

The West Wing Weekly
2.06: The Lame Duck Congress
Guest: Dave Chameides

[Intro music]

HRISHI: You're listening to *The West Wing Weekly*. I'm Hrishikesh Hirway.

JOSH: And I'm Joshua Malina.

HRISHI: Today we're talking about season two, episode six: The Lame Duck Congress.

JOSH: The teleplay is by Aaron Sorkin, he wrote a lot of them. Story is by Lawrence O'Donnell, Jr. and the episode first aired on November 8th, in the year 2000. Directed by Jeremy Kagan, one of two episodes, his first.

HRISHI: Here's a synopsis from TV Guide: "Josh, Toby and Sam want the President to consider calling a lame-duck session of Congress to try and pass a Test Ban Treaty, and CJ leaks news of this to Danny, who initiated the story in the first place by asking if the White House was, quote, "considering calling the session". Meanwhile, Donna goes on the warpath over Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Sam and Ainsley teach each other a thing or two. And a Ukrainian reformer turns up, drunk, at the White House, demanding to see the President."

JOSH: Wow, you got it in one.

HRISHI: Phew. I was on the edge of my seat.

JOSH: Killed it!

[HRISHI laughing]

HRISHI: There's a thing at the beginning of the episode that I kept thinking about throughout the episode, and then really got brought home at the end of the episode, which was chess. When they're first talking about the musical chairs of the Senate committees.

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

TOBY: What's going on?

JOSH: Casey wants Appropriations, and he has the seniority.

SAM: So he'll have to give up Budget.

JOSH: Which Taglio will jump at in a second, which clears the way for Newberry in Senate Armed Services.

C.J. Newberry leaving opens up Judiciary.

SAM: Now who wants to be named Attorney General under the next Republican President?

JOSH: Howard Weston.

SAM: That's right. So he takes the seat on Judiciary.

JOSH: Vacating his seat on Foreign Relations.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: It wasn't even like they were considering questions they were like 'well this person will do this, this person will do this,' and it was sort of moving the pieces around the board, and as a result, Morgan Mitchell would end up on Foreign Relations and then would mess up the Test Ban Treaty, and it felt like, oh, they see all the moves ahead. It felt like chess to me.

JOSH: Interesting. That discussion to me, I wrote down, this is the unfunny version of Abbott and Costello's 'Who's On First?'

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: But maybe a chess match is a kinder way to frame it.

HRISHI: And there's lots of chess. I thought that the way that, just jumping, I'm jumping right through the whole thing...

JOSH: Jump away.

HRISHI: ...Then later C.J. pulls a chess move of sorts with Danny, when she initiates the call to the spokesperson for the Majority Leader in front of him, to leak the story.

JOSH: Right. It's like a little feint.

HRISHI: Yeah.

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

DANNY: So you guys are considering a lame-duck session?

C.J.: Who says?

DANNY: You just put in a call to the Majority Leader's office.

C.J.: We do a great deal of business with the Majority Leader's office. He leads the majority.

DANNY: He's not in session.

C.J.: I believe we'll track him down.

DANNY: Can I say White House senior aides?

C.J.: No.

DANNY: High-level sources inside the White House?

C.J.: Certain sources inside the White House Office of Legislative Liaisons who declined to be named.

DANNY: Sounds like I got it from somebody's paperboy!

C.J.: Take it or leave it.

DANNY: I'll take it.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: It's funny because everybody knows what's going on; he understands that she's just leaked it to him and she knows that he knows, but they do it. The only person who doesn't seem to know is this poor spokesperson who gets a call from the Press Secretary and then gets hung up on by Carol.

JOSH: Yeah, and I guess Carol, because she actually places the call.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: [laughing] She doesn't seem to mind though.

HRISHI: But that also felt like a chess move, and even there was a bit of chess maneuvering between Leo and the President when they're considering the session, you know, they're trying to get a read off each other about what they should do and whether or not they should hold it.

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

LEO: You don't want to call this vote and lose.

BARTLET: Yeah, but this could be a window.

LEO: Yeah.

BARTLET: We gotta see if it's do-able.

LEO: Yeah.

BARTLET: It could be do-able.

LEO: Yeah.

BARTLET: You got anything more to say?

LEO: Not this minute.

BARTLET: OK.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: So I was like, oh, there's this chess subtext all throughout the episode, and then at the very end, the President says to Toby:

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

BARTLET: Come on up, I'll beat your ass at chess.

TOBY: You baiting me, Mr President?

BARTLET: Yes.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And I thought, ah OK, I wasn't the only one seeing that. I was meant to.

JOSH: Look at you, you big pictured it. That's good. I buy it all, very nice.

HRISHI: Then there's another line that I was less sure of understanding. I thought maybe you got it. C.J. says, "This is bad pool," I think.

JOSH: Yeah.

HRISHI: Did you get that?

JOSH: She does have a weird line of dialogue there.

HRISHI: When they're talking about calling the session, she says...

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

C.J.: These people are gone. The 106th Congress is adjourned. Twelve of them were voted out of office. This is bad pool. You go in there and tell the President to call a lame-duck session and he does, it's gonna look like politics.

TOBY: It is politics.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: That's not a phrase; either I misheard what she said...

JOSH: No, I think that's exactly what she said, and I think you're right, and I think it's just a Sorkinism. [laughing] That sounds like it means something.

HRISHI: [laughing] Yeah it does!

JOSH: Not sure what it means, but it sounds right.

HRISHI: I don't play pool so I don't know exactly, I was like maybe I just don't get..., I'm not getting the reference.

JOSH: Um, no. I didn't get anything more out of it than you did. I think you may be right, it may just..., it may be nonsensical.

HRISHI: [laughing] OK!

JOSH: I think it's just C.J.'s way of saying 'not cool'.

HRISHI: [laughing] You know the story about the Ukrainian reformer showing up drunk is based on a real thing that happened?

JOSH: No, I love that.

HRISHI: Yeah, based on Boris Yeltsin. It's sort of, I think they're combining two different stories, the first time that Boris Yeltsin visited the White House was during George Bush Sr.'s first term, his only term, and Marlin Fitzwater told this story, and that's why he actually has a consulting credit on this episode. This came from him: Boris Yeltsin showed up and wanted to meet the President, but President Bush Sr. was worried that that would be insulting to Mikhail Gorbachev.

JOSH: Gorbachev, yeah.

