



## Digital Folklore

BONUS. Season 2 Episode 1.05

*After the Episode Discussion with Perry & Mason*

<https://digitalfolklore.fm>

[Intro clip] Welcome, you've got ... [/Intro clip]

Perry Carpenter:

Hi, I'm Perry Carpenter.

Mason Amadeus:

And I'm Mason Amadeus.

Perry Carpenter:

And this is... [transitions to digitized voice]...*Digital Folklore*.

[Perry coughs...]

It always hurts me to do that part.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, it's honestly a little bit scary every time you do it, and I've just gotten, I've kind of gotten used to it.

Perry Carpenter:

It's a really weird feeling...

Hey, if you're listening to this right now and you've not yet listened to episode one of season two, this does have spoilers. So we encourage you to go back, listen to episode one of season two right now, and then join us after that for this behind the scenes episode.

Mason Amadeus:

And if you did that, I just want to say interesting choice. It's an interesting choice you've made.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, because I think we're going to actually label this as after the episode, episode... episode.

Mason Amadeus:



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Yeah. We'll pretty clearly label it.

Perry Carpenter:

So if you've decided to go for the spoiler episode, then I don't know,

Mason Amadeus:

Honestly, I respect that. I think it's a very interesting way to move through the world. And you do you.

Perry Carpenter:

You like to read the last page first?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I've known several people who do that.

Perry Carpenter:

My wife does that.

Mason Amadeus:

It's so interesting to me. Anyway, you do you.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, you do you.

Mason Amadeus:

So this is our right out of the gate behind the scenes episode, yeah. Just a little state of the podcast and just kind of talking about the making of, right?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. You're probably wondering why I called you here today. I wanted to give our listeners a little bit of a behind the scenes look at what you put yourself through if we get ready for these episodes, because



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there's quite a lot, right? There's the writing bit. Of course, we schedule and we talk to lots of people and do some cool stuff. But if we were to pull back the curtain and get into maybe some of the sound design elements, how do you think about the framing of this weird blended hodgepodge of genres that we've put together from a sound design perspective?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, that was the whole thing of the journey of finding the identity of the show. As we started, we were like, "Well, what is the unique angle we can bring?" It's probably worth mentioning a tiny bit of background, is that you host the show 8th Layer Insights, which is a cybersecurity podcast, and inside of that you've done a bunch of these little sketches where you talk to a phishing email and a firewall and it's wicked fun. And I loved that show, and I work on my little side project of PodCube, which is just a highly produced comedy sketch show. And so I feel like neither of us thought of this at the start, but what happened was both of those influences kind of bled out into what we've done now.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, yeah. I think that the original way that I thought about Digital Folklore was just a folklore version of 8th Layer Insights, and then we kind of created that is one of the draft first episodes, and it still didn't feel organic enough. It didn't feel like it had that special thing that it needed to be. And so as soon as we added some cut scenes with us in a more dramatized area, it felt right for us. Took a few other people by surprise, but it felt right for us.

Mason Amadeus:

The thing I love about it, I think it's fun to provide a momentum that is outside of what you're learning because I love edutainment content just in general.

Perry Carpenter:

Me Too.

Mason Amadeus:



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And the best of it is it's got jokes or funny things. It's just an element of fun that gets added onto learning. And I am also the kind of person who will read very dry stuff to learn, but I think it's more fun to make something like this, so.

Perry Carpenter:

What it came down to is just finding the right body style for our specific Trojan horse, right? We're trying to get all of this fun content out to people, but we also have to make it palatable in some way.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, and it's interesting, we definitely limit it too, by doing what we're doing, but I think when we met up at Podcast Movement '22, one of the things we talked about was like, "Well, who do we want to listen to this show?" And one of the things I remember us talking about was someone driving in the car with their kids. I don't have kids, but I can't imagine that kids would want to sit through you listening to something that's really dry. But if it has a talking raccoon and silly jokes, that's more fun. And it's not just for kids, adults also like that.

Perry Carpenter:

And even for people without families, we wanted it to feel somewhat educational and indulgent at the same time.

Mason Amadeus:

Yes.

