

**[00:00:00.970] - Nathan**

Hello. Welcome to Nonsense and Noise, a podcast about the queer person of color pop culture media experience. As you can tell, I'm still... we're 20 episodes and I still have no way to like, greet everybody before I was doing the triple hello. And I just got very self conscious about it. I'm like I seem lame.

**[00:00:23.350] - Nathan**

Anyways, I'm your host. It's Nathan Kato. And welcome to Pod. Today is January 16. I'm recording on MLK Day.

**[00:00:34.010] - Nathan**

And yeah, it's been two weeks into the new year, back to work. Luckily I had today off and I brought my car into the dealership. That's what I ended up doing today instead of trying to do that at any other point during the weekend so I could try and enjoy my day off. But you know what, sometimes adult life comes at you hard and fast and you make decisions that you would maybe not make in any other situation. That's a very intense way of putting it.

**[00:01:09.370] - Nathan**

I just didn't want to go up to the dealership on Saturday, that's all. I've just been working. The only sort of new fun development that's occurred since in these first two weeks of the year is I am now starting to carpool with one of my coworkers. It turns out he lives like in actually my old apartment building. And yeah, so it's been interesting just like getting to know him and everything.

**[00:01:38.430] - Nathan**

This upcoming week is going to be the second week of us carpooling together. And we only have to go to the office twice a week, so it's not too bad. But also at the same time, I don't think we've reached the point where I'm just fine not talking in the car quite yet. I still feel quite awkward about that, even though probably it doesn't matter. Especially since we're going to run out of things to talk about anyways, since our commute is like 40 to 50 minutes each way, I don't need to spend 2 hours talking to this person all the time for really a grand total of almost 4 hours every week. But yeah, I'm carpooling, so at least I'm like saving a little bit of money. That's nice. And also it is my birthday in a little bit under a month. I've been keeping a countdown on Twitter like I do every year.

**[00:02:35.090] - Nathan**

I do a nice funny little bit on Twitter with my display name. So right now we're at 23 days left. When this drops, which is probably going to be end of this week, how many days are going to be remaining? Probably like 19. So yeah, that's fun.

**[00:02:55.450] - Nathan**

Looking forward to I'm going to be trying to plan a house party for some folks so we can get together, hang out, drink, maybe play some party games, who knows? We'll see. But yeah, that's the plan. That's what I've been up to for the most part. Generally things are pretty quiet.

**[00:03:14.210] - Nathan**

I've tried out like some new recipes I guess is the only other fun thing. I found this one nutritionist on Instagram, and she had this one recipe for Mason Jar noodles where you just put a whole bunch of ingredients in a Mason Jar and you top it off with some vermicelli noodles and then you just heat it up with hot or boiling water. And I tried it out last week and it ended up working out quite well. And I was surprised, but also not too surprised. It was good.

**[00:03:49.680] - Nathan**

And my personal trainer... I actually sent him that recipe because we were talking about food stuff and he was like, oh yeah, I actually do this. So it was cool to just get that further feedback from my trainer. Like, yeah, this is a reputable source to trust. Yeah, that's pretty much all from me.

**[00:04:09.740] - Nathan**

Nothing too exciting in my life that's going on right now. So let's just hop right into pop culture updates. So things are a little sparse on the video game end, but that's only because I think I covered a lot of video game topics or updates that I wanted to last month and I was trying to limit this to just January. So really the only two that I have. Forspoken still coming out on January 24. I just put my pre order in yesterday or maybe two days ago or whatever.

**[00:04:46.250] - Nathan**

I was really waffling back and forth between whether or not I wanted everything, like the full deluxe package, which includes prequel DLC. I'm sure I'm going to like the game enough to maybe consider it, but also considering all the other games that I need to play and by need to, I mean, I literally have physical copies of them for my switch or they're in my Steam library. There's a lot of shit for me to do and I don't need to necessarily spend more money. Also, I don't need a huge new game to play because I've got Octopath Traveler Two coming out at the end of February and I'm so excited for that. I just keep adding things to my backlog.

**[00:05:29.910] - Nathan**

And my aunt bought me Pikmin Three for Christmas, like Christmas of 2020. It's been now almost three. It's been two years. I haven't even opened it. I have that.

**[00:05:40.800] - Nathan**

And Shin Megami Tensei Three. I haven't finished Shin Megami Tensei Five. I haven't finished Harvestella. I have a problem anyways, just in case you happen to miss last month's episode, Forspoken is an adventure RPG open World, where you play the character Frey, who is a black girl from New York City who gets transported to the mythical alternate dimension of Athia. And you basically explore Athia and try and master magic while also trying to find your way home and figure out what's wrong with Athia. So all the gameplay trailers and everything looked really cool. It's fantasy and you get to, I think, Square Enix had said the big focus is on movement and fluidity of movement. So you get to see a lot of just like, in addition to learning magic, you actually learn parkour skills.

**[00:06:36.310] - Nathan**

So I highly recommend watching one of the trailers. I'll probably put that in the episode description so you guys can just take a look. The game looks really cool. Really looking forward to that. So that's Forspoken from Square Enix on January 24.