HRISHI: Instead, they did exactly what they do in this. It's not Donna, it's the, it was the National Security Advisor; they had a meeting, and the President walked in and said "Hey, how ya doing Boris Yeltsin?" the way that when he says, Leo says...

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

LEO: Hey, how ya doing Dalai Lama?

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: That made me laugh so hard! [laughing]

JOSH: Very funny.

HRISHI: And then there was some other time when Boris Yeltsin was visiting and he was totally drunk and they found him wandering around outside, and it sounds like it was pretty funny.

JOSH: [laughing] Those wacky Russians.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: I know when Gorbachev would come to New York we would be warned about traffic and Gorby-gridlock. Apropos of nothing, other than a mention of him; I just wanted to relive that.

HRISHI: The thing that I think that Yeltsin was doing was he was trying to hail a cab in order to get a pizza and he was only in his underwear.

JOSH: Oh. So basically freshman year of college.

HRISHI: [laughing] Yeah. So that made it even funnier when Josh calls him, when he refers to them as Boris and Natasha; I was like oh it really is Boris.

JOSH: [laughing] I liked this episode more and more as I watched it. As I was watching it I was thinking, OK, it's another palate-cleanser. My palate was fully cleansed by last episode, it was ready for something meatier.

HRISHI: Uh-huh.

JOSH: But then, something that I felt was going to be less than the sum of its parts became more than I had anticipated. In the end there were two particular nice pieces of silent film work. Or I should say dialogue-free, as I'm sure they were scored, that made the sum greater than the parts for me. And those were a nice kind of swirling 360 shot where we have Ainsley's point of view and it's just a kind of visual celebration of the hubbub of everybody doing their jobs. She's just had that moment with Sam.

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

AINSLEY: I was just talking, Sam. I was just talking to you.

SAM: Well we play with live ammo around here. You convinced me, I convinced Leo, Leo'll convince the President.

AINSLEY: Sam!

SAM: It's a short day Ainsley, and a big country. We've gotta move fast.

AINSLEY: And so because I said this in here, the President [crosstalk] in there is gonna...

SAM: [crosstalk] Yeah.

AINSLEY: You gotta tell me when that's gonna happen.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: She has that great moment where we see from her point of view just everybody doing their jobs, and she realises she's part of the workings of the U.S. government. And then there's that great scene at the very end in the Oval, as you said, the President and Toby go off to play chess, and then someone comes in and turns the lights off in the Oval one by one and then it goes to black. And for some reason that brought it all together for me in a way that made me appreciate the entirety of the episode.

HRISHI: Yeah, I agree. I like this episode a lot for its smallness. That moment that you were talking about with Ainsley, I thought that the score there was also from her perspective, not just the camera work. It was nice, it was again, it was a rare moment that happens. I think the only other time we've talked about it happening was with Gina at the end of Season 1, but here it really feels like you're inside Ainsley's head, and the camera's reflecting that as well.

JOSH: Yeah, Aaron likes to do that a lot, and I know because I've, twice, I think, I've played the character who functions in this role. He likes to give us fresh eyes into the world he's exploring and on *The West Wing* it's fresh eyes into the government and its workings, and he's constantly sort of tapping us on the shoulder and reminding us, don't take this for granted, what this is, this democracy and how it works and our government, and he will do that from time to time by giving us fresh eyes.

HRISHI: Yeah. You know what else he shall do from time to time?

JOSH: Ha ha! Boom!

HRISHI: He will use this line: "It seems to me that more and more we've come to expect less and less from each other."

[West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

MARINO: Toby, it seems to me that more and more we've come to expect less and less from each other.

[end excerpt]

[Sports Night Episode 2.19 except]

DAN: It seems to me that more and more we've come to expect less and less from each other.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I wrote that down. I thought, should we be having Kevin Porter on this episode?

HRISHI: [laughing] Right! Exactly! Kevin Porter has made that Sorkinisms supercut where he has all of the lines that are refrains, it's a motif.

[Begin interview]

KEVIN: My name is Kevin T. Porter and I'm a writer and comedian, and I made the Sorkinisms Supercut videos.

HRISHI: OK, so what are the Sorkinisms Supercut videos?

KEVIN: So the Sorkinisms videos was something I put together a couple of years ago, when I noticed that Aaron Sorkin, who I'm a huge fan of, of course, tended to recycle a lot of his dialogue from movie to movie, or TV show to TV show. I noticed it most acutely in *The Social Network*. So back then, I think around 2010, I started putting together and editing from everything he's ever written and ever done on film, a supercut showing all the times he's reused lines of dialogue or expressions or idioms or even plotlines.

HRISHI: What was the line in *The Social Network* that made you first think of it?

KEVIN: It was when he re-used the line, actually that your co-host, Joshua Malina, says in *Sports Night* to his girlfriend Natalie.

[Sports Night Episode 1.10 excerpt]

JEREMY: You're basically going to be living the rest of your life on a charitable grant from the Jeremy Goodwin Foundation.

[end excerpt]

KEVIN: And in *The Social Network*, Andrew Garfield's character says:

[The Social Network excerpt]

SAVERIN: He is a house guest, living here rent-free, on a very generous grant from the Eduardo Saverin Foundation.

[end excerpt]

KEVIN: That one was just so oddly specific, I was like, is anyone else, you know, I felt like I was seeing the ones and zeroes in *The Matrix* all at once, like, is anyone else seeing or hearing what I'm seeing or hearing?

[HRISHI laughing]

KEVIN: So that was when I was like, yeah, I think it'd be fun to put that together.

HRISHI: How does it make you feel about Aaron Sorkin, knowing that he re-uses lines from series to series?

KEVIN: A lot of people took the video as deep criticism, like, look at this guy, taking down Aaron Sorkin or the work. For me it was more like looking at just the themes of someone over the course of a career where it's like man, he's put out how many hundreds of hours of content and drama? It's like yeah, you're gonna reuse some stuff, consciously or not. That's like saying 'I think Bruce Springsteen writes about cars and girls and factories too much'. It's like yeah, it's his job.

HRISHI: [laughing]

KEVIN: You know, like that's just his particular style. It's almost like when you're friends with someone, you become really familiar with their idiosyncrasies or foibles, or just like different quirks and characteristics. It's fun to like, acknowledge those and make light of those from time to time, so that's what I feel the Sorkinisms videos always were, were just like an affectionate look at his work.

HRISHI: Kevin, thanks so much, that's awesome. I love those videos and we're going to post them on the website.

