think it's a little more specific than just science teacher. But his teacher, Mr. Miller's, Saturn got hijacked right out of the school parking lot. And Carmella is like, oh, Tony, you should ask Big Pussy because he runs

the auto shop if he can help find it. And Tony is not into the idea until he finds out that AJ is only getting a D minus in the class. And he's like, yeah, okay. Which, you know, once again, I think really goes—Ties into the talk Carmella and Meadow had with the like, you can't just break the rules that don't appeal to you. You know?

Meadows—Meadows got—Meadow's got some—Got a lot more of her dad in there though, than her mom, necessarily.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And yeah, after a little bit, Tony does let—I think it's in the same scene where we get Georgie not knowing how to use the phone the first time, where Pussy comes up and is like, hey, I'm looking for the—He mentions that he's looking for the Saturn and that's sort of where we get this plotline going of him and Paulie Walnuts finally getting a bit more screen time in this episode.

Keith: I understand the man is a fan favorite.

Sylvi: The man is—I mean, listen, can you blame us? I feel like he acquits himself pretty entertainingly in this episode. But they find out that it is, like I said, barista. He was wearing one of those uniforms from Buttfucks or whatever, which I do just love saying, I'm sorry for being a 12 year old. And they start trying to track down this guy and you know, there's the whole—There's one of the—They go to one of the locations. Pussy makes up this whole thing about like this guy dropped his money clip and I'm trying to give it back to him, which is crazy.

Austin: The idea that the guy who's working as a barista has a money clip filled with like a thousand dollars in hundreds.

Keith: He has so much money.

Dre: Good tips. Good tips.

Austin: I guess!

Keith: Gems in the clip too. It is like an ornate money clip.

Austin: It's Big Pussy's money clip.

Keith: Yeah, it's his money clip. [**Art:** Definitely Pussy's money clip.] Who would carry a money clip. Showing you the money clip that guy would have being like, this is some other guys. We're definitely trying to give it back to him.

Austin: Yeah, we got no problem trying to help him out. Actually, real quick, I just want to note a couple things real quick from that first scene when AJ's telling about the missing car. A Saturn is a car—It's a car brand that doesn't exist anymore to any of our young people.

Keith: I forgot that Saturn doesn't exist.

Sylvi: They don't exist?

Austin: Saturn hasn't existed since 2010. There has not been a new Saturn made in 16 years.

Keith: Wow.

Austin: So it's very likely that people are listening who have never seen a new Saturn ever.

Keith: That's—

Austin: There are used ones, but less and less. They weren't doing great by the end there either.

Keith: My dad drove a Saturn for like 12 years, right?

Austin: Yes.

Keith: So it didn't even occur to me that Saturns were gone.

Austin: Right. Two, we get some real good New Jersey conservative upper middle class here where Tony says that Mr. Miller, the science teacher, could maybe earn enough to make a car by working over his summer break. Classic anti teacher position

is yeah, well, they don't want to work over the summer. So they're real. You know, they're real lazy or whatever. That's all. I wanted to, really—I know this guy. I grew up around this guy.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Austin: A lot of these guys.

Keith: There's a lot of these guys. It's hard to not know this guy.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And then, yeah, we get to the thing that you're talking about. Paulie. Here it is. Paulie upset.

Sylvi: This is Paulie Walnut—This is the thesis of Paulie Walnuts really, when you get down to it.

Keith: You can tell that they talk about this all the time, because they—

Austin: The two of them.

Keith: The two of them. Because they have all the same words for everything. Like, they're referencing things that they talk about to each other in the conversation.

Austin: I love that. Paulie frames this as, you know, he's like, fuckin' Italian people. How did we miss out on, on this? You know, it's not—He's like—He's not even like these people. He's like, how didn't we get in on this from the ground floor?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: We invented this shit.

Dre: We obviously have the best shit, and it's no wonder other people would want to steal it from us.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: So can't blame 'em. But we're real fucking stupid for not.

Austin: Also, he's like, white people have bad food, which I love. We gave them good food.

Art: They ate garbage before we gave them the gift of our cuisine.

Austin: Olive oil. Yeah. You know, all of it. Yeah. Oh, it's good.

Art: It's so good. Like, the aggrieved white man as Paulie Walnuts is so fucking funny.

Keith: The way that he stares forlornly at the wall of coffee equipment.

Austin: Even before that, did you notice, while Big Pussy is doing the money clip thing, Paulie sees the menu, and his eyes just get locked to the menu.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And he's looking over all of it, nodding to himself like, yeah, you motherfuckers. You know? It's great.

Keith: What's crazy, I mean, it's really funny, I think, to get upset about, like, the—You know, I've never heard of peaberry, but it's like—

Sylvi: It's New Zealand peaberry.

Keith: Yeah, New Zealand peaberry. But it's like it's white people that put coffee all over the place. That was you. [**Austin:** He doesn't know that!] He doesn't know that. Well, that's why it's funny, because he doesn't know.

Austin: Also, he's not white people. He's Italian American. Okay.

Dre: Big difference.

Keith: Big difference.

Sylvi: Genuinely, for this show, crucial.

Keith: You can tell from his attitude how big of a difference there is.

Austin: Is there a white person in the show yet or is it just Italian Americans? Is Melfi—No, Melfi's Italian.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: AJ's teacher.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Mr. Miller.

Keith: Yeah, right.

Austin: Yeah, 100% Mr. Miller. That's a white guy. For the show, right?

Keith: For the show.

Austin: Nils. Melfi's guy.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Uh-huh. I think the show is very interested in Italian as a ethnic group, you might say, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Art: Yeah the, the casting, they talked about how important it was that the actors all actually be Italian.

Austin: Interesting.

Art: They made exceptions for the kids.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Art: For A.J. and Meadow, neither of them are Italian, but it's hard to—It's hard to cast children.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. What's the next Paulie... And it's just them back at the thing getting—

Art: They do like two of these—Two or three stores, right?