Perry Carpenter:

And I think that that served us really well because we did hear in the survey and in tons of other comments, people saying that they do listen to this in the car with their kids and their kids enjoy it. It's the thing that keeps their kids attentive rather than just getting in little mini arguments in the backseat. So I actually love that a lot.

Mason Amadeus:



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Yeah, same. That made me feel really happy to know that we had achieved that. So before I talk exactly about the process of what we're doing now, I want to quickly mention where we went wrong in the first season, and it's that we did not map the narrative arc through the entire season 'cause we didn't know we were going to have one.

Perry Carpenter:

We created an arc as we went, right? There's a definite starting point and an end point.

Mason Amadeus:

I think the thing that struck me was it's a bit like a D&D campaign, right? 'Cause we started meeting these characters in these places and there's all these little breadcrumbs and which ones are we going to follow? But that can come across as a little bit disjointed. So for season two, for the first time ever in my life, I wrote an outline that is massive for the entire season that outlines not just the narrative arc, but also all of the interviews that we want to do and ties them in together in a way that I think is going to be so much more cohesive. In the framing of the narrative of each episode this season, because it's all planned out, everything ties together with the informational topics we're talking about. And rather than just doing all of our... What's the opposite of foreshadowing? Back shadowing?

Perry Carpenter:

Backward masking? No, that's not it.

Mason Amadeus:

The whole first season was a lot of retroactive like, "Oh, and then that links to this, and then that links to this." There's a lot of foreshadowing and actual progression that you're going to feel as we go through this one, which I'm really proud of. We have a very fun story that stands on its own as a story and also provides us all of these different ins for the different episodes. And something that's very fun about this too is that there's a fair bit more acting that we're going to be getting from these academics, which is -

Perry Carpenter:

We'll see how they like that. The ones that we've interviewed so far for this season have been very, very good sports and surprisingly competent actors as well.



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Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I think it's episode seven that Andrew Peck comes in and when we did the interview with Andrew already and he was just like, "Well, we'll see what four years of high school theater gets you." And then when you hear that episode, his acting was really good. It was awesome.

Perry Carpenter:

It was actually, yeah, it was fantastic.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, he was incredible. And all of the people that were talking to are so charismatic. I feel it's very fun to give the people we're interviewing a chance to just be a little bit silly and a little bit creative and a little bit weird with us.

Perry Carpenter:

Well, and it goes back to my childhood at least. I don't know what childhood TV you may have been raised on, but Sesame Street, The Muppets, Scooby-Doo, they all had these crossovers with real celebrities. We're creating that in a little bit more, hopefully a little bit more grownup way, but it is fun. It's educational in its own way, but then we bring this other value add in, which is the celebrity or the subject matter expert, and they get to play in that playground for a bit.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, that's exactly it. It's not just that they're being celebrity cameos, but then there's a pretty deep interview that we do with them.

Perry Carpenter:

Right.

Mason Amadeus:

So for season two, for the first time in my life, made an outline that has the entire narrative story and then all of the guests that we want to interview and tracking for, who have we recorded interviews for? Who do we have to reschedule, ways to work around things that might come up? If someone's like, "I



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really don't want to act." That's fine, and I have a bunch of built-in safeguards to try and make sure that we maintain our sort of integrity throughout it. It also means that the editing workload of this podcast is a lot different than the editing workload of any other sort of nonfiction talk podcast. I want to say it's different. I'm not trying to say it's more, but it's different because like you think of Radiolab, there's a lot of sound design and stuff flying around. Oh, yeah. But my style of sound design that I'm sort of porting over from PodCube is that sort of diegetic style of, it's like watching something without the visual component.

I'm working in a ton of different ambiances that I'm crafting for the different spaces we exist in and making sure those are consistent episode to episode so that you have this sonic signature that I'm sure nobody's going to notice that part, but it's a subliminal thing.

Perry Carpenter:

I do, as a listener on other podcasts, especially fiction podcasts, there's different room tone for different rooms, different ambience for different settings, and I love in your scripts the things that probably nobody sees other than us and then maybe the voice actors and the folklorists that we have come do acting with us as well, is you specifically talk about the camera moving and following people in the script, which really kind of sells the idea that you're trying to soundscape for.

