

To the Victor Belongs the Spoils - The Sopranos: Media Club

Plus S03E08

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Introduction

[["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 are brought to you by Friends at the Table and our patrons over at friendsatthetable.cash. This season, we are watching The Sopranos. I'm Sylvi Bullet, and you can find me on most social media platforms @sylvibullet. Like I said, you can support the show at our Patreon at friendsatthetable.cash. And joining me as always is Keith J. Carberry.

Keith: Wow, it's an honor. It's great to be here. Uh, you can find me online @carberry.deals. You can find the Let's Plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton.

Sylvi: Uh, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey. Um, so glad to be here. friendsatthetable.cash where you can give us money directly. And also the first bonus episode is up?

Sylvi: Yeah, we've recorded that at the very least. I'm sure it'll be up.

Keith: Oh, it'll be up.

Sylvi: Probably before this.

Keith: It'll be up.

Sylvi: Yeah. Given our recording schedule.

Keith: Uh, and also I hope you enjoyed watching or listening to us talk about Goodfellas, 'cause that's what it is.

Sylvi: That's what it was. And it was a really good time 'cause that's a really good movie.

Darcy: Ooh, those are some good fellas.

Keith: Those are some good fellas. I'll tell you.

Sylvi: Those are some great fellas.

Art: Some of them are bad fellas.

Keith: I don't even know what you mean.

Sylvi: Well, the movie's not titled that.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Wow.

Sylvi: Uh, before we get too deep into our bits, there's also Darcy Swan here,¹ my good friend. Hello.

Darcy: Hey, I'm, I'm genuinely excited. I don't know what this weird fucking energy is, but I'm, I'm ready to go. Let's talk about season 2 of The Sopranos.

Sylvi: Were they being facetious about it being an honor to be here? I thought it was an honor to be here.

Keith: No, no, it's an honor to be here.

Art: Most people aren't here.

¹ The name/pronouns in the audio recording are no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancies.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: I'm playing the role of Tony Soprano. I'm being very—

Sylvi: That's genuinely true. Sorry, what?

Darcy: Being very on edge and, and, and anxious and assuming the worst in everyone in my life.

Sylvi: Man. Yeah. It's Tony time, baby.

Keith: Not often wrong, though.

Darcy: Not without reason.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And herein lies the conflict of Tony Soprano's life. All right. This week we watched the first two episodes of season 2. That's the premiere, Guy Walks Into a Psychiatrist's Office. And episode 2 is called Do Not Resuscitate. Do you guys have anything before I get into the summary, or do you think it's just better for me to jump in? I feel like I ask this every week, but I want to check because it's the start of a season, you know?

Keith: You know, I, I can't explain what happened. Maybe it was having watched Goodfellas, um, and having to like, jump back into a TV show after watching Goodfellas. But I, I started the first episode being like, I don't know about it— I don't know about all this. I guess this is a— I guess I like this.

Sylvi: Damn, brutal.

Art: Wow. These episodes whip.

Sylvi: These episodes are great, dude.

Keith: It took me, it took me, um, honestly, it took me till Janice showed up to start liking the first episode.

Sylvi: That's fair though.

Art: Isn't that like, the third season?

Keith: What's that?

Art: The third scene, right? Isn't that like right away? Doesn't Janice show up?

Darcy: It's pretty close.

Art: Immediately?

Keith: Um, I'll tell you exactly. Maybe Janice, maybe it wasn't the actual scene where Janice showed up, but it's maybe halfway through my notes. So it can't be at the very beginning of the episode.

Art: You know, maybe it is time for the summary.

Sylvi: Maybe it is time for the summary.

Art: You are getting a little too crazy here.

Darcy: Let's hit it.

Sylvi: Before we get into it, just some credits for each episode. Guy Walks Into a Psychiatrist's Office was directed by Allen Coulter, written by Jason Cahill, and edited by Sidney Wolinsky. Do Not Resuscitate was written by Martin— was, sorry, directed by Martin Bruestle, uh, written by Frank Renzulli, Mitchell Burgess, and Robin Green, and edited by William B. Stich, with Phil Abraham working as cinemato— cinematographer on both episodes. Cinnamon-tographer. Um, our second season starts with a brief scene showing that Chris has someone else taking his stockbroker certification exam before we jump into a lengthy montage of our principal cast's lives set to It Was a Very Good Year by Frank Sinatra. The broad strokes are thus: Livia is in the hospital being treated after her stroke. Tony's still cheating on his wife quite a bit. Dr. Melfi is seeing her patients out of motels. Carmela is looking more and more dissatisfied with life. The FBI investigation now lists Tony as the street boss on the big, uh, like, pinboard we saw.

Junior is in prison, and Chris is back to doing coke. The montage ends with Tony walking out to get the paper, much like in the pilot, only for there to be a mysterious car parked outside. Tony's set to run, assuming the worst, but instead it's Big Pussy, back, trying to explain where he's been, and obviously fearful that Tony's going to kill him. Pussy tries to explain things, saying he went on the run because his friends suspected him. He says his back really was the problem, that he ran off to Puerto Rico where he shackled up with his 26-year-old acupuncturist, and that the reason he didn't send word to Tony is because his friends, quote, took the word of a crooked cop over me. He also explains that he's back to help his kids out financially, and Tony seems to accept the explanation, but not without checking him for a wire first. We get a glimpse of how Tony's running things in Jersey now, and by that I mean we get our first hit of the season. Philly Parisi, who stepped up to run Junior's crew with him in prison, has been gossiping about Tony and his mother to people. So they send in Gigi Cestone— I hope I'm pronouncing that last name correctly— to take him out. They sort of stage a thing where he's coming back from being on the lam at the airport, and Philly picks him up. And then right when Philly's about to drop him off, Gigi shoots him in the face.

Keith: Uh, it was—

Sylvi: It also seems like they've— What?

Keith: It was so confusing to me when this guy shows up to do a hit, and then I'm like, okay, I guess this guy just does a hit, and then shows up later in the Bada Bing as if he's always been there.

Sylvi: Yeah, he is definitely just like a new, uh, soldier.

Art: Yeah, yeah, I would, I would like to discuss this, but we should wait till the— But I'll wait till the, the summary is over.

Sylvi: Thank you. So it seems like they finally figured out what they're doing with that money they scored from the drug robbery in season 1, because Chris's new gig is running a pump-and-dump stock scam from a brokerage. He's also got two new chumps working for him, Matthew Bevilaqua and Sean Gismonte, who rough up one of the

traders for not pushing this Webistic stocks they're trying to raise the value of. After Chris leaves work early to go to the shore with Adriana, Tony meets with his lawyer, who explains that Junior's trying to get out of prison on medical release and that there's concerns Tony will have him killed if that's allowed to go through. We also get a quick mention that Tony's stuck running things, quote, bunker style, and it's pretty obvious that he's unhappy about that. Good thing Carmela's calling with good news! After a 20-year absence, his sister Janice is here! Tony suggests his other sister, Barbara, visits, and they have an impromptu family reunion, but without his mother, for obvious reasons. The guys catch up with Pussy at the Bing, mostly involving Silvio doing his Pacino impression again. They also find out that Chris's two goons sent one of those traders to the, the emergency room. And, after pulling him aside, Paulie tells Tony that Pussy's story checks out. The next morning at breakfast, we get to meet Janice— Or Parvati, depending on who you ask— And boy is she a Soprano. We learn a few things about her: that she's been living in Seattle, she has miso soup for breakfast, misses her ergonomic pillow, and that she also lights up a joint right after eating breakfast. While she's sharing it with Tony, the two discuss their mother, with Tony emphasizing that she's dead to him. Crucially, we also learn that Janice is looking to take care of Livia now, asking Tony for some money to repair her car, and that Tony doesn't ever want her mentioned in his house ever again. He says that he's putting her house on the market, which is an inconsistency with last season because he— They said he had sold it, but it doesn't really matter to me that they said that last season. Here's the storyline: the house is on the market. That's what you need to know.

Keith: Hey, things fall through.

Sylvi: Yeah, exactly.

Keith: Could have been in escrow.

Art: I think that's what they said. They only said it was in escrow. I don't think they said it—

Sylvi: Okay, cool. Everywhere I looked said that it was, uh, when I was double-checking this, mentioned that they said it was sold. After giving Chris a talking to about staying at the brokerage because he's the SEC compliance officer, obviously, it's off to Livia's now empty house where some teens have vandalized the place. Carmela mentions that her parents are joining the family party they're throwing, having avoided functions at the Soprano household while Livia was in attendance, and Tony almost defends her, but then reiterates that she's dead to him. Carmela also mentions that Tony should go back to therapy, saying he's self-medicating and bemoaning their lack of a sex life. Much like Tony got to play at being Melfi last season, it's Chris's turn to pretend to be Tony back at the brokerage. He smooths things over and gives Sean and Matthew a talking-to about cooling their jets some, don't bleed a guy completely right away, make sure you do it slowly and suavely, or something like that. It's mostly just funny seeing Chris be the big man in an operation.

Keith: These are three pathetic guys.

Art: It hits contrarily really hard and I love it.

Sylvi: Contrarily, yeah. It's really good. Um, Janice takes Meadow to see Livia, but immediately leaves Meadow alone with her grandmother. And Meadow, of course, wants to know what's going on with Livia and Tony, since her parents won't tell her. Livia's not in good shape, much like how we saw her at the end of season 1, at least in front of Meadow— Most of her thoughts and sentences disconnected from the prior, and the scene ending with her giving away some more jewelry to her granddaughter. While driving, Tony has another episode, flying into a rage when his CD starts skipping, and then losing consciousness. So he goes back to therapy! But not with Dr. Melfi, and certainly not under his real name. It doesn't go well. Once he alludes to what he does for a living, the therapist tells Tony he knows who he is, that he watches the news, and that he's not accepting new patients right now.

Keith: And that he's seen a movie.

Sylvi: Uh, yes. He's seen *Analyze This*, which I haven't seen, so...

Darcy: I haven't either.

Keith: Uh, it's a movie where Billy Crystal plays therapist to mobster Robert De Niro.

Sylvi: Yeah. Sure.

Art: It came out about the same time as season 1 of The Sopranos.

Keith: So it's a good reference. Something was in the air.

Sylvi: I think we talked about it for a bonus episode.

Keith: Mm.

Sylvi: It's the day of the family barbecue. Tony and Janice's little sister Barbara arrives with her husband and kids to a lot of hooting and hollering. Then Carmela's parents show up, with her mother in particular not able to keep her mouth shut. from talking about the way Livia treated Carmela before they got married. Janice and Barbara catch up a bit, with Janice bringing the conversation back around to how Tony shouldn't be treating Livia like this, and that he doesn't need the money from selling her house. After she takes off to see some friends, Tony sees the for sale sign that was planted outside Livia's house torn out and hidden in the back of Janice's car. He flies off the handle, unable to calm himself down while ranting to Carmela about his sister, until she pushes him out into the backyard to have a beer with the guys. It seems like he's calming down while shooting the shit, but then while he's watching Pussy talk to the guys, he has to fight off another episode, with the audio dropping out and us being able to hear his heartbeat in our ears, and the focus shifting so everything's a little blurry around his old friend's face. Chris and Adriana are out for a drink with Sean and Matthew, with the latter two being very eager to work for Tony. But things between Adriana and Chris blow up pretty quickly after the two chuds finish their little fanboy routine, with Chris pestering Adriana to drink, her refusing and being mad at him for being reckless now that he's using drugs again. Chris gets violent in response and Adriana leaves, leaving him behind with his two idiot coworkers. Dr. Melfi is sitting at a diner when Tony surprises her, trying to convince her to take him back and that he's sorry for what he did. Melfi,

however, makes it very clear that their relationship has been horribly damaged after what he did, with one of her patients committing suicide while she was on the run, telling him to get out of her life and refusing to suggest any other psychiatrist to him. The episode ends with Tony, still looking a bit off after his meeting with Melfi, coming home to Carmela. She heats up some leftovers for him and the two sit at the dinner— The two sit at the dinner table in silence while he eats and she goes through the mail, before *Time Is On My Side* by Irma Thomas hits with the credits. Our second episode, *Do Not Resuscitate*, begins with Tony visiting Junior in prison. And even though the bulletproof glass, uh, keeps them apart, things are just as tense as they were before Junior's imprisonment. Still, Tony does ask about Junior's heart, and Junior also tries to tell Tony that his mother had nothing to do with what went down between them, but Tony reiterates: she's dead to him. Junior also mentions that people in prison are talking about how Tony tried to kill his mother, and Tony leaves after telling Junior to get his associate Bacala to see him, that he just wants to talk. We cut from that to a protest happening at a mob-affiliated Massarone construction site led by Reverend Herman James Jr. and his father. The Black Joint Fitters Union are picketing because they've been discriminated against by the other Joint Fitters Union, as well as because Massarone hasn't hired any Black workers for his sites. We cut from that back to Janice, off to visit Livia again. But before she can leave, Tony confronts her about the sign in the backseat of her car. Janice explains to a furious Tony that she's just trying to make a little extra money for her ma. She's got an old friend from school who's a real estate agent now, and she's willing to give them a better deal. That's all. Janice does go to visit Livia, and we finally get to see how she treats her other kids. Guess what? It's a lot like how she treats Tony. Though, to be fair, Janice doesn't seem like she's that invested either. More focused on talking about how she's trying to sell her, quote, self-help video in the city.

Keith: This is, I think, maybe to me, a strong undercurrent of the episodes so far that hasn't been as present in the recap is that Tony's implication and the very, very likely possibility is that Janice is always trying to scam everyone around her out of money.

Sylvi: So my plan was to ask you guys, like, what your vibe was of Janice after I finished this. So I kind of wanted to, like, let that sit. But yeah, she is. She's absolutely like— She, she has a real hustler mentality. She's a Soprano!

Keith: I wrote, I wrote, and I'm sorry that we're blowing it now instead of when it comes up. [**Sylvi:** It's fine.] I wrote in my notes, Janice serial killer gene.

Sylvi: I fucking love her.

Keith: During the scene where she's, like, picturing her mother falling down the stairs via a be careful going downstairs sign. Dude, yeah.

Sylvi: I fucking adore that scene. Oh my God. I'm so excited to have this in the show now.

Keith: That, I think, is maybe one of— It's one of the two or three best scenes in these two episodes. Uh, although the implication that, like, there is some sort of, like, blood crime gene that this— The Sopranos family has coming back, I don't appreciate.

Sylvi: I don't think that's the thing that's genetic here, to be fair. I do think depression might be.

Keith: Well, the, you know, the show, the show is— It's walking a fine line.

Sylvi: We can talk about it more later. I'm going to finish my summary. Livia quickly breaks into tears after they talk for a bit, with Janice declaring it bullshit and leaving. Tony meets with Jack Massarone in a parking lot who asks him to help get rid of the protesters, with Tony agreeing to for a price, despite the Joint Fitters Union technically falling under his uncle's umbrella. Yep. Speaking of his uncle, Tony gets his meeting with Bobby Bacala, the presumably last of Junior's lieutenants still standing. Bacala is quick to agree to Tony's terms for being the go-between for him and Junior— That Junior is still in charge of the Joint Fitters Union, keeps his rank as boss, and is allowed to earn just enough to pay his defense lawyers. Everything else though? That's Tony's. Big Pussy's at the doctor getting some treatment for his back, getting picked up by somebody named Skip who, at first blush, looks like another low-level mob guy, guy, but

in actuality is Pussy's FBI handler, Skip Lipari. That's right, Big Pussy is an informant, and has been apparently since 1998. Skip pushes Pussy hard to get something actionable on Tony, but the scene ends with Sal looking just as conflicted as he was at the beginning of it. Junior and his lawyer present their case for medical release, with Junior going the whole 9 yards and hooking himself up to an oxygen tank for the meeting. And the judge does agree to house arrest, but Junior has to wear an electronic bracelet, much to his chagrin. Tony goes to visit Reverend James, but is greeted by his father instead, immediately going into his history nerd mode when he sees that the Reverend James Sr. was a World War II veteran. But after his recommendation of the History Channel quickly flops, Tony decides to excuse himself. Tony and Junior set up a meet at Junior's doctor's office, with his cardiologist agreeing to let him use it whenever he needs since a doctor's office can't be bugged. Tony says he'll take care of the Joint Fitters Union— Or, sorry— Junior says he'll take care of the Joint Fitters Union, but right afterwards asks Tony if he's made peace with his mother. Obviously not, because she's dead to him. The two get into an argument about whether or not Livia was playing Junior, and Junior lets slip that the owner of Greengrove is one of the people spreading rumors about Tony trying to kill Livia. We've got our first dinner scene of the season after this. It's quiet as hell, though. Carmela tries to get a conversation going with AJ about a school assignment on DNA, I believe, but— They talk about— I couldn't remember if it was the Unknown Soldier was the purpose of his paper or the DNA was, but they talk about some news story about Carmela saying there'll never be another Unknown Soldier because of DNA.

Keith: I also read that in my notes. It's really funny.

Sylvi: It's really funny. Janice brings up Livia. She tries to commiserate with Tony about her, but he doesn't want to talk about it, and he gets enraged that she even brought their mother up. Still, at the end of it, Tony does agree to let Janice's friend list the house like she asked earlier. Oh, whoops. Uh, getting a little update here. It looks like Freddie Capuano, the owner of Greengrove who had been gossiping, has disappeared. Well, at least his car and his toupee got left behind.

Keith: What a stroke of luck for the Sopranos.

Sylvi: I know, right? We cut from that to Janice taking Meadow out to driving— to practice driving and to bring her aunt to buy some pot. Uh, but she's mostly using it as an excuse to pry for details about Livia, wondering what interests she has so she could use them to get closer to her estranged mother. Junior, in the waiting room for an optometry— Optometrist visit, is talking with Bacala about how he looked on the news, telling a racist joke that flops really bad, and most importantly meeting with Jack Massarone for a handoff on the money to fix the Joint Fitters Union's protest problems. Janice surprises a sleeping Livia with some Pavarotti, her fact-finding mission with Meadow evidently paying off because Livia's overcome with emotion at the sound of it. To celebrate her success, Janice drives home while smoking a joint and listening to Paul Simon. The second dinner scene of the episode starts with Janice arriving late, interrupting grace, with Tony and her trading some classic Sopranos passive-aggressive barbs at each other. After dinner, they sit by the pool and talk, with Janice almost immediately turning the conversation to their mom again. Apparently, she's been improving enough that she could come home, but there's no home for her to go back to. Janice can't convince Tony to let her live at the old house because dead people don't have homes, with his final suggestion being that Janice, who cannot afford it, send her back to Greengrove. The next day, Pussy and Tony are scoping out the protest from a car up on a hill, griping about how hard it is to find good help these days. And as if on cue, Sean and Matthew, who are rolling up with baseball bats, try to greet Tony, who angrily drives off because he's not supposed to be seen there. Chris, backed up by his army of miscellaneous goombas, starts swinging on the protesters, turning things into a small-scale riot. Janice tells Livia that it's almost time for her to go home, and Livia's immediately like, oh well, that's okay, I'll just go to Greengrove again. Janice, instead of saying they can't afford it, starts talking about how it's dangerous and that she can't go back after what happened to the owner. Uh, after Livia almost chokes on a cookie, a nurse pulls Janice aside to ask about Livia's DNR, which she then tries to talk to Tony about. He at first is resistant to just hearing any of it, but eventually relents and says that Janice can do whatever she wants with Livia. She's her problem now. Meadow takes AJ to visit their grandmother but immediately leaves him alone with her, much like Janice

did to her earlier, meaning AJ gets to once again accidentally let some information slip that he shouldn't.

Keith: This is the all-time dumbest kid. This is the dumbest kid of all time.

Sylvi: I fucking love him so much. See, he doesn't know what a DNR is, but he's learning about DNA in school, so he asks Livia if they're related. Oops.

Darcy: How old is he supposed to be at this point?

Sylvi: Like 13?

Darcy: Okay.

Art: Yeah, right there.

Sylvi: 12 or 13?

Art: I think 13, somewhere in there.

Sylvi: He's— His voice has dropped since, like, is starting to drop between seasons, so I think he's 13, 13 or 14.

Art: Um, but yeah, they do have to stop letting him talk to Livia by himself.

Sylvi: He cannot be trusted to be unsupervised around his grandmother.

Keith: Tony still doesn't know that that's how she got the psychiatrist info.

Sylvi: It's great!

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Um, the next day Janice goes to see Livia, telling her she'll be able to take her home and help her live in the old house. Livia, of course, is angry, and specifically angry about the DNR, complaining about Janice to one of the doctors that's looking after her, and then taunting her about a supposed stash of money she squirreled away

somewhere. Janice spends this conversation fantasizing about pushing her mom down the stairs. I—

Keith: I believe actively planning.

Sylvi: Sure.

Keith: She's talking about this secret inheritance that she has.

