

The West Wing Weekly
3.03: "Ways and Means"
Guest: Eli Attie

[Intro Music]

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

JOSH: And I'm Joshua Malina.

HRISHI: Today we're talking about episode three of season three. It's called "Ways and Means".

JOSH: And we have three-time guest...

HRISHI: Eli Attie.

JOSH: Yeah.

ELI: A great pleasure to be here.

JOSH: Welcome, Eli.

ELI: Is this like when Alec Baldwin hosts *Saturday Night Live* for his seventeenth time, you get like a ring [cross talk] or a bouquet?

JOSH: [cross talk] It's good, it looks like it's going to get competitive between you and Brad Whitford.

ELI: You know, the competition between me and Brad for appearances on The West Wing Weekly should be about the importance of writing versus acting on episodic television. No, I'm kidding.

HRISHI: Josh, give us the credits, so we can talk about why Eli is here.

JOSH: We're here to discuss the episode titled, "Ways and Means". Although I would say in parentheses, (How C.J. Got Her Groove Back). The teleplay is by Aaron Sorkin. The story is by our esteemed guest, Eli Attie, and Gene Sperling. The episode was directed by Alex Graves, and it first aired on October 24th, 2001.

HRISHI: Here's a quick synopsis: a special prosecutor has been appointed to investigate any wrongdoing around the president's M.S. while he's fair-minded and effective, C.J. recognizes that fair-minded and effective are not qualities that will help the administration politically, so she cleverly poisons the well by praising the prosecutor for being fair-minded and effective. Sam has to deal with putting out two fires - a literal one in Wyoming and a political one in California. And Josh and Toby are up against the estate tax, which the Republicans seem intent on repealing. And Donna takes a break from sorting through boxes for the prosecutor, to have a blind date with a Republican lawyer.

JOSH: How much of that is you?

ELI: You know, I think the things I worked on the most for this episode - I mean definitely the C.J. story about trying to basically remove an investigation from a special prosecutor and give it to a blood-thirsty, craven, leech-like, Republican Congress. But it's funny, because as I mentioned to you guys before we started taping this, I was looking in my garage this morning in these big boxes of binders that I have.

JOSH: Like Donna.

ELI: Like Donna, I - that's right, I was looking through boxes - sort of doing an undramatic re-enactment of her opening scene in the episode. It's funny, because I've saved a lot of these *West Wing* papers and documents, and I guess I have kept a binder for each of these episodes, and a number of things were really interesting about it. I mean, my biggest contribution to this episode I think, was the C.J. story and how you move an investigation from a Special Prosecutor to Congress. But it's a really freaky thing; I have this binder of essentially all the research material and pitch memos that we presented and wrote, the whole writing staff, for Aaron, for this episode, and the first draft of the script, and it's just amazing, and a testament to the show, I think, in a lot of ways, how much research went into this. And there's memos in here from Gene Sperling, who you mentioned, who was Bill Clinton's top economic adviser and Dee Dee Myers, who was White House Press Secretary, and all these consultants to the show, and so much energy and so many facts and arguments and all obviously woven together beautifully by our creator and leader, Mr. Sorkin. But you know, you could hurt somebody with this binder. It's very thick, heavy. I would say your typical network TV show would not produce such a binder.

HRISHI: Could you read for us the memo, or one of the memos, that you might have written for this episode?

ELI: Well, before I do that, the most interesting thing I found, to me, in the binder, which I'd completely forgotten, and maybe you know this. I don't know if this came up when you guys were talking about "Two Cathedrals", but I actually have in my hands here, the original teaser from "Two Cathedrals", which was the teaser for this episode, basically. So I don't know why it was cut. I don't know whether it was filmed. I just found this a couple hours ago. but: "Fade in. Interior. Anteroom. Day. Clement Rollins is sitting at a table in a sparse room. He has a cup of tea from a deli and he bobs the bag til it suits his taste. Then using a plastic spoon, he lynches the bag with its own string, draining the excess into the cup before tossing it into the wastebasket at his side. The door opens and Babish walks in." You know, and it's basically that first scene, and it ends with - I guess it's said a little differently, but it ends with Rollins reading out the names of all the people he's issuing subpoenas for.

JOSH: So what is the opening scene in "Two Cathedrals" ?

HRISHI: It's Leo speaking with some of the Democratic leaders about the news about the M.S. and they're saying he's got to consider maybe stepping aside and not running or something like that. And Leo saying, "You think you're the first person to mention that?"

ELI: It's entirely possible - I wasn't there in the second season. This was the first season I wrote on the show - It's entirely possible that Aaron wrote the script and it was too long, that the scene was filmed and just taken out in editing, but obviously, lots of these story lines were being juggled at one time at the end of the second season, the beginning of the third season. But the reason I found it interesting is that it reminded me that many times, if a scene was cut for length, sometimes if it was shot, sometimes if it wasn't, Aaron would find a way to get it in another episode. Sometimes whole storylines that had to be lifted for time would end up just being sort of flopped into another episode, and you don't think of it as being that modular. I just thought it was a cool little insider-y fact.

JOSH: I'm struck by how good the writing is in this stage direction. [cross talk] "The tea bag is lynched with its own string." Unreal!

ELI: [cross talk] Well that's true. It's amazing, I'll see if there are other stage directions, I didn't even read this carefully this morning. Although it's a funny thing. One of the hallmarks of Aaron's screenwriting is that there are so few stage directions and so few indications for the actors. I think that a typical screenwriter, because they're trying to sell things to executives, usually, will describe the mood of - how the actor's supposed to feel and they turn toward the window and suffering, welling up or something really over-written. And Aaron's stuff is so spare, usually, so he puts in only the stage directions that are critically necessary. Or if he's got a good joke or something to say in the stage direction. Sometimes he'd have amazing jokes in a stage direction.

JOSH: It's funny that you say that. I do remember in the original production of *A Few Good Men*, we were rehearsing for the out-of-town try-out, which was going to be at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. There was one scene that had tremendous amounts of stage direction, like almost paragraphs, including "Jo Galloway looks at PFC Downey. And she hears what he's saying but she thinks, no, wait, is that what he means?" It was a little bit over-written for the actor. And I remember the actress who was playing Jo Galloway really vehemently striking out all of that. She obviously was not psyched, she obviously felt that she was being told too much as an actor, so just - line after line after line, scratching it out. I remember, I could see her doing that, and I thought, this doesn't bode well. And she would not go on to be the same actress who played the role when we opened on Broadway. But I wonder if maybe Aaron, though, took a message there, and decided to write things lighter.

