Digital Folklore

After the Episode | S2E5 (Down the Raccoon Hole)

https://digitalfolklore.fm

[Digital Folklore intro]

Perry: Hello and welcome to the After the Episode for Season 2, Episode 5, Down the Raccoon Hole.

Mason: That was a fun episode, I think. All things considered, that was fun.

Perry: Yeah. So, tell us what was going on in your happy little mind as you started to put that one together.

Mason: [chuckles] If I sound really tired, it's because I am.

Perry: [chuckles]

Mason: We were both traveling a lot individually. I just came back off a big road trip cross country to go to multiple weddings, and I'm very tired. So we had a time crunch on this one. We interviewed Brent on Friday before release. That was like a last-minute thing where we really wanted to talk to Brent, but I had forgotten to reach out to him for a long time. And then, I had reached out and it was a bit before I had heard back from Brent. And then, he was awesome and scheduled an interview with us and we got him on.

Perry: Just in time. Yeah. And I think it was a fantastic way to cap off the episode too, because it was on our wish list to kind of have that perspective of somebody that could really represent somebody who had been in a conspiracy, wrapped up deeply and then gotten out and hear their first-person perspective rather than people. Great people like Mick West saying, "Here's what you do," it's totally different to hear it from the perspective of somebody that was there and managed to get out.

Mason: Yeah, completely. And that unplugged full edition of the interview with Brent is going to be really interesting too. He had so much cool stuff to say. But I think overall it felt as close to a "Digital Folklore" episode, I think, as anything, with us traveling to the place, meet the people, everything came together really fun. That dream sequence in the beginning was a fun thing to put together using the audio from Mick West, which you recorded years ago.

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Perry: Like two years ago. Yeah. That was Episode 2 of Season 1 of my other show, 8th Layer Insights, and I talked about disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories there. And that interview with Mick West came from that. That was a lot of fun. It was a really big honor to be able to speak to Mick because anytime you see something about how to get out of conspiracy theories or how to talk rationally to somebody who is stuck in a conspiracy theory and really meet them where they are and show them evidence in a way that they're most likely to receive it, Mick West's name floats to the top. And his book, *Escaping the Rabbit Hole*, is really kind of the great representation of that as well.

Mason: Yeah, that whole interview was really cool. It seemed like it was fun to talk to him. He has a lot of information.

Perry: Yeah. Well, and one thing that a lot of people don't know about Mick is he's known for being able to talk to people that are stuck in conspiracies and give great advice to people who are concerned about friends and family members that are in that. But he kind of self-funded his own path into having that as his mission because he was a video game designer. He was the main video game designer behind the Tony Hawk skating games back in the day.

Mason: Oh, that's right. Yeah, because he worked at Neversoft.

Perry: Yeah. And then sold that off, retired very well off, and then pursued his passion, which is helping people.

Mason: From *Tony Hawk's Underground* to pulling people out of the underground.

Perry: The underground. Ooh.

Mason: I forgot that. That's really cool. Because also I played the heck out of those games when I was a kid.

Perry: Yeah. It also shows the kind of the technical mind that he has as well, and being able to really understand logic flows and also understand the gamification that is inherent in a lot of conspiracy as well.

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Mason: Yeah. That's a fascinating lens to look at the world from when you're thinking about behavior and response and the way and pace at which you are exposed to different things, which are all different considerations you have to have when designing an interactive experience like a game.

Perry: Well, and you look at now, right now, and for the past several years, he's been having to talk about things like contrails and UFOs and UAPs and those kind of things. And to be able to talk about that in a very conversant way, you also have to understand physics. And what does a video game designer that's done skateboard games understand, is that you have to deal with a physics engine as part of that.

Mason: Yeah. It's such a multifarious discipline to be a part of, or you have to be a multifarious individual. You need to have multifarious interests. I should not use words that I can't use properly.

[laughter]

Mason: But yeah, no, I think it would be cool to talk to Mick again in the future.

Perry: Yeah, I think so. I bet we can get him again. Mick and Ben Radford have also done some things together. I don't know if they've ever shared the stage before, but they've been in the same documentaries. And then, I believe that Mick and Brent have been in some shared spaces as well. And so, everything is connected in this episode.