Sylvi: I'm 2 paragraphs away from finishing, please. [**Keith:** Sorry.] There's a real quick scene of Junior slipping in the shower and injuring himself before we cut back to outside of Reverend James's home where a funeral service for his father is being held. Tony and the Reverend talk, making the business relationship between them more explicit than the visit Tony tried to pay him earlier, and they talk about losing parents, getting older, and how they're replacing their parents as the elders in their respective communities. Tony gives the good Reverend his cut, and the two of them haggle about how to split five no-show jobs that Massarone gave to the Reverend, and the scene ends with Tony giving the Reverend his condolences and getting a phone call about Uncle Junior. Livia also calls the house, but Carmela answers. Livia tries to tell her that whatever she can leave behind goes to Tony's and Barbara's kids, but to watch out for Janice— she's a snake. Carmela just hangs up on her before she can really launch into the sob story. In our last scene of the episode, Tony's rushed over to Junior's, who's pretty obviously broken his hip. Junior resists going to the emergency room, though, and Tony insists on it, hoisting Junior into his arms while his uncle once again begs him to make peace with his mother so he won't go to the grave with this guilt. The episode ends on a shot of Tony walking out the door, Junior in his arms, taking the man who ordered his murder to the hospital, 'cause that's his uncle, and he obviously still loves him a little on some level. That's my summary. Now you guys can say whatever you want.

Keith: I want to know how much that, uh, that Junior doll weighed.

Sylvi: You don't think that's really him?

Keith: I'm 100% sure that is a mannequin.

Sylvi: I don't know...

Keith: It's pretty— It's pretty clear.

Sylvi: Oh, we lost Darcy.

Keith: Oh, we lost Darcy.

Art: As soon as the summary ended, Darcy dropped.

Keith: Darcy is out. Yes.

Sylvi: Okay, well, we can pause for a second. Oh no, Darcy's like fully offline. I hope they didn't lose power or something. Oh no, man, my— I don't know if you could tell, my— I, I'm like low on my allergy meds right now, so like I kept getting like a little phlegmy during that, which is why I was just like, I need to power through this and finish this so I can clear my throat.

Art: Well, I promise you, if we have to redo the episode because Darcy can't get on, we're keeping the summary.

Sylvi: I mean, listen, I'll— Yeah, I'll get my meds next time. Um, sorry, by the way. I usually, uh, I usually would not try to, to, to shut you down like that though in the middle of it, Keith.

Keith: Yeah, it's fine.

Sylvi: Um, I just wanted to make sure we're up clear though.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I like, I like when my pals talk to me about things.

Keith: This has got to be a mannequin, right?

Sylvi: Uh, I genuinely don't know.

Keith: Look at the way that his arm stays the same when it when, like, he rotates.

Sylvi: Yeah, but look at this face, brother.

Keith: I just think it's expensive.

Art: In the first shot, I think it is.

[musical sting]

Darcy: Okay, I am going again.

Keith: Okay, great.

Sylvi: All right, my summary's out of the way. You are welcome to share any and all thoughts. I appreciate you letting me have my little diva moment.

Episode 14 [00:24:10]

Keith: Let me get— Let me find the right— Okay, uh, okay, so first of all. This guy who's like intro-ing the stockbroker exam so that fake Christopher can get a license for real Christopher to become the SEC compliance officer. I love this guy. I think he's great. I don't recognize him. There's another— There is an actor that I recognize later on, but I just thought that this guy doing like, the board spiel at the front of this test was really good.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Um, also it's just funny to see a room full of old computers and it's like, yeah, you gotta wear khakis and a button-down t-shirt in order to take your SEC test. Everybody's dressed up to go to the computer lab.

Sylvi: Everybody's in a scene from fucking Severance. This is what that whole show looks like.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Do we think that Tony knows that Christopher cheated on this exam?

Sylvi: I think Tony probably fucking suggested it.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Okay.

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't think they ever intended for Chris to actually go do this test.

Keith: Yeah, my guess—

Art: Yeah, I don't think Christopher getting his stockbroker license is part of the crime plan.

Keith: I mean, it may have helped them long-term, but I don't think that Tony thinks that that— Like, I don't even think that they think that way. Like, like, yeah, as we'll just steal the license, we don't need to actually get a license, we just need to steal a license.

Darcy: Fair enough.

Sylvi: It's, it's, it's an obstacle. It's not a like, actual qualification.

Keith: Yeah. This— I, I don't know why, I can't really explain why this montage bummed me out. I really didn't like the montage.

Sylvi: Really?

Keith: Yeah, I was just like—

Art: It's largely a bummer. You're correct.

Keith: Sorry, I mean, I mean structurally, [**Sylvi:** Like, functionally?] Like, functionally within the episode, like I, I felt like they didn't have that much to show me, but also it was kind of a long montage. Uh, so they kind of showed me what every character was

up to. And I have to allow for that for a lot of people, it was, you know, months and months and months between seasons 1 and 2. And so getting a little update makes sense, like watching the FBI cross out Capo and write Street Boss is like, that might be what someone needs to remember like, oh yeah, they put Tony like officially in charge and the FBI's onto him. Uh, but also I was just like, this is kind of a boring montage. It was kind of boring.

Art: It had been eight months, which is much longer than the typical TV offseason of the time.

Keith: Of the time, yeah.

Art: Uh, you know, TV shows used to end in May and start up again in September.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Damn.

Art: We used to be a country.

Keith: Yeah. Dude, we invented TV and then ruined it. Isn't that crazy?

Sylvi: I mean— Yeah, no, that sounds like most things that have been invented.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah...

Art: So when you're like, this is three times the normal, almost three times the normal, like, off-season, doing like, a refresher might have like, felt very important.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. I totally get it.

Art: Also, The Sopranos picked up a lot of attention in between the first two seasons, and I think some people probably went and tried to catch the first season. But this is like

sort of— This is before streaming and kind of before TV shows regularly got home releases. So there's also like a very good chance this is a lot of people's first episode. And—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Mm.

Darcy: That's a good point.

Keith: When you're, when you're including the least important of the two Sopranos kids combing his hair in the mirror because he got a haircut, it's just, you're scraping the bottom of the barrel of what I need to be recapped on.

Sylvi: Fair. That's like two seconds, but fair enough, man.

Keith: It's, but it's spiritual. It's part of the, you know, it's the essence of the montage is in that.

Sylvi: It's spiritual.

Art: Yeah, for contrast, the ratings of these episodes are not always available because HBO doesn't have to tell you the way that a broadcast network did. But the highest-rated episode of the first season was the finale with 5.2 million viewers. And the first episode of season 2 did 7.6 million viewers.

Darcy: Damn.

Keith: Damn.

Art: I guess to keep going, the first episode of season 3 is going to do 11.

Keith: Um, why'd they show me Paulie having sex in the montage? That's another one.

Darcy: So you know what he's fucking about, bro.

Keith: I already knew he was about this.

Sylvi: His name, his name is Paulie Walnuts, not Paulie Wal-no-nuts. Like, let him, let him get it off, man.

Art: Let him have sex with a completely uninterested, very plastic stripper.

Darcy: Listen, after last season, one of our last images of Paulie Walnuts was a hurtful accusation that he has issues with women.

Keith: It's true.

Darcy: And they just wanted to clear all that up right from the start.

Keith: I just— Yeah, clearly, he loves them.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: You know, I'm not— It's just like, this wasn't something I needed clarification on about Paulie. Like, I wonder if during all this time, Paulie was getting some.

Darcy: I just had fun catching up with my friends. Glad to hear that my guy, my guy Paulie Walnuts was having a good time being safe.

Keith: You kind of had to, like, catch that it was him too. Like, it wasn't totally clear. Like, it's not like, obvious that this is Paulie.

Art: Well, it's also for— Again, if this is your first episode, it's HBO. And we got tits.

Keith: Yeah. Yes, I get it.

Darcy: True.

Art: You won't see this on NYPD Blue. Is that on at the same time as that?

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: I don't know.

Darcy: NCIS, probably.

Keith: No, definitely no.

Art: No, NCIS was like years later.

Keith: NCIS was like 2004 or something.

Sylvi: Down with NCIS.

Keith: Okay. Uh, 2003. I was close. Okay. Because the first while of this— Oh, they reused the same shot from the pilot of season 1. That— See, now that was the thing I liked after the montage.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: They give you a freeze frame of the Sopranos house from the first episode. And then I was like, nice.

Sylvi: They recreate another early shot of him coming out to get the newspaper. I really liked that.

Darcy: Oh, yeah.

Keith: Oh, when he goes to— When he sees the car that Big Pussy's in?

Sylvi: 'Cause that's the exact same thing that happens during his— Like, towards the end of his, um, “I feel like I came in at the end” monologue in the first season, is the shot of him going out to get the newspaper. Or maybe it's early. It's the beginning of that montage. I don't know the specific location, but it is in that montage, that sequence there. And then they basically recreate it here.

Art: Tony getting the newspapers is going to be like a hallmark shot for the show.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: It's a recurring— This specific shot is very recurring in a way that I think is fun.

Art: And as a production note, I know that starting in the second season, they're no longer using the interior of the actual house.

Sylvi: Oh.

Art: In the first season, they shot that as a location. And for the second season, they rebuilt the interior of the house on a soundstage. And did little field trips to New Jersey to get the exterior shots.

Sylvi: Nice.

Keith: Shout out to the soundstage. We love it. I want to jump to Pussy returning.

Sylvi: Okay. Somehow.

Art: Jump to five seconds later in this shot.

Sylvi: Somehow Big Pussy has returned.

Keith: And so they have their little, like, Ed, do I have your guarantee that I'm safe? And Tony doesn't really reply, but he tells him to come in. And then they have a border— They have like, a romantic bordering on sexual hug that Big Pussy then gets homophobic about and then relents to go in for a second hug.

Sylvi: Well, he gets—

Art: Well, no, he's checking him for a wire.

Sylvi: Because he's checking him for a wire.

Keith: Yeah, he is checking him for a wire, but it's very— It doesn't— It's still romantic.

Sylvi: I'm not— You're not wrong about that. I just like the thing. I mean, yes, he does also get homophobic about it, but the thing that he's— The reason he's backing off is not the hug, it's the, uh, sure, it's the check being checked for a wire.

Art: Tony checks where the battery— Like, a battery pack would be. Tony checks where the wire would be taped to his chest. Tony checks the places a recording device would be.

Keith: Now, of course, if he's been an informant, which we don't know yet because they do a very weird timeline thing where they have this whole introduction and then in the next episode they cut to him talking to the, uh, uh **[Sylvi: Skip.]** The FBI handler guy. And, and he tells that guy, no, I haven't seen Tony yet.

Art: Oh, he's lying.

Keith: It's not just a timeline thing? He's just lying?

Sylvi: No, that is him lying.

Keith: Yeah. Okay.

Sylvi: Sorry, I should have included that in my—

Keith: This is the '90s and like, putting bits of TV shows out of order just because that's how they needed to edit it for some reason is not that weird. So I just assumed that it was like a flashback where they didn't tell you that it was a flashback.

Sylvi: Yeah, fair enough.

Keith: He's lying.

Art: Yeah, he's just lying.

Sylvi: He's lying.

Keith: I guess that's what makes him a good, um, informant is, uh—

Art: And criminal.

Keith: And criminal is that he's like— I mean, Jimmy was so obvious with it that he was so easy to catch. The minute they were looking for a rat, they found him almost

immediately. Uh, but Big Pussy, like, he, he's not even telling the truth to his handler. So, uh, if he's like, that careful about things, then I guess it would be hard to get caught.

Art: Um, I wish— So the thing we have to do, because these episodes are— These seasons are 13 episodes long, and, uh, we do these in two chunks, is that every year we have to— Every season we have to have one one-off episode. We've talked about what that should be this year, and I think we have a really good choice. But after this episode, I was like, shit, we should have done this as a one-off because you end the episode not knowing about Pussy.

Sylvi: That's true.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Sylvi: That would have been a fun conversation.

Art: We could have, like, sort of had that conversation, and now we can't because we've all met Skip and we all definitively know the answer.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: But I think— I think our current plan is still good, but I'm jealous of the us that get to live in that alternate universe.

Keith: Um, and honestly, I had— I was taking notes and I watched that scene. I had to like, rewind it and watch the scene again because I was taking notes. I didn't even pick up that that's who this was. I, I swear to God, I watched the scene once through and I was like, that's Big Pussy's brother.

Sylvi: Well, that's like—

Keith: I think they call him his brother at the acupuncturist or whatever, or at the— Where they give him like the cortisol injection. Yeah. The steroid. Yeah. And they call him his brother. So I was like, oh, that's his brother. And when they're talking shit about

Tony Soprano, I was like, well, they're talking shit because that's his brother. And he just doesn't like that Tony doesn't treat him well.

Darcy: It's a good brother.

Keith: It's a good brother. Yeah. If I was in the mafia, I'd tell my brother about it.

Darcy: You just watched Goodfellas where famously the guy has a brother. So—

Keith: Famous. Yeah. The guy has a brother. So I thought that maybe having a brother was part of the mafia.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Sylvi: Is that just because you want that one character actor to be your brother?

Keith: Yeah. You gotta be full Italian so they can trace you back to your brother.

Darcy: You know, with DNA, You'll never be an Unknown Italian Soldier ever again.

Keith: Yeah. You'll always know who your brother is because of DNA.

Sylvi: Unknown Italian Soldier is killing me. Oh my god.

Keith: Tomb of the Unknown Italian Soldier.

Sylvi: Salute to all of our unknown Italian soldiers out there.

Darcy: Always leave a piece of gabagool outside of respect.

Keith: Eyy, I'm buried here!

Sylvi: Eyy, I'm decomposing here! Um, is this offensive?

Keith: No, no, that's not— They love it. It's—

Sylvi: You can always do an Italian accent.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: God, you know, just not around any of the characters on this show.

Keith: Sure.

Darcy: Good thing the mob doesn't exist anymore, otherwise we'd probably get in trouble for those jokes.

Sylvi: It never has. There's no such thing as the mob.

Darcy: Yeah, I know, it's a fictional TV show.

Keith: Paulie bringing this random guy we've never heard of to the airport, giving him his favorite bag that he shouldn't lose, and the guy immediately turning around—

Art: It's a shitty bag.

Keith: What's that?

Art: It's a shitty bag.

Keith: Yeah, I couldn't even tell what about it might make it your favorite bag. Uh, I mean, it was also— It was an ADR line, so it wasn't in the script. So they were just like, we just need a thing in here. That's it.

Darcy: The bag had the gun in it, right?

Keith: Um, yeah, sure. Well, he also— He was pretending to just have flown in from Boston, so he had to have luggage with him. Uh, but, uh, yeah, Paulie's mouth is not moving at all when he says, and, you know, don't lose it, it's my favorite bag. Like, full ADR, you know, the punch-up writers were working overtime for that.

Sylvi: I wonder if they were like, we need another line from Paulie so it's obvious that it's Paulie here because the shots are so quick.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvi: I don't know.

Keith: I'm—

Darcy: We've only seen him fucking so far.

Art: I would like to call attention to the bag thing, because this, this sequence is kind of confusing.

Sylvi: I like it a lot, but I can— I, I— Yeah, I see, I see what you mean. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: So this is— He— What is the— What is this?

Darcy: This is the one I had to rewatch.

Sylvi: So this is Philly Parisi, who is one of Junior's lieutenants, I believe. Um, they mentioned that he's kind of been working— One of the few guys who still work in Junior's beat.

Art: He's now like, he's now like, the de facto head of Junior's crew.

Keith: Because they killed anyone else that would legitimately claim that.

Sylvi: Yes.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Yes.

Sylvi: Much like Crusader Kings, they've taken care of all the heirs to the Junior Soprano claim.

Keith: Yeah. Um, or when you kill, you kill the king in a country like three or four times and then all of a sudden it's like, who the fuck is this that's king now? What the fuck?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: This random guy.

Sylvi: Philly Parisi? Who?

Keith: Yeah.

Art: But this is sort of a thing that's gonna come up in this show. I wanted to flag this here, which is they are going to need to keep bringing people in, both because people are going to continue to be murdered on this show about criminals, but also just like, it's— In real life, there would just be more people hanging around, but in a TV show, those are all actors that you have to cast and pay all the time. So that there's only ever going to be five or six guys hanging around. And if anything ever happens to one of those five or six guys, you're just going to need another guy.

Keith: Right.

Art: And so there's going to be a lot of this. Like Gigi, who I think you are supposed to believe is legitimately coming in off the lam. He just got in early and was told to go kill Philly or whatever.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: And Philly, who we didn't see, or Bobby, who we didn't see. These are people who like— Well, they were there. The camera just didn't focus on them.

Keith: Right.

Art: Of course, Junior didn't have two guys. Junior had 10 guys. But we're not going to pay 10. We're not going to cast and pay 10 guys because in a year, we're going to need another guy to have a line here. And so, this is going to sort of be a thing that this show is going to do the whole time, basically. There's always going to be a need for more guys, and those guys are going to be either, oh, we just— He's been here the whole time. We didn't mention him. Or like, oh, this person's been doing X at Y location, and we just have to like—

Keith: This is a— This is just the reality of television that like, we can't just have a whole, a whole Bada Bing full of gangsters.

Art: Right.

Keith: You know, we, we hear a lot about Paulie and Silvio and Big Pussy, but there's gotta be more guys, and Gigi's one of them.

Sylvi: Yeah, like, I think that's why, you know, you get like the, the, the two— The fucking blowjob brothers who work for Chris, um, coming in, because you need— You also need those like, low-level dudes, because everyone we know is like, kind of a, uh, like, has a crew presumably, or something along those lines, or is like— Specifically, they're all made other than Chris, right?

Art: This is the start of the Moltisanti crew.

Keith: This hierarchy is kind of confusing to me because if— I think there's a world where, you know, Junior's like, the underboss, and then that like, Tony is the soldier, and then everyone under him is an associate. Like, that's like the— That's sort of the— But then there's this other level of like, what about the associates of associates? Like, Christopher's always got like, an idiot that he's hanging out with. You know?

Sylvi: He's got Brendan.

Art: These aren't associates because made guys are not— Associates are not made guys.

Darcy: And at this point, Brendan is still not made, right?

Sylvi: Or Christopher, yeah.

Art: Christopher is not made.

Darcy: Christopher's not made, sorry. Brendan's definitely not made.

Art: Christopher's the only not-made guy we're hanging out with.

Sylvi: Brendan's been unmade very specifically.

Keith: Um, every time I try to figure out like, what is the hierarchy of the mafia, it's always calling what Tony was under, uh, Junior, that's a soldier.

Art: Tony was a captain.

Keith: Sure, captain. I guess then a soldier is— Inside the soldier classification, there's its own rank where you have like soldier— Or like, captain and then like, whatever's under captain. Privates.

Art: I think, I think to call a captain a soldier, I feel is like calling a general a—

Keith: You just gotta take it up with the dozen different mafia hierarchy charts I've tried to figure out what the fuck any of these people's actual things are.

Art: Well, again, this is a TV program.

Keith: Yeah. But you'd think that they'd want to— that at least we can try to fit them into a scheme.

Art: That, like, Tony has this collection of made guys under him who each kind of have this unseen group of non-made guys who work with them.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Who only appear when the plot needs another guy. Like Matt and Sean.

Keith: Yeah, but then there's the weirdness of the, like, well, you actually want to have Paulie doing the stuff because he's the character that we like and care about. So even though, let's say he's got five guys, we don't watch them do anything because—

Art: Well, I think most technically Christopher is one of Paulie's guys.

Keith: Really?

Art: Yeah.

Keith: That's insane.

Art: Yeah, that— Christopher is part of the Paulie crew.

Keith: Well, still, but we're still watching Paulie do stuff instead of delegating it to an unknown guy because it's like, it's not fun to watch Tony tell Paulie tell Danny to do something, and Danny goes out and do it, and it's like, well, who the fuck is Danny? No one cares.

Art: Yeah, that's true.

Keith: So they've got to do all of this stuff that they probably wouldn't actually be doing, but it makes them seem lower on the totem pole.

Art: Well, and Paulie calls himself half a wise guy in that conversation with Chris in the first— Um, but I think it means like he's a made guy and he's probably mostly a made guy because he's fucking old, right? Like, um, and that like, he still does this shit because he didn't get anywhere. And this is the kind of shit he needs to do to make money. Like, Paulie's still getting paid to do this work, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Art: He doesn't have the passive income of, uh, stock pump and dump or a—

Keith: Although that might filter down. I don't know how they do things over there.

Sylvi: Big believers in trickle-down economics.

Keith: Well, because if Christopher is doing the job, then he's getting some, and then that would go up to Paulie, presumably.

Art: Yeah. Yeah. I guess that is probably Paulie's— But again, we're getting too much into the—

Keith: Hmm. This is feeling like a pyramid scheme. Do you think maybe the mafia is not like a legitimately organized business?

Sylvi: No, it's like more— It's more like an upside-down funnel, dude. Don't worry about it.

[Keith laughter]

Keith: Uh, I love— okay.

Darcy: Also, he's in bunker mode. You know, everything has to be disconnected and behind three levels of different relationships and shit now.

Keith: Real quick, I mean,

Darcy: They gotta dodge RICO.

Keith: He's dangerous.

Sylvi: Is that his brother?