ELI: It's a good question. If I can tell a very small tangent related to *The West Wing*, our dear friend Richard Schiff, I think, studied with an acting teacher at one point in New York, or was working with a teacher at the time, who gave him a method that I know a number of actors use, where they actually will cross out or white out all of the stage directions, and I think in his case, even the punctuation. And the idea was, just be about the words, and just find your motivation from the words, and not these clunky stage directions and indications and even a question mark - maybe that's not how you want to say the line. And he was in this very pure place, as I recall the story. And he got an audition for a movie. And he went, or no - I think he was filming a scene in a movie. And he got the pages and immediately whited out all the stage directions and showed up on the day and had learned all his lines and the prop master came to him with a gun. And he said, "what's this?" And the guy said, "It's the gun." And I guess he had no idea there was a gun. It wasn't really clear from the lines. And it was a real testament to Aaron's writing, and I was always in awe that you could look a scene with no stage directions, just words, and almost always, they would know exactly what to do - at least if you read the whole scene.

JOSH: Right, so if Aaron decides to include a stage direction, and he tells you that Charlie takes off his jacket and hands it to the President, it's important. It's to be noted.

ELI: Well yeah, there's always that.

JOSH: I want to tell one other little tangent, just since we're on it. I don't know if you've ever seen Kevin Sorbo, who played Hercules.

ELI: Oh yeah, he was a professional wrestler, wasn't he, Kevin Sorbo?

JOSH: That I don't know. I can't speak to that, but there is a famous clip on YouTube - I can't speak to its authenticity. There are some who say he was joking. Others say it was a misread of the parenthetical, in which [laughter] - it's really funny, too - he clearly had a line of dialogue followed by the parenthetical phrase "DISAPPOINTED." In this clip, he walks out. I think he's on a horse, and he says,

[Hercules YouTube Clip excerpt]

HERCULES: Wait a minute. This isn't my world. DISAPPOINTED!!!

[end excerpt]

[laughter]

ELI: Well.

JOSH: And I want to believe it's real and an actor making a terrible mistake.

ELI: I'm sure you both know, and a lot of listeners to this podcast know that that happened in real politics, very famously, when George H. W. Bush was running, he was just having a lot of trouble connecting, and the economy was not in great shape, and he allegedly didn't know what a supermarket scanner was, and was out of touch with the common man, and so he had some speech that he was giving somewhere. And the speechwriter or somebody had put at the bottom of the page - more just as a sort of a stage direction if you will, "Message: I care."

[George H.W. Bush Campaign Speech in Exeter, NH on January 15, 1992 excerpt]

BUSH: ...useless exercise. But message: I care. We're trying.

[end excerpt]

ELI: And, you know, it was in every newspaper, seen as a huge goof. But it's - he and Kevin Sorbo, I think, should take an acting class together.

JOSH: And once at a table read for *Scandal*, Tony Goldwyn, playing the President, had a line that included a list of various organizations, including N. O. W., the National Organization of Women. And it was just a table read and the first time we were seeing it, and when he got to it, he said, "now!" And then we all that this weird pause and we started laughing and he just thought it was the word "now," to be emphasized, and he realized it as soon as he said it. Oh, did we laugh at him.

ELI: Oh those silly actors.

JOSH: Oh actors. So that's an interesting story, in terms of that Bush speech. Would you ever write in any kind of suggestion of, hand to face or anything physical?

ELI: No, because - I mean what's so unusual about that, and to be honest, I think, what becomes unusual about a lot of over-written stage directions in scripts of TV shows in things I've worked on post *The West Wing* is that, if you're writing a speech for a politician, you can go talk to the politician. You can say to him, "here's the message: you care about somebody earning less than a half million dollars a year." And you can talk to your actors on a TV show and say, "here's what the scene is about." The writer is usually in the rehearsal, so I find it very strange, the idea that it would just be in neon letters on a page, and that he hadn't seen it before, says he's out of touch even with his own staff, which is kind of a problem.

JOSH: Where were you when they shot this episode? Were you on set?

ELI: No. So as I mentioned, I was brand new to the show. I would say that my role on the show and the role of most of the writers on the staff, really, was this sort of a brain trust for Aaron, kind of researchers, consultants. You know, and we did a lot of writing, and they would be policy arguments, drafts of scenes, things like that, but he would weave the scripts together, and we never really had ownership of the scripts, like we would go down to the set and produce them or be talking to the actors and directors. If I did talk to the actors and the director, it would usually be about the content and about the politics of it, and trying to help explain the background. Something like that C.J. story - I actually remember in this case, that Aaron had in some way set up the idea of these subpoenas coming, and a special prosecutor, and for reasons I can't remember, I think just lost interest in the idea of the special prosecutor as a villain and wanted to set it up as more of a battle between the White House and Congress. And I think he sort of presented to the writers room, can we take this away from the special prosecutor? Can we get it to a Congressional investigation?

HRISHI: Do you think that was because he didn't want it to follow too much a Kenneth Starr kind of plot that we had already seen with Bill Clinton, like that that was a dynamic that was maybe too familiar in the public consciousness?

ELI: You know, that's a good question. I can't remember completely. But I do know that it was that great line of C.J.'s - well of Aaron's, through C.J., where she talks about,

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

C.J.: Am I crazy or this not a job for the U.S. House of Representatives?

[end excerpt]

ELI: And one of the things I was remembering about "Isaac and Ishmael" and about what happened when September 11th occurred, not long after the filming of this episode, maybe a month later, was that Congress didn't seem petty anymore. And I think in his mind, and it's true for a lot of people now, Congress was a good whipping post. It just seemed more fun and more heroic to have the sort of annoying, pipsqueak minority, well, I guess the Republican Congress, kind of nipping at our heels, as opposed to a legal investigation that's gonna go on behind closed doors with some gray-haired... y'know.

HRISHI: Yeah, the majority in Congress, in a way, they get to play the administration as the underdog to Congress, and also, I think, it is just like a favorite - look, we were talking about Aaron's love of making France surrendering jokes in the last episode, and I think that the idea that Congress is the butt of the joke is also a good go-to.