Mason Amadeus:

Yes. Actually that's something that blew my own mind, not in a, I'm so clever for doing this way, but in just like I didn't think to approach it this way, but as I was scripting, I've started writing all of my stage directions as though we were filming this because I realized, and if anyone out there is trying to write a script for audio fiction, I think this is a really good way to do it because I've realized rather than try and convey the sounds I would be making or what we would be hearing, we hear shattering glass and a scuff of shoes. That's instructions that may not work. That's saying find shattering glass MP3 and scuffing shoes MP3, but if you say the camera pans through the broken window as the fight ensues, it's evoking in your mind the image of what's happening, and then you're recreating that in sound. I found it makes me not limit the choices I might make if I'm describing it visually and it's counterintuitive, but it works so much better in the script writing process.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.



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Mason Amadeus:

Here is the stage direction from episode one that absolutely nobody is going to notice, but 100% informed the way I sound designed this. As we're entering the Wizards Tower with Mark, he says, "Why don't we come inside? We can sit down and have a proper chat." And then the stage direction reads, Mark throws open the giant wooden door at the base of the tower and the group enters. The foyer is cavernous. Rows of coat hooks and racks of shoes flank either side of the entrance, a hodgepodge of mismatched mailboxes form an island in the center. A spiral staircase winds around the circumference of the room all the way to the top. Many doors of varying color are placed at regular intervals on the way up, though their numbering appears random and later on, Mark shuffles off to prepare some tea as Perry and Mason sit down in a pair of overstuffed armchairs. Mark's apartment is large and open concept, yet made to feel small and cozy by innumerable bookshelves adorned with all manner of tchotchkes.

Not only did I spell tchotchkes right first try, which I'm proud of, but also all of those notes inform the sound design choices I'm going to make from the ambience to the things we're interacting with, but not in a way that is so prescriptive that it feels limiting. And at least for me in my creative process as a sound designer, if I got a script like this, I would be able to interpret it in a way that's really fun.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. Well, and it sounds like at that point you also have to grab your D&D dice and just roll.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, that's literally the biggest note. I had a notepad up on my other screen as I was writing everything, and one of the top notes on it was Write this like it's a D&D campaign. That's helpful for me, someone who has run D&D campaigns. I don't know if that's helpful for everybody, but.

Perry Carpenter:

I don't know. But it does make it to where I'm thinking from a Patreon perspective or even just on the website, we should start to make some of the scripts available so that people can get a flavor of that.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I would love that. I mean, it'd be easy enough. We got PDFs because we use them.





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Perry Carpenter:

From a sound design perspective, what is the hardest part of this? Is it finding sounds? Is it finding music? Is it building the right pacing? Where do you find yourself rabbit holing and losing time?

Mason Amadeus:

I got to say, of all of the different parts of making this show, the thing that takes the most time for me is not anything to do with sound design, but editing the interviews down is the hardest part. But if we're going to limit it to the sound design choices, there is that paralysis that you get when you are... I use libraries. I don't Foley everything. I will Foley some things because my style of sound design is a lot of micro sounds. So if me saying that, you're probably going to notice it now. A lot of small cloth movements, object interactions, you know? Someone's picking something off a table, folding a piece of paper. I'm paying a lot of attention to those tiny things because to me, the sound design serves to illustrate the body language of the actors that you don't get in an audio medium. So my focus is almost always on those little moments.

I probably spend a lot of time just tweaking cloth sounds and something that I have to say that you may notice or may not is I have used one audio file for almost all of the cloth, and it is a 28-second MP3 called rolling around on bedsheets. I use a lot of little pieces of that, but moving and placing those takes a lot of time. As far as the thing that takes the most time, it's probably finding anything really specific in a library. 'Cause the sound design part is really the part that I think is fun and the part that goes, I think, the fastest for me, and it's amazing what sound design can do to save a take that is less than good. There'll be a lot of times where my inflection is weird, but if I put a little bit of a cloth movement and me setting something down, my weird take is suddenly just like I'm doing something else, and so I'm not paying attention to how I'm speaking as much. It hides a lot of sins. It hides some of the noise in the recordings and things like that.

