

[INTRO]

Hi listeners, happy new year! I know it's been a long time since you've heard from me, but I promise it'll be worth it.

Because.... Drum roll please: I'm putting together season 2 of In Defense of Fandom!

For season 2, we're going to broaden our scope and talk about endings. Specifically, how TV series end and what that does to the fandom of that show.

Don't worry, we're not going to stop talking about Supernatural! Trust me. My husband begs for one day without an SPN factoid and has yet to find relief [laughs]. But I want to compare and contrast how and why different shows ended and what was the legacy they left.

The rest of this episode is actually the unabridged interview I had with The Winchesters (and Flash) tv writer, Gabe Garcia! We talk about his writing experience on The Winchesters, how he walked the line between inviting in new viewers while staying true to the mothership, and he answers some fan questions.

I think this is a perfect launching point to get everyone excited for season 2 of In Defense of Fandom and start thinking about how our favorite shows came to a conclusion.... And whether we liked that end or now.

And this is where you come in! What are some shows that had memorable endings to you? Was it because they were so good and left you happy with completed character arcs and resolved plots? Or was there an ending that was so horrible that it's still a running joke with your fandom friends? Or is there a show's ending that you can't stop discussing, uncertain whether it was good or bad?

Send me your thoughts! I want you to send me a voice memo with tv series endings that made an impact on you! Start thinking about what you might like to say now, and I'll give you full instructions at the end of this episode.

Ok, now let's get to my conversation with Gabe on all things The Winchesters!

[music transition]

*PS- this was recorded after the Writers Strike had ended but before the SAG strike had ended, so it was ongoing: just for a little context.

[music transition continues]

[cut to interview selection]

Sadie Witkowski 0:00

I did want to start by asking you a little bit about your role, you are a co executive producer - correct?

Gabe Garza 0:10

Correct.

Sadie Witkowski 0:11

So how is that same or different than being a writer because I know you just finished being on the WGA writers strike?

Gabe Garza 0:19

Yes, I just did that I'm still out there supporting sag, because they don't have a deal yet, which is why I came straight from the picket lines, and I'm still wearing my blue shirt. I'm not just you know, at home wearing this blue shirt all the time, fighting the man in my private time. So, Executive Producer, co executive producer are two of the titles that writers can have on a show. Basically, when you watch a show, you'll see, you know, producer, co producer, supervising producer, consulting producer, co executive producer, executive producer, and see all those credits at the beginning, those are all just writers for the most part. And essentially, based on your experience, and sort of like whatever the hierarchy of that show is, you fall somewhere within those titles, and they generally relate to like the more experienced people have the higher title. There's also Story Editor, executive Story Editor, staff writer, a lot of times those are credits that are shown after the show at the end of credits as opposed to the opening credits. And they're all just writers that sit around a table and talk to each other. And I you know, where comes into play is when there's decisions to be made. You have the showrunner. Then you have whoever the executive pieces are under them. And then you know, if they all leave the room and stuff, so it needs to be done. It's well, usually, whoever's the next in charge and title ranking takes over unless the showrunner appoints someone specifically. But we're all just writers. And we write and if we're lucky enough to be on a show that keeps writers on during production, we will produce those episodes and be on set and in some cases even do post for those episodes.

Sadie Witkowski 1:54

Awesome. Oh, and I forgot to say would you like to introduce your like name and why you're here?

Gabe Garza 2:00

Sure. My name is Gabe. My screen credit is very long as Gabriel Alejandro Garza because there were five Gabriel Garza's on IMDb and I got tired of being asked about the pop documentary that I didn't direct and the National Geographic special that I didn't produce. So I was like, I'm just gonna put my full name in there, and they'll know who I am. I have written for the Winchesters. Yay. Before that I wrote for another CW show called The Flash for about five years, I was an executive producer on that. And before that, I actually came out of half hour, I co created a sitcom for Nickelodeon called Bella and the Bulldogs. And then before that, I worked

in animation, and Nickelodeon. So, I've also done a couple of features, which means I've sort of touched a little bit of every part of the industry. geek stuff is my favorite thing to do. So, you know, there was a time there where I had to decide to move from half hour to one hour, and look to the Lifesize Yoda in my office and said, What would you do? And he said, Follow the force. So it's led me here.

Sadie Witkowski 3:07

That That makes a lot of sense. Also being into the geek stuff like I think I watched all that maybe the last two seasons of The Flash I think I dropped off when I... during pandemic time, you know, time things got a little weird.

Gabe Garza 3:19

You're not the only one. I made me behind on a few episodes.

Sadie Witkowski 3:23

Well, okay, so then I have to ask because you worked on the Winchesters Have you seen all the episodes of the original supernatural mothership.

Gabe Garza 3:30

So I have not seen all the episodes my history with supernatural first of all, it's an amazing show. And I admire it and I everything I've seen about it, I love. I was a big fan for the early seasons back when it was like, not TiVo, but like your digital cable would give you like the lane knockoff, their brand version of TiVo. And I would watch that way. So I watched before much earlier than I was a professional writer, because the show's been on for so long. And, like I was amazed by it and loved it. And everything about it just came out, in a lot of ways fully baked, which is rare for a new show. Like it just was already what it wanted to be. And then it continued to evolve in such a, you know, interesting way over the years to stay relevant. But because, you know, there's a lot of episodes at a certain point I did fall off and it became more serialized it became harder to like jump back in I was like how many seasons do I have to catch up on to watch now oh, five years to just get relevant again, get current. So I didn't watch well, but I would catch it here and there. My brother is like a ginormous supernatural fan. Like really! Like he's never cared about anything I've done but he'd like lost his mind when he found out about this. And so I would, you know, just being around him kind of absorb a little bit about what was going on. But I would feel, I feel like in general We had a pretty nice mix. On the show, we had some writers that had seen every episode, definitely. And they were like, you know, either off the top of their head, the encyclopedia, or they could easily look up, you know, via some, like internet research what we needed to know, in terms of how something had been done. We also had, obviously, Robbie Thomas, who like, worked on the show, and wrote some of like, my personal favorite episodes of the show, like really, like really amazing episodes. And he obviously knew a lot about it. And he had a line to, you know, the original creator Eric Kripke. And, you know, Jensen was a big part of the show, and he was on zooms with us and everything. So there was a good balance of that. And then other people who were sort of like, fans of what it was, but had not seen every episode, but they were just like fans of the bullseye

of the show is aiming for. And then you also had people that were, you know, a little less familiar, but they were very versed in sort of like genre writing. And I think that's kind of what's needed for a balance. Because, you know, the original show, you know, many, many, many, many hundreds of episodes. And if you had just tried to do that, without all that, you know, the cast and all that, like it wouldn't have worked, you needed to find a way to sort of advance it from where it was. And so, you know, we we had a good mix of people from all different points of views with different levels of familiarity, to sort of brainstorm that,

Sadie Witkowski 6:33

it sounds like the way that you built the writers room allowed you to have that, like fresh perspective. So you didn't have to expect the audience to have seen think it's like 327 episodes, to know who these characters are, or care who they are. Because you need to be able to have fresh people step in as well, as you know, longtime fans essentially.

Gabe Garza 6:52

Absolutely. I mean, that's the key, it has to work for both. First of all, what a challenge, right? Like, you're saying, you've got to please people that have seen 300 episodes of this show. And that's just the produce stuff you want to talk about, like the forum theorizing, and the fanfiction, and how much more content has like, you know, in some of these people's heads for the show, so you got to please them without really having the original cast. And you have to make the show for people that haven't seen that. Because if it's only for that audience, then only those people will be able to watch it. But you want it to be also for people that are new to the show and can discover it on its own right. So that balance is very tricky. And so we would often like once it worked for everybody in the room, and everybody was excited for something like you kind of knew you were on to something. And you know, Robbie Thompson, our showrunner and David Goodman, our number two, were very good at sort of, you know, is an unenviable task to balance those two things. And I thought they would do a very good job of sort of, you know, doing it in a simple way that didn't bog things down with so much of being burdened by, you know, mythology from the past, but also had enough there, you know, it was accessible for the casual viewer, but had enough there that if you wanted to go theorize on the forums afterwards, and you wanted to think well, did this didn't yet or that mean that or is this person who's like, that was still there, and those avenues were still available.

