T-Diamond Stylus - The Visit: Media Club Plus S02E08

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Introduction

["Dr Malcolm and Friends" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Keith: Yeah. [pause] [in a spooky voice] Greetings from Media Club Plus, a podcast about plunging into the media that thrills us and the stories that chill us. As always, we have been dragged to you by Friends at the Table. Before our next season, we'll be subjecting ourselves to the twisted mind of M. Night Shyamalan. [in his normal voice] This is a movie. It's a real movie!

Sylvi: It's a fitting intro for once too.

Art: Yeah, this one works.

Keith: I thought it'd be really funny if I read the intro like [**Sylvi:** Normal?] Normal, because it's the first one that's kind of scary.

Ali: [crosstalk] Is this the first one that's kind of scary?

Sylvi: [crosstalk] That would have been a good bit, but—

Art: The Sixth Sense is kind of scary. The Village is kind of scary. I mean…

Keith: Uh, I— I don't think that those movies were kind of scary. And I feel like I have a—

Art: Keith likes being hunted by a monster in the woods.

Keith: The concept was scary. Like, on paper, it could be a scary movie, but it was made in a way that it wasn't scary.

Sylvi: It had potential if done right, and it wasn't done right.

Keith: Yeah. Or, you know, it's not— I wouldn't say that The Sixth Sense was going for scary.

Sylvi: The Sixth Sense, I still don't really think of that much of a horror movie outside of a couple sequences, but it like— Horror is such a broad tent now that anything that has blood and guts and ghosts is a horror movie.

Keith: Yeah, I— This was such a normal movie to me. This was so like, a movie, like a guy who made a movie and he made a movie and look at— Which is a, which is a bar that our friend has not cleared in a little while.

Art: And it's a very literal description of the production of this movie.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: That it's a movie?

Art: Guy went and made a movie.

Keith: Guy went and made a movie. Yeah. I guess it's sort of high level.

Ali: I'm shocked—

Keith: Ali, what were you gonna say?

Sylvi: What was that, Ali?

Ali: I'm shocked about how little I knew about this movie going into it.

Sylvi: Yeah, I pretty much all I knew was, uh, the horror comes from old people, which is like 99% of horror movies made in the— This, this decade. So like, I've been prepared.

Ali: I didn't know it was found footage. I didn't know it was a scary movie. I, I couldn't even really tell you when it came out or if I had ever seen it advertised ever in my life. [**Sylvi:** Same!] I don't think that ever happened.

Keith: Weirdly, I did an okay job guessing what this movie was going to be about. I thought it was going to be a holiday movie. I thought that everything about this movie— My guess was that like, make it Thanksgiving, and that was my guess.

Art: Mm. As opposed to just vague winter. It's just so—

Keith: Yeah, just vague winter. Yeah. They don't have like, a Thanksgiving or a Christmas theme, but I— It's weird. I had always considered The Visit was going to be like, visiting a house and not like, aliens visiting, which I only thought of like, between— After we recorded the last time. And I was like, well, I think it's going to be like, what you— You're visiting your grandma, which is what it was. Uh, and then I was like, wait, fuck, visit is— Could be aliens. I forgot about the other definition of visit.

Sylvi: I mean, and then, uh, aliens get mentioned.

Keith: Aliens do get mentioned. And then I— Yeah, then I started the movie and I was like, oh, it was the— It was like visiting your grandparents. And then I was like, is it both? But it's not.

Art: Before we get too far in, do we want to— We didn't do any—

Sylvi: We should introduce ourselves.

Art: Introductions, yeah.

Keith: My name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me online by searching @KeithJCarberry. You can find the Let's Plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton, where we've got, by the time this is out, like a whole Silent Hill F Let's Play probably that you can go watch. And I should have also started posting publicly the… Lorelei and the Laser Eyes Let's Play that we did, that's right now only on Patreon. So if you want all of

those, you can go to Patreon, the Run Button Patreon, not the Friends at the Table one. With me as always is Sylvi Bullet.

Sylvi: Hey, I'm Sylvia. You can find me most places @sylvibullet, but you should also go to the Friends at the Table Patreon at friendsatthetable.cash. I cannot stress enough how much you should go to that one too. And you should check out, uh, Side Story, sidestory.show. It's the gaming podcast that we do in addition to this and Friends at the Table. Um, it's good. Jack and I were just both on it and it was a fun time.

Keith: Uh, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, um, you should also go to friendsatthetable.shop to, to buy a t-shirt or a sticker or a glass, I think. We still have the glasses, right? Um, drinking glasses, not vision glasses. I don't think we can.

Keith: And at first I thought you said, you said glass, like loose glass, which we also don't sell there.

Art: Send us $20 and we will send you some loose glass inspired by The Visit.

Keith: Inspired by The Visit. Inspired by the climactic scene of The Visit.

Art: That has some loose glass in it. Yeah.

Keith: Ali Acampora.

Ali: Hi. Thank you for listening to Media Club Plus.

Keith: You're welcome.

Sylvi: I have to, otherwise I can't keep the conversation going.

Ali: You're welcome as well. Yeah.

Keith: And already mentioned, Jack de Quidt, welcome back for the third-est time.

Jack: Am I the first third-est?

Keith: You're the first third-est in the second-est season.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: Whoa. Thrilling.

Sylvi: 'Cause Austin was the first third-est in history for the show, I believe.

Keith: Yeah, I believe.

Jack: I believe so.

The Visit [05:55]

Jack: I'm back because I love horror movies, and he made a real one.

Keith: He made a real one. Yeah.

Sylvi: He really did.

Jack: Uh, I think this movie's tremendous.

Keith: Really?

Jack: I like this.

Sylvi: Yeah, I had a lot of fun with this.

Jack: Yeah, I like this film a lot.

Keith: Wow.

Art: Yeah, good movie.

Sylvi: Oh, are we fighting?

Keith: No, no.

Art: I told you we'd be fighting.

Keith: No, I think that it's like, good. I think it's like, fine.

Jack: Here is how I feel. So much of watching The Happening with you lot and having that conversation about how he was trying to make a B-movie and kind of just blundering over every hurdle like, it was as though he knew what the hurdles were and he just ran straight into every single one of them.

Keith: Like a heavy horse.

Jack: This is how you make a fucking B-horror movie. This is how you do it.

Art: Yeah, I think— I'm sorry, go on.

Jack: I think it is politically and ideologically fucked, and we're gonna talk more about that, presumably, over the course of this recording.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Um, but I think in terms of, like, hitting horror beats, playing like a 4-cast-member tense horror that has some really good, um, humor, some really good scary stuff, some nice like, bone-shaking, cheap jump scares that work really well, and some nice like, slow dread stuff. This is a— This is an enjoyable horror movie. I had a really good time with this one.

Art: Yeah, it feels to me like with The Happening, we got like this, like, film student idea of a B-movie. Like, well, I've seen all these movies. I'm gonna make something that, like, speaks to this language, and that's just not what the modern filmgoing audience is thinking about. And this movie feels like he was sad after these movies of his kept bombing, and someone showed him Paranormal Activity. He was like, I can fucking make that.

Keith: Let me get the guy who made that.

Art: Well, he didn't. It was the other way.

Sylvi: To be fair, this is like, so much better shot than any found footage movie I've seen, comparatively. Like most of them, I guess.

Keith: I've never seen another found footage movie.

Sylvi: Okay.

Art: This movie goes out of its way to like, find like, in-universe reasons that the shots are just way better. Like, I'm going to hide the camera here in a place that makes the shot into the kitchen amazing.

Keith: Yeah, I agree. You know, like the thing that M. Night has not lost, um, is just no matter how bad his movies are, is that he, he gets really good set decorators to get really good sets, and he has a good eye for how to frame those sets. And even in movies that suck shit, that part of it is like, pretty good. Um, and this is a pretty good movie, so that part of it's actually really good.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: It's surprisingly tricky to— [**Ali** laughter]

Ali: I'm very sorry. I'm looking at the Letterboxd for this movie as we're all talking. I just saw Sylvi's review.

Keith: Did you just review this on Letterboxd?

Sylvi: No, I reviewed it after I watched it.

Keith: I mean, well—

Ali: I just sorted by recent and it's still on there.

Sylvi: Yeah, there I am.

Keith: I didn't mean just as in just this minute. I mean, just as in this week.

Sylvi: Well, yeah, because I saw it for the first time.

Keith: That's true. It's never occurred to— I'm so inconsistent with Letterboxd and I don't really even use it, but it's never occurred to me to review one of the Media Club Plus movies on Letterboxd.

Sylvi: I've been— I haven't been star rating them. I don't want to give away too much. I give away a lot in my review of this one, though, which is— And also, if you want to follow me, it's just @sylvibullet, like I mentioned. He's back, baby! 2 exclamation points emoji. mediaclub.plus.

Keith: Wow.

Ali: I'm sorry, Jack.

Jack: Um, before we, um, we should get to the recap and start kind of like, breaking the movie down. But to your point, um, Keith, about like, M. Night just has a really good eye for set design and set dressing and hiring people who can do that. It is like, surprising how easy he makes, um, this house set look and feel, given that he essentially— He claims to only have 2 cameras. I believe that's true kind of throughout the whole movie.

Keith: Canon was big, by the way, uh, in this era of, like, making their prosumer, purchasable-at-a-Best Buy cameras seem like you could, um, make a movie or a TV show with them.

Jack: Yeah, I do not believe they shot on those cameras, but those are the cameras the characters are holding.

Keith: They famously, um, had a deal with House where the finale of one of the seasons was filmed entirely using a Canon EOS, like, D6 or something. I don't remember cameras from the mid-20s. So the— So Canon is doing this, being like, we'll pay you to use our, our Best Buy camera. These are great cameras. This is— I'm not like, shitting on the camera, the Canon EOS. I have a Canon EOS camera, which is why I noticed it right away that they have a Canon EOS.

Art: Yeah, I, I don't— I don't believe it either, just— But how this movie was made, I don't think he was going out and getting these kind of sponsorship deals.

Keith: But Canon, there was a, there's like a Canon-ass, like, move your hand to show the logo shot, multiple times.

Sylvi: I really, I would not be like, too shocked if this is one of those things where that, those are the cameras they used, but they used like, they added extra equipment to it. Famously like, I'm thinking of how, what's it called? The Tangerine Project, is that what it's called?

Keith: Based on the iPhone?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvi: Famously shot on iPhones, but they used like, extra like, they added lenses and stuff to it.

Keith: Well, of course you're gonna rig out your camera.

Sylvi: Yeah, like, like I imagine that is if that, if they are using these cameras, it's a situation like that.

Jack: When Soderbergh shoots on iPhones as well, he like, will have a whole rig going. But yeah, the house is internally consistent. People move around it really nicely. This is a film essentially set in one location, and the flow of the house is really, really great. What happens in this movie? Oh, wait, wait, wait. I think we've all heard about roughly how we feel about it except Ally.

Ali: Oh, sure. I— It's okay. It's a fine movie. I was scared by it. There's like a weird thing, and I, I, I feel like I should bring it up later, but I feel like the, the worst thing I can say about this movie is that I don't know that it has a lot of rewatchability. And I think that some of the benefit of some of M. Night's earlier scripts are sort of the, like— Or movies structured in this way, the sort of like, oh, once you kind of know what's happening, when you watch it again, it's like, more interesting.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: I disagree.

Ali: Okay.

Art: I haven't seen this movie in almost exactly 10 years, but I was immediately like, oh, knowing how it goes, There's something different. And I don't want to push off the summary too much longer, but did you all sort of get that you were supposed to think it was ghosts?

Keith: No, never.

Jack: No.

Ali: No.

Art: You were absolutely supposed to think it was like a demonic possession movie. You were supposed to think—

Sylvi: Oh, yeah, there's some of that.

Art: That this was a paranormal activity because the previous, like, four years to this movie coming out was nothing but found footage movies about ghosts.

Sylvi: Yeah. Um, it also— There was bits where it was like, they— When they bring up that she's a werewolf, I was like, oh, is that what we're supposed to think?

Art: Yeah, like—

Ali: Well, yeah, let's go into the summary because there's something about this movie and M. Night's writing that I immediately was like, oh, okay, I know what it is. Um, so, Sylvi, if you—

Sylvi: Yeah. 15 years after leaving home to be with her now ex, Loretta Jamison gets a message from her estranged parents asking if her two children, Becca and Tyler, can come visit for a week to finally meet their grandparents. The two kids, who want their mom to be able to go on a cruise with her boyfriend slash just be happy for once, agree,

with Becca, an aspiring young filmmaker, deciding to make a documentary out of the whole thing and giving us M. Night Shyamalan's first and only found-footage horror film. She's not the only artist in the family, mind you. Young Tyler, also known as T-Diamond Styles, just loves to freestyle, as well as being the second camera operator for his sister's movie. Things start off normal enough, if not a little awkward, when they first meet Nana and Pop-Pop, Nana makes some cookies, Pop-Pop spends a little time in his shed, and the kids get told that 9:30 is bedtime because they're old people. But after dark is when we get our first hints that something might be a little weird. While sneaking down to get some more of those cookies I mentioned, Becca sees Nana projectile vomiting in the middle of the night. Seems fine. It's explained away by Pop-Pop, something that's gonna become a trend for the rest of this week, and the kids go back to getting to know their grandparents. The two of them play hide and seek under the house, but Nana decides to get involved and chases them on all fours in a scene that genuinely got a little jump out of me. Tyler, who has had an issue with germophobia since their dad left, finds his worst nightmare in their grandparents' shed: a bunch of Pop-Pop's shitty old diapers. Remember how I said Pop-Pop explained away Nana's vomit? Well, Nana explains away the poop. He's a proud old man who gets embarrassed, so he leaves his poopy diapers out there to burn them later. It's super normal! During this day, we also get one of the first visits to the house from a guy named Dr. Sam, who works at Mapleshade, the hospital where Nana and Pop-Pop volunteer as counselors, and he wanted to come check on them because they haven't been seen in a few days. Unfortunately, the grandparents are out on a walk and can't see him right now, which is a shame. That night, the two kids hear something outside their door, and when they open it, they find Nana completely naked scratching at the walls of the house. The next day, Pop-Pop, while dressing up for a costume party that is not actually happening, explains to Becca what sundowning is, a form of dementia that intensifies after dark, and that Nana suffers from this conditi— Condition. So everything's fine and completely normal. Becca tries to talk to Nana about her mom twice. The first time, Nana changes the subject and gets Becca to climb inside the oven to clean it before she agrees to be interviewed. The sit-down interview follows, and it's the second time she asks about the circumstances of Loretta leaving home, but Nana

immediately starts having an episode, reacting almost violently to the question and declaring that she will not star in Becca's movie anymore. The two siblings go out for a walk, with Tyler tastefully making fun of the way Nana moves during her sundowning episodes, before they find her staring down a weird creepy well. Probably fine. There's another visit to the house— Stacy, a nice young lady who credits Nana and Pop-Pop with helping her through the Mapleshade rehab program when she was going through the worst of it. She also mentions some scuttlebutt at the hospital that could be a reason why they haven't been back to volunteer more. Weird. We don't get more details now, unfortunately. Becca hears Nana laughing in the other room a little bit later, assuming she's watching TV. I believe she says, maybe she watches the same TV shows as Mom. She is not. She is staring at the wall and laughing to, quote, keep the darkies in their cave. And once she stops, she tries to— The deep darkies. Sorry, I just made it sound like Nana's doing a racial thing. It's not that, but it's a weird thing to say.