So the sound design part does take a lot of time, but that is just from a function of it's a lot of detail work. It's a lot of very carefully placing, balancing, mixing. Trying to make the show sound good at any volume is tougher than you might think because stuff naturally sounds good when it's louder, so there's an inclination to compress it all. So you just have this brick and everything's really prominent. Something that I think really helps too is I tie everything into the sound of the room. Every single thing is being fed through a reverb bus, even when we're not in a space that's echoey, like a very short reverb, specifically convolution reverb, if there's any audio nerds so that everything sounds like it's in the same room, everything exists in the same space scene to scene to try and create a cohesive feeling. I could talk ad



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nauseum about sound design, and maybe at some point I'll do a little session breakdown of one of our episodes. But yeah, I guess in short to answer your question, what takes the most time is editing the interviews down because that's just tricky.

And the second most time is just finding the right sounds if I can't Foley them.

Perry Carpenter:

When you think about the interviews, Mark's interview and Daisy's interview, what functional purpose do they serve in the narrative and how do they get us ready for episode two and beyond?

Mason Amadeus:

That's the thing that's tricky is going in with expectations to these interviews because you want to give the person you're talking to, the freedom to talk about the things they're excited about. Neither you nor I go into these saying, "Can you say this?" Except for the script, but any of the questions like, "Actually, can you say this? 'Cause this is what I want you to say." So I think the hardest thing is really just cutting it down to be concise and short without losing anything that the person really brought to the table. But we interview people for an hour or sometimes an hour and a half, and then it gets cut down to 15 minutes. So getting the best parts out of that. Some of it is serving the function. So in this first episode, this episode is ostensibly about us starting to make season two of the podcast and asking people, how do we do research? How do you sustain something like this? What is it like to make media about this kind of thing? How does that itself intersect with folklore?

So Perry and I function as the audience stand in for someone who might be interested in learning about folklore or learning about creating media and interacting with groups of media, because I mean, we don't have time to go into the ties between media and folklore, people creating things with other people. That's the function that it serves. So when cutting down Daisy's interview and Mark's interview, a lot of what I'm focusing on are the clips that bring that to light. So like Daisy talking about how they do their show folk wise on Twitch and bring stuff to a new audience. Mark talking about the struggles that he has with various aspects of creating his show for eight years. All of these have a lot of tangents in them, and a lot of them are worth keeping. So it's really that decision process of like, well, what is too tangential and what do we not have time to get into? That's the hardest thing to select for.

Perry Carpenter:



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And we have a type of fix for that in that we are now starting to push out a lot of that interview content in the unplugged episodes. That way we don't feel bad for ditching 45 minutes of an hour long interview.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, our interview with Daisy, I think we talked with Daisy for almost three hours.

Perry Carpenter:

Wow. Daisy is used to Twitch streams.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, no, and Daisy's so cool and has so much energy and they're so excited about what they're doing, which I love. Obviously it's in the episode, but my favorite thing that Daisy said was that folklorists are enthusiasm enthusiasts. That super resonates.

Perry Carpenter:

Absolutely. So what are you looking forward to as we push out into the rest of the season? So this is episode one. This was really just setting the stage, getting a little bit of excitement. What are you looking forward to in the rest of the season and what do you hope that other people are going to get excited about?

Mason Amadeus:

The thing I'm excited about is that you kind of get a sense of where we're going to go next at the end of each episode in the way the narrative goes, like we saw that we are going to go to this meme expo, so we have to figure out something to talk about. All of the rest of this season is focusing more on specific things like memes, meme warfare, children and online platform ethics comes up, AI conspiratorial thinking. Honestly, I'm really excited about all of the people we're going to get to talk to. Doing those interviews is so much fun. Narratively, I'm really excited for the way that everything gets brought back around because obviously this episode started with the van flying off of a cliff, and then we rewind time. I'm really excited for the way that everything comes back around there. Each character has their own



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sort of arc that they go on through the series, and that's going to be really fun to explore. Digby is going through some stuff later on that will be very fun.