Keith: Yeah, it's his brother. That's how you know he's in the mafia, he has a brother. Um, this hit is great. I actually think like, the mechanics of the hit are really fun.

Sylvi: So fun.

Keith: It's really good. And also like, uh, you know, they kind of show you that he's a fucking idiot because he fires the gun in the car and then immediately he's like, ah, my ears hurt. Like, yeah, there's nothing stopping him from opening the door so that the sound has somewhere to go and then shooting him with the door open. And then he's— he just walks away like, holding his ear. This fucker has tinnitus now. Sorry, Gigi.

Sylvi: It rocks, dude. I love though, the like— He takes this shot, he walks out of the car, and then you see him just like— There's a car across the street that Paulie's in, or presume— Maybe— I don't know if you see that it's Paulie, but somebody's in it.

Keith: You see that it's Paulie's car from earlier.

Sylvi: Yeah, and he just tosses the thing in the backseat and gets in with him, and it's like, that's it, it's done. It's so— I, I really love it.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, because he's like, did I just fucking blow my eardrum out? Totally superfluous little bit of, of acting there.

Sylvi: Uh, the best type of acting, if we're being real.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: The little shit that doesn't matter.

Keith: [crosstalk] Just adding some reality to the character.

Sylvi: [crosstalk] As a big Columbo fan, I love an idiosyncrasy.

Keith: Yeah. Um, the The, the— We get the scenes of Melfi, like, doing therapy out of the, uh, motel.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Um, that's kind of fun.

Sylvi: Yeah, it— We don't get a ton of Melfi in this episode, and we get none in the second. Um [**Darcy:** And I'm glad for her.] The glimpses we see are— What?

Darcy: I'm glad that we don't see more.

Sylvi: Honestly, yeah, she deserves a break. Me personally, I want more Lorraine Bracco on my screen. However, I understand.

Darcy: Yeah.

Art: I mean, the best scene in the first episode is the one of the two of them in the diner because the best scenes on the show are the ones with the two of them in it. But yes.

Keith: She's so— She's such a good actor. And I think that, like, the complex sort of relationship that they have also brings out the best in James Gandolfini when he is— We're jumping ahead a little bit just because I want to note this one specific thing. When

he, like, goes to the diner and grabs her arm, it's the scariest thing that he's ever done, including killing people.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Like, it's terrifying. Uh, and he does it so naturally and calmly, and, you know, she's, like, terrified of him. Um, and then, like, you know, he's not there to do anything except beg her to take him back and then leave. But it does. But like, he just is a scary guy who does scary things to get his way, even when he's like, part of getting my, you know, my way includes like, letting you say no here, but only because that's— That he decided that. Like, he could presumably force her to be his therapist still if he wanted.

Sylvi: I mean, yeah.

Art: I mean, that would be a big escalation.

Keith: It would. But he— But this is a guy who kills people.

Darcy: Right. Yeah. So you're saying the bar is in hell?

Keith: Yeah. Well, it's— It is that— It is a demonstration of, you know, the terror that Tony Soprano can cause and the— The lengths that he's willing to go to, to control, uh, to be in control of the violence in his life.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Keith: That like, it seems only by his whim that, uh, that, you know, he goes, please take me back, and she says no, and then he leaves. Instead of being like, my guys all fucking know about you. They know your name. They know where you live. They know how to find you. She already knows that they know how to find her. You be my therapist or you're dead. Uh, I don't think that would make a good show, but the fact that he's willing to do that is why he's terrifying.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Um, yeah. Uh, anyway, she's, she's doing that. Uh, I kind of— there's a, there's a thing later on that we'll talk about, but the fact that she is seeing clients at the motel Uh, to me is a weird complication of something else that happens in the episode. We'll talk about it. Um, uh, but I'm very happy to be in this fucking stockbroker office with a sleeping Christopher Moltisanti. He does not like this job.

Sylvi: Oh no.

Keith: He does not—

Darcy: I don't think he likes anything.

Art: The job is doing nothing.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, I guess the job is making sure his two goons don't kill stockbrokers.

Darcy: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, it's sort of like, does the mafia only exist because Italian people get ADHD and don't know what to do? Like Christopher can't do an office job, and so—

Keith: Uh, yeah, I think so. And other disorders, not just ADHD.

Darcy: Like cocaine.

Keith: Yeah, cocaine.

Darcy: I imagine doing cocaine would make it hard to have an office job, eventually.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Actually, there was a decade called the '80s.

Darcy: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Hey, I said eventually.

Keith: Yeah, eventually, yeah.

Art: It's actually very easy to have a stockbroker job and do a lot of cocaine.

Darcy: Yeah, okay, no, yeah, you're right, you're right. I spoke out of turn. This is what happens when I step outside of my scope.

Art: Yeah, they're running this pump-and-dump scheme, and Adriana's like, why don't we just leave? And Christopher leaves, and his two goons immediately rough up—

Keith: This is a great comedy scene for how violent it is, because, you know, when he puts this guy in charge, and you're— You know, it seems like this guy is a stockbroker, like, for real. And then there's the guy that looks like a '90s underwear model, and you're like, this guy—

Sylvi: He does.

Keith: Why is this random guy from a '90s catalog walking around this stock brokerage? Um, and it's because these two guys are not stockbrokers. They're pretending to be stockbrokers. He didn't put him in charge because he's the best stockbroker. He put him in charge because he's his favorite little goon. And they immediately throw coffee into the face and down the shirt of this guy who I recognize, I think from The X-Files. I recognize this—

Sylvi: Oh, he— Sure.

Keith: I was gonna look it up, but I didn't look it up.

Sylvi: I could see him being one of Mulder's miscellaneous nerds that he goes to see about a thing.

Art: He was not on The X-Files.

Keith: Okay.

Art: What might you know him from? He's currently starring in Stuart Fails To Save The Universe on HBO.

Sylvi: [typing] Stuart Fails To Save The Universe.

Keith: Damn, that sounds like a bummer.

Sylvi: That sounds like a—

Art: It's a The Big Bang Theory spinoff.

Sylvi: Oh yeah, sure, why not?

Art: He's a Big Bang Theory guy—

Sylvi: Yeah, sure, why not?

Keith: I've never seen Big Bang Theory really, so it's definitely— That's definitely not what I know him from.

Art: I don't know what you would know him from. This is just a guy who works. This guy has been on many television shows and movies.

Keith: Darcy's having a lot of problems here, huh?

Sylvi: Yeah. Jeepers.

Keith: Jeepers creepers.

Art: Jeepers creepers indeed.

Keith: Darcy?

Darcy: Hello. I do not know what is going on with my internet today.

Sylvi: Uh-oh.

Darcy: It's back now. Um, I'm also going to swap because it is only being weird on my computer. Like I just checked on my phone and it's fine. So I'm just going to get on the wifi and get off the ethernet and see if that does anything.

Sylvi: Okay, sure. We can pause it.

Darcy: But I didn't have to restart. So my, my recording is still going.

Keith: I'm going to look at this guy's IMDb to know what I know him from.

Art: Yeah, this guy, I mean, I think it's just that he's a guy who works.

Keith: Do you have his name? What was his name?

Art: His name is Kevin Sussman.

Sylvi: Oh, okay, Among Us.

Keith: Okay, now the name even sounds familiar.

Darcy: Which guy are we talking about?

Keith: Uh, the guy who gets—

Art: The stockbroker who gets attacked.

Keith: Yeah. Oh, he's in Wet Hot American Summer!

Sylvi: Well, there it is.

Art: It's not a very big part in it.

Sylvi: Yeah, but Keith is gonna recognize anybody from that.

Keith: Yeah. I mean, yeah. And I just, you know, I just have a thing when I've seen someone, I know that I've seen them in something else. I don't— That doesn't necessarily have to be a big part.

Art: Sure. And again, this guy just works.

Keith: This guy just works.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: He's in AI, Artificial Intelligence. I've seen that. He plays super nerd.

Art: He's been in two different Law and Orders and CSI.

Keith: He was in Hitch. He played Neil in Hitch. I've seen that.

Sylvi: Yo, okay. Never mind. I respect him now.

Art: Um, he was in Burn After Reading.

Darcy: Okay.

Art: Hmm.

Keith: Dwayne. He was in two episodes of My Name Is Earl as Dwayne. I bet that, I bet I know him from that.

Art: From his two-episode run in My Name Is Earl?

Keith: I, I liked My Name Is Earl when I was 14.

Sylvi: Great.

Darcy: Hmm.

Art: 108 episodes of The Big Bang Theory. I bet that was good money.

Keith: I bet that was good money.

Darcy: That's so many episodes.

Keith: That's a lot of episodes. Yeah.

Art: Anyway, they fuck up Kevin. His character's name is Kevin. That's how you know you're just starting in the biz is you, you, like, your character's the same name as you because no one cares.

Keith: Weirdly, that's kind of a horseshoe because also then the bigger you get, the more likely they are to put you in as just your name, I think.

Art: Yeah, I think that's— But probably does go both ways.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: I can't believe we haven't talked about Janice yet. Can we get to a Janice scene?

Keith: Let's talk— Well, I really love this scene where they immediately start beating the shit out of this guy. They threaten the manager of the brokerage with a letter opener. Um, like, these are— These— This is— These guys are so much more unhinged and so much less reliable and so much bigger kiss-asses. Like, they are worse than Brendan Filoni in every possible way. Christopher has like, whatever ability he has to, to pull a guy into his orbit to be his crime buddy is a— It's like a fixed amount, and he had to, like, split that up between 2 guys. And so they're both half as good as Brendan Filoni was, and he was already not that good.

Art: Well, again, he had a better guy. That guy died. He had to go get a worse guy.

Keith: He had to go get two worse guys.

Darcy: It also seems like the only pull Christopher has is that he's, he's in with Tony's crew. It doesn't seem like these guys really care that much about Christopher outside of Christopher's access to Tony.

Keith: Yeah, well, this guy brings him a cap, brings him a little cap. My favorite line in the episode.

Darcy: Little cold cap.

Keith: Brought you a little cap. It was cold. God, that was so funny. Uh, anyway, I think that them beating the shit out of Kevin Sussman was hilarious. Uh, the, the idea that they don't know that this isn't how you manage a stock brokerage is real. Like, this is so— This is such sloppy work. They're trying to do real fucking crime here. This is— They're trying to get into white-collar shit.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Art: But I'm like not even sure the things they're doing in this brokerage are illegal anymore.

Keith: In modern day?

Art: In modern day.

Darcy: Yeah, no, they're not.

Keith: I think that you still aren't allowed to beat the shit out of someone.

Darcy: Okay, that part.

Art: Maybe that part, but the like—

Darcy: The pump and dump thing.

Art: The pump and dumps seem to just be what the world is now.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Every week we have a new Hawk Tua that's doing a new pump and dump.

Keith: So I, I totally agree.

Sylvi: What a beautiful sentence summing up the world we live in. Beautiful is the word. Every month we have a new Hawk Tua doing a pump and dump. Oh my God, I love to be alive.

Art: Alexander wakes up, Carthage must fall.

Keith: I just, you know, I, I agree that that's true. I just don't know that— Certainly the SEC was more powerful in 1999 or whatever.

Sylvi: Sure.

Keith: But—

Art: Yeah, and I agree, you're still not allowed to beat up your employees.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Probably.

Darcy: It's probably more of an OSHA thing.

Keith: It is sort of the thing where it's like, what they're doing is so hard to be in trouble for that they're much better off not doing the way more illegal thing of threatening someone with a letter opener and beating the shit out of someone. Like, it's, you know, and that this needs to be explained to them is a bad sign.

Art: Yeah.

Darcy: Also, how did you manage to hire the one, like, stockbroker with a conscience who's like, I only want to sell good stocks to good people?

Keith: Uh, I imagine that they already worked here and that Christopher wormed his way into an existing brokerage.

Sylvi: Oh, I mean, yeah. I kind of assumed that given the manager there.

Art: Well, they're goons.

Keith: No, no, not these two. I'm talking about Kevin Sussman. Kevin Sussman already worked here.

Darcy: Yeah, that's what I'm talking about.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Kevin Sussman.

Keith: Kevin Sussman.

Darcy: This scene is also really funny to me because it's, it's a new trend of people telling the mafia, hey, I know you're the mafia. And then the mafia being like, yeah, you know we're the fucking mafia, don't you? And then being like, oh, I'm sorry.

Keith: They're also not the mafia. They know a guy who's in the mafia.

Sylvi: Hey man, we know the mafia.

Darcy: You know what, if someone was holding a letter opener to my throat and said— And I just watched them beat the shit out of two people and they said, hey, we know the mafia, it'd probably work.

Sylvi: I remember— I watched one of those, like, I— One night, probably pretty, pretty stoned, remember watching a video that was like a former mob guy talks about how the mob really works. And there was like a— I'm trying to remember the difference between he's a friend of mine and he's a friend of ours, because one of them denotes someone who is affiliated but not made, and one of denotes like, someone who is made.

Keith: Friend of ours sounds made, right?

Sylvi: I think, yeah. So, so, so these guys are friends of mine, uh, and— Is to Chris, I guess, right? Uh, versus, uh, Big Pussy, he's a friend of ours. He's right, he's, he's sure. Yeah.

Keith: Uh, I hope these guys show back up. They're so stupid.

Sylvi: I mean, I'm not gonna give too much away, but I did put them on the sheet.

Keith: Yeah, they're on the sheet. The way they are—

Art: They're in both— They're in 100% of season 2 episodes so far.

Sylvi: They have more screen time time than Dr. Melfi in season 2.

Keith: They do by kind of a lot. They're like one breath away from offering to suck Chris off to meet Tony Soprano. Like, that's where— That's where they're at.

Art: I fucking love later where they're like, does Tony ever talk about us?

Keith: Does Tony ever talk about us!

Art: Fucking full-on, like, junior high crush conversation.

Keith: And it's like in the middle of him— In the middle of him and Adriana, like, having a fight. They're like, excuse me, I know you guys are doing something and we're just here. Do you think Tony Soprano thinks about us?

Art: They're also like, we'll do anything. Wet work, pick up his shirts. Those are the two things Tony Soprano needs. Someone murdered and his shirts picked up.

Keith: I mean, honestly, pretty fucking good guess. That is kind of what he needs. Like, it sounds funny to have it laid out like that, but they're not— They maybe they actually have a pretty good idea of what goes on in the mafia.

Art: Oh my God, I— Fuck yeah, Matt and Sean.

Darcy: Maybe they should be Livia's live-in nurses.

Sylvi: They're very funny.

Art: Livia's what?

Darcy: They could be Livia's live-in nurses.

Art: Yeah, oh yeah.

[**Sylvi** hysteria]

Sylvi: I would love that show. I would love that show. That would be great.

Art: And speaking of Livia Soprano, her oldest child shows up in this episode.

Sylvi: It's true. Yes!

Sylvi: Art, were you as happy as I was that it's Janice time?

Art: Janice showing up, it feels like the show has finally begun. And I know it's—

Sylvi: It's crazy, right?

Art: It's like, the, the chaos that Janice brings into the show is so— I don't know how they did it. I don't know how they waited 14 episodes.

Keith: Um, I, I know how, they didn't think of her at first.

Sylvi: I mean, they did. She's in— She is in season 1. Like, we do see her as a child, but they didn't think of how to bring her in.

Art: She's very similar, if we're being completely honest.

Darcy: Janice is the sister that was taken to the carnival or whatever as part of—

Keith: Yes.

Darcy: Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: So to be— For the, the listener, Janice is Tony's older sister, and Tony also has a younger sister, Barbara. And they both show up in this episode. Um, or is it— No, yeah, it's this episode that they both show up in.

Art: Yeah, they both show up in this episode.

Sylvi: Um, to be clear though, I do— I don't think it's giving too much away to say that Janice is a bit more important to things, um, given that she's in the beginning.

Art: They immediately put her in the opening credits.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Janice played by Ada Turturro, who I, I, I'm a— I, I think is really great in this role. Really funny actress. She has a, a guest spot in at least one episode of What We Do in the Shadows that I think is really funny. I think she goes on a date with Nandor. Um, it's good. It's— She's, she's a funny—

Keith: Sorry, what is she?

Sylvi: She's funny and she's John Turturro's cousin.

Keith: I was— I— First of all, you said Turturro and I immediately was like, is she related to John Turturro? I guess she is. And so you said she's funny in what?

Sylvi: Uh, What We Do in the Shadows. She's in one episode, the episode Gail. She plays Gail.

Keith: Um, I remember— Oh yeah. Okay. I knew I recognized her.

Sylvi: Yeah. She's dating Nandor in an episode, it's funny.

Keith: That's really funny.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: Um, she's, she's a very funny actor. Um, she has a lot of stuff. Weirdly, I think her most, one of her most prominent roles after this is she ends up being a judge on Law and Order: Special Victims Unit.

Sylvi: Wow, yeah.

Art: And she just like, appears all the time. [**Sylvi:** 12 years.] It's always like, I can't watch something where Janice Soprano is a judge. This is just like, this doesn't work for me.

Sylvi: This is really funny because when there are— I was looking at Dominic Chianese, who plays Junior, also a judge in later TV work. Him and the guy who played Johnny Sack are both judges on The Good Wife, which is really funny to me.

Keith: That's really funny. Actors just got to be acting.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: No, when you play someone like Junior Soprano, you should just be entombed like the Pharaoh at the end of the role. You should—

Sylvi: I don't know.

Art: Not literally, but like, Hollywood should just give you a big pile of money and you're done.

Sylvi: He's 95 and still kicking. Good for him.

Keith: He's singing his hit songs still, right?

Sylvi: He is. Yeah. Um, oh yeah. And I guess other things that I, I'm off on a tangent. I was gonna be like, oh yeah, he's in Boardwalk Empire, which has, uh, shared, uh, DNA with, with The Sopranos. 'Cause, uh, Terrence Winter. Um, but—

Keith: That's a show. Should I give that show another shot? Is that worth it?

Sylvi: We can talk about it later. Um, it's fine.

Art: If you gave it a shot, you probably saw most of the episodes worth seeing.

Sylvi: Um, yeah, that's— This is the thing. That show kind of goes off the rails because, uh, what's his name? Michael Pitt? Is like a nightmare to work with, so they had to write him out of the show.

Keith: Which one is Michael Pitt?

Art: Yeah, they don't have a show after that. He's like the secondary guy.

Sylvi: He's the Chris.

Keith: Oh, this guy. **[Sylvi:** He's the Christopher.] I know him from a lot of stuff, actually. Yeah, he should be an actor.

Sylvi: In almost everything he's in, there's a story about him being a fucking terror to work with.

Art: Yeah, he's like basically never made it to season 3 on a TV show.

Sylvi: He got famous— My favorite one is him getting recast in Hannibal after they made him eat his face.

Keith: That's really funny. Just be nice. Don't be crazy. What the fuck?

Sylvi: Yeah, hard for a lot of actors apparently.

Keith: Yeah. Janice is here.

Sylvi: Janice is here.

Keith: Okay. Now this is the start of me— I really like Janice. I think she's doing a great job.

Sylvi: Just when you thought you were out, they pull you back in is what you're saying?

Keith: No, well, I'm actually going the other way because she shows up and I like her immediately. Just when I thought I was in, they pull me back out because this episode's doing a lot of like, '90s, like a '90s style, sort of like, we're believing that the world has a liberal bent to it, and then we're here in the center trying to pull things back to reality.

Speaker E: Yeah.

Keith: That's sort of what— 'Cause Janice is a '90s hippie, in a way that only exists in a boomer's imagination. She lives on workers' comp and food stamps, and she's running scams, and she's got weird— This is someone who doesn't—

Darcy: She won't see a doctor. She smokes weed all day.

Keith: She smokes weed all day. Like, it's not that this person isn't real as much as it's like, it's not a problem. And they really show like, okay, I'm right here.

Sylvi: It's not a problem.

Keith: Tony, like, they almost try to— They almost try to go like, Tony is looking at his sister being like, she's crazy and her life is fucked up. She's like, yeah. She's off like, doing like, feminist stuff. Like, what the— What, what is going on? I'm just a normal guy and my sister's like, this wackadoo.

Darcy: You get Carmi like kind of reinforces that too. Like she— This is next episode, but like, on the phone, like, complains to Livia like, well, why doesn't Janice have any work ethic?

Keith: Yeah, totally.

Darcy: Work ethic. Sorry.

Keith: Yeah, and then they kind of do a similar thing with the, with the juniors. like manipulating the judge into letting him out of jail, where like, it feels to me like the episode wants you to go like, no, no, keep him in jail. He shouldn't—

Sylvi: Oh, I don't know about that. The episode to me was like, no, let him out.

Keith: Or the judge is making an error, whether or not you are rooting for him to be in or out of jail. You're like, he's getting one over on the soft-hearted judge.

Art: I think— I think there are two things you need to consider here. I don't know that this is, like, a commentary on everything.

Keith: No.

Art: But Junior is lying.

Keith: I agree.

Art: Junior does not have this medical condition. He is faking it.