KEVIN: Thanks Hrish, it's a pleasure and an honor to be on *The West Wing Weekly*.

[end interview]

[Music]

JOSH: I was just gonna say something that seemed very timely to me, after the second Presidential Debate. I was struck by how much Donald Trump thinks a single senator can get accomplished.

[Debate excerpt]

TRUMP: She complains that Donald Trump took advantage of the tax cut. Well, why didn't she change it – why didn't you change it when you were a Senator?

[end excerpt]

JOSH: So it made me laugh, because again and again, Trump was taking shots at Hillary for not changing the tax code single-handedly, and for various other things that he seemed to think, as one percent of the Senate, that she could have accomplished, and so I just love, in the first scene, in that press conference, when C.J. says:

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

C.J.: I think like all freshmen, Senator-Elect Mitchell will discover that he's one of a hundred and that his power is considerably more limited than he imagines.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I just thought, what a perfectly apt line of dialogue to follow what we saw last night.

HRISHI: Well maybe just Trump's so used to being part of the powerful one percent that he thinks that being a one percenter...

JOSH: Boom!

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: You're firing on all cylinders today, Hrishi.

HRISHI: 99 percent of them, anyway.

[JOSH laughing]

HRISHI: Can we talk about the pronunciation of 'Pulitzer'?

JOSH: You know what? I bumped on that.

HRISHI: It happens other times in *The West Wing*.

JOSH: Well let me, what do you say?

HRISHI: I say it the right way. Pull-itzer.

JOSH: Pull-itzer. That's what I say. OK. And she says Pew-litzer, C.J. does.

HRISHI: Yeah, C.J. says Pew-litzer. I checked, just to make sure, I went on the Pulitzer website and the frequently asked questions, they say 'How is Pulitzer pronounced? The correct pronunciation is Pull-It-Sir'.

JOSH: Oooh. Now that's just dirty.

[HRISHI laughing. Claps in glee]

JOSH: Well it is.

HRISHI: [Still laughing] I even called the voicemail, just to hear them say it.

[Voicemail message excerpt]

Hi, you've reached the Pul-litzer Prize office.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: [laughing] What other weird... dirndl skirt!

HRISHI: Dirndl skirt, yeah.

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

AINSLEY: You want me to summarise your recommendation and give it to the President.

SAM: Yeah. Then I want you to skip to Tijuana in a dirndl skirt.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: That just made me think flentl.

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: Dirndl, flentl. Dirndl.

HRISHI: Speaking of the Pulitzer though, we haven't talked about the fact that Danny works for the *Washington Post*. And I was thinking about the decision to place him there, as opposed to...

JOSH: The *Times*

HRISHI: Yeah, the *Times*, or any other paper, but I think maybe what I would have expected would have been for him to work for a fictional newspaper. You know, we had the fake African nation of Equatorial Kundu.

JOSH: Mmmhmm, you've got *Capitol Beat*.

HRISHI: And *Capitol Beat*. It's always interesting to me when things that are evoked are real or not real. Like we had the cases from the Southern Poverty Law Centre that were real cases against the Ku Klux Klan. But here Danny works for the *Post*, and I feel like that must be because he's brilliant, there's some bias right there, I think. He's supposed to be the best reporter in the press room, and I think there's a little bit of bias, like, ah well then, he must work for the *Post*!

JOSH: Mmm.

HRISHI: Right? That's where Woodward and Bernstein worked.

JOSH: Yeah, that's probably a nod from Aaron...

HRISHI: Yeah

JOSH: ...to their work.

HRISHI: And the *Washington Post*, they're also the ones who broke the *Access Hollywood* Donald Trump story.

JOSH: That is true. So Danny continues to do good work.

HRISHI: [laughing] Exactly! But you know, this is like, as opposed to in *The Newsroom*, where they created a whole fake channel and news show and in *Sports Night*, another fake TV show. But here we've got a very real paper.

JOSH: Yeah, I guess also I was thinking the *Washington Post* I guess is left-leaning, yes?

HRISHI: Is it?

JOSH: Well, that's, I guess, my take on it.

HRISHI: I imagine that they would probably take umbrage at that idea.

JOSH: Well yeah, I suppose any newspaper would take umbrage at any suggestion of leaning in any direction. But...

HRISHI: But, the ones owned by Rupert Murdoch, you might think are gonna...

JOSH: Right, I think there's a fair...

HRISHI: Lean to the right.

JOSH: And so I thought that, maybe in a way, made, for instance, their, the editorial board's, criticism of President Bartlet sting a little bit more

HRISHI: That's true, yeah, I think you're right.

JOSH: While we're on more language stuff, Toby at one point says, he uses the phrase "so unanimous" and that hurt.

HRISHI: [laughing]

JOSH: Spoiler alert, I know we're going to have a discussion about modifying the word 'unique' soon enough on this very television show.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: I think it's worth stopping and considering that 'unanimous' cannot be modified either. It is a...

HRISHI: ...binary state.

JOSH: Right, exactly, either your group is unanimous, or it is not.

HRISHI: Yeah. You can't modify it. On a different kind of language tip, but another nod to Kevin Porter, I thought that when Ainsley and Sam start talking about lunch, it got a little *Gilmore Girls*.

JOSH: I can't speak to that, having never seen an episode of the *Gilmore Girls*.

HRISHI: So the one thing that *Gilmore Girls* and *West Wing* shares is rapid fire dialogue, but with *The West Wing* I think usually people have these really hyper-articulate things to say, and they're sort of like these tricky long sentences that you have to get out. There's a lot of language being delivered quickly, but isn't necessarily one-line, one-line, one-line, one-line, being tossed back and forth from character to character. Would you say that that's accurate? Not as much?

JOSH: Yeah, yeah I think so.

HRISHI: In any case, in this particular exchange between Ainsley and Sam, where she asks:

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

AINSLEY: Have you eaten lunch?

SAM: No.

AINSLEY: I brought my lunch from home.

SAM: That's fine.

AINSLEY: I ate it already.

SAM: That's fine, too.

AINSLEY: Did you bring your lunch from home?

SAM: Ainsley, what the hell?

AINSLEY: Do you think you'll be eating it?

SAM: You can't have my lunch!

AINSLEY: OK.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: All that felt very much like it was Lorelai Gilmore talking to somebody.

JOSH: Ah. Well I know I liked it very much. I wrote down 'good snappy repartée between Sam and Ainsley'. I like it very much, I guess I like that rapid-fire delivery, and I also, of course, don't remember where any of this is going, but I sure hope there's something between them, because it feels like there's a little, you know, flirtation and sexual energy behind it.