Keith: Yeah, multiple different of the chain because they're like, there's a thousand of these things around and they finally find the one where he is, and that's when they cut back to it.

Art: And that's where Paulie steals the coffee maker.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: The Moka Pot, yeah. The gigantic Moka Pot.

Sylvi: So funny, the way he just glares at everything. I love it. Great face for looking upset. A lot of good faces for looking upset. But Tony Sirico in particular really, really nails it.

Keith: For some reason, I was, like, looking at my screen caps and I don't have him looking at the Moka Pots, but I gotta go back and get him stuffing the gigantic one into his shirt. It's so funny.

Austin: I hadn't realized it, but he literally does take the bigger of two. Possible. Yeah, There's a smaller one there.

Keith: Yeah. The smaller one, by the way, is already too big. Get a smaller one of these if you're gonna get one of these. But the bigger one is massive.

Austin: God, it's funny.

Art: Yeah, it feels a lot like they did a take with the smaller one and they're like, it's funnier if you do the big one.

Keith: It's way funnier than how big it is. Yeah, it's really funny. The, the next thing is they find the guys. Immediately guns out.

Austin: Guns out, guns from a paper bag, like a paper delivery bag with handles. Produce the two guns. One of them has a silencer on them. Maybe both of them do.

Keith: They both do. Yeah. One of them is a black gun with a silver silencer. The other one is a silver gun with a silver silencer. They look cool.

Sylvi: I love the way Paulie gets them to open the door. [**Art:** Me too!] Knocks, he just mumbles some shit. It starts with him being like—It sounds like he's starting an actual sentence and then it's just gibberish. It's really good. It's so good. It might be worth mentioning that Tony Sirico was like an actual gangster.

Keith: Oh, really?

Sylvi: I don't know how well known that is [**Dre:** I believe it.] For people who aren't like into the show, but it is definitely one of those things that's like, like peak trivia for this is like, oh, yeah, Tony Sirico's done time.

Dre: Oh, wow. He uh, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: No, like genuinely.

Keith: That's good—I would not have guessed, because that's a weird thing to guess.

Art: Before they did this—Before they did this show, he and Michael Imperioli had done things together and Michael Imperioli like, thought he was kind of a jerk and a bully.

Sylvi: Oh, my God.

Austin: That's funny.

Art: They went to a—They went to a premiere of a movie they were both in. And he greets his girlfriend at the time being like, what are you doing with him? He's never—He never works.

Sylvi: They're Paulie and Chris immediately, is what you're saying/

Art: Before the show.

Dre: Tony Sirico's Early Life section on Wikipedia is, is wild.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Is wild.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: He was arrested 28 times.

Keith: Wow.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Was it for smuggling cigarettes?

Dre: Disorderly conduct, assault and robbery.

Sylvi: And then he took up acting.

Dre: Yeah. Because of—Because it says an acting troupe came and performed where he was imprisoned.

Austin: When he was at Sing Sing. Yeah.

Sylvi: It's crazy that he's been in Sing Sing. That's something that doesn't feel real anymore.

Austin: Yeah. I think it's still open up there.

Sylvi: It is, it is. I looked into it.

Austin: No one calls it Sing Sing so much anymore, these days. But yeah, they go into the apartment with these guys.

Sylvi: They think they're detectives at first. That's true.

Austin: They do think that. That's right.

Sylvi: They think they're—It's like we're not saying anything until we have a lawyer. And then Pussy has the line of, oh, here I got Johnny Cochran right here speaking of the microphone while he's shoving the barrel of his gun into one of them—their mouths.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Thinking that those two are cops is real dumb, though.

Sylvi: It's very funny.

Art: The cops with the silencer guns.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: They find the car already chopped. The guys are trying to like, that's not the car. But it has the plates on it. It is. And they send them off to get a new Saturn. The same Saturn and the plates. And we're just gonna put the old plates on the new car, which is galaxy brain [**Austin:** And they repaint it.] Criminal thinking. Yeah, they—Yeah—Ideally, they probably would have gotten the same color, but they had to repaint it, which you learn, because the paint isn't even dry when they give it back to the teacher. They give it back. He opens—**Austin:** Is it paint that wasn't dry or was it blood on the car?

Austin: That's fine.

Keith: Oh, that is. That's funny.

Austin: I think it's just. Yeah, yeah, it's very funny.

Keith: Cause they open the trunk—

Austin: The interior color is wrong, right?

Dre: Yeah, the interior color.

Keith: They open the trunk, and he's got the paint on his hands, and one of the other teachers is like, it's a different color inside.

Austin: Yeah.

Austin: And the keys are different.

Art: And the keys are different.

Sylvi: It's a cascade of punchlines. It's great.

Keith: And then Anthony Junior's like, my dad's a hero.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Well, even before that, the very first thing he says is like. He's like, well, yeah, Big Pussy got it back.

Sylvi: My Uncle Pussy. The teacher goes Uncle Pussy?

Austin: My Uncle Pussy helped my dad locate it. Yeah. He's in the car business.

Keith: He's in the car business.

Austin: Well, I don't know what to say to your dad, but, I mean, thanks.

Keith: That's so, so funny.

Austin: AJ says—somebody says it's nice and clean, too, which is also very funny.

Keith: IOh, I've read—He opens the trunk. 'Cause he's already like, I don't suppose my papers are still gonna be in the trunk. Which of course they're not. And that's why he gets paint on his hand, because he goes in the trunk. It's so funny. It's really funny.

Austin: I also want to say, to their credit, Pussy and Paulie don't use a single homophobic slur while dealing with the guys. [**Sylvi:** They're woke.] They're woke! They instead go for a classic racist name switch situation. The guy's name, his last name is Arnaz. So he calls him Desi. Like, Desi Arnaz. That's another classic way of being lowkey racist.

Sylvi: And then they call his boyfriend Lucy.

Art: Which is—

Keith: That's homophobic.

Sylvi: It's not a slur.

Art: It's not slur homophobic. But it's not not homophobic.