JOSH: What you came up with was so clever for C.J. to sort of intuit that they'd be better positioned in an adversarial relationship with Congress rather than to have this fairly straight-up independent special prosecutor. Was there a parallel to that? How did you come up with it?

ELI: I'm looking through, now, a memo that I wrote - actually, not even to Aaron yet, but to Kevin Falls, who was running the writing staff. It's "to Kevin and *West Wing* Writers, from me. How M.S.-gate ends up in the lap of a blood-thirsty Congress" is the memo. And it gets into a lot of

things, and it's different than the story that ended up in the episode, but one of the points that I make here is that - I write in italics, " *Note: this is a very real issue. Oliver North is a radio talk show host and not a convict today, because so much immunity was granted by Congress in the Iran Contra case. The special prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, couldn't make the case against him. Also, Ken Starr had big arguments with Congress over the scope of their Whitewater hearings.*" So I think the thing in my mind that made this seem like a doable idea actually turned out to not be in the episode, I'm sure for simplicity sake. One of the brilliant things that Aaron would always do is - we would have incredibly nuanced, incredibly detailed, nine-page memos that we would give him, he'd be able to stay above it just enough that he would pick out - *The West Wing* is very complex by the standards of any TV show. It's still a little distilled from the way these things work. And I think I was thinking, what actually was going to happen was that if Congress decided to speed up their investigation, they'd start handing out immunity, so that actually there'd be nothing for the special prosecutor to do, because he couldn't prosecute people, because Congress had granted them immunity if they would be willing to testify. And that was based on Oliver North. And it's funny, because I sort of envisioned this in my mind as a multi-episode storyline. And another thing Aaron would very often do is, we'd pitch things to him, and he would compress them, and you'd give him, "well these could be the first three scenes." And then he'd go into his office, and he'd come back and say, "well, all of that's now in the first scene. What's the second scene."

JOSH: Right, what else you got?

ELI: It was very exciting, because his standards were so high. I remember really feeling, when you had an idea he liked, it was a very exciting thing. He was the audience. And he managed, even though he knew a lot, he managed to not get in the weeds. So if somebody like Gene Sperling was saying, "let's get into an argument about the estate tax," and Gene was a brilliant economic mind. He'd go on and on about it, and Aaron would say, "Ok, you lost me. Give me three simple arguments and tell me the politics of it," and he could kind of slow things down.

JOSH: That's one of the things I love about the show as a viewer. Even his simplified version, there are times where I'm learning something, but it always, when it's an interesting issue, which is most of the time, gives you just enough also to run to your books or to your computer, and it motivates you to learn more and to do a deeper dive into so many things that you might have either not thought about or just thought a little bit on.

ELI: Well it was interesting watching the episode, too, for any of the scenes that had any sort of policy or politics in them. In this sort of harder brass tacks way, we'd give him memos, and we'd have conversations with him, and you very quickly knew what he loved, which were just these little nuggets of, sort of, insight. Like I remember when I...

JOSH: Distillation. [cross talk]

ELI: Yeah, when I worked on Capitol Hill, right before I worked in the White House, I remember with my Congressman boss, meeting with this thinker, this guy, Michael Lerner, who was talking about how the big problem with the concept of the American dream. And he was saying, "the problem with this myth of upward mobility is that it prevents people from recognizing their own class interests. Everyone wants a tax cut, because they think they're going to be a millionaire." So you tell something like that to Aaron, and after a little while of working for him, you could know that he just loved those kinds of things.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

PRESIDENT BARTLET: *It doesn't matter if most voters don't benefit. They all believe that some day they will. That's the problem with the American dream. Makes everyone concerned for the day they're going to be rich.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: That was my biggest Trump-ai-yi-yi moment in this, because it felt like, this was the line that was - the only thing I could think about during the election - thinking about how to get working class people to vote against their own interests by positioning this person as the embodiment of the American dream, because he's this wealthy business person, and he's speaking to you, saying, "you are my people," even though he has never had anything in common with them.

JOSH: Nor do his policies line up with theirs at all. But you're right. This does reflect on the belief that I'm going to be more like him.

HRISHI: Exactly. He presents the narrative of this is what you could be, or the embodiment of something. And that's a compelling story line and people want to buy into that.

ELI: It's a huge problem in politics. Yeah, it's what drove Donald Trump's election, absolutely. So often in polling, people's view of the economy - 'how's the economy going to be doing in five years?' - is much darker than their view of how they will be doing in five years, and it's that kind of relentless American can-do optimism that's ruining our country, people!

[laughter]

HRISHI: There's one scene I wanted to point out about the idea of how Aaron will take this kind of complicated idea of moving it from the prosecutor to Congress, but then he really spends a lot of time with the dramatization of it and the conflict and the individual moves that make that happen. And it also relates to what you guys were saying about stage direction, because when I was watching, I was thinking about, when you give an actor a line reading or when you over-write stage direction - in the scene where C.J. and Ainsley are talking,

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

AINSLEY: *I can't believe how the President can be claiming to waive executive privilege, yet still reserve the right to withhold certain documents.*

C.J.: *Yeah, do it quietly and kind of shake your head in disbelief.*

AINSLEY: *I can't believe how the President can be claiming to waive executive privilege and yet still...*

C.J.: You don't have to keep shaking your head, just at the beginning.

AINSLEY: I can't believe how the President can...

C.J.: Yeah, but think about...

AINSLEY: Ok, I've got it.

C.J.: Thank you.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I was like, wow - you'd be a terrible director.

JOSH: [laughter] That's true. That's very funny.

ELI: That is another thing that struck me when I watched the episode and then sort of looked through my little binder, because *The West Wing* - there's so many things that are so unique about it as a TV show, and one of them is that if you were certainly to look at the four seasons that Aaron Sorkin ran, there's relatively little, if you compare it to *Scandal* or to anything else on the air, conflict among the core characters. It happens sometimes, but it doesn't happen a lot. And...

JOSH: I like when they fight.

