# TFEO Parkdale Haunt Transcript

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**SPEAKERS**

Owen, W. Keith Tims, Ian Boddy, Claire, Emily Kellogg, Alex Nursall, Judith, A. Bird

**W. Keith Tims** 00:00
[Theme music] Hello, and welcome to The First Episode Of, a podcast about audio drama and the creative process. I'm W Keith Tims audio drama producer and podcaster. In this show, I listen to the first episode of an audio drama. Then have a discussion with the creators about their show their methods, struggles and successes. Today, we're discussing the first episode of Parkdale Haunt.

**W. Keith Tims** 00:41
[Parkdale Haunt theme music plays.] Parkdale Haunt is a found footage haunted house story, written by Alex Nursall and Emily Kellogg, and sound designed by Ian Boddy. When Judith's best friend Claire takes off without warning  it's up to her and her friend Owen to work backwards and figure out what happened to her. Claire had come into possession of a house in Toronto's Parkdale neighborhood left to her by a long lost relative. But not long after she started going to the house. Things began to get weird, and Claire began to change. In addition to their other roles on the show, Nursall, Kellog and Boddy also voice the main characters. Parkdale Haunt has three seasons of 10 episodes each. I spoke to Alex, Emily and Ian from their homes in Toronto.

**W. Keith Tims** 01:34
The first thing I would like to do is I would like to have each of you introduce yourselves and tell our audience what you do, generally speaking on Parkdale Haunt.

**Alex Nursall** 01:42
Hi my name is Alex Nursall and I am the Co-creator, co-writer, director and voice of Judith on Parkdale Haunt.

**Emily Kellogg** 01:50
Hello everybody. My name is Emily Kellogg and I am also co creator, co writer on Parkdale Haunt. I am also the voice of Claire.


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**Ian Boddy** 01:58
Hey, I am Ian Boddy. And I am the voice of Owen on the show. And I'm also the sound designer, mix engineer and recordist.

**W. Keith Tims** 02:09
I'm curious as to all of your backgrounds as artists, where you came from before you got into making audio drama.

**Alex Nursall** 02:17
I started as a writer as a teenager, I wrote my first published article when I was 13. I got my first hate mail when I was 13. It was very funny. (laughter) They called my house to tell me that I was a bad daughter to my dad. Because I wrote a humor piece about how-- my because my dad had a humor column in a local paper. And I wrote a piece in rebuttal to him and a lady called my house to tell me that I was a bad child and I was going to hell. And that just spurred me on. And here I am today.

**Ian Boddy** 02:43
Good for you! A common thread I see.

**Alex Nursall** 02:47
Yes, I got into radio when I was about 15 when I got access to a community radio station for some reason. And I've kind of never stopped doing audio stuff since then. I'm still in a lot of ways like a like an ascendent amateur. But I've always loved doing it. And then when it comes to writing, I've wrote for a lot of years doing pop culture, pop history stuff, humor stuff. This was the first long format like scripted anything I'd ever done, I'd ever worked on. Prior to that the most scripted stuff I'd ever done was with Ian at work, and we would just make silly little things together. Which were a lot of fun. And that's that's also how I roped Ian into doing this after several years of us just making bizarre stuff at work.

**W. Keith Tims** 03:33
Where did the two of you work?

**Ian Boddy** 03:35
We both work at currently called Pirate Sound a sound post production house in Toronto mostly focused on advertising and long format television.

**Alex Nursall** 03:45
I can remember the, the first thing we did together was it was on-- I remember this because it was Brexit and my husband's English and Brexit had like, the vote happened and he was not happy and on the way to work. I wrote this goofy little script to mostly just to be like, we can send this to our friends in England and stuff called like Choose Canada as like a...

**Ian Boddy** 04:03
Ah geez.

**Alex Nursall** 04:03
Yeah, it was like a little funny little thing. Like like a travel spot. And I got to work and I went up to one of our bosses. I was like, Can I, Can I record something for like silly and he goes like yeah, you can do that. I'm like can I should I ask an engineer and he like this or someone to be into that and he goes go ask Ian and I was like the guy the hat? I don't really know him that well. And we I got in the booth and recorded that and I remember you were doing with a lot of like very broad Scouse accents at me and I was like I think I like this guy and I want to work with him more and and then we never stopped.