Mason: Yeah, it really is. Everything is connected.

Perry: Almost like a conspiracy.

Mason: Right. Maybe there's something bigger going on. Have you considered that?

Perry: Just have to keep your eyes open.

Mason: Exactly. But overall, I feel like we had a really cohesive theme too, which was good, like really going into conspiracy.

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Perry: Where does the clown security fit in?

Mason: Yeah, I was just thinking of that actually and I don't know if-- I think I may need to retract my previous statement.

Perry: Well, the personalities behind it fit theme because Ben comes at everything from a skeptical point of view and is really a "show me the evidence" type of person. And I think that's where the conspiracy hook is. The creepy clown bit was purely in service of this releasing in the Halloween season.

Mason: Yeah. And also, the fact that's sort of the weird niche area of interest that Ben has so much extra knowledge on, it was really interesting to explore.

Perry: Yeah, he's probably the world's foremost expert on creepy clown lore and the research behind that, which is awesome to be able to say. He's also like the world's foremost expert on chupacabras and tons of other weird, inane things that people really like to research and talk about. And he's done Bigfoot stuff and everything else. If you've not looked at Ben Radford's stuff, listeners, you need to go check him out because he's a wealth of information and is super fun to listen to. He's got another podcast called Squaring the Strange that you need to take a listen to as well, because everything is through that critical lens. But Ben, like he mentioned in this interview, he really wants to understand some of these fun things. Like, could ghosts really exist? Is there anything really behind UFOs? Is there anything behind some weird cryptid? But he's going to go out there with an open mind and an academic, critical, research-based lens.

Mason: Yeah, you mentioned in the episode that his sort of tone is more approachable than a lot of debunker-style video things. And I get the impression, Ben would be genuinely thrilled if someone was like, "Here is irrefutable evidence of ghost activity," or something.

Perry: Yeah, I mean, because he got into this because he used to look at all those fun magazines, Weekly World News, and all that fun stuff that would show like Bat Boy or the Cryptid of the Week or whatever on it and it's like, "This is really, really cool stuff. I wonder if we can find it."

Mason: Yeah.

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Perry: And then, because he has a psychology background and an education background, he's going to approach those things with the enthusiasm of hoping that he finds something. But at the same time, if he doesn't, the enthusiasm of saying, "Here's why this, at least in these circumstances, is not a provable thing." And he'll never say, "This doesn't exist," at least what I've heard. He's like, "No, the evidence for this claim doesn't really add up."

Mason: You need to improve your methodologies.

Perry: Yeah. Which is, I think, the perfect credible way of doing that. So, he will debunk a mound of evidence, but he's not going to debunk the idea of something.

Mason: Yeah. Which is super cool. I've listened to a bit of Squaring the Strange. I've been meaning to add that to my rotation to get more into it, because it seems really good and Ben was so fun to talk to.

Perry: It's good. And for folks who haven't heard that yet, the format is, they'll usually open up, they'll talk about some of the interesting factoids of the week that have hit the news and approach that from a skeptical point of view, and that's like the first 30 minutes. And then, the last hour-ish is an interview or a deeper discussion about a specific topic. Something like chupacabra or the UAP testimony before Congress or anything else, really.

Mason: Man, bringing up contrails earlier, it's a bit of a jump back in time, but I always think too, when I worked in radio, there was one time someone dropped off a bunch of pamphlets and a poster and a bunch of documents all about how the government was seeding things into the air using contrails. And I hung up all the posters in my office because I thought they were so funny.

[chuckles]

Perry: It's just a fun personality trait. You want to give into the aesthetic of it.

Mason: Yeah, well, the graphic design on every conspiracy I've ever seen is phenomenal. The people putting together infographics for conspiracies are really compelling and interesting and sometimes campy in a way that I find very fun.

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Perry: So, I want to talk about this intro sequence with Mick West. We talked about the history of Mick West's interview in that but talk a little bit about the sound design because there's something going on other than just this just being a random dream sequence, there's things that are connected underneath the covers, right?

Mason: Yeah. It was kind of an instance of trying to do something that I know exactly how I would want to do it in a visual medium, but trying to do it with audio only was a challenge, which is trying to do a dream sequence. And so, the whole time, if you mute Mick West's part, which you can't do in the finished episode because it doesn't work like that, I wish it did, but if you mute Mick West's part--

Perry: Oh, we could put that on Patreon though.

