

Plans in the Airfield (S2, E36)

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: Can I get a drumroll, please?

Teej: [Drumroll]

Rev: There we go. There we go. And the winner of the Decuma deck is Mike Keck.

All: [Cheer]

Rev: That was such a fun sentence to say.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Decuma deck, Mike Keck.

Tass: Congrats!

Rev: So we will get that to you once it's created, because they are just now finishing their Kickstarter. And so those decks will be created. We will have it sent to you upon completion.

And we'd like to take a second to thank all of our patrons who joined in the month of February. Again, if I butcher your last name ...

Jake: Nothing personal.

Rev: It is almost inevitable.

Jake: If you want to join the Patreon and have your name read aloud, please also give it to us phonetically.

All: [Laugh]

Chaz Cable, Grady Jaynes, Christopher Halloway, Fred Kavanagh, LJ Half-Breed from Reddit, Bam Sroka -- yes, that is Lieutenant Sroka.

Teej: [Gasps]

Tass: Oh!

Rev: Austin Pellegrin, Luke Renz, Nigel Pasman, Adam Carroll, St. Pickard, William Barter, Victoria -- hmm ...

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Victoria Dorochev -- I think. I apologize if it's way off. Gavin McNamara, Christopher Heisserer, Chris LeBlanc, and Jessica ... I just want to say "baby OK" now, because that was a toy. Do you remember Baby OK?

Teej: No.

Rev: It was like a baby doll you could buy. And it would ... It was like one of the first like, oh, it cries when it's hungry. And if you did the right things, it would stop. And it was like, oh, baby's OK -- Baby OK. But that's not the last name. I mean ...

Jake: Maybe!

Rev: I guess, maybe.

Jake: Maybe her parents created the Baby OK.

Rev: She just joined today, too. And here I am, butchering her name and reminiscing about an 80s toy. This has to stay in now, unfortunately.

Teej: That you had as a kid.

Rev: Yeah, right? It was my first baby doll. And Jessica Babyok.

Jake: ... Maybe.

Rev: [Sighs] Tass is right. Maybe I should just always do the last names as badly as possible. But you know who you are.

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: So let's hit these again! With ...

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: God.

Rev: And if you have not joined the Patreon and you're considering it, you could also get your last name butchered live on the air. But just today actually, we released the next Tales from the Omniverse, where we were joined by Eddy Webb. If you have played any kind of tabletop RPG, there's a pretty good chance you have worked on something that Eddy Webb has done. He has worked on Vampire the Masquerade, he has worked on DnD, he has worked on Pathfinder. He works with Onyx Path and White Wolf. And he joined us to play Pugmire, and we got to be the dog versions of the IPT. And that content, as well as over 80 hours more, is available at the five dollar tier. Can find that at Patreon.com/TheCritshow.

And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Jake: And I'm going to hold a hand out to help him up.

Rev: He looks at you from the ground, and you can tell he looks hurt.

Jake: "I'm trying to show you we are not here to hurt you. We're not here to mess with you in any capacity. You know, where we're from, not only are you and I good friends, we are actually all good friends."

Rev: ORI: If I don't see you tomorrow at 1:00 p.m., I'll find all of you, and I won't be alone.

Rev: A vision appears inside of the chalk circle that you have drawn. You're seeing from someone's point of view. They hold up their wrist, and you recognize the watch, actually. It is the watch that you saw Margaret wear every day that you saw her. But the arm it's on doesn't look like hers. And at some point, whoever's eyes you're seeing out of turns and looks through a door, and you can see just a little bit of a reflection. And it looks like Margaret. There's something about the nose and the eyes that look very similar. But this person is in their mid 20s.

Rev: SHERRI: And she had a plan. A good one, and the right people to execute it. But more than that, she knew the secret the Halifax was hiding. The Soul Bat wasn't guarding one item of power there. It was guarding two.

Rev: And she starts to tear up a little bit.

Rev: SHERRI: It should have worked. One of them should have been able to use it. One of them should have been worthy.

Rev: And Everett puts a hand on her shoulder and gives it a gentle squeeze, and she lays her hand over his and takes a deep breath.

Jake: "What do you mean by be worthy?"

Rev: SHERRI: That was the secret mom knew, Jake. No one knows how it got there or why, but the other item being guarded at the Halifax is your old hammer.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: Here you all are in the back of an old Chinook helicopter at the Grissom Air Museum. Sherri has just told you that your hammer, Jake, is at the Halifax Theatre.