ELI: I like when the fight, too, and I think to some degree, when Aaron left the show, and we sort of carried on without him, and those of us who were holdovers from the Aaron era and new writers who came in, we were sort of off the leash, and everybody was yelling at everybody right away. And it was very exciting in the beginning. I think we may have erred too far in that direction at times, but it's a testament, again, to Aaron having a very clear vision of what he wanted, which was this was a family. Ron Silver was introduced as a sort of a fly-in-the-ointment political consultant, right? So I think we expected, in the writers room, even as green as I was, probably two days into the job, that he would just be fighting with everybody all the time. What I found in this binder is, a lot of things that weren't in the episode that would have fit in the shape of that C.J. storyline, which was, here's the huge fight that Babish and Ainsley have, after she goes on TV, even though she doesn't work for C.J., she works for Babish. And there also were notes from Dee Dee Myers, actually, to Aaron, basically saying, "here's the huge fight Babish has with C.J., basically saying, "what the hell are you doing? You think you're going to be better off with a bloodthirsty, craven Republican Congress? Why are you - they're going to be out to score political points and you're [cross talk]

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

BABISH: I was going to say, you took a beating in the last few months.

C.J.: Yeah.

BABISH: And I was wondering if you were trying to get back in the game with one swing.

C.J.: Is that what you were wondering?

BABISH: Yeah.

C.J.: Anything else?

BABISH: No.

[end excerpt]

ELI: He's almost impressed.

HRISHI: He almost admires [cross talk]

ELI: And I'm not criticizing, and to some degree [cross talk] it's a very Aaron way to go, and I think another TV show would have absolutely not just had those two blow-out fights, but that would have been what that writer would have been writing toward.

HRISHI: And I love the example of Bruno, too. Because it does feel like he's immediately part of the family. His scene with Leo when he's trying to get him to show the tape of Buckland. It felt to me like a marital scene.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

BRUNO: You paying attention?

LEO: Yeah.

BRUNO: Does this thing work?

LEO: No.

BRUNO: Ok. If it did, what you'd see is Victor Campos sitting courtside with Buckland.

[end excerpt]

ELI: *The West Wing*, one of the things that's tricky about it, as a writing exercise, is there is so much need for exposition. There is so much that needs to be told, to be explained.

JOSH: We talk about that a lot.

ELI: Yeah. And Aaron has an endless supply of devices to do it, such as "here's what you would have seen on the videotape." You know, or the long scene where Connie's saying to Sam, "I don't understand who Victor Campos is." [cross talk] Right, exactly.

JOSH: And Donna, [crosstalk] whenever she gets Josh to explain something to her.

HRISHI: Yeah, that did feel a little too real. Connie was having to take the surrogate role for Donna. Like, who's this person? It's just a painful thing that has to happen sometimes, and the videotape thing is so great, because it is built into the plot, that I have to tell you what's happening, because you can't see it and we can't dramatize it.

JOSH: Fiendishly clever.

HRISHI: It's really clever. But then the Connie one, I was like, "was she really?" she's like this expert political consultant. She wouldn't know this key player in Democratic campaigning to get the whole state of California? That seemed like a little bit of a stretch. But, you know, I'm also like, well, you need it.

ELI: That campaign team, which includes some great, now-beloved actors: Connie Britton and Evan Handler - they never really achieved traction on the show. And I don't know that they're in very many more episodes - one or two, maybe. But there was all this discussion and hope that they would be, that they would create a lot of conflict, actually, and that we'd sort of throw them in the mix and they'd be yelling at everybody all the time. And I don't know, maybe Aaron just didn't want to do the yelling.

JOSH: We had an interesting conversation with Connie Britton, and one of the things she was saying is: one, that she happened to work on the show and this plot line happened to take place when renegotiations between the actors and management were happening.

ELI: Oh, interesting.

JOSH: And that she had a sense that perhaps some of that bled into how she and her posse were used.

HRISHI: She had the sense maybe that...

JOSH: She had the sense that she was maybe being positioned as a love interest for Sam Seaborn.

HRISHI: And this episode would kind of reinforce that.

JOSH: I felt that way, yeah.

ELI: You know, it's funny. I guess my memory is different, but I guess my feeling at the time - and I may just have been ignorant and non-involved in those discussions, and I wasn't involved in those discussions, but - is that Aaron just wanted to write for his core people, and as time went on, he wasn't as interested in - he had enough mouths to feed. He used to crack a whip in the writers' room [cross talk]

JOSH: Pass the ball around.

ELI: When we didn't have a whole story for Charlie every week - by the way, amazing actor, who deserves his own story every week, but we just had so many people, so many mouths to feed, he didn't want to have an episode where Richard didn't have anything to do or Allison didn't have anything to do, which any other TV show would do, frankly.

HRISHI: It's funny, too, because Connie Britton is so great, but even in that scene between her and Sam, when they're talking about Victor Campos. I was thinking, now that we'd had this discussion with Connie Britton, I was watching it, trying to look for some chemistry between them.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

CONNIE: I have an exceptional mind.

SAM: But.

CONNIE: I don't know who Victor Campos is.

SAM: Yeah.

CONNIE: Look, pal, I went to Oxford, ok, which is in England.

SAM: Hey, you weren't kidding about that exceptional mind.

CONNIE: Sam.

SAM: England's in Europe, right?

CONNIE: Sam.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: It just wasn't there, compared to the immense amount of chemistry between Ainsley

and Sam, just when she says,

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

AINSLEY: Excuse me.

SAM: Hey!

AINSLEY: You need a haircut.

SAM: Shouldn't you be...

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Yeah, that energy is so...

JOSH: Sam doesn't treat her very well, does not treat Connie very well.

HRISHI: Yeah, which isn't unusual, I guess, for him, in general right? With ladies?

JOSH: Little bit true.

JOSH: Yeah.

HRISHI: But just that little exchange between Ainsley and Sam, I was like, oh. I feel like she would be the more appropriate love interest.

ELI: Yeah, a lot of people were rooting for that. It's funny, because Emily Procter is another amazing actor, wonderful person, who we sort of let go. We just weren't using her enough, and she got offered, I think, first a holding deal by CBS, and then she was put on *CSI: Miami*.

JOSH: We were talking about that.

ELI: Unavailable.

JOSH: She would like to have stayed.

ELI: It's a shame, but that's the embarrassment of riches on this show. You can say to people who would be leads, go on to be the leads on huge hit shows, you're number fifty-seven on the call sheet.