Sadie Witkowski 8:20

Yeah, I don't know if I mentioned this before. But it became a great show that my mom and I watched, like, not together because my mom was in Texas, and I'm in Chicago, but we both watch it when it was out. And we'd be texting each other. And my mom has never seen... I think you've seen three episodes, the original series, but she loved it. She kept calling it demon How I Met Your Mother. She thought it was very fun, clever. And I knew all the back lore. So So you haven't be like, Oh, that's so and so it means that she's like, Oh, that's neat. I just thought that was a good song. I was like,

Gabe Garza 8:48

Yeah, and you know, is similar to like Flash where you have, like, even if you can have anything larger than the supernatural mythology, the comic book mythology, you know, goes back decades and decades and decades and has been rebooted several times. And you've got huge fans of that, while at the same time having to be its own thing. So we would often okay, we're taking this comic story, but we have to do a differently one because we don't have the budget of comic book. But how can we still put in those touchstones that either put a new spin on what was in the comic or has those Easter eggs that still gives people a little bit of reward. So like the idea is you can enjoy it on its own. But if you are a mega fan, you're gonna get a little extra something. You get that little sprinkles on top of the sundae. It tastes a little bit better to you because you can recognize that stuff that the others can't but everyone still can enjoy the ice cream underneath it, you know?

Sadie Witkowski 9:45

Yeah, you gotta have that good bass flavor level otherwise it just it will work as well. Um, did you also have to think about because as you mentioned, you didn't really have the original cast. Did you have to be flexible in the writing room in how you kind of how the cast was finding their characters as well as you like writing out these stories.

Gabe Garza 10:05

Yeah, and that kind of happens on any first season show. Again, that's what was so remarkable to me about the original series is that, you know, Sam and Dean, you know, they evolved. And I think they, especially for the comedy, Dean, like they wrote towards, like the actor's strengths. But so much of it was just like, there like from the get go. Usually what happens in a show is, you do your best to get there. But then once you start spending time, again, why it's important for writers to spend time on set. Once you start spending time with the actors, and you're seeing what they do, you're seeing what they do in between takes, you're seeing, you know, the stuff that they do off to the side with each other, where they're just kind of goofing off, you're talking with them, you know, while they're setting up lights, and you're kind of seeing what's in their heads and how they tick. And you really do start to understand, Okay, we have this idea for the character. And we can keep that idea. But we can bring in a little bit more of like, what this actor's special sauce is, you know, everyone's got their thing. And that's gonna come across as like, so authentic. And I think it's part of the reason why you really connect with some characters and not others, I think actors that are able to understand what the character is, and collaborate in some way with the creative and bring a little something to that. Not like taking it off in a different direction, you know, but like just being part of that process, well, then there's a real person that's a part of this imaginary person. And that's how something just feels more real.

Sadie Witkowski 11:42

Right. Because a lot of actors are like, Oh, this was like an aspect if I was there, like I recognize parts of myself in this character. And that's because both they've been thinking and sitting in that head for a long time, they've also worked with the writers to think about ways that can kind of pull those elements in even stronger, essentially.

Gabe Garza 11:58

Yep. You know, it's a big collaborative process, which is important. Again, you know, I keep going back to this, but I've been fortunate to be on so many shows, that writers were involved with the production in the post, and especially in half hour where you're on stage, workshopping jokes, with actors, everything's better when everyone knows each other. Like when they when you can talk. And people can feel like they can collaborate freely. That's how you get the best thing. And, you know, shooting in New Orleans, you're always going to have shooting in Vancouver, or shoot in any of these places, you're always going to have like a distance issue, and you get tax breaks. And that's great. And you get a great look like it's not everything shoots in LA, which is great. But there is always that distance barrier that is going to sort of affect I think, the reasons why we watch television, because if you think of like TV, like you really are inviting characters into your home every week. And there's a lot of times where there's some shows where, you know, I kind of not too much into the story, but I'm seven seasons in and I just need to spend time with this cast every week, you know, I just need to like see my buddies. That's really the stuff that is the Smash homerun hits in television, that stuff that lasts long is stuff that makes all the money for the studios. And a big part of that is those characters and connecting with them. And the character on a television show. It's part the director, it's part the actor, it's part the writer, it's part the editor, it's part a bunch of people. And if you have all those people that actually are employed, close to each other and able to work together, those are some of the best characters and I think that's one of the reasons why network TV for so long, was so successful. Whereas if you look at like a lot of streaming stuff, there's the big hits, but by and large, nothing is hitting it quite what network TV was able to do for so long. Because, you know, the vast majority of streaming shows everybody's just you don't even get to know most of the people on your crews. And you know, I've had better written scripts because I got to know the art department on my show. Better it all just like feeds each other. Yeah, you know, itself once you realize how it's actually made.

Sadie Witkowski 14:18

Yeah, I think you're totally right about the kind of like, it's like seeing your friends for dinner once a week or something. So I shows like, you know, Star Trek, I think we're so successful. Both TNG, Voyager and DS nine, these it was like, oh, but these are this is my crew of misfit friends. And yeah, even if the adventures are a little bit ridiculous, like I just, I just want to see what odo is up to this week. You know,

Gabe Garza 14:38

Yeah and even when the shows and you're like, I can't, I don't feel like those shows are over in my head. Those characters are off doing something still. You know, they get to do it away from cameras now but they're still off doing it. And that's something that's special that happens with television. And that special soup of how that's made is from a lot of people working together than really putting their heart and soul into it and collaborating.

Sadie Witkowski 15:03

Yeah, did you...? So did anybody from the Winchesters get to go down to New Orleans and

spend some time on set? Or was it just too fast of a turnaround?

Gabe Garza 15:12

No, we did. It was actually, I, you know, Robbie and David are number one, and number two would probably be more privy to sort of the logistics of was that an easy ask, or was that something they had to convince someone to spend the money on. But however we did it, we were able to do that. And the... Right away, you know, people who have worked in television on our show, but maybe never been to a set were going to set. And I've been to many different kinds of sets and went to a set, you know, everyone went down, Robbie was down there plenty of times. And it was just such, like the cast and everybody, we all got to know each other, we all got to shoot in New Orleans, which is its own adventure. And it really is a baptism by fire in a lot of ways that I can go into if you want. But it made so much of that sort of, you know, working on other shows where there is that sort of distance between the writers room and the post room and set, there's a lack of synergy that can happen. And I think like, you know, rest in peace Season Two. A lot of like, the things that were talked about on set, and some of that synergy would have made its way into a theoretical season too. And I think that there were particular moments throughout season one where you saw sort of all the pieces clicking really well. And I think that would have been built upon in a great way, because of that sort of relationship that have been formed between cast, crew, and writers over the course of season one, which kind of takes a season one to happen, you know, but yeah, so I was fortunate enough to be there, we had everyone went down for their episodes. And, you know, having seen TV made a few different ways, I can strongly attest that if people are interested in the most successful product, it really is the best way to cost very little to set yourself up for success. Because in success, you know, you're talking about, you know, 300 episodes with supernatural, you know, yeah,

Sadie Witkowski 17:26

and a fan base that still like goes to conventions and watch everybody's projects afterwards, because they just really liked you know, the whole tenant worked

Gabe Garza 17:33

on it, at least one spin off so far, you know,

Sadie Witkowski 17:37

just say it, ya know, definitely, um, my husband is actually born in New Orleans. And so I can imagine it's like, you know, the original supernatural, it's like, oh, yeah, Vancouver had rain. That was really difficult. What if we turn that up to 11? By doing it in a literal swamp? Was that what it was like? Yeah.

Gabe Garza 17:55

Okay, so New Orleans was insane in all the best ways, and also all the insane ways. I remember getting to the hotel, and you know, you're getting into the Marriott or wherever it was. And I be like, Wow, it's pretty empty. And it's like, July, you know, it's like summer. This is like, the peak vacation time. And it was talking to the front desk clerk, and he said, No one summers

in New Orleans. And I was like, Oh, well, we're about to shoot a season of television here. And for those that don't know, summers in New Orleans, it was like, over 100 degrees with like, 91% humidity. And you would have that heat with torrential rain that at times, my windshield wipers were on the full setting and I still cannot see. I had to pull over because the it was impossible to see even with the windshield wipers. You had a flooding you had. I mean, that city. I can only imagine the nightmare that was Katrina. I can only imagine because the normal heavy summer storms, you would have so much flooding, right. And on top of that, there's there's so many other natural sort of obstacles from the environment. We had scenes that were for some reason, so you know, we we hadn't ever shot in summer and when you're beholden to a network schedule and airdate you have to start in the summer. So we had our episode two was outdoors at a commune and you know this hippie commune. A lot of scenes outside and you're dealing with that heat and mosquitoes and ticks and

Sadie Witkowski 19:52

oh, and in vintage costumes like style to look like great so long pants like codoroy, leather jacket.