**Ian Boddy** 04:34
Yeah, the weird the weird clicked.

**Alex Nursall** 04:37
Yes, it did.

**W. Keith Tims** 04:37
Well, Ian, how did you get your started the arts?

**Ian Boddy** 04:40
I think much like the other two here. I got started just being in love with audio. When I was young I grew up around music. A lot of my family members were musicians, maybe about 12 or 13. I got my hands on a program called Sonic Foundry's Acid, and a demo version of a program called Fruity Loops. And I just started cutting stuff together and making weird remixes of songs that I downloaded from Napster and just really just slicing and dicing audio to other people's dismay. (laughter) And I really got a taste for it. And after a while I was writing my own songs and producing some electronic music, I got into DJing. And so music really kind of stuck with me for a long time. I went to school at about 18 for music production at a place a place called the Harris Institute. I kind of graduated from there, I was a bit young for the program, I did well but didn't have any contacts outside of the industry. So I became a chef as one does. And I worked, I worked cooking for about 10 years before I kind of got back into the audio game and went back to university got a really really underqualified position at at Pirate. But from there, I kind of you know, facilitated that met Alex and Emily and worked on the project. In the interim between you know, that was about 10 years of time recording.

**Alex Nursall** 06:10
That's a long, long span of time in between.

**Ian Boddy** 06:13
For the sake of time of the of this podcast, right? Like I recorded a bunch of albums with some some great bands and had some some fun along the way in terms of audio. So yeah, here we are.

**W. Keith Tims** 06:23
Nice. Emily, once you tell us a bit about your artistic background.

**Claire** 06:26

I would say that Alex is our fearless leader who brought the three of us together. Alex and I know each other from university, we were both editors on our student newspaper. And my background is mainly in writing. Although I did have a radio show when I was 15 too Alex! We could have been competing radio hosts! (laughter) We've been really good friends for a really long time. And my background is mostly, as I mentioned in writing. I recently did my Masters of Fine Arts and Creative Writing, and I'm a creative writing instructor as well. And I also love all things macabre, all things horror, it's what I live and breathe. And so the idea of combining audio, which had been kind of a recent obsession for me after Alex had recommended some horror fiction podcasts, I started listening to them. And I just I hadn't realized that that was something that I could do that I could bring fiction to life and in that specific kind of a format. And as soon as I realized that, that was an avenue of storytelling that was open to me, and I was just so excited to just to just barrel on through.

**W. Keith Tims** 07:31
All three of you played the leads in Parkdale haunt and yet I didn't hear anything about any experience in voice acting. I'm curious as to how you guys came to that.

**Alex Nursall** 07:39
Oh, man. I yeah, I think I mean, I'm a voice director. So I directed a lot of people. And I still remember Emily and I talking about when we first started writing the show. It's like, what I don't know what we're like, 2018, 2019. We wrote a couple scripts, and then it was like, who's gonna voice these characters? We have this stuff. And I don't remember if it was like, I don't remember which one of us was like, well, it could just be us. Probably. I feel like probably probably I said that. And because I remember you were just like, I don't I don't know, man. Like, I don't know what we sound like.

**Claire** 08:13
I said that we could do it. But that if if we were ruining our own show, we should recast. (laughter) And you were like, how about we just try it?

**Alex Nursall** 08:26
Yeah, because I've done a lot of live radio stuff. I did tons of live radio. I did that for years and years. So I was comfortable on a mic, but I've never thought of myself as an as an actor. So I wasn't really sure what was going to happen once I actually started pretending to be a character. Thankfully, Judith just sounds like me. Thank God!

**Claire** 08:46
Wow, who could have written it that way?

**Alex Nursall** 08:48
I know. I know. You can write a script and find the person who fits it. Or you can write to your voice actor. Boy, do we write to her voice actors!

**W. Keith Tims** 08:56
I think it suits the style of the show. Right?

**Claire** 08:58
I have pitched Alex so many times on making my character Russian. (laughter)

**Ian Boddy** 09:03
We can do that? Oh, man.

**Alex Nursall** 09:06
It's too late now Ian! I think this was the first big, big voice acting thing any of us had ever done. We don't-- think we've all dabbled in stuff. We've done like a couple of spots. Like I know I've done some commercial work.