HRISHI: There's something nice and warm behind it, for sure. Like, there's depth to it. I really like their dynamic. I especially like the part where he turns, where she's arguing with him, and then finally he's like, "fine, start from the beginning".

JOSH: [laughing] Yeah, that's it.

HRISHI: He reaches his breaking point and realizes that there is something substantive to her argument, and now he's willing to be convinced of it. He goes into a different mode. And I also like the motif of her asking for different carbs, everywhere she goes.

JOSH: Yes. This woman needs pastry.

HRISHI: [laughing] Yeah! It reminded me of another great pastry move.

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

AINSLEY: You're a schmuck Peter. Today, tomorrow, next year, next term; these guys'll have the Treaty ratified and they'll do it without the reservations he just offered to discuss with you.

pause

AINSLEY: Can I take this muffin?

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: It felt, you know, Sam makes fun of her later, for saying that that like deflated the power of the moment that she had, but I thought it was the opposite. I thought it was a nice little, you know, 'I'm gonna put you in your place, and I'm gonna eat your lunch. I'm gonna drink your milkshake up.'

JOSH: Well it's funny that you say that; I thought the exact same thing, so much so that I felt like they should have filmed the muffin moment differently.

HRISHI: Huh.

JOSH: I took it the same way, too, it was the perfect power button. Exactly what you said.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: She verbally slams him, and takes his snacks!

HRISHI: [laughing] Exactly, yeah!

JOSH: But then when Sam said it, I thought it actually would have been funny if it had been this weird moment where she deflated her victory because she really needed a muffin.

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: I wonder if maybe they should have filmed it that way.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: Where he had been right, because I don't know why it's sticking in his craw that you did everything great but the muffin move...

HRISHI: Yeah. I think because she is so polite when she asks for it, but it felt a little bit like a callback too to Fitzwallace, Admiral Fitzwallace, when he says, "Beat that with a stick," and he's got the pastry in his hand, and then he tosses the pastry back in the plate.

JOSH: Yeah, very good. I forgot about that.

HRISHI: I like this use of baked goods to emphasise your point.

JOSH: Aaron is clearly obsessed with carbohydrates.

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: I mean, "the finest muffins and bagels in the land" will attest to that.

HRISHI: Right!

JOSH: It's clearly on his mind.

HRISHI: Yeah, probably all the craft services lying around.

JOSH: There you go.

HRISHI: A line that I did not like so much was from Charlie, when they're talking about Boris and Natasha.

JOSH: About the woman?

HRISHI: Yes. When they're talking about Konanov, and his attaché, Charlie says:

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

CHARLIE: The girl's not bad looking.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: [moaning sound] Charlie.

JOSH: I think I'm with you on that. That line was weird. I felt her whole presence was a little weird.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: Because she doesn't do anything! At one point during the whole, when Donna, which I like, is going off about Carpal Tunnel Syndrome to Konanov, I kinda thought she was going to be interpreting for him or something, because she was speaking ... but she really doesn't do anything.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: She's there for Charlie to make that comment, so I guess she's there to be attractive, but it felt a little odd.

HRISHI: It was a little weird. I think I have especially heightened sensitivity to just like dudes talking about how a girl looks behind their back. I watched this episode the day after the Access Hollywood tape came out, and I was just like urgh, come on, I can't hang.

JOSH: Mmm. We're more finely tuned to supposed locker-room banter, you and I.

HRISHI: Yeah. [moaning] Urgh.

JOSH: Urgh.

HRISHI: Pull it sir.

JOSH: [laughing]

HRISHI: There's another thing about music that I wanted to mention, which was that after C.J. and Leo talk about Danny wanting two minutes with the President, and C.J.'s like 'no we can't give it to him,' and Leo's like 'no, we're gonna give it to him,' the music actually takes on almost like a comedy musical cue, which is very rare.

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

Aforementioned comedy musical cue. CJ: Hello?

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I mean it's so strange whenever we hear the light, effervescent end titles music, but this is like, this is in the middle of the episode, and it almost felt like, just a touch, like a comedy cue.

JOSH: Huh. I would always bump on that when *Downton Abbey* would always tell us when the next scene's gonna be kinda funny.

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: That has to be very subtle, I don't like to be told how to respond to a scene as it's happening.

HRISHI: Yeah. Scoring something dramatically is hard, but scoring something comedically is incredibly hard and I think not a task I'd ever wanna take on. It's just like, it's brutal.

JOSH: Have you had to do that?

HRISHI: No, I mean, I would never... it's very hard to do well: make something lighter and funnier, make something funnier with the music, I mean what are you going to do? [comedy trumpets]

[JOSH laughing]

HRISHI: How about Ainsley with the "It's *President* Bartlet"?

JOSH: Oh, I know. I thought...

HRISHI: Smackdown!

JOSH: ...Ainsley, channeling Hrish!

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: Although you've changed, you've officially changed your position, but I figured you must like that.

HRISHI: I like it and in the world of the show, especially in politics, that's really when you need to be bringing the 'President Bartlet'. I was saying that we're, we're more like his family.

JOSH: Sure.

HRISHI: We're in there with Abbey, and Karl Malden.

JOSH: We're his not-oft-recognised offspring.

HRISHI: Exactly.

JOSH: We're Tiffany Trump, you and I.

HRISHI: [laughing] Yep, just waiting for a shout out. Still waiting. You know, Congress really is exempt from OSHA?

JOSH: Yeah, that was something I learned in the watching.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: I did not know that.

HRISHI: Yeah. They can pass the legislation, but they don't have to abide by it.

JOSH: Why is that? I'm curious.

HRISHI: I don't know. Senator Marino, since we're going all in on bringing in real-world references; Senator Marino is quite Chris Christie-esque, I thought.

JOSH: Very nicely played by Mike Starr, another one of those actors who's been in everything. Just a great character, he was in *Goodfellas*, along with 200-some odd other things you'll see on his IMDb page. Do you not immediately recognize him?

HRISHI: No, I recognized him from *Goodfellas*, but I thought that was interesting casting, I liked that that was the kind of person who would be leading the test ban treaty, in the show.

JOSH: Yeah, it was interesting casting, I agree with you. And he seems like a gruff, street politician guy, who you don't expect him to then take the high road and say, "I'm gonna have to abstain." Especially as they build him up as this guy who loves revenge.

