

Sage G.C.:

Hey you listening at home just wanted to let you know once again that you can go watch this at home as well or on the go or wherever. Patreon.com/20SidedStories, look for the video version of the episode. If- if, you know, that interests you or whatever.

Whee!

[CATACOMBS intro music plays.]

[eerie, deep] Welcome to the CATACOMBS.

[Music fades out.]

PIRATES Director's Commentary #2: World Introduction

Sage:

Hello! And welcome back to the *20 Sided Stories* PIRATES OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN Directors Commentary, where I open up these massive project files and we listen through together and I react to my bullshit and talk about how the sausage was made. Look at these fine, blocky pieces of sausage on the factory line.

This is the World Introduction! The world introduction trailer lore dump overture. I never really could figure out, like, a fancy name to call these things. It's just an introduction to the world. That's what it is. I could make up something like a trailerture. It's an overture and it's a trailer. 'Kay.

But basically, the idea was that whether we're doing a parody season or an original season, there's lore, there's exposition, and I don't want to take away from the 'excuse me, end the moment, action!' to talk about exposition. And I don't want somebody who maybe wasn't super familiar with whatever world or setting we picked, or let alone our own original world, to get lost and confused.

This episode is optional, these episodes are optional, but they're a great jumping off point, a way to sort of just get in sync, get on the same page about the most important things you gotta know about how this world works. So they're skippable, but I do personally find them essential for the overall listening experience. It's kind of like, like I said, it's the- the overture to the show where the orchestra warms up. It's sort of the, uh, not quite the dumb show to Shakespeare, but you catch my drift. It's the- sets the scene, literally.

So I have the world introduction open. I'm actually pretty excited to listen through it with you guys, 'cause I haven't heard it in a couple months. I don't think I've really heard it since I posted it. So that'll be exciting.

I spent way more time on this world introduction than any of the other series world introductions got. Most of the time, they were very much a rush job. Like something I could do in a day or two. Wrote, like, two pages, wrote some music and not really a

whole lot of sound design. Maybe the marble one- the MARVEL one had- had- the prologues were worked into the character prologues, but for the most part, they weren't really treated as, like, episodes. This was a whole production in and of itself. I should just actually see how long it took me 'cause I know I tracked it. Let's...

Okay, I got it open here. Pirates introduction.

[pained] Eee!

[chuckles] *What?* Did it really take that long? [chuckles] Um... 66 hours and 16 minutes, it's gonna be out of focus. So there's no point doing that. But that's what I tracked. The thing is always not super accurate. It's, you know, you can give or take five hours in either direction. I sometimes forget to stop it or start, uh, doesn't- I'm not always tracking time when I'm, like, posting things. Definitely not when I'm doing my graphic design stuff. So it's really just when I start editing, I try to just start tracking.

66 hours! I mean, that's- that's more than I spent on like, several POKÉMON episodes *together*. [chuckles]

I- god, what have I done? Look at this. I mean, yeah. I mean, I guess it makes sense because it has the song, it has "Pay Me My Money Down", which is a shanty that I chose for this opening, and weaves in and out with the score and with the vocal tracks that me and Christian sang on. So I guess it makes sense.

Uh, yeah, you're getting a firsthand look into why episode releases are so slow. This is hard. I'm just one guy. But! Fun times.

So I'm gonna press play. We're gonna listen to the world introduction. I'll pause if I have to look at any specific details, but otherwise, we're just gonna roll through and go on this adventure together. Yeah.

[Keyboard clacks.]

Alright! Let's begin.

Start long ago.

Narrator: *Long ago, "it" fell from the sparkled sky.*

Sage: So I usually always try to edit and sound design with a storyboard in mind. So even though it's entirely an audio medium, basically a lot of what I make should be able to be animated. In an ideal world, if I- if I could do that, right, I could just take the audio and it should just have a very clear visual picture without having to do much adjustment.

Narrator: *Stardust.*

Sage: So this is the stars this is the precursor of time. Like, we're going way, way back showing, you know, just the slightest little meteor go- streak go across the sky, and then one lands on a very old planet and- and splashes up.

Narrator: *—insists this is hogwash.*

Sage: We're talking about the oldest and oldest of myths. Ancient religion.

Narrator: *Nevertheless, when we look up at night, we can't help but still see a bit of ourselves.*

Sage: 'Cause that's where we came from.

Narrator: *I digress.*

Sage: Boom! And then the mystery is- [chuckles] blast- blasted into smithereens. We're still going back into that time.

Narrator: *Wind, Earth, Fire—*

Sage: Set up those elements, they're very important to the story. There are so many sounds in this section. It was really hard to balance all the different elements coming out of all sides. Water, Fire, Wind, time passing. Eagle. [chuckles] And then this buildup.