**Claire** 09:19
I think one of the biggest learning curves for me was being in the studio and wanting to walk and move a lot. And you kept being like, Emily, can you stay the same distance from the mic and you're kind of weaving around the studio here. And then that and then not popping my Ts every two seconds.

**W. Keith Tims** 09:38
I hear you it's like, whenever I'm acting, I want to move right. There's got to be some physicality. Which is why I kind of watch out making too much noise, you know, rocking in my chair or banging on the table or whatever.

**Alex Nursall** 09:48
No, no moving! Everyone stay still. The mic is right there.

**Ian Boddy** 09:52
Yeah. And then there's literal parts in the show where I'm asking you to run across the room and chuck into a baffle. (laughter)

**Alex Nursall** 10:02
Season One... the sound design in season one is theirs. I can't believe I asked you to actually tackle me. (laughter) Possibly one of the funniest things, but also just absolute chaos.

**W. Keith Tims** 10:14
When you think of Parkdale Haunt, what do you each of you think about? What is the show mean to you?

**Ian Boddy** 10:21
To me initially, it was something that was like a fun thing that we're going to do that I was going to help out a colleague and a friend to visualize. And we did the promo. The promo was like, to me that the kind of amuse bouche of this whole thing where I was like, oh, man, this is actually like a really fantastic idea. There's some cool stuff behind it. Think of the sound design. And we dove into it. And there's so, it turns out, there's so much meat, and so much opportunity to create these spaces. And for me, that was

the payoff that was the reward, not only getting to act, which is something I don't get to do in long format, scripted content, but while we're we were recording these scripts, like I'm, I'm building these worlds in my mind, I heard like, what is the what is the living room sound like? What is the living room sound like at night, like, I get to nerd out about this stuff and really, really dig into it. So for me, that was the real boon, the real great opportunity there alongside working with, you know, Alex and Emily, who have created this awesome show. So yeah, that's my answer.

**W. Keith Tims** 11:28
Emily, what do you think of when you think of Parkdale Han?

**Emily Kellogg** 11:30
Well, first of all, Parkdale Haunt is our is our spooky baby. And we absolutely think of it as our child that we gave birth to. It was very painful. Thank you for asking.

**Alex Nursall** 11:39
It's true. (laughter)

**Emily Kellogg** 11:41
But for me, really one of the biggest lessons of Parkdale Haunt beyond the story and the characters who I care so deeply for as though they were my own friends and family was just as an artist, as a creator. This was kind of really my first time branching out from what I thought was possible, in the sense that I like anyone else. I don't like being bad at things. So sometimes that stops me from trying new things. So I just won't try anything new at all, because then I'd have to start out by being bad at it. Isn't that so scary? Parkdale Haunt was really just kind of a lesson in if you just go for it. And if you have amazing smart people to support you. And you just keep going like that fear can fall away. And it can be part of the process of creating something really beautiful. And it can be a part of a process of learning a lot about yourself as an artist. And it can just be really one of the most rewarding things in the world. So just moving forward in my life. Just in general, I like to think about, like that lesson from Parkdale Haunt. I've just been like, Oh, that's a thing that I did not know if I could do. And thanks to incredible collaborators. And thanks to just pure stubbornness. You know, we did it and and if I can do it once I can do it again.

**Claire** 11:55
Alex, what do you think of when you think of the show?

**Alex Nursall** 12:44
When I think about Parkdale haunt a thing that sort of lives in my brain. But I don't tend to talk about very often when I talk about this show is that when when we started doing it when Emily and I started writing, I was at a real creative nadir. I was at a point where I was burnt out as a writer, I had been writing for years and years publishing across various like, with different magazines and different websites and a bunch of the verticals, I'd worked before it shut down. I was like deeply unfulfilled. And I'd like stopped writing. There's kind of two points that sort of made something in my brain wake up again. And the first one is meeting Ian and starting to work with him and doing fun little things that kind

of like was like, oh, okay, I can like make stuff again. I can. There's other people who want to build stuff and like, have fun with that. It's not just this constant feeling of having to write these magazine articles and feeling very, very unfulfilled. And the second one was starting to write Parkdale Haunt and that was the first big thing I'd written in. It felt like a long time at that point, like I've been writing for so long. And then I stopped and it felt freeing in a way it felt freeing because there was no there was no editor there was no control. It was just me and Emily just sitting there and like throwing ideas back and forth. And and I knew that I loved audio and I knew that I wanted to make this thing and I knew that there were good, amazing, talented people that I could work with. It kind of like brought me back from this creative edge that I kind of found myself on.