Jake: Do I remember ... When was the last time I saw my hammer? Was it at the bottom of the sea?

Rev: It was. You touched it and vanished for the Trial of the Divine, and that was the last time you saw it.

Jake: OK. I want to ask her -- I mean, I guess, like the collective group, "Do we know how it got back to the Halifax?"

Rev: SHERRI: No. I mean, anyone can lift it. It's just whether it gives you the power. So something -- something found it and brought it back there. I assume the Soul Bat, or something related to it.

Jake: "That's weird. I mean, I wonder why it would bother."

Tass: "Well I mean, we know it can hurt the Soul Bat real bad. Like, you were whoopin' on it with that thing."

Jake: "Yeah, but it can't kill it."

Teej: "Right. Only light can kill it."

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "I mean, I don't know. This is all conjecture. But it's just ... It's a powerful item, you know? It's something unique and strong. I imagine it not wanting that to just be out in the world for somebody to be worthy enough to use. Makes sense to me."

Rev: SHERRI: Well, that and the lightning. Like the lightning, I assume if light can kill it ...

Tass: "Oh."

Jake: "I can't -- I can't really do the lightning here, though."

Rev: SHERRI: What do you mean?

Jake: "Well, I could do the lightning and ... We went to another different world in a similar circumstance and it was super magical, and so I could call lightning there. But I can't -- I can't call lightning ..." Can I call lightning here?

Rev: You have visions of yourself doing it.

Jake: Like a way that Prime Me can't do, but I can see other me being able to do it?

Rev: Yeah. In the memories of the you from this world. Yeah.

Jake: "Fuck me, I can do lightning here."

Tass: "Seriously?"

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "Huh ..."

Jake: "Is this like a heavily magical world?"

Tass: "I mean there are lots of little differences. It may not even be that. It might just be the way he, you, figured out how to manipulate this. Like this -- that's just the source of his power."

Rev: And I think with that, you see a couple of visions in your head of this other you training when they first got the hammer, and they're focusing on very different things. Like, they really went down the line of using the hammer as a focal point instead of as a weapon. And so you see a lot less feats of strength and a lot more energy manipulation and the creation of storms, and things like that.

Jake: Oh. Well ... "I mean, I guess we ought to recover it, then."

Tass: "Here's my question: on our world, the only reason you're not The Divine is because the gods died."

Jake: "Yeah."

Tass: "So technically speaking, you -- this soul -- you're still worthy to use it."

Jake: "That stands to reason."

Tass: "I mean, that's already worth the chance to try. And I agree -- either way, just getting it seems important."

Teej: "As long as, you know, the gods aren't dead here."

Jake: "I don't think it has to work that way. Because like, the god Death was around in Fanarin, you know? So I don't think that, like, the gods, even their existence is consistent across worlds. So I'm guessing that just because the gods are dead in our world doesn't mean that they're dead in this world."

Teej: Being that I'm trying to be more on top of things and not wanting to just guess at things, can I look through my other me's memories of training with magic and everything, and see if they say anything about the gods or their existence or anything? And whether or not they still are alive?

Rev: No, I don't think so. The gods and magic in these worlds, you have not found a link between. Especially in the one that you're from.

Teej: OK.

Jake: I mean, there are probably ways to figure it out. But again, it's just how much time are we willing to invest in that, as opposed to going and doing the thing?

Tass: All right. "Well, this just puts two and maybe three reasons to specifically go to the Halifax. Because getting that hammer out seems like a good idea, we need to figure out how to see where that book went, and maybe, just maybe, you have a new way to hurt this thing real bad."

Jake: "And so y'all don't know where that script went?"

Rev: SHERRI: No. Our whole plan was to try to get in and get the hammer, and the entire team she took with her didn't make it.

Jake: "I know that this is an unpleasant thing to talk about, but can you tell us about how they went in and what went wrong?"

Rev: SHERRI: Yeah. She had a whole plan.

Rev: And Sherri turns and takes a step through one of the metal doorways and she gestures for you to follow her.

Tass: Yeah, we follow her.

Rev: It's a pretty small room. It has a cot attached to the wall, and it's got a desk and three or four file cabinets. And she goes over to the desk and she opens one of the drawers and pulls out a journal.

Rev: SHERRI: She had her whole plan in here, for what good it did.

Rev: And she throws it to you.

Jake: I want to start looking through it.