Gabe Garza 19:59

Yeah you know, and you know, that and there was like, in a bayou, like a swamp was like where we could like National Park is where we could find a place. That could pass as a commune. And there were times where the van got, you know, water up to the hood. And the director has to, like, drive the actors through it. And because they couldn't, I know, we had some people getting their license on this show that like came from New York and didn't have it. So it was, I remember after I went down for episode three, which I wrote, and I texted the next writer that was coming after me for episode four, and I told her, just watch Indiana Jones. That's what it's like, like, you're gonna, you just gotta roll up your sleeves, you got to get dirty, you're gonna get all beat up, and you're gonna be sweaty, and you're gonna outrun a boulder at some point. But that's just what it's like. And the, you know, I will say, the unsung heroes of the show were hair and makeup. The amount of touch ups every five seconds, and you watch the episodes, and you would never know it. I was just in awe. In general, I would say, as tough as it was shooting in New Orleans because of some of the conditions the crew was, and this is no shade against any crew that I've worked for. But the New Orleans crew that we worked with, on this show was by far the most talented crew I've ever worked with, it blew my mind that, you know, our DP Polly, our DIT guy, Manny, our camera ops, you know, they were, you know, Maurice and Tony, they, it was just there was so much just like, amazing talent. And if they were not that talented, I don't believe it would have been able to finish those episodes. Because, until like October, it was just every day was just like going to battle with the elements. It was, it was pretty, it was pretty intense. But it also, you know, it didn't look like a normal CW show.

Sadie Witkowski 22:13

No, it had it had a very strong sense of like aesthetic, which I really appreciate, like, oh, you actually found a town that is supposed to be as old looking as it should like, the shots makes sense.

Gabe Garza 22:23

What I wish we could have done more. And we talked about ways to do this in season two was to because it was set in Lawrence, Kansas, small town, right. And so we had a lot of small town things. It was so fun. The garage was actually like a real gas station slash garage that we just bought and retrofitted. So you would just be driving around the town and you would just pass it and you're just like, Oh, this isn't like on a backlot or anything. This is just like an actual town that like we've built the you know, Millie's garage in. And the whole experience was like, really, really, you know, difficult a lot of ways, but also like, very rewarding and amazing. And you see all these shows shot in Vancouver, I was on one for five years. And Vancouver is great. I love that city. But when you've seen so many of them, it's you can start like, you can pick it out, you know, you can say okay, this, this show obviously is shot in Vancouver, like from the get go. So it was nice to also you know, chart our own path and like have our own aesthetic look. And I wish we could have leaned more into it because New Orleans proper, is just so much beautiful color everywhere. And there's a lot of old buildings, but they're beautiful in a way that like a lot of the old stuff in LA and I love LA not saying this, but all of LA but there's a lot of old stuff here that isn't necessarily beautiful. It's just old. And in New Orleans, like everything is so beautiful. So, you know, I really would have... I... One of the things that I'm worried about not having more seasons of the show is not being able to dive into more of the aesthetic of New Orleans and bring that into the show and we talked about ways where we can do that. So you know, but if anyone wants to shoot in New Orleans, I will just say start in the fall. Yes, correct. It's it's wonderful pleasant in October don't shoot outdoors in July.

Sadie Witkowski 24:17

Now I don't I don't make those mistakes. I don't even visit in the summer. I'm like no, I'm good. I really like my my hair not a frizzed out mess. Um, yeah, I love New Orleans. I think it's such a cool mix of like Spanish and French and American like culture and cuisine and architecture. And it just, it really makes for a unique setting. Um, but I just want to talk more about the Winchesters in particular and some of the some of the stuff y'all y'all tackled. So I noticed in the show, you tackle a lot of other monsters that are not from the mothership, right it's you're not just getting your classic vampires and werewolves and I mean, you know, we have clear references them it's not like they don't exist this world but there's a focus on a lot of the broader lore. How did you all think about which monsters you wanted to bring in? And kind of expand that cannon? I guess?

Gabe Garza 25:06

Right? Well, you know, I'm glad to notice that because it was a very conscious choice that, you know, Robbie was very clear on from the beginning, you know, the original pitch, I remember seeing like the Bible at one point for supernatural not related to this show, but just, you know, in my other dealings, and the original pitch was very much about how the American lore and the American urban legends were as rich as any other mythology there was to be mined. And that was like the essential pitch for the show and allow the monster the week stuff. And it's very true. Because for 300 episodes, they very much mined that lore, and then went to, you know, biblical

land after that. It was like, Well, how do we sort of, again, give people the same feelings they got watching supernatural, but without retreading? The, you know, Bigfoot, or whatever the American urban legends are. So and, and also in an effort to sort of think, like, you know, what, what is? What can we do today, that would sort of resonate with a lot of people. And, you know, we, we had more diversity in our cast. And we also realized, you know, well, let's go global. Like, there's the American Urban Legends was the pitch for Supernatural. And it worked great. They had 300 episodes. What other like, if that was enough for a show, then every other culture must have their own urban legends and their own unmined monsters and things? And, you know, one of the things that I think is very important, is surprising your audience nowadays, you know, there's been studies that like the average 10 year old has seen the same amount of content as like a 40 year old from 20 years ago, it's some number like that, right? Because they've had an iPad in their hands since they were born. And so how do you, surprise them? Well, they've probably seen every version of these same monsters that we've seen over and over and over again. So any monster that you can just think of from the top of your head, they probably seen a billion stories about it, because you can think about it, right? So, go learn about some monsters, learn about ones you couldn't think learn about ones you couldn't pitch. And so we would just like spend time outside the room. This was like homework that the writers would have of researching other cultures, other monsters from other cultures and other lore from other cultures. And you would find really cool things. And that you'd never heard of, and no one else in the room ever heard of it. But they were scary. And so when you found that you're like, No one here has really heard of this. But we all are kind of freaked out by it and a little weirded out by it, we're on to something here. And we would have a list. You know, we had just lists going of like, you know, this monster is like a floating head with like intestines that like, you know, just floats around. That's really cool. Got to figure out how to do in our budget. But like, that's really cool. And you would have all these lists, but ultimately, it always comes back to the story of the characters. What is the main story, the characters here, and the story would dictate, we need this kind of monster because this is the next step of this character's journey. And we would go through our list and a lot of times you would find a monster that Oh, this one's this one could work, you know, this one will fit that. And sometimes you wouldn't even have to go digging specifically. But it was really amazing. Because you really were like, wow, there's a lot of messed up stuff out there that people have thought of and told stories around the campfires. And when you start to like widen the net from just like the campfires, like here in your hometown, and then your home state, and then your home country, you really get to like be exposed to some weirdness out there. And that's really cool.

Sadie Witkowski 29:04

Yeah, I thought it was really fun. There was some that I had definitely never heard. I was like, Wait, is that really how that that works? And like doing my own, you know, Wikipedia mini deep dive, certainly not nearly as deep. Um, did you have certain monsters that you're trying to save for season two that just...

Gabe Garza 29:19

oh, man, I mean, the headless the headless one. It was like a version of a vampire. Forget from

one culture was like a headless monster with like, the intestine still, you know, coming out, which were awesome. We were trying to figure out what to do that money wise, but like, even just for like a scene, that would have been a cool one, that I you know, I should go through my document. It's been like a year from the show, so I don't quite remember. But there I remember there was a bunch that were like season two, season two. And that always happens on the show. Where like, you see the shiny candy, and you're like, oh, I want my candy now and they're like, Oh, well, it doesn't. We have to do our vegetables first and it doesn't fit on the plate right now. We got to service the character story like alright, we'll do candy next season. And then I remember being on Flash, I was there for over 100 episodes, there were still ones that like 100 episodes earlier, kept being punted, because we always thought they were cool. But we're like, when are we going to have a time to do that, and some of them you got to do and some of them, you just don't, because at the end of the day, you really gotta like, try to squeeze in, as, you know, much cool stuff that fits the emotional story rather than, like, fit the emotional story to the cool stuff.