HRISHI: Exactly, yeah.

JOSH: And he's like a hardcore, down and dirty type of politician, and then he looks like what he's been built up to be, and it's a nice little reversal.

HRISHI: Right. I really liked this moment, where Toby says:

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

TOBY: If we lose, and we will, we cut off—

SAM: Yeah.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Like, he gets cut off after he says the phrase 'cut off'.

JOSH: And did you have a sense where that was going, that thought?

HRISHI: I think that he's talking about they cut off the chance to bring it up later, or to circle the wagons. I'm not really sure. I just got caught up on the idea that he said 'cut off' and then he got cut off. I didn't even finish thinking the thought, I just thought that was a really nice...

JOSH: Linguistic...

HRISHI: Yeah, little play on the words. We have, in this episode, what may be the most dire telladonna of all time, when Toby's in the lobby.

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

TOBY: Why is the Test Ban Treaty so important? Let me tell ya. In 1974 India set off a peaceful nuclear explosion. Indira Gandhi herself said they had no intention of building a bomb, they just wanted to know that they could. Twenty years later, India sets off five nuclear explosions. Who gets nervous? Pakistan. When Pakistan gets nervous, everybody gets nervous! You know why? Cos we're all gonna die.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yeah, I didn't love that scene.

HRISHI: It didn't feel like in character with him, right?

JOSH: I didn't think of it that way at the moment. At the moment I just thought it didn't feel like a credible scene, he just pops in in front of a tour and spouts off. I'm not sure that anyone would do that, but yeah, it doesn't feel like a Toby moment.

HRISHI: Yeah. Huh. Here's one moment that I wanted to talk about with you. The impasse between C.J. and Danny really comes out here. Of course they have all this history, and Danny wanting to ask out C.J. But there's this reveal that Danny has the chance to leave his job, stop being a White House reporter, and it gets brought up, and she says, "I know about the job offer," and she says, "You don't wanna be an editor?" and he says "I'm a White House reporter." And I'm like, OK yeah, makes sense. He loves his job. But then she turns it:

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

DANNY: I'm a White House reporter.

C.J.: I know. I just thought by taking a job outside the press room ...

DANNY: C.J. I have no problem with a reporter dating the Press Secretary.

C.J.: Well. I have a problem, so ...

DANNY: Yeah. OK, I'll see you later.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And so they're just stuck, there's something really kind of tragic and professional about it. For professional reasons, she can't date a reporter, and for professional reasons, he doesn't want to change his job to be in a situation where he could, so they're both demonstrating to the other what all their cards are, and where their priorities are, and they just can't make it work between them, even though they both clearly have enough affection for each other.

JOSH: Yeah. It also was revealed to me that more had gone on between them off-screen than we've been aware of. I mean, were you aware that they were at this impasse? There was a question in my mind as to what the story is between them, but I feel like I didn't know explicitly that they were at this romantic stalemate.

HRISHI: Yeah? No, I think that, I tracked with that. To me, it felt like you know, it went flirty-flirty-flirty, then they start kissing, and then C.J.'s like maybe we shouldn't be doing this, then she starts to get questions from people within the White House staff, questioning whether her ability to do her job, because of her relationship with the press, specifically citing her relationship with Danny. And then she backs off from that and then he keeps trying to pursue her, and she's like 'look, this isn't happening.' What do you think about C.J. and

Danny's chemistry?

JOSH: Eh.

[HRISHI laughing]

JOSH: They've clearly got chemistry. I don't care much whether they get together or don't.

HRISHI: Do you feel at this point, are you more invested in the Ainsley–Sam dynamic than you are in the Danny–C.J. dynamic?

JOSH: Yeah, I guess so. I guess maybe it's the Sam and Ainsley are all potential as I see them now, and Danny and C.J. have been sort of happening and not happening for a while now.

HRISHI: Mmm.

JOSH: Yeah. I don't feel deeply invested, [laughing] in whether they can work it out or not. I think they're both good at their jobs, and I mean I have the sense of where it's going. I mean I tend to agree with her assessment of how appropriate a relationship between them would be, because it has gotten in the way.

HRISHI: Right. And our guest from episode 1.16, Zeke Miller, White House correspondent for *Time Magazine*, said it is absolutely inappropriate. There's no way, and if it were up to him, he would de-credential Danny for his actions.

JOSH: Yeah. There you go. So Danny's completely nonchalant about it, couldn't care less, and I think I guess C.J.'s being more professional of the two because she realizes it's a real problem.

HRISHI: Yeah. I don't really want Ainsley and Sam to have any kind of romantic anything, but I do like their dynamic, and I especially like, I think of all the romantic relationships, or suggested romantic relationships on the screen, this one is my favorite outside of the President and the First Lady. I like it much more than certainly Josh and Mandy, which didn't work for anybody, or Josh and Donna, or Sam and Laurie, which I never liked at all. It feels like an equal playing field

in terms of power, and smarts, and capability, you know? You don't have the telladonna moment, like the telladonnas where Josh is mansplaining to Donna; there's a power dynamic in that and of course there is, she's his assistant.

JOSH: Certainly.

HRISHI: Whereas this is a little bit trickier, she doesn't work for Sam, she works for Tribbey, and she's a lawyer, and he's a lawyer, and she's brilliant and he's brilliant. He tries to, you know, take a shot at her.

[The West Wing Episode 2.06 excerpt]

AINSLEY: I'm from North Carolina.

SAM: Wherever it was you studied baton-twirling.

AINSLEY: That'd be Harvard Law School.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: She can give as good as she gets, and I really love that character.

JOSH: But you don't like the concept of Sam and Ainsley together.

HRISHI: I don't want them to like... I like where it's at right now. I like this exact level of subtext. It's not like Josh and Donna, where you're like, come on, like you guys are obviously a couple. This is like, they are colleagues and they can fence with each other and they can bounce ideas off of each other.

JOSH: Well that's why I'd like to see those crazy kids work it out!

HRISHI: [laughing]

JOSH: I like them as a couple. I like the romantic potential. And god knows, Sam deserves – he couldn't quite make it happen with Mallory.

HRISHI: Oh right, that's another one. [scoffing noise]

JOSH: I'd like to see... What a waste of someone looking like Rob Lowe and not having a decent relationship.

HRISHI: [laughing] One thing that I've learned since we posted that we were gonna be covering this episode; a lot of people love Ainsley. There have been three different people in the last four or five days who have tweeted at us about how their daughter's named after Ainsley.

