

Enthusiasm - DC

Content Warnings

- Spoilers for several DC properties, inc. Injustice Game
- Discussions of: extreme violence, child trauma inc. murder
- Mentions of: poverty, death of unborn child, seizures, cancer

ALEX

That's your, the, your sort of Fincher-esque. And then you can go it from the angle of, uh, Batman who stands for Truth, Justice and Capitalism!

ALL

[laugh]

[Show Theme - Outro]

HELEN

Hello, friends and fans, and welcome to Enthusiasm, the show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers, and today we're talking about DC and I am comically happy to be joined by Alex, Harry, Shahan, and Vic. As always, we shall introduce ourselves alphabetically. So, Alex, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

ALEX

Hello, I'm Alexander J. Newell, I'm the founder and CEO of Rusty Quill Limited. And if Helen is one of the best Rusty Quillers we've established, I am the "er"

Quiller [laugh]. Uh, I have been doing this for a very long time, and you could say, I'll be here till Kingdom come...?

HELEN

[laugh]. Very good, very good. I liked the little Dr. Evil thing you had going on there.

ALEX

I dunno why I do it now. Listeners can see my little finger, but it makes me feel better.

HELEN

[laugh] Next up, Harry, can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

HARRY

Hello, my name is Harry Roebuck. My pronouns are he, him and I'm an actor.

HELEN

What are you acting in Harry?

HARRY

Ah, I am playing Gaius Octavius in Rusty Quill's upcoming drama-comedy Cry Havoc Ask Questions Later.

HELEN

[laugh] I didn't mean for that to sound so much like I was prompting you to plug the show.

HARRY

Let's get the plugs out the way early.

ALEX

Sell the brand Harry, sell the brand!

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

Next up, Shahan, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

SHAHAN

My pronouns are he, him, and I'm an actor. And I've just finished recording for Siva in Rusty Quill's, Trice Forgotten.

HELEN

Yes! And finally, Vic, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

VIC

Hey folks, I'm Vic Zander, my pronouns are he, him and I too am an actor. I've just finished recording also for Rusty Quill's, Trice Forgotten. And I played the part of Baker.

HELEN

Lovely. Can I ask quickly, whereabouts are you from? Because I really like that accent, but I'm very bad at identifying where accents are from.

VIC

Yeah. Usually, uh, when people are guessing, it's usually Manchester or Liverpool. But I'm actually Glaswegian, I'm Scottish. The reason why it confuses people is because I've slowed my accent down when I came down to England, like 30 years ago. Cause no one could understand what I was saying. [laugh]. I had to keep repeating myself all the time. So I had to slow it right down.

HELEN

I was like, this is somewhere nearer my region than London. But I didn't know exactly where. [laugh].

VIC

There you go.

HELEN

All right, so we're gonna start with a very reasonable first question, which is, how did you get into DC? Did you seek out the comics? Did you watch cartoons? Did you watch the films?

HARRY

I was thinking about this and my earliest memory was, uh, Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze in, uh, Batman and Robin [laugh].

ALEX

Oh, excellent, excellent.

HARRY

Yeah, I wasn't really much of a Batman or DC fan cause I was a massive Spider-Man fan growing up.

SHAHAN

Mm-hmm. [affirmative].

HARRY

But for some reason I absolutely loved Mr. Freeze! [laugh]. So like the, the animated series Film Subzero, it was like one of my favourite like VHS tapes to, to rent when I was little. And uh, of course I watched the, uh, Tim Burton films, the Batman and Batman Returns. Batman Returns is probably my favourite one, looking in retrospect. So yeah, I didn't actually end up reading the comics or anything until I was in college, I think. Mm. So yeah, that was my introduction.

ALEX

I'm quite similar to you, Harry. So I, I was a Spider-Man freak, so, uh..

HARRY

Oh yay!

ALEX

...so let's see. I came in, I came in via Marvel, tried to read X-Men as a child and went, this is gibberish. I understand nothing...

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

...because X-Men. Progressed to Spider and went, oh, I understand this. And then proceeded into DC. But I would say that mine was definitely the, uh, old classic art deco animated adventures of Batman.

HARRY

Oh yes.

ALEX

I can remember the, the tune, but I, I'm not gonna be able to sing it very well.

But you know, the one that's very art deco, very, very good voice acting like that. And then I, from that, I went in via as well. When it came, was it Batman Beyond, which was basically the same voice actors, but they went; "Right, it's 60 years in the future. Also laser guns deal with it." And that was mine.

SHAHAN

Yes!

HARRY

You know what we really need? We need Batman. But in Blade Runner Times,

ALEX

I mean, in fairness, [laugh], I'm still quite excited by that conceptually.

HARRY

Because it's awesome.

HELEN

[laugh]

ALEX

It's great!

SHAHAN

Batman Beyond is so cool. [laugh] Slightly differently. I got in, I think right before Batman Beyond was was Teen Titans.

ALEX & HARRY

Oh yes.

SHAHAN

So the Teen Titans Animated show, that's how I properly got in. Otherwise, before that, just Spider-Man all the way. But yeah, Teen Titans Beast Boy was my hero. I just had a connection with Beast Boy, I wanted turn into all the different animals. So I just watched so much Teen Titans all the time. I'd just watch the same episode as a kid over and over. My mum would be like, what are you doing? [laugh]?

HELEN

And what about you, Vic?

VIC

Yeah, for me it's, uh, I mean I'm, I'm back in the land of the dinosaurs, I'm afraid. So, I mean, I I I came up in the seventies, so I watched all the old sort of cartoons. And actually what it was was, uh, my brother was a big DC fan and that's how I started getting into it, reading the comics, basically. You know, because we, we were quite poor growing up. And we had one of those TVs where you had to put in like 10 pence or 50 pence or something like that.

