

The West Wing Weekly  
2:15: "Ellie"  
Guest: Nina Siemaszko

[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 "Ellie". It's episode 15 from season 2.

JOSH: Coming up in a little bit, we'll be joined by Nina Siemaszko, who played the eponymous role of Ellie in this episode. The teleplay is by Aaron Sorkin, the story by Kevin Falls and Laura Glasser. It was directed by Michael Engler and it first aired on February – [laughter] [expletive deleted] it, I feel like I mentally backed up and I got up to the ramp and I just wasn't ready for the jump. [laughter] February 21st, 2001.

HRISHI: Here's the synopsis from TV Guide: "The President returns from Japan to learn his Surgeon General has said some things about marijuana that might prove troublesome. Then his daughter Ellie, a medical student, says something about the controversy to reporter Danny Concannon. Meanwhile, Charlie's choice of a movie for the President to watch proves controversial too. And Toby tries to enlist his ex-wife, a Congresswoman, in his effort to make peace with liberal Democrats over the Social Security flap.

JOSH: Michael Engler, a very good director, has directed a lot of great comedy *30 Rock*, *Big C*, four *Downton Abbey*'s, including the 2015 Christmas special. A lot of great stuff.

HRISHI: I think it's *Downton's Abbey*.

JOSH: Nice! I suspect you're right. [laughter] I think that is correct.

HRISHI: But there's no mention in the synopsis of the Allman Brothers, who are basically a supporting character in this episode.

JOSH: Yeah! They get quite a few 'shouts out', I think it is.

HRISHI:[laughter] I think that's right.

JOSH: The Allmans Brother.

HRISHI: At first, I had a reaction when the Surgeon General says the line:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*DR. GRIFFITH: He should put the bong back in the closet, behind the Allman Brothers albums where it belongs.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Clearly, she assumes that whoever is writing to her is white...

JOSH: And old!

HRISHI: [laughter] Yeah, exactly. And then, without really expanding on it, it seems like everybody else in the episode just says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

C.J.: *The Allman Brothers?*

JOSH: *It gets a lot worse.*

SAM: *The Allman Brothers?*

JOSH: *Keep reading.*

PRESIDENT BARTLET: *The Allman Brothers, Josh?*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And I felt like they were agreeing with me. They're like, "Really, Allman Brothers? That's your cliché of what a ...

JOSH: Yeah, you're right. It's Aaron [Sorkin] talking to himself.

HRISHI: [laughter] Yeah.

JOSH: Like, really dude. Like I think maybe throughout the entire first draft he had a pin in it, figured he'd come up with something better. And he just kept saying to himself, "Really, Allman Brothers?" and at the end he was like, "Ah no, I'll just keep it all in.". It's kind of a thing, it's kinda funny. Also, did you get the a *Sports Night* vibe in the first scene?

HRISHI: Because of the online chat?

JOSH: No no. Greg Baker, who played Elliott in *Sports Night*, was questioning Mary Kay Place as the Surgeon General.

HRISHI: Hey, that's right! Yeah, he was, he was one of the interviewers.

JOSH: Yeah, great guy, terrific actor.

HRISHI: That's right. Not the Allmans Brother, but brothers of different mothers – Ed and Larry [cross talk, laughter], they're in this episode. But in their first mention, I was kind of thrown off because Toby says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

TOBY: *Ginger?*

GINGER: *Yeah?*

TOBY: *Get Larry and Ed.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And it just felt like when you fold your hands and you put your thumb in a certain way and then you have to put your thumb on the inside instead of the outside – do you know what I'm talking about?

JOSH: No, but I'm liking it; I'm enjoying the visual that the listeners are NOT getting [laughter].

HRISHI: Okay, here, everybody do this – fold your hands together.

JOSH: I'm actually gonna do it [cross talk], I'm gonna do it with you.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Okay, good, yeah.

JOSH: Okay, fold your hands together?

HRISHI: Yeah, fold your hands together.

JOSH: The little, Jews don't pray like this, but I'll do it.

HRISHI: Yeah, okay, it doesn't have to be in prayer.

JOSH: I'm always in prayer – because I'm always in fear.

HRISHI: Okay, now whatever way you did it, now unclasp your hands and do it the other way so that the other thumb is on the outside.

JOSH: It just feels wrong.

HRISHI: Right, like “Larry and Ed”. That's what I was trying to say.

JOSH: Yeah, I would have said try saying “Robin and Batman” – but the hand thing was fine.

HRISHI: [laughter] Mine was interactive.

JOSH: [laughter] It was much more interactive. You'd be great at a kid's museum.

HRISHI: Kid museums.

JOSH: That's right, I'm sorry. God, I make that mistake a lot.

HRISHI: [laughter] Anyway, has it been established that they're always called Ed and Larry, or is that just a “hmmm”?

JOSH: It's possible that it was just Richard being Richard.

HRISHI: [laughter] No, I mean is it my issue?

JOSH: No no. I didn't even notice it. My guess is my brain – in fact, until I heard William Duffy's voice I didn't realize they were in the episode, so my guess is that when he said Larry and Ed it didn't even register to me as Ed and Larry [laughter]. Again, cognitive dissonance.

HRISHI: Right. That's great. Well, so we start this episode off with Elliott from *Sports Night*, asking questions to Dr. Griffith, who is played by Mary Kay Place.

JOSH: Yes, quite an accomplished actress, comic actress, going back to *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, and she's currently on the Maria Bamford show *Lady Dynamite*. She was in *My So-Called Life*.

HRISHI: She was in *Being John Malkovich*.

JOSH: Oh, you know what she was also terrific in? *Big Love* – I knew I was forgetting something.

HRISHI: Did you ever work with her? I mean she's been in some episodes that you were also in.

JOSH: Hmm... That's interesting. I remember my being in all those episodes. [laughter] I'm a little iffy on some of the other actors. I don't recall ever working with her. I think I would remember that.

HRISHI: Do you know her?

JOSH: I don't recall knowing her. But it's possible we're dear friends.

HRISHI: [laughter] She plays Dr. Millicent Griffith – she has three different names. It's her first episode, but she already gets three names. She gets to be called - well four really – she gets to

be called the Surgeon General, Dr. Griffith, Millicent, and Millie.