Art: I thought that I would have remembered her saying that, but—

Sylvi: She did. Deep. Yeah. Yeah. Sorry. She adds deep at the beginning of it. And once she stops, she tries to seemingly crush her own head with the scarf she's wearing. I don't know. You guys can tell me how you interpreted that specific move after I finish the summary. Becca finds Pop-Pop in the shed, cleaning his shotgun normal style— With his mouth. Tyler, who's been pushing to hide a camera at night, finally gets Becca to agree, and they see footage of Nana running around the house on all fours before finding the camera, screaming at it, and standing in front of the kids' room with a kitchen knife for the rest of the night. This is when the kids decide they need to be ready to get the hell out of here, and thankfully their mom's gonna be home soon. Stacy also stops by again, getting in a fight with the grandparents outside the house before the kids go back to getting ready to leave. Becca finally gets the interview she's been trying to get with Nana, where she forgives Loretta for whatever happened before she left, but not until after Nana gets to talk about some aliens that take people to their planet by spitting on them? I'll admit, I did not get a good transcript of this scene written down, but I'm sure we'll be digging deeper into it as we go.

Keith: They were spitting into the pond with their spit drops.

Sylvi: And it helps them dream.

Keith: It makes people sleep.

Sylvi: Yeah. Almost immediately after this, we get the other shoe to drop. While on Skype with their mom, Becca and Tyler, who are begging to pick her up— Pick them up, shows Loretta over the webcam Nana and Pop Pop standing outside, where we are informed that those are not their grandparents. She has never seen those people before in her life. They're about to start their escape when the two old strangers come back inside. Becca gets shut in the oven again by fake Nana while trying— After being asked to clean it. And the kids try to escape, only to discover Stacy's body hanging from a tree behind the house and are forced to play the world's most uncomfortable game of Yahtzee.

Keith: That's the best scene in the movie.

Sylvi: It's pretty good. Becca excuses herself and goes down to the basement where she discovers the bodies of her real grandparents. Pop-Pop follows her down and introduces himself as Mitchell. He explains that he did this because Claire, Nana, drowned her two children in a way that is very reminiscent of the alien story she told, and that she deserves a chance to be a grandma. He says that their grandparents at Mapleshade kept talking about them and that that was a bad thing to do. Because they were so excited to see them. You know, it's fine. Tyler, meanwhile, is frozen in fear in the kitchen. Oh, wait, I missed a line. Sorry. He also says that the two kids are going to join Claire's children, and he locks Becca upstairs in a room with Claire. Tyler, meanwhile, is frozen in fear in the kitchen and has literally the worst night of his life, while Mitchell smears shit on the poor kid's face and rambles into the camera about how he's a seer who can see the real face of humanity. Becca manages to escape the room with Claire, stabbing the faux Nana to death with a shard of broken mirror and breaking out of the room by destroying the doorknob with her camera. She tries to rescue Tyler, leaping on Mitchell's back and telling her brother to run away. But T-Diamond Styles

does not run away. He tackles the old man multiple times and then bashes his head in with the refrigerator door. The two kids finally get out of the house, reuniting with their mother under the rain while police finally show up to investigate what's going on. Loretta explains the explosive exit from her parents' home was actually— She hit her mom and her father, in retaliation, hit her. And a few weeks later, I don't— I can't remember the specific time period she gives— She received a call from them, presumably to try and patch things up, that she never answered. And she tells Becca that forgiveness was always there if she wanted it and that she shouldn't hold on to anger. This leads into a little montage of Tyler and Becca as kids with their dad before the movie ends. But our final shot, which is crucial, is Tyler doing a freestyle rap about the events of the movie over the credits. And that is The Visit by M. Night Shyamalan.

Jack: Everybody in— Basically everybody in this movie is doing a great job, I think.

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know if there— I don't think there was a single performance that, like, felt like it was dragging down. I think Kathryn Hahn, who plays the mom, made some, like— Was really able to make some dialogue that shouldn't work work.

Keith: I really like Kathryn Hahn. It's the first time I think in an M. Night movie there's someone who I recognized and was like, oh, I already like them. Except maybe Bruce Willis, but that's a highly qualified like.

Art: You don't like Samuel L. Jackson? Who hurt you?

Keith: Oh, no, okay, okay. I like Samuel L. Jackson. I forgot that I liked him because of how much I didn't like him in Unbreakable.

Ali: She's been such an interesting pull here because I think of her as such a comedy actress that like, there was already something uncanny about the like, found footage format once it's like, oh, that's the lady from The Wedding Crashers, or whatever. You know what I mean? Like, it was like— It was like another plane of existence where I like, had to buy into this. Um, and I think that it kind of works because it— You know, The Visit is really toeing a line between horror and comedy.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Ali: I think that there's even like, um, there's like, rumor or whatever, or maybe M. Night said this, um, that like—

Jack: I think he said it.

Ali: That there are like, two— there were two cuts of the movie, one that was like, full horror, one that was like, full comedy, and then he ended up like, kind of weaving them, finding a place in the middle to release it.

Keith: And that's weird.

Ali: And yeah, I am, I'm very curious about what is or isn't included in those two.

Keith: I would love to see a release of those two cuts, like, on one disc.

Sylvi: That'd be fun.

Ali: The Visit trilogy. And you just have all three of them.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, I, I think— I— You know what I think is really interesting about this movie is it completely flips my normal experience of an M. Night movie, where I really like the first half and then the second half, I'm like, this is dog shit. Where—

Sylvi: Whereas with this one, you like the second half more?

Keith: Yeah, the second half is so much better than the first half to me. Uh, I think that the first half, it's a little slow and there's— He's really over— These are some fucking Lemony Snicket-ass kids. These kids are precocious as hell.

Sylvi: Aw, I liked them.

Keith: They're way— They're way overwritten, I think. Uh, they're doing a good job, especially, uh, Becca. Um, uh, what is her name? It's, um, Olivia DeJonge.

Sylvi: I, I don't know if it's a soft J or a hard J. Yeah,

Keith: De Gange.

Sylvi: De Gange?

Keith: No, Olivia DeJonge. Uh, I think she does a, a good job sometimes, like, translating this precociousness into a usable performance. But it's a little tough. And as the visit starts to unravel, they're— And this is nice to me— The characters are less able to do that performance of being a smart kid and are just kind of afraid and confused. And so it makes that earlier stuff feel way more intentional. And also, it's happening less as the movie goes on.

Ali: Yeah, I feel like I have a lot of grace for these characters and these performances, both because the movie gets to do a really fun thing of, like, you calling out that it seems a little overacted, or they're too on the nose, is like, these are kids who are putting themselves on camera and performing on camera. Like, the characters are performing as much as the actors are. [**Keith:** Yeah, 100%.] There's already that sort of, like, whatever their actual personalities are, are pushed to 120% or whatever. Plus, meeting people for the first time. Plus, like, I really appreciate that there's this sort of like, already heightened like, emotional intelligence, I guess is the way to say this, because of this recent divorce. The sort of like, intention of them being going into this is like, we kind of want to do this as a favor to our mom. And then also like, Becca being the one to be like, I'm being artsy about this, and I think that this is like, going to be my big break as an amateur filmmaker, as well as like, this is going to fix the holes in my heart and in my family.

Sylvi: Yeah. I really like—

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvi: Oh, sorry.

Ali: No, I just, like, I think that they draw that line really well, and I feel like it helps me buy into the sort of, like, [inaudible 26:06] sarcaneness of these children in the performance.

Sylvi: There is— I think it works better with Becca in terms of like, feeling like a kid who wants to be a grown-up but is not actually. Like, is trying to behave like, I'm an adult, I'm this serious artist stuff. I'm— I'm gonna take care of my little brother during all this. And then when things start breaking down, you're like, no, she is still just a kid. Like, it's fucked that she's in this situation.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: I think Ed Oxenbould, who is playing Tyler, um, is— Has really figured some stuff out. I think that he is a very capable actor who is being asked to deliver some extremely awkward child dialogue and some of the worst freestyle rapping you have ever seen.

Sylvi: It's truly—

Keith: Oh my God, it's truly— It is really atrocious.

Sylvi: It's so funny, because there's a part where he talks about his cellphone having no bars, and I just went, yeah, man, we've heard.

Jack: We've heard. Um, and he— The kids regularly like, misuse AAVE, um, or just expressions children would use. M. Night was clearly like, what do kids say? And he botched it. Um, but then at the same time, there are these moments of, like, either having to land a joke well, or land a bit of physical comedy, or land, um, fear or anxiety that Ed Oxenbould is just real— Doing really, really well with. Um, uh, there's a running gag that gets increasingly, um, sort of sad and flat and sinister, which is that the children have to pretend to be playing repeatedly so that their grandparents don't get suspicious. But the only way they can think of pretending to play is standing in one place exactly outside the house and throwing a ball up and down.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: And as the movie continues, Tyler starts getting kind of fun with it. He throws the ball in the air and spins round, and Becca says, what? And he says the line, that's how children play, which is— This is incredible to me. This is some real, like— Not only are they so completely out of their depth that even their own understanding of what a child

is supposed to do is starting to come apart, but these are also freestyle rapping, camera— Canon camera big break children, not stand outside and play with a ball children, and so they just— They can't do it. There's a great moment where— Another running gag is that Tyler doesn't really know how to use the camera. Becca does. There's a really good early scene where Becca says, just try to be formal, as in classicism. And we hard cut to Tyler just screaming into the camera, [**Keith:** Raaaagh.] Like, wiggling his tongue around.

Keith: Good gag.

Jack: At one point, he flips the camera the bird very precisely. You can tell he's very excited to have this camera and flip the bird to it. Um, uh, at one point he breaks into the, uh, shed, as Sylvi said, and finds the diapers. Um, but before he does, he does a little piece to camera. He's like, what's in there? Uh, and he says, is it dead bodies? And then realizes he's botched the line and does like, four or five takes of, is it dead bodies? Um, and there's like— This kid has like, got this performance.

Sylvi: Ohhh, that’s so funny.

Keith: I didn't— I didn't hear—

Sylvi: I've been that kid with the camera before doing that shit.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: I didn't hear him botch the line. I just heard— To me, he's— And I just— I thought that he was just, like, considering the reality of it.

Jack: No, he's trying— He’s trying different line reads.

Keith: Which is great because one of my favorite things in the first half of the movie is how deliberately Becca is directing the documentary, setting up scenes, trying to get people to act naturally. Trying to imagine a finished product that looks good in a way that is not quite documentary-like. It is not documentarian, but she wants it to look like

how a documentary looks. So she needs her brother to look forlorn by the swing. So, like, go stand over by the swing so I can get you looking forlorn by the swing.

Jack: And don't push it. Let it move naturally.

Keith: Yeah, let it move organically.

Jack: The metaphors snap together here. I don't think necessarily particularly with much nuance, but the like, trying to look like a documentary, but not actually being a documentary, trying to look like a family, but not actually being a family, et cetera, et cetera. Something really funny is happening with the way Becca chooses to shoot this, where, like Keith said, she's being very deliberate. And often when she's talking about film, she's not very good at it because she's 15 or whatever. This is fine. She says things like, try to be formal as in classicism. She has like, really weird— She has like— She knows that she should talk about tension in shots and how shots are composed, but can't really like, pull it off. But at the same time, she shoots this movie beautifully and she edits it incredibly.

Sylvi: Yeah, if we're to believe that she edited this, like, damn, those title cards, she crushed it.

Keith: Yeah, instead of it being Luke, uh, Luke— crack— caca— uh, hold on. Luke Ciarrocchi, now veteran M. Night editor.

Jack: It is her movie. Um, uh, there's a bit early on when she is playing this ridiculous overblown kind of like, radio classical music, uh, and saying that it's gonna provide a nice contrast to the scene of going around the house. And we see this scene as she's cut it, and it's not good. But by the end of the movie, when that music does come in as they escape the house. Um, it's working, you know, they've, they've got it to work. The rain, the sirens, the flashing blue light, this music coming up. It's really good. There’s a—

Sylvi: I think—

Jack: Oh, sorry, go on.

Sylvi: Oh, go— No, you go ahead.

Jack: There's a beautiful shot, beautiful piece of editing that I really like that I thought was so fun to think about Becca being the one editing it, where, um, after we see Nana scratching the walls, nude scratching the walls, um, it cuts to the next day and we see all of the like, evergreen trees in the yard have been wrapped up for the winter. And have become these kind of like, weird, lumpy, misshapen, sort of mummified trees. Um, and it's such a nice, um, like, subtle shift in visuals of, of one sinister thing shifting into another sinister thing that those two images flow together really nicely. And that Becca was, you know, after all this trauma like, yeah, that cut's good.

Keith: Yeah, there, there is a lot of the movie that's dedicated to kind of, uh, Tyler on the B-cam filming Becca editing the footage they've already shot, which is really funny. I think that's a great— It's one of my favorite parts of the movie is like all the different ways that they're con— That the movie is being constructed at— In the movie.

Art: Yes. Although not to be too much of a shit here, But it is where it like, takes me out of the idea that this is, like—

Sylvi: Really?

Art: This isn't her cut of this movie. And you can tell because she left all this shit in, right? Like, anyone else? No, just me?

Jack: Um, no, I think you're right, but it's a B-movie. Yeah.

Keith: I, yeah, I think that this is a, this is a— An easy suspension of disbelief for me.

Art: Yeah. Oh, sure. I'm not like— But yeah, that at the end they're like, actually, this is the movie. That's where it becomes like—

Keith: Well, if you had this footage, what would you cut it into? Would you cut it into a present for your mom or would you make a horror movie out of it?

Art: Um, I guess make a horror movie out of it, but it's a weird—

Keith: It is weird, but if you've got the footage, you know, you can tell that she's ambitious.

Ali: I also like, in Becca's defense here, she ends up, if we're assuming she's doing it, making it both because she includes all this horror movie stuff.

Jack: She does.

Ali: But then also the interviews that they do of each other and her thing of like, I refuse to put footage of my dad in this. And then that's literally how the movie ends. It does have this emotional— She achieves both things in a way that seems very childish.

Art: Well, and I'm a fucking sucker for shit like this, but I— That, like, her— The Kathryn Hahn speech about, like, how you can't hang on to anger, followed by the footage that she said she wouldn't put in unless— Because it meant she had forgiven her father. Like, oh my God, fucking—

Jack: Why do you think you're a sucker for this?

Art: Love it. What's that?

Jack: Why do you think you're a sucker for this?

Keith: Are you asking what makes you a sucker about it, or why do you think this is for suckers?

Jack: No, what makes— Why—

Sylvi: What makes you susceptible to it?