Mason: Oh, we could.

Perry: Yeah. Pull that sequence out, we'll mute Mick and then just put the dream under sound effects and everything else out there.

Mason: Yeah. Because there's like a whole little story you can kind of follow. There's a person who's running from outside, clips through like bolt cutters and shoulder slams his way through a gate, and then climbs a ladder to a roof. Kicks a door in and enters this facility. Walks up to a computer terminal and starts interacting with it. And then the phone starts ringing. So, he starts panicking, running down these hallways and checking doors before he gets to the elevator, opens the elevator. And this phone ringing continues to follow him as he's sort of panicking. Takes the elevator down to a lower level, breaks glass to get through a locked door, and runs out into the street. And the phone ringing is still getting louder and louder.

And it's just, you can follow this whole-- I know exactly how I would animate it or what we would show on the screen. That probably has the most concentrated chunks of sound effects because I made that whole story just out of library sounds, and that was a fun challenge. If you're a sound designer and anyone ever tells you that it's not viable to use things from libraries or you should be making all of your own stuff, that's not true. You can

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use libraries to do a lot as long as you're careful and layer and [chuckles] spend a stupid amount of time on it.

Perry: And also realize that the thing you're trying to represent might not actually be the sound that you need to represent that thing.

Mason: Yeah. I'm still not happy with the switch out of the dream sequence. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out the right way to get it to build up and then suddenly be gone. But ultimately, crunch time was crunch time, and it was 04:00 AM.

Perry: So, this is the midpoint of the season. Where does this fit and what is it connecting us to?

Mason: Yeah, so we've resolved Digby's little spat with conspiracy, but there still might be something bigger that's going on in the world that we're going to explore now that this has sort of laid some of the groundwork for, as well as other stuff in the previous episodes. Like you said, this is the halfway point of the 10-episode season. So basically, we've scattered a bunch of Chekhov's guns all over the ground, and then we're going to be picking those up as we move forward. And I'm excited to see how that all comes together because though it is all planned out and outlined, it is always interesting how things sort of change and morph as we're going through and doing them. There's a few details of this narrative that I had not planned for that really just juice up some other aspects of it. So, I think it's going to be really fun.

Part of it too was to get Digby more fleshed out than just this character that's always in distress and always like screaming or running or freaking out in some way. Like, getting Digby more characterization, I think, was a big function of this.

Perry: Putting a horse virus in his brain really helps flesh that out.

Mason: Yeah. [chuckles] That last scene, that was really fun to write.

Perry: Now, I think though that Dr. Sphynkyll should be very good at discerning what a horse virus is and just like giving ivermectin or something, right?

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Mason: Right. Given he's a vet, apparently. But who knows what Dr. Sphynkyll actually specializes in, if anything. [chuckles] I love a vague doctor. I know that's kind of a trope in animation and in things in general, but I love a vague doctor who is just-- you can't really trust them, but they're just--

Perry: You don't want to go to a vague doctor though.

Mason: No, you don't. But they're-- [crosstalk]

Perry: Isn't that just a general practitioner?

Mason: Yeah, I guess vague doctor is a pretty bad way of putting general practitioner. "This is my doctor, Dr. Vaguely."

Perry: Apologies for any general practitioners listening.

Mason: Dr. Vaguely.

Perry: You have better things to do than to listen to things about Digital Folklore though.

Mason: Yeah, that's true. However, I will say Dr. Vaguely has got to be a character in something now.

Perry: Ooh, Dr. Vaguely.

Mason: Yeah.

Perry: I also had a friend who suggested a film noir name for a detective, Twice Nightly, and I can't stop thinking about that because I think that's like a great-- "It's me, Twice Nightly."

But anyway, listener shoutouts and reviews we should probably hit on.

Mason: Yeah, let's talk about a few things, because we have a few things that came in over the past weeks. No new reviews. If anybody listening has not yet rated and reviewed on their podcast platform of choice or Apple Podcasts, go over to Apple Podcasts or Spotify or

wherever, give us five stars, leave some nice thoughts and we will read those nice thoughts on air. If you have things that are not nice, send those to us at *hello@8thlayermedia.com* and we'll read it when we can.