JOSH: Yes. The first time I heard Millie, I think it's from Leo? [cross talk] It seemed a bit more familiar than I would have guessed these two would be. And it's only later, when we discover that she's in fact Ellie's Godmother that I realize she's just, there's a closeness, and an intimacy between her and the Bartlets and maybe the whole Administration. There's just a closer link than you realize for most of the episode.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Yeah. It plays into stuff that we've talked about in terms of the staff all having nicknames that, everybody has a nickname – Abigail Bartlet is Abbey. Everybody. You know, Danny Concannon is Danny. There's a power in the nickname that Aaron [Sorkin] likes to invoke. But Danny Concannon is in the episode – he's even mentioned in the synopsis that I read but he's not actually IN the episode. Timothy Busfield is not in the episode at all. He just figures into the plot [cross talk] without ever appearing on the screen.

JOSH: [cross talk] Oh yeah, right. And how we know that he's the one who has a published Eleanor's quote.

HRISHI: In fact, before he even publishes anything, I think C.J. gets the heads up – she gets a call from him, because Ellie has called him directly.

JOSH: Right, because he has the hots for C.J., he gives her a heads up, [cross talk] the bad reporter.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Yeah. [laughter] Or maybe he's calling to get an official response [cross talk].

JOSH: [cross talk] Right. Of which he'll get none.

HRISHI: But that's interesting, that he's clearly an important part to the mechanics of the plot here, but not so important that they decided to bring him in.

JOSH: Right. Not quite worth the expense to hire the actor. Pretty topical episode given the recent passage of Proposition 64 in California, anyway topical for us. Topical for many, certainly the de-criminalization of marijuana [cross talk] possession.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Yeah, topical, edible, all kinds of forms.

JOSH: [laughter] Nice. I like, I prefer topical. I use my cannabis in an ointment. I don't want to say where [laughter] I will say where – at my house.

HRISHI: [laughter] Yeah, there's a pretty big disparity between the public opinion as represented in this episode, versus what it is today.

JOSH: Give us some numbers, Hrishi.

HRISHI: In the episode, they mention that 69% of Americans oppose the legalization of marijuana. This is when the episode was aired in 2001, if that was accurate. In any case, the number now, according to a Quinnipiac poll from June of 2016, 54% of Americans support legalization – so that's a pretty big shift.

JOSH: Yes, it is. Big differential and I guess we know that there's been a seismic shift in thinking about decriminalization.

HRISHI: Mhmm. This episode's pretty funny, right?

JOSH: Yeah it is. It feels like, overall, we're hemming and hawing a little bit because it's not a super media episode. I actually enjoyed it very much. It went - it went down easy and I liked it and it had a lot of laughs. There's a lot of good, snappy, classic Aaron repartee.

HRISHI: Yeah, there's practically an Abbott and Costello routine happening when they're trying to figure out what time zone the President is in.

JOSH: That is true, which I love; I wrote down "Quintessential Sorkin".

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*SAM: 3am.*

*C.J.: Which puts him down in Washington 6pm Thursday.*

*JOSH: He's gonna land in Washington an hour before he took off?*

*SAM: Yeah.*

*JOSH: And that's not a story that beats the Surgeon General?*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: That is a fantastic riff and there's a similar one – maybe less effective because Ellie tells her Dad, you know, "I'm not going to laugh" – but President Bartlet does a whole riff at the end in the movie theater with the various specializations of doctors in a desperate attempt with Dad humor to get a laugh from his daughter.

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: I hear you're thinking about Ophthalmology?*

*ELLIE: Oncology.*

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: Why do you want to study people's feet?*

*ELLIE: That's Podiatry.*

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: Then what's children's medicine?*

*ELLIE: Pediatrics.*

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: I thought it was Obstetrics?*

*ELLIE: That's pregnant women.*

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: And what's the study of feet?*

*ELLIE: Dad, you're not going to get me to laugh.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: It's also kind of along those lines of funny linguistic humor. And I get a feeling maybe Aaron just, [snap] you know, had to bang one out – get an episode out there [laughter]. And you know, Aaron at whatever it is, half speed, still writes out a fantastic episode and thoroughly enjoyable.

HRISHI: There are nice little visual touches that go along with some of this stuff too. Even if there's something light about this idea of not knowing exactly what time the President will land, it's reinforced later; there's a shot when we come back where you just see a hand adjusting the

clock that says “POTUS” and I love that little detail.

JOSH: I love that too! I love just the analog moment ‘oh somebody actually sets that by hand?’  
[cross talk] You know?

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. I think we’re told at one point it’s someone from the Navy who sets those clocks, right?

JOSH: We’re told in the episode?

HRISHI: Not this episode, but in a past episode, if I remember correctly.

[West Wing Episode 1.21 excerpt]

*DONNA: ‘Cause those large clocks on the wall that are run by the U.S. Navy, say your watch sucks. In fact, they say your watch sucks in four different time zones.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: This is also the first introduction of the ‘Spaldeen’.

JOSH: I wrote down, “First Toby ball bouncing?”, [cross talk] so mini spoiler alert, balls will bounce in the future.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Mmhmmm. Yeah, this is the first appearance of a recurring character motif.

JOSH: Sure. Visual-like motif. Yeah, and I think you can see how much Richard enjoys the little acting toy he’s found. He uses it to torment Sam; he uses it kind of as a cathartic way to get out aggression and frustration during scenes with Andy. It’s kind of all purpose. It’s like a little executive therapeutic toy for Toby.

HRISHI: I love the little, almost chaste, kiss on the cheek that she gives him. She gives him a kiss on the cheek, but it’s just not quite 100% chaste. He says she looks fantastic, which she does, and she gives him a kiss, and it’s just like a little bit too close to the mouth and there’s just too much chemistry between them. And the fact that they use to be married to each other – all these things combine – that that little moment, that little physical exchange, has so much to it.