Jack: What gives Art Martinez-Tebbel this feeling?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Art: Um, you know, I think there's— It's a lot. I think part of it is just like, I don't know why, but in like, the late 2000s, I just decided that movies were gonna— They're like, every movie could make me cry. That just like, I don't know what it was, but I distinctly

remember like… I don't know. It must have been Up. Like, I walked out of Up being like, Jesus, that was a sad movie. And then just like going on like a run of just movies making me sad. But this in particular, I think, is wrapped up with my father is dead, um, and now I am a father. So like—

Jack: Yeah.

Art: Stuff about parenting is just like, it's a little, you know, the— It's playing from the short tees for me. For me, but like, I think it's, I think it's terribly effective. Yeah, because Shyamalan knows how to, how to, how to, how to land it, I think, too. Like—

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, this also like, I think, is gonna speak to like, this hits some of the themes that he really likes with parenthood too. He's like, the both the sort of like, absent parent thing and then as well as the like, trying to not have your kids repeat the same, uh, like, mistakes you've made. I think that there's like, a through line for some of the stuff with— I can't remember the actor's name, but the, the dad of, um, what's-her-face from The Village. And, uh, the, the stuff in Unbreakable I think is a through line. But in here it's like, oh yeah, the dad actually left in this one, as opposed to they were just having a, a separation and he was planning on leaving. Um, and I think this stuff is going to come back up again.

Keith: This is the stuff—

Jack: Oh, go on, Keith.

Keith: This is stuff I'm, I'm not sure about. Like, I think the movie is like really working on its premises. Uh, like, it is being about family. It's being about like, connections or severed connections. Um, it's being about like, performing and performances that you put on for family. Uh, like it— Like kids, how kids change when their parents are divorced, like, feeling, uh, not worthwhile, feeling like, trying to find where— What happened, like, but also not having a full view of what's going on. Uh, like, it's doing all this stuff. It's doing a really good job of it. But that one specific thing of like, I won't put

him in the movie because that means I forgive him. That is kind of the hitch for me of like, that doesn't mean that. And the movie kind of just says that that's what that would mean. And I don't— It didn't feel— In the moment, it didn't feel true. And then when they use it at the end to sort of bring it home with like, not holding on to anger, where I also don't feel like that— I feel like you— I feel like people can hold on to anger and that it's actually fine and that it doesn't— It won't put you in a horror movie. Um, that—

Art: It means it because she says it means it.

Keith: Yeah, well, but she says that, that it means it because M. Night wrote that she would say that.

Sylvi: Yeah, that's how movies work.

Keith: Right.

Ali: Yeah.

Art: Right. Yeah. But, but the character is allowed to think something that isn't true.

Keith: Yeah, but that's— But then you can then judge the quality of that thought, and I judge it to be an incomplete thought.

Art: Well, she's a child.

Keith: And isn't that useful for him as the writer?

[group laughter]

Jack: I think M. Night is doing something really, um, odd and interesting, and I don't know necessarily successful, in that he is both trying to blend a pretty reactionary horror movie, like, straightforward horror movie. Yeah. There are two quote-unquote mad people. They are mad within the fiction of the movie, and they are very dangerous, and they're attacking two children. And he's trying to blend that with, like, the classic M. Night, I want to explore sort of vaguely, superly, but at the same time very earnestly, the character's particular fears or anxieties. And this is not unusual for horror. You know,

you do tend to make a horror movie work by, like, scaffolding it around, you know, core emotive beliefs that the characters have, the way you want to see them change, and then you make them be chased by a man with a knife or something. This is how horror's been done forever. But it's as though M. Night is both trying to make a Frank Capra movie in the way that he often likes to do, and a John Carpenter movie. And he's like smashing them into each other. Um, which produces these— This really weird moment towards the end where both Tyler and Becca perfectly end up in situations where they have to overcome the exact anxiety that they had. Becca has to turn and look into the mirror. We've learned that that she's not been looking at herself in the mirror because she believes that she's worthless since their father left. She has to turn to look into the mirror to see Nana creeping up behind her. Tyler has to withstand this awful attack by Pop-Pop, and Tyler is germophobic. It's like the— All the lines kind of draw together very perfectly and very melodramatically towards the end.

Sylvi: There's a lot of like— I described this movie to my partner after we watched it as just like, an exercise in sort of the horror version of setup and punchline. The whole first half of the movie is all the setups. Like, you get the stuff with, um, the— Oh God, I had it a second ago and I've completely lost it.

Keith: The germaphobe stuff, for one.

Sylvi: Germaphobe stuff. But there's the, um, there is the stuff with the oven. We get the like, sort of tension early on, and then we get the like, when things finally go bad, we get the like, even scarier version of it. There's the stuff with, um, the visits to the— Not to, not to— I'm not being cute there, that I just don't have another word for it. The visits of the two people from Mapleshade coming by, um, the sort of the, um, wall of people that they've helped, and then the reveal after that. Um, I had better examples when I had this thought like 10 minutes ago, but I couldn't get— I can't remember what they were anymore. Um, but I think it actually works pretty well. I don't— I'm not— When I say that like M. Night's back, I mean he made a fun movie. I don't think this movie is better than like a 3.5 star, if that. Um, but I think that it works really well in the form of these Blumhouse low-budget horror movies to make the like, perfectly adequate roller

coaster you want that if you think a little bit too much about, you'll be like, huh, this is very ideologically suspect.

Keith: Hey, 3.5 stars is really good.

Sylvi: 3.5 stars is fine.

Keith: I would, I think 3 stars is fine.

Sylvi: Eh.

Keith: Out of 5?

Sylvi: Cool, man.

Art: But 3.5, 3 is fine and 3.5 is good. You're just, your hairs are very thin.

Keith: Well, that's the, that is the tragedy of the 5-star rating.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. I, I— Can we talk about the performances of the— Of Nana and Pop Pop?

Jack: They are fantastic. These people have been cast so well.

Keith: They are really great. Oh my God.

Sylvi: I wish Nana had a better wig.

Keith: You wish Nana what?

Sylvi: Had a better wig. Her wig looks really bad in some scenes.

Art: Oh, I thought that was on purpose.

Keith: I thought that was on purpose too.

Sylvi: I thought it was on purpose and that the twist was going to be that they are wearing old age makeup.

Keith: Oh, that's funny because they're very spry. They're very spry.

Sylvi: She, she, uh, really can run on all fours.

Keith: She really can run on all fours. Yeah, I felt that the hair was getting worse over time and that that was a signifier of their decay.

Sylvi: I think that is probably true. I just— All I noticed was that like when she comes up from under the, the, the, like, underneath the house, both my partner and I were like, damn, her wig is like really bad right now.

Keith: I saw, I saw, I saw a video once of someone saying that they're— That they, uh, are wig blind and that when they watch a movie, they just believe that that's that person's hair no matter what. I feel that way. I've never thought about someone wearing a wig once in my life unless they're wearing a wig that is signaling to you that it's a wig. Uh, her hair— Or the wig did not— Like, the idea of a wig didn't occur to me once in the whole movie.

Jack: Built different. I don't know what to say.

Ali: So weird. Yeah.

Jack: Nana is played by Deanna Dunagan, and Pop-Pop is played by Peter McRobbie. And I was— I knew going into this movie that, um, I knew what the twist was, and I was really— I was expecting the escalation to the kind of wide-eyed screaming horror of the last 15 minutes of the movie to happen much earlier. But the, like, click, click, click of the rollercoaster through the performance of Nana and Pop-Pop, I think is great. They have conversations with these people. They move around the house. They offer them food and drink. They are— They are sinister in increasingly peculiar ways.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: But I think the, the kind of like, herky-jerky escalation in, uh, the grandparents is, is pitched really well. And so much of that is in these two performers.

Sylvi: Yeah, it comes across like they definitely have those moments where like, Tyler does one of his god-awful raps in the kitchen and they get really excited about it in the way that like, grandparents would be over their grandson in like, a way that's kind of cute. And then like, I think they do a good job of threading the needle of being like, oh, maybe— Like, obviously we all know the twist is not going to be that they really are just dealing with, uh, dementia. I mean, they are, but like, they're not— They're, you know what I mean? Um, the twist isn't going to be that they're just old and weird. It's going to be something more sinister than that. Right. But they've managed to play the sort of like, struggling with having an older relative who is dealing with this stuff. Um, pretty well.

Jack: Yeah, they very patiently explain each other.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, in, in very classic M. Night Shyamalan fashion, um, this is a movie about, like, the main character of the movie denying the premise of the movie for way longer than you would think is reasonable or possible, uh, which is a pet peeve of mine with his movies, uh, and it is kind of held together with Nana and Pop-Pop's performances. The first time that she asks Becca to clean the oven by getting into the oven, there's a—

Jack: It's a beautiful line delivery.

Keith: Barely contained— Oh, I have the button for it, which I forgot about. There's a barely contained impulse in her arms. You can see in her arms how badly she wants to close the door to the oven. She's shaking with everything she has to not ruin the perfect weekend that she has with these kids by closing the door on her in the oven. And I think that is sort of one of the more interesting parts of the movie to me is how, you know, everything else aside, their goal is to have a good week with the kids.

Jack: And then kill them.

Keith: Is that unclear? Is that clear or unclear?

Jack: Past a certain point, they do decide death.

Keith: Past a certain point, right.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: So, I, you know, the, the, the, the, the, the hinge that this movie spins on is like, they're explaining everything away by like, oh, we're old, you know, we're, you know, Nana has dementia, Pop-Pop has incontinence. Becca is very sensitive to the idea that they are simply old, and that Tyler's fear is a socially conservative fear that is unfounded.

Sylvi: And then the movie's like—

Keith: Then the movie's like, haha!

Sylvi: Nope, Tyler was right.

Keith: Tyler was right.

Jack: This is why I described this film as being quite conservative.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yes.

Art: I think this was like a second viewing revelation, for lack of a better word. I think they were always going to kill them.

Keith: Yeah?

Art: I think it was clear at the end that they were always going to murder them at the end.

Sylvi: This was a murder-suicide, was the vibe I got from the moment Pop-Pop was sucking off the shotgun.

Keith: Well, but that was— He was sucking off that shotgun way before he was gonna murder anybody.

Sylvi: I know, but still.

Art: Well, but he's—

Keith: And he was embarrassed.

Art: Not doing great with the idea that he's gonna murder these children.

Sylvi: The white thing with yellow eyes was tormenting him.

Keith: This is what I— What I was thinking is that they killed— They obviously, they start— The movie starts after they have already murdered the real Nana and Pop-Pop Jamison.

Art: Certainly by the time they appear in it. It's possible they murder them before–

Keith: I guess it's possible, but it seems like the last day or two before they leave. Anyway, it doesn't matter. They're recently murdered, which means that they're recently replaced by the fake Nana and Pop Pop, who we know from the movie. Whatever help that they were getting in the facility where they escaped from is going to be wearing out over the course of the movie. To me, they may not have been like, and we get to kill the kids at the end, because part of it is trying to sort of soothe Nana, who killed her own kids by drowning them in the lake of the— The Sinomorphia? The Sina—

Sylvi: Yeah, I couldn't remember. Sinmorfitellia or something? Yeah, Sinmorfitellia.

Keith: There we go. Yeah, my mixer cut it off, so I had to find the file on my computer. Sinmorfitellia. Uh, I think that these desires, for me, they only felt like they were starting to crop up like, as they had less and less control over themselves. But it's possible on a second viewing that I could change my mind on that, for sure.

Art: I hear you, but Pop-Pop in the basement at the end is very much like, and you'll be joining them. And that sort of sounds like it was the plan the whole time. Again, we can't know this. There's no— There's no material to tell us. [**Keith:** Yeah.] But that's what I think.

Sylvi: There's like some, some stuff in the background that made me think that too. Like, there was like a bunch of gasoline in the basement, if I'm remembering right, that made me be like, oh, is this movie ending with this house getting burned down while they're inside?

Keith: As a kid who grew up with grandparents on a farm, there's just gasoline all over the place.

Ali: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Art: I thought it was, I grew up with grandparents on a farm who tried to murder me one day.

Keith: We had a barn that was full of gasoline, you know, just full of gasoline.

Art: I don't think that's safe. I think if anyone ever asks you, you should—

Sylvi: Yeah, man. Did you grow up on a compound?

Keith: Yeah, it was fun. Yes, kind of!

Sylvi: Yeah, you did, man. I know.

Ali: I think some of this relates to what I was hinting at earlier with the like, rewatchability versus satisfaction of like, the quote-unquote twist here, which is the thing that we like, you know, audiences met over all of the time. But, like, I— It's not that I think that this movie had an unsatisfying twist, because I don't think that. I think that, like, the, you know, the length that it plays out, the deceit of this, the sort of, like, very gentle explaining away of the issues, the, like, tension we were talking about before about the, like, you're here with your family, but you also don't know these people at all. Yeah. And you're sort of, like, trying to be gracious about being in their space, and being young, and frustrated, or bored, or whatever else. Like, all of that stuff is really fun. But, like, in M. Night fashion, when Pop-Pop comes into the room and is like, bedtime is at 9 o'clock, and also, please don't go into the basement, I was like, okay, so the secret of all

of this is in the basement. Yeah, this is M. Night, like, in the— In Signs saying don't go to the lake. This is the fucking tree. Like—

Sylvi: This was the setup I was trying to remember. Thank you, Ali. Yeah, that was the big one.

Ali: It's, it's just like, once I heard that, I was like, oh, okay, the entire tension on this movie is waiting for someone to open that door, and it doesn't happen until maybe 20, 30 minutes left on the runtime.

Keith: Oh, I think actually it's more like nine minutes left on the run.

Art: Yeah, it's really close to the end.

Ali: All the way at the end. Yeah. It's very close to the end. Um, so, like, yeah, I don't know. Like, I— Again, I went into this movie knowing basically nothing about it. So I do think some of the, the conceit of, like, is the terror coming from the house? Is, you know, in, in thinking about, like, the way that you can write movies about children and the sort of, like, social terror of that bleeding into like, this actual terror is all like, you know, the sort of like, question of like, what should I be looking at as an audience viewer? Like, what is tension to me versus what is tension to the character? And having a lot of that immediately deflated by, like, oh, I know how M. Night does these scripts. Yeah. It's like, okay, well, yeah.

Keith: Part of me wants to grant it because it's such a trope of the, like, don't go in the one room. That's like such a— I think I've seen that in— I've only seen a dozen horror movies, and I think I've seen that in 10 horror movies.

Ali: Sure, sure, sure. It's just that he is never willing to do— Like, he does it so frequently, and he never, like, twists upon that, you know what I mean? Upon that audience expectation. So I just like, I remember feeling like, oh, okay, during that scene. Yeah.

Keith: Just waiting for them to get to the basement.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I thought— I mean, I'm essentially with you, Ali. I think that both those moments, the don't come out of your room after 9:30 and don't go into the basement, which are actually two separate scenes, the actual delivery of them, I really liked. I think that the actor playing— So the actor playing Nana has this incredible control over her body. Her physicality is incredible. The scenes where she's chasing them in the— Under the house, and she manages to get her body into this sort of like, spider-like posture. Um, when she's running through the house, uh, and crawling through the house, there's this weird sort of like, looseness and lightness to her body, almost like a dance. Um, I think her physicality is incredible.

Keith: And then in the emotional side, there's a scene where she's, like, getting emotional and crying, and like, the like, dimples on her chin are like, flexing in and out in a way that is— Feels completely impossible to do if someone asked me to do that on camera. I would never be able to get that to happen.