Perry: Yeah, slip those quietly into our email inbox. There was a writeup that Simplecast put out though, that it seems like it was from earlier because it said it was written around launch time, but it just came out.

Perry: Yeah. So, it looks like that was written around launch time with some of the pre-release materials that we had. But Lisette, who is the author of that review, did a great job capturing the vibe that we hit specifically in Season One. And I did get some communication after the fact that Lisette has been listening ever since and was hugely complimentary of Season 2 as well. So, thank you so much for getting that out there during Spooky season. I think that's the perfect time for something like that to drop and continue to validate the work that we've done.

Mason: Yeah. And then the review, like Lisette's review did a really good job of talking about the crux of the show, which I think is cool, about how important folklore is to study and pay attention to, and that's really cool to see.

Perry: Yeah. We also got a really cool email to our *hello@8thlayermedia.com*. This is from Aubrey Anderson. And Aubrey was talking about personal group folklore. Mason, what did you think about that?

Mason: Yeah, Aubrey shared this great story of a bit of holiday folklore from Aubrey's family involving this cursed-looking potato that they would keep in their Christmas village. And it was really good. And I want to record the contents of this email and use it somewhere, either in an episode or just as like a little mini thing, because it's a really nice story. It's a bit long. I was tempted to just read through the whole thing, but it's phenomenal. Potato Lord and the way that Potato Lord played a role in Aubrey's family and holiday traditions.

Perry: Yeah. So, here's just a couple sentences. It says, "They took an old, withered potato that had somehow hidden in the back of the pantry for long enough to dry out and shrivel up. It had long eyes that had also grown and dried, making it look like a B horror movie creature.

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They stuck toothpicks into it, making legs and a head for it, and then, [pause] it was placed into the village."

Mason: [laughs] The whole thing, it's incredible. It's super fun, and it's just a great example of how something innocuous and silly can become really meaningful.

Perry: Yeah.

Mason: Towards the end, Aubrey says, "My mother passed away from an aggressive form of breast cancer two years ago. The village has been split between my sister and my daughter. Potato Lord is my oldest son's responsibility. His story and legend continues." And, yeah, I thought it was really awesome.

Perry: Yeah. Family folklore is so much fun, and I think for anybody, not to talk about TV, but there was this show, *This Is Us*, that just finished like a year or so ago during the kind of end of the pandemic, and there's a whole bunch of family folklore that's wrapped up into that with this holiday tradition around Thanksgiving that they celebrated. And it just shows how these family units over generations create their own folklore and folk traditions. And I thought that this was a fun example of that just happening in real life, not written as some kind of TV show.

Mason: I completely agree. It's heartwarming and also silly and weird, and I love that.

Perry: Which is what good family memories should be, right?

Mason: Yeah.

Perry: It's heartwarming and so down to earth that they're quirky and weird.

Mason: Yeah. One of the pieces of family folklore that I have that I've shared with friends because it's something that I always thought was nice, was we had a big old shadow box on the wall, and my parents were very insistent when I was young to not take things off of it and play with them. "They were things that you're supposed to look at and feel happy," is what they would tell me. And so, they started just calling them happy-looking-ats. And so now,

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every time I see just like knickknacks or tchotchkes, I always think of them as happy-looking-ats, which is just like a--

Perry: Oh, nice.

Mason: All those little turns of phrase. Everyone has things like that, and I think that's very cool.

Perry: [crosstalk] One other thing, Mason, I didn't tell you about this, but Karla Carter, who's on our Discord and is also a listener of not only this show, but 8th Layer Insights and who I interviewed on that. She's a professor of cybersecurity at Bellevue University. She's been interweaving folklore into some of her cybersecurity stuff as a result of maybe this show.

Mason: Oh, no way.

Perry: But one of the things that she did around Halloween was-- and I think it was in conjunction with the English department there, was that they had a contest of writing a piece of folklore, and she sent one of the samples over already. And I did agree that if she can send a couple of samples over, maybe we can do a dramatic reading of those at some point--

Mason: Oh, hell yeah.