JOSH: Absolutely. I thought there were two meaningfully awkward kisses in the show - that is clearly one of them. And you’re right, that’s not, I mean it has a slight awkwardness because it’s kind of, what is it? Is it platonic? [cross talk] Is it charged? There’s clearly a little charge there. And then there is an also not quite fully successful kiss between the President and his daughter Ellie when they first see each other. [cross talk] And I thought both little moments it’s two great little bits of business that speak to what these characters have all given up personally in their pursuit of excellence at work.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. Yeah. Well put. And Sam tries to do his thing, be Sam-like and friendly and Toby just cuts him off and says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*ANDY: How have you been, Sam?*

*TOBY: Sam’s great.*

*SAM: Fit as a fiddle, Andy. Although, to tell you the truth, I found a...*

*TOBY: Nobody cares.*

SAM: Yeah.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yes, and Rob Lowe, God bless him, as Sam, just kind of beams. He doesn't, he doesn't get offended at all [laughter]. He's kind of like "Well, yeah, I should have seen that coming".

HRISHI: Josh, have we ever talked about the monogram on Sam's shirts?

JOSH: No, I know that I've read about it online, I think people have reached out here and there. There's some sort of mistake, right? Because we know his last name.

HRISHI: Yeah, Samuel Norman Seaborn and his shirts say 'SNS', but that's not right. The way that you would monogram it traditionally is, there would be a big 'S' in the middle, and there would be a 'S' and a 'N' on either side, because Seaborn is his last name, you put the last name in the middle and the first and middle initial on either side.

JOSH: So, what's the story?

HRISHI: I don't know.

JOSH: Is it a gaffe? Gaffe squad.

HRISHI: I think it's a gaffe or maybe they didn't want to put 'SSN' on there because there's already so much attention being paid to Social Security.

JOSH: [laughter] Nice. That's all we got? [cross talk] Just bad jokes? Is there no real explanation? I guess it's just an error then, isn't it?

HRISHI: [cross talk] That's all I've got. Yep, just bad jokes. I think so. You know, one thing that I love in this episode is the mechanics of when they demonstrate how C.J. does her job. It's not just a matter of relaying "this is the information", you know, "this is what's happening". We get to see in this exchange between C.J. and Josh what her job is in terms of answering the reporters and how she's doing this kind of obfuscation and really like, there's a lot of politics in every answer she has to deliver. It's a really difficult game that she has to play and Josh tests her, he says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*JOSH: Think you're able to show support for the Surgeon General without supporting her policy?*

*C.J.: Yeah.*

*JOSH: Show me.*

*C.J.: Try me.*

*JOSH: C.J., did you know that Dr. Griffith was going to criticize the Administration's drug policy last night?*

*C.J.: I don't agree with your characterization of her comments. I think she expressed her opinion about the health effects of certain illegal drugs.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yeah, as you say it is completely a game; it's all about anticipating the questions and

then the concomitant questions that your answers are going to provoke and it's completely a scene where he tests her. I thought they should then, right after that scene, go and play chess.

HRISHI: Yeah. [laughter] Nice use of concomitant.

JOSH: Thank you, I really, that's what I was working towards.

HRISHI: I have a good word that I was going to bring up.

JOSH: Bring it.

HRISHI: Zeugma.

JOSH: Zeugma?! Well, but mine was English.

HRISHI: Mine is English as well. In fact, it's a device in English.

JOSH: Teach me, Hrishi, teach me. Spell it first.

HRISHI: Zeugma.

JOSH: Sure. Is that anything like a dweomer?

HRISHI: It's nothing like a dweomer.

JOSH: [loudly] Ohhh, first season call back! Okay, what is a zeugma?

HRISHI: Okay, so C.J. says in this exchange with Josh:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*C.J.: Josh?*

*JOSH: Yeah?*

*C.J.: While I'm showing her support, what are you showing her?*

*JOSH: The door.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: That's a zeugma?

HRISHI: Yeah, because they're....

JOSH: So a zeugma is a predictable line of dialog?

HRISHI: I'm showing her support/I'm showing her the door. It's like this parallel structure, but in the two different pieces of it the word 'showing' is used with different meaning.

JOSH: Hmmm. Okay.

HRISHI: Yeah, zeugma. It comes from the Greek 'yoking' or 'bonding'.

JOSH: I do love to learn a new word. Zeugma, very cool. How do you know this word?

HRISHI: Uh, I don't know, just general word nerd stuff.

JOSH: Wow. Zeugma. I'm gonna do a zeugma deep dive off mic later so that I can use it...

HRISHI: I'm sure you've participated in zeugma.

JOSH: Oh, that's true. Well, I've done all sorts of things I can't pronounce.

HRISHI: [laughter] Usually at home. But, yeah, you know like "I lost my wife and my mind in a



matter of a week”.

JOSH: Hmm. Good example. Very good example.

HRISHI: I liked that moment in the episode. Even if the line was being telegraphed, they did it in a poetic way.

JOSH: Yeah, no, it was well done. I just got there before he did. Got to the door, I meant. Zeugma!

HRISHI: [laughter] I would like it if in your [cross talk], the way you digested it is like you then used zeugma as like a Jerry Lewis-esk, just like an exclamation, any time you get surprised. That's you're, just what you're going to say.

JOSH: [cross talk] Am I wrong? That wasn't zeugma? It'll be like my flaven. Yeah. [cross talk] I'm gonna give it a shot.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Exactly. If we didn't already have flentl for flentls and zeugma didn't already mean something the zeugma would be a good word for the flentl.

JOSH: That's true. But, my God flentl has taken off!

HRISHI: [laughter] It really has.

JOSH: Linguistic hit of 2016.

HRISHI: Although, I've got to tell you there have been two people who have tried to come at us about flentl, saying "Uh, excuse me, actually" who are hashtagging actual'ing us and saying "a flentl is just a sound bridge or a split edit". And I've had to go and say "No, actually that's not true". And they do it in this like really annoying way, where it's like "I'm surprised that you guys, who work in tv and film, don't know that this is actually called" because it's a very specific phenomenon – it is not just a general intercutting of [cross talk], it's not just sound and picture. Yeah, it's the end of the episode. You clearly described in our episode with Larry and Ed, God that feels so weird, with Ed and Larry, Episode 1.11, where you coined the term flentl. There's only one time when something is a flentl. And it is at the very end of the episode when the episode fades to black and the executive producer credits come up and the sound continues while you just see the title card.