Jack: It's like, a beautiful high melodrama performance. And then—

Art: It's a funny thing to think about, but the thing she did immediately before this was win a Tony.

Jack: Really? That kind of doesn't surprise me. She sort of has the like, triple threat vibe of, you know, an actor, a singer, and a dancer. Gives you a really rounded, rigorous control over what your body can do.

Sylvi: I was about to say, that makes the physical acting she does make a lot of sense, actually.

Jack: And then Pop-Pop, um, Peter MacRobbie. Um, this is not a subtle movie at all, but he manages to play some of Pop-Pop's dialogue with this really odd, sad, confused subtlety. To, to Ali's point, when he says there's, um, there's mold in the basement, so don't go down there, he throws it midway through a conversation, like a normal conversation while they are unpacking, as though it is something he knows he needs to

say, but can't wait properly for the moment, and it just kind of bubbles out of him. He's like, oh, and don't go in the basement. Similarly, he tells her that they can't come outta their room after 9:30 while he is dressing to go out to a party that he is not supposed to go out— The party doesn't exist. [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] And he delivers this... Otherwise pretty sinister request or demand so casually and with so much sort of sensitivity towards his wife. Similarly, when she catches him with the gun in his mouth, he says, I was just cleaning it. And then as though he knows that he has lost, as though he knows that he can't sell this anymore, repeats, I was just cleaning it, in like, a variety of different ways. Yeah. It's very sad.

Keith: I think that's the best line reading in the whole movie.

Sylvi:I think, by the way, also the way it's filmed is so like, you walked in on your grandpa, uh, jerking it.

Keith: Yeah, when he's cleaning the gun.

Sylvi: I was just saying, I was just cleaning it. Like, I'm just saying, there was some weird stuff happening.

Jack: There's some, um— Oh, I suppose we should talk about that later, actually. Um—

Keith: Can I play the clip of, uh, the oven from, uh, we were talking about earlier?

Jack: Yes, absolutely.

[audio from The Visit starts playing]

> **Becca:** Nana, could I ask you about Mom? Maybe you'd be okay to talk for a minute in an interview?
>
> **Nana:** Would you mind getting inside the oven to clean it?
>
> **Becca:** I'm sorry?

Nana: I'm too big. I can't reach back there. The kitchen's got to be clean. The oven's off.

Becca: Yeah, sure. Yeah, sure.

Nana: Get farther in there. All the way in. Okay, I'll star in your movie.

[audio ends]

Jack: She's good.

Keith: She's good. I like the way that she, in the performance and in the dialogue, she seems unable to guess what someone's hesitation about this might be. Because when she says, you know, the oven's not on.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: That's not the problem.

Art: If anyone ever says that to you, if anyone ever— If someone ever asks you to clean their oven and then says the oven's off, don't get in that oven.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: No.

Art: That's someone who's thinking about turning the oven on.

Sylvi: Yeah, they're Hansel and Gretel-ing you.

Keith: This is what was—

Jack: I really—

Keith: Oh, go ahead, Jack.

Jack: I just, I really liked the, the Hansel and Gretel thing here is not subtle, and I really liked it.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, the, the, um, I can't remember what I was gonna say.

Jack: Oh no.

Keith: Nah, it's okay. It wasn't a big deal.

Art: Which is another, like, that's why the twist, the twist isn't just that it's not their grandparents. The twist is that it's mundane.

Keith: Yeah. Yeah. This is— I do remember now. This is the thing. This is like the kernel of, like, I'm trying to guess like, what is going on with them? The movie's always inviting you to be like, what is happening with the grandparents, obviously? And it was really difficult to settle on an explanation because I would see a scene like that, or with the grandfather with the gun, Or the clawing at the door, or the jump scares where she'll just appear behind them, face right in the camera, being creepy and weird. And it's like, oh, they can't censor themselves. They're trying to hide that something's wrong with them and they can't hide it. And that is a very strange dynamic, um, that the, the twist of the movie perfectly accounts for, basically. Uh, uh, but it does make it hard to be like, oh well, it's ghosts. Oh well, it— they're witches. Oh well, it's aliens.

Sylvi: You're right. It does make it easier to suspend the disbelief of why the kids are like, oh, it's— It is just dementia though. Like, that is a thing of like, not really being able to sort of hide when something's wrong.

Keith: Yeah, this is a valid point. I'm not judging the movie for this. No, for sure. I think it's an interesting thing that makes it hard to draw a conclusion that makes sense. And I almost felt silly that I didn't see the twist coming because it was so— I knew that there was something about them. There's something going on here. But when they turn the camera and it's like, those aren't my parents, I was like, oh, of course. Of course. That, that— You know, it's so important to the movie that they've never seen, uh, that, that Kathryn Hahn never sees the grandparents, that, uh, uh, when she sabotages the camera.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: You know, all of this stuff like that, that like, even knowing that like, why did she sabotage the camera? It didn't click to me. Like, I was like, oh, so they can't like, video for help, but they have the— They have their phones, but the phones don't really work. I was trying to figure out what exactly is this all for? And it was to prevent Kathryn Hahn from seeing them.

Jack: I think that this twist, technically, the moment of the twist is killer. I think this is up there for me with the— “I see dead people” is presented as an emotive moment. That scene is so good in The Sixth Sense, but it's not like, um, like feeling like the roller coaster suddenly moves. I think that the movie puts so much effort in, and Kathryn Hahn does such a good job, and the like, um, almost play-like, like, like, theater like execution of this twist makes that moment just sing for me.

Keith: I love the part where she's trying to tell them, they're talking about other stuff, still explaining all the stuff, and, and are not listening to Kathryn Hahn, who's trying to explain, I don't know those people.

Art: Yeah, and I understand that she's surprised, but you would just interrupt your children if they were talking about something else, and you had to tell them that those people they've been with are strangers.

Keith: She was trying!

Ali: Well, I think it's part of why this is so successful. Because it, like, the kids at this point are already like, we have to leave.

Keith: Yeah, we have to get out of here.

Ali: We are scared enough by just the reality of who these people are without knowing that we are actually in this like, weird flytrap. Like, we are at the point where it is unexplained if, like, it is just sundowning, or the fact that Nana has found the camera and reacted to it so extremely. I guess we didn't go over this, but, like, what happens the night before the kids decide to leave and this reveal happens is they finally leave the camera out, and Nana like, seems to immediately find it, carry it around, put it in places

where she can, like, perform weirdly for it, and then carry around a knife and, like, bang on their door while holding a knife. And then that's when they're like, Mom's gonna be here tomorrow. We have to leave immediately. So the fact that it's like, you know, whether or not the truth of these people is that we're related to them and they are just violent and strange is such like, a good place to be in a horror movie if it's just like, a weird horror movie about family issues. But then to like— And then be like, oh my God, I have no idea who those people are, is such like— It feels really satisfying in the watch. It just is like, oh shit.

Jack: It's like a perfect knowledge twist where like, it's like Keith said, all these little things of like, if person X had only seen person Y, or if the people had been around at that moment, you know, the— Sometimes when a twist relies on like, a web of coincidences, it can feel really arbitrary. But here, that web of coincidence is so precise that the moment it happens, you're like, oh my God, of course this has happened. I think it's great. And I think that, you know, you cast Kathryn Hahn for that moment, right? I mean, you also cast her for the scene at the very end, but I feel like those are the two beats that she has to hit as a performer, and she hits both of them.

Art: Yeah. And it's— We didn't really talk about like, the making of this movie, but M. Night Shyamalan goes and makes this movie with his own money.

Jack: [crosstalk] He mortgages his house.

Keith: [crosstalk] This is a $5 million budget with like a $95 million box office, something like that?

Art: Yeah, he makes them— He makes the movie by borrowing against his house. Makes this movie and then goes and sells it to Blumhouse to distribute, essentially. Universal/Blumhouse. And part of it must have been like— I'm sitting there like, Kathryn Hahn worked two days on this movie, right? That's like, how this budget gets low, is you hire Kathryn Hahn, who isn't like an A-list actor by any means, but is like, the only person in this movie with a serious quote, or even like, something resembling a serious

quote. And you're like, well, but you don't need your full quote for this because you're gonna do two, maybe three days.

Keith: Yeah. She's in three scenes.

Art: One of them is— Yeah, the only thing that had me— Because it's like the video calls could all be the same day. Maybe they aren't because the kids might not have the ability to— They might want to shoot the kids in a little more sequence to get the emotion correct. But then she's— The scene at the beginning and the scene at the end are definitely the same shooting time. And then whatever she's in, she's on the fake cruise ship. Or maybe it's a real cruise ship. And that's a location. There's stuff going on there.

Keith: Part of the quote. Send me on a cruise.

Art: Yeah, send me on a cruise with a bunch of extras.

Sylvi: I want to judge a hairy chest contest.

Art: Yeah.

Ali: The, the weird thing about some of the budgeting is that I also read that, like, they did, like, thousands of auditions for the kids in this movie. Like, hundreds and thousands before they ended up settling on these, these two kids. Um.

Art: Ali says settling on these kids.

Ali: [laughter] Or deciding on them. Um, and then just like the, the amount of like, money that is thrown into a bucket and burned at that point. Like, I don't know what finances are like. I guess to go to auditions, people pay for it themselves. Right. I don't know.

Keith: You have to pay the casting to do the casting, but that's it.

Art: Yeah, you— It might not— I don't know how many people you have to reject before the casting person's like, actually, I want more money for this. 'Cause I think the casting director just takes an amount of money and does the job.

Jack: But the casting's great.

Ali: Yeah. No, no, no. I think that they did a tremendous job. And, like, there's no complaints about the performances here. I just can't imagine fully believing in The Visit enough—

Jack: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: To, you know, loan $5 million off of my house.

Jack: But do you have, uh, do you have how much this movie made, Ali?

Ali: I don't.

Keith: It's $99 million.

Jack: This movie made $99 million on a $5 million budget.

Keith: This is a huge success.

Art: Yeah. And it transforms his career.

Jack: It does. Yeah.

Keith: Despite actually underperforming in the box office, uh, compared to like the last— everything since Lady in the Water made way more money. But also had way bigger budgets.

Art: Yeah, yeah, that's the thing though, right? It's, it's, it's not, it's not do you make money, it's how much money you make. And this— He, after this, he goes on a— I mean, essentially, we can talk about Trap when we get to it, but he goes— The next one, two, three, four movies are all pretty low budget, especially for him.

Jack: And, and this, in terms of the M. Night Shyamalan mythos, um, ticks three boxes at once.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The, the thing that people say about M. Night is he makes bad films, and this film is fine. Um, you, you don't look at it and go, this is a disaster. The other thing that they say is his films like, bomb. It makes $98 million on a $5 million budget. And the third thing people say is that his twists are bad, and I think this is a film with a great twist. Yeah, it's a great movie. And so in terms of, like, you know, you often hear people say, like, M. Night is back, as our dear Sylvi says in her—

Sylvi: That's me. I'm dear Sylvi.

Jack: M. Night is back. I think part of the reason that that is the line with this movie is that he just hits three home runs as far as the people's problems with M. Night are concerned. A problem that I have with M. Night that I think we have to talk about is that by revealing that it is not supernatural, um, this movie's politics and this movie's treatment of disability comes rapidly in line with previous M. Night disability thinking.

Art: Oh yeah.

Jack: Um, the, the note that I wrote, uh, when I remembered how this movie works is I said this movie's thesis is like, old people aren't so bad, but mad people are. And it's like, that is absolutely how it goes. You know, we have the, the old people horror is like, a staple in horror moviemaking. The horror of the elderly body, the horror of an old person as somebody that has like, come loose from, quote unquote, proper life. There is like, some real exploitative work done on old bodies. You see this with like, Pearl, you see this with Barbarian. The famous kind of like, line is that contemporary horror can't think of anything scarier than a naked old lady. And I think that there are degrees of subtlety to that, but I think that, you know, the point is being made correctly. And then you also have so much horror about the quote-unquote crazy person. Setting aside the fact that people experiencing psychosis are infinitely more likely to be harmed by others than to harm anybody themselves, the capital M, capital P Mad Person is a fixture in

horror cinema. And there is something really cynical and reactionary about the move from one to the other of saying like, you know, it's okay to be old, it's okay to be incontinent. And, you know, sometimes when people are sundowning or they get elderly, they can be quite scary if you're a child. It's all very normal and natural. And then pivot straight into, no, these people are mentally ill and there is something wrong with them. Um, it's grotesque. And I think that part of the reason that it works is that the movie is playing on grotesquery, you know? But I think that ideologically and politically, I don't feel good about what's going on in here.

Ali: Mm-hmm. And it's just like, it's the same drum beating again and again. And it's like, I, you know, it's, it's tough because, like, I, I want to talk about it because— Obviously, we disagree with it, and we think that there are like, more creative ways to go down these lines about ways people can feel strange or uncanny, or the way that fear is there or whatever. But, like, it just seems like— It's such a disappointment that M. Night can't escape his contemporaries in that way, because it's not like horror is a genre that deals with mental illness or the perception of mental institutions or any of that stuff well, by any means.

Keith: Mm.

Ali: But the fact that, like, you know, we're getting it with, um, uh, the, the, the— It starts with Unbreakable, right? With the, the, uh— No, not Unbreakable. It starts with The Sixth Sense, which is former therapist killed by his former patient because being mentally ill makes you a dangerous and violent person. And then we get into— there's probably a little bit of Unbreakable because— [**Keith:** There is. There is. Yeah.] Samuel Jackson's character is evil because he is depressed because he is disabled. And life sucks when you're disabled, so what else would you do?

Keith: Yeah, Bruce Willis's wife says that out loud, basically like, look, when you're sick enough, it makes you crazy.

Ali: Uh-huh.

Art: Although, I guess to go back, The Sixth Sense, the person isn't mentally ill. They've just been tormented by ghosts their whole lives.

Jack: Right. That one is ghosts.

Keith: That one is—

Art: That one is ghosts.

Keith: Well, this is that sort of the other thing of like, we're not so sure about therapy as a solution to the problems of the world, which also does pop up in this because they talk about how Kathryn Hahn's been to a therapist and the therapy isn't helping how sad she is,

Art: Yeah, I think that's the thing in Sixth Sense is the— The anti-therapy, cynicism about therapy.

Ali: Oh, yeah. The therapy failed him so badly that he had to become a murderer in his—

Keith: Right, because he wasn't listening right.

Ali: That he had to do a vigilante killing of his therapist.

Keith: And this shows back up again in The Happening with like, the science thing. Like, science doesn't have an explanation for stuff. Science is like—

Art: Maybe he is a Scientologist.

Keith: Maybe he's a Scientologist. Yeah, you know, we can't— We can't know the— Science is just the name we put on our best guesses for the mysteries of the world. And that's not good enough if you— If you're being haunted by ghosts or if the plants are spewing out kill-yourself gas.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: In The Village, we have—

Ali: The Village, yeah.

Jack: Oh, no, sorry, you go ahead, Ali. You're, you're drawing these out.

Ali: I mean, yeah, The Village has one of our worst depictions yet, which is the— Oh, yeah.