**[00:06:49.030] - Nathan**

That is on PlayStation and PC. And then the only other game update that I saw that I haven't mentioned before is coming out on January 31 for Xbox as Age of Empires Definitive Edition. The real time strategy game genre has been not dead per se, but it's been dormant for a while. Like so I remember growing up in like, the 2000s, like, real time strategy games were like, pretty not rampant per se, but they were like, everywhere. You had Age of Empires and all of its spin off.

**[00:07:25.870] - Nathan**

You had Rise of Nations, which actually I really liked. I played it once at a friend's house and really wanted to get it, but then my parents weren't super into me gaming when I was growing up, so I never got Rise of Nations. But that's okay. Maybe I'll find it somewhere and I can see if it holds up to my expectations. StarCraft is also real time strategy.

**[00:07:49.910] - Nathan**

What else? But basically, like, there was during the during the 2000s, like, real time strategy was like a really big and like, thriving genre of video game. And then during the 2010s and even now, there's not too many big name real time strategy games out there. There's one that I have on Steam from, I think it's Shiro Studios. S-H-I-R-O.

**[00:08:18.270] - Nathan**

And they have a game called Northgard, and it's very similar to Age of Empires, like Age of Mythology, that sort of thing, but with a Norse spin on it. It's pretty fun. You play as like, a different clan or whatever.

You get to choose a clan and each clan has its own perks and also, like, drawbacks. But of course, the game mostly focuses on the perks.

**[00:08:48.800] - Nathan**

So, for example, like, the Clan of the Bear, they don't get a penalty during wintertime. The game has like, seasons and winter is like when you're penalized the most, because this is taking place during the age of Viking exploration and everything. So, yeah, it's really fun. And they really get you with all the DLC for all the different clans that they've added on. I think they've added on maybe they start I think the base is like maybe five to seven clans or whatever.

**[00:09:21.520] - Nathan**

Or no, I think it's five. And then they've added on like seven or eight now it's kind of wild. And I keep buying the DLC even though I rarely play this game because I'm not generally in the mood for real time strategy all the time. But yeah, so Age of Empires is a game that I ended up growing up with sorry, that was a long tangent on real time strategy, and I didn't even get to say what I wanted to say.

**[00:09:44.600] - Nathan**

But yeah, Age of Empires I grew up on, I honestly don't understand how I played these games as, like, a child, literal child. Like, these were my jam from like, 4th through, like, 8th grade. I loved these things. I mostly played Age of Empires and Age of Mythology. And like I said, I played Rise of Nations once.

**[00:10:08.600] - Nathan**

I did not touch StarCraft ever. I did not touch StarCraft until maybe late 2021, early 2022, for reasons that I will not talk about right now. So, yeah, it's cool to see that coming back. There's a game studio called Frost Giant Studios that is trying to resurrect the RTS genre. And right now their debut game is Stormgate.

**[00:10:42.070] - Nathan**

It's in beta right now I believe. I saw a trailer for it at the Game Awards over the summer, or maybe over the summer I saw that and personally, I wasn't super impressed. But that's also because this definitely had a more World of Warcraft sort of feeling. And I don't know, in my RTS games, I don't know, I like more like builders, I guess. I don't know.

**[00:11:14.790] - Nathan**

Either way, it didn't really appeal to me. But I know that Frost Giant Studios is like, trying to work on that. And I've been following them for a little bit just because I do like RTS games, I just have to be in the mood to play them. So that's video games. I'm sorry, I just went on this huge tangent for truly no reason.

**[00:11:35.150] - Nathan**

We'll jump into movies. So I've got three movies for you all. The first one has already come out. It's Megan M3GAN. That came out on January 6.

**[00:11:46.370] - Nathan**

And I know that people were like, oh, this looks like super campy, and people weren't expecting it to do really well. But then it smashed box office expectations, which I think is very funny, and I think it's just because it's so campy, but this is like a horror movie kind of adjacent to Chucky. It's a Doll, I guess technically this is an AI, but it's still the same sort of concept of like, there's this toy that has taken over our lives and it's doing nefarious things, and we would like it to stop doing that. And I don't think there are actually, like, people of color in the main cast, but it was written by a Black woman. Let me just look up her name real quick because I don't know it off the top of my head.

**[00:12:41.970] - Nathan**

It was written by Akela Cooper. And Akela Cooper has also written Malignant, Hell Fest, and the Nun 2. And she's also written for TV. She wrote on Tron Uprising, Grimm, Witches of East End, The 100, American Horror Story, Luke Cage, Avengers Assemble, Chambers, Jupiter's Legacy, and then Star Trek Strange New Worlds.

**[00:13:13.070] - Nathan**

And she was a nominee in 2017 for the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding writing in a drama series for Luke Cage. She was also nominated for a Black Reel Award also for Luke Cage. So, yeah, it's really cool that she got to put that work into this story that is now very it seems popular. Like people seem to really like it a lot.