JOSH: That's interesting.

HRISHI: I know, I think that's really nice. There's one person who has two daughters, first one is named Claudia, after C.J., and the second one is named Ainsley, but a lot of people have said that they named their kid Ainsley.

JOSH: The viewers of *The West Wing* represent the entire spectrum of political belief, and I'm sure it was a real godsend to the Republican viewers of the show, to get this great, attractive, incredibly intelligent breath of fresh air in the person of Ainsley Hayes on the show. So I think she adds a significant dimension to the show.

HRISHI: Yeah, and I think that's because of having people like Marlin Fitzwater coming on as a consultant. In Season 2 I think there are some more people from like the Bush era who are coming in.

JOSH: Who are rounding things out a bit, yes.

HRISHI: But it makes you wonder what the show would have been like if she'd been there from Season 1. If we had gotten Ainsley instead of Mandy, as an outsider, foil.

JOSH: Mmm hmm. I think it would've worked.

HRISHI: I think so too.

JOSH: I think she would've stayed on throughout, robbing CSI viewers of years of entertainment.

HRISHI: Yeah. One thing we haven't talked about in a little while, Josh, is Gail the goldfish.

JOSH: Oh! I've been dropping the ball there. Or the bowl.

HRISHI: [laughing] After all the hubbub from "In the Shadow of Two Gunmen", we haven't really looked in the fishbowl too much. But in the last couple episodes, I didn't see it in this episode, but in the last two, there were a couple nice placements.

JOSH: What did we miss?

HRISHI: Well, when Ainsley made her first appearance there's an elephant in the fishbowl. The elephant being the Republican party symbol. And then in the last episode as the President and Mrs Bartlet are planning their 'special meeting of the government', Gail has a little bed.

JOSH: Oooh. [crosstalk] Saucy.

HRISHI: [crosstalk] Yeah.

JOSH: I hate that we failed to address the elephant in the fishbowl.

HRISHI: [laughing] Let's take a quick break to thank our sponsors.

[ad break]

HRISHI: We're joined now by Dave Chameides. You might remember the lengthy discussion we had about the lengthy walk and talk back in episode four, for "Five Votes Down". Dave was the Steadicam operator for that episode and several other early episodes. We've been wanting to talk to him for a long time and we're so glad to finally have him on. Thanks for coming on the show Dave.

DAVE: Nice to talk to you guys, I'm glad this finally happened. How's everything going?

JOSH: Show's going great; your work has been viewed and admired and discussed by many. It's exciting to finally get to talk to you.

DAVE: Well thank you. So tell me what can I tell you guys.

JOSH: I guess to start with, how did you... how did you get the job? How did you find your way to *The West Wing*, or how did they find you?

DAVE: So, I used to be the camera operator on *ER*, seasons three through five, and season four they told me that there was this rumour that there was gonna be a live episode for the first episode, which of course, shooting-wise means it was like the fourth or fifth episode into the season, and I heard that this guy with a funny name was coming in to direct it, who I'd never of and I really was sort of put off by the idea that there was someone sort of coming into our house to do something without us; it seemed as if we weren't going to be involved with that. Of course that guy was Tommy Schlamme, and we ended up actually hitting it off, and I ended up leaving *ER* after my fifth year and Tommy called me and said "I'm starting this show and would love you to come and do it with me," and I thought that sounds great, and that ended up being *The West Wing*.

JOSH: And were you told going into it that there would be a lot of Steadicam work specifically?

DAVE: Yeah, I mean Tommy said "We wanna do a lot of long takes, and we wanna do a lot of oners," and he really said "I'm looking for someone to help..." you know I don't wanna say 'create the look of the show' but that gives me too much credit. But to be involved in that, and I was like "that sounds fantastic." I distinctly remember talking to them early on about filming the sets with the doors wide enough so we could get a camera through sideways, and I think that if I remember, off the top of my head, it's been a while now, there was like six inches on either side of the camera. I look back at some of those things and I sort of am shocked that we did what we did without ever hitting doors and stuff like that.

[HRISHI laughing]

DAVE: But those were good times, to be sure.

HRISHI: Could you explain what a Steadicam operator does, and even maybe what a Steadicam is?

DAVE: Yeah, absolutely. So a Steadicam is a device that was invented in sort of the mid-70s by a guy named Garrett Brown, and the idea was he was fed up with the idea that people were doing this whole thing called Cinema verité which was basically handheld and it was a French way to say 'this is cool', but his feeling was...

[JOSH laughing]

DAVE: [laughing] Maybe that sounded worse than it was.

JOSH: No that was fantastic!

DAVE: His feeling was the reason we're doing all this handheld is because there's no other way to move a camera around without a dolly, and a dolly has to be on track or floor and I want to free it up, and he sort of messed around and came up with this idea to disconnect the camera from the operator, so to speak. So it's basically made up of three parts, if anybody's ever seen a Steadicam they'll understand, but there's a vest that you wear that kinda becomes an exoskeleton so now the camera's sort of physically attached to your body, and off of that is an arm, and the idea is that now sort of replicates your arm, like if you think about if you had your hand out in front of you with a cup of coffee, right? And you were moving; you would move your arm up and down without even realizing it to keep that coffee from spilling all over the place, so that arm sort of does that; it takes the weight and sort of keeps in in one space. And then the Steadicam itself has the camera on top, that's the top weight, and on the front on the bottom, you've got a monitor so you can see what's going on, and usually on the back on the bottom you've got batteries to power the whole thing. And the reason that's all happening is because it's now a triangle of weights, and if you move them all in such a way, with the gimbal in the middle, which is a three-way-moving, very smooth apparatus, you can sort of have the camera float through space. And interestingly enough, that three-way apparatus that he came up with, because Garrett's sort of a renaissance genius, is based on old whaling ships that used to have their lanterns with the oil in them on these three-way gimbals, because as the ship would move, they didn't want the oil spilling all over the place.

JOSH: Oh, that's interesting. I worked with Garrett on the movie *Bulworth*.

DAVE: Well first of all, phenomenal movie, and how cool to work with Garrett.

JOSH: It was very exciting to work with him – great guy.

DAVE: The thing is, he invented Steadicam, but he also invented like GoCam and DiveCam for the Olympics and you name it... he's just an amazing guy. And the cool thing about Steadicam is, from the first one that was created in 1975/76, to the ones that are out now, the only thing that's different is like the monitors are sharper and you know it's HD, but it

works exactly the same as he created it, and it really hasn't been improved on, other than materials, in any way, which is kinda cool. Perfect design, I guess.