Austin: No, but, you know, I guess. What were they gonna call—You know what I mean? Like Desi and Lucy. That's—You know?

Keith: It's a little funny, though.

Austin: It's a little funny. It's homophobic.

Keith: It is.

Sylvi: A lot of—A lot of this show is them doing something very bad and also going, yeah, but it's a little funny.

Austin: But li's a little funny.

Art: What's the name of the other guy—What's the name of the other guy in I Love Lucy? That's—That would have been—

Austin: Fred, I think. Fred the neighbor. Yeah, but they're neighbors. Yeah, Fred and Ethel. But these two are lovers, like Lucy and Desi.

Keith: Oh.

Art: Which—What's—What's less homophobic?

Austin: That's what I'm trying to say.

Dre: True. True. He was just saying that their love is just as equal.

Art: Right.

Austin: That's what Big Pussy was saying.

Art: You can't turn them into neighbors.

Keith: And as far as I know, there's never gonna be an opportunity to clarify how they feel about gay people.

Austin: That's right. That's gonna be the only time.

Sylvi: Yeah. This is the only time it ever comes up.

Art: Mm.

Dre: When I was 42 and I robbed a gay guy, I called his boyfriend a girl, and I felt kind of bad about it.

Sylvi: [sing-song] She steals my car. She steals my car. [normal] Here we go. Here we go. Got the remix.

Austin: Oh, my God. All right, well, that's that plot line.

Sylvi: That's that plot line.

Keith: Yeah. Now let's go back to the very beginning and hear about—

Art: The C plot, featuring woke homophobia.

Austin: Christopher and Brendan.

Sylvi: Whoa.

Keith: By the way, it's 2026. Woke homophobia is back.

Austin: Oh, big time.

Sylvi: Yeah, I'm right here.

Austin: Brendan.

Keith: Brendan.

Austin: Brendan Filoni.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: No, wait a second.

Austin: Wow.

Art: Keep that guy away from Star Wars.

Austin: Stay away. Don't touch her.

Sylvi: Get a real job!

Austin: That's right. So they've hit. At this point, we already talked about them hitting the first truck. Right? And unloading the—We talked earlier in the episode—Way earlier in the episode about unloading the truck or unloading the DVD players and doing the whole is the sound better? Blah, blah, blah stuff.

Sylvi: Yeah. And then I think the stuff we didn't really talk about is the sit down between Tony and Junior with Jackie, which I do think we should hit on. That's a pretty big part of this plot line as well as just like, really important to the state of the family in Jersey.

Keith: So this is—

Art: We definitely need to talk about Jackie.

Keith: This is the part where they kind of walk back what Tony's role is, right? This is the guy who's actually the head because his dad is in the hospital or something. Is that?

Sylvi: No, the guy who they talk about is the actual boss of the family who's in prison.

Keith: Oh, he's in prison.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Old man DiMeo, who's a friend—Who's a guest of the government.

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: Oh, I missed—Okay.

Art: I don't know how they say his first name, but

Sylvi: But yeah, I just, being able to say DiMeo crime family is a lot easier. Yeah, but. Yeah, so what we get is this outside—This is Satriale's now. It is no longer the actual butcher that they used in the pilot. It's this—the one that we're gonna come to know and love throughout the rest of the series.

Keith: Less of a filter on the image here, but it's still kind of orange. When they're drinking espresso, it's orange.

Sylvi: That's—

Austin: Oh, right. Well, so I've actually here—I meant to say this earlier. Something interesting about that is, that is Tony telling Melfi about it. And so we're kind of. We're not in a dream state, but we are in Tony narration mode. And I suspect that maybe that filter is actually about. It's too cloudy of a day or something about trying to give the thing a certain vibe. Maybe it's a summer day, I'm not 100% sure. But what I really like about it is that it feels a little surreal and a little dreamlike.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: As Tony is doing the cutaway narration.

Keith: So when he's chasing the degenerate fucking gambler down in the Lex—the \$60,000 Lexus that is like complete—Unencumbered by weird color filters.

Austin: Though he isn't really telling her all of that.

Keith: That's true. He just says they had coffee.

Art: He says they had coffee.

Austin: Yeah, they get coffee. Exactly.

Art: Oh, yeah. He's also not telling her about the whole content of the Mafia sit down.

Austin: True. Exactly. Yes. That's also true. But I do think that, like, that's the thing to continue looking at is like, how are—How are his—We don't—Not everything he tells her gets a cutaway. Like, for instance, we didn't cut back to him as a child on the, on the boardwalk down by the shore as his father falls over. I think it's a—I think it's a strength of the show that we don't just get constant cutaways. You know, it's good to let Tony—To let James Gandolfini narrate that stuff. He's so good at it, I think there's powerful ambiguity in us needing to imagine it, but I think that there is—When we do the cutaways to things he's describing, and especially as the show eventually gets to him describing dreams or being in dreams or dreamlike stuff is happening, the way that that stuff is shot will get increasingly aestheticized in important ways, I think. And I think that, like, in a very funny way, whether it was intentional or not, or whether it was intentional around the fact that this was not narration. I think it's a funny early example of, as Tony talks about a thing he's remembering, sometimes you see it a little differently than the reality of it all, you know.

Keith: So the—What's the crime family called?

Sylvi: DiMeo crime family.

Keith: Old man DiMeo. He's in prison.

Sylvi: He's in prison, yes.

Keith: Who's this guy?

Sylvi: This is Jackie Aprile. He is the acting boss played by Michael Rispoli. Another thing worth mentioning—I mean, Art, you gestured at this during the first episode. This is actually another guy who was one of the final names on the list of who would play Tony Soprano. And so instead he gets cast as the acting boss and sort of like, another one of Tony's childhood friends, but this time who's actually involved in crime, unlike Artie, to the point where he is higher ranked than Tony, right?

Keith: Yeah. Do we get any hints that I didn't pick up on on why this dynamic exists where he is acting boss but is not really acting as acting boss?

Sylvi: He has cancer.