Keith: Yeah, he's faking it. Yeah. Well, this is why, like, you know, criminals lying to get out of jail. They're not, you know, they're not tough on crime enough.

Art: Um, I don't know. Um, I don't necessarily think that's the point of this arc so much as it is just like, this is a thing that the mafia does.

Sylvi: I think it's also supposed to be like, this is a thing that kind of ties The Sopranos together. Like, this is like a— Like, it's supposed to— I think it's supposed to make it seem a bit more parallel. I kind of am with you, Keith, that it's a clumsy way of doing it. And that looking at it in 2026, it definitely reads this way. I want to say, But I think I'm more with Art's perspective.

Art: The Junior stuff that's gonna happen around this medical stuff—

Sylvi: Is pretty good.

Art: Is pretty good, and is also very directly based on something that really happened. There was— I forget who it was, but there was a prominent older mobster at this time who was doing this, who was faking these— illnesses.

Keith: To get out of jail?

Art: To get out of jail. Um, and so it's— I guess it— I guess that does make it real-world commentary, but not like, on a larger pattern of events.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: On like, one guy.

Keith: I want to say, it's not that I'm saying that they're doing a commentary on it, but like the writers existing in the '90s and like, bringing their sort of TV writer perspective by nature of how writing works into the show. Like, when you're deciding how to characterize a new character like Janice, uh, you know, you're bringing how you feel about things into it, whether or not you're like, and I'm gonna teach everybody about these fucking '90s hippies living in Seattle, as much as like, well, we know that she's like kind of a loose cannon. We know that she ran away from the family. You know, they want her to kind of be a scam artist. And so they create this character that like, I can

see a 90— Uh, you know, a 40, 50-year-old guy in the '90s feeling like, Janice really makes sense. The pot-smoking, workers' comp scam, spiritual—

Art: I would give Janice a little more time. I'm—

Keith: Sure.

Art: I'm not sure you can see the full picture of Janice yet, but I would flag that every single person who has known Janice for a long time immediately thinks she's full of shit.

Keith: Yeah, she's definitely full of shit.

Art: And that it's not that she's like, That she's not even really a workman's comp conning hippie. She's just a fucking— she's just a scammer.

Keith: Well, she's been destroyed by her mother in the way that Tony has, but with a different outcome, is, I think, that's the reality of her. But I just I just feel— I just feel the, like—

Sylvi: The sneer?

Keith: I feel the conservative sneer within the heart of the show.

Art: I hear you, and I think that that is a fair read of these two episodes. And I would simply say give Janice a little more time.

Sylvi: I think that I would love to come back to this conversation. Like, one, we can keep having it now. I don't think we need to finish talking about how this episode made you feel, to be clear. I just— I do think this is something to put a pin in and come back to.

Keith: Yeah, this is not— I'm not trying to cast this into all future episodes, but when watching a couple of these episodes, you know, you get— You know, I think about when, um, Tony is, like, shit-talking teachers getting summer pay, to AJ in either the first or second episode. And to me, that's almost like, a caricature of a right-wing feeling in a way that's kind of fun and funny and makes sense for Tony as a character. And doesn't

come from a place of agreeing with what Tony is saying there. And may even come from the opposite of like, this fucking idiot who scams people out of money I mean, this is definitely where it comes from. He's scamming people out of money. He's like, not actually working for anything that he's doing. And of course he's taking shots at teachers who work very hard for much less money than Tony makes.

Art: Sure.

Keith: Uh, uh, and the fact— And like, maybe the one big benefit of being a teacher is that kids get summers off of school, and so that means you also get summers off from school. Or like when he's complaining to Melfi about like, the pay, uh, uh, you know, you never— When you're shaking me down, you don't think about like, my position. And it's like, a total inversion of his job where he's shaking people down, not thinking of that. Like, these make sense to me as like, these are right-wing positions that Tony Soprano has because he's a character that would have right-wing positions. That's not the feeling I get with Janice.

Sylvi: It feels like the show is taking that position, right?

Keith: Yes, yes. And the same thing with the courtroom scene of like, you know, these judges just fucking letting criminals out on the street. Like, that's how it feels. And I'm not saying that that says anything about the show. Shows are written by a lot of people, and I wouldn't be surprised if, like a lot of shows, there's like, some Hollywood conservatives in there getting their Hollywood conservative shit in.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Not maybe even on purpose. Um, you know, I'm interested to see how these things develop. I imagine that the more they draw, they color in the lines, the more Janice makes sense.

Sylvi: What's interesting to note is that this is gonna be the last, uh, episode that Jason Cahill writes. He came up a couple times. He co-wrote Boca. He wrote the Meadowlands episode. And after that, he leaves The Sopranos after this season, um,

from what I can tell. So I'm curious to see, like, how much of the— Like, if, if as the writers' room turns over, if this like, becomes more prevalent to you, or like, how the— The, the how basically how the overall tone of the show shifts a little bit.

Keith: It would be really funny if it was this one guy, if it was Jason Cahill—

Sylvi: I'm not gonna blame this one guy. My point, my, my bigger point is that we have people coming in. Like, we have like also the, the, um, the director of the next episode is like, a new name among the people that like, have been working on the show. And I just kind of wanted to point that out, that like, we're starting to have some like, turnover in the writer's room and that will affect like, how a show works, even with David Chase still, you know, being at the helm and like having a pass at everything.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, this is— There is a big writers turnover in between these first 2 seasons. There's going to be another kind of churn. There's a— I've got a story about this for the last episode of the season.

Sylvi: Oh, I'm excited.

Art: It's, I mean—

Sylvi: No, but I just love stories about one of my favorite TV shows.

Art: Yeah. And so, yeah, I do think there is going to be— And then, of course, the show is being written without a lot of grand plans in mind. I'm saying I think the Janice stuff pays off in the fullness of time. If you ask the people working on the show after they finish this episode, hey, what do you think is going to happen with Janice? They would be able to tell you, six episodes in the future, maybe. And they certainly didn't know what was going to happen at this point. But yeah, Janice runs into people who know her, and they all fully see through her bullshit. Tony does, Barb does. And then in the second episode, Livia fully tortures her with the fact that she knows—

Keith: Though she also does that to everyone, deserved or undeserved.

Sylvi: Yeah. But specifically, she knows which— Oh, Darcy dropped again. Oh, we're back. It's specifically that she knows which screws to turn, I think, is the thing.

Keith: She does. She does. She always has.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: Livia is terrifying in these hospital scenes.

Keith: Right.

Sylvi: I love Livia in these episodes. We have still barely talked about Janice, 'cause we keep talking about the big picture of Janice.

Keith: I have one more thing to say about a big picture thing, which is that like, The Sopranos has me thinking all the time about prestige TV, the generation of TV that was sort of spawned by The Sopranos, a generation that I repeatedly bounce off from.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: If we count Severance as one of these shows, it's the only one that I've ever truly loved. And everything else I did not like. And one of the hallmarks of this kind of show to me is that, that— And again, I don't want to sound like I'm like, too much trying to take everything I'm watching in and being like, is this too conservative to be enjoyable? Because that's not, that's not the thing that I'm—

Sylvi: No.

Keith: That I'm doing. But there is this like, weird, um, bifurcation of these shows where they kind of always feel like they have this sort of social critique that is broadly agreeable, that makes sense to me, that feels like it is generative of interesting content and commentary. But then even as it's doing that at the meta level, at the micro character level, or there's like, this sort of background radiation of weird conservatism that kind of— It doesn't— It's not just a different perspective, but it kind of like, conflicts

with what I understood as the heart of the show. A great example of this is *Mad Men* to me. Again, a show I haven't seen a lot of, but a show that is like—

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: On the surface and in a lot of very specific ways that you could explain, you know, in great detail, like, this is a show that's critiquing— What the fuck is his name in the show?

Sylvi: Don Draper.

Keith: Don Draper. I mean, this is an anti-Don Draper show, right?

Sylvi: It's not though. It's, it's, it has its cake and eat it in the same way that all prestige TV does. I, I totally know what you mean.

Keith: This is what I'm saying. Yeah, I think, yes, this is what I'm— Where I'm leading to it. At the same time as they are critiquing him in a lot of different real ways, they also are, uh, selling you how fucking awesome he is all the time. And that's the sort of thing I see here.

Sylvi: They are still doing that, probably less than you think, but they are still doing that.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And I think that like, yeah, it's tough. It's tough out here. I'm specific. I've been— Because *The Sopranos* cannot be my, I rewatch this show while I do the dishes or whatever show anymore. I have started rewatching *Mad Men*. So like you saying that, I was like, oh dude, *Mad Men*'s way worse about it. *Mad Men* loves to talk like it's really like— Loves to pretend they're doing feminist shit and then also make Sally— Or not Sally, Betty Draper— One of the most like, misogynistic caricatures in the history of television.

Keith: Yes, this is— Yeah. And, and, uh, that's why *Mad Men* popped up is because I do know how bad that it can be with that stuff, even as people will readily defend the

content of the show as being, you know, a critique or satirical. And it's like, okay, yeah, you can list me all your facts and quotes and whatever, but there's also this other side of the show that is doing this other thing that is contradicting all of this other stuff that you're using as evidence. And I'm not saying that Sopranos falls into that, but this is like the anxiety that I feel about a show like The Sopranos because of how many times I've been burned by it, where I'm like, this is— I feel like this show is slipping into being the opposite of what it claimed to be, uh, or what it seemed like it was going to be to me.

Art: Well, and of course, uh, Mad Men is a child show of The Sopranos.

Sylvi: That is, uh, yeah.

Art: And Darcy has informed me that they are resetting their router, so—

Sylvi: Okay, okay.

Keith: Uh, I thought that Darcy was back. Sorry, Darcy.

Art: Darcy can't hear you. She is not on the call.

Sylvi: Uh, I figured we could— we could wrap up the convo and then pause. Yeah.

Art: Yeah. Once we got fully into Mad Men, I was like, I'm just gonna let this go.

Sylvi: Yeah, I figured just let me and Keith go off a little bit while Darcy sorts out—

Keith: Are we saying a child of The Sopranos, or are we saying a child Sopranos?

Art: Child of The Sopranos. Matthew Weiner gets his— Weiner?

Sylvi: I don't know.

Keith: I think it's Weiner.

Art: Gets his—

Keith: I'm sure that it's Weiner.

Art: Gets his start in The Sopranos.

Sylvi: As a writer, yeah. Yeah. I think he starts in— Oh, I don't know. I can't find when he starts as a writer, but, uh, specifically, uh, a producer starting in 2004 at the very least. Yeah, 2004 is when he starts on The Sopranos.

Art: Which would be season 5.

Sylvi: Hello?

Darcy: Hello?

Keith: Hey, hey, Darcy.

Sylvi: Oh, is the move gonna be finish up talking about this first episode and then take a break if these problems persist?

Darcy: Let's see, because I did just reset the router.

Sylvi: Cool. I'm hoping it gets better. I just also like, I want to get you in on this. I don't want to—

Darcy: Yeah, no, for sure. Um, I would also—

Art: We had a big Mad Men digression.

Sylvi: Yeah, we had a huge diversion about—

Darcy: I've never seen that show, so there you go.

Art: There you go. I guess a lot of the Janice stuff is in the second episode, huh?

Sylvi: This is— Yeah, it's— That is also the case.

Keith: But yeah, she shows up for breakfast, they hug, they have like a cute sibling thing. And I actually really like that, um, when she's not like running a scam, they kind of have these nice sibling moments that are kind of fun.

Sylvi: I love that shit. I think it is so like— there's some really good moments of like siblings that you have both like a bit of a contentious relationship with and like, a loving relationship with. Um, which like, I think everyone has experienced if you've got siblings to some degree, right? Uh, maybe I'm wrong. I mean, listen, my little brother listens to this and my mom listens to this. You guys know I'm good with everybody now, but you know, we've all been there. Um, I really like how Janice immediately is like trying to ingratiate herself with Meadow a lot, uh, in these two episodes. Um, 'cause it really sells her sort of arrested development in the more literal sense. But also, I bet she— I bet Ada Turturro would've done great on Arrested Development.

Keith: She would've— Yeah, I can see that. Um, I can see that for sure.

Art: I mean, what kicked her off of it was this, right? You can't be on another— If you're a regular on a TV show, they can stop you from being on another TV show.

Sylvi: I mean, listen, she did pick the better show, and I know not everyone's gonna agree with that, but I mean—

Keith: No, I'm sorry to say, I've enjoyed my time with Sopranos not even fucking close, frankly.

Sylvi: That's crazy. Keith, I'm on the opposite side of the spectrum.

Art: You're not even like 1/5 of the way into the show.

Keith: I've seen 15 episodes out of— I've seen, yeah, I've seen almost 20. I've seen like 15, I don't know, percent.

Sylvi: You've seen almost 20%.

Keith: I've seen almost 20%.

Sylvi: I love this. It's fine. You're, you're a comedy guy. You're going to prefer the comedy stuff. It's fine.

Keith: I think that, I hate to say it. I think Arrested Development is even a better drama. It even has better drama than that.

Sylvi: Okay, now you're smoking crack, so let's move on.

Art: Yeah, this is ridiculous. Ridiculous. You're not— You haven't even gotten to the— they just introduced one of the best comedy pairs in this episode set, and you've seen one scene with them.

Keith: Sure. Fair.

Art: Which is Junior and Bobby, who are beautiful and perfect together.

Sylvi: They're the fucking best combo in this show. I love those fucking guys.

Keith: Yes, there's a scene with them that I want to talk about that is so fucking funny from Junior's perspective, I think, that I couldn't believe it. It was really good.

Sylvi: Um, we should talk about this breakfast scene. We keep getting all over the place. Uh, I'm sorry that I, I keep baiting you into debating— Into power scaling TV shows, Keith.

Keith: It's fine. There's not a lot here. That's also the thing is that this is—

Sylvi: It's pretty quick. You just kind of get her complaining about her losing her pillow. Uh, and like, I don't know, there's something about Janice showing up, and I think this is a credit to, uh, Turturro's performance, is that you can kind of see both the, um, there's the, the glimpses of both like the, the Johnny Soprano that we saw in those flashbacks, but then also the Livia who can't help but complain about things even when it's good.

Keith: Well, and she's very—

Sylvi: In a way that Tony also has I mean, he has bits of both his parents in there, but it's a different— She's a different font than Tony.

Keith: Yes.

Sylvi: If that makes sense.

Keith: She's a— She's very good at, um, and I assume this will develop into like, a full-blown superpower. She's really good at finding other people's interpersonal conflicts and leveraging them against each other.

Sylvi: Yeah..

Keith: And I can—

Sylvi: Much like her mother.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: I can see how she's like, uh, it's, it's very dynamic what she's doing with Livia. She keeps intentionally needling Tony about his mother, even though he keeps saying, stop talking about her. And she's also like, trying to like, actively turn on the charm versus her mom in order to get her liking her. Um, and, you know, like, going in with a plan of how to get her to be in a better mood or whatever, in a way that, you know, you could spin that as a good thing. But it sure seems kind of like she's doing it in a manipulative way, especially when she's also fantasizing about killing her.

Sylvi: Right.

Keith: Um, uh, and she's also, with Meadow, seeming like she's ready to use her knowledge of Tony and Tony's life as a way to like, separate Meadow and Tony in a way.

Sylvi: There's definitely, like— She really plays the cool aunt vibe in a way that like, is cringe to adults, but like, the teens are like, eating it up. Um, the teens in the show. I don't know if teens in real life are eating up Janice's routine, but I mean, I'm specifically talking about AJ and Meadow here.

Art: But it is not hard to put a wedge between a high school senior and their parent.

Sylvi: Absolutely.

Keith: No, but she— But there might be a re— Like, uh, uh, I'm interested to see how Janice might instrumentalize that dynamic.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: For her own benefit.

Sylvi: That's another thing to, I think, to put a pin in, because that's gonna— That's something to keep an eye out for, is how Janice throws a wrench into the, the home life of, of Tony and the, the titular Sopranos.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvi: Um, God, sorry, I accidentally tabbed over to the season 2 predictions and just saw Keith thinks AJ is going to start killing animals.

[**Keith** laughter]

Keith: I forgot about that. I still think that.

Sylvi: Sure, man.

Keith: Uh, I would love to find out that, like, in, in season 1 when they're like still being coy about, is, is Livia like, a doddering old fool, or is she intentionally feeding Junior information so that he will be motivated to do the things that she wants him to do? Um, I would love like, a season 5 reveal or whatever, that all of these slip-ups of AJ were actually on purpose, trying to fuck with his family. He knows what DNR means. He's just trying to upset everybody.

Sylvi: That'd be a really good twist. That would be a good twist. I'd fuck with that.

Keith: Yeah. Um, he's— I want them to fucking, uh, the Jar Jar— Sith Jar Jar Binks theory AJ, where it's like, yeah, you thought he was an idiot, but he's actually behind all of this.

Sylvi: Sith AJ! Oh no, it's It's— His name stood for Anakin Jedi Soprano.

Darcy: Oh, fuck.

Art: All right, I'm just gonna pencil it on our schedule, an episode for early— For, for like late 2027, the AJ Secret Sith episode.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Where we have to flesh out this, this theory.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: He's masterminding the whole thing. Uh, he's getting, he's getting himself ready to take over the Empire. Um, to put, to put his dad in the Junior position and to be the real power behind the scene.

Sylvi: Damn.

Art: All right. I think it's an interesting way to, to read this. So on, on one sense, we have done none of this episode. On the other hand, I've said almost all of my notes.

Sylvi: This is the thing. We've, we've, we've, we've— We're in a weird place where we're hitting the thematic notes, but not really the beat by beat. But hey, you guys got a summary. Hopefully you're able to follow. Watch the goddamn show too.

Art: Yeah, watch the show.

Keith: Um, okay, so on the other— the flip side of this though is that I have all these buttons that I never pressed.

Sylvi: This is a— Oh, I'm just about to ask.

Art: Just start pressing some buttons.

Sylvi: Okay, let's push some— Push those buttons, Keith.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: You look good. Tan.

Pussy: Yeah, right.

Tony: The tan ghost.

Pussy: You're a good guy, Tony, but you abuse that jokey shit.

Tony: What do you got to say to me?

Pussy: Yeah, I'm back, Tony. I'm tan. I'm in a fucking tan nightmare. What do you think, I'm stupid? I don't know it when every fucking one of my friends turns their hearts to stone against me. Fuck!

Tony: All right, easy, okay? I don't think you're stupid.

Pussy: There was a fucking rat. So you finger me? You think I didn't realize what was going on when you come to my house 3 o'clock in the fucking afternoon telling me you're my friend. That's when I knew I was in trouble, Anthony. When out of the blue you come and for no reason you start telling me you're my friend.

Tony: Oh, is that right?

[audio ends]

Keith: Uh, I loved that. It is— I clipped it because it was straight out of the Goodfellas that we just watched. Uh, at the end when he's meeting De Niro in the diner and he's like, uh, when you're part of a crew, uh, they don't tell you— They don't tell you they're gonna kill you. They come to you with smiles. They come to you as your friends. Uh, and I was like, oh great, that's awesome. They just did that in this episode.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Because that's exactly what happened to Big Pussy.

Sylvi: Uh, I, I really like the performance from Big Pussy here. I think that like, both knowing what's gonna be revealed in the second episode and not knowing, like, you can— He plays it really well where it's like you can— It feels like real outrage, but then when you get the context, it's like, oh fuck, he was just trying to save his ass this whole time because he is a mole.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Um, yeah. And then, yeah, like you said, there, there is definitely some real like, arguing with someone I'm in love with energy too.

Keith: Yep. Um, he says— Oh fuck, I, I fucked it up. Um, because I actually had more of that.

Sylvi: Uh, oh, no worries.

Keith: Uh, I actually had more of that clip, and I cut it off just for time because we moved past that. Uh, but he's like, oh, you know what? It was actually earlier than that. I quoted it. "I don't see you for all this time, no word, nothing, and this is the way you come back to me?" That's what he says when they're still outside.

Sylvi: Again, sounds like something Carmela could say to him, to Tony, after he goes on a bender or something with one of his goons.

Keith: There's such a nice little difference between, this is how you come back, and, this is how you come back to me.

Sylvi: To me.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: I mean, he said it. He loves that man. Like, that's textual. That's been mentioned in the show.

Keith: Uh, I, I, you know, another thing that's really funny about Livia here, or, uh, uh, Janice here, uh, is, uh, sorry, I was looking at my buttons and I saw, because we're—

We were looking for stuff to say about Janice, and here's what I wanted to say about Janice, is that she comes back with all this like, I don't care what happened. The past is the past. It's my turn to— And who knows what her genuine motivations are at this early stage before she knows about the house, before she knows— Well, no, actually, she always knew about the house. She assumed that she would be able to stay in the house. So, I guess that's part of her early thing. But, you know, she's defending her mom. And I wonder how much of that is like, I don't care how my mom is. I just need to live in this house. I don't care if I have to take care of her. Or if she's like, actually made— You know, spent the last 20 years making excuses for her and is coming back with this false idea of her mom. Like, maybe it wasn't so bad that she then has to live with her.