**Judith** 14:32
[Begin clip from Parkdale Haunt.] My name is Judith Antony, and my best friend Claire Sterback has disappeared. Okay, just to clarify, she's still alive and apparently she's fine. But all this started in mid 2018 when she took possession of a house in the Parkdale neighbourhood of Toronto. We decided, hey, let's make a fun podcast, maybe some YouTube videos about the renos and like the attempted DIY stuff. You know all the half assed plans that people make and only keep like 45% of the time. But things started to get kind of weird. In all honesty, parts of her life were starting to unravel, but I don't think that was it. I think it was the house. [End clip.]

**W. Keith Tims** 15:20
Why this particular story? Why Parkdale? Why a ghost story in haunted house? Where did all that come from?

**Alex Nursall** 15:26
Haunted House stories are a lot of fun there. And Emily is the horror person, I would say that my tastes tend to veer towards like, I live a rom com. I live in action movie. I love fantasy. I love sci fi. So I'm sort of the, I like horror, but not the deepest in it. Because I'm a big scaredy cat. We've been joking. We've been joking about all kinds of stuff about like, house renos, and like you were Emily was going through trying to find a new apartment at the time when we started.

**Claire** 15:55
You know, what's so funny is I was thinking the idea actually came in a very similar time in my life to right now, which is that I had just been apartment hunting. And I was apartment hunting in the city of Toronto. I don't know if you know anything about it, but we have a housing crisis and rental costs are through the roof. And when you're touring places, you're like, What is this nightmare box for $3,000 a month? And it was just it was very much real estate and, and apartments in the city. I'm living in the city in that kind of very real way was very top of mind. And I remember Alex and I joking about how you know, I completely understand why people stay in haunted houses. Because if blood is dripping from the walls, that's fine. Honestly, rents under like below $2,000 a month. Okay, I'm staying. (laughter)

**Emily Kellogg** 16:54
For those who don't know too much about Toronto, Parkdale is a neighborhood that used to be its own village, and it was quite affluent. So it had these really large sort of Victorian mansions. And then

Toronto city planners did what Toronto city planners do best, which is nothing and then build highways, and built a highway across Parkdale so that it was kind of weirdly, the waterfront was weirdly cut off. So it ended up with a lot of those houses being torn down. And then there would be various high rises built in their place. But what resulted is actually a very cool, very vibrant, multicultural neighborhood, which is a mixture of a lot of new Canadians, as well as these old legacy houses, which have since been turned into other kinds of low income housing. And now as a result of gentrification, these houses are now being bought and turned into super mansions. So it just it gives a neighborhood a very interesting, specific character. And there would always be this feeling you get when you walk by these houses and you're like, what is inside? I can tell there's such a fascinating history here.

**Alex Nursall** 16:54
That ghost is just a roommate. (laughter) Yeah. And I think the other thing too, is that it was really important for us to set it in Toronto, because for all of its flaws, we love this city. And it's a fascinating, weird, funny place. And it's it's, uh, so, you know, I think the city itself is somewhat of like a like a minor character. Yeah, it was just, it was very fun to set it somewhere where we knew the geography of it so well.

**W. Keith Tims** 18:29
And I do definitely get that vibe of the neighborhood is part of the show that as you listen you are, you're getting a little glimpse into life in the area, especially in the first episode where you get the nosy neighbor, and then you get the property developer guy dropping in. (laughter)

**Judith** 18:46
[Begin clip] Your name really is "A. Bird?"

**A. Bird** 18:48
It's Austin. Austin Bird. You've heard of me, of course.

**Claire** 18:52
Uh, maybe?

**A. Bird** 18:54
A. Bird?! No one makes a nest like A. Bird?! I'm sure you've seen my billboards. And of course my properties. I'm working on a condo development not far from here.