Art: Oh, for sure.

Ali: Adrien Brody's character, who is also violent and disabled at the same way.

Keith: That one is truly despicable. That is like, some of the worst shit I've seen in a movie, I think.

Ali: It's so bad, and like, we're about to get it— It's about to get worse with Split. Like—

Keith: Yeah—

Ali: I— It's just—

Art: Worse?

Ali: It just—

Art: well, I don't know, Split might be back the other way again. 'Cause I don't want to get ahead of ourselves too much, but isn't that one also just ghosts?

Ali: No, I mean, because— I mean, I don't know. I don't know the twist with Split, but the setup is you are being kidnapped with a guy with multiple personality disorder, and the like, all stereotype and fear around that. So— And then it's not going well. And it's just like, I don't know. I don't know how you become— I'm sure people who've listened to Friends at the Table can say they are bad about representation and speaking about this specific thing again and again and again. But, like, to be as, like— To, like— We're talking about, like, 10 or 15 years of making movies. Like, to have your opinion on this stuff not elevate at any point, um, to just feel like, oh, it's obvious that people struggling

with mental illness are scary and demonic and can be a scapegoat in all senses, is just like, it's getting really tired.

Jack: It bothers me the most when he tries to get clever with it, when he tries to do something like Noah, uh, and, and say that Noah and Ivy are like, purer in some way. And the way he uses Noah as a sort of like, depersoned violence, you know, we do this in the village.

Keith: Right, he's not a person. He's a clear pond that the, the, the ink of society drips into and makes him bad.

Jack: Right. And I'm not, I'm not excusing it, but it plays different— Differently. I don't know why I said it like that. It plays differently for me in something like The Visit, where what he's essentially saying is that they're, they're monsters. This is equally fucked, but is fucked in a way that somehow seems more earnest. If you know what I mean? The fact that he's out there being like, I have to try and put a bow on it. I have to try and say something, you know, progressive or interesting or nuanced about Noah. And in The Visit, he's just like, they're evil old people who are gonna kill you because they've gone mad.

Keith: I think it hurts The Village that it's such a— It's such a thoughtful way to be a piece of shit. Yeah.

Jack: Whereas this is just being a piece of shit.

Keith: Yeah, The Village is just like— it's so easy just to be like, yeah, the bad guys were escaped mental patients. Like, okay, welcome to every horror movie ever made. Uh, it just feels easy and cheap, and that it is— That it has been done 100 times softens the blow because it's so normal. Which doesn't make it good. It just makes it the normal shitty thing instead of a weird tack on expectations, I guess.

Jack: Earlier I described it as like, the, the M. Night is kind of trying to blend Capra and John Carpenter. And I think that what happens is that in The Village, he's trying to tell this mental health story with the Capra part of his brain, and it's despicable. And in The

Visit, he's trying to play— To tell it with the John Carpenter bit of his brain, and it's still bad, but he's coming at it from a completely different sort of sensibility. It's— How, you know, Ali, you said, 15 years of doing this, how come you don't change? How come you don't think any further about this? What do you think is happening?

Ali: It's, it's— I mean, we are not in a culture— We might be now. I barely believe that. We could be now, but we definitely weren't then, in, you know, none of the reviews of any of his movies were thinking about this and talking about it in a serious sense. Like, it was clear when we were talking about the Adrien Brody stuff that that was just, like, things that actors did and sometimes got Oscar nominees over it. Like, you know, there's a way that he thinks that he's being sort of like— Romantic or justified about some of this stuff. And, like, you know, it's so tropey in this movie that I can't— I can't imagine when it becomes so commonplace in your art and your writing to just be like, oh, well, mental illness is set dressing for this, that like, the idea that he's putting here is challenged at all. Mm-hmm. You know, it just—

Keith: Yeah, it is— I do think, Ali, you hit on how tropey it is. I do think that, like, in a movie that is throwing tropes at you over and over again, sometimes as pure distraction, it, it fits in with what the rest of the movie is doing. Um, there's a great shot towards the end, um, when Nana is chasing Becca around the bedroom during the climax scene where she like, wraps herself up in— [**Jack:** Oh yeah.] The sheet and appears as a ghost, like a sort of the, the idea of a ghost. And—

Jack: She's also reaching up from under the bed in that scene, like the horror movie image of a hand emerging from under the bed.

Keith: And this is just a, like a a, a brief and obvious visual metaphor, uh, or not even a metaphor, a visual allusion to the sort of stuff the movie's doing the whole time, which is like, showing you different paths the movie could take if it was about different things. Uh, Art, you asked at the beginning if, if any of us had thought about ghosts for the rest of the movie. Uh, and that was— I genuinely, I didn't think about ghosts until they showed me a ghost at the very end. But in that way, I think it all sort of fits in with the reveal of, like, oh, they escaped a mental institution and they're criminally insane and they

murder— They're already murderers. And for some reason they had escaped and no one was making that big of a deal out of it.

Sylvi: Just some scuttlebutt.

Keith: Just some scuttlebutt is, I guess, what—

Sylvi: Well, also Jerry the police officer won't pick up his damn phone about anything.

Keith: Yeah, what's going on with Jerry the police officer?

Sylvi: That was funny.

Keith: Oh, do they kill the police officer?

Ali: I don't think so. I think it's just supposed to be like, small town.

Art: Just a hick town. Yeah.

Ali: Um, like internal issues. Like, it's such a— It's, it's an interesting thing because you can, you know, I— As disappo— You know, I'm disappointed with the way that I already know that he treats these issues. But I think that there's something in the way that it adds to the puzzle box that isn't so damning, except that it's— I don't know. I don't know what I'm saying. But, like, the— You know, the thing of, like— Yeah. The real grandparents presumably were already expected to take this time off. This sort of repeated, like, oh, we just kind of wanted to come to talk to them, and it's just so interesting that they just happened to not be here. Oh, we just kind of want to talk to them about this thing that was also happening. And presumably, the way that the other characters are experiencing this is like, these volunteers who come to this place, uh, on their own will, and were already gonna be busy, are not here to be a part of the, like, oh, two people escaped gossip. Um, that— Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I don't— I don't know how you, like, can include all of those elements and not make it seem— Yeah. Lazy and, uh, like, insensitive? Um, especially in a movie that could be like— The addressing of, you know, dealing with issues of age and things like that on the surface

are, I guess, kind of things that you don't see in movies pretty often. I mean, are like the, the sort of things that you go to movies for to kind of have that experience happen.

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: You know what I mean?

Keith: It sucks that they use the, I think, reasonable and sensitive, um, uh, acceptance of their age as a way to imperil them because actually their age and their, um, uh, mental illness does make them dangerous. Like, it kind of like, um— It's kind of like, sneaky. It's getting a little sneakily shitty to, to like— To kind of couch this explanation of how, you know, society discards and fears the elderly only to be like—

Jack: But this time—

Keith: Yeah, but this time actually it's right.

Art: They were right to. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. And I'm sure that that happens in other movies. I can't think of like, a good example of that happening, but it felt familiar to me while it was happening of like, Well, of course they're dangerous. I'm watching a movie. It wouldn't be a movie if they weren't dangerous. So I know that this is going to end up being wrong. I just don't know exactly how yet. [**Jack:** Yeah.] And it's— Not to say— I also want to say it’s familiarity and that it doesn't kind of strike as hard as something like Noah— Doesn't necessarily— You could make an argument that because it's so familiar, it's worse because it's both lazy and it confirms people's existing biases. Maybe in 2004 or whatever, something about Noah was confirming an audience's bias, but I certainly don't watch that performance and see anything true about the world that seems familiar and known, that audiences would be like, like, yeah, this is true about, you know, people with some developmental disability, how they behave, and what could happen with them if they were around bad people. It just kind of felt like a bizarre way to handle a performance and a character that was completely unnecessary, I think, to the way that the movie functioned. Yeah. Um, but the

fact that it goes the— It goes down so easy in this because it's so culturally accepted to be like, yeah, crazy people are crazy and they kill.

Jack: Yeah, they are like—

Keith: It's Killadelphia. They're in Killadelphia.

Sylvi: Oh my God.

Ali: Wow.

Jack: It's the— It's, it's the way things work in a B-movie rather than in social realism, you know? Um, uh— In the last 20 minutes of the movie, something really impressive happens to the camera work, which is that as they go to leave after things have gone very wrong, we know that we're in trouble. And as the grandparents are setting up for a final board game night, which the kids know is very, very bad news, they head outside and open the door and see, and we only see kind of like, in soft focus in the background, the hanging body of Stacy, the woman who came to visit them earlier and presumably confronted them about who they were. And Becca is holding the camera, and at that moment, Pop-Pop kind of like, shuts the door and is like, it's time for a board game. And because Becca is afraid and because she doesn't have time to set up camera positions, the cinematography takes advantage of this by suddenly becoming really claustrophobic. You know, the only camera position she can do is put the camera down on the table next to you. And, you know, maybe occasionally tilt it out of the way. And it felt like such an organic, clever way to shift the way this film looks in its kind of final moments, while also playing up the, this film is being shot by Becca.

Keith: Yeah, there's a wild sort of frenetic energy to that Yahtzee game, because— [**Jack:** It's great.] It's the best scene in the movie. And there's only one part of it that I really didn't like. But it feels like the grandparents already know the jig is up for them. Like, they know they've been caught. I don't know if they know how they've been caught, but they're also like— They have less and less control over themselves. And—

Art: I think it's that. I think it's that they just don't have it to— That they've— That they're deteriorating over the course of time away from treatment.

Keith: Yeah, but—

Art: Is what I think you're supposed to get from…

[1:30:00]

Keith: I totally agree. But like, they know that there's a dead person outside, and they're trying to hide it, and they're trying to keep them in the room. And—

Jack: They have this lovely bickering about playing Yahtzee. At one point, Nana calls herself a Yahtzee master, and very reproachfully, Pop-Pop says, you're not a Yahtzee master, that takes 10 years. Which I thought was a really good line.

Art: Their bickering about Yahtzee is very funny.

Keith: The part of it that I think was very strangely written is that— Jack, I think you had those reversed. I think that Pop-Pop's the Yahtzee master. And he insists he— When Tyler is doing a better job than Nana at playing Yahtzee, he's playing with tactics. He says, like, he's playing with Milton Bradley-approved tactics. And Becca somehow picks up on this, and they're like, Yahtzee's made by Hasbro. It used to be made by Milton Bradley.

Jack: This is not the trump card she thinks it is.

Keith: Right—

Sylvi: Well, yeah, because Hasbro bought Milton Bradley, so it is kind of the same guys.

Keith: Right. So—

Art: And like, shut up.

Keith: I, I—

Sylvi: Yeah, shut up.

Keith: I, I was confused about like, why this is an important part of the script to include. It seems to me that what they're trying to say is that of course you would know that it's Hasbro and not Milton Bradley. Uh, you don't have to be from Providence, Rhode Island, uh, home of Hasbro, to know that—

Jack: And Keith J. Carberry.

Keith: To know that— And they're moving to Boston, long story— To know that Hasbro bought Milton Bradley, and so you'd have to be from the moon to think that it's still Milton Bradley that makes Yahtzee. So you guys must not have been living somewhere where you would have heard the news.

Jack: But they saw the corpse outside. We've superseded this. I know, it's so weird.

Keith: So weird.

Ali: Well, I think that— I mean, it's less that, like, I think that she thinks that she's getting them, and more that like, the social barrier has broken down such that she's not stopping herself from being a needling little teenager. Like, when you're trying to be gracious and a good guest, and trying to explain your newly met grandmother that rap is a form of modern poetry. That's one thing. But when you get to the end of it all, and you think that you've seen a gre— Dead body outside, you're gonna correct the guy that you're afraid of.

Keith: Don't they have bigger fish to fry, though, than who—

Ali: I guess, you know, you're not wrong on that. But I do think that it's just like one of those— Like, she's being tense, and she's being mean, and she's, like, willing to fight back in that way. And when you're a teen girl, one of your only ways to fight back is being like, hey, I think you're wrong about that.

Keith: It's connected to the line about the cafeteria, where they say something about the cafeteria, and she's like, what cafeteria? And in my head, I was like, well, aren't they supposed to volunteer at a hospital? That cafeteria.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Keith: But it is supposed to, I think, indicate that they would be patients. It would have to be patients to be talking in the cafeteria. I don't know.

Jack: It's not really how a cafeteria works.

Keith: It's not really how a cafeteria works. Um, I don't know. I just found that annoying and I wanted to point it out. Otherwise, it's the best scene of the movie.

Jack: This, um, uh, what I'm about to say is going to sound like I'm being glib, I know. This kind of trap that M. Night sets up in this movie, the seeing the hanging body and the door closing, and you now being in this sort of like, very high-stakes bottle episode, uh, that you know exactly, uh, how fucked it is. Other people in the scene know how fucked it is with you. It seems like there is no way out, and the purpose of the movie is to like, play the bottle episode, um, incredibly intensely until you figure the way out. Um, he is going to come back to this. He's obviously going to come back to it in Trap, where he blows that premise up to the whole movie and kind of plays themes and variations on this idea. But I feel like this is the first time he has really done one of these sequences that we're going to see again and again in the project. You're gonna see it in Knock at the Cabin. You're gonna see it in Old. You're almost certainly going to see it in Split. The moment in the movie when, like, the other shoe drops and the characters are, like, physically sealed inside this location and they have to, like, do some sort of combinatrix inside to get their way out. And it was really fun seeing that happen and knowing, oh my God, he's— Having figured this out, he's gonna come back to this again over the rest of his career.

Keith: Well he— Because he tried this before in Signs, and instead of figuring out how to get out, he just lets the— He just has the aliens run away.

Jack: Yeah, which is not satisfying. And this, they kill both the old people.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Oh, and this movie has an ending.

Keith: And this movie has an ending, and it's the best ending easily by far. I mean, I was excited about The Happening having an ending merely for having one. It happened to be a terrible ending. But this one has a real ending, and it's okay.

Jack: It's not as good as The Sixth Sense.

Keith: Doesn't have an ending.

Sylvi: Well, that's the end— Okay, that's wrong. Saying it's not as good as The Sixth Sense is just sort of like, the title of this season now, you know?

Jack: I think I had about—

Art: Yeah, I think The Sixth Sense was the best one, and we're not— It's not coming back.

Jack: I had about as much fun with this as I did with The Sixth Sense, but I do think The Sixth Sense was a much better movie. But you know, in terms of like, being in the movie theater and saying wahoo, which is how you judge a movie.

Keith: Yeah,

Jack: They're about— They're about even for me.

Keith: It's Mario. It's a Mario-based system.

Sylvi: The WPM Wahoo's pretty good.

Keith: It goes 3 stars, yah, wah, and yahoo.

Jack: Yes. Yes, it's a very narrow criteria. Yeah. Should we talk about how this Yahtzee game breaks bad?

Keith: Yeah. How does the Yahtzee game break bad?

Jack: Becca says, all right, I'm— I have to go and change the battery for my camera. Right. And rather than going to try and escape, she goes into the basement. This is because she's a character in a B-movie. I have no problem with this. This is where she finds her parents and is interrupted by... Uh, grandpa, she is delivering a sort of, um— so there are two very specific, uh, like, found footage references that I think M. Night is working with. The scene where she stands outside the bedroom with the knife all night feels like a Paranormal Activity reference where— Sylvi, what's her name? Katie?