HRISHI: It's funny, back to the family idea, and how much these new characters are immediately part of the family. There was one moment where I was kind of surprised: C.J. is talking to Leo, and she says,

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

C.J.: Oliver Babish and Ainsley Hayes were just in my office.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I thought, does she really need to use their full names to Leo? [cross talk] Who else is going to be in her office? Are there a lot of Ainsleys? That she needs to be like, not Ainsley Smith, Ainsley Hayes. [cross talk] It's so formal, considering how...

ELI: Yeah, how familial everything is.

HRISHI: Yeah, exactly.

ELI: It's very interesting to me, because again, I'm looking at it, just thinking about how different it is from so much that you see now, or even then. How it's really what the episode is about, and

part of why this was so exciting to me to watch is that I'm remembering now that I came to the show really weeks before this, from a White House that was, the whole time I worked there, balancing subpoenas and scandals with the running of the government. And it was all so real, the question of when you're weak, can they press you, can they roll you?

HRISHI: On the death tax, for example.

ELI: It's just amazing, how storylines like the fires and, to some extent, the Campos story. They seem - you don't know why they're there, for a lot of the episode. They may be interesting scenes, they may be fun scenes, but one thing that Aaron is so good at is those little moments that can come two-thirds of the way through an episode or toward the end of an episode where he ties it all together. And for me, it was that moment with Josh and Toby in the Roosevelt Room.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

JOSH: Toby, I just don't know on how many fronts we can fight a war. Wanna find out?

TOBY: Yeah.

[end excerpt]

ELI: You realize that that's really what this episode is about. It's just about, they're under siege. [cross talk] Every story is the same story, but in the beginning, you think it's just all these different things happening in a typical day.

HRISHI: OK, let's take a quick break and when we come back we'll have more with our guest Eli Attie.

[Ads break]

HRISHI: And now back to the show.

JOSH: I want to make sure to also comment on how good I think the direction is in this episode. Alex Graves is a terrific director, and I love what he brought to this show, and I feel like there are subtle new techniques that we're seeing, including, and maybe I missed it in prior episodes, but a couple times he really keeps the motion and the thrust of the episode continuing by having a significant, a major scene end on a shot that carries us into the next scene. One excellent example is from the Sam-Connie-Campos scene, Campos played beautifully by Miguel Sandoval. They move right from that scene, the final shot of that scene moves us into the Roosevelt Room and Josh with the Congressional Black Caucus member, Richardson, it' just excellently done.

HRISHI: There is something kind of funny structurally about those two meetings happening side by side, though. Where it's like, oh, here's the white staff meeting with the [cross talk] minority representative. And there's something interesting where Campos really speaks about, in Spanish, when he says, "my people earn more than the minimum wage." He talks about the Latino vote, in this block, but immediately afterwards, Richardson's like,

JOSH: [cross talk] Latino...

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

RICHARDSON: The Black Caucus doesn't vote as one mind.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: But it is kind of funny where it's like, oh, here's our white staffers meeting with their...

JOSH: It's minority interest day.

HRISHI: Yeah, Exactly. Big block of minority cheese.

JOSH: I also really like, it made me laugh, that first - I guess it's the opening, is it Clement Rollins going into the Grand Jury with his very long list of people he intends to subpoena, and there's this great shot, I could just see, also as an actor I know, that Nicholas Pryor, who is terrific in the role, has to hold the list up just right so it captures the special light that you know Tom Del Ruth was like, "make sure you hit the light," because it's translucent and you can see through the back, there's a very, very - he starts to read all the names of the Bartlet family, but you can see there's three columns, I think, of thirty names each. And I would like to challenge our listeners. I wanted someone - I tried for a couple minutes, but - I tried to pause and look through the translucence, and then reverse the writing, because I'm sure there are some either gag names or names of people on the crew, because that's always what prop people do. So if anybody can find out what those names are, I'd like to know.

ELI: Well it's funny, I also wish we had the chance to see what Alex would have done visually with Ron's lynching his tea bag [laughter] The violent lynching of his tea bag. But I was also kind of amazed because I didn't really remember all those middle names.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

ROLLINS: Josiah Bartlet. Abigail Anne Bartlet. Elizabeth Bartlet Westin. Eleanor Emily Bartlet. Zoey Patricia Bartlet. Leo Thomas McGarry. Joshua Lyman. Claudia Jean Cregg. Samuel Norman Seaborn. Toby Zachary Ziegler.

[end excerpt]

ELI: And I was sitting there thinking, a) why didn't Josh Lyman have a middle name; and b) did we keep those middle names consistent later in the series if they ever came up again? I have no idea.

HRISHI: Speaking of using names from people from the crew, I was wondering if there was a Mark Buckland who directed *The West Wing* [cross talk] and there's a Jack Buckland, who's the potential Democratic rival.

HRISHI: There's another move that I really liked, a directorial move, where Ainsley goes to visit Donna as she's sorting through the boxes. She comes in, into the bowels of whatever room it is that Donna's sorting through, and there's this nice motion that follows her in, and then it pauses, and the room is shadowy, and she calls out to Donna. And it turns out, you can't tell, but Donna is actually in the shot already. She's in the shadows, in the corner, and so when she says, "don't touch that pile", she's actually, just her head is framed out, but her arm extends, and you realize that her body has been in the shot. It's really cool.

ELI: Here's another thing that you just reminded me of, actually, that I sort of look back on and marvel, and one of the cool things about working on the show in that period was that, when I got to the show, third season, it was already established, it had already won a bunch of Emmys, and it was a ratings hit. I think the biggest ratings the show ever had were in the third season.

And even though it was a hit, I think to the network and, I'm sure, the studio's horror, the show was largely allergic to romantic story lines.

HRISHI: I was thinking about how much I appreciated that.

ELI: I agree with you. I'm thinking the exact same thing, and one of the things that's so interesting about the way that that Donna/Cliff story plays out is that what really happens in that story is that she has one drink with a guy, once, and then you get to see the kind of look of horror on her face at the end of the episode when she realizes that this guy is now on [cross talk] the key committee that's going to investigate the President and the White House. You know, she'd met the guy for ten minutes. On any other show, they'd have been sleeping together all through act three, and they'd have a love child by the time that dime dropped. But as a viewer of this show, it's doled out so sparingly, that you're thinking, but she had almost a date with the guy. One drink [cross talk]

JOSH: [cross talk] Yeah, like one drink is a huge romantic gesture.