ALEX

Oh wow, wicked!

VIC

Yeah. To watch the tv. And we didn't always have money. So it was like, for me it was a big escape. Just reading the DC comics, you know, Batman was sort of blew me away, you know. And, uh, I just like the, the psychology of Batman basically, you know. So that's, that's sort of thanks to my brother that I got into reading the DC. I also collect DC comics, actually, so...

HARRY

Oh, sweet.

VIC

Everywhere I go. So if I go to a different country, I think the last one was Ireland and I managed to get some sort of, um, they're sort of in those little casings that protects 'em, you know?

HELEN

Aww!

ALEX

Oh, I do something similar. It's always a thing, if, every Edinburgh festival I ever took part in, I came back with a, uh, DC run.

HELEN

Aww!

VIC

I mean, I don't go out to, I tell myself this, I don't go out to, but somehow I come across these shops and suddenly find myself buying.

HELEN

[laugh]. How did this happen?!

VIC

I know, it's like, have I got an addiction or something? [laugh]

ALEX

Your retro TV is making me think, I do have a very early memory you've unearthed, which is, I used to sneak down as a kid crazy early in the morning to watch TV because you know what an nerd, and I remember that the Adam West real old school, Batmans would always be running at like 500 AM and those I, I've, I've just realized I, yeah, I used to watch those at like five in the morning. Cause it was the only time it was airing in the uk. But that's, that's a

blast from the past. That's when Alex was wearing bin liners on his head and running around shouting. "Neow! Wham! Whamm-o" stuff like that.

VIC

[laugh] I remember those!

HELEN

I was about to say that I was a little disappointed. Nobody had said that. It was the Adam West one where like, they hit something and it said "Kapow".

HARRY

I was waiting for someone to bring up Adam West. Uh, cause because that was, uh, always a thing my mum would talk about, always trying to get me. Oh, you know, you should watch the, uh, I know Tim Burton one's all good, but you should watch the Adam West one [laugh]. That's the true Batman.

ALEX

I still want to commission a video show just for the pleasure of doing their really bad climbing a building rope.

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

You know, where they're just taken the camera and rotated it and they're all like; "Oof, this is difficult" and they're just plodding along.

HARRY

Oh, yeah, isn't there an episode where they're climbing up the building and
Bruce Lee happens to be one of the guests?

SHAHAN

No way.

HARRY

Because he, he's coming in as, uh, Kato from Green Hornet.

VIC

Yeah. There might be actually, there might be something about that. Yeah.

[laugh] Be worth looking into.

HELEN

I did notice a common theme there, which is that everyone said some kind of
bat related [laugh] thing. [laugh]. And my next question was going to be, do
you have a favourite DC character? But like, is it, is it Batman for all of you?

ALEX

Superman. Superman.

SHAHAN

No!

VIC

[singing] Batman!

ALEX

Definitely Superman. I think Batman takes himself way too seriously. And I realise that I'm basically like, Superman's hardly easygoing. He's not like the Flash or anything. But I, I, I quite liked Soops. I just quite liked his, you know, let's be nice and it'll work out. And cause it's fiction, it does like I like that. I like that optimism. I kind of wish the world worked like that.

HARRY

Mm. [affirmative]

VIC

Yeah. Yeah. I dunno about that. [laugh]

HELEN

Oh?! Do carry on Vic.

VIC

I mean, lately they've sort of played around with Batman, haven't they? You know, so it's like, he, he he is not always so serious. I mean, when...

ALEX

That, that's true.

VIC

When, what was that actor, uh, Christian? Was it Christian Bale that was playing on?

HARRY

Yeah.

VIC

It was like he was off in a tangent. Wasn't he, in a sort of soul searching that, that was quite interesting. That was one of my favourites acts.

ALEX

Oh. I think Batman begins as legitimately one of the best comic films ever made still.

VIC

Yeah. Yeah.

HARRY

Really, You're not gonna go for Dark Knight?

ALEX

So I do like Dark Knight. But here's, here's the thing. The reason I like Batman begins as one is real simple.

HARRY

Mm. [affirmative]

ALEX

How many times have you now seen Batman's origin story? Okay. Like so many times. And that one I watched and was like, oh, I'm fine. I'm finding something fresh here.

VIC

Yeah.

ALEX

In a way that, like, I've seen this, let's be honest, we've seen the origin story like a thousand times and it's over and over again. That was the first one I remember seeing and going, I actually kind of, I kind of give a damn about this origin. Like, I always liked the comic Year One for that.

HARRY

Yeah.

ALEX

Where it's engaging a lot more in the, like, the nitty gritty of his start. But, sorry, I'm, I'm talking across other people. I'm getting enthused.

VIC

[laugh] It's ok!

HELEN

[laugh] It's, you're allowed to be enthused on a show called Enthusiasm.

SHAHAN

Just slightly.

HELEN

Shahan. What about you?

SHAHAN

Ah, it's tricky. Not Batman. It's, it's kind of stuck between Flash and Green Lantern.

ALEX

Good choice. Which Green Lantern?

SHAHAN

Oh, okay. Was Hal Jordan, but Kyle Rayner more recently has taken it because I was watching the, there's there's a few, uh, different YouTube channels that basically, um, compile loads of comic stories together and then they'll have their people narrate over them. So some of the like, new-ish Green Lantern stories like White Lantern Saga, those ones have been pretty cool. So Kyle Rayner is kind of beaten out Hal Jordan as favourite Green Lantern. But I think Flash is still at the top. And Barry Allen.

HELEN

So, I'm gonna need a little quick explanation. You said which Green Lantern...?

ALEX

Okay, so...

HELEN

How many are there?

ALEX

Whoa.

