



Hit Play Transcription

Episode 54: Reconnaissance

[Episode 54: Reconnaissance](#)

[Show Intro](#)

[Play 1: Record Breaking Part II \(featuring Priyal Patel\) \(1:47\)](#)

[Play 2: The Deal with NFTs \(6:28\)](#)

[Play 3: What To Expect When You're Expecting \(8:58\)](#)

[Play 4: Pfluge Road \(12:50\)](#)

[Play 5: BodyTalk \(17:38\)](#)

[Play 6: Pitch Meeting Remix \(22:15\)](#)

[Show Outro](#)

Show Intro

Jingly electronic instrumental music plays underneath.

Anooj: 54. Reconnaissance. Hi, I'm Anooj—a New York Neo-Futurist. While our on-going, ever-changing, late-night show, *The Infinite Wrench*, continues to be on hold for the foreseeable future, we wanted to keep making art for you. And so we're back with season 2!

If you're already a fan of The New York Neo-Futurists, or any of our sibling companies, hello! We can't wait to eat with our hands from the same plate as you again. And if this is totally new to you—welcome to it!

We make art by four rules: We are who we are, we're doing what we're doing, we are where we are, and the time is now. Simply put: we tell stories, and those stories are our own. Everything that you hear is actually happening. So if we tell you we're playing patty cake with our roommates, we are actually playing patty cake with our roommates.

Slapping hands playing patty cake

Some of the work in this episode may contain sensitive topics. For more specific content warnings, check the timecodes in the show notes.

All of the plays in this episode are exploring what we don't know. Maybe we'll find out something new. And maybe we won't!

Anooj: And now, Colin will Run the Numbers!

Colin: Hi, I'm Colin, a New York Neo-Futurist Alum.

In this episode we're bringing you 6 new plays by Anooj Bhandari, Hilary Asare, Michaela Farrell, Joey Rizzolo, and me, Colin Summers.

This brings our grand total to 222 audio experiments on *Hit Play*. Enjoy!
Music winds down.

Play 1: Record Breaking Part II (featuring Priyal Patel) (1:47)

Anooj: Record Breaking Part II (featuring Priyal Patel). **GO!**

Percussive underscore

Anooj: The Ganges river spans 2,525 kilometers across India and into Bangladesh. The Ganges river is a goddess. There are births within her; there are deaths within her; there is cleansing and celebrating and crying and worshipping and if you listen closely to the dichotomy of birth and death you'll understand that she's known all along that they're the same. The womb that birthed me and the fires that will one day burn my body to ash; she's known all along that they're the same.

Priyal: So I think that's made me a stronger palliative care physician. One thing that I would say to families going through loss or kids going through loss is there is dignity in it, right? There is dignity in grief, there is dignity in loss, there is dignity in death. And what I hope for everyone is that if they are losing a loved one, or if they themselves are battling with something, that leads to earlier mortality, is that their goals are heard and their choices are heard and that they're respected as a human being. I think that that's the biggest thing that I would offer my patients. And also offer anyone going through this loss in my personal life.

Anooj: Same energy is not the same as sameness. Not the same as your birth is certainly not your death. Not the same as, but both are tremendous acts in this world of an ecosystem of you and I pulling, pulling, pulling, grieving, creating, the goddess, she carries water that moves in moments from a baby being blessed in water to a group of men wading, carrying yet another body to set on the river, and how on earth do you take it all in?

Priyal: And it's unfortunate that the infrastructure is not available to have someone die with dignity. So my hope is that things ease up a little bit in India to a point where people have some dignity in the way they die. People have some respect. And that people have some care.

Anooj: On my stoop we read a poem about failure and sacrifice and love and my friend's eyes, they swell up, and for a second my heart breaks into a billion pieces as I look into the sky and

think how tremendously incredible it is to conjure something greater than this all from a tender sidewalk and that feeling of my heart breaking, I recognize it, like a colored sari or a colored sari with an oxygen tank or a series of whatsapp messages or a post about donating or checking in on my family, and I realize that these are the energies the river holds, but if there are all these ways to access it then I am surely, so surely, doing my people a disservice by demanding anything less for them than to feel it through a chance to look up from a poem at the sky, and to breathe something tremendous.

Priyal: And it's been a constant reminder that no one is immune to loss. That's been, at times, really difficult to sort through. Cause part of my job, what I do, is deal with loss every single day. What's changed this past year, is it's become a lot more personal. Children are often told not to grieve openly, especially in front of the surviving siblings or the surviving parents. Often what that does is it creates this narrative that one should not grieve loudly, or that one should keep their thoughts to themselves. It's unfortunate, but grief almost requires an invitation to be expressed.