Art: He's sick. Yeah, he's—

Keith: Oh, okay, okay. That's why he was talking about his stomach.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvi: And that's why Brendan calls him, like, makes a chemo joke.

Keith: Okay.

Art: That's when Tony throws him out of the room and...

Keith: Got it. I conflated that stuff with the old man stuff. One's in prison, one has cancer. This is Tony's friend that has cancer that he talks about. [**Art:** Yeah.] Okay. I now understand what happened in the show.

[muffled laughter]

Sylvi: So, yeah, what I really—This scene is pretty. We kind of talked about what the end result of this scene is, which is the \$15,000 restitution to be made for Junior from Christopher and Brendan. I think what I really like about this scene in particular is how it sort of ends with like—Tony and Junior act kind of like amicably during it. And then the second Tony walks away, Junior's bitching about him.

Art: Well, Junior's bitching about him hiring a black person to take care of his mother. And then Tony goes across the street and insults Junior's driver to his face repeatedly.

Sylvi: Yeah. This is Mikey, who has fuckfaceitis, which is very serious. I laugh at fuckfaceitis every time. Again, I'm a real 12 year old sometimes with this show.

Art: It's funny.

Sylvi: It's really funny. Especially 'cause he's got such a goofy smile on his face before he says it.

Keith: Yeah. And the driver is like all pained smiles, like, gotta be extremely friendly to Tony Soprano no matter what he says to me.

Sylvi: Yeah. And this is a really good demonstration of how Tony uses that against people. We get a little bit of it with like, Chris too, where he's like, he will just say some shit, but know that they can't do anything about it, as long as he's like, ah, I'm kidding, nobody. Nobody can really—Nobody's allowed to take offense, even though that's what's intended.

Art: Well, Tony's fake niceness is really over the top of this one, right? He's like, he's shaking his hand like, oh, I'm just kidding. But it's like every time he says he's just kidding, you know even more resolutely that he is not kidding. And he fucking hates this guy.

Sylvi: It's um...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: And also he just came out of a very frustrating situation with Uncle Junior, who he also can't do anything about. So he goes right from not really having any power over his uncle to being like, I'm gonna—I gotta fuck—It's like a pressure release valve, I'm gonna fuck with Mikey...

Austin: This is the Georgie thing again.

Keith: Palmice. What's his name?

Sylvi: Mikey Palmice. And he's like displacing it. I mean, it's interesting too, 'cause it also is kind of what Junior's doing to Christopher.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I mean, like, Junior [crosstalk] has some justification for it.

Keith: [crosstalk] Man is driven in total by his securities.

Sylvi: Yeah. Like there's this sort of—There's a real cult war going on with these guys. And the subordinates are the ones who have with the brunt of the actual conflict between the two—Between Junior and Tony.

Austin: Yeah. I want to shout out two other things really quick, just visually here, which is we get this really great establishing shot of them in front of the store. This is Satriale's, the butcher shop. The pork store, I believe is what it actually says.

Keith: Pork store, meat market.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Italian pork and Angus beef.

Austin: Yeah. It's this great kind of mid-wide shot of them at the little table right out front in their—I think two of them are in folding chairs and one of them, Tony, is in a white kind of outdoor patio chair just out front. And I just think that shot is an all-timer in terms of just setting them against the city street or the street of the town, just like—I don't

know, they look so small there in a way. But then the next shot, the follow up shot to that is a mid shot of all three them around this tiny table. But it's looking up at them from the ground. And I think normally that sort of looking up is aggrandizing. You get the big figure kind of standing over the camera. But because they're sitting, there's still a lot of headroom above them. And it doesn't make them look bigger, which I think is really—it's still under looking up. So it has a little bit of that shot. They dominate the frame, but there's still so much above them and around them. You get the Italian flag on the adjoining building, and you get the building being bigger than them, and that's what takes up the frame there, these buildings that they're in the shadow of, which I think is just great visual storytelling.

Keith: Both of these episodes so far have really actively tried to put you off kilter with angles and ultra wide focal lengths, with Tony in the shot when he's uncomfortable. It happens all the time with Melfi, it happens sometimes with his mother. It happens when he's having a panic attack. And this is another instance of the angle's not crazy, but it's a little bit exaggerated, it is—To be this close to them and to get this wide of a shot, it's gotta be a super wide angle or a focal length. And this is another example of something that has happened since pretty much the beginning of the first episode. When he first shows up in Melfi's office, he's looking at—She has a statue in her—She has a topless statue in her waiting room that he's looking at uncomfortably. And that is like, the camera's too close to his face. The focal length is super wide. He's looking uncomfortable. It's just barely not wide enough to get a ton of distortion, but it's as wide as you ever see on TV, as far as I know. I don't often see camera angles that wide.

Austin: I also want to shout out another New York-y thing which is behind Tony at Satriale's is one of the signs that's in the road is a PATH train—Like, PATH train this way type sign. The PATH train is a train that goes from Jersey into New York. That's like a commute—A daily commuter train. It runs all day. It does not run all night as I—Maybe it does now. But when I first moved here, I learned, in fact, that it does not always run all night. Or maybe it actually does. Maybe it did get me home that time. I don't quite remember. Anyway. But it seems to be a sign for people not just driving, but walking. So it's close enough. Satriale's is close enough to the city that you can take a PATH train in.

There's not like a million of these trains that go through all of Jersey or something. It's a pretty finite line that runs out—The one that goes out that far would go out to Harrison and then Newark, and so it must be in that very, very specific vicinity. They're really close. They're not super far from the city. They're not an hour drive away. You know what I mean? They're close enough for the commuter, the daily commuter train. Not even the big New Jersey transit daily train, but the all day—Like the subway. The subway that goes from Manhattan into New York or into New Jersey runs all the way out there. So, yeah.

Sylvi: Can I—I'm so glad we have like a New Jersey, a New Jersey correspondent to help. Thank you so much.

Austin: Any time you got questions, yeah. Yeah. You hit me up. You let me know.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And I didn't know that—My neighborhood growing up, I grew up in an Italian neighborhood in the Northeast. I didn't know that pork stores weren't just like—that everyone just didn't have a pork store.