HELEN

Oh no. Oh no, here we go!

SHAHAN

Oh, there's a tin of worms that's been opened.

VIC

[laugh]

ALEX

You've triggered my trap, gah!

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

So of course that question naturally was referring to which of the Green Lanterns, and I would've included the original hero with his cape, the Green Lantern. However, don't forget, you of course have the entire Green Lantern corps, Helen.

SHAHAN

Oh, yeah.

ALEX

Which are the, which is, you know, hundreds, nay, thousands of, of do gooders.

SHAHAN

Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

ALEX

So it's a, it's a big question.

HELEN

So, so the, okay, so

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

So the green lanterns are like, like a...

ALEX

Space police

SHAHAN

Space police, yeah.

HARRY

Yeah. Space police

ALEX

Using their thought guns that are rings basically.

HELEN

So does every planet have one?

ALEX

No, we... so you know what I'll, I'll simplify to some Green Lanterns are spread amongst many places. Somehow Earth always seems to be overflowing with them...

SHAHAN

Many

ALEX

...because as always, Earth is always the problem.

SHAHAN

Yes.

ALEX

Like Earth's always the problem. Humanity's the worst. We're always the problem in all fiction forever. So...

SHAHAN

I think it's got like four or five I can think off the top of my head.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

Yeah.

SHAHAN

And a Pink Lantern and a red one as well, that's a cat.

ALEX

Oh I forgot about Pink Lantern.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

HELEN

Is the Pink Lantern a lady?

SHAHAN

I believe so. I don't think there's a Purple Lantern on Earth.

ALEX

Just be careful of the colour yellow. Cause it'll turn your powers off!

SHAHAN

Oh, yeah.

ALEX

[laugh]. I joke not!

SHAHAN

There's an emotional spectrum. Each emotion has a colour assigned to it and then a respective Lantern col...

HELEN

So what emotion is green?

SHAHAN

Green is willpower.

ALEX

[enthused] Yeah!

HELEN

Ooh! Okay. Okay. What are the others I wanna know now what's the blue one?

SHAHAN

Blue is hope. Oh, pink is love. But love can be quite weird as well. It's like...

ALEX

It kind of errs into obsession and stuff like that as well.

SHAHAN

Obsession. Yeah. And then purple, I think's compassion. But purple can be quite weird as well. Like in compassion.

ALEX

Trust me. Deep lore Green Lantern and stuff is, it's the gift that keeps on giving.

HARRY

I mean like how his weakness originally was; Wood. [laugh]

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

What?

HARRY

Yeah, there's a story cause the character Solomon Grundy was originally a Green Lantern villain.

ALEX

Oh my God. Yeah!

HARRY

There's a bit where he is, Green Lantern's chasing him in the swamp and then all of a sudden he loses his powers. Like, oh no, it's because there's all this, uh, decomposing wood surrounding me, zapping my powers.

HELEN

Wait, Solomon Grundy sounds really familiar.

HARRY

He's commonly associated with Batman now.

ALEX

Yeah, he's like a big beefy zombie-ish sort of.

HELEN

Oh. Okay. Well thank you all for that. [laugh]

ALL

[laugh].

HELEN

Um,

ALEX

Never invite me on a topic. You know that Helen, I'll just dive to the very, very bottom and then there's no content in there. It's just noise.

HELEN

I know. I should have known.

HARRY

Yeah. Let's talk about the weird side of comics. It's great

HELEN

[laugh]. Honestly. Yes, I'm up for that. Harry, we didn't hear who your favourite was yet.

HARRY

No. And uh, I've hoping that you would forget, cause I've been trying to think of it. [laugh] the cop-out answer will be Batman, but I've always had a soft spot for John Constantine, the sorcerer.

ALEX

Oh, great choice.

SHAHAN

Really great choice.

I didn't know that that was a DC one.

HARRY

Yeah, yeah, he's a DC character.

ALEX

It's, is it by Dark Horse John Constantine?

HARRY

No, it was by, um, Virgo. I think they're called that they essentially do like the weird offshoots or the more adult stuff cause they also did Sandman.

HELEN

Mm.

ALEX

I mean Sandman would be a pretty good choice as well, actually.

HARRY

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Sorry. Why didn't, sorry, I'm stupid. Why didn't I go with Sandman? I love Sandman.

ALEX

I'm the same here. The second I've been like, oh yeah. There is more than just the Justice League. I kind of forget.

VIC

Yeah. Yeah

HELEN

Vic also, uh, was your favourite Batman?

VIC

Yeah, Batman was my favourite. And I, I I, I like, um, Ares as well. He's like a, uh, mythological god of war.

HELEN

Oh yeah.

VIC

I think he's a half sister of, um, Wonder Women.

HELEN

Aries?

VIC

Yeah.

ALEX

I know that the relationships in the comics don't track directly onto Greek mythology.

VIC

No, no, they don't.

HELEN

I was about to say, Wonder Woman is not a Greek God!

VIC

[laugh] But the, he's like a thorn in the side. Isn't he? Like the adversary to Wonder Woman.

HARRY

Yeah, she is. I think Ares is Wonder Woman's arch rival.

VIC

Arch rival. Yeah. Something like that.

HELEN

Okay. The next question I had written down was, so we talk about why we think Batman is so popular because he's been rebooted at least four or five times while I've been alive. And I am not old. So like,

ALEX

Because he is the best articulation of the American dream that has ever been, uh, generated [laugh]. And I, I am gonna plant my flag on this hill and I'm gonna defend it.