Wanted to stop being scary, and it starts being hopeful the second that plants come to life and all this gray and red turns into green and blue. And there's, like, little fucking lemurs jumping around in trees, and then...

Narrator: *—symphony! The song played for many millennia.*

Sage: Orgasmic. Uh, the Garden of Eden is born.

Narrator: *Then the humans came.*

Sage: And fucking ruined it. [chuckles]

[Jaunty sea shanty.]

Sailor Crew: *I thought I heard the captain say,*

Sage: So here's Christian coming back on the track. I knew that this world introduction needed a strong sense of the musical nature of the season. And this song was on the list. It's not one of my favorite shanties in the world, but it's perfect. The whole season, the story is about money. It's about greed. And what better than a group of pirates themselves demanding their pay that they're not getting? They're getting fucked over by their captain and just as likely the- the- the richest of the rich want their- their dividends, right, want their paycheck.

Shoebill: *Welcome to the Royal Year of 1717.*

Sage: So I think it sets up the theme very nicely. It was one of the first things I focused on was how this- this whole society- our society is run off of money. But I really wanted to just lean into the preposterous, like, absurdity level of, like, that's being literally it's blood. [chuckles]

So what's fun about this world introduction too compared to previous ones is we're not sort of in a ethereal narrative land. This is in the world. I am Shoebill talking to the audience, you, as a sailor on my ship.

So this- we can assume this happens sometime around, you know, Episode 6 or 7. I won't spoil it right now.

[Jaunty sea shanty.]

Sailor Crew: *(Pay me my money down)*

The captain knocked me with a spar

(Pay me my money down)

Sage: In a lot of previous, uh, in all the previous series, basically, I would have, like, a narrator character. And I would have myself and I'd have, like, NPCs that I would play, and it was just too much. So this time I was like, I'm cutting the narrator character. Like, it's not important. That can be Shoebill, and it can be Joyce.

So Joyce Torres did the whole introduction at the top, and she is the storyteller, and she does the credits. And I really wanted *that*. We've always had somebody else come in to do the credits and to do some introduction stuff like that. But I really wanted to make sure that this time around, they were with us the whole time. So Joyce's voice is on board and she's doing every episode's little opener instead of me. And I just- god, she's just so good. She worked so hard to get that accent right, and I think she's crushing it. And she's so great to work with.

Shoebill: —*that may be about to change...*

Sage: Shoebill's voice was a process. Originally, I wasn't going to be, like, a pirate, cliché pirate. But nobody else was.

[Jaunty sea shanty.]

Sailor Crew: —*jail!*

[Music calms.]

Pay me my money down!

Sage: And by the way, other than what is obviously Christian's voice, they're all my voice. [chuckles]

I wanted to get the cast to sing on this, but there just wasn't enough time. It's a lot of work to try to organize that with everybody.

I mean, just- I remember Sunstar was a nightmare to just, like, get done. And it's like that was just four of us. So it's, like, multiply that up to seven, eight. I mean, it just hasn't been worth it. We're gonna try to do that with future shanties. You know, every now and again when it's important. But for this one, it's a whole me. I think Jess maybe sings in it somewhere in the background as well. But yeah, it's me and Christian. [chuckles] And Christians on the lead part.

Shoebill: —*taking. This has led to the greatest discovery in history: The Public Domain.*

Sage: And I really want to play up the idea that The Public Domain is almost like a Garden of Eden. It's this mythical land that's- that just seems perfect because everything is just free and loose. Which is ridiculous, right? I mean, the public domain to us is- is a concept. And so what if this concept was a real physical place? Uh, is kinda the joke of the whole fuckin' thing.

Shoebill: —*Public Domain is finally unveiled, and a love for exploration—*

Sage: Lotta great nature sounds that I got. Was not cheap. But I am using that library wherever I can. Full surround sound. And then I down mix it to stereo when all is said and done.

Shoebill: *The Public Domain may soon face—*

Sage: Just further and further echoey because it is very far away.

Shoebill: —*owned and sealed, lock and key, by Davy Jones Incorporated.*

Sage: Davy Jones, right, it's a pirate myth. In our world, it's just some greedy ass fucking company conglomerate who fuckin' owns everything and takes all your assets when you're in debt.

What I was saying earlier about the pirate voice, this was- it was really kinda last minute 'cause nobody else was a pirate, a cliché pirate. Right? So I was like, well, I guess that's me. [chuckles] I'm the first mate. I'll be, you know, kind of the plant. The NPC who- who really embodies *that* no cliché nature.

Shoebill: —*ye gots to go see it for yeself.*

Sage: Even better, because...

Shoebill: *And thus!*

Sage: I'm a bird! Bird pirate 'cause anthem- anthropomorphic animals are fun.