**Claire** 19:04
Yeah, I'm sorry, but I don't know who you are.

**A. Bird** 19:07
Well, never you might. You know me now. And I'm sure this is the start of a beautiful friendship. I've had my bird's eye on this property for years. It's just chock a block full of potential.

**Judith** 19:18


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I'm sorry, who says chock a block?

**A. Bird** 19:20
So Claire, my darling. What do you think? Are we going to do it?

**Claire** 19:25
Do what?

**A. Bird** 19:27
Sell this house and make you a fortune, of course!

**Claire** 19:31
Actually, Mr. Bird...

**A. Bird** 19:32
Listen, property rates have soared over the last few years. It's a seller's market. And you my dear are a seller and the best kind of seller! The kind with highly valuable property. Obviously, you couldn't have picked a better time in history to sell a house and beautiful Toronto.

**Judith** 19:47
Hey, okay, great. That's cool. That's enough. Thank you for coming by and for your card. Claire isn't planning to sell at this time, but if that changes we'll call you or something. So if you'll excuse us...

**A. Bird** 19:58
Look, if you'll just give me a moment. I can give my appraiser a ring. He'll be here in a jiff.

**Claire** 20:03
Thank you for your offer. But we have to be going now.

**A. Bird** 20:08
Well, Claire, I do believe you'll change your mind.

**Judith** 20:12
Just, just leave.

**A. Bird** 20:13
Claire. Can I call you Claire?

**Claire** 20:16
No.

**A. Bird** 20:16
My dear...

**Claire** 20:17
That is worse.

**A. Bird** 20:19
Let's make another appointment. Are you around next Thursday?

**Claire** 20:21
Another appointment? We never made a first appointment. You just showed up and look, I'm not selling.

**A. Bird** 20:28
I think you're making a mistake.

**Judith** 20:29
I think you're making a bigger mistake by not leaving.

**A. Bird** 20:33
Well, I can see when I'm not wanted. I'll bid you adieu for now ladies. I'm sure we'll see each other around the neighborhood.

**Claire** 20:40
Yeah, not if I can help it. [End clip.]

**Alex Nursall** 20:43
(laughter) A. Bird. Casting Taylor was truly a boon that Emily gets credit for, for suggesting Taylor.

**W. Keith Tims** 20:52
So the story is it's a podcast within a podcast kind of frame. The story is about two friends that Judith and Claire who Claire inherits a fixer upper house in Toronto's Parkdale neighborhood. And her best friend Judith agrees to help her remodel and they decided to make a podcast about the renovations and they start recording everything they're doing. But as they go along with these renovations, things start to become very strange. They discover the house has a very checkered history associated with murders and the occult, they start to hear noises. They experience unexplainable things. They find cryptic notebooks and writing on the walls and Claire gradually becomes obsessed with the house and its history and then abruptly vanishes, which is where the show begins as the podcast within a podcast in that Parkdale Haunt Podcast is ostensibly about Judith, leaving this investigation into what happened to Claire going back and looking through all of their recordings to try to put the pieces together and figure out what happened. Talk to me about the framing device you chose to tell the story with which is the sort of podcast within a podcast kind of thing.

**Claire** 22:00
So there are a lot of reasons to use the found footage format. A lot of stories use framing devices. And a big reason for doing that is that you can pull your audience in right away, because you are deciding--

you're deciding why the story is being told when you use a found footage format. For instance, the story is being told because we have these recordings because they wanted to create a home reno podcast, and then later because it's an investigation and she wants to find her friend. So that gives us a pretty clear direction and motivation for the characters that works with the structure as well as with the narrative. And my favorite thing is when narrative and structure are working together. I think another big part of using found footage is that we wanted to create a world that was incredibly real. I went on my little spiel about Parkdale earlier. And it's because we have so much love for the city. And we have so much love for our characters that we wanted to create something that was kind of, you know, podcast veritas, we wanted to create something that felt incredibly authentic and real. One of my favorite parts of listening to podcast is when I get that, that sort of relationship with the characters, I get that relationship where I feel like they're real people, and I feel like they're my friends. A really cool, fun way to do that when you're working in fiction is to be able to give yourself an excuse to be hyper naturalistic. That was another thing that the found footage allowed us to do. Parkdale Haunt is asking you what happened if your best friend became possessed, not in the abstract, not in a horror movie universe, like in this universe that you exist in? What would you actually do?