Rev: Yeah. You start flipping through this journal. And the first thing that you note is that it seems like the gods are alive, because she has written in here she saw this in a vision, that this is why they went. That they were destined to try to go and free this -- that something had shown it to her. And she had taken in a team of nine and they went in from three different directions. Three through the ceiling, three through the front

entrance, and three through the back. And it was a matter of trying to get at least one person to center stage where the hammer is. And it goes into further detail about how they were breaching the front, the back, and the top. Are there any particular details that you want to know? Or ...

Jake: Well, because the journal wouldn't tell me what went wrong, because they didn't survive to write in it after that.

Rev: Correct.

Jake: I mean, was there any particular time of day that they went for this? Who was in the group with her, and how were they divided up into their units?

Rev: So it was broken up into three teams. The team that went through the back consisted of Riley, White, and Larsen. The team that went through the front was Sroka, Nat, and Jason. And the team that went through the top was Reeves, Eddie, and Margaret.

Tass: Are you just trying to make us cry at the table, Rev? Are you just trying?!

Teej: So many deaths of people we love.

Rev: The saddest part is that out there somewhere is a very lonely Jeff without Eddie.

Tass: [Sighs]

Jake: God!

Tass: Some of those people we got killed.

Jake: You've taken that from us!

All: [Laugh]

Tass: How are we ever going to get a hat trick if even a second out of the gate, they're gone?

Jake: [Laughs] You've killed nine of our potential ...

Tass: [Laughs] We're having fun.

Jake: And what time did they go?

Rev: You can actually see, it's written in a strange scrawl in the notebook. And there's like a cowboy over it, and it just says, [ala Overwatch] "High Noon."

Teej: Except "high" is like ... It's extended out. "Hiiiiigh ..."

Jake: Like over multiple pages. But just still in one line, it's a real waste of notebook space. You flip the page, it goes across the middle of the next page ...

Tass: Oh, no ...

Jake: "Well, I mean, I'm inclined to trust this strategy in general, because Margaret was smart and a lot of good people went in on it. Obviously, it didn't work out. And we can't know how or why, because it couldn't be documented."

Rev: SHERRI: I was on comms for a while, but something was stopping the signal from getting out. It was real spotty. And I think that ... I mean, if you go by the Halifax, you'll see. It's -- it's a lot. I think they were just swarmed, and no amount of prep that they had done ... You know, we know that light hurts it before it bonds to you. It's a whole different ball game once it's bonded. Like, it still is a weakness to it. It still hurts it. But it's nowhere near as devastating as it is before it bonds to you.

Teej: "By the way you're describing it, it seems almost like it takes on the strengths of those that it bonds with. So like with people, we can handle the light. So maybe it handles the light better that way."

Rev: SHERRI: Yeah, maybe. I don't know why it does it. It just -- it seems once it's bonded with the host, it is stronger.

Tass: And I'm sure this version of me has pretty intimate detail on that too, right? Just taking these things out?

Rev: Yes. I think as they're talking about this getting overrun and using the light, to you it probably makes sense if their main weapon was the light, because light doesn't do anything to the body underneath. And so in your experience, and thinking specifically of the weapon hanging at your side, you use that point of light to create an opening. And you try to make it someplace super vulnerable, like the head or the heart. And then you put that big, nasty spike through that open hole. Because you are not killing the Soul Bat, you're killing the host that also kills the Soul Bat.

Tass: Right. "Yeah, I feel kind of gruesome saying it this way, but it just seems like they were going in to attack the symptoms and not the cold. You know, they weren't taking out the core of what was going on, and it just wasn't enough."

Rev: SHERRI: Yeah, the core is people. And I mean, if we're just going through and killing people, what are we saving the world from?

Tass: "Yeah, that's what I've been worried about, honestly. Like, this version of me has seen nothing to indicate that it's possible to save these people. So at this point, they're just monsters to him, just monsters to kill and get out of the way. And I get it. Like, if I thought that that were 100 percent true and only the case, then that's what we have to do to save a whole hell of a lot more people. It just -- it does, it gives me a little pause, though. If there's any chance that these people are going to be normal again after the big boy's taken out, I don't know how to approach this. That makes me sick, but we just don't know. Like, we haven't seen it done. Nobody here has done that."

Rev: And I think that, again, this voice in your head. You know, you haven't seen any indication of a hive mind. Like you've fought some of them, they've never sent a huge army of them to your location to deal with you. So they don't particularly seem linked. This analogy will hit a couple of people. But, you know, you don't kill Carnage by killing Venom.