**[00:13:41.270] - Nathan**

Like I said, this movie exceeded box office expectations. As of date of record... So the budget for this movie was \$12 million. As of date of recording, this movie has made \$94.5 million. So that's like absurd. It's great that something that's not a huge IP like Marvel or something is making this much money.

**[00:14:08.320] - Nathan**

So hopefully the movie studios will actually see, hey, it's cool. We can do stuff that's not just a franchise anymore. And hopefully we see cool news stories that come out instead of just like Avatar Five where apparently James Cameron is like, they're actually fired Na'vi now, and it's just like we had this plot point in Avatar The Last Airbender, like, get over yourself. You're not telling any new stories. You're just doing your usual white savior narrative but recycling an already existing storyline.

**[00:14:44.260] - Nathan**

So, yeah. So that's M3GAN. That came out on January 6. The next two are coming out on January 20. The first is JUNG\_E. That is coming out the 20 January on Netflix.

**[00:15:00.390] - Nathan**

And it is a post apocalyptic Sci-Fi movie centering on the legacy of a mercenary strategist named Yun Jungyi who is in a vegetative state after a failed mission. So in this movie, basically, there's I guess, like post apocalyptic conditions on Earth and so humanity is up in space and fighting civil war up in space or whatever. And Yun Jungyi is a brilliant military strategist and she ends up being in a failed mission and she ends up in a vegetative state. And naturally an AI development company takes a lot of interest in cloning her brain so that they can have the ultimate combat warrior. So they try and try all these things and then 35 years later, the daughter of Yun Jungyi, Yun Seohyun, is the leader of the actual project, which is actually in the midst of being scrapped.

**[00:16:09.190] - Nathan**

However, the project has created a prototype called JUNG\_E. So the actual person's name or character's name is spelled J-U-N-G-Y-I, and of course, that's romanized from the Korean. And then the prototype is also called JUNG\_E, but it's J-U-N-G underscore E. It's all caps.

**[00:16:31.410] - Nathan**

So, yeah, this movie is about the prototype AI trying to escape from the lab and all the ramifications of that. So that's coming out on January 20 on Netflix, and it's a Korean movie. And then the other movie that I saw that's coming out also on January 20 is a limited release. It's a movie called In From the Side, and it's a sports movie about a team of gay athletes who are more second string type of people and they're trying to score a win at a game while dealing with some romance within the team. The synopsis that I found online didn't really give me anything more than that.

**[00:17:17.600] - Nathan**

So all you need to know is probably a gay rugby team or something. But either way, I highlighted that just because at least it's a gay movie. I don't know if I don't think there are any people of color featured in that, unfortunately. That's In From the Side with a limited release on January 20. So, like I said, pop culture update this month is a little bit shorter than normal, maybe, sans my rant about RTS games, but yeah.

**[00:17:50.630] - Nathan**

So that's it for now. I'm going to take a quick break and then we will launch into the main content.

**[00:17:57.450] - Nathan**

All right, and we are back from the break. So if in case you didn't listen to last month's episode, this month we're also doing a recap or sort of summarization of the state of super Asian America, but this time following DC Comics.

**[00:18:15.270] - Nathan**

Because last month's was Marvel and we saw some good, we saw some bad, most of it was bad. But also, there are some cool characters that I mentioned looking out for. And of course, you can't really talk about anything Marvel without talking about anything DC. So we're here doing part two of this series. Highly recommend going back to listen to the Marvel episode.

**[00:18:39.150] - Nathan**

But the DC episode, I mean, these are all standalone, too, so it doesn't really matter. You just get to hear me being tired and upset at white people for like twice the time, I guess, if you listen to this one and the last episode. So, just as a reminder for context, what sparked these episodes on Super Asian America was a comment by Simu Liu on being Asian American representation in the superhero space. And a lot of people were like, okay, well, how much representation is that actually, because you're just being an Asian American person who knows gongfu, like martial arts is not a superpower. And like I said in the previous episode, I understand his perspective.

**[00:19:27.650] - Nathan**

Like, this is his job, so he can't really say hey. I mean, he could, but he doesn't really feel like he could say, hey, I hate doing this, or like, this isn't good enough because Hollywood is controlled by wealthy white people who think they're doing good. And when you hold the mirror up and say, like, hey, actually, this is not that great, then they can blacklist you and stuff. Like all of what happened with Brendan Fraser after he was sexually assaulted by this big wig in Hollywood, he got blacklisted, which is why we haven't seen Brendan Fraser in anything since the late 2000s, I think. And then he came back with the Whale.

**[00:20:14.790] - Nathan**

That's his first appearance since then because he's been blacklisted in Hollywood. So anyways, that's the whole context for all of this, basically, I was motivated to see, okay, well, how is Super Asian America doing what does our representation look like? What does the landscape actually look like? And what can we do to do better, if at all, really? So we're going to launch in.

**[00:20:41.120] - Nathan**

It's going to be the same sort of format as last episode. I'm going to start with the bad and be really exhausted and upset. And then we'll go to the good. And then I'll highlight a couple of characters who I

think are really cool. And then we'll pivot once again to the solutions and stuff, which I think are probably going to be the same as last episode.