We have a special episode in the plan that I'm really hoping we can pull off. Fingers crossed that is going to be a fun, just a little narrative bonus jaunt, but there's a couple of people I'm talking to about how with that in the audio fiction space.

Perry Carpenter:

Nice.

Mason Amadeus:

So yeah, I'm most excited about episode nine, the one just before the end. That one's going to be really good.

Perry Carpenter:

Okay, so we talked about the podcast itself, the thing that people listen to. Now, let's talk about the podcast as an entity, the thing that we are putting out. What are some of your hopes, dreams, aspirations for the podcast itself?

Mason Amadeus:

I would really like to see our listenership grow. It is a show that I'm really proud of. I assume you're really proud of it.

Perry Carpenter:

Absolutely.

Mason Amadeus:

It's such a cool thing to be putting out. I want everyone to see it, you know?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.



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Mason Amadeus:

I really hope that more people, the people for whom it is for find it and resonate with it. That's really cool. It's not even just about let get big number. I like big number. It's like I want the people for whom this absolutely hits to get it and find it and be excited. Nothing that gets me more excited than when I find a piece of art that someone is making that really, I'm like, "This is for me. I'm the target audience." I want those people to find us.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah.

Mason Amadeus:

What about you?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, I totally agree with all of that, of course. For us, it is really how do we scale this to, I don't even know what a reasonable size is, but way bigger than we are right now. Right now, we are a reasonably sized podcast for one that is independently produced and has been out for a season. So I think we've done really, really well in season one. I think we can do way, way more, and I think there's a lot, a ton more good stuff coming our way because we're putting so much great content out there for people to listen to. The one thing I think our current listeners can do to help us out, of course, is just really be our advocates out there, tell other people about us. We are going to be making merchandise and stickers and all that other kind of stuff as available as we could make it. So you can even really be advocates without saying words sometimes. So you wear a shirt, have a sticker on your laptop, any of that kind of stuff.

All of that helps gain interest because I remember I was in Vegas a few weeks ago and I wore a Digital Folklore t-shirt, and I got stopped from somebody that didn't see the fact that it was a podcast on the side of the logo because that was hidden by another piece of clothing. But they said, "Oh, is that a podcast? That sounds exactly like something that I'd want to listen to."

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, no way.



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Perry Carpenter:

And we got to have a good conversation about it, so.

Mason Amadeus:

That's so cool.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, I thought that served its function, right? I mean, it shows that the logo works really, really well for that. So if you are the kind of person that really likes to show your love and your loyalty to the things that you get value out of, then we invite you to do that. Then of course, other things that spin off of that, we do have Discord. Discord is free. We want you to come join us on that, have great conversations. There's a really, really good and engaged core group of people on our Discord server that are having fun discussions every day, and we encourage you to join that 'cause that's so cool for us to see, and we poke our heads in as often as we can and participate as well. But in reality, there is a great core group of people that are making solid friendships out there right now and discussing really, really cool things.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, no, our Discord has awesome people. It's so cool. I love the little community that has grown around this show. They're all such wonderful people and they always bring such interesting discussions to the table in all the different channels.

Perry Carpenter:

And pet photos too. So it's really cool to see the pet channel. I'm glad you put that in there.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I'm glad that the pet's channel has taken off as much as it has. The other thing too, other ways to help out, I know this is a lot to ask, and I'm not asking anyone to do this, but if you are an artist and fan art is so cool. If you draw something and design something, we would love to put that on stickers or shirts and compensate you for it some way if we can. I think the biggest goal that we really need to hit is making the show sustainable financially. And I say that as probably the biggest expense of the show



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being the sound designer who is employed full-time working on this and stuff. I'm not cheap, I guess. Neither is advertising and neither is all of the different services and products and things that we use to make this, and at the moment, it isn't paying for itself.

Perry Carpenter:

No, and that's not a complaint, right? We're doing this because we love to create something, but there is a definite cost to that that is in the thousands of dollars per episode type of range, and sustainability becomes a concern in the long run. We're not saying that we're going to shut down the show, or anything. That's not anything that we're looking to do.

Mason Amadeus:

This is not a threat.