Underscore plays out

Play 2: The Deal with NFTs (6:28)

Hilary: The Deal with NFTs. **GO!**

Percussive energetic underscore

Hilary: NFTs--have you heard about NFTs? The acronym stands for non-fungible-token. Wikipedia says: "It is a unit of data stored on a digital ledger, called a blockchain, that certifies a digital asset to be unique and therefore not interchangeable. NFTs can be used to represent photos, videos, audio, and other digital files." In luddite terms it's just data that other data says is special and you can charge money for it. Many NFT's are images and they are auctioned like artwork, or kept to accumulate value--like artwork. But it's essentially a fancy piece of data. You could argue the art we make is just fancy data. But the experience of it is tangible- I suppose I'm undervaluing the tangible experience of owning the image of Jack Dorsey's first tweet that sold for \$2.9 million dollars--but I digress.

What I really want to discuss is the auction of a Basquiat NFT. A digital copy of a 1986 drawing titled "Free Comb With Pagoda", was put up for auction and if the winner wanted to they could destroy the original drawing! WTF?!?! The Basquiat estate stepped in and shut it down but truly that pissed me off. I'm not Basquiat's fan no 1 fan, but it was more the idea that the destruction of physical work--tangible art that demands your presence in its presence--that destruction was up for auction because it would drive up the price of a digital echo of a drawing.

I'm not against digital art. Neither are you presumably--you are listening to a podcast, forged out of a sudden need for a digital gathering place to make and share art on a regular basis. But I worry what happens when the value of the digital copy is more important than preservation of the real thing. But I don't have the final say on what makes something real. I'm talking to you

conversationally but it's not a real conversation. Is this monologue made any more or less real by me delivering it live, late at night, in the East Village? I'm not sure, but I know I'd prefer to be doing the latter. So I suppose that this is a roundabout way to say--I miss you, I miss giving you tangible non fungible art in person. I hope I can soon. And NFTs are probably just a new money laundering scheme but don't quote me on that.

Underscore plays out

Play 3: What To Expect When You're Expecting (8:58)

Michaela: What To Expect When You're Expecting (and what you absolutely cannot prepare for). **GO!**

Static and breath interrupts the text at turns

Hilary: What to Expect: Information & Consumption.

Michaela: When I found out, I googled everything, I figured out exactly what was going to happen to his body and how long he was still going to have it. I got obsessed with potential genetic issues I may have, and joined Facebook groups and cold-called doctors to see if anyone would talk to me.

Hilary: What You Can't Prepare For: Obsession and Over Indulgence

Michaela: Since November, I've tried all the chocolate bars in every grocery store in New York City and taking into consideration price and quality, the best choice for your chocolate needs would have to be Alter Eco Dark Chocolate Sea Salt.

Hilary: What to expect: Crying fits, depression, and being a mess

Michaela: At first, I would be at work and randomly start sobbing, and my mask would pool up with tear water and my face would get all flushed. My boss would give me an air hug and let me go home early. It became kind of a routine. I got fired from this job eventually.

Hilary: What You can't plan for: How others react.

Michaela: A lot of friends and family couldn't handle it. That's been really unexpectedly hard to deal with. Some people just aren't equipped, it's too much. Hell, before this happened to me, I don't know if I would have been equipped. I've had to come to terms with the fact that it's not their fault and it's not my fault. It just is.

Hilary: What to expect: Worsening conditions and watching it all unfold.

Michaela: Recognizing that oh this is really happening you know? He has a hard time eating, he looks really skinny, he completely forgot who one of his best friends was, he's yelling at the dog, he's crying all the time, he's repeating himself, he can't screw in the light bulb, he's yelling at the lightbulb.

Hilary: What you can't plan for: Having it unfold on you.

Michaela: He's repeating things to ME, he's crying to ME, he's yelling at ME, he hasn't forgotten ME yet but he will soon. He will forget me soon.

Hilary: What to expect: Forgiveness.

Michaela: I started to only remember the good stuff. I honestly also started misremembering the bad stuff as well. It's weird, I thought, in order to save our relationship from before, we would have to go through years of therapy and long fights and ya know, healing moments but knowing that we now don't get that, makes all the bad moments just kind of, moot. At least for now. Maybe watching a death is enough work. Or maybe through all of this I have grown up, in a backwards way.

Hilary: What you can't plan for: Beautiful and Sad and Random Moments of Feeling Like You Are Being Held.

Michaela: I was out to drinks the other night with an old friend of mine and it was fine, the night was fine, we hadn't seen each other in a while so a lot of pleasantries and catching up but generally a super normal time, but there was a moment where I looked at him and suddenly, I saw the exact same exhaustion in him that I have been carrying, and he looked at me, and we were quiet. And I asked how he was. And he told me what I already knew, and we hugged and walked and talked about our shared burden. A moment like that will get you through the fuckin week.

Hilary: What to expect: Art.