**[00:20:58.600] - Nathan**

But just in case you didn't listen to the last episode, you get to hear those thoughts here. So launching right in with the shitty stuff. So I don't remember how many DC characters that I looked at, but basically I went through the whole list on Wikipedia and did a little short little profile on these characters for like, who they were created by, when they were created, and what powers they have, if any. So like I said, we'll start with the sort of bad themes that I saw first. Interestingly enough, Marvel didn't have a ton of mysticism at work other than, I think, Wong, who's the sidekick for Dr. Strange. There isn't really too much like, oh, because you're Asian, you're like this. You have like, supernatural, I don't know, like, you've got a stronger connection to the supernatural because the culture is mystical or whatever. However, DC has two characters that are blind and are made superheroes, not necessarily despite being blind, but like to add to sort of like the mysticism and stuff. So the first character is named I Ching, or I Ching.

**[00:22:19.350] - Nathan**

Or this is spelled I Ching. I don't I don't know how white people pronounce this, honestly. I-C-H-I-N-G. This is based off of a Chinese fortune telling system called the Yi Jing.

**[00:22:37.410] - Nathan**

So this character is a blind martial artist and he was created by two white men in 1968. And then the other character is Jade Yifei, who's a Green Lantern. So at least she's got actual superpowers. But she's also blind. She was created in 2013 by white men.

**[00:22:59.270] - Nathan**

And I'm going to need to like, find the article that or like the essay that I saw about this. But basically, like, it's cool to have disability representation in superhero spaces. And also at the same time, I think the thing that happens is that these disabilities get turned into superpowers or the superpowers that the characters end up having end up being able to supersede the disability or whatever. Whereas I think the perspective from some folks in the disability community is like, our disability isn't something that should be viewed as like a crutch to get over. It's just part of us and our experience.

**[00:23:50.970] - Nathan**

Don't quote me on this. I don't remember the essay exactly. And also, I'm not disabled, so this isn't really my wheelhouse. But yeah, these characters are blind. And at least with Jade, she actually gets enhancement from her Green Lantern powers that sort of allow her to be able to see and they enhance her hearing.



**[00:24:16.130] - Nathan**

As for I Ching, he doesn't get anything special. He's just a blind martial artist. And, yeah, the mysticism is just like, oh, I may be blind, but I'm, like, so connected to the natural world around me that I can pick up on things and make up for my lack of eyesight or whatever.

**[00:24:40.090] - Nathan**

This is a trope that we see a lot in different media. This is especially evident in Avatar The Last Airbender with the character of Toph, and she can see with vibrations, and that turns into her superpower of sorts. It's dubbed seismic sense, which is cool and all and also, like, yeah, it's a weird relationship with disability. But, yeah, there's just, like, all this mysticism and, like, oh, you're, like, so exotic and cool and, like, special because you have this disability when, like, you know, that doesn't really happen in the real world. So that was one thing that I noticed.

**[00:25:28.650] - Nathan**

Then, of course, we fall into some of the overlaps with Marvel. You have a lot of characters who are just regular regular humans who just happen to know martial arts. So in no particular order, you've got Wing, who is from the Seven Soldiers of Victory. He's the sidekick to Crimson Avenger. The important thing to note here is neither Crimson Avenger nor Wing have actual superpowers.

**[00:25:56.230] - Nathan**

Anyways, these characters were created in 1938 by a couple of white men. There's also Striker Z or Daniel Tsang, who was created by white men in 2002. All I have in my notes is that he's a human battery. I don't remember exactly what that means, but I guess he does have some superpowers, but he knows martial arts. And I was like, okay, well, martial arts isn't like a superpower.

**[00:26:21.200] - Nathan**

So there's also Claw from Primal Force. He was created... or they, I don't remember if Claw is a man or a woman, but they're created by white folks in 1994 and they have anger issues, but they also have no superpowers. They just are a good swordsman. I think they have, like, a special sword and that grants them some power. So once again, the whole thing with artifacts and does using an artifact actually make you a superhero?

**[00:26:51.750] - Nathan**

Or are you just like, a regular person who just happens to have a tool? So there's Claw, Lady Shiva, or Sandra Wu-San was created by a white writer and a Cuban American artist in 1975. Once again, she has no superpowers, but she knows martial arts. And this character in particular is a little strange because

Shiva is not like someone from the Chinese pantheon or any sort of Chinese mythology. Shiva is a god in the Hindu pantheon.

**[00:27:27.670] - Nathan**

So this is like, real peak oh, Asians are just like, whatever. It's just like, anywhere that's not Europe. And just like, obviously the whole bloc of Asian America is really big and very diverse. It covers Southeast Asia, East Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia.

**[00:27:57.550] - Nathan**

All of these geographical regions have such diverse cultures. There's no way that... I would say this would be less of a problem if the character herself was actually mixed like Chinese and Indian. I think that would be really cool. But instead, this character is just a Chinese woman and she has a nonsensical Chinese name or nonsensical Chinese last name. Like, Wu San is not a Chinese surname, unless I guess you're going with, like, maybe her parents...