Tass: Right. "I don't think that's the case. It doesn't seem like that's how this works. And I don't know if I'm just justifying this to myself so that we can get this done or whether that's true, but that's just ... That is very much what it seems like."

Rev: SHERRI: We've tried to figure out if we can free people or banish this thing. But I mean, without the source of its power, without that tether, there's just too many variables in the equation that we don't have.

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah, and that's the other tough part is technically speaking, if that's the case, if they're not intrinsically linked ... You know, killing the big boy is going to stop it from continuing, but there's still all the rest of them that we have to deal with. But I mean that, you know, that's still the goal. That's the big part. You gotta cut the head off the snake."

Rev: And I think at this point, Sherri goes out and closes the door so you can all have some privacy to talk.

Jake: "Well, we've got the plan they came up with for entry. I mean, I don't know what else to do except try to get in there. We've got to get in there to get the hammer, we've got to get in there to maybe fight the thing, and we've got to get in there to figure out where the tether went. So, I don't know what else to do before we go. T.J., you're the man with the plan now. Do you have any other thoughts, things we need to think about before we go?"

Teej: Does that have a map of the Halifax in it -- the journal?

Rev: It does.

Teej: "I think we should route out a quick way to one, get the hammer. And then a quick way to get to where we saw Macbeth last."

Rev: Yeah. And I mean, routes to the hammer are already labeled on the map.

Teej: Even better. "And then it's just the idea that we need to find where the script was, and then see if we can use my magic to find out where it went."

Jake: "What order do we want to do those two things in? Should we go for the hammer first and the locker second, or vice versa?"

Teej: "I say the hammer first, only because then at least we'll have a secondary weapon if anything. If you can get a hand on it, who knows, maybe you can call the lightning and that'll be an extra light source for us, at least."

Tass: "Another point of interest, here: which one of these routes puts us on an in and out? Is there one that we can go down so that we're kind of hitting both? As opposed to coming in the front door and then having to fight through even more to get out a side. Like, is going through one or the other going to serve us better?"

Rev: As you look at the drawing of the Halifax, it's the exact same layout when you experienced it. So the green room is by the back door. The stage is at the middle of the building, below the big glass dome that they used to get in. And then the front door is through the lobby, past the concessions, and then through the theatre to get there.

Tass: OK, so they did more or less take -- like, that back door is the door we entered from.

Rev: Yep. They used that, they used the front, and they used the skylight.

Tass: OK.

Teej: "Uh, let's not split up into three teams."

Tass: "No, I agree."

Teej: "Yeah."

Tass: "Unless you want me to make a distraction out front."

Jake: The skylight's like right over the stage?

Rev: It's right over the audience. So it's very close, maybe 30, 40 feet away.

Jake: "Man, if we were trying to be quick, just going straight in through the top, beeline for the hammer, and then heading out in the direction of the back door in the basement. That'd be our fastest bet."

Tass: "Yeah. Not all three of us can fly."

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: "No, but I could potentially float."

Tass: "Well, that's cool as hell."

Jake: "He could do all sorts of shit. He's a full fledged magician." It's remarkable that both in our world and in this world, T.J. can just kind of make any old shit happen.
[Laughs]

Teej: And to, like, emphasize that point, I'm doing like the thumb --

Jake: [Laughs]

Teej: Like, little magic thumb trick.

Rev: But it's levitating out in front of his body.

Tass: Oh, god.

Rev: Just the top of his thumb.

Tass: [Disconcerted yell]

Jake: "Yeah, we'd have to figure out a way to maybe get you up. More importantly, to get you down there safely."

Tass: "Oh, man. I feel like I could do it." I think I'm going back in my head a little bit at some of the stuff that this version of me has been through, and I'm seeing like feats of strength. "Guys, I think I can make the jump."

Jake: "All right."

Teej: "OK. I'm just concerned, I guess. Just be careful, all right?"

Tass: "Yeah. Well, let me put it this way. One way or the other, I'm either relying on one of you to get me down there -- which I can already feel my shoulders tightening up. He doesn't like that. And I think he doesn't like that because he thinks we can make the jump."

Jake: "All right. So all three of us have a way to get up and through the dome, probably. So is that what we want to do? Because we will be absolutely abandoning the element - the stealth element -- if we do that. I can't imagine there's any crashing through the ceiling into the middle of the theatre and going unnoticed. At least maybe with the back door, maybe we'd have a chance to sneak it."