JOSH: And if you had to estimate the average weight of a Steadicam rig?

DAVE: I would say, well talking about *West Wing* anyway for the film cameras that we were using, I'd say it's probably 55 to 60 pounds.

JOSH: Yeah, it's significant. It's a workout.

DAVE: It is, it is a workout. But you're wearing this vest, so it's not like holding that in your arms per se, it's more like wearing it as a backpack, which is... I wouldn't say it's easier, it's just different.

JOSH: There's nothing quite like the expression on a Steadicam operator's face when either the actors are forgetting their words over and over, or worse, goofing around, when you're trying to get a Steadicam shot!

DAVE: Yeah, usually we try to hide those looks but I guess you guys see something... [laughing].

JOSH: [laughing] I'm very sensitive to them. I don't goof around. Or forget my lines.

DAVE: [laughing] But anyway, so and you know *West Wing* was, as *ER* was, was a dream for me. I was 29 when I started, and I only did, basically a big part of the first season, but thankfully it was a very, I think, important part, and it was an amazing thing to be a part of, just because of what we were trying to accomplish on a daily basis.

JOSH: We've discussed, and appreciated, what the actors have been doing in these long shots, and these walk-and-talks all in one. Can you give us a sense of what the camera crew was doing? Of course all of it backwards. We want to get a sense of technically everything you have to think about when you guys are shooting a scene like that.

DAVE: Well, like if you're talking about the big Steadicam shot in "Five Votes Down"...

JOSH: Sure

DAVE: First of all you've got to figure out the physical aspect of that, cos ok 'I'm gonna go down the stairs here, and I'm gonna go down there, and I'm gonna make sure I don't hit this and I'm gonna make sure of this, and that and the other'. So you have to understand where you are physically in space. Then obviously you have to remember... I wouldn't say I learned the dialogue the same way that you actors learnt it, but I have to remember the beginnings of lines and the ends of lines because I have to know when I'm gonna go to the next person. And of course the entire time you're trying to keep it steady and the entire time you're looking for the boom and reflections and lights and everything else. I mean to give you an example on 'Five

Votes Down', the beginning of that shot, you know brings them out of the speech that Martin has just finished and I kind of back up and then I follow Brad and Allison down the stairs and it sort of turns, and at a point at the very bottom of the stairs, I think actually just as I'm getting down the stairs, they're already obviously down the stairs, I gotta get around in front of them, but there's an entire bank of glass; I think they're freezers or something like that, behind them. And you're looking at it while you're there, and you're like 'how do I get around that? I can't let them see my reflection.' And so I said, "Allison, do me a favour: right at the point when I'm starting to get to the side of you, grab Brad for a second or do something that will take our eye away from it." I don't think I told her to grab him, I just said can you give me some sort of big motion. One of the great things about, as you know, all the actors on those shows, was they were always inventive and they understand what we were trying to do, and they were always part of just elevating it even higher, which was amazing. And so she does that little, I think she stops him by the arm, and, of course, the take that they use, you can actually see me in the glass, which kills me every time I see that shot.

JOSH: [laughing] It's pretty minor – you've gotta really be looking for it!

DAVE: It is, but that's what I'm looking for. I'm pretty sure, actually, in the take that's on TV, because we did 16 takes of that shot...

JOSH: Wow.

DAVE: ...there's a moment where I'm sort of pulling back through the folks and there's a Secret Service agent who pushes past who pushed me back to put Toby in the program, Richard Schiff, and he's supposed to react to this big flame that goes off, but the flame didn't go off, or it went off late or something like that, so there's a moment where he's trying, I mean again I probably only notice it, but he's trying to figure out whether he should react to it or not. And then the next part of the shot, going down the stairs where the bodyguards come in, in front of the President, we had walked all this through the night before to make sure it was doable, and I said, "Yeah it's great, we'll be fine," whatever. So I'm now backing up down the stairs, but what I didn't take into account is they've now put these two football-sized linebackers in front of everybody, and Martin's not the tallest person in the world, so I'm going backwards, trying not to fall; I've got two guys behind me helping you know keep me up, and I'm trying to see Martin over all this just sort of cacophony, and it's kind of shocking that it worked. But it did. And I don't remember which take they ended up using, but about two takes beforehand was, as far as I'm concerned the absolute perfect take, and I got towards the end to where Martin's talking about his pills and I kicked the Steadicam with my knee accidentally and [crosstalk] burned the shot.

JOSH: [crosstalk] Oh!

DAVE: And I remember very distinctly, Martin realised what happened, and he went, "Oh man!" and I remember thinking 'I feel worse than I've ever felt' because I don't want to be the one to drop the ball.

[JOSH laughing]

DAVE: But we did it again, and there you go. [laughing]

JOSH: I'm sure previous takes had been blown by the actors, so...

DAVE: Yeah. Although actually, I think most everybody, I'm sure there were one or two, but most everybody made it through most of them, because especially, on the bigger things, like nobody wants to be the one to drop the ball, [crosstalk] so everybody steps up. But, yeah, it happens you know?

JOSH: [crosstalk] I know

HRISHI: Was that the hardest scene that you ever shot for the show?

DAVE: I think it depends on what you're talking about. That scene is, no question, physically was the hardest scene I'd ever done on that show, and really, I don't know, ever, one of the harder things I've ever done because of the sheer length of that shot and the number of cues, the stairs and everything else. There were other scenes that were harder in a different way, but there are certain scenes where, you know that to me is a big huge moving shot, right?

HRISHI: Mmmhmm.

DAVE: And there are some of the scenes that we used to do that didn't cover a lot of ground but were very nuanced, and you have to just have your timings just right, to make the drama of the scene work. And in a weird way those are harder, because you sometimes become almost an actor in the play as well, and if you're coming off someone and coming onto the other person at the wrong time, it's not going to work. So you have to mentally be much more in the game, I think, for those. There are the ones that are tough because of physical actions, and there are other ones that are tough because of nuances, so I think they are all hard in their own way, you know?

JOSH: And so you mentioned the rest of the gang that you've got helping you. You've got a couple people, what, running interference, they have a hand on your back, a little bit, as you're moving backwards?

DAVE: Yeah, yeah. There's no question, look, I mean the reality is there's a whole group of people who are making it happen. First of all, and again, I apologize, because this is a long time ago –

JOSH: Of course.