Sylvi: I'm kind of on to that. Which is that like, she's been gone for 20 years. So, like, she doesn't really— Like, I don't know if that's the first time— 'Cause did she mention that she had seen her mom already when she shows up, or no?

Art: I don't think she had.

Sylvi: I think, yeah, we see her seeing Livia for the first time in 20 years. Um, and, like, yeah, you're gonna get some rose-tinted glasses about that, I think. You're gonna be like, oh, I guess maybe it's not so bad. Oh, she's a frail old lady now. She needs me. It'll be better. Um, not saying that I'm like— This is 100% the case. It's just like, it is kind of what comes to mind for me, which is like, oh yeah, she probably does, at the very least at the beginning of this, believes what she's saying.

Keith: Um, yeah, here, let's listen to a little bit of that.

Sylvi: Please.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Janice: You seem good, mood-wise.

Tony: Yeah, things are, uh, very good nowadays.

Janice: So how are things really with Ma?

Tony: She's dead to me.

Janice: Look, I don't want to get in your way here, Tony. I mean, you're the one who stayed. You took the brunt. Barb and I, we're never gonna forget that.

Tony: Well, you forgot it okay for about 20 years. At least Barb pitched in.

Janice: I know I made my share of mistakes, but Ma can't stay in the hospital forever.

Tony: Let me tell you something about this stroke of hers, and I got this from a doctor. It's called a conversion reaction. It's, it's a big fucking opera brought on by repressed rage. It's bullshit. There was no infarc- whatever the fuck.

Janice: Yeah, but they also said that the symptoms are the same as a stroke, so the result is the same. She cannot take care of herself.

Tony: She's on the lam in that fucking hospital from me.

Janice: Well, who did what to who, it's not my business. All I know is Mom is bewildered by all of this. I mentioned you, her eyes fill up with tears.

Tony: Oh boy.

Janice: Look, I'm not asking you to step in, Tony. It's my turn now. That's why I came.

Tony: She's a Strega. She's the devil.

Janice: She was. Now she's just a confused, frightened old woman.

[audio ends]

Keith: Uh, that was the line that made me think that she had seen her already. She mentioned her eyes filled with tears.

Sylvi: Yeah, okay, maybe you're right.

Keith: Um, the— But then they still film the first scene with them as if it's like the first time, because it's the first time we see it.

Art: I guess as ever, we could, um, conclude that Janice is lying.

Keith: Yes, we could conclude that Janice is lying also. Uh, I, I, I love this because she's such a piece of shit, it seems like, that it's hard to know exactly what she believes as she's saying it. Does she think that she's just a confused, frightened old woman? I don't know.

Art: I— There's a point in episode 2, and I'm sorry for jumping ahead, but we're clearly not observing linear time here. Um, there's a point in episode 2 before the creepy bit with the stair sign where I paused, like, is Janice planning on murdering Livia, just like, from the jump here, is that like— Was that like, Janice's to-do list when come to town? Was it like, murder mother, steal house, go back to Seattle? Like—

Keith: She seems more like an opportunistic hunter to me.

Art: But she sort of seems like she's—

Darcy: I'm with you, Keith.

Keith: I think—

Art: She seems sort of into it though, right?

Keith: Oh, she's definitely into it. I did write down serial killer gene in my notes. I think it doesn't take long to be with Livia before the people in her life are like, I wish she was dead. And if she's also talking— If you also want to live in her house and you also want to get her inheritance that she's talking about, and also you're not a remorseful person, then that idea can start taking shape pretty quick. But I don't know. And I guess it's never clear because Art also doesn't know.

Sylvi: It's also kind of hard to talk about without giving away too much about future stuff, too.

Keith: True, yeah. This is not connected to anything. I think that Webistix is one of the funniest things. To be selling a stock called Webistix is really, really funny to me.

Sylvi: It's really funny. It's like, it— The— They really understand how to make the stock market funny because it was this, and then last season it was the fucking erectile dysfunction—

Keith: Yeah, true.

Sylvi: Medication.

Darcy: True.

Sylvi: Um, should we talk about Chris's little— We can get into Jana stuff when we get into episode 2, I think, because that's where the bulk is. And I know we've talked about some of it, but it'll be easier. Uh, do we want to talk about Chris's little pep talk he gives to his two chuds?

Keith: Uh, yes, I do.

Art: Don't we have to— Should we start with Tony's pep talk?

Sylvi: Right. Yeah, aka him grabbing Chris by the face.

Keith: He gives the scariest smile. He's so mad at Chris that these guys did that.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: He— After the face grab, he like walks away smiling. Absolute psycho smile. It's, it's so good.

Sylvi: This is a good point to mention. Tony is so much angrier in these episodes, and you can tell it by the way Gandolfini's both carrying himself, not even in the scenes when he's not blowing up. Um, it's like really— It's, it's, it's, you know, I say it a lot about how I am constantly impressed with James Gandolfini's performance, but there's both— There's moments of comedy in, in these first two episodes that I— I'm like, man, he does not get enough credit for that. And then also he's doing this dramatic stuff, and I'm like, man, one of the best to ever do it.

Keith: Um, he also is talking all the time about how much better he's feeling.

Sylvi: It rocks. It's— He's so in denial. I love it.

Keith: Yeah. Well, and— Denial, but also, like, there's— There's reasons for him to be feeling better.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: But he's not. Uh, or he's not— It's not totally honest that he's like, simply feeling better. Because his mom's not in his life right now, and I'm sure that that's like, a genuine source of relief. But also, when your mom tries to kill you and then you sort of try to kill your mom and she has a stroke, that's real no matter how you feel. Like, him being like she's dead to me, his like, insistence on repeating that over and over, to me is like, he does not actually feel that. He wants to feel that. He wants to feel like she's dead— Like, he wants to put her behind him.

Sylvi: He's convincing himself.

Keith: He's convincing himself. Like, that is a line that's for himself because he says it in situations where it would've made sense to say other things. Like, when Junior's like, she didn't mean— She didn't actually want to kill you. And instead of being like— He does eventually mention the tapes, but instead of being like, I do believe that she meant that, he just goes, she's dead to me. Like, I'm not even thinking about it. She's dead. Don't worry about it. Don't talk to me about it.

Sylvi: She doesn't matter anymore. She's out of my mind.

Keith: And then also, like, Melfi's not there. And, uh, every time he's not going to Melfi, he gets worse again.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Uh, and so he's like got this one genuine reason to be relieved, and then these two big reasons reasons to be still stressed out. And then one of those reasons is his outlet for this stuff, which is why he's going to see that dipshit Analyze This therapist to try to get some therapy in. And it doesn't work. It's just very funny how he's like, he kind of is in a good mood, kind of, but just right under the surface is, like, the rage and anguish.

Sylvi: Yeah, there's like, um, you— We really got a good look at it at the end of this episode during the barbecue, but like, it is omnipresent, um, in the way Tony's behaving, uh, this— In both episodes we saw.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Sylvi: Uh, did we have anything else about him, his little talk with, with Chris, or should we talk to, to contra— What does he say?

Keith: Contrarily.

Sylvi: Conversarilly? Contrarily.

Keith: Thank you.

Sylvi: I was like, he says something silly and then, and suavely. I love the way he says suavely.

Keith: I think maybe it is conversarilly.

Art: No, it's contrarily.

Sylvi: It's contrarily. Okay. I was making up a stupid word because I was like, I couldn't remember what Chris said to try and be smart. Yeah.

Art: On The, The Soprano's soundtrack album that eventually gets released, there's a track that is just a set of quotations from the show, and this is in the thing. And because this was back before iPods, I've listened to just that set of dialogue a million times.

Sylvi: So funny.

Art: I'm surprised it didn't get buttoned. I was—

Keith: The— That contrarily scene?

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Um, yeah, I didn't button it. It was really funny though.

Art: That's how it goes. Yeah. Uh, can't button everything.

Keith: Can't button everything.

Art: As we learned in the, uh, yeah, uh, Goodfellas episode.

Keith: I tried, I tried to button everything for the Goodfellas episode.

Sylvi: You know, and no one would blame you for that. You know?

Darcy: Yeah, no.

Keith: Uh, It's so funny, like, explaining— You know what it is? You know what he should have said? He should have said the, uh, Junior's joke about the cows. That's what he should have said.

Sylvi: Yeah, you're right. They should go down and fuck 'em all.

Keith: You should walk down there and fuck 'em all.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Then they'd get it immediately. Like I did.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You didn't need it explained multiple times from different people.

Keith: And you know what? I don't even remember the—

Sylvi: We don't need Austin to say in the chat because we explained it wrong too.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, there was— Austin went into the Media Club Plus chat to say that, that if— To make sure that I had seen the people who had explained it on Blue Sky and on the screenshot post on Patreon. friendsatthetable.cash, by the way. And I had seen it, but I no longer remember what that explanation was. But I was like, oh yeah, I guess that makes sense. So if you're— Feel free to scroll back on the Patreon to find that explanation if you want. If you also didn't like or get that joke. Uh, but no, I do like, I do like Chris saying, you know, uh, you gotta be more suave with how you trick people. You gotta— You don't just want to trick them today. You want to trick them, you know, next week and the week after, at least. At least two weeks you want to trick them.

Art: Is it like, yes, Chris needed this explained to him. Yes. It was sort of like— But Chris is smarter than these guys.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: I think we're—

Art: And it's weird because Chris is dumb.

Keith: We're dealing with three different orders of magnitude. Like, yeah, Tony is as much smarter than Chris as Chris is to these two.

Art: And so it's a massive— Chasm if you take Chris out.

Keith: Now on the flip side, they did bring him a little cap.

Sylvi: They did, but it was cold.

Keith: But it was cold. Although it may not have been cold. That may have been Chris asserting dominance.

Sylvi: Possibly.

Keith: Uh, yeah, I think they're funny. I really want to see more of them. It's weird to have like, you know, 14 episodes in, they've introduced like the first characters that are like, these guys are comic relief. These guys are here to be funny. And maybe they get— Maybe they— Maybe if they show up more, it'll be more, uh, there'll be more ingredients in that stew. But to me, these guys are just like, we got to do something funny. When they see Tony in the car, when Tony's like secretly there watching his crime deal go down, and they're like, hey, it's Tony! Hey, Tony! And he's so fucking pissed off at them. All they want.

Art: He's in the car, he's having a conversation about how everyone's a fuck-up these days.

Sylvi: It's great.

Keith: Yeah. And of course it's Chris's guys again. He can't get— he can't get—

Sylvi: I can't believe he went from having one Brendan to having two.

Keith: Two worse Brendans.

Sylvi: Two worse Brendans.

Art: Two worse Brendans.

Sylvi: That's my title of my, my, my, uh [**Keith:** Sketch comedy.] Yeah. Oh, sure.

Keith: Sorry, what was it gonna be? What was it actually?

Sylvi: I was gonna do like a, like a, like an auto, auto, autofiction. Like, what's it called when it's like half autobiographical, half literary or whatever?

Keith: I don't know.

Sylvi: I read genre shit. I'm not, I'm not highbrow enough to make this joke is what I've learned.

Keith: I think that you're, I think that you're fine. You're, you don't have to be Jonathan Safran Foer.

Sylvi: Are you sure?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Okay, thank you.

Keith: You're welcome.

Sylvi: Guys, I can keep doing the show.

Keith: You can be extremely loud without having to read that book.

Sylvi: What about incredibly close?

Keith: Uh, yeah, that too. You could be extremely loud and incredibly close.

Sylvi: Okay. Hell yeah, man.

Keith: Um, I think that that's what we're— I think that's the genre. I think that's the right genre.

Sylvi: Sure. I'll believe you. Yeah.

Keith: Uh, do we, do we want to hear a little bit about Janice's scheme?

Sylvi: Always.

Art: Yes.

Keith: He finds— He's trying to sell the house. It's been vandalized. I saw the vandalizing of the house and immediately I was like, like, not only did Janice steal the sign, but she also vandalized the house. Like, as soon as, oh, suddenly some teens

broke in and fucked up the whole house, I, in my head, I was like, that's Janice. We didn't even know about the sign yet, uh, but she also took the real estate agent sign out of the, uh, the ground. Um, and, you know, she's trying to get her friend, the realtor— And in my head, I'm like, there's no fucking friend realtor. Or if there is, she's told the friend realtor, don't sell this house. Make sure this house doesn't get sold because she wants to live in that house. Anyway, this is the scene of Tony talking to his wife about having discovered the realtor sign hidden in her car.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Carmela: I am sure there's an explanation.

Tony: Oh, there is, there is. Take Ma back to Seattle. She came here for the house and a \$400 car. That was the con from the first. That's the level she works at.

Carmela: Maybe the sign was broken. Maybe it fell down.

Tony: I'm still a little fat kid to her. What does she think, she's gonna stop the house sale by picking up one fucking sign? If she were here, I'd be bouncing her fucking head against the wall.

Carmela: Look at yourself, Tony. Look at how angry you are. What do you care about that house?

Tony: It's not gonna stop with the house. The \$300 pillow, which we're gonna fucking pay for. Then the video equipment, which you already heard her talking about.

Carmela: When are you getting back into therapy?

Tony: Hey, don't start with that, okay? I am not fucking insane, and I am not overreacting, 'cause you don't know. You don't know this wretched little pucchiac—

Carmela: All right, all right. This is getting you no place. Go. Go outside, join the party, be with your friends, have some pleasure. Go ahead.

Tony: Fucking bitch.

Carmela: Tony, go ahead, go have a beer.

[audio ends]

Keith: Um.

Sylvi: He's scary.

Darcy: That line at the end is such a, like, a little— It's such a little kid thing of being like, you better not say that word. You— Hey, hey, I'm telling you, buddy, I'm telling you, you know what happens if you say that word. And then the kid, like, stares at you, like, with their cheeks all swollen up, and then they go, “blargh!” and like run out.

Sylvi: It's like he can't help himself.

Art: Can you hold onto this button?

Keith: Yes, I can. I have every button we've ever had saved.

Art: This I've now realized is like weirdly foreshadowing.

Sylvi: Is— Art, I'll message you.

Art: Yeah. We'll come back to this this season. It won't take long, but I think there's a weird bit of foreshadowing here.

Keith: Yeah, I've got all the buttons. If we ever need to go back to a button I already have, just let me know and I will bring a button back from the past. Um, no worries. Uh—

Sylvi: I didn't spell that right, but I sent it to you.

Art: Yeah, yeah, that's exactly right. Yes.

Keith: Uh, this is a great scene. Tony is like— He's losing it. Uh, Sylvi, you finally watched some of The Grinder?

Sylvi: I watched 2 episodes of it, yeah.

Keith: Okay. That's enough to have the exact idea.

Sylvi: I can understand the dynamic.

Keith: It's like, being right in a way that drives you crazy because no one else will agree that you're right. And he's right about Janice. He knew from the beginning that she was there to get money off of him, that she was there to run some sort of scam. He feels confident that he knows what kind of scam this is. He's trying to have his, uh, have his wife meet him where he is on this knowledge. And she's trying to get him to calm down and he does not want to calm down. And so he's flipping out that she's like, not supporting him. Uh, and I think that makes sense. I think that he's kind of right to be mad.

Art: Well, it doesn't help when you're an out-of-control rage monster.

Keith: It doesn't help when you're an out-of-control rage monster. I don't think that he should be bashing her head against the wall.

Art: Or pantomiming it for your wife.

Keith: Right. Or pantomiming it for your wife. But it's kind of a big deal if someone's trying to steal \$200,000 from you. He knows about stealing \$200,000 from people.

Sylvi: He's an old hand at that.

Keith: What's that?

Sylvi: He's an old hand at that.

Keith: He's an old hand at that. Uh, and, and that's the— That is the connection to The Grinder, which is the brother who, uh, is trying to convince everyone in the world that his brother is, uh, both a dumbass and a piece of shit. And they're all like, yeah, but look how awesome and handsome he is. Um, he— But that probably makes him smart too. Um, and, you know, it's tough because Tony's such an out-of-control maniac that it's— That whenever he's mad, everyone just wants to get him not to be mad anymore.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And that's not always the best move, I think. It's one thing when someone tells you to calm down and it's like, well, maybe you should calm down, but being told to calm down may be counterproductive.

Sylvi: The worst thing to say right now. Yeah.

Keith: And that is, I think, sort of what's happening here. Carmela's, I think, rightfully kind of sick of his shit. And sick of him being mad all the time. But also his sister's trying to steal this fucking house.

Art: Well, there's a beautiful and sad moment in the opening montage where Tony comes in and they're both kind of pretending to be asleep and then they make eye contact and then she rolls over. You see the distance between the two of them and it's heartbreaking. And this is sort of like, if Tony and Carmela were feeling closer together, then this might be an easier thing for Tony to talk about with her.

Keith: Right.

Art: But instead, he's not connected to his wife. He's sneaking in after having sex with another woman. And also, he's an out-of-control rage monster who's hitting the walls. Tony is not ingratiating himself to his wife in his life or in this sequence.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: But he is 100% right about Janice. And again, a lot of people are trying to tell Carmela about Janice, and their previous actions have made them unable to reach her

about that. As we will see in the next episode when Livia tries to do it. And, you know, Carmela opens the conversation with like, how dare you call here? Or something like that, like—

Sylvi: I mean, to be fair, how dare she call there? Yeah.

Art: Well, and Livia should have opened with her stuff and instead she, like, does her, like, grieving mother routine. And then we get to, like, and Janice is trying to kill me.

Sylvi: Does the, uh, we don't know if it's real or not Alzheimer's by saying, I wanted to call. Well, I know Johnny wasn't home.

Keith: We definitely know it's not real. And also the stroke is not real. For sure.

Sylvi: I'm trying to keep kayfabe a little, come on.

Keith: I called them both. I called them both. I knew it. I knew she was faking and she's a faker.

Art: Uh, I need to get my Livia voice. It's fallen off. We haven't been off that long, you know?

Sylvi: Yeah. These things happen.

Art: My, my, my base phrase is the, I don't like that kind of talk.

Sylvi: It's a good way to get into it because you get the, the aw sound in there.

Keith: Gosh, who plays Carmela's mother? And does she play Lorraine Bracco's mother in Goodfellas?

Sylvi: I don't think so. You could— It's Suzanne Shepherd.

Keith: She reminds me of the mother from—

Sylvi: I mean, I'm looking her up now. Let's check it out.

Keith: It is. It is Karen's mother in Goodfellas.

Sylvi: Really?

Keith: Yes.

Sylvi: Oh, that's so fun. I didn't know.

Keith: I thought that she was Karen's mother.

Art: Another good reason they didn't cast Lorraine Bracco as Carmela. You never could have gotten away with that.

Keith: No, no.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Um, uh, but yeah, uh, and weirdly a similar dynamic to her dynamic with her husband in Goodfellas as well. You know, she's sort of critical and loud and angry, and she sends her quiet, sad husband off to go to the store. Her—

Art: We're gonna get more Hugh as the—

Sylvi: Hugh is so fun.

Art: Both of these characters are gonna start appearing more and, and do get more things to do.

Keith: She's just awful. She's awful in a different way than Livia is, but like, that she shows up to see her daughter at their home after who knows how fucking long. And is like— Can't do anything but complain about, uh, Livia, complain about, um— Remind, uh, Carmela about the awful things that Livia has said to her? Like, at a moment when Carmela's already struggling with feeling distant from Tony, having her mom show up and be like, don't you remember how Livia was like, Tony will get bored of you? And it's like, yeah, thanks, thanks, Mom. Great. Awesome.

Sylvi: It sucks. It's so brutal. I feel so bad for her.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, it's just not a nice, uh— It just doesn't seem like a very nice relationship.

Art: Oh, word?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: The Sopranos and, a parent-child relationship doesn't seem very nice?.

Keith: At some point there'll be a nice parent somewhere.

Sylvi: We'll see.

Darcy: Maybe.

Keith: Maybe.

Darcy: I don't— Melfi seemed like a nice parent.

Sylvi: Yeah, the son kind of sucks though.

Keith: There's the scene in the therapist's office where they're doing family therapy where the son was trying to explain his problems with his father's like, implications, and Melfi cuts him off to continue to argue with her husband.

Sylvi: That's fair.

Darcy: Yeah, you're right.

Keith: And that happens. You can be a good mom and still do that. But if they're illustrating things—

Art: Yes, I certainly hope, as I am certainly hopefully on the beginning part of my parenting journey, that I am allowed to make one mistake and still end up as a good parent.

Keith: As long as that one mistake isn't supposed to be an illustrative scene within a TV show, then you'll be okay.

Art: Oh no, I never know when my scenes are illustrative.

Sylvi: Be careful, man.

Keith: It's— If it's one of your only scenes, then it will be. It has to be.

Art: Oh fuck, I have to figure out who in my life is the camera of the TV show.

Keith: Yeah, that's, that's the most important thing. And then you just never want to make a mistake in front of the camera.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But you know, I don't know if that kid will show back up. And I, I hope the— I hope the kid and the ex-husband show back up. I thought they were fun.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Oh, that was the other thing. That was like the third pillar of the conversation of the conservative ocean that the show is kind of swimming in, is the show kind of affirming Richard's worldview about Tony. Like, he seems kind of— He seems crazy and judgmental in a way that is like, this guy's clearly insane. But then the show like, works overtime to bring all of his kind of reasoning into reality. And I found that kind of frustrating. The— I don't know, is it too— is it the wrong time to talk about the diner scene?