Sadie Witkowski 30:24

Yeah, we talked about this in journalism school all the time, you need to have a story, not a topic. Topics can be really fun and interesting and have all kinds of factoids. But if there's no story, no one's gonna stay on board with you. Like they just don't care.

Gabe Garza 30:36

Yeah, is the same in half, I remember working in sitcoms, you know, they would talk about our job is not to find a funny story, our job is to find an emotional story that can be made funny. And that's one of the big differences between sitcom and other forms of comedy writing. Yeah,

Sadie Witkowski 30:54

yeah, that makes total sense. Um, well, I did want to ask also, I mean, because we kind of danced around it. So there was no season two. And in fact, there wasn't even a pickup on the backup of season one, how did y'all have to think about retooling the the 13 episodes that you did have, so you could provide some sense of, of closure, and did that affect, you know, decisions, even within the bigger plan that you might have had?

Gabe Garza 31:17

Well, I was actually in New Orleans, while the last two or three episodes had been broken in the room that was on set. So because it's done simultaneously, so I'm not the best person to ask for all this, I can kind of speak to the more generalities of it. What I can say is, throughout the whole year, this sort of uncertain, you know, formula was circling the show underneath all the other formulas that the show was about. And that was the formula of the makeup of our platform, The CW. So for the entire run of the show, there was sort of whispers in the air that the CW was going to be bought and sold. And anytime a network is bought and sold is huge news, it is a seismic shift for all of their product. But usually, it's bought and sold to, you know, an entity that is making scripted content, and is, you know, whether they want to make different scripted content is their choice, but they are mostly in that game. This was the CW actually did wind up

being sold. And it was sold to a company that is not primarily in the scripted content game, they're actually very far removed from it. And shows like the Winchester are just not the kinds of shows they want to make. They had to, I think, contractually renew a couple shows that were just like part of the deal of being sold. But not all of them. And it's very clear, sort of based on, you know, executives, that had been replaced in directions that they want to go that shows like supernatural shows like The Flash like the CW, as we know, it is no longer going to be that ever again. And you know, there'll be new places for those kinds of shows. But all this was happening while we were making the show. And so... not only was it a constant sort of, well, how many episodes do we have? Is it 13? Is it 20-something, the number moved several times. And even before interviewing for the show, I was told, you know, we're probably going to do this amount of episodes, then you get there. And it's like, well, this many episodes, and now we're not sure. And you're like, you know, the ratings were decent enough, because I worked on The CW for a long time were decent enough that in any other year would have been like an automatic pickup, you've already spent the money for a season, you kind of it's in your interest to keep it going to amortize those costs. But the network just was is no longer in the game of making these kinds of shows. And so you and then you also had like shifting notes, they would be given at a certain point, because of the potential new buyers before they even bought it. And then the new buyers when they buy it. So it was a lot of the first season of a show is extremely critical. And it's very hard to sort of, you've got a lot of people you got to get things through. And there's a that process can sometimes compress the creativity to a certain extent. And this was another level above that, where we're not even sure if this network is going to exist. And there's a lot of people feeling that pressure that aren't related to our show. But our show is also going to be feeling the pressure because of that, to be able to work with all these people. I had such a fantastic time in my tenure at Warner Brothers and CW. The executives there really do care about television. Really, really do and it breaks my heart to see that you know some of the CW folks that you know are responsible for a lot of the shows that you've loved on that network, you know, had to leave and and that network is no longer going to be what it was. And I hope those people will land somewhere else. Because, you know, there was like a real there was a real need for these kinds of shows. And before the CW, there wasn't a lot of people making them, that sort of this sort of, you know, really gonna go on and live with Geek demo stuff. There was a lot of diversity very early on, on some of these shows, that were like, aimed for younger audience, but also had to stuff for an older audience, like it's, you know, a lot of that. So we had to deal with all that. And because of that, you can imagine to get back to your question, the, what's going to how's the season going to end? What is Season Two going to be? Are we gonna have a cliffhanger, we have a nice and tidy end. And like, what is that going to be was our showrunner had a lot of different versions in his head, not a lot, but like, he had a few. And that's what a good boss does, like, you know, when he... Episode One was all, we had the pilot, and we all started, you know, he had a version in his head for, like, this is the story I want to tell, and like, you know, this is kind of the route it would go, and then you stay flexible, and you kind of change. But usually, that flexibility is just about, like, what the story wants to be, we had to deal with additional flexibility that was like, our network might disappear, you know, so. So, you know, Robbie had a few things, and he was really good at, like, you know, a writing staff can freak out at times, like, you can be like, you know, it's hard to hold the team together, when you're like,

you know, the sport may not exist next season, you know, let alone Well, we get to the playoffs. And so, but he did a really good job at sort of, like, you know, like, okay, like, these are the two areas he could go here could go here is where, where he's at, and then like, he would revisit that with us, you know, throughout the year. So, even though some of it was like, literally like, okay, you know, we now know that we should go for this kind of an ending, even though some of the, like, final decision on that stuff may have come a little bit later. Like, we'd already been familiar with that option, and already been planning for that option. And, you know, it was, like, you know, it was an easy, and as streamlined a process as sort of a season one like that can be for anyone. And, you know, I worked for a lot of different bosses were to like, you know, 11 or 13, show runners, you know, some shows have many both, you know, Flash had three different showrunners. And, for a first time showrunner to sort of, have all of that stress and pressure, but you can never tell, and really sort of did a good job at keeping us very just focused on sort of the task at hand and never letting the work life balance, got a hand where we were working on the weekends and staying up till midnight or anything like that. Is is really remarkable and admirable. And it's one of the big lessons I took away from working with Robbie, I was like, Well, if you can keep a life balance on this show, with everything that it had happening to it, and shooting in New Orleans, with like sets being flooded, and all this stuff, than any show can have a proper life balance. So long winded way to answer your question that, you know, we knew that we were going to have to stick and move a little towards the end. So we always had some sort of ideas of what those moves would be. And then when the word came down, like make this move, we were already ready to go and everything was already, you know, we didn't have to suddenly like rewrite a bunch of things or figure out how we make it make sense with things that it doesn't make sense with. You know,

Sadie Witkowski 39:01

yeah, you were able to have kind of like, here's a bucket of what might happen if we get a second half pick up because it's like kind of what happens if we get kind of close early, you're already thinking about it. It's not totally from scratch, essentially.

Gabe Garza 39:12

Right. And I think like one of the biggest things was just sort of, you know, there's the tag after the episode that sometimes is the teaser for the next episode, and can sometimes be the teaser for the next season. And, you know, do we want to have a cliffhanger introduce the new villain kind of thing. And one of the big decisions there was, you know, let's leave it so that if this work was the last season, we're not going to leave fans dissatisfied. And I think that was like such a, you know, as a writer, you're like, oh, this this is a cool scene. Like this is an awesome scene that we're all excited about doing it'd be the last thing and it gives you so excited. But the discipline as a showrunner that Robbie had to say like, you know, that's cool. It could also be the teaser of season two, you know, rather than the last scene of season one if we want to do that, and, but because of what's happening with our network, and there's so much uncertainty, like to do right by fans, and give them something that they can watch that does give them a complete sense of emotional closure, and they can still theorize, like, what's gonna happen with John & Mary on that adventure? When are they going to come back to school? Again,

Sadie Witkowski 40:21

What's the deal with Ada? What's going on there?

Gabe Garza 40:23

Exactly. You know, it's still like that, but it's not in a way that like, You're not leaving a cliffhanger of like, you know, for example, this wasn't it, but like, you know, oh, John gets shot, is John gonna live like you? And that's the last we ever see. Like, you know, you didn't want to do something like that. Because after fans had kind of like gone on this roller coaster of like, how is this connected to the mothership? What is this as alternate use? What is this? And then they finally get to the end? You know, leaving them with emotional closure? Just in case, you know, the network goes away?

Sadie Witkowski 40:53

Did you always know that it was going to be kind of an AU alternate universe? Like was that always the plan a parallel universe, one of the many that God created?