JOSH: [cross talk] Right, sound into.... Thank you, thank you for defining what I meant.

HRISHI: Anyway so, to go so far back [cross talk]

JOSH: [cross talk] Well said. Right, I don't want to lose listeners and my mind by being zeugmatic, [laughter] but, if you can't understand what a flentl is, I wrote down, obviously I had some concentration issues. Because I'm looking at my notes right now and I wrote down "Dule speaks Spanish."

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*CHARLIE: Moshimoshi. Konichiwa, Sam. Ikaga dess ka.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: [laughter] I guess that was in response to his speaking Japanese on the airplane.

HRISHI: [laughter] But you wrote Spanish?

JOSH: I wrote “Dulé speaks Spanish”, as if that was particularly worthy of note.

HRISHI: [laughter] Apparently it wasn’t since you didn’t even get the right language.

JOSH:Correct. But maybe that’s more my fault than his.

HRISHI: That scene, I thought was noteworthy just because I interpreted his use of Japanese as “This is pretty exciting for Charlie, he’s going to Tokyo.”

JOSH: Absolutely, oh yeah.

HRISHI: Maybe this is his first time going to Tokyo. And I do the same thing when I’m going to a country for the first time; I get a phrasebook and I get excited about trying to at least to not just speak English. I thought it was kind of cute that he was practicing his Japanese.

JOSH: Absolutely, very endearing. And clearly, in addition to the Japanese phrasebook, he also got the big book of tariffs to read on the plane. [cross talk] Because he sure knew a lot about them on the way off the plane, as they disembark. He and the President have quite the heady conversation:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: [waves to someone] How ya doing? They’re going to want retaliatory tariffs and you know what that means?*

*CHARLIE: A return to Smoot-Hawley and the Great Depression.*

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: A return to Smoot-Hawley and the Great Depression.*

*CHARLIE: Well, you should go to Japan and tell them that, Sir.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: The President’s kind of having a teaching moment, but it gets a little bit thwarted because Charlie already knows the answers [cross talk] and he tells him the answer, but then the President says the answer himself anyway. And I thought, “Yeah, either Charlie now really knows this stuff or this is the third time that...”

JOSH: [cross talk] Right. That Bartlet has bored him with the information. It’s funny.

HRISHI: [laughter] Yeah. We just haven’t seen the first two ourselves.

JOSH: You might be right.

HRISHI: Smoot-Hawley...

JOSH: Co-hosted the Country Music Awards in 1968.

HRISHI: [laughter] Smoot-Hawley, besides being maybe the most fun-named tariff of all time, also figured into a, now do you remember this moment in 2009, when Michele Bachmann...

JOSH: No chance! [laughter]

HRISHI: [laughter] Okay. Michele Bachmann had this really great, just Bachmann ai-yi-yi moment when she, it was crazy, she blamed the Depression on FDR and she went on this little jag about the Depression that was so incredibly inaccurate:

[CSPAN excerpt]

*MICHELE BACHMANN: FDR applied just the opposite formula, the Hoot-Smalley Act, which was a tremendous burden on tariff restrictions, and then of course trade barriers and the regulatory burden and tax barriers, that's what we saw happen under FDR that took a recession and blew it into a full-scale depression...*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And also seemed to forget that both Smoot and Hawley were Republicans.

JOSH: Boom! Wow.

HRISHI: Speaking of arcane, esoterica, Sam at one point says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*SAM: Gloriosky, Morgan, the Family Values Leadership Council distorted the truth. Stop the presses.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Ohhh! Yeah, I wanted to know if that rang any bells for you. I'm guessing not as you are not a musical fan. But it rang two musical bells.

HRISHI: No, I had to look that up.

JOSH: Apparently, it's from a character from the comics Annie Rooney, her pet expression was "Gloriosky!" But here's the musical, first the obscure one, I remember, and I think one of these two is what inspired Aaron to use the expression 'gloriosky', to put that in Sam's mouth. My cousin Joel who went to high school with Aaron, was in a production, a musical production of *James and the Giant Peach*, the Roald Dahl kids book, Jew hater, [laughter] and there's a lyric, "Gloriosky, what a peach!", 'cause it's a very big peach. That may have inspired Aaron 'cause it took place at Scarsdale High School but then there's a more famous example of the expression "Gloriosky" being used in an American musical, in *West Side Story*, Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, the "Gee, Officer Krupke" number includes the lyric:

[West Side Story excerpt]

*Riff: I'm only anti-work. Gloriosky, that's why I'm a jerk.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: [laughter] And that might be ... [cross talk] Wow. Wow. You actually, wow, you now hate *West Side Story*. Because of one lyric.

HRISHI: [laughter] I can't imagine why I ever did not like musicals. What could I have been thinking?

JOSH: Wow. Wow. *West Side Story*? Have you ever seen *West Side Story* in any format?

HRISHI: Yes, it has the Jets and the Mets?

JOSH: Have you seen the movie? Have you seen a live production?

HRISHI: I have seen the movie.

JOSH: And just meh?

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: *West Side Story*. Classic American musical.

HRISHI:[laughter] I'm not doubting that it's a classic.

JOSH: So, you're saying it could be a classic example of a horrible art form?

HRISHI: [laughter] Exactly.

JOSH: Okay folks, again, you can comment at [thewestwingweekly.com](http://thewestwingweekly.com). Light up the message boards, people.

HRISHI: [laughter] What was it? Do it again, please. The "Gloriosky, I'm a jerk".

JOSH: [singing along with *West Side Story* music] "Gloriosky, that's why I'm a jerk!"

HRISHI: [laughter] You can't think that's good!

JOSH: That's my tough street kid musical voice. I did a production of *West Side Story*, I played 'Baby John' of the Jets. And it was musical theatre and mainly the audience ate [laughter].

HRISHI: They ate it up?

JOSH: No, 65% of their attention was paid on what they were actually eating and 35% on my performance as 'Baby John'.

HRISHI: Is that called Dinner Theatre?

JOSH: It was Dinner Theatre, yeah. Oh – have you ever had dinner? Do you have a problem with dinner?