Perry: -in the future. That'd be fun to do, especially given some of your-- you see the inner workings of the show, *13*, all the time, which is really a good dramatic reading of a lot of listener fiction that comes through as well. So, I think we might be able to give a semi treatment like that at some point.

Mason: Yeah, I would love to do that. That would be so much fun, depending on how many there are too. If we need extra voices, I could probably even talk to some of the *13* people about lending some voice lines to it.

Perry: Nice. So, Karla, if you're listening, I did get your Discord message, and we will jump on that as soon as we have a little bit of bandwidth.

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Mason: We also got an email from someone called Christina Morris.

Perry: Yeah.

Mason: And she seems super cool, an Italian content creator who has a website that I am in love with. The design of Christina's website is so cool, and Christina wanted to collaborate with us, and when Christina reached out, we both had been on the road. Just absolutely pedal to the metal.

Perry: Christina, yeah, thank you for sending that in. I did respond quickly and just said that I'm sure that we'll find a way to collaborate. We are just kind of at the end of our time limits in a lot of cases right now. So, we'll put some mental energy into finding ways to do that and make that happen. But it may be a couple of months from now.

Mason: Oh, I didn't see that you responded, if that's a testament to how hectic things have been.

Perry: Yeah, things have been super hectic. We keep telling people, if you want to get in touch with us, reach out to us at *hello@8thlayermedia.com*. We have the intention of responding to things. Sometimes, we're just slow because both of our lives have kind of exploded. Not in bad ways, but just with lots of crazy busyness.

Mason: Yeah. Like, particularly lately, but I've been starring a lot of emails to make sure I get back to. There have been a handful of people that have reached out about collaborating. If you haven't heard back from me, it is not because we are not going to collaborate, it is just because of how hectic things are. I'm making like a roster, everyone who reaches out to me, so that I can tap into that.

Perry: One last one. And this is, I think, not to rank things, but I think this one is super special. We got a great piece of physical mail from Dorian, who's on our Discord server, and it was addressed to Digby, which I thought was great.

Mason: [chuckles] Yeah.

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Perry: Digby got a piece of fan mail. And, Dorian, I didn't see an explicit bit of permission to share the contents of that, but just know that meant the world to both Mason and I, and obviously Digby as well.

[Digby cheering]

Mason: Yeah.

Perry: So, thank you so much.

Mason: Yeah. Thank you, Dorian. That was awesome. That was so much fun to read. The bracelet is amazing. Everything. That was phenomenal. That was so cool. That made me so happy. That also made Brooke, who voices Digby, very happy to read.

Perry: Yeah. That was super satisfying in a lot of ways. So again, thank you. We won't share the contents unless at some point you want us to. But it meant a lot.

Mason: Yeah, it really did.

Perry: Oh, you know what we should talk about?

Mason: Oh, yeah. So, this is the section where we talk about Patreon and maybe things that are going to end up on there.

Perry: Yes. What's going on on Patreon?

Mason: [sighs] I think I know what you're going to say, and I think you should say it because you're excited about it.

Perry: [laughs] I don't know if I'm excited about it [Mason laughs] so much as opportunistic. So, we're always wondering, just like, "How do we give value at Patreon?" And we do want to scale Patreon more in the future as well and have some fun things like that. Right now, we're still just growing all these different platforms and figuring out what goes where.

Mason: And how to manage them.

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Perry: How to manage them, how to keep up with the demand, given our time crunches that we're always under. So, this connects back to another Discord comment that we got where somebody made the comment of, "Hey, I know that you intend to make these very family friendly, and for the most part they are. But every now and then, it would make sense to have a disclaimer for some of these darker topics, or if you're going to end up talking about something related to sexuality and so on." Even though we're doing those in very PG-13 ways, sometimes a parent just wants to have that discussion with their child for the first time rather than hearing me or Mason or a folklorist have that discussion. Makes total sense.

Mason: Yeah.

Perry: That being said, [Mason chuckles] there are typically some very interesting discussions that we get into with folklorists that are not suitable for release in our normal feed. One of those came from Ben Radford. And if you are a parent in a car right now with your child, you may want to pause this bit.

Mason: Or just skip ahead like 15 seconds.

Perry: Or so. I mean, it may drag out longer than that.

Mason: That's true.