Teej: "What if we did create a distraction? Except instead of us jumping through the roof, one of us just goes up there and starts breaking the dome."

Jake: "And then hope that they swarm up to the top? Because we just -- we did just talk about not splitting up. And I'm not necessarily opposed, but let's really think about it. Let's really dive in on this one."

Tass: "I mean, yeah, I like the idea of a distraction. I don't like the idea of us splitting up unless we're going to ask these people to join us on this, or if they have any thing that we can use. You know, their goal is the same as ours."

Teej: "I don't see why not. Let's ask them for help."

Jake: "What if it goes sideways, though? Are you willing to have all these people's lives on your hands?"

Teej: "I'm not willing to have your lives on my hands."

Jake: "But here we are."

Teej: "And yet, here we are."

Tass: "Maybe we don't ask that way. Maybe we approach with, here's what we're thinking -- is there anything that you're willing to offer or anything that you have that we can use? If somebody volunteers? Awesome. But I think you're right, I don't want to just outright demand their assistance."

Jake: "If we're operating on the hope that the people who have been assimilated can be fixed, then it's not as big of a problem. Because even if they got taken, if we ultimately succeeded, which we're more likely to do with their help, we could get them back. But we don't know that that's how this works."

Tass: "You're right."

Jake: "I know that we are better off going in with more people. And I am starting to think that we might have been a little bit rash in just believing that we could pull this off. But I don't know if either of those outweighs my need for these people to survive."

Tass: "Yeah, I just ... I hate to say it, but I really don't think that we can do anything about it if they get taken. I really don't. And you're right, if there's even a chance, that's the way that I say we go. That's the plan that we make. But I just -- I mean, even Rev himself didn't think ... He's like, if he had been taken, he said that would have been the end, you know? That it would have been over. And we did it just in time. So I don't know. I know I'm flip-flopping here. I'm sorry."

Jake: "Is there anything we can do to give them an edge? T.J., is there any magic? Or can we put some kind of protections on them?"

Teej: "I can absolutely imbue their weapons. I can create spaces where certain evils can't get through, obviously. You've experienced that yourself."

Tass: "We need a tank. We magic it up so nothing can get in and we roll through."

Teej: "We are on an air base, however, so there's not very many tanks here."

Tass: "Yeah ..."

Teej: "So if we can find an A-10 Warthog, which is basically a flying tank, we could absolutely mess up the Halifax."

Tass: "Although point of interest, we have to get out of the tank to do any of the things."

Jake: "I mean, I wonder if this helicopter's got guns. They've already got this thing pretty warded. So if you magic it up to do some more damage and they just fly this son of a bitch in and start lighting shit up over the Halifax, like that's not nothing. And that's kind of the distraction we're talking about on the roof anyway."

Teej: "Yeah."

Jake: "And they're largely up and out of harm's way."

Teej: "It's loud. It's boisterous. I love it."

Jake: "It reminds me of me."

Teej: [Laughs]

Tass: "All right. Let's go ask, I guess."

Teej: And we'll leave the room and go and have a conversation with our new friends/old friends/new friends.

Rev: You all head back out into the staging area. Sherri and Everett are chatting, and she looks up.

Rev: SHERRI: Did you find anything useful?

Jake: "We've got part of a plan. We also have questions. Is this helicopter armed?"

Rev: SHERRI: No.

Jake: "Are there any around here? Any, I don't know, big, tough vehicles that have guns in this museum that somebody could operate?"

Rev: EVERETT: No, there's not any vehicles someone could drive and have weapons on them. But I have been fiddling with more than a few of them, trying to get them in flying shape again.

Jake: "Here's what we know: we need to get in the Halifax. We have an order of operations that we want to go for, which is get in, get the hammer, get down to the locker where Macbeth was and figure out where it went, and then get out. And there's a lot of big ifs in that plan. So we had the thought that somebody might be able to drive or fly something in and, from a safe distance, start lighting that bitch up to buy us a little bit of an opening. Is that anything anyone thinks they could or would do?"

Rev: EVERETT: You got to be more specific. What do you mean, light this bitch up?

Jake: "Like, if this -- if this helicopter had guns on it, I was going to say, like, start firing in through the dome above the audience area. Or if we had like a tank, you know, bust down the front doors and start blasting. But something to cause damage and cause a distraction."

Rev: EVERETT: You haven't been downtown yet, have you?

Jake: "No."