Austin: Nope.

Sylvi: Nah, man.

Keith: Yeah, there would be a shop that sold pork, but it would be called a butcher or a deli.

Art: No, it's not quite either of those things is the thing.

Dre: Yeah, no. Yeah.

Art: Yeah. Anyway, it's, it's a—

Keith: What makes a pork store different?

Dre: It's got gabagool.

Art: A pork store is like a butcher store and a bo—A butcher and a bodega had a baby.

Keith: Oh, I do have one of those. There's a Brazilian grocery store down the street for me, that is exactly.

Art: Yeah, that sounds real plausible.

Keith: Yeah, they. They sell great. You can get picanha there. You can get the best bacon I've ever had there.

Austin: That sounds great.

Keith: And they have a little restaurant in there.

Art: If you're. If you're ever in the New York's West Village. Faicco's was my pork store. It's a—They make a good sandwich.

Austin: Well, speaking of the pork store, then we get the, we need to pay restitution scene, which we kind of already talked about. I just want to again, shout out Tony loves movies. He watched The Bank Dick, the W.C. Fields comedy from the 30s.

Sylvi: He loves his movies so much. His little shitty smile when he quotes it back at them.

Keith: I've never even heard of The Bank Dick, actually.

Sylvi: It's like a comedy, right?

Austin: It is a comedy.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: W.C. Fields, a comedian.

Austin: W. C. Fields is a comedian, the character is like a drunk who's like a bank security guy.

Keith: My dad was always quoting WC Fields. I don't know—I don't know why.

Sylvi: Why? Was your dad in the mob?

Keith: No.

Sylvi: Oh, okay.

Keith: Wink.

Sylvi: Oh, he's a friend of—

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Was he in the Mafia community?

Keith: Yeah, yeah, Yeah. I can't say.

Art: Is your dad a part of the community?

Austin: Part of the community? But yeah. So he—Was there any other Jackie Aprile stuff that's important before we move past that scene? I guess we kind of blew past and talked about everything else.

Art: As uh, as—The oral history book, Jackie talks—The guy who plays Jackie...

Michael... [**Sylvi:** Michael Rispoli.] Talks about how he thought he did, like, a really bad job in this scene. That he was actually acting too sick and, like, not strong enough on the, like, general advice that, like, if everyone talks about that you're, like, a tough guy, you should act reserved so that, that, like, people must think that you're even tougher if, if other people talk about you this way, but that he, he was a little too soft in this. But that he, he had one good take and that's what made it in. And he, he credits the editing for saving his performance in this episode. I thought that was a...

Keith: Huh.

Austin: That is interesting.

Keith: I noticed that he was understated.

Sylvi: Yeah, I like that. I liked that he was. That you could tell that he was going through the, like, chemotherapy and that he was struggling with that stuff.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Personally, like, I see where he's coming from with that idea of, like, yeah, you're the crime boss, you should try and present as tougher in your performance of it. But, you know, it's—I think it works having the guy that these guys are answering to clearly being in sort of, like active, like, disrepair or whatever, because it makes every—Like, it ties into what Tony talks about in the first episode with his narration about how things started to feel like they're falling apart. That he came in at the end of things and then like, yeah, the guy that's running this crime family right now is also actively falling apart. He is like, I don't know. I think it just—It works well with the ongoing sort of metaphor for America that they're trying to do. The sickness goes all the way to the top, you know?

Keith: What's the next piece of this thread here? Oh, yeah. In the pork store.

Austin: Which I talked about, he calls him Kemosabe. Kicks him out.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: He takes the 15 grand. He immediately takes five grand for himself. And then he does the W.C. Fields, did you warble, my little wren, again?

Sylvi: A lot of these guys love quoting movies. These guys would like—Cause we also get Silvio doing, just when they thought I was out, they pull me back in over and over again.

Austin: It's so good.

Keith: And they love it. He does it because it's a crowd pleaser.

Art: That's right.

Austin: Yeah.

Austin: He knows the material kills, why not play the hits, you know?

Sylvi: Continuing to be the funniest guy in the show so far in the episodes. Sylvio Dante, shout out.

Austin: Well, and then we get more movie stuff because now we get Christopher and Brendan and Christopher's girlfriend for the first time that we see here, Adri—

Sylvi: Adriana.

Austin: Adriana. Yeah, thank you. Here, waiting to get into the club. They cannot get in the club.

Keith: They can't get in the club.

Austin: But you know who can get in the club? Marty.

Sylvi: Marty Scorsese, baby.

Austin: That's right. Marty Scorsese is here. Martin—Mr. Scorsese, good evening. Brendan points and goes, Whoa, ho, ho.

Sylvi: [as **Brendan**] Hey! Marty Kundun! I liked it!

Austin: I liked it!

Sylvi: I liked it. So funny. I think it is so important that Chris is a big Marty Scorsese guy.

Keith: It was—At the time, it was his most recent movie.

Austin: Yeah, but no one cared, right? Kundun didn't hit the culture like that, did it?

Sylvi: No, it's not. It's like not really one people think. I mean, I haven't seen it.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: I had never heard of it.

Austin: 5.7 million in the box office. Jesus Christ, Marty.

Keith: [reading] The film was buried by Disney, which limited the release in order to minimize the damage to the company's relationship with the Chinese Communist Party, resulting in less than \$6 million in limited US—[stops reading] So it's not that the movie did bad, it's that Disney intentionally didn't promote it.

Austin: That makes sense.

Keith: Kudnu was nominated for four Academy Awards. Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, and Best Original Score.

Austin: I've heard the score. The score is great.

Keith: I've not heard the score.

Sylvi: After this, it's Bringing out the Dead, which I think also bombs, right?

Austin: Yeah, I think so. But Christopher made a point of going to see it.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: Because he has a Letterboxd account. It just doesn't—He doesn't use private.

Keith: Oh, my God.

Austin: It's just in a notebook somewhere.