HRISHI: [laughter] I'm not so in to it. It's alright.

JOSH: It's not your favorite genre of meal, but...?

HRISHI: Yeah, exactly, I'm more of a lunch guy.

JOSH: Fair enough. You enjoy a late lunch, I respect that.

HRISHI: There's a part in this episode that I wanted to ask you about. Sam says, to this movie producer Morgan Ross:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*SAM: You ever call the President a coward again for your own PR purposes, it's not going to be C.J. Cregg you gotta deal with, it's going to be me. You understand what I'm saying, right?*

*Morgan Ross: Yes.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And Morgan Ross says "Yes". But, I don't understand what he's saying. Did you understand what he was saying? Like, what is the threat there?

JOSH: I think the threat is, "even though C.J. is taller than I am, [laughter], I'm a better fighter". I think he was just posturing. It was just like what gorillas do. That's all I got out of it just "alright, you're not going to have to deal with C.J., you're going to have to deal with me, buddy". It didn't impress me and I'm not sure how much, I don't know how intimidated the producer was either.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: Did you think there was something deeper there?

HRISHI: Well, I was just like, is he saying it because he's a lawyer and he's going to bring some kind of litigation or – I didn't understand it.

JOSH: I took it solely as you think you can run over C.J., that's one thing. But you're going to have to deal with Sam Seaborn.

HRISHI: Yeah. Or like, maybe he would write a very strongly worded memo with all his speechwriting powers.

JOSH: Possibly.

HRISHI: Morgan Ross, was played by Robert Knepper, or 'KA-nepper', but I think it's probably "N-epper", right?

JOSH: It might be pronounced "KR-obert". Unlikely.

HRISHI: [laughter] How do you pronounce Israeli's Parliament?

JOSH: Knesset.

HRISHI: So, maybe he would pronounce this Robert "KN-epper".

JOSH: Oh, is he Jewish?

HRISHI: I don't know. But his name is spelled Knepper. You've seen him in many, many things; he's one of those guys. I know him best from *Carnivàle*. Have you ever saw that? That's an excellent show, [cross talk] I really like.

JOSH: [cross talk] Yes, sure, good show.

HRISHI: Yeah, and he was in *Prison Break*. But here he comes in for just a couple lines as Morgan Ross, the opportunistic film producer.

JOSH: Yes, okay, and then talk me through this subplot. So, he's trying to make hay for his movie, which appears to be, perhaps, not very good.

HRISHI: I don't even know necessarily that the movie is supposed to be bad. I think it's just that it's a smaller movie and it's a little bit edgy and not a mainstream film. So, you know, as Sam says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*SAM: I've read the press synopsis of the film and if exhibitors put you on every screen of every multiplex in every mall, you still wouldn't do any business in Mississippi, Oklahoma, or Alabama.*

*MORGAN ROSS: You're an industry expert now.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: But it is a way for him to drum up some publicity. I imagined Bad Lieutenant when they were describing the movie.

JOSH: Sure.

HRISHI: And the scene where Harvey Keitel strips in the church.

JOSH: Sure. Do you imagine that scene a lot?

HRISHI: [laughter] It's my screensaver [laughter]. You know they say it's an adaptation of *The*

*Idiot* by Dostoyevsky. So it's not really a popcorn movie; it's not a summer blockbuster.

JOSH: Right. There's a lot made of this plot but there wasn't a lot there.

HRISHI: It sets up this idea of the screening at the White House which is the set up for the final scene, the one that you were talking about, about liking where the President says all his ridiculous Dad things to try and get Ellie to laugh. They have a movie night, and it gives a chance for the President to be in full Dad mode, even though he's at work. Because it's a movie that they show at the White House and you see the staff comes there and everybody's kind of watching with him and he even says:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: You wanna bet me your tuition no one in this room's gonna shush me?*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: 'Cause he's still the boss. But this episode, I thought was a great one for getting a little bit deeper in the President and the sitcom version 'President Dad'.

JOSH: Yeah, no, I agree. That's what I think I most liked about this episode. Is that we get to see the personal relationship between President Bartlet and his daughter and we get to see 'President Bartlet' the President in an intimate movie screening situation with staff. And we learn in the scene with the Surgeon General, who we discover is Ellie's Godmother, that she believes his stature and his power and things that he probably discounts on a personal level have bled into his personal life. And that the power that he carries as the President has an effect on his kids too. I really love the scene in the Oval. I thought Nina Siemaszko was terrific as Ellie. She gives a sweetly understated performance where you can see, or divine, a lot about her relationship with her Dad even when it's not entirely there in the dialog. And I noticed just a moment, where as a Dad, I was disappointed in President Bartlet because there's just a moment in the scene where she makes herself as vulnerable as can be:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: [arguing] Well, you sure didn't do it to make me happy!*

*ELLIE: I don't know HOW to make you happy, Dad! For that you gotta talk to Zoey or Liz.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: It's just a moment where she might as well be screaming "hug me!" and he just walks back behind the Resolute Desk. [cross talk] And you know, you see that there's oh this guy's got some Dad work to do. [cross talk] His instincts are interesting; he walks away from her at time where you think most people would just give your kid a hug and say "come on". He's more comfortable later getting angry about it and saying to Millicent:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: [arguing] but I will not stand and allow someone to tell me that I love one of my children less than the others.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: The moment to really address it was with his daughter, right there.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. Yeah. I was mostly paying attention to what you were saying but I was, I admit, mostly thinking about what the opening titles to 'President Dad' would look like [laughter].

JOSH: Maybe that could be the reboot of the show.

HRISHI: Yeah. But the President's Dad-ness also is underscored in that scene with Dr. Griffith because he's wearing the sweatshirt in the Oval Office, and I feel like they really call attention to it because she, although in the beginning when she's doing the Q & A she's got her Stanford sweatshirt on, later in the Oval Office when she's having this official meeting where she goes to hand in her resignation, she's in her uniform. And, in contrast, the President is walking around having this meeting with her, but he's in HIS sweatshirt now, his Notre Dame sweatshirt. And it really seems like he's in Dad mode, in terms of the way he's dressed. But then they drop him into the Oval Office; I don't know, I thought that was great visually [cross talk] of, yeah, these two contrasting versions of President Bartlet in the same space.