HARRY

I think it's because he is a very malleable character. It lends itself to different things. I've been thinking about this the other day when I saw the question. Because like, sure, you could have the outlandish Comic Bookie camp fun with either the, uh, Adam West show or to a lesser extent, maybe the Tim Burton films. But there's also, uh, like the gadget aspect, the James Bond aspect. So that's when you get films like the Chris Nolan trilogy where it's more like a political thriller. And then there's the recent example where it focuses on the detective angle, like the Robert Pattinson film, where it can go more like very dark noir-y like the, like David Fincher movies.

HELEN

Yeah. That's been my favourite.

HARRY

I just think that's one of the reasons th that and, you know, his rogues gallery.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

HARRY

They're perfect for any situation.

ALEX

He does have a very versatile rogues gallery compared to some.

HARRY

Whereas with, uh, Superman, like since most of his, uh, villains are from space, it it'd be difficult to, to do like a a a David Fincher investigation, uh, thing with, with Superman at the center of it.

HELEN

Mm. I think...

HARRY

Oh, well actually, yeah, sorry. I said that and then I didn't believe it.

HELEN

I could see there being a really good political thriller with, I know that at some point Lex Luther runs for president.

HARRY

Oh yes!

HELEN

And like and, and Superman having to be Clark Kent doing an investigative report into why Lex Luther is shady.

HARRY

Okay. I take, I take everything I said back,

ALEX

Raise the stakes higher [laugh]. Any of you read Red Sun?

HARRY

Oh yes.

ALEX

Superman lands in Soviet Russia and the Man of Steel is a communist and it's about him becoming a, a dictator. Cause communism will work if he just fixes all of the world's problems himself personally. And it gets real weird, real quick. That's your, the, your sort of Fincher-esque. And then you can go it from the angle of, uh, Batman who stands for Truth, Justice and Capitalism!

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

[laugh]. There is also very often a kind of, yeah, I'll say, I'll say antagonism between Batman and Superman.

HARRY

Hmm.

HELEN

Why? I don't, I don't know much of like the history or the lore of any of that. Like is it just cause Batman's like, [puts on deep batman voice] "oh, you are, you are not, you're so naive. I'm, I'm sad" and Superman's like "Yay!" [laugh].

ALEX

I mean, a lot of the time...

HELEN

[laugh]

ALEX

It's depends are so many manifestations. I'd say taking a step back, I think it's quite, because if you don't, they don't really work as characters in the same universe if they're pally.

HELEN

Mm. [affirmative]

ALEX

Because the argument goes, one of them just becomes the other basically either Batman gets nice or Superman gets mean if they aren't shown to be casting sparks whenever they're together.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

ALEX

They just, they'll they'll end up with a, you see it in writing a lot where characters home in and just start becoming one another. I think it's kind of like essential that they have the conflict. Otherwise you, you're gonna get in trouble quite quickly. I'd, I'd argue, but I'm going a bit big picture there.

HELEN

What do you think, Vic? As a big Batman person?

VIC

Uh, yeah. Yeah. I mean, uh, I dunno really. I mean, it's just the creativeness of it, you know? It's what what you can do with it. You know, what storylines you can pull out basically. You know, it's like, I'm not very political really, you know, but I like to see the creative aspect of it, you know, and, and, and, and, and what they do with it and what storyline they, they they bring in basically.

HELEN

Mm.

VIC

You know? And, um, um, I guess there's the, there's, there's a bomber right there somewhere, you know, um, um, for Batman and Superman, you know, waiting to happen. And, uh, it, it's just, uh, it's just, it's just the creative minds really. You know? It's like, do do you, do you, are you creative for the mainstream? You know, and, and just sort of playing up to people's sort of, uh, basic habits or do you go a little bit deeper? I mean, like the, the, the last Batman was the, the, the detective side is, um, was mentioned, you know, was um, uh, you know, it was a bit more darker and uh, uh, psychological, you know, and I sort of like that aspect, you know, cause it brings out that sort of deeper, uh, subconsciousness, you know, of what's actually going on, uh, in Batman's heads, you know, or not going on basically, you know, so.

HELEN

Okay. Uh, Shahan, what do you think?

SHAHAN

I grew up watching a lot of the Animated Justice League series and Smallville and the Smallville show as well. So with both of those two, it is quite interesting because I kind of saw Batman and Superman as pals a lot of the time first than clashing. And it was only kind of later where I saw it was like, oh, there's, there's actually different interpretations and, and different storylines where there's massive sort of like rivalry between them. But I think a lot of the rivalry kind of spawns from, or in, in certain stories. Like when there's not as many, like Robins and Bat Girls and things going on, that there's, there's a stronger kind of separation between Bruce Wayne and Batman. Then there is

between Clark Kent's values and, and Superman's values. And there's almost, even though Superman's like kind of the Man of Steel, there's more vulnerability in Superman in certain like storylines. And that kind of, that causes like differences in both their values, which causes them to have differences and, and kind of like argue. And I mean, you got the whole injustice series as well, like the co... that was, that, that was

HARRY

I love those games.

ALEX

You raise a good point. I really chuckle when the answer that he is given is like, well, you know, Batman, he's so solitary. And I'm like, welcome to The Bat Cave.

Also, this is Batgirl, Batwoman, Robin...

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

Red Hood, who used to be Robin, but isn't the same Robin. There's the other Robin, there's Alfred, and it's just like he, he has like the biggest family of all of the DC characters, but he's brooding alone.

HARRY

And this is my son [laugh].

ALEX

Yeah, exactly! He's just like, so, he has such a big family. I love it.

HELEN

What's the Injustice series?

HARRY

Oh!

SHAHAN

Oh, here we go.

HARRY

Uh, if no one minds, uh, could I answer the question about Injustice?

SHAHAN

Go ahead.

HARRY

So the Injustice games are made by the same people that do the Mortal Kombat series.

HELEN

Oh.

HARRY

So it's a fighting game and it's certainly universe where the Joker tricks Superman into killing Lois Lane.