ELI: You're so starved, as an audience, for romance. But she met him and they both were there for twenty minutes.

JOSH: That's the terrific Mark Feuerstein. He's one of those people - every actor knows all the other people who get their work. Mark gets a lot of my jobs. I feel like we're similar, but he's the handsome version. And you know what? They usually hire the handsome guy.

ELI: You're both dashing New York Jews.

JOSH: You're very kind, Eli. But he's a terrific actor, and I do want to link - I can only think of him, although I love him in this role, I primarily think of him in one role, which is a short film that he made called *Piñata Hustler*, in which he plays a bad-ass guy who weasels his way into kids' parties, and is just incredibly good at smashing the piñata. It's a very, very funny performance [cross talk].

HRISHI [cross talk] I would want to be defined by that role! I was wondering if you could give us a little insight into the different committees that are name-checked in this episode, because Cliff is on Ways and Means and he gets transferred to Reform and Oversight. There's Ways and Means, Reform and Oversight, and there's a little mention of Judiciary, But could you tell us what those committees actually do?

ELI: Well basically Ways and Means is a tax committee. In the Senate, they call it the Senate Finance Committee, and in the House they call it Ways and Means. And really all it does is deal with sort of tax and financial legislation, and it has...

JOSH: The oldest committee, I believe?

ELI: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised [cross talk] It's certainly a big, big deal committee, because it deals with the tax code, and so the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee would be one of the most powerful, important people in Washington, by a lot. Same with the Senate Finance Committee. But Oversight really has no connection to it at all. It's basically exactly what it sounds like - it's kind of a watchdog committee, with a slightly fuzzy jurisdiction.

HRISHI: But it's different from an Ethics Committee.

ELI: Yes. It's different from the Ethics Committee. I think the Ethics Committee has a much

narrower scope. But the bottom line is that these investigations can be carried out by tons of committees, and sometimes the committees team up, because if the Bartlet M.S. scandal - if he had an episode at a time when there was tax legislation on the floor, Ways and Means could probably argue, well, it's in our jurisdiction, so very often, as they say in the episode, it kind of depends on who wants the investigation.

HRISHI: Is there a pecking order or a hierarchy that's established, committees that have more power than others, not just in terms of the scope, but an established one, where sometimes it feels like Intelligence is a very important committee to try and get on.

ELI: I think there is a pecking order. Obviously, as you're saying the National Security committees - you have access to a lot of information that the other committees don't, and have lots of secret hearings, and I think those have a lot of cache to them. But it all depends, if you're a Congressman, it all depends what you want. If you're a Congressman and you're on the House Intelligence Committee, let's say, you may be privy to all kinds of insider information about, well the White House is going to try to kill Osama Bin Laden, and you're getting a briefing on it and you're getting to see the pictures of him with a hole in his head when the whole thing is done, but there are a lot of people who would much, much rather be on, say, the Banking Committee, because if you're on the Banking Committee, you can raise a fortune from Wall Street, because you're overseeing all their issues. If you're from a rural part of the country, being on the Agriculture Committee is much more important than those other committees. So I think that there are a handful of committees - Ways and Means is one of them, the Appropriations Committee is another, which just deals with actually spending all the money that is agreed to in the budget, that have a lot of old line prestige, they're the committees that really run the Congress. And then there's things like Intelligence, that are actually really important, but bring you less political benefit.

JOSH: This is a maybe really simplistic question, but memberships of committees and chairmanships are decided...

ELI: Basically by the Speaker of the House and by the Majority Leader of the Senate, in consultation with the Minority Leader. So it's seniority, it's what your interests are. If I get elected to the Senate, let's say I had a close election and I just squeaked it out, and basically got elected to the Senate, my Minority Leader or Majority Leader would say, "look, we need to get you on committees that are gonna mean something to your state. So if I'm from Iowa, there might not be a seat on Agriculture, there may be more senior people who want it, but if they can get me on it, then I can start delivering things for my state [cross talk]

JOSH: How much lobbying for committees goes on?

ELI: Huge amount of lobbying, and I think it's a balance, some people - something like Armed Services or Intelligence, it's a very interesting thing, because there are people who are going to want that, because they want to effect the policy, and they want to be in Washington for twenty years and become heavyweights, and maybe they want to run for some higher office and maybe get some foreign policy experience [cross talk] yeah, but there's gonna be less short term political bang for that kind of committee dollar.

HRISHI: And so it's not any kind of either promotion or demotion for Cliff when he gets transferred from Ways and Means to Reform and Oversight.

ELI: No, and in fact - I'm not sure, it's almost presented in the episode like, he just gets a phone call that - pack up your things, you're going to this other committee.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

CLIFF: I've been traded.

DONNA: To where?

CLIFF: House Government Oversight.

DONNA: What did they trade you for?

CLIFF: Some toner, I think.

DONNA: No, I mean, why?

CLIFF: I don't know. We got a call from the Majority Leader's Office. They wanted another litigator at Government Oversight, and they didn't - they didn't say why.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: It seems that he almost says he's not even considered, at the point of the date with Janel what that might mean [cross talk]

ELI: I think that's not how it would work, fully. He doesn't say anything that's technically inaccurate, but I think, really what that means is, let's say the chairman of Ways and Means, or if it's a subcommittee chairman that he really works for as a lawyer on that committee, comes to him and says, "hey, Reform and Oversight really needs some folks; I just talked to Congressman So-and-so, and I think you'd be great over there; would you mind, or could you go there for six months and we'll take you back here." But it's a job, it's different job, and a different budget line. I mean, there might be a way to be detailed over, but I think it's more...

JOSH: More significant than it's presented.

ELI: It's just a job change. It does make it seem like he's been given a different portfolio for the week, but he'd be working for a different person.

JOSH: There's a beautiful shot of them in that little traffic light island in front of the Capitol that I like - it's a great use of D.C.

HRISHI: Right. And he has a moment where he kind of realizes about the boxes.

JOSH: Right.

ELI: I actually think this is Alex's first episode that he directed as a Producing Director of the show.