JOSH: [cross talk] Contrast. Yeah. I was impressed to that Vice Admiral Griffith got into uniform in order to resign. I don't think I would have even showed up. I'd be like "check your email" [laughter]. You know what else was interesting to me? Actually, about the ultimate resolution of that subplot, "I won't accept it", that whole thing, is that the President kind of got the emotional win there in the episode, rather than Dr. Griffith. I felt like, I felt the situation was framed to gain adulation, or praise for, President Bartlet. But really, it should have been more of an apology and a hat tip to the Surgeon General.

HRISHI: You don't think that it was?

JOSH: No, it didn't feel like it. I mean but for much of this episode, it's again about, and I like that these greater sort of moving arcs throughout a season or more, where now that we know they're all thinking about a second term that involves a shift kind of back to the middle and a lot of this episode really is about how the politics are going to play out. You know, Leo basically says to her you're not wrong about anything:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*LEO: I don't think you said anything wrong. Nobody with a brain thinks you did anything wrong. And I'd like to do the right thing all the time, but I can't. I can't let us get bogged down in this crap. Government will stop. This'll be what we do for two months and there are more important things than that. I'll take the heat from the First Lady but I want your resignation by 8 o'clock tonight or the President's going to fire you.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: It's really politics; it's like "you didn't play this right". I feel like the end, I don't know a little bit felt to me like "oh, look at the President doing this grand thing" rather than "you know what, hey, we were wrong".

HRISHI: I was thinking how confusing it was for the President to be able to just say "You know what, I don't accept your resignation" because what about all the stuff that Leo said?

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*LEO: Six different committee chairs... three in the House, three in the Senate... are all talking*

*about hearings.*

*DR. GRIFFITH: What are they going to find?*

*LEO: They don't need to find anything, they just need to say your name and drugs as many times as possible on television.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And they're going to get bogged down in the quagmire of it. Even if there's no criminal wrongdoing or anything like that, Leo says explicitly, we can't afford to be bogged down by this. So, the President gets his emotional win and all that, but it doesn't change any of these facts that are very clearly laid out by Leo.

JOSH: Yeah, that occurred to me too as I watched it unfold, I thought "are they going to come back to this – is any of this going to come back to bite them?" And they don't, do they?

HRISHI: No, they don't.

JOSH: Well, it's interesting then; it's wrapped up more neatly than really could be, realistically.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: That's why I felt that like it was more of an emotional thing than like but "hey, wait a minute, how are you just making this gesture, and are you going to buy back the position that you put this woman in?". And again, like you say, what is going to happen now? [cross talk] How is it this simple, seemingly?

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. Yeah. I found this a little unsatisfying. I wanted to talk about another part of the Ellie dynamic and Nina Siemaszko's performance. I loved the lack of comfort that she had with Charlie. You know, Charlie is talking to her as 'this is my girlfriend's sister'.

JOSH: Right, it's his girlfriend-in-law.

HRISHI: [laughter] Yeah, exactly. It feels like they really haven't hung out a lot and, I don't know, she's kind of standoffish.

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*CHARLIE: Zoey said you were thinking about oncology.*

*ELLIE: Excuse me?*

*CHARLIE: Zoey said you were thinking about oncology.*

*ELLIE: Yeah, or neurology.*

*CHARLIE: He's just tied up in this meeting down the hall.*

*ELLIE: I'm fine.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And he's talking to her, you know, with that kind of coming from the Zoey perspective. But I think she still sees him as her Dad's employee first.

JOSH: Interesting. I thought it was a sweet gambit from Charlie [cross talk], because it indicated that they had discussed what she's up to and that he cared enough to remember.



HRISHI: [cross talk] Yeah, exactly. Yeah, it was really nice. He went out on a limb to make it personal and she starts off a little aloof and a little bit surprised, taken aback. But, he keeps going with it, he tries to really invite her in and then she slowly opens up:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*CHARLIE: You like medical school?*

*ELLIE: I do. I like my professors. I have a pathophysiology professor who teaches clinical skills by...*

*SECRET SERVICE AGENT: Eagle's moving.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And you see I think a little bit about, her personality just in those few lines, just from the performance and the dialog in a really quick moment.

JOSH: Good point. She also knows she's been called to the mat and she knows, I think, about how the conversation is going to go in the Oval.

HRISHI: Right, right.

JOSH: So I'm sure she's not anticipating it fondly.

HRISHI: Yeah, she's previsualizing what's coming her way...and it probably reminds her a bit of Harvey Keitel in Bad Lieutenant.

JOSH: Undoubtedly. As most things do, to most people. I noticed I tweeted something today that I feel foreshadowed one of the lines that I would then watch on the episode. Toby, at one point, basically tells C.J. what she's going to do by saying:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*TOBY: Make sure they know that he's a patriot, and when the President asked him to serve, Senator Gillette answered the call.*

*C.J.: Did he?*

*TOBY: Yeah. I just saw it at your press briefing tomorrow morning.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Right. I watched that soon after having tweeted this morning to Donald Trump "Next week's SNL really sucked won't it?" [laughter]. I thought WOW, that's just a similar as that Toby joke construction.

HRISHI: Dr. Griffith, I also had a little bit of fun trying to intuit the backstory, which I know I should not be doing, but the backstory for Dr. Griffith. She's Eleanor's Godmother and she's a Doctor, and the President even calls her Doc. Which makes me think, so she must be Abbey's friend from the medical community.

JOSH: I like the fact that when Josh first visits her to tell her that she needs to resign, that she immediately launches into series of questions about his medical condition:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*DR. GRIFFITH: They're checking your blood pressure once a week?*

JOSH: Yeah, 130 over 87.

DR. GRIFFITH: Hmm. It's a little high. Uh, what about the right leg and arm?

JOSH: There's a little stiffness.

DR. GRIFFITH: Yeah. You know, the guys at GW did a fantastic job. It's a beautiful scar.

JOSH: [surprised] When have you seen my scar?

DR. GRIFFITH: At the hospital.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I thought that was kind of sweet and unexpected and I also thought Presidential appointees [cross talk] who actually have a base of knowledge for the position to which they've been appointed, how quaint.