HELEN

Oh! [shock]

HARRY

And, yes, it's so horrifying. He, he gets scarecrows, Fear Toxin combines it with Kryptonite, uses it on Superman. So when Superman looks at Lois Lane, he sees Doomsday and the first thing he does is just launch her into space.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

HARRY

Yeah.

HELEN

Oh my God.

HARRY

Oh yeah. It, it gets way darker when you find out that, uh, she was about to have his child as well. It does not let up. It gets super dark. But anyway, so, um, getting over that, uh, Superman then tracks down the Joker and literally punches through his stomach and kills him, at which point, this horrifies everybody. And he's like, you know what? I've had enough of villains, of crime, everything I'm going to take I from now on, if anyone commits any crime, it's zero tolerance. So he essentially becomes dictator of the Earth.

ALEX

It's, it's edge lord Justice League. But that, that homes in to like my favourite bit of Superman, which is why I actively like Superman is. And I think, uh, Shahan, you may, you may clock this from the Justice League cartoons, which did it really, really well. Where he loses his temper once when he is having a fight and then he suddenly starts winning from nowhere.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

ALEX

And he just keeps going on and go, I walk through a world made of paper

HARRY

Ah yes.

ALEX

Where if I, if I, uh, lose concentration for a moment, everything is destroyed. Well screw it. And then he just completely loses it.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

ALEX

But that idea of like, yeah, I, I I walk through a world made of paper really stuck with me as like a, there's a lot to unpack in that as a concept that I really liked and I think they deal with really well.

HELEN

So in The Man of Steel film recently, there was like a weird vision where Superman saw himself like on a pile of skeletons and everything was weird and red and dusty. Is that a reference to injustice then?

HARRY

No. No. I, the film I think, did, did the film come out before Injustice?

SHAHAN

I think it came out before.

ALEX

It came out before, but it's, it's kind of a running trope in Superman that he's one bad decision away from being a dictator.

SHAHAN

Mm-hmm. [affirmative].

ALEX

And they like, it comes up a lot. It comes up a lot in his stuff.

HARRY

But, but can I say one of my favourite things about the first Injustice game?

Anyway, it's, it's the ending, if you don't mind me spoiling it a bit.

HELEN

Nah, go for it.

HARRY

All right. So slowly the injustice version of the Justice League members who are trying to fight against Superman, they have been slowly throughout the game stealing the good versions from another universe where none of this ever happened, [laugh] to help them fight. So at the very end they're like, well, there's only one more person we can bring. And they pull in good Superman to fight bad Superman. And there's just, uh, it is this excellent moment where, um, the good Superman is trying to remind him like, it, like, this is why I I, I'd never do this because, uh, the the bad one's like, yes, I can use this machine and I can take your Lois and bring her here and, and I'll show her all the good I've done. And he is like, she won't like that and she'll be horrified by what you've done. And just like that moment he's like, oh, of course this all happens after a massive beatdown.

HELEN

Of course, of course.

HARRY

All this soul searching.

HELEN

[laugh] Nobody soul searches before getting beat in the face.

ALEX

[laugh]. I was, I was gonna say, it's, it's the classic sort of, again, the, the game designers thing where it's like "you've smashed their solar plexus in, alas poor Yorick" Like it's, it does try to have it come in and going, doesn't it?

HARRY

That that was one of my favourite things about the Injustice game. You can team up Catwoman and have her fight against Dark Side [laugh]. And she just like get, gets blasted through the moon or something. [laugh]

HELEN

[laugh] Oh no!

HARRY

And she's fine.

ALEX

The stakes do not match up!

HARRY

Catwoman can take it.

HELEN

[laugh]. Well, on that note, I think we're gonna have a little break and we'll be back in a minute.

[BREAK]

HELEN

And welcome back. So Shahan, you mentioned Smallville and a a, a torrent of memories has just flooded back into my mind because I remember watching it a lot and always thinking, oh, Clark Kent's not a very good actor, but I kept watching cause I really liked Lex Luther. I really liked the sort of...

ALEX

Cause Luther's the better character in every iteration.

HELEN

He is! He's so interesting. He's so interesting. And he has like this fierce dad called Lionel with this literal like mane of hair and it's bizarre. And I stopped watching it at a certain point and apparently it got really wild afterwards. There was like a half-brother and different kinds of kryptonite and I don't even know what, but yeah. Did anyone else watch Smallville?

ALEX

I only saw little bits of it here and there.

HARRY

Yeah, same.

ALEX

Everything I got from it was sort of secondhand where again, like you say towards the end I was like, ah, yes. So it's gone completely buck wild. I might join in again, but I never really gave it much of a chance. Not, not from being snooty, it just never sort of made it onto my, uh, radar. I think it was this, this is

me advertising my age. I think it was like on when I was still coming home from school or something. So as a result the timing's never matched up.

HELEN

Yes, same.

SHAHAN

I've, I've watched the whole thing. It's funny you said the, uh, multiple types of kryptonite cause I, I'd really liked the show growing up, but there were specific episodes where I think it was like Red Kryptonite episodes. I just hated those because it was just like, everything's going wrong. Clark is doing all these weird, creepy, annoying things. You see all these relationships that he is built up now he is using X-ray vision in, in creepy ways. And say all these bad things to Lana and all his best mates. And then for some reason, even though it's happened before, it takes them the entire length of the episode to be like, oh no, it must be the red kryptonite [laugh].

HELEN

So is Red Kryptonite just like the horny kryptonite or what?

SHAHAN

[laugh] Pretty much, I think it just flips them.

ALEX

Yeah. So, so much like your Green Lantern core ... strap in, cause there's like 60 types of kryptonite.