Gabe Garza 41:03

So yes, in that there were, again, Robbie had like, this is in his head, what he would want, you know, when he comes in, that's kind of like what he says to us. It's like, alright, this is the pitch for the show. This is in my head, what, you know, if I had to do it today, what it would be, but we're gonna leave open to see if we find something better. And so there were times where we entertained other ideas of like, is a time travel? Is it? You know, is it a dream? Is it you know, are they all in limbo? Or, you know, is it Lost, are they on an island? But we eventually did kind of just circle back to like, the main thing that was kind of the first idea. And, you know, it was interesting, because you have to ask yourself, like, how do I, again, the big question, how do I, please people that are going to have 300 episodes you can be comparing this to, but also, you know, I don't know if you ever watched the original office. And then you watch season one of the office, the American remake, and some of those episodes were like, very close to those British ones. And it wasn't till they kind of could do their own thing that the show kind of really started to sing. And that happens a lot, happens a lot, where you've got to let the new thing be its own thing. And with this show, in particular, you have the story of how mom and dad met, which has already been seen in the original show, a time to

Sadie Witkowski 42:41

travel the seasons, like season four, or something like

Gabe Garza 42:44

Sam and Dean have, like been a part of that story already. Like it's been explored from a lot of different angles. And well, how do you surprise an audience? How do you tell them there's going to be reward for watching here, and you're going to learn something new. And so they're always needed to be sort of a device that allowed us to sort of go off in new directions. But also, it's almost like, you know, like the Star Trek, JJ Abrams movie where this... some of these things

are kind of just destiny and like, you're gonna encounter them still, some of these things are gonna be versions of what's happened, but like, they're planning events. Right? Exactly. Right. Canon events, they're, you know, it's a it's what is the term and legends of tomorrow, it was always like,

Sadie Witkowski 43:33

I watched that show, too. I watched all of it. They're like fixed points in time.

Gabe Garza 43:38

Ah, yes, yes. Fix what I was gonna say, I was gonna be like, first person who gets it gets a gold star, you get a gold star. But yes, like certain things that like have to happen, right? And that would be a way to sort of honor the past. Because if you do have this love for the original show, you can be like, Oh, is that thing gonna happen? Or is it gonna happen? Somebody different, or some of this fanfic where, you know, they theorize maybe that thing happened this way? Maybe you get some version of it's closer to it this way? How does that, you know, are John and Mary just always destined to be tragic lovers? And is it impossible for them to have you a happy ending? You could explore all these things, if it was both, you know, a version of it, but also not it specifically. And, you know, this is something that I thought Robbie spoke very beautifully about when he first told us his inspiration for the show, in that, you know, he had a relationship with his father and then got to know him. And, you know, kind of changed that relationship a little later in life. And he said that his pitch for this show was sort of like from, you know, Dean's perspective it was. If he could have given his father, a happier ending, that's what this show was. And it was Dean trying to do that. You know, and I think emotionally that's something that a lot of people Ball can understand, and kind of grounds it in a way that sort of not only makes it okay, that it deviates from 300 episodes, but kind of requires that it deviates from 100 episodes, but it's coming, not from a place of like, oh, we just want to make more supernatural and make more money. It's coming from a place of like, No, this character who wants to give his parents a happy ending that never got one. And like, there's, of course, you know, there's gonna be a lot of obstacles to that, because when you meddle in space and time, like things are gonna happen. But could he do that, and also like those, you know, John and Mary deserve that there's definitely a version of them out there that deserves a happy ending, you know, and we have so many talks about, like, you know, fate versus free will and this idea that, is them, always having a tragic love story, a fixed event? Or could they overcome it? And like, if you were, if at some point in the series, they were to learn that every John and Mary ends in tragedy? Would they stop dating each other? Would they break up? Like, what would it be to sort of say, we're going to defy every known universe and, you know, still fall in love. So there's a lot of like, really great emotional places, and things that we had pitched out that were potentials that you could explore in that concept. And, you know, obviously, by Episode 13, this all became very clear to the audience and up to then it was a little bit of sort of, you know, I know at first I was like, Ah, they're gonna think we just haven't seen the show. They're gonna be like, what, that's not how those vampires work, you know. But I think that's like, the fun is, if you're a brand new person, this show the way he did, it was so smart, you could just jump in, and you didn't have to, like, do 300 episodes of homework, just to enjoy one season on the show. But if you were a fan of those

shows, like there's this extra fun thing of it's almost like, you know, going into the spider verse and be like, what's this spider man going to be? Like? Is he gonna be a lot? Like, you know, my spirit is gonna be very different from my spider man, but they're all going to be Spider Man, you know? Yeah. And I think they just had a lot of potential to go a lot of different places. Had it continued.

Sadie Witkowski 47:16

Did you have like a dream for what season to kind of look like even let's say that, like, you only have 13 pickup and like, JK, you also have a season two, like, what would have been it, it could be just your personal dream, it doesn't have to be like what was talked about in the writers room.

Gabe Garza 47:28

So I will not talk about anything was talked about in the writers room. Because honestly, there was so much being done just to like, get season one in the can with everything that we had going on. I mean, we still had, you know, COVID was still very much a thing. And, you know, you had slow downs because of that, and you had to keep people safe. And then you had the weather. And then you had every possible, you know, notes and all these things, right? So a lot of it was like, let's focus on just like one awesome season of television, and we all have ideas, and we're gonna put them in a grab bag. And then, you know, it would be up to like Robbie and David, to sort of go through, you know, if we had to had a season two and said, Are these ideas that we like, let's start talking about him. So it would be unfair for me to mention all that stuff. Because honestly, it's like, just a grab bag of things. And, and I wouldn't want to speak for Robbie. Me personally, what I would have liked you know, I would have liked to do more monster the week episodes. I think, you know, it's interesting, because you come into this and you're like, well streamings blown up since the original supernatural. We gotta go serialized a lot. And interestingly enough, like my personal favorite episodes, and other writers may have different answers for this. But and I'm not just saying this because I wrote number three, which was one of the monster the week episodes, but like, three, four, the clown one.

Sadie Witkowski 49:03

Yeah, the clown one was great.

Gabe Garza 49:07

Written by our number two David Goodman directed by Minaj Hoda, who's done stuff for us on Flash and was honestly is amazing director but those guys knocked it out of the park with that one and I remember just feeling like oh, this is like I'm getting those feelings of supernatural that I loved and it still had a little bit of mythology in it so I would have liked because again, that's where you could have just gone into that grab bag of crazy monsters and just like pulled out the floating head you know, although it would have been you know, very expensive Yeah. It's like one scene of the floating head you know. It would've been in cool opening and you like you know, kill the floating head. So, I think that would have been something that would have been cool to like really get into like the scary to also if we had had a full season, you would have been

able to do that a lot more and still have You know, I know this from flash where we do like 23,24 episodes a season, you have a lot of sort of the monster the week stuff that touches the serialization and inches that along, and then you have like your more heavy serialized episodes. But you don't have to, you know, service. The season long story for so many characters in 13 episodes is like very hard, there was a lot of unexplored territory with like the supporting cast, that was just like, really, really interesting stories that we all got excited about in like week one, like very early times, and then it just wasn't room because you kind of like by the time you like, put up the what you need to make the serialized story work. It's like, you don't have a whole lot of room. And so I think like, you know, if we were blessed enough to have like a full season of 20, some episodes, you would have had something that I think, felt a lot more like, scratch the itch that supernatural scratched, a little bit more. So I think that. I think having more villains that were played by people, it's one of the things that supernatural did really well. It's something Robbie told me during our first interview to staff was, you know, on Supernatural, they did not have a lot of money. But they had some, you know, humans were essentially all actors were essentially the villains, most of the time, and worked really well. And I think like that, you know, not having the villain be in the shadows so much, and having, you know, actors that we could cut to, and also like multiple villains that could act with each other and interact, which was so fun with, you know, both supernatural and the flash. These are all things that I think we all realized that we were suddenly like, it'd be great to write these scenes in season two, as opposed to these kinds of scenes that are like, you know, a little bit more like spectacle-y with like, the keeper bug monsters, which you know, is, I'm sure there's tons of, you know, fans out there that are, you know, like, like seeing the creepy bug monsters. So I would have, I would have liked that some, some more villains like that. And you know, there was a lot of John/Mary romance stuff. But I could always use more of that stuff, man, I just, I remember, they would make fun of me in the room. Because I was like, guys, like, I know, we got we're slow burning and stuff. But Ross and Rachel, like, you look back at season one, and they were on and off already, like they went back and forth quickly on that show, because you could take them together, break them apart, and other things can happen. I think that would have been really cool. And would have been, especially for Mary's character, something that and John's character, because he had a lot of like repressed things, something that was a positive thing in their life that also would have challenged them. And that's what's always great when you find somebody will like, you know, this is going to challenge your character. That's really great. And usually it's like some antagonistic force, but when it's something good, like falling in love, and that's going to challenge and bring out issues that they have. I would have, you know, love to do more sort of spookiness with the romance. That's my soapy heart.