Perry: Go forward like a minute because this deserves a little bit of discussion.

Matt: Hi, Matt Bliss, the editor here again. Just letting you know that this explicit section will only last for 2 minutes and 30 seconds. That means as soon as it begins, if you click that skip forward 30 seconds button five times, you'll be fine. Here we go.

Perry: One of the main things that came out in clown lore is that there's a lot of disturbing things that come with it. And Ben Radford, in his discussion with us, talked about a masturbating clown that was on public access TV.

Mason: A clown named Crotchy.

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Perry: I always struggle to remember his name. If it's like Stiffy the Clown or--

Mason: It's Crotchy.

Perry: Yeah. Crotchy.

Mason: That name is burned into my memory after Ben was telling us.

Perry: And we were trying to figure out how do we-- Because it's such a good story and it made it to his book, how do we get that released in the. I mean, Crotchy had some release potentially, but where do we release this in a safe way? And so, this story will end up on Patreon about the same time that we release Ben's unplugged episode. So, maybe not a week from now, but around the same time that you see Ben Radford's. We'll pull that clip out, separate it, and make that easy to access on Patreon for folks.

Mason: It's quite a story.

Perry: It is quite a story. It's slightly disturbing.

Mason: There's also in realm of adult content going on Patreon, since this is probably sort of the zone that will be skipped if people are trying to skip past it, we also have that story from Paul Prater about Paul doing a performance somewhat unexpectedly at an adult entertainer's birthday party.

Perry: Right. And some of the antics that happened there.

Mason: Which is also very interesting. [chuckles]

Perry: Yeah. Again, when you're studying folklore or talking about folklore, you are talking about everything related to the human condition. And of course, sexuality is a big part of that. It's why we exist.

Mason: Right. And so naturally, there are a lot of funny and interesting stories that come out involving that. And our main feed is not the place for those but our Patreon might be.

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Perry: Our Patreon might be, and we'll label those clearly too. So, if you're a parent and you're sharing that stuff on Patreon as it comes out, we'll make sure that you're aware.

Mason: As is morally correct, we will do everything in our power to make Crotchy the Clown not a surprise to encounter.

Perry: Nobody wants to be surprised by Crotchy the Clown. And Ben also talks about-- I think he tried to get in touch with-- no, Crotchy reached out to him.

Mason: Asking for royalties. [laughs]

Perry: Hopefully after washing his hands.

Mason: Because he was mentioning-- he wanted royalties from Ben's book, which is a bold move. A very bold move.

Perry: One of many.

Mason: Yeah, one of many bold moves made by Crotchy the Clown. Christmas.

Perry: Anyway, we got to get away. Okay, what do we look for in the next episode?

Mason: We're going to talk about AI, which I'm really excited about. We've done these interviews already. So, I know what's in them and what we're going to cover. Talking about AI. AI and folklore, AI and misinformation. Kind of a broad strokes' introduction to the topic of AI, because I'm certain it's going to come up again in future episodes of this show. We might talk about AI's implications in specific aspects of folklore, but this is going to be kind of our first AI episode.

Perry: And if you're super into AI, listen to what will be the next 8th Layer Insights episode as well, because I'm going to have a chunk of Lynne McNeil's interview where she mentioned AI. So, you've heard that before. But I'll also be doing a number of fun things with AI as the centerpiece of the conversation. One of those is, and I've recorded it, I've got to trim it down to an acceptable length, but I recorded a 45-minute conversation that I had with the voice version of ChatGPT.

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Mason: Oh, really?

Perry: And asked it about lots of interesting things, and even its take on Lynne McNeil's comment of in many ways AI is divining the folk belief of our society and asked ChatGPT about that and got some interesting responses.

Mason: Oh, I am super excited to hear this.

Perry: So, the only thing I'm really doing other than just kind of editing out some of the questions that I thought rambled on a little bit or were not hitting the mark for the episode, so I would edit those out in any interview. The only other thing that I'm changing is I'm cutting out some of the delay between me asking the question and ChatGPT coming back with the answer. Everything else is the same. So, I'm editing out maybe two to three seconds between me asking and ChatGPT answering, but I'm not editing any of the responses because I don't want to misrepresent context.