Sylvi: Oh, I don't remember any of the characters from Paranormal Activity.

Art: Yeah, I think Katie is the central character in the Paranormal Activity franchise.

Keith: By the way, I love when she puts the camera down with the knife, she cants her own angle, which is great.

Jack: Yeah, it's lovely. They're all born filmmakers.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um, she, uh, famously there's a scene in Paranormal Activity where Katie is caught on the security camera standing motionless by the bed all night. That feels like Nana at the door with the knife. And then towards the end, um, Becca pointing the camera up to her face and introducing herself by name in the moment that she is is like, the most imperiled is the protagonist of The Blair Witch Project, famously introducing herself and apologizing to the camera kind of when she realizes that the jig is up. Mitchell also introduces himself. He says, hi, I'm Mitchell, which I thought was a really good line. This felt like a play on the Signs basement sequence.

Ali and **Art:** Yeah.

Jack: The kid standing in the basement and then the arm coming out, like, flipping that being like, the light turning on and seeing Mitchell standing there. And he chases her around the basement. He says, uh, everybody's dying tonight, Becca. No, he says, we're all dying today, Becca, which is a great line.

Keith: Yeah. Um, I don't have his dialogue here. I have his from, um, later when he's talking to the camera. But, uh, I do have a few buttons that I haven't pressed, uh, and one of them is the introduction of the, uh, the, uh, Sinmorfitellia.

Jack: The white thing? Oh, the Sinmorfitellia aliens. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Um, that might be a good play, uh, thing to drop here where it's sort of like where the mask has really fallen. Um, this is like, before they see the dead body, but after they've, uh, decided they have to get out as soon as possible, uh, and they're waiting for their mom to show up.

Jack: After they've learnt, these aren't your real grandparents.

Keith: Yeah. So after they— After they have— They can't pretend to play with a ball any longer, she's decided, I guess I'll give them each one more interview. And Tyler's like, what are you thinking? And Pop-Pop gives his interview. He says he basically— He was fired for seeing a white thing with yellow eyes in the coal mine where he worked. And it was real, and they fired him over it. And Nana talks about Sinmorfitellia.

[audio from The Visit starts playing]

> **Becca:** Tell me anything. Whatever you want to talk about.
>
> **Nana:** I know a story. It's about water.
>
> **Becca:** Great.

Sylvi: Narf.

> **Nana:** There is a pond that has little creatures. in it. These creatures are from another planet, but no one realizes it. These creatures spit into the water all day

long. Their spit can make you sleep, but not die. When people go underwater in the pond, they go into a deep sleep, a really beautiful sleep. The creatures from another planet have many people at the bottom of the pond storing them up. They are going to take them back to their planet of Sinmorfitellia one day.

Sylvi: Yeah—

Nana: That's just a made-up story. It's not real.

Sylvi: I thought it was done. Sorry.

Becca: Wow, that's, that's some story.

Nana: And the creatures have antennas, but they are invisible antennas.

[audio ends]

Keith: You're right that it sounded done, but I had to include the antennas thing.

Sylvi: The antenna thing, which is the real thing I wanted to yelp after, if I'm being honest.

Keith: She has this, like, um— It's similar to the, like, uh, like, the oven's not on. Like, this very uncanny way of giving the wrong information.

Jack: That's how you read a script.

Keith: That's how you read a script.

Jack: Like, there is a gravitas to the way she is speaking that is really impressive. Um, and I think that M. Night has— M. Night loves to over-egg the pudding. And in a lot of ways, this monologue is an incredibly over-egged pudding. But, um, this actress has like, figured out a way to make it work. Um, [**Keith:** I don't know—] She performs it very still.

Keith: As the, as the number one M. Night's over-egging his pudding guy, I'm not sure this one's over-egged because I think it's doing something really interesting, which is

that it's trying to set you up for another one of their series of like, fake-out red herring twists of like, it's, it's been aliens the whole time. Um, but it includes— It gives you too much information, like— It feels overegged, but it's because she's crazy.

Jack: Yes, I think the line, it makes you sleep but not die, is just really nice writing.

Keith: Yeah, but then she's talking about Sinmorfitellia, and it's like, if it was aliens, M. Night Shyamalan would never tell you that their home planet is called Sinmorfitellia.

Jack: No, that is not how M. Night does.

Keith: Right. So then that's when— When he— It's when he's— It's only when he's telling you that it's aliens that you have to go like, okay, well, it's definitely not aliens because invisible antenna and Sinmorfitellia, that's not how he does it. Although when she couldn't open any doors, she was running around the hallway not opening any doors, I was like, maybe this is a callback to Signs where his aliens couldn't open any doors.

Art: It's like, it's only invisible aliens when the movie cost $5 million and you ran out of money, right? That's the—

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Uh-huh. The, um, Pop-Pop's version of this is this, uh, the, the white shape with eyes, um, which he then— [**Art:** Yellow eyes.] With yellow eyes. He then says is outside the farm. It's waiting for them.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um, and he's also delivered with, uh, kind of gravitas or a kind of attention to the performance.

Keith: He has the delivery of like— I've met dozens of guys like this. My grandfather is like this, old powerfully strong men who have this sort of gentle gruffness that everything they say sounds very serious and can sometimes sound—

Jack: But not necessarily unpleasant.

Keith: No. And they can sound sad, and it can sound uh, proud. Like when she talked about— When Nana talked about how he's too proud to— He's so proud that he has to hide his shitty diapers in the thing. Like, my grandfather, he's 95. He can't— He has such bad hearing, but he's so vain that he won't wear his hearing aids because he doesn't want to feel old, and he doesn't want people to look at him and see that he's old and can't hear.

Jack: Which is relatable.

Keith: When he puts them on, he's instantly 20 years younger. He's vibrant and talking and interesting. He's like the most interesting guy in the world when he's telling his insane stories about things that have happened. And then he doesn't have them in because he's too proud to wear them, and he can't take part in conversations because he can't hear what's happening around him. And like, this is what the movie's telling you about old people, is that like, when you get old, parts of your life are sad now. And we have to deal with that as their grandchildren, that like, it's not weird and scary, it's just reality. And it's a shame that the movie kind of doubles back on that a lot. But, like, I can feel the reality in Pop-Pop in those moments, where I'm like, I know people who are like that.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Ali: There's another thing, there's another point that I want to bring up when we're talking about melodramatic and weird, uncanny ways of speaking, which is Becca getting to a point in the situation where she feels like she is in real danger, but she can't fully remove herself because she has to get an elixir for her mother.

Jack: Mmm. Yeah.

Ali: And every time she says this, it just feels stranger and sadder and more childlike. And like, you know, the reveal ends up being pretty straightforward, like, the elixir that I want to get for my mom is her mom, or her parents, saying on camera that they are

willing to forgive her. Like, this is the problem in my mother's life, and I need to fix it. And the only way that I can fix it is through this art form that I suddenly think is really important to me, is so sad.

Sylvi: It's really sad.

Ali: And it's like, a little bit funny because you could think of being 13 and thinking that this is the real— A literal elixir, like, it's just— And they don't gild it too much. Like, I think that she really only says those words maybe two or three times in the movie. [**Keith:** Two times, yeah.] And sort of towards the end where, you know, she's sort of getting desperate and sort of like, wanting to feel like she can still relate and be gracious to these people and accept the reality of aging. And, you know, just like, you know, what Keith was just talking about, about how Pop-Pop is so relatable. Like, it is so relatable to think that you're 13 and be like, God, being 40 and divorced is so awful, and I understand it, and I know what being an adult is like, and I know what my mother needs. And then, you know, being in a house with people in their 70s and 80s, and then suddenly being like, oh my God, like, life keeps going on, and these experiences are just gonna keep being further from what I know is— It's just like, it feels so considered. And like, the fact that it's so relatable and so, you know, compassionate makes me more disappointed in the ways that this movie just turns it into like, a hook. [**Keith:** Yeah.] You know, like, horror is allowed to make you think deeply about these uncomfortable things. Um, and I think that, like, being willing to write a movie that can be very funny and truthful about those things is really fun until you're like, oh, well, they're mental patients.

Keith: Uh— The way that they— Thankfully they don't betray the, um, interesting things about the movie is how, you know, it— Ali, you were just talking about how it flips forward. You know, she's worried about her mom, and then all of a sudden she's with her grandparents, and now she has like, this whole other stage of life that she's worried about. But it also flips backwards. What she's worried about is, you know, her mom's relationship with her parents as a sort of cover for her own worry about her relationship with her father. Mm-hmm. And is sort of, like, working on the problem she can see instead of the problem that she can't see. Even though her and her brother, they have

those— They trade interviews, and they both have like, the moment where they accuse each other of being sadder than they let on about their dad. And neither one of them really accept it. I guess maybe they both accept it kind of, but they quickly brush those feelings under the rug in order to deal with the more pressing issue of these— Our grandparents are acting weird.

Jack: Yeah. This is also there with the, this is how children play, line as well. It's a very similar kind of sadness. Yeah. I really want to watch the movie that Ali cut out of— I want that to be on the Blu-ray disc. I want the one that's all horror. I want the one that's all comedy. And I want the one where Ali just got all the dailies and pulled this further out of the movie. Because I think you're right. I just think that, like you say, it kind of tumbles apart there towards the end. I'd love to talk about these interviews. You know, we have learned that the divorce and their dad moving out has kind of produced two fairly neat problems that these children have. Obviously, these problems are representative of other stuff, but in the movie, they are expressed as Tyler being very germophobic, and Becca not looking at herself in the mirror. Tyler's interview is first, right?

Keith: Yeah. I do have them linked, though, if you want me to play them. They're not—

Art: Hold on. I just want to say one— I had, like, a full old person moment with the first time she said elixir, just before we move on. Where the first time she said elixir, I, like, paused the movie, It was like, what the fuck? Elixir? Like a full-on, what did they say, moment. I— I'm fully embarrassing. Like, why are they talking? Like, what's the elixir? Like, ugh, time comes for us all. But yes, these interviews are both excellent.

Keith: All right. Now let me, let me, let me play them.

Jack: So Tyler first.

Keith: Tyler first and then Becca.

[audio from The Visit starts playing]

Tyler: So their running back, who's big, makes it past the line and I'm the only one left to tackle him. All I gotta do is tackle him, put my hands around him and tackle him, but I just stand there. They call it freezing and I can hear everyone yelling. Coach Doherty, Dad, my teammates, and he gets a first down and runs and runs, and the other team is celebrating, and I'm still standing there. Then the assistant coach came and got me, and Dad patted me on the shoulder and then went to the car, and he never told me he was angry or anything.

Becca: You think Dad didn't say anything and left because you didn't tackle another eight year old in a game five years ago?

Tyler: Well, when you say it like that, it sounds stupid.

[audio ends]

Keith: Uh, I should say that, uh, I usually don't do this. Um, a lot of the clips in this episode were edited for time because there's a lot of space in the dialogue. Uh, so that was edited down by about 25 seconds to be able to fit it in a normal-sized clip.

Jack: His delivery on, “well, when you put it like that,” is great. This kid's, like, nonverbal acting is fantastic. He has this sort of mannerism where he talks out of the corner of his mouth. Really good work with where his gaze falls. I think that it's hard to act when you're a kid. It's hard to act generally. And I think that especially just pointing the camera at you in, like, a straight shot and saying, you have to sell this thing. Um, I think he does a really good job.

Art: And do you— Did we cover that both of these kids are Australian?

Sylvi: Yeah, we did not.

Keith: What? No, I had no idea.

Jack: What?

Sylvi: Yeah, that's impressive, right?

Art: Yeah. And he's doing a very good Philly accent to my not-from-Philly ear, but from the Northeast.

Jack: I, I had no idea these children were not Americans.

Keith: Yeah, no clue. Why did he get two Australians? He saw thousands of people, couldn't find anyone?

Art: Um, these were the two he liked. I don't know what you want.

Jack: I need two really good child actors. Oh, and they need to be Australian.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: Um, all right, Becca's interview.

[audio from The Visit starts playing]

> **Tyler:** How come you don't look at yourself in the mirror?
>
> **Becca:** Okay, fine. What's this now?
>
> **Tyler:** Besides when you're editing, you don't like looking at yourself. You never look at yourself in the mirror. You comb your hair with your back to the mirror, and I see you brush your teeth. You look down the whole time. Your sweater's inside out. Did you know that? Did you see that in the mirror this morning? Is that correct? It doesn't feel so good, does it?

[audio ends]

Jack: It's a really awkward scene.

Art: He's such a shit. I love it so much.

Jack: He's also zooming in during this scene. She says to him, are you adjusting the focal length? And he says, nope, I don't know what that is. And she says, are you zooming the camera? And he says, nope. But he is.

Sylvi: Do you think it's intentional? I interpreted it as him not realizing he zoomed in.

Keith: Oh, I thought that he was doing it on purpose to, to highlight how upset she was.

Sylvi: Ah, okay.

Art: But he like fucks it up.

Jack: He does.

Sylvi: Oh, that's why I thought it was an accident.

Jack: Yeah, that's why I thought it was an accident. It ends up being a really good zoom. I actually really like the way it's a good zoom.

Keith: Yeah, I thought that— I was like, wow, he's, he's got an iPhone too.

Jack: I don't think that kid's figured that out yet.

Art: Um, and of course, because it's a horror movie, I'm like, something's about to happen in the background. Something's about to happen in the background. Of course, I've seen this movie, but I don't remember that shit. But yeah, I, I was like, there's gonna— We're gonna get like a jump scare, or we're gonna see some clue in the back there.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And there wasn't.

Sylvi: Grandma’s gonna gallop again.

Keith: Tricked.

Art: Tricked, tricked into not looking at the actor. So maybe it wasn't the best.

Keith: I was, for what it's worth, I was looking at the actor.

Jack: Um, I also didn't notice that her sweater was inside out.

Keith: I also didn't until—

Jack: It was a good detail.

Keith: Yeah. Um, The, uh, I think the interviews are good. I think that like, it is occasionally uncanny how, uh, excellent the footage is. We talked about earlier. Um, but you know, what are you gonna make— You're gonna put out a movie that looks like it was shot by 15-year-olds? No.

Jack: Uh, they've done that and it doesn't look good.

Keith: They have done that?

Sylvi: We talked about Paranormal Activity.

Keith: Oh, sure.

Jack: Uh, Chronicle is, uh, found footage, right?

Art: Yeah, Chronicle. I think. Paranormal Activity is usually fixed, uh, cameras.

Sylvi: I just don't like that movie very much.

Art: The Paranormal Activity movies are so bad.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: I like the one with the camera on the, um, rotating fan. That's a, that's a fun scene.

Keith: Which one is that?

Jack: 4 or something.

Keith: Lost World.

Art: One of them's a Kinect. That one's offensive. Not like morally—

Jack: Art means morally.

Art: Uh, it is just product placement.

Keith: Yeah. Do, uh, well, let's see, where, where are we in this movie that we have anything more?