Art: No.

Sylvi: No, I think we're here because the, the, the, um, scene of him losing his temper is right towards the end of the, uh, right towards the end of the barbecue because that's when, when Janice takes off. My only, uh, real question is, do you guys want to talk about the, um, scene where he almost loses consciousness while looking at Pussy

barbecuing before we move on to there? Or is there not much to really talk about there other than—

Keith: I'll say that sort of in the context of the second episode, this takes on that sort of Twin Peaks-y dreamlike significance.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: To me, it sort of feels like, paranatural.

Sylvi: Okay.

Keith: Paranatural?

Sylvi: Cool comic. That's a comic I like.

Keith: Um, oh, I know the comic.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: It's like, what's one step under supernatural?

Sylvi: Sure, it's better than Supernatural though. That show sucks.

Keith: Um, oh my God, sucks, dude. That's like such a bad show.

Sylvi: Media Club minus. But yeah, shout out Paranatural. Check out Paranatural if you haven't. It's a fun time.

Keith: Um, Uh, yeah, well, so whatever's in between natural and supernatural, that's what this is.

Sylvi: It's, it's, it's a little mystical.

Keith: It's a little mystical. There's a little bit of a— Yeah, it's like, it's like he's receiving the truth about Big Pussy through his nervous system and almost shutting down. That's what it, that's what it feels like within the context.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Um, which is fun. Uh, I also like all, you know, the boys all singing at the barbecue like it's 1956. It just feels like a very weird thing to just like, break into song together. Uh, and then yeah, Tony go— Actually, I have a, I have a button for this. Should we just play this?

Sylvi: Yes, please.

Keith: Okay.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: Don't yell, don't scream. All cutlery stays right where it is. How's the bagels in this place? Come on, you don't answer my calls, I got no choice.

Melfi: Walking away is a choice. Ruining my practice, it's a choice.

Tony: You got your office back. No harm done.

Melfi: One of my patients committed suicide because I wasn't available to her. You know what that means to me? She can't eat bagels. She can't call in sick because she's feeling blue. She's gone. She's in the ground because of you.

Tony: All right, I don't deserve your help. I hate your fucking system, I told you.

Melfi: Fuck you.

Tony: But I got a family, and believe it or not, they're better off with me than without me. And I don't know what else to do. I drove off the road a couple days back.

Melfi: You look fine.

Tony: Yeah, but. You always told me if I was driving, something happened...

Melfi: That was a different time for us.

Tony: All right, I don't blame you. Maybe you can recommend somebody else.

Melfi: I would never ask another colleague to get involved in this. How many more people have to die for your personal growth?

Tony: Look at me. I swear to Jesus Christ, nobody got killed because of you.

Melfi: Get out of my life.

[audio ends]

Keith: This is a great scene. Lorraine Bracco's killing it. She's doing so good. She's in a totally different space than she normally is in the show.

Sylvi: It's great. I, I love the venom when she says, get out of my life.

Keith: Yeah. And when she tells— Does she say fuck you or fuck off? I don't remember. She says fuck you, I think.

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: Now, okay. I do— I think that it makes the drama of the scene weaker that a patient committed suicide because she wasn't there. To me. I think that what Tony did is bad regardless of if someone committed suicide because she was not available. Also, they showed how she was available in the— Earlier in the episode, taking patients at the motel.

Darcy: I don't think that means that she was immediately available as soon as she had to, like, leave town.

Keith: It just seems like an unearned overdramatization of— Is the worst possible case, the worst possible scenario that they could imagine. I don't know, maybe I'm being hypercritical of it, but it just feels like an unearned thing that they can add in—

Art: Hold on just a second. I'm just writing this down in my notes. Keith Carberry says human death is not that bad.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Sylvi: Damn, get him.

Keith: That's not what— No, I said it was too bad. They should have made it less bad because I think it would have been more— To me, it would have been more interesting to have her be this mad without her having like, a death on her conscience.

Darcy: I mean, I don't know if the death is on her conscience. I think she's pretty appropriately putting it on Tony.

Keith: You don't think she feels any—

Sylvi: I think she's very sad that it happened.

Darcy: Yeah, I think she blames him for it and does not like him.

Keith: She's definitely blaming herself. She's definitely not saying that she blames herself, but she's like, involved in this whole thing. Like, she was a participant in the therapy. She took the warnings from her husband.

Art: I think therapists feel bad when their patients die. Is that what's holding you up here?

Sylvi: The fuck?

Keith: No, I agree that therapists feel bad when their patients die.

Darcy: You're just saying it feels like this is like being like, we don't need this level of melodrama.

Keith: I don't need this level of melodrama. I think that her position would have been stronger if she had been this mad without the obscene, uh, dramatics of like, I wasn't around and someone killed themselves. Like, I don't think that they needed that level of intensity for her to have sold this scene, and that actually it may have been more powerful if she was this mad on the principle instead of on some specific bad outcome.

Darcy: I guess I disagree because I read this— I am seeing this as like her patient dying is the result of her, like, never having any boundaries with Tony ever. And not ending this relationship much, much, much, much sooner and continuing to let this person abuse their relationship and push those boundaries.

Keith: And this is sort of why I was like, well, obviously she blames herself.

Darcy: Yeah, but I don't know if that is— That hasn't been put on film yet. I would be shocked if she doesn't, but I don't know if we've actually seen enough.

Keith: Yeah, this is just a human thought about how when someone dies and you're involved, you blame yourself even when it's not. I mean, this is like a trope of tropes. Like, this is like, it's not, you know, even if it's not your fault, you'll still in part blame yourself. And that she has him to blame instead of herself is like, you know, you know, psychically convenient.

Darcy: Sure.

Keith: Even if it is truly—

Darcy: Now that you say that, I— If I'm assuming we're gonna see Dr. Melfi again, so I'm gonna imagine that that comes up.

Keith: Oh yeah, I'm still banking on my prediction. Sorry, Sylvi, do you have the exact word? I, I said something like a pseudo-romantic gesture.

Sylvi: Yes, hold on, let me tab over. You said, uh, Melfi dumps Tony, he has to do a pseudo-romantic ritual to win her back.

Darcy: I feel really good. I'm doubling down on my bet too.

Keith: Which one was yours?

Darcy: Uh, Sylvi, do you remember which one I'm talking about? Can you read that?

Sylvi: Uh, Junior seeing a therapist? Is that the one?

Darcy: No, no, no, no, no. This was— No, it's— The bit's ruined now. Uh, Melfi. Melfi's gonna hold a gun sometime.

Sylvi: I mean...

Keith: I do remember that. I do remember that.

Darcy: I feel very confident that Melfi's gonna hold a gun.

Sylvi: Sorry, I went for the therapy connection as opposed to the Melfi holds— I missed Melfi holds a gun, uh, there.

Keith: I'm— I'm excited to see how Melfi gets back into the show, uh, as his therapist, because—

Art: Yes, I hate to get too meta here, but of course, um, Mel— Lorraine Bracco is still the second-biggest star in the show, and therefore sort of needs to hang around.

Keith: There's no— There's no world where I think that they cut her out of the show at the start of season 2. I would not— For a million dollars, I wouldn't believe you. So I'm confident that she's back in the show. Now, is she going to officially be his therapist? I mean, I would say 95% chance yes, because that's the show. That's like, the conceit of the show.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: And so—

Art: Yeah, shows can throw away their premise, but it's usually not so soon.

Keith: Yeah, and— God, you know, I think I really hate it when they do. It's pretty common, actually. Every time a show throws away its premise to like, be like, and this is what we are now, I'm like, I kind of— I was bought into the original premise, actually. Um, but anyway, that's not what this is about. Uh, yeah, I really want to see how that happens. That's the other thing about a patient having committed suicide is I worry that

maybe they've raised the stakes on the consequences of Tony's actions so high that they'll never be able to properly buy back in that she should be his therapist.

Darcy: Hmm.

Keith: Barring some sort of duress on her part, which is what we talked about earlier. Maybe someone else. Maybe, maybe someone threatens her for him and he never knows. That would be— That could be interesting.

Art: I, I— We're, we're gonna get there. I don't want to get into it too much now, but you're— I, I just think you're making things too complicated.

Keith: I don't think so. I mean, so, you know, a man is dead now. A woman is dead.

Art: Uh-huh.

Keith: Um, maybe she's lying. That would be funny.

Darcy: I don't think she's lying.

Sylvi: That would be funny.

Keith: It'd be funny.

Darcy: I mean, I'm pretty sure when he— In the, in the first season, when he was like, you got to go away for a while, she explicitly said like, I have like, clients and stuff that I'm worried about, like, what would happen to them if I disappeared.

Keith: Yeah, I agree. Yeah, she definitely did say that. I just think it's over the top. It's not a big deal. Is there anything else in this episode that we have to talk about? We're pretty close to the end. He goes home and eats a bowl of pasta. He makes Carmela sit with him while he eats pasta.

Art: Yep. Yeah, the only notes I have that we didn't get to are sort of aesthetic notes. Tony's hideous arm tattoo gets a lot of screen time.

Sylvi: Oh, man.

Keith: I didn't even notice his tattoo.

Art: The other therapist is wearing an absolutely insane outfit. He's wearing jeans, a denim shirt, a bolo tie, and then like, just, like, a tweed jacket over it.

Keith: While we're talking about clothes, Tony is, like, dressed like a J.Crew model in the next episode when he's walking out of the mall. He's got like, the nicest sweater he's ever worn. It's crazy.

Art: James Gandolfini is hot and I'm tired of pretending he's not.

Keith: I didn't say he wasn't hot. I'm just saying— 'Cause normally he just wears a fucking button-down, like a shitty button, like a bowling shirt almost.

Art: Uh, I thought they started dressing him better at the end of the last season. I think we're just, we're just evolving our Tony Soprano a little bit. Oh, and Silvio's Pacino is so bad.

Sylvi: It's so bad.

Keith: I love how bad it is. It's like, super cartoony and cheesy, right? But they love it like that.

Art: I love it to the point of like, do we need to do a whole bonus episode about the every time, just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in scene in The Godfather? Like a whole bonus episode, just that. So we're not going to watch the movie, just that scene. It's starting to become that important.

Keith: It's so funny. Like the idea that he's away for that long and he's like, look, now that I'm back, Please do the— Please do the line for me.

Sylvi: They love it.

Keith: They love it.

Art: He does like three lines. He does the end of Godfather 1, 2, and he— Then he starts like, riffing on it.

Keith: Yeah, they love— They're eating it up.

Art: Do we have any unpushed buttons?

Keith: Uh, Janice and Melfi diner. No, my next button is when Janice goes to the hospital.

Sylvi: All right, let's talk about episode 2 then.

Art: Let's go to episode 2.

Sylvi: Actually, before we do, do we want to take just like a quick 5 so people can run to the bathroom and stuff?

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Art: Sounds good. Yeah, stretch some legs out.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: Just mine.

[musical sting]

Episode 15 [02:18:10]

Sylvi: All right, episode 2, which we have covered. We've talked about, you know, a pretty decent amount of things given, uh, uh, in our first episode here, which I guess works out pretty well for us. Um, Um, but I think the big things are we got a lot more Janice this episode. We got her dynamic with Livia way more. And like, Junior's plot for the season really starts kicking off.

Art: Um, yeah, Junior doesn't have a line in the first episode. Am I right about that?

Sylvi: Junior? Yeah, Junior is only in that montage. And then in the— He's the— We see him at the first scene of this episode talking to Tony through the, the, the like, bulletproof glass phone thing.

Art: Yeah, I love that scene.

Keith: And you know what's interesting about this is how, you know, they're immediately kind of friendlier than you'd think they might be. It's tense. It is tense. But there's— There is like, still a connection there right away like, kind of obviously.

Art: They play a stupid fucking game about not wanting to pick up the phone.

Sylvi: It's really funny.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: They— They're still Tony and Junior. They're still doing that to each other.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: For better or for worse.

Art: I'm beginning to think these are bad guys.

Darcy: I was—

Sylvi: What?!

Darcy: So at this point, it doesn't seem like the New York mob is like, stepping in to like, really like, handle anything or tell anybody how things are supposed to go down.

Keith: Well, I think because Tony was already de facto boss, like, when they're already kind of in the loop. Yeah, yeah. When, when Junior goes to prison, they just go like, well, it's— Now it's official.

Art: Yeah, that is also what I think is the, the read here.

Keith: Um, because weirdly, this is actually part of Tony's plan from the very beginning of season 1, is to let, uh, Junior be a lightning rod for the feds.

Sylvi: Yeah, and it continues to be because he mentions to Bobby later, yeah, he's gonna still be the boss, uh, as far as anyone's concerned.

Keith: Yeah. He's gonna keep his stripes, is what they say?

Sylvi: Yep.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, and then we cut to the, the, the protesting of the racist pipefitters union.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Right? This is a union that they're protesting. It's not the company itself, it's a union company.

Sylvi: So they're protesting the union because there are no Black members, and then also this specific job site does not have any Black workers on it for the same reason.

Keith: Right.

Art: Yeah, yeah. Junior runs the joint fitters union. Massarone Brothers Construction is a joint fitting company of which the people belong to the union.

Keith: Yeah. Okay. And again, God, this is another one of those little things of this sort of right-wing cynicism that feels '90s to me. It's obviously still around, but this is a very '90s flavor of this to me of like— And I'm just going to blow what this plotline is about, which is there's these two reverends, the father and the son. They're both reverends, I think.

Sylvi: They are.

Keith: Yeah. Okay. And the father is a committed activist and the son is actually on the take with the mafia. These protests are basically staged to— God, I couldn't actually tell

you what the point of the protests are, but the younger Reverend is taking money in exchange for jobs, no-show jobs going to non-union Black workers

Art: No, I think they're union Black workers.

Keith: Oh, I thought that they couldn't be union.

Art: If I could explain the scam to you, they do this to get no-show jobs that they split, and then they're just splitting the money that these joint fitters are being paid, but there's no joint fitter. It's just they're paying a salary to Tony and this guy..

Keith: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Okay. And so now what is the— What are the protests doing? Because they're certainly not trying to get Black workers into the union because that would—

Sylvi: It's putting pressure on Massarone to pay them more.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: Okay. Like, they're trying to squeeze money out of the guy who runs the—

Keith: Got it. Got it. Yeah.

Art: Massarone, and I guess by extension whoever is paying Massarone.

Keith: Right.

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: So the protests are merely to fuck with Massarone, slash whatever job site they happen to be going to.

Art: Yes. Essentially, yes.

Keith: Okay. And the dad doesn't know this. And there's like a weird— There's a weird moment of like— Oh, by the way, the father, the elder reverend, is played by Billy Cobb. Cobb or Cobbs?

Sylvi: Uh, Bill Cobbs.

Keith: Bill Cobb. Yeah, he's a great— he's a great character actor. He's in a bunch of stuff. I know him mainly from being in Air Bud and The Hudsucker Proxy.

Sylvi: Sure.

Art: Oh, the guy from Air Bud.

Keith: Yeah, he's in Air Bud.

Sylvi: It just— I— That's a double feature that I've never, uh, expected before, is, is, uh, what popped into my head when you said that.

Keith: I mean, that's— That's acting.

Sylvi: That is acting.

Art: That's fucking acting.

Keith: Go to his IMDb. This guy's in fucking everything. He's in a lot of stuff. I'm looking at it right now. He died two years ago at 90 years old.

Sylvi: And he has four upcoming credits still.

Keith: And he still has four upcoming credits. This guy's in so much shit, but he plays the clockwork guy, Moses the clockwork guy in The Hudsucker Proxy.

Art: Huh.

Keith: Uh, which I think is maybe the Coen Brothers' most underrated movie. I know that the last few years it has gotten maybe a little bit more appreciated, but it's been one of my favorites since I was a kid, and he's great in it. Anyway, he's a good actor. He's great in this too, but he gives, he gives, uh, Tony a little, uh, he gives Tony— I don't know, it wasn't a— It didn't seem to be a moral quandary. It maybe just seemed to be like, a momentary stymieing of his wanting to talk about crime.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, you know, he tells him about, uh, people wanting to be free, and then he goes, I guess I won't talk to your son about crime today. I'll talk— I'll do it later.

Darcy: Well, now that you don't watch the History Channel, I don't know if we've got anything to talk about.

Art: Tony Soprano, freelance History Channel, uh, salesman.

Keith: It's really funny because, I mean, I feel like this is actually a really fun little thing of like a guy who— They, they show you, uh, you know, this reverend, he was in World War II, you know, a guy who lived history, who has something to say. He's idealistic and passionate. And then Tony is like, you ever see the special about submarines on History Channel? And it's— I think it's great. The guy who lived history and is a part of— He's like, his story is a part of history, is sort of what they're trying to get. And then Tony's like, a dumb fuck.

Sylvi: He really is a dumb fuck. It's a great way to put it.

Keith: And I think that's always like when Tony's being a dumb fuck, you know, that's— And then again, like we talked about earlier, he also is the smartest guy out of all the guys he knows.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: It's really funny. Uh, and it's great. It's good stuff.

Sylvi: That's what you get for hanging out with a bunch of dumb fucks.

Keith: Yeah, that's what you get for hanging about.

Art: That's what you get for hanging out with a bunch of dumb fucks. Yeah, bunch of dumb fucks.

Keith: Don't— You never want to be the smartest guy that you hang out with—

Art: Especially if you're a criminal. I think.

Keith: Yeah, that's all— That's also true. If you're a criminal, you should have a smarter guy that you know. Uh, he confronts Janice about the, the sign, and she's got a million excuses for why it makes sense and why it's, you know— Yeah, she's like, I know that it's It's not, oh, you think one sign is gonna stop it from getting sold? It's still listed. And it's like, okay, well, that makes a lot of sense, except for you still took the fucking sign, you weirdo.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: This has one of my favorite bits of like little comedy moments, uh, with Gandolfini where he's— [**Keith:** Oh, with the hose.] So he's like, he's— yeah, he's hosing off the lawn, like the driveway. And he like, when he goes over to talk to Janice, he— the hose is too short and he like tries to pull it but can't.

Darcy: It's so good.

Sylvi: Yeah, that line.

Keith: It's really funny.

Sylvi: It's a really good, Tiny little thing, great bit. That's when I wrote down, people don't give him enough credit for his comedic timing.

Keith: It is comedic, but it's also really real. This is a real— I mean, that's like a natural, the like, my hose isn't quite long enough thing. And then a second bit of realism is he's got his thumb over the nozzle in the exact way that everybody does to get it to spray further, 'cause he, for some reason, doesn't have a spray head on the hose. So he's just like thumbing it, which is also real. Like, that's so funny for the— For Tony Soprano to live in this house and to not have like a spray nozzle on his hose and to just do the thumb thing. Like, you know, they do— They make Tony feel like he grew up poor in the '60s.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Which he did.

Sylvi: They make him feel like he's new money.

Keith: Yeah. And I love that stuff, the Tony doesn't fit in where he lives.

Art: And maybe this has changed in the decades since, but as someone who recently bought a hose head with a spray function, they're not that expensive.

Keith: No, they're like \$3. They're really, really affordable. So there's not a high barrier to entry for a union guy like Tony with his gold— With his gold watch, by the way, and cigar. You know, that cigar probably cost 10 times what a spray head would cost.

Sylvi: Listen, you gotta prioritize.

Keith: I don't know, as a person, you know, I've smoked some cigars in my life. I cannot imagine smoking cigars at the frequency that these guys do. It's just ridiculous. It's way too much.

Darcy: Well, you don't inhale.

Keith: No, I agree. No, I just, just the— It's, I mean, for— Even not inhaling, it gets to your head. It gets in, it gets in you. But it's just—

Darcy: I have a dumb question.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: When were like, spray nozzles invented for the garden hose?

Sylvi: I got no fucking idea, but I bet they were invented by this point.

Art: I bet before the year 2000.

Darcy: I think I'm thinking like, I'm thinking like, oh man, I don't know if they had like, a hose thing that I'm thinking of today where it's got like, the fucking 10 different options. But yeah, they probably had the little thing that you just screw on.

Keith: Yeah, 'cause all it is is a restrictor, right? It just, you know, at the, at the very least—

Darcy: A restrictor that you can then unleash.

Keith: Right, exactly. Yeah. Uh, and, uh, you know, they could have had it. This could be an 1800s invention and I wouldn't be that surprised. You know what I mean? This could have been—

Sylvi: That's a beautiful sentence.

Art: I'm all the way at like, wait, how long have we had hoses?

Keith: Right. How long have we had hoses? But like, how long? That means how— 'cause a hose is just a long sink, right?

Darcy: A hose is just a pipe.

Art: Uh-huh.

Keith: And so how long have we had sinks? And then once you've got a sink, you can have a hose.

Darcy: Mm.