Shoebill: —*scattered throughout The Private Isles before we leave.*

Sage: And it also gives us a way to criticize the human nature not as humans, even though they're very human-like.

Shoebill: —*rise of the ghost tide.*

Sage: And there's more of that later in the story.

[Jaunty sea shanty plays throughout.]

Sailor Crew: *Well I wish I was a rich man's son,*

Sage: Christian gave me so many good takes.

Greg Reasoner: *Hi! My name is Greg Reasoner, and I'll be playing...[Ronald's accent] Prince Ronald—*

Sage: So every intro episode has had this moment where the character and the actor are introduced. The actor says their name, and then they go into their character voice. It's very important to me that the listeners, that you guys, can distinguish between them as easily as possible, 'cause I know you're gonna be mixing it up all the time.

How many podcasts have we all listened to where we lose track of who's talking? But whatever I could do to make it slightly easier, right? Just wanna spell it out there.

And I also push the actors very hard to have as distinct of voices as possible as well. And I think they did a fantastic job, honestly.

Sailor Crew: *Pay me! (pay me!) pay me! (pay me!)*

Pay me my money down!

Emily Ervolina: *Hello! My—*

Sage: In this section, with every character, the song slightly changes. Right? So we're going into our call and response, call and response, pay me (pay me), and the instrumental section, and the arrangement changes. So for Ronald he has a dulcimer harpsichord combo, his much more regal and uppity. A very French-British sort of thing.

Valora has got harps and flutes, it's very soft, it's very fluttery.

Sabine is obviously very, very French. Accordions galore, a French musette accordion.

Kate/Una, she is Bjordlandic, which is going to be sort of Scandinavian in our world. So I gave her some very low strings. I don't have access to specifically Scandinavian instruments, but we can get something similar with, like, low string kinda sounds.

Salmon, Salmon the monkey, the capuchin monkey, he's got a lot of mallet instruments, African mallet instruments as well as steel drum instruments. Just wanted to give them that sort of islandy coastal sort of feel.

Travis Reaves: —*sense of community. Help me.*

Sage: And, uh, who's after that? Henry/Monte.

Henry Benny: *Hello. My name is Henry Benny—*

Sage: He is sort of a victim of capitalism.

Henry: *Cartographer.*

Sage: You know, he's the one who, like, racially- [chuckles] He didn't really pick much. I guess he's just kind of a Westerner, right? What am I trying to say? I kinda went with Italian. He's got mandolins. [chuckles] And that's kind of the vibe. I was like, what's different that nobody else did? He's kind of Italian. There's no Italians in this world, but that's what I picked. [chuckles] Sorry, Henry, if you don't approve. Um, we can talk about it later, what's canon/cannon ball.

Here's Horatio, of course, lastly. He has established he's Nouveauian. But David was going more like a Dutch sort of angle. And Horatio's got horns. And I have made a custom horn patch called Horn-ratio that's very boombastic and loud.

Shoebill: —*d for a change. But—*

Sage: And so this line, it kinda seems like a... a throwaway here.

Shoebill: *d—me mother used to say...SQUAAAK!*

Sage: As me mother used to say.

Shoebill: *Which means 'nothing ventured—*

Sage: But without spoiling anything, there is a- there's a lot there. I'm just gonna say that. Okay? I try to- I try to- I try to have no choice be meaningless. Even the improvised choices. Down the line, we gotta justify them somehow.

[Gentle drum-beat.]

Sailor Crew: *Pay me, pay me, pay me, pay me,*

You better pay me!

Sage: Also, this section right here is kind of a throwback to, um, it's kind of- it's kind of, um, it's not the most shanty arrangements I've heard of this song. It's kind of my way of paying homage to the Peter Pan tick tock and the crocodile thing a little bit.

Sailor Crew: *Pay me, pay me, pay me, pay me,*

You better pay me!

Sage: Right. It's not exactly the same, but that was the idea.

Sailor Crew: *Pay me, pay me, pay me, pay me,
You better pay me!
Pay me, pay me, pay me, pay me,*

Sage on Trailer: *Pirates of the public domain was recorded—*

Sage: And now this is where I'm talking and I'm talking over me. Why don't I just- I'm just gonna mute my voice and, uh, I'm just gonna talk about the music for this section since I was already on that topic.

So the soundtrack, I have a lot of inspirations that- for this. It's... how do I describe it? You know, it's somewhere between, like, tropical, um, nautical, mallet, and melodic percussion.

Crew: *BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES!*

Sage: [chuckles] As well as, um, very wind-based orchestral sounds. Of course going with the- the wind and water, basically. Wind and water being very important elements to the pirate life. And I listened to so many things. There's some great records.

We're going through the sound effects now in descending order, these are all custom made. Took a lot longer than I planned. Scuttled is special because that's- that's the true one failure.