Rev: EVERETT: Sounds like you're picturing one fortified building amidst a whole bunch of just safe space. I don't know anybody except my daughter here who's been anywhere near the outskirts of town for at least a year, because it's just all Soul Bat territory. Like, there's not just a dozen creatures roaming around in one building, they are the city.

Jake: "So are we unable to come in by air?"

Rev: EVERETT: We could try it. But what does that mean to you? Like we're going to fly you over and you're going to parachute out onto the Halifax? Now, these are all fighter jets here.

Rev: SHERRI: Well, that's not entirely true.

Rev: EVERETT: Well, yeah, that's right. There are some old World War One planes, but I haven't spent any time with those because it didn't seem like they'd be very useful.

Tass: "Yeah, maybe we could do it with something that can fly? More specifically, a chopper of some kind. You know, they tried it quiet and they got there, but quiet didn't work for them. So ..."

Teej: "And there was nine of them and they were all killed."

Tass: "Yeah. Well, and I mean, that's kind of the greater point, is we're also trying to plan this based on a failed plan -- and we haven't even seen downtown yet."

Jake: "All right. We just don't know enough to storm the theatre yet."

Teej: "No."

Jake: "So we've -- we've got to put that on the back burner, at least for now. But I don't know ... Like, we need more information. And other than going down there, I don't know how to get it."

Tass: "So let's go down there. I mean, what else can we do? Let's go down there. Let's see what we can see. I mean, we know that they're still guarding IPT too. Do either of you know why?"

Rev: SHERRI: No. When they came to take the IPT out, they just never left.

Tass: "Huh."

Jake: "Is it as overrun as Halifax?"

Rev: SHERRI: Yeah. And I mean, don't get me wrong, when I say the IPT and Halifax is overrun ... The whole place is crowded, the whole downtown. But instead of there being two or three of them everywhere you look, there's six or seven. Just think about walking downtown Indianapolis, and then turn all those people into monsters.

Jake: "But at least the one isn't there. You know, the main boss won't be there. So it's got to be at least marginally safer to go check out IPT."

Teej: "I don't know. The way she's describing it, I don't think so. I think we're rushing into this a little too much. I'll do whatever you guys say we want to do, but I've got my reservations."

Tass: "I don't know what else to do, man. I mean, we have to figure out where that script went. We have to. And I don't know a way to figure that out outside of 465. I mean, does anybody have anything? Anything? Because I don't. I don't have the sense, I don't have that gut feeling of taking a path here. It's just gone. This guy is just rage and monster murder -- and that might be affecting this, that might be getting in my bones right now to get down there and do something about it. But I don't know what else to do. This sucks. It's easy to say on the other side of that portal, 'We did it once, so we're going to go back and do it.' But Jesus, look at this place."

Rev: EVERETT: Well easy, now. Some of us gotta live here.

All: [Laugh]

Jake: Yep. They're just, 'Oh, we're right here.'

Rev: EVERETT: We can hear you, you know.

Tass: So I know -- I, you know, I patrol, I hunt. And I know that he stays on the outskirts. Is there any deeper information on this that he would have? Like, just the density of them, easier places to go in, just anything at all?

Rev: I think in the sense of density, the only real impression you get from this other you is that they have not been downtown in a very long time, because they're not interested in getting in a fight they can't win.

Tass: Right. Woof. "Even the impression that I'm getting from myself, you know, this guy wants to be in these fights and he does not want to go downtown." And that's the closest I have to Trust Your Gut in this world ... [Laughs]

Jake: What with the vampires and the Soul Bat kind of warring all the time, does the other me have any useful intel about Indianapolis? Is there anything the vampires have gleaned?

Rev: No, not really. It's kind of the equivalent of having any good intel about Berlin during World War Two. Like every now and then there were some spies that got in and out. But it's not something that someone in your position would know any details about.

Tass: "I mean, the only other thing I can think of is just see if we can get a series of snapshots. Like, you can see these other times, T.J."

Teej: "Yes."

Tass: "You can see other places too, right?"

Teej: "Yes."

Tass: "I mean, that's another way to get information. But I also watched you slag your own shit to try one thing. So I mean, maybe we can get something. Maybe we can get a

little context. Some snapshots of like Margaret's office, or whatever is surrounding the hammer."

Teej: "Sure." I'll start drawing the circle on the floor.

Jake: "Let's go do it inside of a vehicle that doesn't matter as much. Just in case this does go terribly wrong."

Teej: I'll start erasing the marks I've already made on the floor.

Rev: EVERETT: What are you doing, there? You getting ready to play hopscotch?