Jack: They're about to kill the grandparents. You know, we, we— These things snap together in a way that I think is too neat. Uh, I mentioned that earlier. Tyler of course kills—

Keith: Becca looking in the mirror to break the mirror to get the glass to stab the grandma.

Jack: And then, um, uh, Tyler actively playing the role of the football player to kill, uh, Pop-Pop.

Keith: Can I play— Can I play Pop-Pop as the Exposer?

Jack: Oh yeah, this is good.

Keith: I love this. This was great to me. I, I really liked him.

[audio from The Visit starts playing]

> **Pop-Pop:** You are blind. You are blind. I am the Exposer. I am a seer. I see the veiny, deformed face of the world.

[audio ends]

Keith: So rare for me. I was like, he could have doubled that speech and I would have been happy. I really— Maybe if it was doubled, I wouldn't feel that way. Maybe he's leaving me wanting more. But I'm like, let me hear more about Pop Pop the Exposer. This is after he's already covered Tyler's face in his own shit. Sorry, not Tyler's own shit. Pop-Pop’s own shit.

Art: Although, and then it's not in any of the— Like, he puts the diaper in his face, and there's like, one shot where his face kind of looks like it might have shit in it.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: And then when he snaps out of it and does the tackle, there is definitely not shit on his face.

Sylvi: Oh my God. I didn't even notice.

Art: And like, yeah, it's like they didn't have the budget to do the makeup, or like, they put the shit wiping in later.

Sylvi: I think it's smart to pull the punch, 'cause I think it will work. It makes you have the visceral reaction when it's out of focus in the background, 'cause in the background of the clip that Keith just played, you can see Tyler with something on his face. Mm-hmm.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: Um, and like, I think it's— I think it is— I don't know. I think it'd be a bit much if they gave you the like, in-focus lingering on the old man's shit on this 13-year-old's face.

Keith: He wants heroes in his movies, and it wouldn't— It would dampen the heroic scene of, of beating the old man to death with a fridge. If he did that, if he was cheering and doing his little football thing with a face covered in shit, I, I do think that it is a, it is a, a continuity error, not a mistake, but like, a poorly thought-out sequence.

Art: I would like to go on record as saying that you should be allowed to murder people with fridges if they have said they're about to murder you.

Keith: I know. Oh, totally. [**Sylvi:** Self-defense!] Self-defense for sure. Um, but he's, he's going so— He's so into it that the— That Becca pulls him off of the old man.

Sylvi: I mean, it— That's adrenaline, right? That's how I read that.

Art: Well, and people in horror movies are always stopping too soon. Um, if someone's ever trying to kill you, don't, don't— Like, they're always like, oh, they're unconscious, and then like moving on. If you knock someone— Someone tried to kill you and you knock them unconscious, you gotta, you gotta kill them.

Sylvi: Yeah, double tap Mike Myers.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvi: The, the Halloween character, not the—

Keith: Right, yeah, not the actor.

Art: Or maybe, uh—

Sylvi: I mean, listen, if he's trying to kill— If Austin Powers is trying to kill you, double tap him as well, but.

Art: Yeah, Scream is correct about this.

Jack: The diaper scene is just so gross, and is essentially, you know, in Just King Things, they talk about King going for the gross-outs. M. Night is just playing this thing to the hilt. It's not great. I don't know that— I mean, they really wanted like, a kind of static, slow, humiliating horror to contrast the like, fast, adrenaline-filled nightmare horror in the bedroom. Yeah. But I think the bedroom scene is much better. Although this did give us the “I am the Exposer,” which I think is great.

Keith: Yeah, there's one thing about this scene between Pop-Pop and Tyler that I liked, and that's when Pop-Pop's like, I never liked you.

Jack: Both of them say that.

Keith: Oh, they do?

Sylvi: They do, yeah.

Keith: Nana says, I never liked you, to Becca?

Jack: She says something to that effect, yeah.

Keith: Oh, I totally missed that line. Because, like, it makes sense for Pop-Pop because he was like, I'm doing this for my wife because we don't have kids anymore. And so it's— It scans to me to be like, this is a favor. You're not— I don't care about you like she does. It's weird to have her say the same thing.

Art: Well, so, you know, as someone who has murdered her own children, maybe she just doesn't have the patience for children that she thinks she does.

Keith: Yeah, she really did seem impatient. She wanted to roast her in an oven twice.

Jack: Yeah, she, she, um— This explains the like, violent reaction to the wanting to talk about your daughter scene, right?

Keith: Yeah, for sure.

Jack: Because she killed her own children. [**Keith:** Right.] And doesn't—

Keith: And she's trying to bury it underneath this sort of alien fantasy.

Jack: Yeah. Um, both the parents are dead. They run out and are rescued by their mom in, um— With the police. Uh, at this point, the cinematography comes apart completely into this kind of abstract collage of rain. The—

Sylvi: I laughed so hard at the, the rain bit because I remembered what Bob Balaban said in The Lady in the Water about the like, oh, they meet in the rain and, and it cleanses away. And I'm like, okay, man. M. Night loves this shit, huh?

Jack: Yeah. Yep.

Art: Look, if there's one thing I know about M. Night Shyamalan, it’s he went to film school.

Jack: And he, and he will show, he will show you.

Keith: Maybe he should have listened to critics more. Maybe if he had— Maybe he had a stronger stomach to see what critics were saying about his movies, he wouldn't have made so many big mistakes all in a row and then have to finance his house to make a movie.

Jack: I don't— [**Sylvi:** Yeah.] I don't— Hmm.

Ali: You buy a house for $90 million though.

Jack: You can, absolutely. You could maybe buy two.

Keith: Maybe buy two.

Ali: Maybe.

Keith: What could a house— What could a house cost? $50 million?

Jack: What could a house possibly cost, Michael?

Art: I mean, this is definitely the movie he made the most money on, right? Because he put up the money and then the deal he made was just distribution.

Keith: Yeah, sure.

Art: This is easily the most money he put in his pocket after a movie. So scoreboard, I guess, is the—

Jack: I think he should do this more. And post-Trap— Well, actually, so what M. Night is doing right now is very confusing. He just released a book. Did you know this?

Keith: No.

Art: No!

Sylvi: Is this the thing he was working on with Nicholas Sparks?

Jack: It is! Nicholas Sparks and M. Night just made a book together. It is called—

Keith: Who is Nicholas Sparks?

Sylvi: He is a sort of, like, young adult-targeted romance author. I believe he wrote The Notebook? Maybe?

Keith: Oh yeah, The Notebook. Yeah, look at that.

Sylvi: Um, yeah, a lot of really famous, like, sort of, um, romance novels of the—

Keith: Dear John, I know that one too. Also a movie.

Sylvi: Yeah, a lot of his stuff has been adapted. And I think, isn't this M. Night thing also being adapted?

Jack: M. Night and Nicholas Sparks are making this adaptation together. So what happened is they had— They developed this idea together. They put the collaboration with Shyamalan's pitch and devised characters during their first meeting, says Wikipedia. And then Shyamalan has gone off to write the screenplay with input from Sparks, and Sparks has written the novel with input from Shyamalan.

Keith: I think that's a great idea. I don't— I mean, I can't speak to the quality of Nicholas Sparks, but I can speak to the quality of M. Night Shyamalan's writing. And so to get a really successful author to write the book that your movie's based on, I think that that— That, that's shoring up his biggest weakness, I think.

Jack: Sylvi, would you like to—

Sylvi: Yeah, you definitely haven't read any Nicolas Sparks.

Keith: Is he a worse writer than M. Night Shyamalan?

Sylvi: I mean, I admittedly have mostly just seen adaptations of his work, but he is pretty hacky.

Keith: Again, worse than M. Night Shyamalan, though? He— This is a guy who— I don’t wanna give—

Art: The Notebook is very hacky.

Sylvi: Yeah, like, it really is a mileage may vary thing here.

Art: It's a different kind of hacky.

Keith: People love The Notebook.

Art: People love all of these movies.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Uh, yeah, I've never seen any of these movies, I've never read any of these books.

Sylvi: People love The Rookie, starring Nathan Fillion. Like, people love a lot of dog shit, dude.

Keith: Oh, that's the movie where he's a writer and he's on— He's going— No, that's Castle.

Art: No, that's a TV show. That's Castle. It's a TV show.

Keith: Is The Rookie—

Art: Yeah, that's Castle.

Keith: Is The Rookie a movie?

Sylvi: No, it's also, it's also a TV show. I just pulled for a bad TV show.

Keith: Okay.

Art: But I think it ran for like 100 years.

Keith: He loves being in cop shows, I guess.

Sylvi: I think it's still on. Yeah, he loves, he loves being a cop.

Keith: Great, cool.

Art: Was Castle a cop? I thought Castle was like a PI.

Keith: Castle's a writer who's having writer's block, so he's on a permanent ride-along with the cops, helping them solve their cases by writing the solutions to them?

Jack: Get the fuck outta here.

Keith: That's what Castle is.

Art: Oh, the 8th season of The Rookie will premiere on January 6th, 2026.

Keith: Wow. Never seen Castle, by the way. So if I'm wrong about exactly how that works—

Sylvi: No, you nailed it.

Keith: Okay, great.

Art: And he's not a— He can't— How do you do 8 seasons of a show called The Rookie?

Jack: New rookies each time.

Art: He's gonna be like, retiring soon.

Keith: I wish.

Jack: The last thing that I think we need to talk about is Kathryn Hahn's revelation of what happened on the day that she left.

Art: Oh, wait. I need to— We need to pause this for a second because I am about to be handed a baby, and I really want to participate in this part of this conversation.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: And the baby does too.

Art: Hi. Aww. Did you have a good time at the store? [baby noises] Can you say hi? It's hard, I know. You only like to say hi when you see people.

Jack: Yeah, she doesn't know we're here.

Baby: Red.

Jack: Red?

Keith: Mets?

[Baby noises]

Art: Oh, don't grab the pop filter.

Sylvi: Oh my God.

Baby: Mad.

Jess: I think she's saying that this Spider-Man monster is mad.

Art: Oh, that's true. Yeah, mad.

Baby: Head.

Keith: Head.

Art: Yeah. Okay.

Jess: Okay, say bye-bye, Daddy.

Art: Have a good nap. Bye-bye. All right.

Sylvi: So fucking cute.

Jack: Why did she say head?

Art: Um, I think she was looking at a baseball. I have a baseball on my desk.

Jack: I see. It is sort of a head shape.

Keith: It is sort of a head.

Sylvi: I mean, it is Mr. Mets' head.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: It is Mr. Mets.

Keith: I was close when I said Mets, shockingly.

Art: Yeah, well, she was saying mad before. [**Jack:** Mad?] Jessica pointed out there's a, there's a box with a, with a picture of a comic book villain on my desk as well, and that looks mad.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Jack: Oh yeah. Learning about the world.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Mad, head.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: The rest.

Jack: You know, bean by bean, the bag fills. Okay. Do we talk about the— How do we want to talk about this Kathryn Hahn, what happened on the day? So this is a mystery that comes up again and again during the movie. Something broke very bad on the day that she left to be with her much older boyfriend.

Sylvi: Her scumbag ex, who was her substitute teacher at her high school.

Keith: Yeah, her substitute teacher.

Jack: Yeah, and her parents did not like this.

Sylvi: You know, reasonable to not like that.

Ali: It's— Yeah, I mean, it's introduced— It's introduced so early and with like, like before they even leave on the visit.

Keith: This is classic plotting. First, first thing in, last thing out. This is very— This is exactly right.

Ali: Right. And it's fun. I mean, like, you know, especially when the mystery is so obscured, to have this be the first drop in the bucket, essentially, is the first interview with the mother, sort of this like, setup of the like, here's the documentary. But Becca asks, can you tell me about— Can you tell me what you did on the day that you left? And Kathryn Hahn saying, I refuse to say that. You know, if they want to tell you, they can, but I'm not going to, is so, like— It's good scriptwriting, let me tell you. It's weird parenting, but it's great scriptwriting.

Art: It's super weird parenting. The idea that you would let your kids go on this trip without you is —Even if you're not staying, then you wouldn't, like— Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Ali: I don't know. It feels understandable when you realize how small the action is, and how the reveal, the thing of like, forgiveness was always there if I was willing to go get it. The idea that Kathryn Hahn's character thinks what she did was such a betrayal to her parents that she never went over the hump of apologizing, but is not too proud to say, oh, I think my parents deserve to know their grandchildren. Like, I have severed this relationship in a way that I do not feel capable of repairing, but I also don't think that that should affect these other people's relationships separately is like— Feels human and complicated in a way that feels satisfying. But I, you know, I just— I cannot imagine being a mom and being like, well, I don't want to tell you, but you should have like, this difficult conversation about— With a stranger.

Jack: Go with God.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. I think that there are several moments in the movie where you can see, just as Keith described seeing Nana's arm, you know, as she's desperately trying to control herself from slamming the oven door shut. You can see Kathryn Hahn wanting to say something or wanting to think something. There's the great moment during the first call when she is just desperate to ask them, how are Nana and Pop Pop? Have they said anything about me? No, you don't have to answer that, or whatever. Mm-hmm. And Kathryn Hahn plays the, like, desperately wanting this information, desperately wanting some— Something approaching a reconciliation. But not— But pulling back and letting her children handle that. I really liked the performance from Kathryn Hahn there. And then, you know, what she reveals in the end is that it was physically violent, which I think is really interesting. And the violence was instigated by Kathryn— The physical violence was instigated by Kathryn Hahn. You know, she says, they cussed at me, then I hit Mom, then Dad hit me. And there's something so blunt and like a shock of cold water of seeing their mom say this down the camera. I thought it was a really interesting moment.

Art: Although you skipped what I think is an important thing, is that she went to leave and her mom got in her way. Her mom does instigate the physicality.

Jack: She does, yes. But the first blow is from Kathryn Hahn.

Art: Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. And that's like, if that happened to you, it would be the most upsetting thing that happened to you in that year, probably, right? Like—

Jack: In that year? Yeah. For a while. Yeah. And then there's the—

Art: Setting aside the perhaps crime your partner at the time committed in dating you at all.

Jack: And then there's the, the child's camera capturing their mother plainly saying— Plainly describing the violence in that family. You know, if your mom looked you in the eye and said, I hit my mom, and then my dad hit me— If the thing that Becca is looking for is the elixir, that is not what is happening on camera in this moment. I mean, there is

an argument that there is some sort of catharsis, but it's not the elixir that Becca is looking for, right?

Ali: Yeah. I mean, it ends up being— I mean, the movie makes it that, right? In that her mom is able to say, like, this was a mistake that I made. This is a mistake that you were capable of not making yourself.

Jack: Right.

Ali: Instead of Becca feeling like, oh, well, obviously my mom was so betrayed, and she has these broken relationships in her life. And maybe, you know, the reason my parents split up is because my mom has not healed this part of herself or whatever. Like, you know, the relationship failed, and it was instigated from this one moment, so maybe I can go fix it. Yeah, I don't know.