Sadie Witkowski 53:10

Like, I just want to like play with my dolls and make them do like, go on adventures. And yeah, things happen to them. Like, why is yeah, why can't we do that?

Gabe Garza 53:18

And more, you know, the more like the clown one where it's like wacky like that. I love the bag, one that I did, because I was like, that was not my monster pitch. I think Robbie came up with

that. And it was a cool, creepy monster that I was just fortunate enough to be, you know, my number was up to work on that episode. But I think like the clown stuff, like in David's episode, like having the monster that was like, very disturbing, and like, and

Sadie Witkowski 53:47

also human, like rely on people with creepy makeup very effective.

Gabe Garza 53:51

And it's like, it got under my skin. And it was super well directed. And it was just like, you know, it gives you the heebie jeebies. But it's also weird. It's also kind of like, silly. And I thought that there was like, the original supernatural had such a great way of being both like serious and people would die, but also silly, but also scary, but also kind of weird, and Goofy. And I think, you know, doing more of that season two would have also been really, really fun. And I think these are all things we would have been able to do had we had a larger season order.

Sadie Witkowski 54:29

Yeah, yeah, it feels unfair. Because I do feel like you know, back in the day was mostly network television, you had a hole you usually got a larger order that you really have this chance to build an audience and now because of streaming, everyone's like, well if you can't make it in this like tight, eight episode, whatever it is, like I don't I don't want eight episodes. I want 22, give me the space to breathe and like play with our whole cast.

Gabe Garza 54:50

Yeah, no, it really depends on the show. You know, there's some shows that you know, maybe it's better to have few but I think especially when you've got, like you said, a cast that is this fun cast you just want to hang out with like, it just means more ways to explore those characters. You know, and like if, if Sam and Dean only had eight episodes, like that would have worked, and the original supernatural, but it's not why the show lasted for so long, it lasted for so long, because like, you just love seeing those guys together. And you got to see them together in many different scenarios every year, and really got that delivery. And you didn't have to wait three years between, you know, eight episode seasons. And there's some shows they're so expensive. That's the only way they can exist. And I'm thankful for that model for those shows, because I get to see this thing that could not exist any other way. But when you've got like, you know, Scooby gang hunted monsters, the more episodes just like, you're never going to have enough episodes of season with those characters at certain points is too many to make. But we're always going to have more stories in the room and things that we want to do, then we get to make it on the screen.

Sadie Witkowski 56:00

Yeah, yeah, that's always I mean, in writing goes talk about like, kill your darlings, which is not like your ideas are terrible. It's, you have too many good ideas. You have to pare them down. Yeah, it is going to make the most sense right now. Like you just gotta get rid of some of your beautiful phrases or lines.

Gabe Garza 56:14

Yeah, until you know, there's another spin off or, and this is a pitch if anyone was in businesses listening to this. Buffy had multiple seasons in comic book form, after you know, the kept the story going. I'm sure Robbie has history with comics, like, hey, there's an idea. Like, keep it going that way. And don't worry, you get the floating head and as many scenes as you want, you know,

Sadie Witkowski 56:36

you could also do a really fun spooky audio drama, like there are incredible narrative podcasts that do some really scary stories.

Gabe Garza 56:44

That's a really good point. That's a really good point. That's really cool. Yeah, I think though, because that's just like, how scary stories started.

Sadie Witkowski 56:52

Before listening to something in the dark being like, oh, no,

Gabe Garza 56:57

yeah, it was people around a campfire, you know, way before TV and films ever existed, like that's in our DNA. Like, that's actually a really, really great idea.

Sadie Witkowski 57:06

Yeah, I have heard several, like podcasts, or audio fiction dramas that I had been like walking my dog in the daylight and my husband tapped me on the shoulder, and I kind of like jumped. I was so freaked out by like some Twilight zone-y. You don't know what's going on? I think. I think that's my official pitch.

Gabe Garza 57:25

Awesome. Yeah.

Sadie Witkowski 57:27

Well, I want to do a speed round of questions from fans. But I first want to ask if there's anything like big topical questions that I didn't get to ask you about that you feel like we should talk about

Gabe Garza 57:37

Big topical questions.

Sadie Witkowski 57:42

Like we talked about season two, we talked about, you know what it was like getting to work be there on set and having a full writers room of a really mixed writers room. Yeah, I cuz I hit all my questions. I'm just looking through.

Gabe Garza 57:58

You know, I'm here to serve. I'm here to serve the fans not ask my own questions. Also, none can come to mind right now.

Sadie Witkowski 58:06

Cool. Well, we'll do we'll do the speed round, and we'll see if any of these spark a bigger conversation. Sure. Um, so the first question I have is like, were there any actors in original series that you really wanted to get on the Winchesters that you didn't get? I mean, I know you got, you know, Dean and Rowena, and Jack and Bobby, but was there anybody that you're like, Oh, if we could have this person?

Gabe Garza 58:29

Well, I would have really liked for Sam to show up. But that's way above my paygrade. But, I mean, if you're talking about questions that fans that we didn't cover that fans are asking, I imagine that's probably the number one question that everyone that works on the show hears all the time, is like, why wasn't Sam there? We Sam gonna be there? What's going on with that? And, you know, the truth of that is, this show goes on for another 300 episodes. I feel like everyone's gonna be at some point. It's just a matter of time. Who knows what could have happened? The, you know, another thing for comic books, possibly. You know, I'm trying to think, obviously, Cas is like, another big fan favorite. And especially, it's like, what version? Is it the, you know, original version, and we find out what happened after what happened and happens not spoiling anything. And that there was something after that, is it a different version is like, how does that work? You know, it's like, is he or angels sort of one set for all the alternative universes like what's you know, I think that would have been interesting. And really, really cool to see. I also think would have been a can of worms would be like, impossible, like, how do you please everybody, given like some of the bait around the character, and I think what the original show did so beautifully was it did kind of, in a lot of ways, emotionally give everyone what they needed, and leave open stuff for interpretation. And so that would have been something. You know, I think it would have been really easy or interesting to like, see some of like, like, the yellow eyed demon, and like just kick his ass and get him off the page right away. Like, it was just been kinda like satisfying

Sadie Witkowski 1:00:23

seasons trying to fight this guy, it's like, no, that was easy. We're done.

Gabe Garza 1:00:26

Right. And also, like, you know, really say that whatever happens with Mary and John is gonna be very different. Like, just take that off the off the table, whether it's good or bad, it's going to not be that, you know, so I think that would have been cool. But other than that, I think the other some of the other writers would probably have had a lot better answers for this for people that they just really, really, really wanted to work with. I think working with Loki again, would have been really awesome. Because Richard was just like, you know, a joy to have. I didn't even

really work with him. But just to like, see his work was really, really cool.

Sadie Witkowski 1:01:06

Yeah, that was one of my mom's favorite episodes. Like when we were reviewing and recapping, she was like, I just thought that was so interesting. And it was so fun. I was like, you don't even know! Yeah, you've never seen the original episodes.

Gabe Garza 1:01:18

There could have been one one a year, right? Like one episode a year. It's like he does another trick on everybody. And we don't even realize so halfway through an episode. Sometimes this is another one it was it's like, you know, it's like the April Fool's episode.

Sadie Witkowski 1:01:32

Okay, so yeah, I didn't ask you if you had been able to get Jared or Misha, did you have plans for either Sam or Cas? Or is that?

Gabe Garza 1:01:40

You know, this is a Robbie question. I would say if he did have plans, or routes to make that happen, he didn't share it with us, which is smart. Because having been a part of like I was, you know, a part of a million cameos, it showed up on the flash by the end of it. And sometimes, in order for some of that stuff not to fall apart before it happens, like no one can know about until it's like contract signed! Now a few people to know about it. So that's a question for him. But again, I really do feel like if the show had gone on many, many, many seasons. I feel like a lot of cameos would have eventually showed up. I don't see how they couldn't have you know?

Sadie Witkowski 1:02:21

Yeah, yeah. Cuz I will say when I put this question out on Twitter, some people's response was just where's the angel? And I was like, I don't I feel like this is gonna be above our pay grade.