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. That's true. And yet still, some nepotism, some nepotism.

JOSH: That's true. [laughter]

HRISHI: [laughter] Did you hear the first way I said it?

JOSH: No, I would like to. [sound of rewinding tape]

HRISHI: "Some nep-itism"

JOSH: "Nep-itism?" I see.

HRISHI: I said "nep-itism" because, I think because of *School of Rock* there's a line in there that I love where Jack Black says:

[School of Rock (movie) excerpt]

*Dewey Finn: Yo-Yo Ma's cousin, little Nepotis.*

[end excerpt]

JOSH: [laughter] Little Nepotis. So, you like *School of Rock* even though that's a musical?

HRISHI: I love *School of Rock*.

JOSH: Me too, okay. Have you seen the musical, the Andrew Lloyd Weber *School of Rock*?

HRISHI: That's not a thing, you can't fool me.

JOSH: Are you joking?? [cross talk] It's on Broadway!

HRISHI: [cross talk] Wait, no, not Andrew Lloyd Webber.

JOSH: Oh Hrishi, pick up the paper, read the Art section sometime.

HRISHI: [laughter] Are you serious?

JOSH: YES!

HRISHI: The reason why I love *School of Rock* is, you know there are songs but the songs exist in the film as song...like, 'now we're gonna play a song' as opposed to [singing] 'now I'm gonna explain that I am jerk!'

JOSH: That's why I'd like you to see the Andrew Lloyd Webber version, we'll see whether it ruins it for you, presumably it would.

HRISHI: And the book is by Julian Fellowes. [cross talk] What?! How does Andrew Lloyd Webber and Julian Fellowes, how do these guys come together?

JOSH: [cross talk] The book is by Julian Fellowes, yeah. Julian Fellowes wrote every *Downtons Abbey*.

HRISHI: I know. And that's the part that's making me so, God, *School of Rock*, The Musical, with music by Andrew Lloyd Weber – that's just confusing.

JOSH: No, it isn't. [laughter]

HRISHI: One thing that's interesting is that there have been a few subplots that have been building that we kind of put on pause for this episode. The MS stuff that had been simmering with the President telling Leo over dinner about the not running for a second term, that doesn't come up at all, the real action plotlines not mentioned at all in this episode. Which is funny considering the urgency with which they appeared in the last couple episodes. Let me ask you this about the Surgeon General, she tells Josh how, she like scolds him for eating too much junk food, and then she gives him a lollipop.

JOSH: Yes, I noticed that! But you know I thought that was almost hyper realistic because I went to the Dentist recently and when I left, the Dentist gave me a box of See's Candy.

HRISHI: But that makes sense because the Dentist is trying to ensure that they're [cross talk] going have a future with

JOSH: [cross talk] That's true. I know, I was like dude, I'm coming back in six months either way, you don't have to do this. But yeah, you're right, you're right.

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

JOSH: When we come back, we'll talk to Nina Siemaszko.

JOSH: Joining us now, well joining Hrishi anyway, all the way from India is the fabulous Nina Siemaszko.

HRISHI: Nina, thank you so much for talking to us.

NINA: Absolutely, happy to be here.

HRISHI: Here? Where are you? 'Cause you are not here with me.

NINA: [laughter] I'm in Tuni, India, which you are familiar with, which is crazy.

HRISHI: Yeah, I've been there several times. Well, how long ago, if ever, was the last time you saw the episode Ellie?

NINA: I actually think I've seen it only once.

HRISHI: Really?

NINA: Yeah, it was when it aired and I think I was watching it between my fingers. Like with my face covered fully [laughter].

HRISHI: And after it was over, did you feel better about it?

NINA: No, I'm never happy, I'm never satisfied [laughter]. But everyone else was amazing. It was amazing writing [laughter]

HRISHI: Josh and I were talking about how great your performance is in the episode.

NINA: Thank you.

HRISHI: So, can you tell us how you got the role?

NINA: I came in and I auditioned. You know, I knew Josh from *American President*, I knew Aaron from that experience and originally, I was actually supposed to play a different part on the show. But when I was going to play that part, my father had passed away, and so I just took some time and so I was really, really happy that it came around a second time and I was able to come in and audition and be a part of it.

HRISHI: What was your experience like on *American President*?

NINA: Oh, it was awesome. It was just pure fun. It was such a surprise when it happened, because again, it was one of those situations where I came in and I read and at the time that wasn't even in the movie, that part that I played, of the sister. And, I read, and then they said "listen, we'd love for you to be in the movie, these are a bunch of parts that you could potentially play – pick one". They were, you know, good parts, but I decided at the time that, I was like you know what, I'm gonna, I would like to do something a little meatier, so I just said thank you, but no thank you. And, what happened was, they had re-written the script, because you know Aaron writes and writes and writes and writes. He's so amazing that way. And this part ended up being written, and so I got to come in for that part.

HRISHI: So, when you came in to audition for Ellie, you really kind of knew what you were getting into. Did you watch the show before that?

NINA: No [laughter]. I watched one episode, I watched the first episode of the show, and that's all I had watched. Because I think it's important, as an actor that you always know what you're going into, but I hadn't seen the whole series. It was solely because I sort of took a hiatus from television and film – I literally turned everything off for a year. This literally came and I was like "oh my God, I gotta watch this show, I mean, you know, this amazing show" and so I just had an opportunity to watch one episode [laughter] before I went in.

HRISHI: So, when you go in for the audition, do you remember which scene you auditioned for; was it the big scene with the President in the Oval Office?

NINA: Yes, that was the scene that I auditioned with.

HRISHI: Did you read with Aaron or somebody else in the room?

NINA: I think I came in twice, and the second time I read with Aaron, yeah. Which was so much fun [laughter].

HRISHI: Did it feel very different to do it on set with Martin Sheen? What do you remember of that day?