**[00:28:33.000] - Nathan**

Like, she's taking both of her parents' names, but even then, that's a stretch. So yeah, like, you can't, like, mash these two different cultures together like this into one person, especially if you're going to call a Chinese American woman Lady Shiva. Like, that is not respectful of any of the source material. So white folks, stop playing in the sandbox unless you do your research and even then, stop playing in the sandbox because Avatar Studios need to really let it go. So there's Lady Shiva, and then the last two are just, once again, swordsmen.

**[00:29:16.930] - Nathan**

There's Bushido or Ryuku Orsono, which... What a stretch for a Japanese last name. That last name just doesn't work. But he was created in 2000 by white people. And I think his most notable appearance is I think there's an episode in Teen Titans where he shows up. But, yeah, he's associated with the Teen Titans.

**[00:29:41.620] - Nathan**

He does not have any superpowers. He just knows how to handle the sword. And then there's Katana or Tatsu Yamashiro, who was created by white folks in 1983. They're a swordsman. I believe they showed up in Birds of Prey.

**[00:29:57.310] - Nathan**

I don't remember. And I can't really say they care too much. But yeah, lots of just regular people who don't have superpowers, but they know how to fight, whether it be with martial arts or using a sword. And yeah,

it's not great. Enough, simply enough. I'm tired of people being like, oh, you know, swords play or, you know, sword play.

**[00:30:29.720] - Nathan**

That's enough for a superpower. Like, you know, martial arts. You never see some white dude wielding an axe and people are like, oh, you're a superhero. I mean, there's Thor and he has a hammer, but he also is supposed to be like a god. And so he actually does have superhuman powers.

**[00:30:49.480] - Nathan**

He just happens to also have a hammer that can also do superhuman things. Anyways, you don't see this sort of thing with white characters. And yeah, it's racist, it's orientalism, it's mysticism. It's just not cool. Martial arts and swords play are not superpowers, bottom line. Okay, so we're going to move on from that to a couple more nasty things that DC did with the Asian American characters. There's, as per usual, fetishization of Asian women, there was a character named Gloss from the new Guardians, like Floss, but with a G, Gloss. And she was created in 1988. And while she is a superhuman and she has superpowers, she has superhuman strength and then can control the elements.

**[00:31:52.770] - Nathan**

Also, when she was originally written, apparently her mission was to just have babies. Yeah, it's not good. Wow, what a fucking two dimensional character. Not even two dimensional, just one dimensional. She's just like, I want to fuck and have kids.

**[00:32:13.120] - Nathan**

It's like, okay, anything else? Like, come on, man, it's bad. And then there was another character from oh, you know what? I ended up deleting that out of my notes by accident. So there was this group of superheroes from China in the DC universe called, like, the Magnificent Ten or something like that.

**[00:32:39.460] - Nathan**

And I don't remember the actual Chinese name of this character because all these superheroes ended up getting Chinese names, and a lot of them are very nonsensical, or they're supposed to be, like, poetic and idiomatic. And it's just very obvious that a non Chinese person just typed shit into Google Translate and then just got shit back. And they're like, yeah, this works. Maybe you can take that with a grain of salt. I don't know how much these people actually consulted, but I'm not willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

**[00:33:11.560] - Nathan**

But there was one character called the Undying Mother or something like that, and her superpower was after being exposed to radiation, she can give birth to sets of ten clones who are like super soldiers every three days. It's like, wow, your superpower is fertility. Like, what? I guess at least she doesn't have to have sex for it to happen. But there were a couple of times where she did have sex with characters to make that happen.

**[00:33:47.820] - Nathan**

And it's like, wow, this is pretty gross to have women reduced to just like, yeah, you're here to just make babies. That's fucking sexist as hell. And even weirder when for that character, they're just like they're clones of each other, and they only do this every three days, and they have, like, a very, very brief lifespan. It's very I don't know what's going on in people's imaginations, if at all. Either way, yeah, that was bad, to say the least.

**[00:34:28.660] - Nathan**

So, yeah, white men are not allowed to write about Asian American women anymore. Thank you very much. So now two sort of new themes. Actually, not two, just one theme that was sort of, like, different from Marvel. I think, like, a lot of the Marvel characters who were Asian American most of the time ended up being pretty substantial and either headed up their own titles or pretty significant characters.

**[00:35:02.770] - Nathan**

However, with DC, you have a lot of just, like, throwaways. So, like I said, there was Wing from before, from Seven Soldiers of Victory sidekick to Crimson Avenger. Key word here being sidekick. And then there's another character in the DC animated universe, another Green Lantern. His name is Kai-Ro, which, like, what nationality are you supposed to be?

**[00:35:31.760] - Nathan**

It's very unclear, but this character is a Green Lantern and he appeared in the DC animated universe in 2000. There's really nothing more to say about this character. He's just like, there and like, I understand that there need to be background characters, but, like, just make your background characters that are, like, fillers white because, like, we don't care about them. Like, there are already so many, like, white characters around. Like, you just put some in the background.