JOSH: I did notice [cross talk]

ELI: Just because *The West Wing* was such an unwieldy beast, and the production demands were so crazy, and the hours were so crazy, the decision was made, before I started on the show, to bring in Alex Graves and Chris Misiano, starting with the third season, as full-time Producing Directors, so that there were three of them, and I've never heard of a TV show that even has two. I don't know how they justified it. I don't know who got the money in the budget. But Alex and Chris were both people who directed many episodes in the first two seasons as guest directors and just done a great job.

JOSH: So do you think that just the one-off that *The West Wing* is, when you find people who get what it is to make a *West Wing* episode, you want to keep them in the fold, that they brought great value, because they just knew how to get it done in this distinctive work environment?

ELI: I think it was two things. I think one is that, and the fact that you're buying Alex Graves and Chris Misiano, you're buying their services all year, so that each of them can direct four or five episodes in addition to Tommy directing some episodes. But so much of the job of a Producing Director on a TV show is not just directing their episodes, but dealing with production issues. We need to film a black tie ball with three days notice, and where can we find the location, and who's going to go scout with this guest director who's coming in and help them on their episode, and dealing with issues with the writers, and dealing with issues with the cast. Because of the way Aaron worked, things usually done on a very tight time line, which could be very exciting, but I honestly think it probably was just, in addition to getting their services as directors, we just need more people here all the time who are creative people, twenty-four hours a day, thinking and worrying and working on this beast.

HRISHI: That's funny. And you've got Kevin Falls running the writers room as a permanent addition since season two.

ELI: That's right.

HRISHI: The team is getting bigger. It feels like it's a reflection of what's also happening in the show, where you've got Bruno's team coming in it's like, we just need more people, like you said, to manage all the stuff that's going on [cross talk] They need to have a separate team for the campaign that's apart from governing. On the subject of credits, we noted in Manchester that Stockard Channing is now in the opening credits. She's not in the opening credits here.

JOSH: Oh, is that true? I didn't notice that.

HRISHI: And it turns out that she's only in the opening credits [cross talk] for episodes that she's in, which seems really unusual, that they would actually have two different sets of opening titles, depending on who's in the cast for a [cross talk] show.

JOSH: I didn't even notice that.

ELI: It's just a negotiation. It's just basically, Stockard was amazing, and probably at that point had already had a flood of nominations for the show. Wasn't there one season where she was nominated for *The West Wing* and for something else, like a TV movie, and may have even, I feel like maybe she was the last person to win two Emmys in one year until Allison did for *Mom* and *Masters of Sex*, Allison Janney.

JOSH: Allison is about to open on Broadway in a role that Stockard originated in *Six Degrees of Separation*. I love the almost fetishizing of the veto. Is it a stamp? It's a stamp, and then it's a sign, then actually President Bartlet takes it out and opens the box. I really liked that. It's like porn for wonks. [cross talk]

HRISHI: Wanking for wonks?

JOSH: It's a big wonk wank. Yeah, you're absolutely right.

ELI: The pens is such a beautiful - Bartlet and Mrs. Landingham.

HRISHI: The way that that is....

JOSH: Beautifully done.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

CHARLIE: She put the pen in your pocket. Every morning, she slipped it in there.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I often have moments when I think, this shouldn't work. This should be either too sappy or something, but it's just...

ELI: Why do you think it works here? Because it works so well.

JOSH: I think it works, 1) because you just have a tremendous actor, and that makes a big difference.

HRISHI: It's a curveball. You never see it coming. You think that you're in a subplot about his mourning and grieving Mrs. Landingham, and then it turns out...

JOSH: I also think, directorially, they don't make a giant meal out of it, so that President Bartlet can be discovered by his dearest friend and confidante, Leo, having a moment with her desk, but it's just a moment, and you can see it flash in both their eyes, but they don't make a soliloquy about it. And I think it's handled well, and it's one of those things where, in execution, it's got to be just right. Otherwise you go, "really, you're staring at her desk?"

HRISHI: I want to point out one continuity gaffe, though, in the show. Not continuity, technically, but in terms of the plot, because there is a big deal made that this is President Bartlet's first veto, and this is such a huge move, but in the first episode where we meet Ainsley, when Ainsley and Sam are on Capitol Beat and they have that debate,

[West Wing Episode 2.04 excerpt]

MARK GOTTFRIED: Sam Seaborn, why is this bill better than its Republican counterpart that the President vetoed last year?

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I totally understand why it works in the episode, but I was like, "that doesn't seem right."

ELI: Yeah. [cross talk] And usually that's the kind of thing that usually we would have caught, but...

HRISHI: That's Ok.

JOSH: I wrote down, "Bruno's a dog."

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

BRUNO: Man, you have got a killer body, you know that?

C.J.: In fact, I do.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Wow. Dude!

ELI: C.J. knows she's got a killer body, and Cliff knows he's cute.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

DONNA: You're really cute.

CLIFF: Yeah, I know.

[end excerpt]

ELI: So we've got a lot of self-aware, [cross talk] attractive people in this episode.

JOSH: That's why I couldn't play the role.

HRISHI: 'Cause you don't know how cute you are.

JOSH: That's right.

ELI: Will Bailey was always humble about his cuteness.

JOSH: With good reason.

HRISHI: There's a cute expression that Ginger has when Toby is ranting before they cancel the meeting.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

TOBY: I compromise, I draw a line in the sand. I'm there to ensure that only multi-millionaires and not billionaires are exempt from the estate tax...

BONNIE: Toby!

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: She's trying to sort of smile politely, but is clearly exhausted and lets out a sigh in the middle of it. It's just kind of in the background, but it's a nice moment, around the ten minute mark in the episode.

JOSH: The whole discussion of the estate tax is pretty relevant to our current situation, right? It's under threat of...

HRISHI: I feel like this is one of those evergreen issues [cross talk]

JOSH: Yeah, that's what I thought [cross talk]

ELI: Absolutely.

JOSH: I mean, how old is this episode? Sixteen years old.

HRISHI: Yeah. In very administration, it kind of comes up, depending on which way the president swings.

ELI: Yeah, for sure, But also just tax cuts for business, and tax cuts for people of upper incomes, it's part of that whole conversation that we were talking about earlier, about everybody wants to be wealthy, and also you can have a small electronics shop and be a small business person, and so the arguments never change on both sides, which is that, isn't it supposed to be this American thing to aspire to be a millionaire, and to want a little piece of that.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

RICHARDSON: A few members who feel that African American homeownership is at its highest level ever, that more African Americans are opening small businesses than ever before, and if

they can't pass it on, how will they build up power and clout and self-sufficiency as a community?