Keith: If someone in 1895 had like a stainless steel sprayer head on a hose, I wouldn't be that surprised, because it's, it's easier than light bulbs, that's for sure.

Darcy: That's true.

Keith: I could make a sprayer hose, a sprayer nozzle for a hose before I could make a light bulb.

Art: Well, sure, especially if you're— If you start with a hose head, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Um, what do we want to talk to you about next? Uh, here, I guess getting no more Janice stuff, going to the hospital

Art: Yeah, I love that we get Livia like, I can't eat this tapioca. Get me some strawberry ice cream or vanilla ice cream? I don't remember.

Darcy: Strawberry.

Art: I think strawberry ice cream. And then Janice comes in, the first thing she does is offer her the tapioca pudding that she just finished saying was fucking gross. That's like an A+ Livia to me. Like, trying to be friendly by offering something you just said was disgusting to, again, your firstborn child.

Sylvi: God, gotta really hit that one home. Uh, but you know, daughters, daughters do take better care of their mothers, which is something she does say later.

Keith: Okay.

Art: Yeah, she says it to AJ or something, and she doesn't mean it. She's just fucking lying. She doesn't think Janice wants to or is taking good care of her. She just thinks AJ will fucking say it to Tony and it'll piss him off. She's just the most evil character in this show about people who do murders all the time.

Sylvi: Yeah, it rocks. I love it.

Keith: And you can tell that that's how evil she is because why would she offer someone tapioca that she refuses to eat?

Art: Oh, the call is coming from inside the house. I know that doesn't really work here, but I feel like it works here.

Keith: I would, I would also like to draw attention to a dynamic I've observed in my real life, which is racist old women who are extremely nice to their Black nurses.

Sylvi: Oh yeah, she's— That, that was something I kind of wanted to, to mention, is the, like, um, both her and Tony are really racist except when it, like, they need something from the, the Black people in their lives.

Art: That's not fair. Livia is later nice to a Black doctor. This is—

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: That's not fair to what Keith said. That line still applies.

Keith: Sorry, I said nurses, but doctors are also included in this.

Art: She says that she's going to leave all her money to that Black doctor.

Keith: Yes. Yeah. I've seen this multiple times from multiple people. Just the— There's something about the specific kind of old lady racist that, that allows for being especially nice to your nurses and doctors still. I can't, I can't fully explain it. I've just seen— I was like, oh, this is real. This is real to me. Although she wasn't nice to the, the, the original nurse.

Art: No, the nurse that came to her house.

Keith: I'm gonna play this hospital scene.

Art: Please.

Keith: And after, I'm gonna tell you the rewrite that I need to go back in time to put in. Oh, there's a line. There's a line. It might— It may be too comedic for the show, but I really, really wanted this to happen so bad, and it didn't.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Janice: Look at you, all dressed, out of bed.

Livia: Yeah, but you see my hand? It's all black and blue from where they stuck in the needle.

Janice: That's how you get better.

Livia: You don't care. You weren't here 5 minutes.

Janice: I had to go to the city for a few days. I'm pitching my self-help video. Lady Kerouac, or Packing for the Highway to a Woman's Self-Esteem.

Livia: You could never stand it here. You could never stand yourself. And that's why you ran away.

Janice: Let's not go there today, Ma.

Livia: You think it was easy for me? You don't know the kind of man your father was.

Janice: What do you mean?

Livia: Nobody knows. Nobody knows what I went through.

Janice: What about Daddy?

Livia: One thing I could tell you, it would kill him to see me now.

[audio ends]

Keith: Um, oh, this isn't the scene.

[Sylvi laughter]

Sylvi: Well, let's talk about it.

Sylvi: Because we're here.

Art: Something we missed in the first episode, um, Meadow— When Meadow goes to visit Livia, she says— She whispers to her, at night, they hit us.

[group laughter]

Sylvi: Yes, she does. Uh, I fully forgot about that. Thank you for bringing it up. It's so funny.

Keith: Oh, it's so funny. Just a complete— And Meadow knows she's lying. Meadow is, you know, she loves her grandma, but she's not under any illusion about her behavior. She's like, at some point she's like, what are her— What are, uh, your grandma's hobbies? Janice is trying to get in good with her mom, and she's like, what does she like? She's like, negativity. The only thing that she can think of that she likes is not liking things. Um, which is true. Uh, yeah, the scene that I'm thinking of happens later, so we'll get to it when we get to it. I ge— So I guess the thing that I want to say about this is, um, she kind of gets close to maybe revealing something about Johnny Boy Soprano. Um, you know, maybe she's talking more shit, but it seems like she all— You know, she has her reflexive like, he was a saint, and it seems like she was going to say something honest about him and then backs off.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Um, and I, and I would love to see where that goes.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Um, especially, you know, considering the, the conversations we had in the flashback episode of feeling like the characterization of Johnny Boy was very rose-tinted.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Um, and that— And but, but, uh, the characterization of Livia was, you know, fully realized cartoon villain in that same flashback.

Sylvi: Yes, that is true.

Keith: Yeah. So very interested to see if that develops. I think that might be episode 4 or 5 of, of this season. If anybody— If anybody's like thinking about going and listening to that, that— I think it was episode 4.

Sylvi: Of the Media Club Plus series.

Keith: Of Media Club Plus, right. So it would have been episode 7 or 8, whichever the flashback was. 7. It would have been 7, is the flashback episode. Just the way that, like, not only that Livia really goes into Janice here, but that it was specifically Janice being like, I'm going to sell people a video about how to have high self-esteem. And immediately goes into brutally cutting her down.

Sylvi: It's, it's really funny. I like— It's brutal, but it's really funny. Um, she's horrible. She's, she's the worst. Uh, and it rocks how much she's the worst.

Keith: Um, I don't think that we need to talk about the scene in the parking lot really with the joint fitter guy very much. But I am going to—

Sylvi: No, it's quick. It's him being— He says some racist shit and then gives Tony money.

Keith: Yeah. But I am going to send pictures of his shirt, which I'm like, what? Where? Like, why is he wearing a much nicer shirt than usual here?

Sylvi: How come he's got that shit on?

Keith: How come he's got that shit on? Look at this shirt.

Art: He is a rich and stylish man.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: He looks like he's going— He looks like he's in Frasier.

Sylvi: Man, imagine if Frasier was his psychiatrist.

Art: God. That would be a fun— Imagine if Niall was his psychiatrist.

Keith: I've actually only ever seen one episode of Frasier.

Darcy: I've never seen Frasier. I'm just, I'm just saying words.

Sylvi: I used to get excited if I got home from school soon enough to catch Frasier on TV.

Art: Frasier is good.

Keith: I like Cheers, but I didn't really like Frasier.

Art: Um, they're so different. Um, Cheers is also good. Um, David Hyde Pierce is just so good in Frasier. We don't have time.

Keith: I love David Hyde Pierce because of Wet Hot American Summer.

Art: Is it time to talk about Bobby yet?

Sylvi: It's time to talk about Bobby. Let's talk about Bobby.

Darcy: Let's talk about Bobby.

Keith: Let's talk about Bobby.

Art: In the, in the opening scene, one of the things Tony demands of Junior is that Bobby show up to Satriale's— I guess not necessarily exactly there, but that Bobby is Junior's last guy. He wants him to come out of his mouse hole. And he appears at Satriale's, and they tell him how things are gonna go, what Junior's new deal is. And he's like, I always liked you. And he's like—

Sylvi: I don't know why you're talking to me like that.

Keith: He says I inherited Junior, I don't think you got a reason to talk to me this way. I always liked you. And Tony says—

Art: And he's like, bullshit, but let's assume that's true from now on.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And as he leaves, he's like, to the victor belong the spoils.

Keith: I've got it. I've got it. I've got it.

Art: You got it?

Sylvi: Oh, wonderful.

Keith: It's because it's so fucking funny.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Tony: Now, as far as the rest of everything that Junior owned, it's now mine.

Bobby: I'll get this to him, Tony.

Tony: That's it.

Bobby: To the victor belongs the spoils.

Tony: Why don't you get the fuck out of here before I shove your quotations book up your fat fucking ass?

[audio ends]

Keith: It's so funny.

Sylvi: He's so mean to him.

Keith: Tony hated that.

Art: But Bobby fills a very important comedic role in this show. You see it in this episode, in this scene. You see it in the “seriously, consider salad” scenes later. And I mean, this character exists because we're going to have this Junior house arrest arc. And because it's television, Junior needs someone to talk to. So they needed to invent a character who could just sit next to Junior all the time.

Keith: And it's so sad because later we see them, uh, together at the optometrist or whatever to get the money from the pipefitter guy. And Junior desperately wants this

guy to be Mikey Palmise and to talk him up and to tell him he looked great and to tell him that he's doing the right thing and to tell him he doesn't need new glasses, that his glasses look good. Like, he's just trying to get some fucking ass-kissing from this guy. But Bobby, like, this is why, like, Tony thinks he's lying about always liking him. But I'm like, I don't know if this guy has it in him to lie. Either like, psychologically or just effort-wise, it just seems beyond him.

Art: He's got it. He drives a Lincoln.

Sylvi: God, that's so funny.

Darcy: So funny.

Keith: Yeah, I feel like— And then he walks out of the— After saying, I'll get this message to Junior, he walks out and it's sort of like the whole time the brain is processing, and then he's like, oh wait, I should probably say something big about like, how the war is ending. And so he just turns and says, to the victor go the spoils, and gets immediately reamed out. It's so funny. It's really funny.

Art: A thing I know about this is, um, they, they, they cast the role, and— But they had the line about, you know, 'cause all Tony does in this episode is talk about how fat he is, But this guy is about the same size as James Gandolfini, so he's wearing a very hastily improvised fat suit.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Art: Throughout this whole season. He describes it in The Sopranos oral history book as like they just shoved car cushions in his pants. Like, he has a very poorly assembled, improvised fat suit on.

Keith: I totally believe that, looking at him.

Sylvi: That's really funny. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Art: And, uh, I, I don't want to get into any spoilers here, but as he becomes more of a fixture on the show, they got him a proper fat suit and he became very grateful for that.

Keith: That's nice. I'm glad that they did that for him.

Sylvi: It's probably uncomfortable just having a bunch of, like, pillows shoved down your pants.

Keith: This guy—

Sylvi: Instead of something made for the job.

Keith: This guy is amazing. I love him.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: He's so good. He's so funny.

Art: He had three scenes in this episode, you're already all the way on board.

Keith: I'm a million percent on board with Bobby. Huge, huge, huge, huge fan. Everything that he— I mean, he's effortlessly stealing scenes, it feels like.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Keith: In a good way.

Sylvi: And hey, guess what? That's gonna continue.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And this is like one of his—

Darcy: Love it.

Art: This is like his big break. This is like, this guy worked before, but this is like—

Keith: Yeah. Good for him. I mean, is he in other stuff? I mean, I would watch this guy in almost anything, I think.

Art: He had an uncredited part in Casino. He had a minor role in Joe Dirt.

Keith: Good.

Art: And then of course after this one works.

Keith: Yeah, anything after that's bigger?

Art: Nothing that I've seen, but some— I've heard of some of these things.

Keith: Okay. Well, good for him for working.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: It's hard to be working.

Art: It is hard to be working. Um, 113 episodes of The Secret Life of the American Teenager.

Darcy: Ohhh.

Keith: Oh, well, good for him.

Art: And 146 episodes of Blue Bloods, a show I wouldn't watch if you paid me.

Sylvi: I thought you were gonna say Bluey.

Keith: That's a Media Club Minus.

Sylvi: Blue Bloods or Bluey?

Keith: Blue, blue— Both.

Darcy: Whoa.

Art: Whoa.

Keith: I, I find the prevalence of adults without kids talking about Bluey in my life to be only irritating.

Sylvi: Oh, that's fair.

Art: Well, as an adult with kids, I hear a lot of adults with kids talk about it and they're very fond of it. It's very important to me.

Keith: That's fine. That's fine. Um, I don't know. I just, I saw a couple scenes and I was like, I don't know.

Art: You don't know how bad kids TV is.

Sylvi: What's the big deal with this fucking dog?

Keith: Oh, I'm sure it's better than kids TV for sure.

Darcy: Media Club Plus bonus where we make Keith watch Caillou.

Keith: Caillou is contemporary with my younger kids. I'm very familiar with that fucking piece of shit, Caillou.

Darcy: Okay.

Sylvi: Okay. Damn.

Darcy: That kid fucking sucks.

Sylvi: That kid fucking sucks.

Keith: That kid sucks. That kid sucks ass.

Sylvi: Each day he grows some more though.

Keith: He didn't. It was a lie.

Sylvi: No, you're right.

Keith: My sister was watching Caillou. I was tearing my hair out as an 8-year-old.

Sylvi: Oh, you, 'cause you wanted to look like him?

Keith: Yes. That's why. He was in, he inspired me.

Art: Um, Junior wants—

Sylvi: We should keep moving just 'cause we have an out here.

Keith: Yeah. We have an out. We have an out.

Darcy: We have an out.

Art: Junior wants Tony to, to make nice with his mom. And it sort of seems to be about his ego, right? Like, Junior wants Tony to reconcile with Liv because, well, it does two things. One, it sort of validates that he ordered the hit and not Livia.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Art: And two, it means that the two— That he was not having a romantic relationship with Livia, which he is concerned that the Greengrove guy is telling people.

Sylvi: Yeah, he gets so— There's a lot of him saying motherless fucks this episode, and I think that's one of them, uh, which I do love as a Junior— And he doesn't say— He doesn't say like motherfuckers. He says motherless fucks, which I think is— It has similar, uh, vibe but different energy.

Keith: Yeah, because it's like, you weren't taught how to behave.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah. Uh, but it's also funny because Tony is trying to be motherless now.

Keith: He is, yeah. She's dead to him.

Sylvi: She's dead to him.

Keith: Uh, two things. Do we have any comments on the FBI guy that's hanging out with Big Pussy or the judge scene that we haven't covered?

Sylvi: I mean, we talked about the stuff with Skip and, uh, Big Pussy. I do think it's really fun. Yeah, Skip, Skip, uh, what's his surname? He's— It's a good name.

Art: Um, Skip Gismonti.

Sylvi: No, that is Sean's surname, is Gismonti. It's— Why, where did I put it on the sheet? Um, Skip Lipari.

Art: Um, yeah it is.

Sylvi: Played by Louis Lombardi. Just fun names to say in general. Shout out to the, the beautiful Italian people.

Keith: This guy is more fucking mob feeling than almost anybody else in the show, which is really—

Sylvi: I love that they like that he has such like, mob guy energy, especially when you first see him. I mentioned it, he's in like, one of the tracksuits, he's got like, a gold chain that they all fucking wear, and like, so you kind of just think it's another—

Keith: This is sort of why I had to watch the scene twice, because I was like, wait, is this guy not his brother like they said?

Sylvi: Yeah, it rocks, right?

Keith: Yeah, it's really funny. Um, uh, and then the scene where they— Where, where Junior gets out of, uh, having to be in jail so that he can, he can be under house arrest, so he has access to a mob guy's— Or was he a mob guy or just a gambler? It was a gambler's son who's a cardiologist?

Sylvi: Yeah, Dr. Shrek.

Keith: Dr.— Yeah, Dr. Shrek.

Sylvi: Mm. Yeah.

Keith: It's a good scam.

Sylvi: It's a good scam. It's a good— like, I like that they have another version of the, of the Greengrove meeting in a way, um, too, where it's like, oh well, um, we found another place that can't be bugged. I'm sure this wasn't— Will never, never come back up.

Art: Yeah, it's, uh, it's, it's— They're just laying a lot of groundwork here because like, we need Tony and Junior scenes, or the show doesn't turn. And so, if Junior's gonna be under house arrest, we need a place where he can meet with Tony.

Keith: Now, I'll say this. Maybe they bugged this place. Sylvi, you've seen the show. Maybe this is you saying, of course they bugged it.

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't actually remember whether they do or not. It's just I remember them saying that about Greengrove.

Keith: The difference with Greengrove is that they thought no one would look there 'cause it would be a waste of time. But this place, they're legally not allowed to bug, and so the evidence would be inadmissible. But of course, you could still get some use out of inadmissible evidence by using that evidence to gather other evidence, which I think is still legal.

Sylvi: Would the FBI do something like that? Would the FBI do something that's a little unethical?

Keith: I think they never would, ever.

Sylvi: Never. Never ever.

Keith: But yeah, but of course, You know, it's— I assume it's pretty easy to use illegal evidence to illegally gather other evidence, and then you can spin it into being permissible.

Art: I don't know, isn't that fruit of the poison tree? Isn't that what that saying's about?

Keith: Oh, it's definitely— It's still illegal, but you— But it's easier because you can— You can make up how you found it. Yeah, you can't make up how you found a bugged recording, but you can make up how you found, you know, the thing that the bug recording leads you to. I'm just speculating. This is all speculation.

Art: I frankly don't remember.

Keith: Yeah. And that's fine. Uh, I, I like that, uh, the— Every time they meet, there's— They, they, they see each other three times in this episode, and each time they're friendlier and friendlier, even though Junior's getting absolutely fucked in this deal with Tony.

Sylvi: Oh, yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: He's taking everything from him.

Sylvi: But he can't do anything about it because he needs what he's getting.

Art: His alternative is getting nothing or maybe even getting shot.

Keith: Yeah, but Junior's so status and appearances motivated that— You could have written this in that, you know, Junior's in it to the death, and I would have believed you. There's, you know, he seems like a guy who wouldn't mind going out in a hail of bullets.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Art: I think I agree that would have been completely consistent. It's just not—

Keith: It's just not what happened, what turned out to happen. But yeah, instead, every time they see each other, they're warmer and warmer, which is interesting.

Sylvi: He loves that old man.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, and the old man loves him.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Keith: He was immediately swayed by Junior to kill that fucking Greengrove guy.

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: Convince him instantly to kill this guy.

Sylvi: Very quick.

Keith: Which is funny because in that conversation it was largely based around how fucking stupid Junior is for letting his mom like, tell him what to do and trick him into killing people. And then he goes out and immediately kills the guy for Junior, basically.

Darcy: For him too, because Junior's like, this guy's spreading the rumors that you tried to kill your mom.

Keith: Yeah, but he did so fast, there's no way he could have confirmed that that's what was happening. He just took his uncle at his word, which is also what Junior did.

Art: I think it's a little bit, who gives a shit? Um, you know?

Keith: Yeah, I'm just saying there's, you know, there's a world where Junior has ulterior motives for wanting this guy dead.

Art: Yeah. Uh, I mean, it's not even ulterior. He says it, right? He's like, and he's the one who's saying I'm—

Keith: No, sorry. That's the “terior” motive. And then the ulterior motive would be some unsaid thing that it's like, actually, it's good for Junior and bad for Tony to have killed this guy. I'm not saying that's what— It just could have been the case. If your enemy who you're in a mafia war with tells you like, hey, by the way, you might want to kill this guy, I would have the thought of like, well, why would he just give me that? Maybe he's lying.

Art: Sure, but it's sort of like, if you're Tony, you're not in a mafia war with Junior anymore.

Keith: Yeah, that's true.

Art: You won.

Keith: Yeah. What's, uh, what is the next scene that we have that we really need to talk about?

Art: Uh, the dinner scene?

Sylvi: Yeah, the, the dinner scene's probably a big one. Yeah.

Keith: Um, uh, oh, just real quick before that scene, there's two little things. Uh, at least I, I think that this is the right order. Uh, it's, it's the scene where, um, she gets Livia, uh—Janice gets Livia like, happy because of the movie—With the Pavarotti record and the flowers.

Sylvi: Yeah. Uh, yeah, that is before— That's the scene right before the dinner. Yeah.

Keith: Uh, well, there's, there's another scene too because, um, uh, Bobby and Tony meet up again. This is the, uh, “start considering salads” scene, which I have a button for because of Bobby's really, really funny post-Tony leaving comeback.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Bobby: Fat fuck. Why don't you look in the mirror sometime, you insensitive cocksucker?

[audio ends]

Keith: Calling Tony Soprano an insensitive cocksucker is really funny.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's pretty good.

Keith: And also kind of like, you know, just putting the— The— It out there that like, I'm not that much fatter than you, man. Uh, it's really funny. I really like Bobby a lot.

Sylvi: "Look in the mirror, you fat fuck." God.

Keith: It's so good. Insensitive cocksucker.

Sylvi: Insensitive cocksucker.

Keith: Huge spit on the ground. I mean, a mouthful of spit, he spits.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: It's crazy. It's so funny. Uh, so I guess he really doesn't like Tony.

Sylvi: You know, he's not really given a good reason to like Tony though.

Keith: No. Maybe if Tony was nicer. Maybe if Tony was a little— It's funny because Tony has no reason to be mean to this guy. He's right when he says, I inherited Junior. I don't think you got reason to talk to me this way. I always liked you. He has no reason— He's right that Tony's being an asshole, I guess, simply by association of Junior.

Art: Maybe he should be in therapy.

Keith: Maybe he should be in therapy.

Darcy: Ohhh.

Keith: Maybe sensitive about his own weight, and so he's just having fun calling everyone who's bigger than him fat.