**[00:36:01.260] - Nathan**

Why don't you make the important characters non white? That's what it really all boils down to. I'm running out of steam so fast and we're, like, not even halfway through. God. Okay, so, yeah, what I wrote was just like, these are just sort of like nothing characters.

**[00:36:19.440] - Nathan**

They're just like sidekicks or background. And background characters or sidekicks don't really fully count as representation because background characters, for obvious reasons, we don't have, like, a story, there's nothing to learn about them. And as for sidekicks, Asian characters have been in a sidekick role for so long and people have had to see themselves not really having the spotlight and always being second place. And I remember growing up, and I think a lot of Asian American actors right now would say this too, is like, I never saw the possibility of myself or anybody looking like me in a position of power or, like, a leading role, because I never saw any characters that looked like me doing that. We were always sidekicks and stuff.

**[00:37:12.540] - Nathan**

So enough of that.

**[00:37:19.950] - Nathan**

This is obviously a big reason why representation is important, right? Because the more possibilities that you can see for yourself in fiction, the more possibilities that you can end up feeling open to actually in real life. And that's sort of an interesting relationship that fiction has with our own reality. Not to say that that's the be all, end all solution to fixing racism, but it is one part that is helpful. I think some people put a little bit too much weight into how helpful it is, but it is helpful in some regard. That's all of that.

**[00:37:57.370] - Nathan**

I did save the worst of the worst for last. So this is sort of like good and a bad. The good part is that DC actually has a fair amount of mixed superheroes. Mixed being like, oh, they're Asian American, and then something else, whether that be white or black or Latino or some other ethnicity mixed in. So that's the good.

**[00:38:30.370] - Nathan**

There's this character, the character that I wanted to highlight is Black and Vietnamese, and he was created by white folks in 1993 and he actually has superpowers. They're called darkforce blasts. So I'm assuming he's just like, sort of energy blast, things that use darkness or whatever. And here we come to truly the worst part of this episode. I told some friends about this and they were fucking appalled.

**[00:39:02.040] - Nathan**

But if you had to guess at what they called this character. What would you think? I'm going to pause for a few seconds here so you can come up with some guesses.

**[00:39:15.170] - Nathan**

Wonderful. Probably none of your guesses involved Mongrel. That's right. This mixed Black and Vietnamese character is named Mongrel. Literally anybody who is mixed knows why this is terrible.

**[00:39:36.650] - Nathan**

And a lot of this just happens to do with blood quantum stuff and white concepts of purity, which are fully rooted in eugenics. And yeah, there's a lot of just, like, implications of dirtiness and filthiness and subhumanness from Mongrel. Like, you might as well just called this character Mutt and called it a day. It's not good. And honestly, I can't believe that they got away with doing this.

**[00:40:12.740] - Nathan**

It's been almost 30 years since this character was created, and I honestly want an apology from the artists, the authors, because this is fucking unacceptable. God, just like so disrespectful. There is someone out there who is Black and Vietnamese. And the fact that the character that they have for themselves is named Mongrel, in addition to all the subhuman shit involved and subhuman overtones involved in the name or like the word Mongrel, there's a lot of racist history there too. That's really all I'm going to say.

**[00:41:00.450] - Nathan**

It's, like, very anti-Black. I can't believe that these people got away with naming this character Mongrel. I mean, I can because they're white folks and DC are run by white people, but like, oh my God, it's so bad.

**[00:41:17.770] - Nathan**

I lost my train of thought because this is just so it knocks me off by rocker every time. I can't believe. So yeah, like I said, it's kind of good in that they have mixed representation. But also, why would you call your character basically a slur? I don't know. It's so bad.

**[00:41:39.710] - Nathan**

Okay, so that's enough of the bad. Move on to some of the good stuff. So the first good example is sort of a lukewarm one.

**[00:41:53.890] - Nathan**

When people are building superheroes, the sort of boring example is just like regular superhuman. So they just happen to be a human person who happens to be a better human. So they've got super strength and they can run super fast and just generally a person, but enhanced. So we do have that in the DC universe. Her name is Grace Choi from the Outsiders.

**[00:42:21.530] - Nathan**

She was created in 2003 by white men. And yeah, at least we've got a sort of boring vanilla character that actually has superpowers. So that's cool. There's also a revamp of Superman called New Superman, and his civilian name is Kong Kennan. And he was created by a Chinese writer and a white artist in 2016.

**[00:42:52.960] - Nathan**

The writer is Gene Luen Yang, who's the guy who wrote ABC or American born Chinese. And he, you know, I trust him to do actual good storytelling versus, like, some white dude. But anyways, this character's origin story is he develops the powers of Superman after being exposed to kryptonite infused with Superman's chi, which, I mean, the origin story could be better, honestly.

**[00:43:27.810] - Nathan**

It's an interesting idea. And then eventually his powers diverge enough from Superman such that he becomes he has two sort of alternate modes that he's got. He can become Yin Superman or Yang Superman.