**W. Keith Tims** 23:39
One of the things that I like about what you do with show is we don't just get the found footage, right? There are some shows that just rely on. Here's some scary tapes, right. But we also get to hear Judith and Owens perspectives on the tapes that they react. And in that way they put a stand in for the audience in a certain way, Their perspective. And their relationship as they go through the tapes, adds another layer of the narrative.

**Claire** 24:08
But the other thing that I really loved that we did with the show is I think that we subverted the found footage structure a little bit in the way that the tapes are unreliable. So when they're listening back a big part of the horror comes from the fact that these are supposed to be found documents but they're changing and and they're not always the same and static is coming through and voices are coming through. And I think that becomes a way of our characters are questioning the reality and the way that these tapes reflect their reality. We want the listener to have the same experience where you're questioning what you're listening to you're beginning to question your own sanity and the way that the characters are.

**W. Keith Tims** 24:44
The three of you are, at least to me, you seem to be good friends, and the the characters on the show are also good friends. And in fact, friendship seems to be sort of the central theme to the story. The first few episodes are not terribly spook heavy, there's some definite scary moments that happen in there. And then so that you're not leaving the audience dry. But they're really more focused on the three friends. I'm curious as to why you wanted to make sure that that friendship was highlighted in the storytelling,

**Ian Boddy** 25:16

Because that's how Alex and Emily gets you. (laughter) They've created the anticipation of the spookiness and like the promise of things to come, really in, in the first few episodes there, and they take this poor unfortunate audio engineer along with him for the ride. (laughter) Who only really wants to help their friend at work. And then all of a sudden, he's whisked away into this tumultuous roller coaster of...

**W. Keith Tims** 25:53
This sounds strangely familiar... (laughter)

**Ian Boddy** 25:55
I know, right? It's weird! (laughter) No, I think I think it's a really, really effective writing technique. It's a slow burn, it makes you you want a little bit more because there's just enough of that spooky weirdness to tell you that you should listen to the next episode. But it's really about the relationships that these people have that makes you want to follow along.

**Judith** 26:22
[Begin clip.] Hello, dear listeners, we have an update for you. After two or three or maybe five rounds the bar, Claire and I have decided to face her fears and have a slumber party in her probably haunted cold House of endless nightmares.

**Claire** 26:39
Yeah, because we are independent and capable adult women having a summer party.

**Judith** 26:47
Yeah and it's way better than when we were kids. Because we have booze.

**Claire** 26:50
Cheers to that. (glasses clink)

**Judith** 26:52
So we've been exploring.

**Claire** 26:54
We didn't go back in the basement in the friggin dark...

**Judith** 26:57
Claire doesn't like basements. They're too scary.

**Claire** 26:59
Basements are like having a tomb in your house that you fill with junk instead of bodies. Besides, it's so cold down there. When we finally got the door open it was like a fridge.

**Judith** 27:11

Yeah, and the light on the staircase doesn't work. So whatever. I'm really okay with not exploring an unfinished mystery basement in the pitch black because it smells a little like an old drainage ditch down there. We locked the door though. So hopefully the rats or whatever's down there don't have keys. Can ghosts carry keys?

**Claire** 27:28
Mm. They can have like chains like that guy from the Christmas one. Ichabod.

**Judith** 27:36
Ichabod Crane is from the Headless Horseman, you dope. You're thinking of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**Claire** 27:41
No no no. That's just some person. It was like his business partner. He was like rich and evil. And I don't know stuff.

**Judith** 27:48
Yeah, listeners, here's what you should know. Turns out the ultimate evil is capitalism. [End clip.]

**Alex Nursall** 27:55
Having these characters be friends does help us because we're in a sense kind of pulling from our own relationships, we didn't set out, I guess, in a sense to be late till sort of like mimic our own relationships. But there is that sort of reality of like Ian and I do work together. And Emily and I have been friends for years. And having these characters be friends was really important, I think in pushing the story forward, and also in the performances, because it gave us a lot of space to have these moments where people aren't just scared. And they're not just talking about the plot or talking about the things that are going to be scary, or that did scare them, they have these moments where they just sit down, and they just hang out. They just talk they chat, you feel this natural kind of warmth between them.