Michaela: I knew I was going to write about this in a way where I would share it with you. I didn't know how or when, but I knew it had to happen.

Hilary: What you can't plan for: Re-learning breath. Re-learning space. Re-learning strength.

Michaela Takes a deep breath.

Play 4: Pfluge Road (12:50)

Joey: Pfluge Road. **GO!**

Joey is driving with his mother and chatting. Turn signal. Fades into underscore.

Joey: This is my mother and me. I am driving my mother to the house she purchased this week. She recently lost her husband and her sister, each of whom expressed to me their wishes that, in their absence, I take care of my mother. And so my mother is moving to a home that is just a few miles and 5 turns from my house. In trying to get the lay of the land, she announces, as we approach the second of these turns, that we need to turn left onto Pfluge Road. P.F.L.U.G.E. Pfluge.

The road is actually called 'Lake Avenue.'

I don't know where 'Pfluge' comes from, and neither does she. She has never been on a Pfluge Road. In the United States, there are two roads Pfluge - one in Pennsylvania, one in Nebraska, neither of them significant. As far as I can tell, she has invented this word and filed it with confidence under a real experience she's had in the world. She gave it a silent P and a silent E and a German name - 'Phlug' is the German word for 'plow' - but she doesn't speak German, so I'm pretty sure that is not the etymology of this word. Or this memory. I tease her about it as we drive:

Joey teases his mother in the car

Joey: I tease her about this because I don't want to make her self-conscious about her memory. And because it's part of our relationship, which I value.

Joey and Joey's mother talking and trying to remember an actress's name and joking about Pfluge.

Joey: I'm pretty sure she's referring to JoAnn Pflug, P.F.L.U.G. no E at the end, who was probably best known for her guest spots on TV games shows. Anyway, my teasing here is the gentlest way I can think to raise concerns about my mother's memory. Several times during this visit, she will repeat questions to which she's already received answers, or invent false memories, like an employer that my wife never had, or a road with a German name that doesn't exist.

I worry about my mother's memory. These slip ups are normal oversights for anyone else, but my mother is an intellectual giant, and her ravenous appetite for mentally edifying conversation does not lend itself to repetition or apocrypha. I worry that she's doing something that disabled people refer to as 'masking,' a kind of behavioral camouflage donned to protect the mask's wearer from the stigma associated with the disability. I see it in my son, who is autistic. I saw it in my father when his liver started to fail and he went through the motions of busy activities that yielded no results. I am not including, of course, his end-of-life request that I take care of my mother. That activity is, clearly, yielding results.

Maybe Pfluge Road means nothing, but I tease her about it as we drive. I tease her because I want to make sure she knows that I can see it, so that when "taking care of my mother" means establishing guardianship or doing things on her behalf that she can no longer accomplish by herself, she will understand why. Teasing her is the kindest thing I can think to do in this moment. I think she thinks so too.

*Turn signal and Joey and his mother making jokes at her own expense, laughing.
Underscore fades out.*

Play 5: BodyTalk (17:38)

Hilary: BodyTalk. **GO!**

*Whispers of things Hilary and Anooj say to themselves about their bodies as underscore.
The whispers are noticeable but cannot be understood.*

Hilary: What was the last thing you said to you about your body?

Anooj: Something about wishing that I could have the experience of looking in a mirror and not feeling like I put on like googly funhouse glasses before doing so.

Hilary: When I noticed my weight gain a month ago, I was struggling to eat because I was not speaking kindly to my body. In fact I said the meanest thing I've ever said to myself which was (*using voice distortion*) "good thing you burned that, you don't need to be eating anyway you fat fuck." Which made me cry. How did you talk to your body today?

Anooj: Um, I told my body that I am much more than it. And that maybe I'm just like an energy source that happens to be stuck in it? Or maybe stuck isn't even the right word but the fact that I used it (*laughter*) probably shows something about my relationship to this thing.

Hilary: I would never talk to anyone the way I criticize my own body. I learned that punishment is the only way to maintain discipline. The space between self improvement and self loathing is not a happy place to live. I'm trying to move to someplace new, someplace I don't know yet.

Anooj: Yeah, I don't know if I know that place either, but there's something there perhaps about talking to yourself the way you talk to me... or the way to talk to anybody that you love. I feel like you treat me and so many people with grace and with curiosity.

Hilary: I've been trying to do just that and what really helps is this image of a Black Queen, with super dark skin and an afro. And she's in this golden gown and she has the most elegant crown, that's understated but her royalty is undeniable. (*distorted voice*) And when the mean voice acts up (*distortion ends*) she doesn't pay it any mind. She stands in front of it and the glow of her makes everything else quiet (*background whispers stop, transitions into calm underscore*) so she can remind me I deserve nourishment, kindness, and support. That I deserve to wear my crown with pride.

Anooj: Well you know that already how I see you so what part of this description do you see in yourself most today?