NINA: I was terrified [laughter]. I was terrified mostly because the language – I really wanted to honor the language and not make any mistakes – I'm a bit of a perfectionist. And they wanted it perfect as well and rightfully so because Aaron takes a lot of time figuring out every 'if and or but' and so I want to honor that and so that was my big like "oh my God, I gotta get it right!" [laughter]. So, but the other aspect of that was just, the sheer joy of playing with Martin, who the part alone – just the whole father/daughter thing was very deep for me at the time and always

because I was very close with my Dad personally, not that I need that as an actor but that was definitely, you know, part of the experience, you know, my personal experience came into it.

HRISHI: Right. We also talked about how much we appreciated your performance in the scene with Dulé, with Charlie, when he approaches you, when you're waiting to go into the Oval Office, you guys have an exchange.

NINA: Yes. I just remember really feeling strongly that I did not want to be in that world. I didn't want to be there, I didn't want to know anybody there. I wanted to have nothing to do with anything my Father was doing or anything in regards to that. But yet, I'm an incredibly polite, people-pleasing human being [laughter], so there was that element, I think going in, and that was some of my preparation, I guess.

HRISHI: You know something that has not come up before, actually despite how much we talk about Aaron Sorkin's writing, I can't believe I haven't asked this before, but I haven't asked much about stage directions at all.

NINA: You know, here's the thing about Aaron that I really really appreciate as a writer: he really gives the actor an opportunity to discover. And I feel like it was on the page, but not on the page. So, I feel like there were hints in there, a lot of hints, about who this girl was and I feel like it was there but it wasn't there, like it was suggested and I just latched onto it.

HRISHI: How about the last scene in the theater when you guys are watching the movie – was that particularly difficult?

NINA: Whew – so hard. That dynamic between father and daughter, and you know what I just really really loved working with Martin so much because it was like we just sort of fell in, it was very easy, in a way between the two of us, I felt. Because he's so present and all of the backstory was just there – and the director of the episode, Michael Engler, was amazing. Michael just would come and say a word, another word, or I remember he screamed from across the way, we were doing and the scene and he just said "Nina, breathe!" [laughter]. That was all he said. 'Okay, I'm gonna breathe' [laughter]. He was so simple and I felt like all of the elements were there and that doesn't always happen. You know, it was just there. Between the words and the direction and Martin and I and it's just such a complicated relationship between father and daughter and he, you know, just refuses to apologize ever to me [laughter]. Like – ever! But, yet he's apologizing to me and I know.

HRISHI: One of the things, in terms of being on the page or not, you know there's this beautiful moment where he says his famous line:

[West Wing Episode 2.15 excerpt]

*PRESIDENT BARTLET: The only thing you ever had to do to make me happy was come home at the end of the day.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And you tear up and kind of hold it back.

NINA: Yeah, I think it was on the page. Getting there was a whole other experience [laughter].

HRISHI: How do you get there?

NINA: It was just a question of me sitting down and being there with Martin and when I breathed, it happened. It was there. I mean really, as an actor, that doesn't happen very often, where everything is in place and it's like all I have to do is put on the costume, have them pat my face with you know, some makeup and curl my hair and all I have to do is say the lines, I mean it was there. So, it was just a question of me breathing, that was it [laughter].

HRISHI: So, that was a good note from the director.

NINA: It was an amazing note!

HRISHI: Do you have any other memories from shooting this episode, either shooting it or around shooting it?

NINA: Yeah, I had to dye my hair brown [laughter]. It was such a big deal. Because I'm blonde, or you know, I try to be blonde. And I had to go dye my hair brown.

HRISHI: Was that a bummer?

NINA: It was a big deal, yeah, at the time it was a big deal. And it was so funny when I did come back again, I was blonde [cross talk], so it didn't matter. They didn't care at that point. So, I don't know what happened but I think it was because they wanted me to look, you know, more like my Mom. But, I remember that being a big deal. And also, there was a big deal about clothing. Like, they did not want me to look, in any way, sexy, they wanted me to look really just normal and I so was so happy about that [laughter]. I was so happy about that because at the time it's like everything that I was auditioning for, it was like they wanted me in a tight dress and I was so happy to play a like a human being, you know who looks like a human being

HRISHI: [cross talk] Right. It makes sense that was the direction but I hadn't thought about it, but it really does all come together to feel like a real person.

NINA: Well yeah, and also what I also really loved is that I didn't look like everyone on the show. I looked like I should be on the show but it was a little different, you know? I wasn't in that world. So, this other world was entering that world. And that was one of the things that I really was excited about that this part of his life was coming in that had nothing to do with that; that was really exciting to me. I thought that would be such a cool facet for the President, you know, for Marin Sheen's character.

HRISHI: Awesome. Thank you so much!

NINA: Oh, my God, it's a pleasure! Thanks for having me.

JOSH: Okay, that's it for this episode of The West Wing Weekly. If you want to leave a comment about Hrishy's lack of appreciation of *West Side Story*, you can do so at:

thewestwingweekly.com or on our Facebook page: facebook.com/thewestwingweekly. You can follow us on Twitter: he's @hrishihirway I'm @joshmalina the show is @westwingweekly.

HRISHI: We're on Instagram – our username there is: @thewestwingweekly and for just a little while longer we still have our shirts and sweatshirts available at thewestwingweekly.com/merch

JOSH: But you can always get a pin.

HRISHI: That's true – especially if you enjoyed 'What's Next' featuring Lin-Manuel Miranda you can get your own 'What's Next' lapel pin.

JOSH: That's right! And I gotta go and make my dinner and my bed. Zeugma!

HRISHI: No.

JOSH: Why not? [laughter]

HRISHI: Ahh, I mean, is it? [cross talk] Make my bed and make my dinner?

JOSH: [cross talk] How dare you! I can't believe I've been holding that back the whole pod. How is that not zeugma?

HRISHI: Alright, well, that's the end of the line and our podcast.

JOSH: [laughter] Aww, [expletive deleted] you had to one up me.

HRISHI: Yeah, I did.

JOSH: Goodbye.

HRISHI: [laughter] That's not how we do it.

JOSH: [laughter] Oh right, I forgot, we have our own thing. Ok.

HRISHI: Ok.

NINA: What's next?

HRISHI: Zeugma!

JOSH: Zeugma!

[music excerpt from West Side Story]

*Singers: Gee Officer Krupke, crup-you!*

[Outro Music]