Keith: Yeah, it's tough because it's sort of, you know, they've spent a movie kind of paralleling Kathryn Hahn and her parents, and then Becca and Tyler and the father, and this idea of forgiveness and whose job it is to forgive who. And Kathryn Hahn, she was dating her teacher, she hit her mom. The secret that— That her secret was that like, despite what she had told the kids that made them feel like she needed forgiveness from them, you know, Kathryn Hahn reveals at the end like, no, like, they— Did I get this mixed up? They think that she needs to hear from the parents, I forgive you, and was denied that. And then she says like, no, no, like, I could have gotten that. Like, I was the one who couldn't handle the relationship. And then she gives the advice about like, don't hold on to anger. And it's like, okay, the kids are struggling with anger towards their father, but they don't have the same kind of issue that she has with her parents where they exchanged blows. Their father's just kind of a scumbag who left them to move to Palo Alto without a phone number. Like, that's not the same kind of issue. She was—

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: She was presumably 18, and she got in a physical fight with her parents. These kids were preteens or whatever, and their dad left their mom and them permanently to go live with a barista.

Jack: In Palo Alto.

Keith: In Palo Alto.

Art: Yeah, their dad sucks.

Keith: Their dad sucks. [**Jack:** He sucks!] This is what I said at the beginning, like, they don't need to forgive him, and in fact shouldn't. And it is not a problem to hold on to that anger. It doesn't make you a bad person to let those feelings exist permanently.

Art: You can— You cannot forgive someone and decide you're not going to be angry anymore. Yeah. I think that's sort of like where we might— The movie, of course, does not do the work here.

Keith: The movie conflates those two things, though.

Art: Right.

Keith: Like, actively conflates them.

Art: But like, I'm doing the work here saying that like, she doesn't— It doesn't have to— Like, I guess the movie says that it means she's forgiven him. But it could be as simple as like, she's decided she's not angry, and therefore the act of putting this footage in the movie doesn't mean the same thing. [**Keith:** Right.] And of course it does. I can't beat the movie at being the movie. But I do think that it's true that you don't have to be— You don't have— That being angry at someone doesn't necessarily help.

Ali: It doesn't change the fact that Keith is completely right that these kids are still owed an apology.

Keith: Right. And they're— This wound is fresh. I don't live my life in anger, right? But I can conjure up that anger when I'm talking about the things that make me angry, and I can feel them. And then I can put them away. And that's its own sort of thing. And it's a different— It's different than saying like, let it go. Like, it doesn't serve you. And it's like, I don't know. I feel like I have been served by my anger. I feel like— Actually, I feel like it

happens all the time. You know, not to be, like, explosive or be kind of— Be frozen in time about the time that you didn't tackle a kid, or not be able to look myself in the mirror because I feel worthless. That's a different thing. And I don't think the solution to that is like, well, you have to let go of your anger.

Jack: I'm so curious—

Art: I think it's like, the resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die bit of it.

Keith: Sure.

Art: Is that a— Is that a saying that anyone else has heard before?

Jack: It’s a good saying.

Keith: I've heard that. I've heard that.

Jack: I haven't heard that before.

Art: Um, and like, that, that feels like, you know, Kathryn Hahn has not been made happy by being angry at her parents for 15 years.

Keith: Right.

Art: And that you should, you should consider that in your life.

Jack: This is the first piece of advice that she's giving her child after sending them off to figure this out themselves. But, you know.

Art: Yeah, I don't think Kathryn Hahn is a particularly good parent.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Just that there's something of her— There's a root in her philosophy.

Keith: Well, this is the elixir, right? Like, the kids know something's wrong. They don't know exactly what's wrong. She's been so busy self-pitying that she hasn't been a good parent.

Jack: Yes. Art, taking his reading glasses off and leaning forward, the elixir?

Keith: What are the ingredients to the elixir?

Art: Maybe it's in the basement!

Keith: Maybe it's in the basement!

Art: It's gasoline!

Jack: That's the elixir of the car. Last time you watched this, Art, you were not a parent. And now you are a parent.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Have— Did you notice a change in your feeling about it? I feel like we haven't— We've talked a little about like, what these kind of parent and child movies feel like now you are a parent. But this is a— This is a parent and child movie in a big way. I think

Art: it is and it isn't, right? Because, because like, the parenting in it is all wrapped up in these bad relationships that I simply don't have. I'm not estranged from my parents for 15 years. I don't think I'm on the verge of either leaving or being left by my partner for a barista in Palo Alto. Although I suppose the true flip would be Providence.

Jack: Oh, right. Yeah. Going in the other direction.

Art: Going in the other— Putting the continent between us.

Keith: Palo Alto seems possible, actually. Just geographically.

Art: Yeah, if we did split up, Palo Alto would be an almost reasonable place for one of us to move. I say almost, it's like, an 8-hour drive, I think, but way closer than Philadelphia and Palo Alto. The family relationships here are so much more broken than

mine are and are likely to end up that I don't feel that like, pull, except in the sense of like, I cannot imagine just being like, well, here's some people I haven't talked to in 15 years. Get on the train and go see them. That doesn't feel—

Jack: Does imperiled children play differently to you?

Art: My daughter can’t— What's that?

Jack: Does imperiled children play differently to you now?

Art: Not at this— Not this age children yet.

Jack: All right. You're sort of like, that's a whole other ballpark.

Art: Yeah.

Keith: It's still easy to feel for imperiled children because—

Jack: Because we're humans.

Keith: Because of humanity. Yeah.

Art: But like, um, that, that pitcher from the Dodgers who sat out the World Series, and then the week after the World Series revealed that it was because their, their baby had died shortly after being born, that, that hit me as a parent. [**Jack:** The proximity of that is—] Like, I don't think anyone's like, that must have been easy. But the idea that their child died at days old felt devastating in a way that I don't think it would have before.

Keith: Meanwhile, I think having a difficult relationship with my father when he was alive made this movie more irritating than speaking to me. I find this in most movies, but when they do the parent— This just came up in After Earth— When they do the parent-child thing wrong, it's so irritating. It's like an itch that I can't scratch where I'm like, when a piece of media is trying to make excuses for parents, it drives me absolutely up the wall. It drives me fucking crazy. And because people who make movies are usually closer to being parents than to being children, it happens more often now.

Jack: Oh, it's a cruel world, isn't it?

Keith: Yeah. Unlike this movie, kids are not often making movies. This happens to be a movie in which a child is making a movie, but the movie is actually being made by a guy who is a parent. And so there's sort of this inherent kind of dishonesty to the whole affair when you're trying to have kids tell a story about parents, but it's actually a parent telling a story about kids telling a story about parents and forgiving parents in the movie, then you're like, well, this is just a parent forgiving themself. Fuck you.

Jack: You puppeted those people.

Keith: Yeah, that's— That really bugs me. But I'm very— When it's done right, I'm very sensitive to it in a good way. I'm like, you know, really speak— You know, don't, don't have me listen to a sad father-son song that really— That could really work, which is how I know that it's the movie's fault and not my fault.

Art: Um, yeah, it, it, it is a clumsy bit. Having her say the thing about it means she's forgiven him, and then having the footage at the end does make it clumsy. But I, I do think there's room for that to be less annoying if you are willing to put extra work into meeting the movie where it does not ask to be met.

Keith: Yeah, it's sort of the one— It's, it's one of the— It's one of the things where I— It's so hard for me to meet the movie. I don't— This doesn't like, ruin the movie for me. I, I can put it in its own box about like, you know, typical stuff that sucks box. Don't worry about it. Uh, but we're doing a podcast where we talk about the stuff that's in that box, so I have to bring it up and talk about it.

Jack: Is it as egregious to you as— Because like, the stuff towards the end of Signs made you, and continues to make you, so mad.

Keith: Yeah, really mad. Yeah.

Jack: Is it more or less than that?

Keith: No, because it's sort of like one lazy line that gets brought up for cheap closure versus, I think like, a kind of structurally poisonous like, like, uh, uh, attempt. Like, the whole, the whole thing is built on a bad foundation, um, in Signs. Uh, and a lot of the stuff inside at the end of Signs I do really like. Like, I like the kind of intentional deus ex machina stuff. Like, you know, people will talk about Signs as if there's a deus ex machina by mistake, but it's that— But no, it's, it's sort of like, intentionally—

Art: Again, you know it's intentional because an hour earlier, the director told it to you.

Keith: Right. Yes. And all this stuff, God is working through the mother to save this family. It's literally a deus ex machina on purpose. So you can not like it, but you can't act like it's a mistake. The part of the ending of Signs that bugs me is that it doesn't trust the audience to pick up on that, maybe right or wrong, but it makes the movie worse for me by how highlighted they have to make it. And the double dip into the flashback, that's really irritating. And they do four deus ex machinas all in a row, culminating in the asthma thing. It's like, okay, this is one too many. This is now in poor taste.

Art: That's— I don't want to— We're really gonna— I really don't want to drag us into the weeds of that but that's not a deus ex machina.

Keith: It is.

Art: It’s not. It’s not.

Jack: Is there anything else about this movie that we want to make sure we get?

Art: It's not God coming out of the machine. It really is

Keith: I mean, yeah, it's just foreshadowing. The god that built the machine? I don't know how you— You know, I think that we're splitting hairs.

Sylvi: You can say it feels contrived, I think is a better way of putting it.

Art: Yeah, I think you can say it feels contrived. It's not—

Keith: Okay, well, let's talk about what a deus ex machina is.

Jack: Well, no, hang on.

Sylvi: Oh my God, let's not.

Art: All right, let's go back to ancient Greece.

Jack: Is there any other business?

Keith: No, I do want to talk for an hour about the deus ex machina thing.

Sylvi: Well, you and Art can do that later.

Art: Yeah, we're gonna end this season with a Patreon bonus where Keith and I get increasingly mad about each other's opinions on Signs until we run out of tape or we're not friends anymore.

Keith: There's no tape anymore.

Art: I mean, it's not what I want.

Art: Well, then.

Keith: It's all on elixir now.

Art: Elixir?

Keith: Yeah, elixir. The recipe's in the basement. Uh, do we have anything else? I don't think we have anything else, but I could be wrong.

Sylvi: This was a pretty— Yeah, no, this was a pretty simple one for me. It was just like, yeah, this is a fun horror movie that has the problems that a lot of modern horror movies have with regards to both the elderly and people with mental illness.

Keith: Yeah.

Jack: I like it, it was scary.

Sylvi: Yeah, the scares were good. It was like a re— It was a really fun Blumhouse horror movie.

Keith: I mean, yeah, I can't— I like this way better than anything we've seen recently, for sure.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah. I'm trying to think what's the stuff that I think— The thing that about this with me is like I don't know if I necessarily think it's better like, like, 100% better than some of the stuff we've seen, but I think it is— Because it's not aiming as high, it is a way more enjoyable watch.

Keith: Yeah, that's how, that's how I felt— I felt about previous Shyamalan movies that I'm like, uh, because it's not so lofty, it ends up not being— The fall ends up not being so hard, uh, when it inevitably isn't that good. But I just think as a movie, it is like, competently written, competently constructed, well directed. What more can you ask for? Jack, I like that earlier you went— You, you hit all of, uh, like the things that people say, talk shit about M. Night Shyamalan on, and this movie is able to avoid all of those pitfalls. I think that that's, that's basically how I feel about this. It doesn't have any of his big issues. [**Jack:** Yeah.] And it's— And it does have a lot of his strengths.

Jack: Yeah, I agree. What are you watching next?

Keith: Is it Split?

Sylvi: I believe it is Split.

Art: It is Split.

Keith: Now it's gonna be tough, my guess about what Split is, because I think I actually do already know what Split is.

Sylvi: Yeah, you probably do, but if you want—

Art: Does anyone not know? Does anyone wanna—

Sylvi: Nah, I know.

Keith: Okay, so to my knowledge, Split is James McAvoy has a dissociative identity disorder, resulting in a number of kooky characters that are maybe also criminals? And something happens to make it a thriller. Maybe one of them— Maybe one of his personalities is really evil. Um, and I guess he's probably gotta be on the run? This is a movie— This is the first M. Night movie— I swear to God, this is the first M. Night movie I remember the advertising for because I was going to the movie theater and I saw posters for Split. I can't say that about any other M. Night movie that I like, remember any advertising for them at all, but this one I do.

Art: Hmm. Um, you have the James McAvoy part pretty, pretty down.

Keith: That it's James McAvoy?

Art: Yeah. And, and, but like, there's a, there's, you don't seem to have like, the plot.

Keith: No, I don't know the plot. I don't know the plot, but I at least know the premise.

Art: Yeah. Wow, the highest grossing Blumhouse movie until 2023.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvi: What was— What beat it?

Art: Five Nights at Freddy's.

[**Keith** laughter]

Sylvi: Yeah, that makes sense. That makes perfect sense.

Keith: Uh, do we have any reviews?

Sylvi: Oh, fuck. I was too busy writing the goddamn recap to remember that I have to do this too. Uh, let me find—

Keith: Sorry, that’s okay. Here's what I want to say. Here's what I want to say. This, this is coming out, I don't know, the end of, uh, the very beginning of December, I think. We

have 680 reviews. I would love to have 700 reviews by, by, by next year. That's my goal. So if you've been dragging your feet on writing a review, I need, I need 20 reviews.

Sylvi: I got two reviews I can read.

Keith: Okay, great.

Sylvi: First is from QCJ0XA455. I'm assuming they just auto-assigned you that username. Signs is a 9/11 movie. The cherry on top of Signs being a 9/11 movie is how the area it takes place, Bucks County, just north of Philly, was hit hard by the subprime mortgage collapse in 2007. All those cornfields got turned into McMansions.

Keith: Oh, that's tragic.

Jack: Great.

Sylvi: Um, and then the other one is related to our Hunter x Hunter season, but I need to read it. Nothing I write can be funnier than Leorio backshots. I'm still catching up on the Hunter x Hunter episodes, but it's a great discussion about a great show. From Sigafoos. Thank you.

Keith: Thank you.

Jack: Thank you.

Keith: Any final thoughts?

Jack: No, I'm all good.

Sylvi: I'm not looking forward to the next one.

Jack: Godspeed. Much like Kathryn Hahn sending her children off to be attacked—

Keith: Sight unseen.

Jack: Sight unseen. I'm waving you off to Split. Ah, it's not for me. Goodbye.

Keith: Bon voyage to us.

Sylvi: It's, it's Split. And then do we get a break between Old and— Or between Glass and Split?

Keith: Or is it straight into Glass?

Sylvi: Okay, so we have to— There's two movies of eating your vegetables before you get to dessert.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Um, I mean, you could talk me into that we should put Glass on the Patreon.

Sylvi: Eh.

Keith: Eh, we'll think about it.

Art: Or put Old on the Patreon.

Keith: Yeah,

Sylvi: I think, I think Old, Knock at the Cabin, and Trap should all be main feed, personally.

Keith: Yeah, me too.

Art: Um, yeah. Glass is just, um, a particularly poorly reviewed movie.

Keith: Yeah,

Sylvi: I'm shocked.

Keith: That's a shame because—

Art: I don't want to wade into the crap pile.

Keith: I am looking forward to the follow-up on that character.

Art: Uh-huh.

Keith: All right, bye.

[“Dr Malcolm and Friends” by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Art: Split is his second highest Rotten Tomatoes score.

[“Dr Malcolm and Friends” by Jack de Quidt plays in its entirety]