The system as well took a lot longer and put a lot more effort into it than I- than I normally do with our systems. Usually try to keep them very lean by design, but this one I wanted to- I wanted to imagine what if this was played long term? What if I made a system that could be played for many sessions, you know, over two years.

[Ominous, warbling boom.]

And you got that epic blackspot horn.

So yeah, there's- there's quite a bit of rules. It's still light but just enough to, I think, have depth compared to our previous systems.

Shoebill: *So what now, sailor? Is it too late for Man? Are things the way they—*

Sage: Then we get into this very kinda Avatar-sounding section, which was not intentional.

Shoebill: *—you have a chance to trailblaze, to take or to give, to uncover history's secrets—*

Sage: I really wanted it to be helpful too. I think hope is a really big word that I've been leaning on. The world has been... *a lot*. Uh, the 2020s are *a lot* so far. So I really wanted to make sure that, you know, kind of responding to a lot of messages I've got about 20 Sided Stories and what it's done for people is just I wanted to be a place where for you feel a sense of joy and hope.

So that's why it's ridiculous! [chuckles] It's why there's talking birds and monkeys and- and even though there is some dark stuff with the topics of climate change and climate destruction and greed, there's still this- this- those voices in the background, there's still this yearning that we can fix it.

Shoebill: —dry, and so does the patience of Piracy.

Sage: If you don't fuck up.

[Jaunty sea shanty.]

Sailor Crew: I heard the—

Sage: [chuckles] And I love all those runs Christian gave me. [chuckles]

He did something like that, and he'd, like, amped it up every time. I was banging on a cajon for that section as loud as I can. I got a couple of takes of that.

Shoebill: —stomp yer boots aboard! And spare ye some change—

Sage: Got so many pirate sounds of, like, sails dropping and ropes getting pulled.

Shoebill: —plunder what ye wish and discover upon them mighty glaciers—

Sage: Crowds in the background that are all, you know, pain in the rear.

Shoebill: —this be the voyage of a lifetime.

Sage: That's kinda the tagline.

[Jaunty sea shanty.]

Sailor Crew: Well, pay me! (pay me!) pay me! (pay me!)

Sage: [sings] Pay me! (pay me!)

[normally] And then we got the grand finale here.

Sailor Crew: —jail!

Sage: Crazy chord. [chuckles]

Sailor Crew: Pay me my money down!

Sage: And thank god I don't have, like, neighbors, really. We do, but there's enough space. I was just me screaming at, like, the corner of these room- this room here, just screaming.

[Music fades out.]

Ah, so fun. Truly what I'm- one of my favorites that- that we've made from the show, just- just the way that it builds and just all the characters being set up and Christian leading the shanty, and it just feels big, right? It just feels like, I feel like, bigger than- than- than a podcast normally feels like. That was the goal, at least. My- my dream is that we can make some sort of video adaptation, [burps] as I was saying at the top- excuse me! As I said at the top, if this- if this was animated in some way that would be- oh my god, that'd be euphoric. Be fuckin' awesome.

I'm not sure what else to break down here. I guess it'd be cool to kinda hear the sound effects on their own for this long ago section.

[Muffled explosion.]

[Elements crash and woosh.]

Lots of different elements.

[Elements crash and woosh.]

Those are the Titans coming up. Notice that each section kind of just blurs into the next.

[Birds chirp. Trees creak.]

And that goes with panning and with tambor.

[Birds chirp. Frogs croak.]

That should be time passing and just things just growing seamlessly. It's like a time-lapse to the planet's history.

[Various jungle animals cry out.]

And it really- the- getting the climax of that was really- I wanted it to just be perfect. And when I found the wolf howl, that's when I was like, that's it. I mean, what- what- what sound is more goosebump-giving than- than the howling of wolves? I think that is a, oh, yeah. I feel pretty good about it. I think it- I think it was a fun one to put together. Uh, [chuckles] 66 hours of work. But I'm pretty proud of it. And I hope, uh, I hope you guys got something out of it. I hope it was enjoyable and sets up the world in an exciting way. I got some nice comments about how hype it was. So yeah, hope you feel that way. [chuckles] 'Cause it's certainly painful to say it's skippable. [chuckles]

'Cause it is. It is optional, but I- I think it came out pretty well. Yeah.

[Gentle, upbeat music fades in.]

Alright. That does it for the world introduction. Now we're gonna move on to the prologues. Yeah. Which are very fun. And those are all kind of- they're all kind of one episode, really. So yeah, we'll do that one next.

Alright. Thanks for tuning in to the [speed talks]

20SidedStoriesPIRATESOFTHEPUBLICDOMAINDirector'sCommentary. No spaces all one word. [chuckles]

My name is Sage G.C. and I'll see you on the next 20 Sided Story. Later!

[Music crescendos and fades out.]