DAVE: So I can't remember all the names, but there's a dolly grip on my back, who's basically a) keeping people out of the way, keeping me from falling down those stairs, making sure as I'm backing up, if I'm backing up into something, to move around. And invariably, on a shot that big,

you're gonna sort of lose track of where you are a little bit, and they have to guide you around stuff a little bit so it is invaluable. I think my assistant at the time was Rick Tschudin, who was pulling focus. So like, I can pull off the greatest shot in the world, and if he's on a remote focus system, so he's wireless, so he's probably three or four feet behind me, and he's keeping everything in focus. I believe there was a guy with a light ball that was turning it up and down as we went, in a couple of places. And then there's a boom operator who's got to somehow get the boom in there, keep it out of my shot, and he's usually in front of everybody, so I have no idea how he does what he does. The luxury of my job is I'm the first person in that line moving backwards, so I don't have to keep out of anybody's way other than the actors'; behind me there's a whole circus going on. Yeah, it's kind of amazing that it all does work as well as it does.

HRISHI: Now you're on one of my favorite contemporary shows, *The Americans*, and I was wondering, is it very different on a show like that than it was on *The West Wing*?

DAVE: Yeah, I don't think they're trying to accomplish the same thing. Something like *The Americans*, and I would come and go on the show, just day-playing here and there. But something like that they don't have a Steadicam operator full time, so they're not always telling the story that way. So usually those shows still pull stuff in just because they're out on the street, and they're doing long walk-and-talk, and don't have a dolly. Most of those things are just, they're more 'this is the best way to shoot it' as opposed to 'we're creating a style' you know?

HRISHI: Right, just functional, for one moment.

DAVE: Yeah, exactly. Which is, I mean that's no less or no more, it's just a different thing. Ironically, the reason I came onto that show was Tommy was directing, I wanna say the first episode of season three, and called me up and said, "Are you available?" and I said, "yeah", and he goes, "Great, come on and hang out." So I went out and I met them and they kept on calling me back. So he's the reason I got into that show.

JOSH: He got the band back together.

DAVE: Yeah, a little bit. And he and I have done I don't even know how many pilots together, and shows. He's just a phenomenal collaborator. I'll tell you, one of my favorite moments *West Wing* wise with him was we were shooting episode two, and I said, "Can I ask you a question?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Do you and Aaron ever talk about the fact," and keep in mind it wasn't on TV at the time, right? I said "Do you guys ever talk about the fact that this may be too smart for the American public?" And he looked at me and he said, "Oh yeah we talk about that all the time," and he said, "and frankly we decided that we don't care. They're going to have to step up to us, we're not going to come back down to them." And I thought that was really cool; I think the sort of not belittling the American public, but the average TV show, I think, *West Wing* throughout was sort of more intelligent than most.

JOSH: Agreed.

DAVE: Yeah, so it was a pretty amazing thing to be a part of. I have to tell you I was so touched when all these people started emailing me saying, "Hey! You gotta listen to what they were talking about you." And I'm like, "What?!" And I heard that you guys said such kind words, and then later on that Richard Schiff, who's one of my favorite people in the entire world, gave me probably the greatest compliment, anyone's ever given me, or an operator, from an actor, you know, was saying nice things about me as well. That whole cast was just unbelievable to work with.

JOSH: Tommy gave you a nice shout-out as well, when he spoke to us.

DAVE: Oh did he? I didn't know, OK, that one I didn't hear but that's cool to know. Richard, years later, I was going out to lunch with him, and he said, "I miss having you on set!" and I said, "Oh, well I miss you guys too." And he said, "No, no, I'm being completely self-centered because every time we finished a take I could always look at you and tell whether I got it or not." I was like 'really?' and he said, "Yeah, absolutely." I always thought that was unbelievably cool, whether it's true or not; I probably had gas and he didn't understand. [laughing]

[HRISHI and JOSH laughing]

DAVE: But to work with people of that calibre, it just takes you to a different level, I think.

JOSH: Well your work on the show is exquisite, and a real integral part of the magic that is *The West Wing*, so I'm glad that we finally got to catch up with you and explore it a little with you.

DAVE: Absolutely. I totally appreciate the opportunity, and I hope the rest of the podcast continues to go well because there's so many people out there. That shot was I don't know how many years ago, and I still get people who are like, "Did you do that *West Wing* shot?" And I'm like, "Are you kidding me?"

JOSH: That's great.

DAVE: That's still getting me props, so I'll take it. But thank you, it was an entire group effort, and thankfully we all got to do it.

JOSH: Thank you so much, Dave.

HRISHI: And that's it for our episode.

JOSH: Yeah. That's all we've got.

HRISHI: [laughing]

JOSH: Hey, thanks for listening, we hope you listen to the next one. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter. I'm @joshmalina, Hrishi's @hrishihirway, the show is @westwingweekly

HRISHI: And if you'd like to hear more from our friend Kevin Porter, you can follow him everywhere at @kevintporter. You should also check out his excellent podcast, *Gilmore Guys*, which I've been on a couple times, and which I highly recommend. And if you'd like, you can discuss this episode with us, or with other *West Wing Weekly* listeners, on our website, thewestwingweekly.com, or on our Facebook page, facebook.com/thewestwingweekly I will say that you're probably more likely to get a response from Josh if you leave the comment on the website, and more likely to get a response from me if you leave it on Facebook.

JOSH: So you're kind of setting this up as a poll of sorts, aren't you Hrishu?

HRISHI: [laughing] The thing that I've noticed is that on the website people tend to be a little meaner.

JOSH: That's true.

HRISHI: So I tend to hang out on Facebook where people are a little nicer.

JOSH: And I think it's possible that what you're picking up on is that I've set the tone on the website, and you've set the tone on our Facebook page.

HRISHI: [laughing] Maybe. Or maybe it's just that people are more willing to be mean when a picture of them isn't attached to it.

JOSH: True. It would be easy enough actually, I think, to post entirely anonymously on the website.

HRISHI: Exactly.

JOSH: You can just make up a name and there's no image. There you go, that may be what it is.

HRISHI: *The West Wing Weekly* is a proud member of the Radiotopia podcast network, from PRX, made possible by the Knight Foundation and Mailchimp, celebrating creativity, chaos and teamwork. Check out all the shows at radiotopia.fm

JOSH: OK.

HRISHI: OK.

DAVE: What's next?