HELEN

Okay. It's time for an in-depth discussion of kryptonite, everybody. Let's go.

ALEX

Okay. Okay. So I can't remember all my colours. You've got your classic green kryptonite.

HELEN

Yes.

ALEX

And then you've got, I think it might be another like, love one is like pink, not to be confused with red kryptonite.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

ALEX

I know you've got Red Kryptonite, which basically makes him evil. There's one of the lesser known ones which comes up in, there was a comic run where it's the Justice League versus Batman. Genuinely one of the best ones where all of the Justice League get taken out in a couple of hours and they find out that someone hacked Batman's computer and has been using his contingency plans to take them all down. So obviously Justice legal alike you asshole because he's developed all of these non-lethal but awful ways of taking them down. And it has one special type of kryptonite he made and it makes all of Superman's skin translucent.

So he overloads on solar power and basically effectively has a seizure. And he is just laser beaming everywhere. And he is just like convulsing on the floor in what they call "hyper-seizures" because he's moving at the, he's convulsing at the speed of sound. And there's something similar for Flash. It's dark. Amazing. But yeah, that has one of the lesser known ones. But there's, there's genuinely like 50 different types of kryptonite. There's the ones that Lex Luther engineers, which give him kryptonite cancer. It became a little bit of how do we make a Superman story interesting. Again, there's a new kryptonite.

SHAHAN

Oh, that was the other thing is that I just remembered that Doomsday was just a dude for a while in Smallville. He was just this poor guy who then one of then that, that Lois Lane's cousin, who's one of the main characters in Smallville, Chloe, she like falls in love with. And then she's like, well wait your doomsday. He's like, no, no. And he just keeps turning into Doomsday every now and then. And it's just,

ALEX

I'm, I'm only interested if he punches someone through the moon as we've established with Catwoman.

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

Anything less than that, I'm, I'm frankly I'm not interested.

HARRY

Oh that just reminds me, I I I never really watched Smallville, but the one thing I do remember is that body snatching happened a lot in it, didn't it? Cause didn't Lex Luther get taken over by General Zod?

SHAHAN

Yeah.

HELEN

Oh my God. I thought the show was okay, but the fan fiction was so much better. There was, there was lots of really interesting fan fiction about like, uh, Clark Kent when he's grown up and he's living in Metropolis being a reporter and he like mourns his previous friendship with Lex Luther and, and like they're, they're like having these clandestine meetings and there's part ones where like he's dating Lex Luther as Superman, but Lex still doesn't know that he's also Clark Kent, and it's like this whole thing. Okay, I'm glad, I'm glad that people other than me remember Smallville because it really does feel like one of those fever dream programs sometimes.

HARRY

Did you know that they tried to do a spinoff of Smallville?

HELEN

About?

HARRY

Aquaman.

SHAHAN

Really?

HELEN

Aquaman is in Smallville?

HARRY

Yeah, they did one pilot. It didn't do well so they scrapped it. But it was like Aquaman was going to be like this teen heartthrob lifeguard [laugh].

SHAHAN

Well yeah, he was in it.

HELEN

I can see that working.

VIC

Yeah.

HELEN

You know what, I'd like to talk about villains. Because I don't know them very well at all. Like we've already mentioned Lex Luther and Batman has like a million villains.

ALEX

So Batman has a really good rogues gallery cause they're quite different. Cause it's like, as much as I like Soops, his rogue gallery is terrible. It's all I punch hard.

Anything else? No.

HELEN

[laugh]

HARRY

Hey what what about Toyman?

SHAHAN

And Braniac.

ALEX

Braniac's the only one I have any time for. [laugh] Brainiac tickles me. Haha. I've shrunk this city. Okay, [laugh], thanks. I dunno why, but okay.

But yeah, like I think DC has better villains than Marvel en mass. I, I just, I just think that they're a bit more interesting. I think that Marvel has done a good job, especially on the cinematic universe in like sympathetic villainy. And ah, here are the justifications for my nah nah. Sometimes I don't want justifications and even if I do, I want them in the form of a ninja. Like in Batman begins [laugh]. Like there's just, I just think that the villains in DC are just kind of on average better, but that might just be me. Hey, we're brought back to Batman.

Here we go.

ALL

[laugh]

VIC

Full circle.

SHAHAN

Speaking of Batman and villains. Does anyone know the Batman who laughs?

Oh

HARRY

Oh yes.

ALEX

Oh yes!

SHAHAN

Yeah, that whole, so is it DC Metal or like Batman metal?

HARRY

Yeah DC Metal.

SHAHAN

DC Metal. Those are some very cool villains. It's essentially where like you've got, uh, bunch of different iterations of Batman from like dying universes who then have the powers of different Justice League members. It gets really dark and like very creepy. And the final villain's kind of a little bit off to me it's like this big Bat God thing [laugh]. But the journey's pretty cool.

ALEX

I was gonna say I would nominate Man-Bat as one of the worst villains.

SHAHAN

[laugh]. Yes.

HARRY

Oh, I wouldn't!

ALEX

Man-Bat. Okay. Okay. Who would you suggest, question to the room, worst, like naффest villain. And this is said with a hundred percent love

HARRY

Condiment King.

HELEN

Did you say Condiment King?

ALEX

Condiment King's a great contender.

ALL

[laugh]

HARRY

He literally will attack you with, with tomato sauce and, and, and Mustard.

[laugh]

HELEN

That's like I watched, I watched this uh, parody by, uh, Team Starkid called Holy Musical Batman [laugh]. And the, um...

ALEX

You do love your it's got off brand musicals. Helen, I lo I love this fact that I know about you.

HELEN

They're good. Although this one is one of the more problematic ones for a couple of reasons, but the villain in that is called Sweet Tooth. And his big play is that he's going to fill Gotham's water supply with really sour sweets. So the anyone who drinks Gotham's water tastes something so sour that their head explodes.