Mason: I am genuinely so excited to hear this episode of 8th Layer Insights.

Perry: I'll just give you an example real quick. Mason, what do we want to ask?

Mason: Does ChatGPT know about our show?

Perry: We could ask just about the topic of Digital Folklore.

Mason: That's true.

Perry: Let's just ask, "What can you tell me about the Digital Folklore podcast and answer in Gen Z speak?"

ChatGPT: Oh, the Digital Folklore podcast. Um, that's totally the vibe if you're into exploring how digital culture is like morphing folklore and storytelling, you know. They dive into how memes, viral stories, and internet trends are basically our modern-day myths and legends. It's all about how we share stuff online and how that shapes our culture. Super relevant if you're down with how the internet's changing the game in how we tell stories and connect

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with each other. It's kind of like sitting down with your squad and unpacking all the crazy stuff that goes down online. You listen to it yet?

Perry: I am a host of that, and I'm also on with the cohost. So, I'm Perry Carpenter and I'm sitting here with Mason Amadeus, who is the other cohost.

Mason: Hello.

ChatGPT: Oh, that's awesome. Great to meet you, Perry and Mason. Having a blast with the podcast, what's the latest topic you guys have been tackling?

Perry: We've recently been talking about conspiracy theories and then also juxtaposing that with creepy clown folklore. And we're going to talk about AI pretty soon.

ChatGPT: Sounds like you're diving into some seriously intriguing stuff. Conspiracy theories can get wild. And the creepy clown folklore, that's a classic mix of weird and fascinating. AI is a huge topic with so much to unpack, like how it's changing everything from creativity to everyday life. What's got you interested in bringing AI into the mix?

Mason: Oh, wow.

Perry: We'll have that discussion as part of our next After the Episode, and we'll bring you back into it. So, thank you so much for talking to us right now. We're going to let you go. Is that okay?

ChatGPT: Absolutely. It sounds like a plan. I'm here whenever you need to deep dive into AI. Take care, Perry and Mason, and have a fantastic time recording your next session.

Perry: All right. Thanks.

Mason: Wow. Ah. It is. Maybe it is just really wedged in the Uncanny Valley because, holy smokes, the Gen Z talk sort of faded away as time progressed.

Perry: It did. Yeah, it didn't keep the context window for that.

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Mason: Yeah, I mean, it is like super relevant if you're unpacking this kind of thing with your squad.

Perry: [chuckles] All right, so I think that we've enticed everybody hopefully enough to want to listen to the AI episode now that we've shown what the Uncanny Valley and beyond can look like. And we've got some really cool interviews set up with John Laudun, who I met at the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research meeting. That's turning out to be a very productive meeting for us.

Mason: Yeah, really.

Perry: [crosstalk] -a lot of guests that have come out of that. So, we have him. We have another gentleman that I met as part of an AI masterclass bootcamp that I was part of. And we'll have some other fun stuff to throw in as well.

Mason: It's going to be a good one. It's going to be a fun one.

Perry: Also, maybe even featuring ChatGPT if we want to.

Mason: Who knows? Until then, thanks for listening. Again, if you're not in our Discord, you should jump in. It's free. It's fun. It's just like a big old chat room. There's a link to that to invite you in the show notes. Follow us on Twitter or X or whatever it is called at the time you are listening if it is still extant, *@digiFolklorePod.* You can find us on Instagram and TikTok as well.

Perry: Yeah, we're not as active on Instagram and TikTok as we should be though. We have to figure out how to splash around the social media pool a little bit more.

Mason: Yeah.

Perry: And again, if you want to support our show and just haven't done it yet or on the fence, you should join our Patreon, at least for a little bit.

Mason: Yeah.

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Perry: And we do have $1000-a-month subscriber option for Patreon.

Mason: Yes, that is still--

Perry: Don't forget about that.

Mason: Nobody's taking us up on it.

Perry: I wonder why.

Mason: Yeah, I don't know why. I can't imagine. Thanks for listening. Thanks for hanging.

Perry: All right. Thank you so much. And we will catch you on the next one.

Mason: See you on the flip side.

[Digital Folklore theme playing]

Perry: I'm Perry Carpenter.

Mason: And I'm Mason Amadeus.

Perry: And this is Digital Folklore.

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