Perry Carpenter:

It's not a threat, and it's not something where we're trying to guilt people. We're just saying if you have the means, being able to help us scale more and do more and have a financial return from it would be a great thing, and it is something that we have in our targets long term.

Mason Amadeus:

And obviously none of that to say that we are not extremely thankful and completely stoked about the people who are listening and the people who are choosing to support us. That's amazing.

Perry Carpenter:

That is super, super amazing. We've been nothing but encouraged by your support, by the words of encouragement that you've given us. You are really, I think, the foundation layer of something that can get even bigger because you've seen value in the thing that we're doing. Oh, and for people that gave us such great feedback on the survey that we did at the end of season one, if you were one of those first 50 participants, you were promised a sticker if you gave your address. I have been delinquent in sending those out because I've been traveling for the past five plus weeks to different conferences and things like that for my day job. So those are outstanding. You are on my mind. You'll soon have stickers in your mailbox, and so those will be coming soon, as soon as I can get those envelopes stuffed with all the



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stickers and everything else that I do have in stock here at the house, so that that's just days or maybe a week or so out.

Mason Amadeus:

And that actually segues perfectly into the fact that I have a couple of asks/offers for you, the listener.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, not me,

Mason Amadeus:

Not you, Perry. You the listener. If you have a podcast and you want us to do a promo specifically, it would be best if the audience that listens to Digital Folklore, if you think there's an intersection between that audience and the people who would like your show, we would love to help out by running a promo for you. The other thing we would love feedback always. The people in our Discord do a great job of that, and it's really helpful. The more feedback we get, the better. So tell us what's on your mind. If you feel inspired to create something because of Digital Folklore, share it with us and we'll share it too. We want to be not just the people making this, but the people involved in the community around this whole thing.

Perry Carpenter:

Absolutely.

Mason Amadeus:

So this is another offer, I guess if you are a voice actor or want to be a voice actor, there are a lot of ancillary little characters coming up in other episodes. I'd love to get your voice and get a little credit in the show notes, that kind of thing.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, we had one voice actor in season one who reached out to us on TikTok. They volunteered their time, so at some point we may get to where we can compensate people a little bit more too, but right now it's just fun being able to get to know you a little bit and be able to reflect your talent out to





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hopefully an audience that may be a little bit larger than you might be able to get to on your own so that you have some things on your resume.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, because audio fiction is such a small universe, and as someone who's a part of that community and very into audio fiction, I love the idea of being able to help promote other shows in the audio fiction realm or other actors in voice acting and in that area. I just think that's really cool. The reason Perry hired me is because we made a sketch about stealing Mark Zuckerberg's baby teeth.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, exactly. Oh, we should put that in the show notes of this also. So that's a PodCube episode. That also was a collaboration that we did for 8th Layer Insights when we interviewed Brian Brushwood about World's Greatest Con, and we created this interesting heist narrative.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, Perry plays a helicopter pilot. It's very good. It's actually one of my favorite episodes.

Perry Carpenter:

One of mine too, actually.

Mason Amadeus:

It's really good.

Perry Carpenter:

The other thing, if you are a folklorist that works in a university setting and you're wanting a quick ad or promo for a university program that you have or a talk that may be coming up or anything like that, we're always happy to throw in those kind of promos as well. So we do what's called dynamic ad insertion, so we can have that exist for as long or a short amount of time as makes sense for you and us. Feel free to reach out if you represent a university program or some other kind of interest for folklorists at large out there, and we'd be happy to throw an ad your way for free.



## **Digital Folklore**

BONUS. Season 2 Episode 1.05

*After the Episode Discussion with Perry & Mason*

<https://digitalfolklore.fm>

Mason Amadeus:

Show notes got links to our email, other ways to contact us and stuff like that. So you can just peek those and that's where you can find out how to do it, [hello@8thLayerMedia.com](mailto:hello@8thLayerMedia.com) in case you want me to say it out loud.

Perry Carpenter:

All right, I think we are at the end. Thank you so much for listening. I hope you enjoy season two. Hope you enjoyed episode one of season two, and we will catch you on the next one.

Mason Amadeus:

Catch you on the flip side, I think is what the cool people say.