Teej: "We're going to go and find another place to do this in, just so that it's safer. But I'm going to look through magic at a different place and time. But mostly just a place."

Jake: "Entirely just a place."

Rev: Everett lowers the back door of the Chinook and points off to the left.

Rev: EVERETT: You head down that way all the way to the end, there'll be a KS-97 Stratofreighter that I know for sure is all gutted out.

Teej: Yeah, we'll head that way.

Rev: All right. And as you go, you do pass a few other things. Everett had said that he'd been working on a few planes to get them running. And you pass a few fighters, a F-4 Phantom, an F-100 Super Sabre. And you pass a few bombers, an F-58 Hustler and a B-47 Stratojet. But you do also pass things like a Huey helicopter, and a C-47 Skytrain, and a Cessna 0-2. The Cessna 0-2, most people will probably remember it from the first airplane you could fly in Grand Theft Auto. But you do eventually come to the Stratofreighter.

Jake: Open her up and head inside.

Rev: You head into it and it's a very large open space inside. This is a refueling tanker, but it's empty now. And T.J. begins to lay out his chalk lines. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: Six.

Tass: I helped him when we were setting up stuff to try to summon Jake. And then, you know, that little bit with the other spells. If it's possible, you know, I would try to help him out by keeping the lines where they need to be. And like just all the little minutia, if it's something that takes a little work off his hand.

Rev: All right. Roll Help Out.

Tass: I didn't even get my dice out yet because I just am afraid. I'm afraid of it. Nine.

Rev: All right. So T.J., what place were you trying to see?

Teej: I think I'm trying to see into Margaret's office.

Rev: And what's your glitch?

Teej: The effect is of short duration.

Rev: So you cast this spell, and this vision appears in the circle. And it is Margaret's office. It's very dark and dusty. In fact, the dust is so thick that after a second glance, you realize that some of it is actually ash. And you can see that the wood of the desk and the walls and the ceiling are charred. And the thing that hits you as you see this is that no one has been in here in a long time because there are no footprints, there's no marks in any of this thick soot on the ground and on the walls. And then the vision closes.

Teej: "So Margaret's office is pretty empty."

Tass: "Yeah."

Teej: "Do we want to look somewhere else?"

Jake: "Well, and it looks like the lobby is also untouched, right? From what we can see of it? So."

Teej: "Sure."

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, there's just the common area. There's all the lab, you know, where they do everything with the monster research."

Teej: "Right. There's the training danger room. There's the junk room that I made the little robots in."

Tass: "Yeah."

Jake: "The infirmary."

Tass: "Yeah. I mean, besides that, there's like the green room, there's the main entrance, like outside and back behind it."

Teej: "Oh, the theatre proper?"

Tass: "Yeah. Yeah."

Teej: "OK. I'm thinking maybe the science labs."

Rev: All right, roll Use Magic.

Teej: That's a lot better. That is a ten.

Rev: So again, the vision appears in front of you. There's light in here, but it almost seems like black light. And you see figures moving around. And there is someone tied up on a table, and the figures that are moving around are taking blood and writing some notes down, and then going over to a large refrigerator and storing the blood. You can see that they're just working on something.

Teej: Do we recognize who's on the table?

Rev: No, it is not anyone that you recognize. But I think as you scrutinize them, roll Investigate a Mystery.

Teej: OK. Seven.

Rev: All right. You get a hold 1.

Teej: What sort of creature is it?

Rev: It's a vampire. You can see that it's mumbling, and you can see fangs in its mouth.

Teej: Can I make out what it's mumbling?

Rev: You can't. It just seems like gibberish.

Teej: OK.

Tass: "So they are doing research on monsters, still."

Jake: Are the figures moving about the room? Do we know what they are? Can we tell if they're human, or ...

Rev: They look human. "I mean, we know that once they bond, Soul Bats become invisible. So there's nothing saying that those people doing the research aren't all Soul Batted up."

Tass: "Yeah. I think it should be assumed that's the case. I mean, I think it's pretty obvious what they're doing."

Teej: "Yeah? What is that?"

Tass: "Well I mean, I don't know --"

Rev: [Laughs]

Tass: "Exactly ..."

Rev: Everybody can tell what they're doing! Clearly ...

Jake: You're like, I think we all know what they're doing.

Teej: It doesn't have to be stated. We just all know it.

Tass: I feel no urge to say out loud.