JOSH: You think a few black millionaires justifies a multi-billion dollar boondoggle?

RICHARDSON: Well, as long as there's a Congress, there are going to be multi-billion dollar boondoggles. We'd just like to share in them a little bit, please.

[end excerpt]

ELI: I like the argument from the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

JOSH: Did they give the number of families that actually applies to?

HRISHI: Forty-five hundred.

JOSH: They say that in the episode. That struck me, because I've always kind of wondered about the Estate Tax. I sort of get that people - those that object to it - that sort of gut reaction to it. It's like double jeopardy.

HRISHI: Right. You've paid income tax all the way...

JOSH: My dad has created, or I've created this great wealth and I want to leave something to my kids, and I get zapped again. So it was sobering to realize just how few people actually would be affected. [cross talk]

ELI: Here's another sort of piece of paper that I found in my binder that kind of interested me.

JOSH: You have to let us take some images of these and post them.

ELI: Sure. Which is an idea that I had sort of pitched for this episode, but ended up not being in this episode, was this notion that I sort of remembered from my own time in the White House, of subpoena envy, and the fact that some people get subpoenas - [cross talk]

HRISHI: [cross talk] Subpoena envy?

ELI: Yes exactly, subpoena envy.

HRISHI: Just making sure.

ELI [cross talk] I don't know if I - I'm sure I didn't coin that phrase.

JOSH: Are there different sized subpoenas?

ELI: Exactly right, no. It's more [cross talk]

HRISHI: It's more what you do with it, Josh.

JOSH: That'

ELI: I write in this memo, after checking with Ron Klain, who I called about this - and he confirms that there really were strange feelings of jealousy surrounding those who didn't receive subpoenas. So the idea was, and I pitched as a runner for this episode, you have that teaser that names all those people, and maybe Sam's not in the list, and he should be happy, everyone's telling him how lucky he is, but he feels a little off, and he goes to Ainsley or Babish, and says, does this mean he's not a big fish and people think he's out of the loop?

HRISHI: That would have been good. Ron Silver has a really strange way of saying the word, "initiative."

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

BRUNO: in initiative to steer private...

[end excerpt]

ELI: He was so great, I have to say. *The West Wing* was filled with, behind the scenes, a lot of liberal Democrats, some Republicans here and there, but Ron was kind of a conservative, almost activist. I think he was good friends with Rudy Giuliani and...

JOSH: And from what I've read about him, it was 9/11, I think, [cross talk] that was the inciting incident that really sort of pushed him right, that he [cross talk] in reaction to this. So it would have been right around this time [cross talk] that he going through this political conversion.

ELI: That's interesting. I guess I didn't probably get to know him until a little later, then. But he used to love - he was a very sweet-hearted, collegial guy, may he rest in peace. But he used to love to argue with other cast members and writers about politics in a very friendly way.

HRISHI: Are there any big things that we missed that we should definitely make sure - I got everything, except I was planning on telling you, Josh, at the beginning, that you have a killer body. That was my only note that I didn't get to.

JOSH: I can sell my farm girl ass for a carton of Luckys.

HRISHI: Exactly.

[laughter]

ELI: One of many things that - I love the little barely-a-runner in the episode about Josh having been a ballerina.

JOSH: Yes, and of course it makes its way to the Oval, and President Bartlet.

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

JOSH: When I was four, I wanted to be a ballerina.

SAM: Yeah?

JOSH: I don't like to talk about it.

[end excerpt]

[West Wing Episode 3.03 excerpt]

BARTLET: Ballerina?

JOSH: Yeah, I didn't know what it was at the time. I liked the word.

BARTLET: We'll go with that for now.

[end excerpt]

ELI: One of the things I love about it is that it's actually true of Rahm Emanuel.

HRISHI: Right.

ELI: And I think that Josh Lyman is the character - you'd have to ask Aaron, but was a composite of a lot of those sort of war room people, but just because Josh came closest to being this sort of brass knuckles pol among the *West Wing* crew, I think that any Rahm-isms

that made their way into the show inevitably ended up in Brad's character, and Rahm, I know, is aware of this, and it was just this odd thing, more-so in Rahm's case than in Josh Lyman's case, that [cross talk] fierce former soldier in the Israeli army, like bad-ass guy, had actually studied ballet.

HRISHI: Yeah, he's a ballerino.

JOSH: Bradley has a daughter who's a dancer. I wonder if he's played this episode for her.

HRISHI: That's true. Ballet - kind of a ballet prodigy.

ELI: And I found in the binder, too, long memos of people suggesting all kinds of history of his ballet, whatever, none of which made its way into the episode, smartly.

JOSH: Sadly.

ELI: Smartly.

JOSH: Sadly.

ELI: Smartly and sadly.

HRISHI: Alright. Hashtag wank wonks, wonk wank. Hashtag wonk wank. Well thanks so much for joining us, Eli.

ELI: Great pleasure.

JOSH: That was a great talk.

HRISHI: And thanks to all of you guys for listening. We hope you'll join us next time. In the meantime if you want to discuss this episode with other West Wing Weekly listeners or with any of us, you can tweet at us - Eli, your Twitter handle?

ELI: Just @eliattie.

JOSH: That's E-L-I-A-T-T-I-E.

ELI: I will answer all of your questions about Will Bailey and why he wasn't in this episode.

HRISHI: [laughs] I'm @hrishihirway. Josh is @joshmalina. And the show is @westwingweekly.

JOSH: Our web site is thewestwingweekly.com - if you add '/pin', you can buy a pin.

HRISHI: And our Facebook page is facebook.com/thewestwingweekly .

JOSH: And our Instagram account is instagram.com/thewestwingweekly .

HRISHI: The West Wing Weekly is a proud member of Radiotopia from PRX, a curated network of extraordinary, cutting edge podcasts. To learn more, go to radiotopia.fm . Joining us next week is a special guest,

JANEL: Donna!!!! [laughter]

JOSH: Ok

HRISHI: Ok

ELI: What's Next?

[Outro Music]