Sylvi: I bet Michael Imperioli has a Letterboxd.

Austin: Oh, I bet he does. I bet he does.

Sylvi: We'll get into it as the show goes on. I love Michael Imperioli so much. That dude is like a shoegaze nerd and shit like that. And I'm like, I love that. I love that he listens to My Bloody Valentine.

Austin: Hell yeah.

Keith: I haven't seen Bringing out the Dead. Is it good?

Sylvi: I actually haven't seen it either, but I really want to because it was written by Paul Schrader.

Keith: In 2022, Nicolas Cage singled out Bringing out the Dead is one of the best movies he's ever made.

Austin: Maybe I've seen this. [**Keith:** I'm gonna watch this.] I'm reading and going, I think I've seen this. But I—It didn't leave an impression if I did see it, so.

Keith: All right, I'm gonna watch this, next, next episode. I'm gonna tell everybody what I thought about Bringing Out The Dead.

Austin: I love it. Anyway, then they're in the club and Brendan is like, hey, I got us my guy at the truck, at the truck company—Again, maybe confirming that the first thing was his also.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Says that there's a—There's an Italian suit, you know, shipment coming in. We can get that. Everyone loves Italian suits.

Keith: Everyone loves Italian suits.

Sylvi: Everybody loves Italian suits.

Austin: They're both really high. They're both—They're both doing coke here in the club.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah.

Austin: And. And they were kind of shit talking Tony. Right? This is Christopher being like, one reason we shouldn't, we shouldn't—Shouldn't do this. It's Junior's fault. Fuck Tony Soprano. Fuck Junior.

Sylvi: But it's when Brendan's like, oh, the books are closed. Chris is like, no, that's real.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Which I think is like, it's super important that Chris always has a little, like, Tony's back a little bit, even when he's, like, bitching about him. 'Cause I think it's a really clear mirror between Tony and Livia and the way that he talks about Livia in the therapy session with Melfi.

Austin: Right, well, right. And just to be clear again, we talked about being a made man. Christopher—The thing that the books are closed thing is that Christopher has been told no one gets to be made right now. And Brendan is like, that's bullshit. How could that be the case? And Christopher's like, things are chaos right now. In some cases, nobody even knows who to pay. Like, the lines of hierarchy have broken. The ladder has been broken.

Sylvi: And this gets kind of referenced in the scene where, where Brendan gets thrown out of the—Thrown onto the butcher's table. Cause he mentions that, Tony, everybody knows you're in charge ever since Jackie became the Chemo-sabe. I also would have thrown Brendan if he said that about one of my friends.

Keith: We talked about the story, how quick Christopher is to sort of switch sides there to help Tony throw him onto the table.

Sylvi: I mean, listen, he's trying to get made.

Keith: He's trying to get made. Well, it's funny that [**Sylvi:** Also, Brendan's a fucking moron.] Yeah, Brandon's a moron, because if anything, he should be more cautious than Christopher is because he is not in this organization. He's just some guy. [**Sylvi:** Yes.] And so it should be important to him that Christopher and Tony are on good terms.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: But it's not. Because he's dumb.

Art: Yeah. I'm not sure that criminal drug addicts are often at the sharpest when it comes to these things.

Keith: Maybe.

Austin: Yeah. When he goes to meet Christopher at 5am so that they can go jump this truck, and Christopher is awake and he's sitting out on the front porch and he's like, no, I'm not doing it. He decides it's more important to be in a crew.

Keith: Yeah. Maybe Tony's right.

Sylvi: He talks about like—Sorry, what was that?

Keith: Oh, just saying maybe Tony's right, what he said about middle management or whatever.

Sylvi: That's literally what I was about to say. We gotta, like—Guys like us need to, like, follow a code and stuff like that.

Austin: Yeah. Well, he's like, I've been dreaming of being in Tony Soprano's crew my whole life, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: And he, and he repeats what Tony's told him, which is like, maybe one of the reasons things are so messed up is no one's listening to middle management. People are doing their own stuff, et cetera. We got to stick together. Why even be in a crew if not that?

Keith: And you know, he's got a point.

Austin: And Brendan says, hey, coach, suck my dick. And then walks away.

Sylvi: Brutal.

Keith: Leading to one of the funniest still images from the entire thing, which is Brendan crouched in the bushes with a gun with a stupid grin on his face.

Sylvi: Hey, hey, coach, suck my dick, being said by Brendan. Is it The Sopranos or is it an edgy home movies episode?

Austin: Don't talk like that, Brendan.

Sylvi: Don't talk like that, Brendan.

Austin: Don't talk like that.

Sylvi: What would your brother say?

Austin: And they get this guy to come out the truck with his lunch.

Sylvi: Yeah, he's going along with it. He's complying. Literally, the only thing he does is, I'm just grabbing my lunch. He does it. He steps out. He doesn't want any trouble.

Brendan is clearly in the performance, clearly still kind of coked up. He's—**Dre:** Oh, yeah.] There's the anxiety that you would assume could be from just doing a crime, but we saw him do one earlier, and this definitely feels like he is still, still high while trying to do this hijacking. And because he is so sort of like, on edge, it goes really bad. A gun gets dropped, right? When one of the guys tries to drive the truck.

Keith: The guy in red tries to drive the truck. And while he's getting out of the truck, his gun falls out of his lap or waistband onto the ground, fires into the driver of the truck.

Austin: Yeah, it's worth saying—

Art: In a great like, delayed movie TV take.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Like, oh, is everybody okay? And then the guy dies. Earlier when they did this to the first truck, the two guys, they were doing a scheme of a car needs help, people or someone, looks like someone's hurt on the ground so the truck will stop. And in the, in the previous section, we don't get a close up of these guys, but the two guys who are helping them look like other members of the crime family. It looks like two other adult Italian guys, but now without those guys, presumably because those are Christopher's

guys, Brendan has brought two young black dudes in like football jerseys basically, who are not professionals, who clearly have not done this a lot. And the thing that breaks is that one of the kids doesn't know how to drive the car. And so he goes—Or the truck. He gets up to drive the truck. He doesn't know how to, how to drive, drive a big, you know, 18 Wheeler, has to get out of the truck. And that's when he drops the thing. So there's this sort of like, you know, there's an illustration of how this shit goes bad, right? Like, it is not—People are going off on their own and also bringing in people who don't know what they're doing.