**Claire** 28:41
I think that Alex and I are both very character driven. I think that there's a lot of ways to build momentum to narrative and to story. One of those ways is having something be very plot driven. And we are we are a plot driven story. There are a lot of mysteries that unfold. But I didn't want it to be a story where once you find out the answers, you're done with the story. I wanted it to be something that stays with you. And I wanted it to be something that lingers. And for me, a story that stays with me is one where I want to slow down and I want to linger and I want to spend time with characters because they're fully fleshed people who could be my friends.

**W. Keith Tims** 29:22
Yeah. I mean, you have to care about the characters, right? Otherwise, the things that happened to them don't have much impact. And the way the way we care about them, usually is in the way that they treat other people and the relationships they have with them. Another question for all three of you. What do you struggle with?

**Alex Nursall** 29:39
Like in general with the show? (laughter)

**Ian Boddy** 29:43
How long you got, sir? (laughter)

**Alex Nursall** 29:46
Oooh, I didn't realize this a therapy session. Let's go!

**W. Keith Tims** 29:48
Yeah I know! (laughter) What do you struggle with when it comes to creating and making your art?

**Claire** 29:53
I think for me, it goes back to my first answer of what when we were talking about what Parkdale Haunt means to me I think that Parkdale Haunt really means that you can fight through perfectionism, and that perfectionism is the enemy to creation.

**Ian Boddy** 30:11
Mm. Nice.

**Emily Kellogg** 30:12
The thing that I struggle is the thing that I've really had the opportunity to work through the most, which is that nothing that you create is going to be perfect when you first make it, the first draft is always going to be bad. And the only way to make it better is to be tenacious and to keep working and keep going and not lose yourself in sort of a hole of self reprisals. But instead without judgment, accept the art that's coming out of you with the understanding that this is just the first draft is the first step of a very long process.

**Alex Nursall** 30:44
When it comes to creating. And it especially in a situation where I'm basically doing this whole sort of like as a showrunner, or something kind of putting all this together. In the end, I struggle with trusting myself to make these calls. And I really at the start, had these moments where I just was filled with such doubt this so much, it was so much doubt in my ability to write and to direct and to act, and to lead a project where I need to, I mean, like, it's still something that I struggle with, but you know, again, it's like Emily saying, you kind of have to, like, push past that you have to find that sweet spot and like, like, and you have to be able to like trust in your ability to be able to make things and to not get caught up in this idea of perfectionism or making it always the peak of anything, the first time you get in there, and the first time you do something, and to make mistakes, and to trust the people around you, that they're going to help and that they're going to offer feedback and listen and join you through these things and not be like you missed up one time, and now everything's ruined forever! (laughter) And, and yeah, it was a it was a trust game. It was a trust game. Do you trust your friends? But do you trust yourself? And I spent the first chunk of the show trying to really learn how to trust myself again, creatively.

**W. Keith Tims** 32:06
Ian, what did you struggle with?

**Ian Boddy** 32:07
When I was cooking, there's a term mise en place, you know, you you have everything in its place, you have everything that you need, it's in front of you and organized spaces, and you execute. When I moved over to doing creative audio, that's not necessarily the case, you may get a piece of dialogue first, you may get the concept first, you may get a piece of music first. So all the pieces aren't there. To kind of visualize what something sonically is going to be. Before you have all your mis en place in front of you is, is the hardest challenge I feel like I deal with.

**W. Keith Tims** 32:46
So Parkdale Haunt by many measures of success has done very well. You have won Best of 2020 from Apple podcasts, and the Canadian Broadcasting Company, you were best of 2021 by Amazon Music. You've received awards from the Canadian Podcast Awards. Lots of other accolades, by all accounts very popular a show, I guess I'm curious, how do you measure success?

**Ian Boddy** 33:12
Well, Emily, and Alex gave me a ribbon that said Participant on it. (laughter) And that, for me, is like the pinnacle of my career. So.