Gabe Garza 1:02:31

Yeah. I mean, am I I don't know, maybe it's above Robbie's pay grade, maybe this is like, you know, you got to ask the actual angels in heaven above us know, what is Warner Brothers deem acceptable?

Sadie Witkowski 1:02:43

Right. Yeah, actually. Yeah, cuz one of the follow up questions that I asked was, some of the story beats between John and Mary and their developing relationship mirrored some of those between Cas and Dean. And if you put any stock in those observations, or anything to say?

Gabe Garza 1:02:59

you know, I can't speak for every writer on the show who contributed at some point to writing John and Mary stuff. And I certainly can't speak for Robbie and David, who were like running story. But I will say just personally, I, that's pure, you know, the fans want to read into it, I will

say, you know, that's some of the open interpretation for their, you know, fun that they can have with it. But I feel like to honor a love, you have to make it about that love. You can't make it about some other love or saying that the only value this love has, is what it tells you about some other relationship, it has to have value for its own relationship. And so I really do feel like when we all approached writing, John and Mary, we put them first at all times and didn't try to serve something else at the expense of their relationship.

Sadie Witkowski 1:03:56

Yeah, I think that totally makes sense. And also the fact that there are mirrors it's like, well, one, a lot of love stories have a lot of similarities. We talked about Romeo and Juliet stories for a reason. They're kind of stereotypes. And then also, just like, if you have some of the writers and the original shows were like, ah, yeah, this feels right. I don't know why.. And then later it's like, because I wrote a scene just like this.

Gabe Garza 1:04:15

Well, also was the, you know, the thing we were talking about earlier with, like multiverse and alternate universes, where it's like, is some stuff just kind of always going to happen, or a version of it happened? And I think a lot of that probably would have been played with, you know, how the show gone on, you know,

Sadie Witkowski 1:04:34

yeah, yeah, that makes sense. Okay, trying to do the speed round or super not. That's okay.

Gabe Garza 1:04:39

Ah, there's editing.

Sadie Witkowski 1:04:41

Yeah, there's that's what editing is for. Was there any consideration or worry about how fans might react that Dean was in the show, but Sam wasn't and like, were you? Were you worried about the fans?

Gabe Garza 1:04:54

You know, I think it's safe to say that that was probably something that at some point everybody thought of, you know, I feel like that's like how could you not right. But at the same point, one, just because something isn't a part of something now, like we've talked about doesn't mean it won't be a part of something. But two, it wasn't even so much about the fact that Dean was in the show. It was about these new guys. And sort of, you know, how do we make people fall in love with the new guys, you know, and, obviously, the emotional underpinning of, you know, Dean's fanfiction of creating the show was, was a big part of like, the emotional sort of pitch for the show and underneath everything. But it really was just about the characters that were on the poster, you know, and it was about, you know, a Scooby gang. And it was about the love of Mary and John defying all odds, as you know, Winchesters are known to do from time to time, and putting that really just sort of first and foremost in our mind, rather than, like, put another

way, if people saw the show, and all they said was like, Sam's not in this, so I'm not interested and nothing else was getting them interested, then like, you know, that's a bigger problem. You know, our job was fall in love with the new guys. And we focused on that.

Sadie Witkowski 1:06:27

Speaking of the new guys, do you have a headcanon? For what happened to Carlos in the original SPN series? Because he is mentioned, there's like an off like one line that Sam says about like, oh yeah, I just called Carlos, and he doesn't think it's this or whatever? Do you have a headcanon for where he ended up in the prime universe?

Gabe Garza 1:06:45

So I know, Robbie does, because I remember him bringing this up in the room. And it's the you know, one of the reasons why, you know, Carlos is named Carlos, I think, I wonder it was that one of Robbie's episodes that he wrote, I'm trying to remember because I think Carlos was also possibly named after a friend of his. But I do remember that been discussed in the room. And I know Robbie has, like a way in his head that either makes sense or is like, an homage to it, or something like the alternate universe version of that. Or so I'm not totally sure what that is. But it was discussed. And I do, I did see a twinkle in Robbie's eye that I was like, Okay, there's more there that will possibly find out. But we it's like 430, and we need to get this story done. So we're focusing on the story at hand, as opposed to breaking a story that may be told several seasons down the line.

Sadie Witkowski 1:07:38

It's good to know. Yeah, I love that. Someone pointed that out to me. I was like, Oh, that makes sense. Um, if you like, would you have wanted them to do any crossovers into other universes in future seasons? Or were you really happy to stay with like the cast that you had and the story that you had going?

Gabe Garza 1:07:54

Oh I always want to like, I want to surprise myself constantly. And so I think, not putting any limits on where the show can go is great. Now, to counteract that you have to have the discipline to say like, just because you can go anywhere and do anything and anything can happen. What should happen, and what should you do? And, you know, there's a version of surprising yourself, where you go, Oh, my gosh, oh, of course. That's amazing. And there's a version of surprising yourself, you're like, Huh, what the heck? What's going on? And so I think like, it's kind of a case by case basis, but I would, I absolutely think the show would have evolved in a lot of interesting ways and not been limited to just just like, you know, supernatural, like, Who could have thought, you going back to research for this watching like few episodes of season one. And then like, the later season, it's like, whoa, you went from this to that. But like, it's, it's amazing some of the flexibility these shows have?

Sadie Witkowski 1:08:52

Do you think Dean would have still been involved in season two? Or would we have like, truly

transitioned off into our new cast?

Gabe Garza 1:08:59

You know, I think some of like him passing on the journal. And at the end, there is a little bit to still get Dean's life lessons and voiceover you know, even though he perhaps was kind of slapped on the wrist, you shouldn't be doing this man. But I mean, come on. It's the Winchesters!

He's gonna break the rules again. Yeah.

I mean, like, come on, like, you know, and like, the thing is, also, all those actors really enjoy working together. And they really enjoy the that's one of the reasons why I think the show lasted for so long, is I don't know how many people know this. But like, everyone that worked on that show, like loved working on that show. And like for the vast majority that I've heard at least, and they also just like really love the show and they love the characters and I think that just comes across so clearly. When you and one of the reasons why it came out fully baked, I think was you know that it wasn't just a paycheck for this and you can tell you can see my conventions and you can tell like they really, really care. Not just about the fans, but about the show, you know, so much so that they'll do stuff on the show that, they think what are the fans gonna think about this? I don't know. Right? Like, that's because they just like love those guys so much that they play and that they get to act with. So, you know, I, again in the 300 episode version of Winchesters, I would not have put my money on, you'll never see Dean again. That just personally, I wouldn't put my biggest odds on that.

Sadie Witkowski 1:10:23

Right? Maybe you can't even keep Jensen offset like, who knows we?

Gabe Garza 1:10:26

Yeah, and Jensen, by the way, like I had very little interaction with him. The higher ups had a lot of interaction with him and you know, obviously his production company and with Robbie and everything. But he did talk to the writers from time to time. Man, that guy is just like such a pleasant human being to be around. Like it. Yeah, I remember what someone in the room was like, you know, after the zoom, where we all were just like, you know, just enthralled. You know, they were like, You know what, it's a shame he's not more charming. Because he could really have a career that you're just like, you know, the most charming, cool like unthreatening, not intimidated by him. But just like, you know, and again, as a guy who came from half hour, I still feel like he's his comedy chops are underrated. Like, he just like, understands how to play that grounded character based but really pushed comedy when he needs to. So well. And that's like, you know, I actually need to catch up on the boys. But I was about to ask if you had seen season three I, you know, I in the middle of season two, my wife and I were both kind of like losing a little interest. And then so we went away some other show caught our attention, as happens with like, you know, streaming when you're binging things, and I need to go back to it, and I need to go back to it. So I hope he's getting a chance to flex his comedy muscles on that.

But if not, someone's got to give him some action comedy movie where he can do his thing.

Sadie Witkowski 1:11:56

Yeah, definitely. I'm actually okay. Speaking of Dean slash Jensen. Has anyone told you that his appearance in the later episodes? Looks like a vintage Old Spice guy.

Gabe Garza 1:12:08

You know, I I I think a lot of that had to do with possibly like, the look he had to have for other things he was making, you know, he was very busy guy to get a hold of even for like that episode. But I think he pulled it off however he looked.