Hilary: Today... I... I see myself in...in her hair and in her- my, my fro isn't done um but uhhhh the fro is- I dunno, It has this like energy of its own that is confident and capable. And I'm feeling that today. Do you trust your mind's eye?

Anooj: I'm working on it. I think I trust it most when my eyes are closed.

Hilary: Open your phone's selfie camera, rest your finger on the shutter and close your eyes 'til I tell you to open them again. Now, when I see you Anooj, I see a beautiful bright radiant human, who stands tall in their values, who makes space in the world for deeper compassion and

empathy. And your smile multiplies the joy of everything it touches. Now, take a picture. Open your eyes and take another. What do you see in those pictures?

Anooj: I see somebody who is so so loved!

Hilary: That's great.

Anooj: So Loved.

Hilary: You are. What are you doing tomorrow to build a mind that loves your body?

Anooj: I think I'm gonna look back at these pictures and remember how I feel when I talk to you. And that that kind of body talk is something that I can always inch closer towards doing for myself.

Hilary: I might copy your example. Thank you so much for another body talk. Remember to be kind to my friend.

Anooj: And you be kind to mine. I love you.

Hilary: Love you too.

Underscore fades out

Play 6: Pitch Meeting Remix (22:15)

Colin: Pitch Meeting Remix.

Hilary: GO!

This play is an electronic song/remix using audio from the Zoom pitch meeting.

Anooj: Phenomenal pitch meeting.

Hilary: Yay!

Anooj: Phenomenal pitch meeting.

Michaela: Oh-kaay!

Anooj: Thanks for a great pitch meeting! You can get creative.

Michaela: Sound and action.

Hilary: You want me to do it out loud?

Anooj: You can get creative.

Michaela: Sound and action.

Joey: Do it out loud!!

Anooj: We'll go JoeyMichaelaHilaryColinAnooj and then back to Joey until we are all done!

Michaela: Sound and action.

Joey: Hi, I'm Joey. Can I share?

Anooj: Okaaaay

Joey: Some of them are very personal.

Anooj: Okaaaay

Joey: There's a philosophical component and a metaphor component.

Anooj: Okaaaay

Joey: Is this making any sense at all?

Michaela: Sound and action.

Anooj: Wonderful! Next is Hilaryyyy

Joey: I have Marty McFly back here.

Anooj: Let's go to Hilary. Let's go to Hllary.

Hilary: Hey y'all! Ummmm. What plays do I have?

Anooj: Hilaryyyy

Hilary: Where am I? Who am I with? And what's going on?

Anooj: Hilaryyyy

Michaela: You good?

Hilary: That's still like, information I want to know.

Anooj: Hilaryyyy

Michaela: You good?

Hilary: And what's going on.

Joey: Michaela.

Michaela: My name is Michaela!! So, don't be scared.

Someone: Wooohooohooo

Michaela: My name is Michaela!!

Someone trills their voice and someone else goes "woohooohooo"

Joey: Michaela.

Someone trills their voice

Colin: I don't think that I understand it, but I might not have been paying attention super well.

Michaela: Amazing.

Anooj: Amazing.

Colin: Pitch meeting remix.

Michaela: Amazing.

Anooj: Amazing.

Michaela: Amazing.

Colin: Pitch meeting remix.

Joey: The idea is that there'd be some like, theremin music going on over that?

Anooj: Woohoo!

Michaela: Amazing.

Anooj: Woohoo!

Michaela: How dare you make me cry in the middle of this pitch meeting?

Joey: Well now I'm having trouble remembering what's what and that excites me.

Colin: This play is called: A R M U M N D N . X Y Z

Michaela: Oh my god.

Colin: / U N I / B G J / N 6 L

Michaela: Okayyyy.

Hilary: And what's going on?

Michaela: Sound and action.

Joey: And that excites me.

Anooj: Wow this is like, a fucking great crew of writers. Phenomenal pitch meeting.

Music drops out.

Show Outro

Jangly electronic instrumental music plays underneath.

Anooj: Thanks for Hitting Play and then listening to *Hit Play*. If you liked what you heard, subscribe to the show, tell a friend, and leave a review on your listening app of choice! If you want to support the New York Neo-Futurists in other ways, consider making a donation at nynf.org, or joining our Patreon—Patreon.com/NYNE. We'd really appreciate any support in these difficult times. Contributing to our Patreon helps us continue to pay our artists.

This episode featured work by: myself, Anooj Bhandari, Hilary Asare, Michaela Farrell, Joey Rizzolo, and Colin Summers. Our brand new logo was designed by Gabriel Drozdov. And our sound is designed by Anthony Sertel Dean. *Hit Play* is produced by Anthony Sertel Dean, Léah Miller, and myself, Anooj Bhandari. Take Care!

Music fades out!