Jake: But if you need to explain it to the audience, I understand.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Why don't you just, real quick, summarize it. In case anybody happens to be a dumb dumb.

Tass: Tell us what you -- tell us what you think is ...

All: [Laugh]

Tass: No. But like, you know, it does. "It kind of just feels like they are ... They're trying to figure out some vampire weaknesses, or maybe this is somebody important that they're torturing, for God's sake. I mean, either way, it's clear why they're like guarding this place heavily as well. They're -- they're doing something here."

Jake: Does it look like anybody, like, important that I would recognize?

Rev: No.

Jake: "I mean, it's nobody so important that, like, everybody would know who they are. I don't know who it is."

Tass: "OK. You know what's messed up? And I almost think we should look? What if they hid the damn book in another green room?"

Jake: "He's just got a theme. Everything's theatres, everything's green rooms. This is what he's attached to."

Tass: "I mean, maybe. Maybe that's just, like, part of it."

Jake: "I mean, whatever. We can look."

Teej: "Yeah." I guess I'll turn off this vision if we're done with it. And I will hit up the green room with my see any place.

Rev: Yeah. I don't think there's any roll needed for this one. It appears. And it, just like Margaret's office, is charred and burned out. You can't even really make anything out in this room.

Tass: "Eh. Worth a shot."

Teej: "Yeah. Anywhere else we want to look in IPT?"

Tass: "I don't know. It's up to you guys. I mean, again, we kind of have a little impression of what's up. But like if they're doing other stuff like this, there's the chance that the infirmary might have something? Or like the junk room might have other stuff that they're working on."

Teej: "You know, I think we're exhausting the IPT. It's like, yeah, we found something interesting and everything, but at the same time, it's not helping us. I think we're good with IPT right now."

Tass: "I mean, that's up to you, man. You're the one that's popping all these off. I mean, yeah, I think we might find a little more out about what exactly they're doing. But, you know, we do. We have the gist. You're right."

Jake: "I mean, we're missing the junk room and the infirmary, is that it? That we are familiar with?"

Tass: "The common room, the cafeteria."

Jake: "I don't know, maybe the infirmary. If they're doing these blood draws and whatever in the lab, maybe the infirmary would answer whatever, like more specifically, what that process is."

Tass: "It doesn't hurt to try."

Teej: "OK. I can definitely do the infirmary, too." So that's what I'm going to do.

Rev: Yeah. You again cast this spell, and there's no need for any roll for this. You get this room to appear, and it is a burned out husk.

Jake: On the blueprint of IPT, what would have to be traveled to get to the lab?

Rev: The elevator.

Jake: And that's it?

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: OK, so we shouldn't be expecting to see tracks in any of these other places we're looking, because there's no need to go past them.

Rev: Correct.

Jake: Now I'm just getting really curious.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Now I just want to clear all the fog of war.

Tass: Doesn't hurt to try. I mean ...

Jake: I mean, it could hurt to try. Magic does not always go correctly.

Teej: I think I got this.

Jake: [Laughs] The face!

Tass: Now I don't want to try anymore.

Teej: Can I go ahead and take a look at the junk room, then?

Rev: Sure. Roll Use Magic.

Teej: That would be a thirteen.

Rev: You get the junk room to appear. And as the three of you peer into this vision, you hear the sound of something moving around, a scraping and grinding sound. Jake, roll Investigate a Mystery. I think you're the only one who can see in the dim light of the room that's being shown to you.

Jake: I got a six.

Teej: Could I help by clarifying the vision?

Rev: Oh, that like you see that it's dark and so you start essentially adjusting the contrast magically?

Teej: [Laughs] Yeah.

Jake: He presses a button on the side of the window. A little menu comes up, clicks through ...

Rev: Roll Help Out.

Teej: That is a six.

Rev: So as you try to adjust the magic of this vision, T.J., there's a strange, magical flare that happens in your hand, and you see the energy ripples over the entirety of the vision. And for a brief moment, it doesn't look like a vision. It looks like you're looking through a portal, and this sound of something moving around gets louder. And you remember back at IPT when you first joined the team, you had to prove to Margaret you could build something and you built the robot that turned into a cannibal and ate other robots. And the vision of this pops back into your head, as you see through the portal approaching, this same robot again, but it is covered in gore. And in one hand it's holding a leg, and it's feeding it down into a big tube on its back. And behind it, you just see a sluice of material as it grinds up this leg. And it raises its giant propeller blade arm and steps through the portal.

SFX: OUTRO MUSIC

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