Sylvi: That does sound pretty good.

Keith: 'Cause he also calls Big Pussy fat all the time.

Darcy: True.

Keith: And Big Pussy's really not that much bigger than—

Sylvi: And then we also get the line of him being like, she just still sees me as that little fat kid. So yeah, I think you're right on the money of this being a big insecurity for him when he's talking about Janice.

Keith: Yeah. What do we have to say about this dinner scene?

Art: It's so fucking funny. AJ starts talking about DNA, and then Carmela does the, you know, I saw on Inside Edition that with DNA, there'll be no more— And it's just like, what the— It's just so late '90s mom watching Inside Edition, DNA being like, a new thing. Like, it's a— It's this perfect, like, little fucking time capsule scene.

Keith: Yeah. And it's also, I, uh, you know, she's just like, desperately trying to have a normal conversation. It's—

Sylvi: yeah, she just wants anything to be like— Because the, the tension— there's a lot of tension in the room.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, but also like, concerns about the Unknown Soldier is like, it had to be— It had— That had to feel weird even at the time to be like, this is what I'm thinking about. I'm thinking about DNA, no— Meaning that we no longer have any unknown soldiers.

Sylvi: Well, do you know how I read that? Was that like, oh, bringing this up is a way for Tony to maybe talk about some History Channel shit he's into, as opposed to just like, stewing.

Keith: Yeah, but that didn't work.

Sylvi: But I don't know, maybe I'm off.

Art: Especially because pre-9/11 like, America was sort of not thinking about war at this time.

Keith: Yeah, they call— Well, they call out the, the, the reverends call out the various wars, and they mentioned the Iraq War, but it was the other Iraq War. Yeah, that we

don't even think about anymore. We've got a whole new Iraq War to replace the Iraq War.

Art: Yeah, Desert Storm is like, quaint at this point.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. There's a scene with Tony and Janice talking about like— He's like, she can live on the street, she can't have the house, take her back to Seattle, whatever. They have kind of this like, back— He tries to bond with her over Jimi Hendrix's house in Seattle.

Sylvi: It's like he's really just trying to be like her little brother there, and instead she's like, nope, we're talking about Mom.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Uh, it's like, the most just like— I don't know, it made me a little sad. But Tony doesn't really deserve that much sympathy given what's been going on the past few days, or the past few episodes.

Keith: Um, he makes another, uh— This is, this is great— He's mad about the taxpayers footing the bill of her Medicaid.

Sylvi: Yeah. Guy who famously pays all his taxes, Tony Soprano.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: Hey, well, we know Junior pays all of his taxes.

Sylvi: It's true.

Keith: No, not Junior.

Art: That's how they got Capone. I think Tony is probably paying a fair amount of taxes.

Keith: Well, he's paying taxes on what he's legally earning.

Sylvi: That's— yeah. Like, on what he declares.

Keith: Yeah. So it's all the illegally earned money that also he's not declaring. Like, if all of a sudden he's declaring hundreds of extra thousands of dollars worth of income, And they're like, income from what? And he's like, don't worry about it. That would be very funny.

Art: This will come up more later in the show, but like, having ways to pay taxes on your illegal money is actually a reasonable part of Tony's life.

Keith: Sure, fair. Um, they get the gang of goons to beat up the Black protesters. Um, I mean, not a great look for the mafia, frankly. [**Sylvi:** Wow.] Yeah, but they're also—they're all in on it, kinda.

Sylvi: I mean, yeah.

Keith: Watching these guys get out of the cars with their fucking wrenches and pipes is so funny.

Sylvi: Fucking sunglasses. It's the sunglasses that really got me personally, that made me laugh. I don't know.

Keith: Also, the way that Chris's goons like, buckle at the knees when they see Tony Soprano sitting in a car is so fucking funny. It's so funny.

Sylvi: He's a celebrity.

Keith: We gotta go say hi to Tony! Now we look like jerk-offs! And they do.

Art: Because you are.

Keith: And they did. Yeah, they did look like jerk-offs. Um, uh, I think one of the bigger scenes though, is what follows this with Livia and Janice back in the hospital. This is the button that I have, that I have a comedy rewrite of.

Sylvi: Okay.

Darcy: Ooh.

Keith: Yeah.

[audio from The Sopranos starts playing]

Janice: Ma.

Sylvi: I'm so curious.

Janice: Ma, you're gonna be getting out of here soon. Wanna go home?

Livia: Home?

Janice: Back to the house?

Livia: My house?

Janice: Uh-huh.

Livia: No, I don't think so. I'll go back to the other place.

Janice: To the nursing home? No, that's for people who don't have anybody to look after them.

Livia: Oh, it's not that bad, and they give you fresh towels every day.

Janice: Barbara said you hated it.

Livia: But it's too much trouble.

Janice: No, Ma, you can't. You can't go back there.

Livia: Why not?

Janice: Because. Because it's, it's dangerous there.

Livia: What are you talking about?

Janice: The owner is missing. Mr. Cappiano? They suspect foul play.

[sounds of Livia coughing and choking]

Janice: Ma, ma, you okay? Nurse! Nurse! It's my mother.

Nurse: What is it? What's the matter? Are you okay, Mrs. Soprano?

Livia: Oh, oh.

Nurse: Take a deep breath.

Livia: Oh my God.

Nurse: Breathe.

Livia: Why do they make cookies that way?

Janice: Oh, you scared me, Ma.

Livia: Oh, would you just stop it? Stop it. Just give me a minute. Go, go. Stop hovering.

[audio ends]

Keith: I love that scene. There's a lot going on there. I desperately wanted her, when she says the nursing home, for Livia to say, it's a retirement community.

Sylvi: Oh, that would've been good.

Keith: I wanted that so bad.

Darcy: That would've been great.

Keith: A whole season of her like, absolutely raging about Greengrove to then turn around immediately and be like, no, actually I want to go back there.

Darcy: Yeah, it's not that bad.

Keith: It's not. It's great. They give you towels. It's a, it's a retirement community. It's not a nursing home. And of course would never, I think, probably admit that to Tony.

Darcy: Oh God, no.

Sylvi: No, never in her fucking life. Are you kidding?

Darcy: Who knows if she even thinks and feels that way, right? But it— Every time her and Janice are together, it feels like just both of them trying to get the other one to like, get caught in their act.

Keith: Yeah, Tony always feels like he's trying to fix his mother or make her happy or make her satisfied, where Janice feels like she's trying to win versus her mother.

Darcy: Yes.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: And Livia is way too smart to win against, at least in this way.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Because to me, this feels like—

Keith: Oh, she's got a lot of experience being negative and manipulative.

Darcy: Yeah. This to me feels like Olivia kind of like, being like, I don't want to go to my house.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Darcy: Why, why, why would you need my house? I don't want to go there.

Keith: Yeah. I have a lovely retirement community that I'm a part of now.

Darcy: Again, to kind of like— and it seems like maybe she's not wrong, but to start the narrative of, well, my kids don't even love me. My daughter just wants me because she wants to kill me for the house.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: And she wants to push me down the stairs.

Keith: And then she would also like— She's choking on the cookie and goes out to get help. And then she like, immediately is mad because she's hovering. Leave me alone. Stop hovering.

Darcy: Also very funny that like, she's talking about, well, you don't need to go to a, like, a medical facility. You— I could take care of you. And then she chokes on a cookie and Janice immediately is like, what the fuck do I do? Ahhhh! [**Keith:** Ill-equipped.] Yeah, just, yeah, a great scene with so many layers. Um, ill-equipped and not interested, right?

Sylvi: Yeah, no interest in being equipped for it.

Darcy: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Okay. Um, they get, um, uh, Meadow has passed her driver's exam. She now wants to drive, uh, Anthony Jr. to the hospital to see his grandma. It doesn't exactly seem like he really wants to go, and she definitely doesn't want to go. She wants to go do some other thing. Uh, they say that Hunter is back in like, eating disorder care.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Uh, but who knows if that's actually true. I mean, it's very plausible, but it just seems like if that's actually what you wanted to do, you may have told your mom that you want to go visit your friend who is at the hospital. But they just needed an excuse to get AJ a scene.

Sylvi: I feel like she wouldn't get permission to see— They've established that she doesn't like, uh, Hunter too, that

Keith: True, but your friend's in the hospital. I mean, come on.

Sylvi: No, for sure.

Keith: Yeah. They just needed to get AJ alone in this room with his grandma so that he can say, DNR, is that like DNA? Like when Janice wants to put you on a DNR, is that the same thing as you having DNA?

Darcy: I heard my dad talking about his friend being DTF, and I don't understand what that is. But I guess it's like DNA.

Keith: I guess it's like DNA. Everything—

Sylvi: I love your AJ voice.

Darcy: Thank you. I fucking love AJ.

Art: Um, I also really love that in these two episodes, people bring people to the hospital with the assumption that they're gonna go see Livia, and then the person who brings them leaves and just sticks the other person with her.

Darcy: Yeah.

Art: Janice did it to Meadow, then Meadow does it to AJ. I assume next episode AJ is gonna find some other kid, take her to the hospital and just leaves.

Sylvi: One of his cousins or whatever that Barbara brought over.

Keith: Yeah. Now I have a fucking Hail Mary here. AJ telling about the DNR. I guess it's not that big of a Hail Mary. Now that I'm like this, I'm saying it, I'm like, this just makes perfect sense.

Sylvi: It's a Hail Mary. Okay.

Keith: I feel like he's telling her about the DNR, and you can see in her eyes when he's telling her about the DNR, this, that she's like, I'm going to trick my daughter into thinking I have this inheritance so that she'll kill me, and then everyone will be sad. It will be my ultimate— It'll be my ultimate way to ruin everyone's life, is to— Is if I get killed by my own daughter.

Sylvi: My secret trick.

Keith: I think that that's what she wants. I think that she wants to— She's— when she has the— 'Cause we know, I believe strongly that she doesn't have the Alzheimer's. So when she starts confusing Janice for Settimia again, like she did with Meadow, Mm-hmm. I believe that that's totally fake. So all of this babbling about the inheritance is only to, trick Janice into believing that there's an inheritance hidden somewhere.

Darcy: Yeah, I agree.

Keith: And when she calls Carmela to like tell her about Janice and be like, she's a snake in the grass, that it feels to me like she's like intentionally either framing her daughter for murder, for attempted murder, or conspiracy to commit murder, or intentionally setting herself up to be murdered by Janice.

Darcy: Hmm.

Keith: This is what I believe.

Sylvi: This is what Keith believes.

Keith: This is what I believe.

Art: That's what Keith believes.

Keith: Get everyone in Friends at the Table to record that, and then I'll have a button with it for whenever I believe something.

Sylvi: You'll have us all saying it at the same time.

Keith: 3, 2, 1.

Sylvi, Darcy, Art: This is what Keith believes.

Keith: That'll be good.

Sylvi: I like that.

Keith: It's gonna be an 8-second-long button of people just saying that over and over. And you'll know if I do that in the future that I meant it. And if I don't do it, you'll know I didn't mean it. I don't know yet. We'll have— Once I'm editing this episode, I'll figure out if I want to do that.

Darcy: Can I, uh, can I make a called shot here?

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah, always.

Darcy: I am, I am always worried about my baby boy AJ. I am increasingly worried about him whenever he's around his mean grandma. I am really wondering if, if Livia is gonna start telling AJ like, mob stuff.

Sylvi: Oh, do you want me to add that to the predictions list?

Darcy: Sure. You know what? Here, I'm gonna— I'll call the shot. I wonder if she's gonna tell AJ that, that Junior tried to get his dad killed, because it feels like at some point that has— Like, he has to find that out.

Keith: Yeah.

Darcy: Um, and Livia seems like a really good vector for that.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Darcy: Especially if, you know, she's fucking sick of Junior and like wants to get back at him for something.

Keith: And, you know, they're already trying to find out what exactly went down between Livia and Tony. Meadow at least is.

Darcy: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Keith: Uh, another, uh, big scene here, um, is we, uh, actually, uh, where is it? Where? Somewhere in here we already talked about it, so we don't have to go into to it. We have the scene of them— Of her imagining her mom on the Don't Slip Down Stairs sign.

Sylvi: I love the face that she has too, uh, when they put that on the sign.

Keith: It's just a really unique way of showing something in, in the show. They haven't quite done this before. Uh, uh, then the way that it like, pulls focus back from the sign to like the corner of Livia's face, I thought was really cool.

Sylvi: Yeah, there's— I really like the, the sort of like, I don't know, it's almost filmed like a— Like, you— There's like a PSA that was aired in Canada that's specifically filmed like that. Not gonna read for anybody, but like it's filmed like an anti-drug PSA, uh, you know, in a weird way. The camera movement, that's what it makes me think.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Uh, yeah, I don't know that PSA.

Sylvi: You wouldn't, you wouldn't, uh, you wouldn't kill your mom. I mean, I'm not even thinking of an actual drug PSA, but it's fine. Why be you when you could be me? All the Canadians know what that means.

Darcy: This is your brain. This is your brain when you kill your mom.

Sylvi: Yeah, exactly!

Keith: What about your brain when you fall in the shower?

Sylvi: Uh, it's insane.

Darcy: Ow.

Sylvi: 'Cause that's what happens to Junior.

Keith: Yeah, he falls in the shower.

Sylvi: He's shaving in the shower. He drops his razor. When he goes to pick it up, he slips.

Darcy: For a split second, I thought he was dead. I thought, oh God, they're gonna kill Junior this way?

Sylvi: And that would have been crazy.

Darcy: And then he was like moaning and groaning, and I was like, okay, phew.

Keith: They really try to play it like he might be dead. They really do. Because like he touches his face and then he jumps, and like, Tony's like, oh, thank God.

Sylvi: Uh, yeah, I mean, he's like— Yeah, he like— It looks like he dies in that scene.

Keith: Yeah. And then he fucking Officer and a Gentleman style, bridal carries him out of the house, or a mannequin that looks a lot like him.

Sylvi: Genuinely very sweet.

Darcy: It is.

Sylvi: Yeah, like, I love that they cannot get rid of the fact that there is like, love between these two even after everything that's happened. Like, this guy tried to have Tony killed, but that's still the man he threw fucking— He threw the ball with outside his home.

Keith: Well, in a lot of ways, you know, uh, everything they've been through is an expression of how much they love each other. Because that's where all of those hurt feelings came from and why it kept escalating, is because they couldn't handle that this person was hurting them, but they also couldn't see that loop that they were in where they keep fucking retaliating against each other.

Sylvi: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's great. It's like, really well-done sort of tragedy.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Right?

Keith: Like, yeah. Uh, and it's— And the, the like, the irony of it is that like, Tony's right there. He like, almost sees what's going on. Like, he mentions multiple times about how they keep doing this, about how they can't act normally anymore, about how, like, he's, like, on the verge of identifying the pattern, but he never quite is able to, or Junior always does something that's so bad that something has to happen. And it's easy to be on Tony's side, but you have to remember also that like, a lot of this stems from Tony's plan to get his uncle arrested by the feds.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: God.

Keith: That is kind of the worst thing that any of them did. Now, was it— Was— Did that plan come out of, like, stupid, annoying power plays from Junior? Yes. Uh, but it was— It's pretty bad to set your uncle up to take the fall for a mafia family when he didn't really—

Sylvi: Especially when he's gonna take an actual fall.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, you gotta— He's old. He might actually fall.

Sylvi: Sorry.

Keith: Do we have anything else to say about these episodes before we call it? And also, how could we possibly?

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know. I feel like, I feel like despite us doing it a little out of order, we covered most things we needed to.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Mm-hmm.

Art: Um, um, oh, hold on. I got two, two, uh, two notes I didn't get to. Um, after Janice has the scene with Livia, where she brings her the music, and she's driving away, and Mother and Child Reunion is playing, and it's like the most on-the-nose music cue anyone has ever used in the history of media.

Sylvi: Yep. Yeah, true.

Art: Um, Tony needles Janice at dinner about eating sausages, and AJ does like, oh, I get it. And that's so fucking funny. That's like—

Sylvi: It's funny.

Art: It's definitely like an, oh, I get it, from someone who didn't get it.

Keith: Yeah. Well, Tony says there's nothing to get. She's a vegetarian.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: But Tony did mean something by it, 'cause he says, you don't eat sausage in that way.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, he's talking about penises.

Keith: Yeah. She will have a penis, but she won't have a sausage.

Art: Yeah. And I love when Livia says—

Sylvi: I know a lot of girls like that. Sorry.

Art: At the end of the conversation about Janice wanting to live with her, it's the, why? So you cannot resuscitate me?

Keith: Great line.

Art: Great line. And I'm sorry I'm not in mid-season for the— I don't like that kind of talk. Why? So you cannot resuscitate me? It's not quite there yet. I'll get there.

Keith: You're getting there. You'll get there.

Darcy: You're getting there.

Sylvi: Yeah. It's all about reps.

Art: And I don't even remember, I had just have, I had written down, they look like jerk-offs. I don't even know what that's talking about.

Keith: Oh, it's the two idiots when they say hi to Tony in the car.

Art: Oh, yeah. We look like jerk-offs. Okay. We covered that. All right, great.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Anything else before we close the books?

Sylvi: I think that's it. The books are closed, still. Yeah. Um, no, I'm just happy we're starting season 2. Uh, I'm happy Janice is here. I'm excited for y'all to learn more about her.

Art: Um, and I, I was, I was, I looked, I peeked ahead. I'm like, well, this episode went long, but you know, it should settle in. And the next two episodes are also both huge episodes. So, you know.

Sylvi: Welcome to Media Club Plus.

Art: Welcome to Media Club Plus season 3.

Keith: Uh, Uh, but, uh, the, the things I was thinking about before we close the books would be, uh, reviews and also what we're watching next.

Sylvi: Let me— Yeah, let me see if we've gotten any more reviews since, because we are— we've been recording a very ahead of release schedule. So if I haven't been reading, uh, your reviews, that's why.

Keith: I think there are reviews.

Sylvi: There are. We've got a couple here. Let me read a few. This one is from—

Art: Just for like, for context, it is August 15th right now.

Sylvi: It is August 15th right now. Yeah. And the most recent episode that came out is what, episode 4 of—

Keith: Yeah, this is gonna be—

Sylvi: Season 3 of Media Club Plus?

Keith: Yeah, this is episode 70 overall. I don't remember what season 3 episode this is gonna be, like 8?

Sylvi: Sure. It doesn't matter. It's been a minute. Next episode, we're watching another two. We are watching— Oh my God.

Art: Toodle fucking-oo.

Sylvi: Toodle fucking-oo

Art: And Commendatori.

Sylvi: Oh, and hey, more, uh, some more recurring characters coming up.

Keith: Damn, excited for this.

Art: Yeah, they're, they're, they're throwing a lot of characters at us here, you know.

Sylvi: Early season, or early, early in the season, you gotta establish these things.

Keith: Yep.

Sylvi: Uh, this is a review from Cortosis Weaver titled My Favorite Italian Food Is Gelato, 5 Stars. “Adriana is my favorite character because she has terrible taste in everything.: Hell yeah.

Art: Hell yeah, indeed.

Sylvi: We've got another one from Reliquarium. “Another banger from the, from the table, friends. Uh, Purple Heart started listening to MCP after catching up on Side Story, which I started after catching up on Friends at the Table.” More of you should exhibit this behavior.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: Um, “the hosts strike a perfect balance between serious and insightful media analysis and making a show that's just plain fun and enjoyable to listen to.” A little bit of feedback here that, uh, politely asking us to be a little more careful with the word of the use psychotic. That's, that's on me. I do use that a lot.

Keith: I also use that a lot.

Sylvi: I'm gonna try. I'm gonna at least make an effort. I just think when we're dealing with a show that's got the content of The Sopranos, it's both hard to avoid and also maybe a little messier because of the mental health angle. Anyway, they close out the review, Reliquarium, with, “thanks again for helping me get through the workday, friends”. And it's our pleasure. And thank you for the kind words and the polite feedback. If you want to leave us a 5-star review, fucking do it. Go to Apple Podcasts, leave us a 5-star review. I'll read it on the air if it's got some stuff that I want to say. Honestly, be funny. If you're funny, I'm gonna notice it even better. But nice stuff is good too. Yeah, most of the people are just nice, and I'm fine with that. The 5 stars, I guess, is the most important part.

Keith: But yeah, this is— By the way, this isn't a request for you to go and like, review it at any level. It doesn't matter unless it's 5.

Sylvi: Yeah, I— If you do give us anything less than 5, I will find you and shoot you with a gun.

Keith: This isn't about, like, accurately reviewing the show for the iTunes review reading audience.

Sylvi: No.

Keith: This is about giving us 5 stars.

Sylvi: Yes.

Keith: Or else!

Sylvi: Or else.

Keith: I'm gonna send the mafia to your house.

[“[Shame About It \(Vocals\)](#)” by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Keith: Well, bye.

Sylvi: Bye.

Keith: Hey.

Sylvi: Look out. Bye!

[“[Shame About It \(Vocals\)](#)” by Jack de Quidt plays in its entirety]