Keith: Well, when you have a crime family, you know, one of the things you get is a guy who goes, now does any of you know how to drive a truck?

Austin: That's right. 100%.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I mean, this is a little on the nose, but like, this is the stuff in the first episode about America changing and about being at the end of America to some degree is like, there's no mentorship anymore.

Keith: You can't get two guys to grout your bathroom. You also can't get two guys to drive a truck to steal a bunch of Italian suits.

Dre: These damn kids these days don't even know how to drive a manual.

Austin: But, like, part of that is on this guy going off and doing this shit by himself instead of teaching them how to drive a manual. You know, in contrast to Tony driving around with Christopher and jumping the guy in the first episode, now you get your kicks in.

Keith: I'll show you how to kick him. And then you come in, you kick him like how I kicked him.

Austin: There's a great distilling happening in America, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Mentorship.

Austin: That's what I'm saying. Leadership.

Keith: What do we mean when we say leadership?

Austin: This is what we mean when we say leadership. And then we get Christopher calling Tony. Tony's like, call me. He's like, call me back on an outside number, Tony goes to a payphone to call back.

Keith: One of the things we miss is that Uncle Junior is trying to get in contact with Tony, but he's, like, busy dealing with his mother. And so he's like, I'll call him back. So he doesn't hear from Uncle Junior first because he had to decline that call. Uncle Junior got him in the meeting at the retirement community, and he's like, no, no, no, I'll call him back. And so Christopher has a chance to tell him first, which is probably better?

Austin: Yeah, it's better if you're Silvio and wanted a suit.

Keith: And wanted a suit. Yeah, you wanted one suit.

Sylvi: Hey, Tone, maybe we don't put this back. He looks so funny in the suit, too. Like the deepest V possible.

Keith: It's terrible. It's. It's really bad.

Austin: And it's where the name of the episode comes from, of course.

Sylvi: 46 long. Yeah.

Austin: 46 long.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Size, it's probably his pant size.

Sylvi: 46 long.

Austin: Maybe it's the whole suit.

Art: That's the suit. Yeah, it's the whole suit.

Keith: It's so funny to me, looking at this last scene, how many times he said, just when I'm out, they pull me back in. That he says it for one last time in the episode, and Tony's face is—It's subtle, but it's pure enjoyment still. He loves it. They love it.

Austin: He's killing it.

Keith: Well, because he put on an Al Pacino suit.

Austin: Yeah, dude! But they're going to return the trucks. They're going to drive into Comey's for the, the truck company's yard and just give it back. And you're going to tell them when it's done that you did it, you know?

Keith: Yeah. Good episode.

Art: They have to. They have to go eat shit in this, in this manner.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. I'm curious to see how—If, like, Christopher being on—Because he goes like, I swear I didn't do shit, this wasn't me. And then Brendan's like, yeah, he's right. I went off and I did it on my own. But Tony's like, I don't care. Like, you could have stopped him and you didn't. Like, you know, this was—You didn't join him, but you didn't do what you were supposed to to do. The truck still got hit. That's the problem. And I'm curious to see in the next episode if that gets followed up on if Uncle Junior wants something to happen to Christopher off of this. A different kind of punishment if Tony is going to be still on him about it or if this is just like we resolved it and it's over.

Austin: Right, yeah. Just briefly want to shout out the director of this episode who is Dan Attias, who is just like a consummate, prolific TV director who's directed everything from an episode of Miami Vice to some Buffy to Six Feet Under, which is like, **[Sylvi:** The Wire.] Yeah, the Wire, Alias, like, all over early 2000s television, Entourage, all over

all the HBO stuff, a few episodes of House, an episode of Deadwood, a ton of It's Always Sunny, a lot of Homeland. This is just like a guy who makes TV.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Has made some good TV too. Yeah. Like there's some heaters in here.

Austin: Uh-huh. There sure is.

Sylvi: Did like one of the most famous episodes of Lost ever. Not as—Like, the numbers episode like he did the episode where you find out what the numbers are with Hurley. It's a big one. That's a big one. Yeah.

Austin: And he'll do a couple more episodes of The Sopranos as well.

Sylvi: Yeah, not this season, but he will be back.

Austin: Yep.

Sylvi: We're gonna have a few recurring directors, and I think I mentioned it earlier, but Alik Sakharov stays on as DP for a lot of these early episodes. But I'll point out, when things change. Do we have anything else we want to mention with Chris and Brendan's escapades or just this episode in general that we might have missed before we, we wrap up for today?

Keith: I, I think I got everything out that I had to say about these.

Sylvi: Hell yeah, Dre?

Art: Um.

Keith: In merely five hours.

Sylvi: Cool.

Art: I don't want to, I don't want to give away too much about the recording process of this episode, but we actually recorded these two episodes on two different days. And I want you to know that it has been bothering me literally the whole time since we left, that yesterday I said the 13 times 50,000 was over a million dollars. And if anyone heard that and thought, well, that's not true, I want you to know that I know and have been thinking about it a lot.

Keith: It's almost three quarters of a million dollars.

Art: Yeah, it's almost two thirds of a million dollars.

Keith: It's—Oh, yeah. It's even more almost two thirds.

Art: Like, thanks for making it to the end of the episode so I could retract that instead of having to wait.

Keith: It'd be very funny if someone didn't have the stamina to make it through five hours and still corrected you on it. Don't do that.

Sylvi: Don't do that. Also, we're gonna try and make these not five hours next time.

Keith: I think it will—I think that we can do that. I think that we can get it. I think that we're—Let's aim for three and a half.

Austin: You won't have me going, wait a second. We can go back three scenes, so I can mention one thing about the camera.