ALEX

Calamitous Cavities Batman!

HELEN

Exactly. [laugh]. Yes. Uh, anyway, that's what you reminded me of with Condiment King.

ALEX

[laugh]. Oh, Conan King's great. He, he's basically become like, I think he was introduced legitimately, but he's totally just become a joke of himself at this point.

HARRY

No, he was introduced as a joke and then they tried to make him legitimate and it didn't work.

ALEX

Oh, ok, right. Ok. Alright.

HELEN

We still have time of one more question. I wanna talk about underappreciated characters because as I expected, we've spent a lot of this talking about Batman and Superman, but there are, I know that there are loads of other DC comics, especially because they own, like you said, uh, Virgo and Dark Horse and stuff like that. Tell me more.

SHAHAN

Plastic Man.

HARRY

Oh yeah, Plastic Man.

HELEN

Plastic Man. Is he like...

SHAHAN

Mr. Fantastic. But more, and Deadpool also in a way that kind of, well, not, not quite. He is very quippy and very...

HARRY

He he cares more about being famous, doesn't he?

SHAHAN

Yeah. [laugh]

HARRY

Than actually being a superhero.

ALEX

Speaking of underappreciated characters. Booster Gold.

HARRY

Oh!

SHAHAN

Booster Gold.

ALEX

So Booster Gold is the best, like Booster Gold is who I totally would be as a superhero. Booster Gold is a man from the future, right. Who travels back in time using future tech to be a superhero. And everyone's like, what's your secret? And he's like, I'm just really smart. No, you just came from the future.

It's the equivalent of traveling back to like Arthurian legend with a calculator and being like, I am a maths genius. Give me any maths. And he's an idiot. And he's, he's just, he's just this, this fool who's just doing it for glory and like all of the attention with no integrity whatsoever. And he's just relying entirely on the fact that he's from the future and pretending that he has something to add to the world when he absolutely doesn't. They do then do some stuff with him later. But that was absolutely the original conceit for him and I love it. He's just so into it.

HARRY

I really hope one of my best mates, Harry S. listens to this because he loves Booster Gold and he'll constantly tell me how great he is.

Booster Gold's amazing.

ALEX

Booster Gold's great. He's Irredeemable [laugh]

HELEN

[laugh] Vic, do you have a favourite underappreciated character?

VIC

I think, um, I, I think one of the oldest superheroes Black Canary.

HELEN

Oh.

VIC

Oh, good shout. Very good shout.

I think she was one of the first superheroes, wasn't she? To to be in DC comics so she was, you know, so yeah, I mean, she's got the supersonic voice, hasn't she? She's just like [makes exploding noise] scream.

ALEX

I always had a soft spot for, although I, I think DC did him dirty, any of you know the Tattooed Man?

SHAHAN

No actually

HARRY

No.

VIC

No.

ALEX

So the tattooed man's a comparative of the obscure one. It's basically this guy who's just down on his luck trying to look after his family. He's an ex-con U.S. and his superpower is just that anything tattooed on his body becomes real and then obeys him.

HELEN

Oh!

VIC

Ah wow.

ALEX

I mean, I'm oversimplifying there's a bit more to it, but he, he's just a bad day because he's, he's not nice, but he is just trying to do right by people. But he just sort of just goes, uh, and then just like snakes and a motorbike and barbed wire and six dragons and an evil rainbow...

VIC

[laugh] Brilliant!

ALEX

...just explode people because you can't handle that much. And he's a villain for like, loads of it. And then I think it was Final Crisis. He starts sort of hitting the, the sort of anti-hero vibe. But I always conceptually really liked that. Cause I like the versatility of it. But again, I think they did him dirty, he gets very reduced to basically generic guy from a down at heel neighbourhood, you know what I mean. And it, they don't do him well. But I always thought, I, I always found the, the powers comparatively unique. I quite like that.

HELEN

Any of the takers for most underappreciated DC character.

HARRY

I always like Zatanna. There's another magic one.

HELEN

Did you say another magic one?

HARRY

Yeah. There are quite a few magic DC characters, uh, Constantine for example. And then there's uh, Zatanna who is literally just a stage magician most of the time. Oh, but who has actual magic.

ALEX

Which I think is cheating.

ALL

[laugh]

HARRY

[laugh] No, my favourite is in like one of the DC animated shows. There's a stage show that she, she's doing and she is like, I'm going to pull something special out of my hat. And she reaches in and she pulls like a tiny version of one of the audience members and suddenly everyone looks and they've disappeared from their seat and then she puts them back. And the person's there, nobody questions how she did this.

HELEN

[laugh] It reminds me of, um, in Good Omens where Aziraphale is really into card tricks and stuff like that, and Crowley is like, you are an angel. You can literally do magic. And Aziraphale's like, but this is more fun.

ALEX

Absolutely. A hundred percent, hundred percent on that side of the fence. I'm trying to think. There's, there's one who I think's been dealt dirty by the like cinematic universe who I always liked, which was, um, J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter.

SHAHAN

Oh yeah.

HARRY

Yeah.

ALEX

So that's J'onn J'onzz is technically in like the DC films, but as like in disguise the whole time. So J'onn J'onzz is the last Martian who is basically all martians were a thing a long, long, long time ago. And they're like shape shifters. Very, very powerful telepaths. And they can sort of turn intangible and stuff like that. It's sort of like halfway between Vision from MCU and I don't know, Professor X, like it is sort of a mashup, but very, very, like they hit the austere wise, I'm from a before time kind of thing, but then decide to just disguise himself as this bloke who just kind of wanders around being really human. But it hits the, like, the sad vestige of a bygone era is very much his shtick and he is Justice League, but he always sort of gets sidelined in almost every representation of the comics because he's quite weird. Like conceptually he is a bit out there.