**[00:43:46.870] - Nathan**

Yin Superman, he gains all like dark energy and Yang Superman is like light energy. I don't remember anything else from those two. I just remember thinking, that's a cool idea. I'm not going to write that down. But I mean, it's like an interesting way to sort of make that version of Superman, like, distinct from other Supermans.

**[00:44:13.090] - Nathan**

Like I said, I do think that the introduction or the origin story is a little corny, but at least it's not terrible. It's better than some of the other stuff that I talked about. Yeah, those are sort of the two good ones. And then there are a few really cool characters, actually that I found. So the first, if anybody remembers the character Darwin from X Men, this is kind of like Darwin, but this character's name is Grunge.

**[00:44:41.460] - Nathan**

His civilian name is Perceival Edmund Chang, or Chang. He's created by Korean American authors and white artists. And his superpower is he's able to mimic the molecular structure of any material that he touches. So I thought that was pretty cool. Pretty cool superpower.

**[00:45:00.050] - Nathan**

The next one is kind of corny, but I figured it's cool because we have some queer representation here. So there's a character named Blitzen or Valerie Kameya, and she was created by Black writers and a white

artist in 1994. I don't remember the superhero team that she's on, but she is in a relationship with another one of her superhero teammates named Donner or Gerrie Brower. Blitzen has super speed. I don't remember what Donner has.

**[00:45:34.140] - Nathan**

The only goofy thing is that they're named after reindeer from Santa's Reindeer Squad. How does people respond or refer to Santa's reindeer? Is it just Santa's reindeer? And I just weirdly said Santa's Reindeer Squad? Anyways.

**[00:45:51.070] - Nathan**

Yeah, they're Blitzen and Donner. At least it wasn't two other different reindeer names. I just thought that was kind of funny. Yeah.

**[00:45:59.240] - Nathan**

So there's Blitzen and then another really cool super who has cool superpowers is Iron Butterfly or Kahina Eskandari. And she's on the same team as Blitzen, also created in 1994. And she can control metallic substances. I don't remember if there are really any equivalents for this in the Marvel Universe other than maybe Magneto and like that sort of metal control of metal, I guess is a little bit more masculine. So it's really cool to see that given to a woman character in the DC Universe.

**[00:46:42.570] - Nathan**

So I thought that was pretty cool. And then the last example that I thought was also really cool, more queer representation, and probably my favorite one. I will say, well, we'll take this with the caveat that she doesn't have any superpowers, but also her main blueprint also doesn't have any superpowers. The whole context here is it is an iteration of Catwoman. So we all know Catwoman is Selena Kyle, and she does not have any superpowers.

**[00:47:12.420] - Nathan**

She's just, like, acrobatic and does cool things, and she is very selfish and does things for her own personal gain, whatever. But so at some point, Selena Kyle actually, like, puts down the mantle of Catwoman, and another character, Eiko Hasigawa, picks it up and becomes a new Catwoman. So Eiko was actually created by a white woman in 2014. From what I remember, this person was a Sci-Fi writer, so, like, she's got some, like, authoring experience already, so that's cool. But yeah, the cool part is Eiko is actually in a romantic relationship with Selina Kyle, like, canonically, and, like, they are shown kissing, and it's cool.

**[00:47:56.180] - Nathan**



So? Yeah. I don't know. There's some there are some cool things, but for the most part, I'm just still oh, God. I'm still really stuck on Mongrel.

**[00:48:10.590] - Nathan**

If we had to have a report card side by side, Marvel versus DC, I think DC has the worse one solely because of Mongrel. It's so bad. Oh, my God. Okay, I actually need a break after going through all of that. So we'll take a break, and then we'll come back with what's your Nonsense, and then we'll close out.

**[00:48:39.190] - Nathan**

All right, and welcome back from the break. Fun peek behind the curtain. I fully took a nap.

**[00:48:47.050] - Nathan**

I was just like, so done. And also, I guess I didn't sleep well last night or something, but I fully took a nap and also went to go cook dinner. So I've got something, like, on a low simmer right now. And this is luckily a quick part of the pod. So anyways, I hope you guys are staying hydrated, make sure you drink some water, and we're going to jump into What's Your Nonsense?

**[00:49:16.120] - Nathan**

So this is the final part of the show where we talk about things that either you're into that nobody else seems to be into or is talking about or something that makes you happy. And what better way to start off the New Year than really taking honest social inventory of yourself and see who actually brings you joy, see what friendships like bring you joy and which connections bring you joy and which ones don't. I was really forced to take an honest look at some connections that I had in my life recently and really draw a boundary and say, like, hey, I'm turning 30 in less than a month. And the way that I view mature connections and relationships, there's mutual respect and admiration and everything from both sides. And there have been a couple of relationships or connections really in my life recently where I'm like, actually, these connections don't bring me joy, and they're not actually serving me in any way.

**[00:50:21.370] - Nathan**

They're not helping me to feel good about myself. In fact, I dread a lot of these social interactions, and so as a result, I more or less set boundaries around these connections and how much I interact with them, if at all. And it's tough because a lot of these connections very much feels like, oh, I don't want to hurt somebody's feelings. And also at the same time, to be honest with a lot of these, it's the much kinder thing to do, to say like, hey, I don't think that we're getting along as friends or this connection isn't really working for me. It's kinder to be honest with that person and to stop leading them on.