Keith: But I think we all—It's important to mention the camera.

Austin: It is.

Sylvi: Okay, then one less person.

Keith: Yeah, one less person.

Austin: It's still just one less person.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Sylvi: Also, again, cannot state how much shit is in that pilot that was really important to talk through. Before we go. I'm going to read a couple reviews and then I'll tell us what we're watching—Tell us—I'll watch what we're watching next time. Oh, my God. I lost the ability to speak there. Yeah, pointing the—

Keith: I can hear you trying to save it

Sylvi: The Havana Syndrome gun pointed at me is amped up.

Art: The Scooby Sylvi is coming in hot on this one.

[someone does a Scooby Doo impression]

Keith: Oh, that was a pretty good Scooby.

Sylvi: I tend to do more of a Shaggy voice, man. Anyway, I got two reviews here. One of them, the username is fully gibberish, I'm not reading every character of this, but titled, Time to get back what matters most. A five star review that says, I assume that The Sopranos is about the mafia community. You tell us, dear listener, does it sound like it is? And then we have another review from Huge Burger, just titled, Yes. Five stars. Good people, good show. Hoping the Italophobia stays at a minimum with the okay sign, a heart and then the, like Italian hand emoji. Thank you so much. What we are going to be watching next week are episodes—Or I guess two weeks time for people listening are episodes three and four. Episode three, Denial, Anger, Acceptance, and episode four, Meadowlands. Look forward to it, I think.

Keith: Whoa.

Sylvi: Yeah, we'll have, uh—

Dre: That's his daughter's name, but it's also the name of the football stadium in New Jersey. Whoa.

Sylvi: Oh, I've been there.

Keith: I have not. I didn't know that. So this is a new fact for me.

Sylvi: No, you know what? I didn't go there. I went to—What is it? I don't know, is it called Red Bull Stadium?

Austin: Yeah, but that's in the same vicinity. I would say that Red—Maybe it's not—Maybe I'm wrong.

Sylvi: Sorry, it's Sports Illustrated Stadium now, which is really funny.

Austin: Whoa. That's funny. Weird.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Wild.

Sylvi: Anyway, thank you all so much for listening. Austin, thanks for guesting. Keith. Dre, I'm so glad you like this, Art, I'm so excited to see how they react to the rest of it.

Art: Yeah, it's a wild season. We got a good season coming up here.

Keith: I'm excited.

Sylvi: Yeah, me too. This has been an absolute delight. We will catch you next time. Oh, and you know what? I'll put it in again at the end of the episode. Reminder one, go listen to Friends at the Table at friendsatthetable.net, it is an incredible show that we all love to make, and we're really—I think I can safely say we're all very proud of this current season and the last few seasons we've done. I mean, maybe the whole thing, I guess, really. But you should go check it out if you haven't. And also if you want to support us on Patreon, friendsatthetable.cash, we mentioned it earlier at the top of the episode that we do have some bonuses planned for this, I think. I don't know, I'm not gonna say anything specific until we actually have a plan for it. But once you guys know, once we know, you'll know. So get in on that for just, like \$5 if you want those bonuses, but \$1 if you just want the clapcast, which is us bullshitting before and after recordings,

the stuff that hits the cutting room floor. You can also subscribe for free to get the newsletter that Janine does every week, which—

Keith: And the screenshot posts.

Sylvi: And the screenshot posts. Yeah. I was gonna mention.

Art: If you like this show, you would probably like our bullshitting show as well.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, I think so. Yeah.

Keith: I can't imagine a person alive who wouldn't like that show.

Sylvi: We also—I think this will be out after the new—The Side Story y'all just recorded, I believe. Right?

Austin: I have no idea. I think on that episode, we thought, no, we—This was coming first, but I had some skepticism about that.

Sylvi: I think—

Austin: When is this coming out, Keith?

Sylvi: Well. Cause we have the Q and A still to go live.

Keith: The Q and A is going up tomorrow, and then this is coming out on the 19th.

Austin: All right, well, then that makes sense.

Sylvi: So if you want to, Art—And was it just you and Art that did the most recent or was Jack on, too?

Austin: We talked about baseball. We talked about baseball. We talked about the instant replay, the ABS system that's now in baseball. We had a great conversation about the value of ambiguity in play, the weird statistical underlying facts of baseball. We had a really great conversation.

Keith: I'm excited to listen to that because I don't know how to feel about—

Sylvi: What's the URL for that? Sidestory.show? Yeah, we got good URLs.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, we worked hard for it.

Art: Yeah. Although at one point, a fan offered to give us friendsatthetable.com and we just didn't respond.

Austin: We should have taken it

Art: We probably should have taken that.

Keith: It's funny that that just came up.

Austin: Yeah, we'll take it. If you still have it.

Keith: If you still have it.

Sylvi: Yeah. Thank you so much for listening, everybody.

Keith: Bye.

Sylvi: Bye.

Art: Bye.

Sylvi: I'll get a sign off eventually. I don't know.

Austin: Forget about it.

Sylvi: Ey, forget about it.

Art: Have a good rest of your day.

Austin: I have an Italian stepfather and Italian stepfamily. I'm allowed. Okay.

Sylvi: My Italian grandmother loved the Sopranos. I'm allowed.

Keith: I have as—I have as many as two Italian grandparents.

Sylvi: Let's go.

Austin: My stepfather's name is Joey D. You're allowed.

Keith: My—

Austin: Okay.

Keith: That's—My grandfather is Don Scioli.

Sylvi: That's a character in this show.

Austin: Yeah. My, my stepfather grew up with a member of the Gambino crime family, actually.

Keith: Really?

Austin: Yeah.

Austin: I'll tell you about it off mic or like, off recording. Should we do a three, two, one?

[“[Shame About It \(Vocals\)](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Keith: Yeah. My grandfather did business with Boston work organized crime because you had to when he was doing radio stuff.

[“[Shame About It \(Vocals\)](#)” by Jack de Quidt plays in full]