SHAHAN

Yeah.

ALEX

Oh, and he is bright green.

HELEN

Of course. Of course. Well yeah, he's a Martian,

ALEX

Naturally, naturally.

HELEN

[laugh] We all know that. Martian's are bright green.

ALEX

We're not idiots. Now tell me how you fit that theatre in your hat, Zatanna.

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

We are now coming to the end of the episode, but I would like to ask, does anyone have anything you'd like to plug or give a shout out to? We'll go and reverse alphabetical order this time. Cause I'm feeling fancy. Vic, would you like to plug any of your projects or anything?

VIC

Yeah, I mean I, I've got a project coming up but I can't really talk about it unfortunately.

HELEN

Oh.

VIC

So uh, that's the only thing I've got coming up at the moment and filming on Thursday actually. So, uh, but I can't mention anything about it unfortunately.

ALEX

So just massive secrets, just huge, massive secrets

HELEN

Keep an eye out for redacted, starring Vic.

VIC

Don't tell anyone.

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

Do you have anything to plug? "beeeeeep"

ALL

[laugh]

ALEX

We're all just like, wow. Cor, yeah!

VIC

Brilliant, yes!

HARRY

I'm glad we heard it here first.

HELEN

Yeah.

VIC

Tune in to next week. [laugh].

HELEN

Shahan, what about you?

SHAHAN

Well, uh, there's this show podcast coming out tomorrow officially.

ALEX

Not really into podcasts.

SHAHAN

No, no, neither really. I've, I've [laugh] especially ones about, uh, pirates and sailors. I think they're just kind of just overplayed it. No, no, no. [laugh]. So, uh, yeah, as, as, as I mentioned before, myself and Vic. Well, we're gonna be on a Trice Forgotten first episode out wherever you get your podcasts tomorrow.

ALEX

Ooh, he's good, isn't he? Listen to that patter.

VIC

He's very good. He's very good.

HELEN

Although by the time this comes out, it will have been out for several weeks.

Probably [laugh].

SHAHAN

Okay. Yeah.

ALEX

[laugh]. So it's this really old show, you've probably already heard of it and got bored of it.

HELEN

You missed the boat.

ALEX

Good pun.

HELEN

Harry, what about you?

HARRY

Err, as, as mentioned at the start, we're currently recording Cry Havoc, so yeah, keep a lookout for when that comes out. I'm very excited for people to listen.

HELEN

I think it's gonna be so funny cause I feel like ancient Rome was one of those time periods where everything was so dreadful that it's very easy to make it all funny because it's just like, this is ridiculous. This is ridiculously horrible [laugh].

Alex, you got any, any potential creative? Yep. Do you have any?

ALEX

I'm not really that creative a person. I don't really, and I'm not really involved in the creation of it. No. [laugh]. Okay. Uh, I'm in a very similar situation to, uh, Vic, where it's like, what are you working on? Oh, loads of stuff. No, I can't, no, I can't talk about or then there's, hmm, no. no. Um, I, I will end by saying I have counted and I signed something like four to five NDAs a day. So that's my life at the moment, signing four to five NDAs a day. And I can give no details on any of it until it comes out. So yes, a lot. All of it Secret, thus rendering the plug pointless. It's very frustration.

VIC

Join the club

ALEX

[laugh]

HELEN

But we haven't mentioned Neon Inkwell yet.

ALEX

Oh, we can! Yes, cause that's allowed now [laugh]. Yes. Yes. The period of that's expired. Yes. So Neon Inkwell is something that I will definitely be plugging cause I think it's rather special. It is our show where effectively we have found a way to do short form in a way that's actually like sustainable and works and means, we've been commissioning a lot of new creators or people who have this idea and it's like, yeah, this is never gonna work in 300 episodes across 20 years, but it's really good. Three parter and it is a single feed where we are putting all of these teams and we are getting all of these people together and we're powering through loads of new ideas and it's giving us a lot of chance to give new opportunities to new writers, new directors, new actors, and off the back of that we can then give other work as well in longer form stuff. And it's really coming together really nicely. And uh, Elizabeth Moffatt, who used to be the lead sound designer for Magnus, is currently sort of leading on the showrunner commissioning-y side and is doing a really good job, far better than I could. So I'm more than more than happy to just sit there and ride those coattails for a little bit. But that's one that I'm particularly enthused by if only because I get to meet lots and lots of interesting people, which is lovely.

HELEN

Yeah. And also why I do this show. Right. Thank you everyone for coming on. This has been really very educational for me actually, [laugh] and I love hearing about absurd comic stuff as well. Also, thank you listener for coming along with us and listening to us talk about DC stuff. I will see you on the next episode, but until then, it's goodbye from me. Goodbye. And it's goodbye from all of them.

Where do you all like to say goodbye?

ALEX

Excelsior? No, wait, no, no, that's wrong, no, bye, no.

SHAHAN

That's the wrong one, that's the wrong one!

ALL

[laugh]

HARRY

Thank you for having me on. It's been fun and goodbye.

SHAHAN

Exactly the same.

VIC

Yes, it's been a pleasure. Thank you, listeners,

HELEN

Thank you for giving me a professional goodbye.

HARRY

Oh, I'm sorry, was I not meant to? Let's try that again. [laugh]

ALEX

[laugh] I can't help it, got to sabotage the out...

HELEN

[laugh] Editor you're going...

ALEX

...everytime!

HELEN

...to have to fade us out. This happens on every episode with Alex on it. Just
fade us out.

ALL

[laugh]

[Editor fades them out]

[Show Theme - Outro]

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