Sadie Witkowski 1:12:26

I mean, it's definitely seven days. I'll give him that. Yeah,

Gabe Garza 1:12:29

I think he pulled it off. I just thought that's a cool looking dude, you know? And I thought it was so cool. How, you know, it reminds me so many stories that I live in comics that involve like time travel where you'll have like, a character was trained by one character go back in time and and now they have to like, you know, they meet the young version, the person to train them who's a little bit more like a wild card like they were now they have to pass on the lessons that they learned from that person. Like, I love the way that he played as a little bit elder statesman, but like, still the reckless you know, you know,

Sadie Witkowski 1:13:01

he's grown but he's not... he's still his character.

Gabe Garza 1:13:05

Exactly. But you know, that's again, like that's, I think, such a reward for the fans who get to see not the exact same guy in the last episode of Supernatural but you can tell there is still like, a little bit like of evolution there, and that he's not done evolving. And again, that's like what I like, which shows where I can imagine that those characters are still off growing, doing something, get into adventures, even if I don't get to see them. That's my favorite version of how you leave the show.

Sadie Witkowski 1:13:34

Yeah, yeah. So you can have fanfiction that last forever. Like I don't know if you know this, but the third most popular fan fiction universe on AO3 which is like the biggest like collection. You have Harry Potter Marvel, cinematic and supernatural with so Wow, the Winchesters it is still number 3.

Gabe Garza 1:13:55

All right. Well, everybody listening, let's let's go after that number one spot. Like I mean, you know, come on, guys.

Sadie Witkowski 1:14:04

We got better politics and Harry Potter. I'm just saying,

Gabe Garza 1:14:07

Yeah, you know, it's like, it's like, I love Harry Potter. I love my MCU. But like, you know, talk about The Little Engine That Could with this show, right? How can you not root for that? Let's go get em.

Sadie Witkowski 1:14:21

Okay, and then my last speed round on was Do you have a favorite scene that you got to write and what is it?

Gabe Garza 1:14:27

Oh, definitely. So you know what I was gonna say definitely gets a little tricky. The second episode I wrote was with the brilliant and absolutely genius Julia Cooperman. She's written a lot of shows. And we were I think the only script that was kind of paired I think maybe Rob and David did one. But they're always like paired at the hip. But like we were our second episode, both of us was writing together. And it was such a pleasant experience. Shout out to Julia. And there. There was a lot of fun sort of just Writing this there was a great, so the villain in that episode is this sort of two faced men of letters, Doctor guy. And I remember in the first draft of the script, you know, we kind of we wrote him. And then Robbie gave this note that was like, one note he had, and it was like one of the best notes that I've ever gotten. And he just said, what would make Harrison Ford wants to play this character, go write that. And it clicked immediately. And so we had such a fun time, then we just really sort of overhauled the character and the voice and your Charles Shaughnessy who took a red eye after shooting this other thing and showed up on day one with like eight pages of dialogue, because we've shot all those scenes back to back completely memorized, and you're just like blown away that he did this overnight on like an airplane. That was like, a real getting that note and going back into the script was a really fun experience because it really gave us license to like, be free and take big swings. And that was really fun. But I still think my favorite absolute thing was the bori baba was scenes in episode three. Particularly the scenes where it was just like Monster cut to the monster with the little kid. And it was just like, creepy teaser out creepy act out. That was just so fun to play in that world. And really think, Alright, I can't be like HBO shock value here. How do I just but how do I make the hair stand up on the arm, in a CW-way here. And it was you know, Claudia yami was a brilliant director who like brought it to life. And, you know, the actors involved in that were amazing. And that that paves the screen, it held a special place in my heart.

Sadie Witkowski 1:16:47

Yeah, that was a that was a fun one. I was surprised by how spooked I was right from the get go. And that episode with with them was like, Oh, I don't even have to see that much. I'm just like, Okay,

Gabe Garza 1:16:56

it's down. It's It's The Contortionist movement, which is a real guy doing that. And then the sound of the bones popping, that like, adds the extra layer, and I'm gonna look up his name, I'm gonna look up who was played here, because I it's not off the top of my head, but he deserves a shout out.

Sadie Witkowski 1:17:15

Yeah, as I say, you've been even nailing it with all the names. I'm like, you know,

Gabe Garza 1:17:20

it's it really is a team effort. And like, I gotta tell you, like, there's a, you go from show to show and you keep a list of like, your all stars. And you're like, when it's my turn, who am I gonna call? And like, I got to tell you, I crossed out so many names and replace them with people I met on the show, both in the crew and the writers and cast. Cast was amazing. This is the thing that a lot of people save, I just need, like, absolutely need to say this, because I've worked with several, like, you know, hundreds of episodes of, you know, people on things. And this cast was really special in that they were very, very talented. They got along so well with each other. And they were just like, genuinely, like professional and nice people that, you know, I understood now why sometimes you'll see some directors work with like the same cast over and over. Because when you find people that are like talented, and good, it's like, well, why am I gonna go look like, check check, right? So it's like, just like, call them. So if anyone is listening to this, this is in the position to hire and anyone in this cast comes up. You will not regret it. And you saw like, 1/10 of what, you know, we could have done with them. Had we known what they could do and then had a season two.

Sadie Witkowski 1:18:35

Yeah, yeah, I really started to flex those muscles. So I enjoyed the cast a lot, too. I thought they were great.

Gabe Garza 1:18:42

They were great.

Sadie Witkowski 1:18:45

Especially for how young they are. I was like, Oh, I'm older than some of these people cast. Just that's the thing that hasn't happened. Yeah.

Gabe Garza 1:18:52

That starts to happen. And you're like, Oh, that's right. You. You're like you haven't seen the Lion King and I wasn't born yet. And you're like, Oh, okay. That happened to me years ago, by the way, like, recently. So I've long stopped recognizing the musical guests on SNL. That's when I knew I was old. I was like, I can't recognize any musical guest anymore. I've proficiently crossed over. And now one of the olds. Well, exactly one of the experienced! The wizened! you know, yeah, I feel like Gandalf. As I say, I think

Sadie Witkowski 1:19:27

SNL is actually kind of a byte distribution where it's like, You're too young. You can't stay up late enough to see it. You're old enough to stay up to see it and you're really excited. You know, the musical guests. You start not knowing the musical guests and then maybe you don't even stay awake for musical guests.

Gabe Garza 1:19:41

Yes, absolutely. Okay, boy, Baba actor feeling contortionists JD Garcia stunt actor. You can find them on IMDb. He's got like a crazy reel. But he was so awesome to work with and I can't tell you how uncomfortable it was to be in that costume. And how we had to go go go and there were storm delays and there were all these things. And we would be like alright, what are we gonna do in this scene? And he would be like, how about this and it was amazing and freaky and I could hear the sound effects without them being on set just because of how he was moving. So JD Garcia go look them up

Sadie Witkowski 1:20:21

Yeah, okay, well we made it through my very slow speed round. Do you have anything last last words we want to say about like for sure there is nothing in the works for a season two but we fans will forever hope I am sure

Gabe Garza 1:20:35

you know I think a lot of people didn't think there was ever going to be any more supernatural anything for a while there Right. And then also you had a spin off a temper to one of these you know stuck Never say never. You never know Right? Carry on wayward son, carry on.

Sadie Witkowski 1:20:52

I love that. I'm gonna leave it right there.

[Music]

All right y'all! Don't forget to send me your voice memo recording about a tv series ending that had a major impact on you! Obviously, I want to hear your stories about the end of Supernatural, but remember that we're expanding the scope this season.

Make sure to mention

- the name of the series
- whether you liked the ending or hated it
- why
- and why you think it still haunts you to this day!

Try to keep your recording under 3 minutes.

Lastly, if you want to be credited in the episode where I use your recording, make sure to let me know what name or social media handle I should use.

I'll have a link for where to submit your recording in the show notes.

[music]

Editorial support was provided by Dr. Anna Funk.

Music was composed and performed by Chris Scott.

Cover art was designed by Liz Hand.

Thanks to One Crafty Chicakadee, DitchLilyTiger, Wayward Photographer, Meg, Rupert Gayes, Dani, and Marissa for supporting the show through ko-fi.

In Defense of Fandom was made possible through an unhealthy obsession, and your support via ko-fi. If you're not already supporting the show and you'd like to, you can find a link in the show notes to our ko-fi. Your support is deeply appreciated.

Ok, now send me your thoughts on TV finales people!