**[00:51:10.070] - Nathan**

So that's what I ended up doing and I think that you should do that. Take social inventory. If there are relationships or connections where you feel like you're not deriving joy and happiness or something positive really from that connection, then it's totally fine to let it go. And obviously you don't have to. Depending on the connection and the strength of the connection or how often you interact or whatever, you don't have to have a big confrontation or even say anything.

**[00:51:43.440] - Nathan**

Some of these connections that you have may be very tenuous and you genuinely don't owe that person anything. So ghosting is sometimes an option that is fine. So that is one thing, that one nonsense that I would like to highlight, as well as stop being a low maintenance friend. I feel like in the past I used to be the low maintenance friend and I would be like, oh yeah, you don't have to worry about calling me or checking in on me or whatever. We'll hang out whenever we hang out and we'll pick up wherever we left off.

**[00:52:16.250] - Nathan**

And as I've been getting older, I have realized that I've rediscovered the joy of phone calls and voicemails. And so as a result, I've got like a panel of people, like a group of five people who I will just call sometimes. And sometimes we have a really great deep conversation. Like today I called my friend on my way to get my car fixed or car serviced and we had a really great conversation about stories and how sometimes TV and or other different forms of media extend a story for much longer than it needs to be alive, I guess is the best way to put it.

**[00:53:02.730] - Nathan**

And sometimes they just have really silly conversations, especially we're still in a pandemic and a lot of my friends aren't local to me. So I don't know. Invest some time in growing your relationships and fostering and growing your connections. I think it's really worth it brings a lot of joy and brings a lot of love into your life. Just so that way you know that there are people who really earnestly appreciate your presence and your thoughts and your feelings.

**[00:53:37.730] - Nathan**

I think that is always important to have and always important to reiterate, I think that also help bring some more happiness into your life just because if you're reminded of that more often than not, then that's something that you get to focus on and remember. So those are my two pieces of nonsense. Number one is take inventory of all your connections and if the tree needs pruning, then prune away. And then number two, stopping the low maintenance friend. Don't be afraid to reach out and connect.

**[00:54:11.650] - Nathan**

If for whatever reason people are really weird about you doing this, then that might be a nice little not warning per se, but like a little nudge to reconsider the strength of that connection. So with that, thank you so much for listening. If you liked the show and you want more of this and you want to support it, please go on over to [Patreon.com/nonsenseandnoise](https://Patreon.com/nonsenseandnoise).

**[00:54:40.720] - Nathan**

This is a completely independent operation. I do all the editing and stuff. So, yeah, please consider supporting the pod that way. There are a few different membership tiers. There's Tier One, which gets you a shout out on the pod, Tier Two, which will actually get you access to some bonus episodes.

**[00:55:01.800] - Nathan**

I have a couple of bonus episodes in mind planned for probably soon at some point. And then there's Tier Three, which gets you the ability to propose or pitch topic ideas for me to talk about. So past pitches have included a deep dive into the culture of Avatar, The Last Airbender, all the cultural building blocks that went into that. I keep saying this, there is going to be a part two where we talk about Korra, and I'm just trying to get my friend set up some time with my friend to actually do that. We'll be recording in person, which I actually have not done before, so we'll see how that all works out.

**[00:55:44.110] - Nathan**

And then also, Boys Love has been another topic pitched to talk about. So, yeah, feel free to follow at Tier Three if that is something that if you'd like to have that opportunity to do. So if you want more of me and my goofiness, follow me at [kahtonotkayto](https://kahtonotkayto). That is K-A-H-T-O-N-O-T-K-A-Y-T-O. That is the same across Twitch, Instagram, and Twitter.

**[00:56:13.200] - Nathan**

Those are the three main socials that you can find me at most active on Twitter. I will be trying to get back into streaming on Twitch. I finished playing Pokemon Violet and the story fully demolished me, and we'll probably have a podcast episode about Pokemon Violet and Scarlet as a review. It'll maybe be the first video game episode, who knows, but that'll be an episode soon. And then yeah, so I want to actually get back into streaming some of the other games that I've been streaming, so Harvestella and the other zillion games that I have in my backlog, as well as maybe like some Valorant and maybe Overwatch too.

**[00:56:55.190] - Nathan**

Who knows?

**[00:56:58.230] - Nathan**

If you follow me on Twitch or Twitter, you should get little notifications for when I go live on Twitch though. Following me natively on Twitch will get you those more reliably. You don't have to scroll through your feed for that on Twitter and then I am not really super active on Instagram, but who knows, maybe I'll try looking at that for a marketing alternative or something for doing little sound bites for the pod. But yeah. Thanks so much for listening to another one.

**[00:57:28.800] - Nathan**

Thank you for dealing, thank you for sitting through me being exhausted and upset with the DC Universe and hope to see you in the next one. Thanks. Bye.