**Judith** 33:27
Don't say that people are gonna think we actually did!

**Emily Kellogg** 33:29
It's far too late Alex!

**Ian Boddy** 33:30
I'm still waiting for it.

**Claire** 33:31
So I think for me, personally, it's always interesting, creating art, understanding that you're going to have people engaging with it. And it's actually one of my biggest fears as an artist. It's a very strange dual thing in that I love to create things, but I equally hate to be perceived. I have found so much satisfaction when there's one person who just gets it. The awards are amazing. The amount of listeners that we have are incredible. But when there's one person who says to me, like, you really nailed what this feels like this, this really spoke to my experience. And I felt seen by this emotional experience in the podcast that I had. To me that is the ultimate success as an artist to make someone else feel seen.

**Alex Nursall** 34:25
For me, it kind of comes on like a three tiered kind of thing first here is like getting the accolades and the listener numbers and all that stuff is very satisfying. I know it's one of those things where it's like,

you know, you want to sort of be like, I'm above this like, I don't I don't need that I just make art for myself, and I do, but I also really love when other people are like, Damn, that is some fine art you made and I'm Yeah, thanks. I love it. And second tier is making something where I feel very satisfied with just the thing that that I've made and Parkdale is something that feels very, very satisfying in that way. And then the final thing is just like the satisfaction of getting to this is so corny getting to do stuff with people that you care about and that you, like really enjoy spending time with and making something that is joyful to do,

**Ian Boddy** 35:17
In the context of, of this show, being successful was was taking a script and interpreting it to a point where they felt like what they had written had come to life, the accolades and stuff like that afterwards. My God did not see that coming.

**Emily Kellogg** 35:38
I don't think any of us did.

**Ian Boddy** 35:39
None of us, like went out to go do that, right? My job was to interpret their scripts, and to make them the best that they could be. And if I did that correctly, and it worked out for us that way, then that success for me,

**Alex Nursall** 35:55
We got some just absolutely phenomenal support. And people really seem to connect with it and love it. And yeah, I don't know, I don't none of us saw this coming. I think we all were sort of just like, let's make a thing. And then hopefully some people listen, and we'll just have some fun with it. And then season one hit, and it did really well. And we're like, oh, man, we got to make season two now. What are we gonna do? And I remember going into writing Season Two and just having to like, sit down and think just keep like writing it for yourself. Keep writing it for yourself. And for Emily and for Ian. And don't think about having to make this like a thing where you have to appeal to everyone. Because if you do, then you're going to overthink this just sit down and be in that same headspace that you were in, back in season one.

**W. Keith Tims** 36:47
What are some lessons that you will have learned through this process of making Parkdale Haunt that you can share with people who might want to create their own?

**Ian Boddy** 36:55
From a sound design perspective, make a lovely folder with all the scenes that you think or have in front of you and create your environments, put them in those and then save it somewhere so that you can recall it later. Instead of having to go through all of your old sessions and dig them out.

**Claire** 37:18

Make something that you want to listen to, because you're going to have to listen to it over and over and over again. That's my advice.

**Alex Nursall** 37:26
My advice is if you're writing, just don't stop, do not worry about refining the scene when you're there. Just keep writing and you can refine later. It's just better to get as much as you can on the page and then go back and make edits. Because if you sit there and you fuss, you'll be there forever.

**Claire** 37:47
[Begin clip.] (Judith and Owen are listening to a recording.) "Hello, so you've picked up a bunch of samples and I think we're going do the wall going down the stairs with a print! Would that look dated?" (faint distortion, recording stops)

**Judith** 37:55
Hey, could you play that again?

**Owen** 38:03
(in a sound booth) Yeah, one sec.

**Claire** 38:04
(recording starts over, but is much more distorted, Claire's voice sounds different) Hello. So we've picked out a bunch of samples and I think we're gonna do the wall going down the stairs." (playback ends)

**Judith** 38:08
Is that the same recording?

**Owen** 38:11
I haven't changed it. I'm playing it from the same spot.

**Judith** 38:14
Again. Play it again.

**Claire** 38:15
(playback starts, much more heavily distorted, with words dropping out and repeating, and two voices speaking the words simultaneously) Hello. We're going down the stairs. Hello. Hello. Hello. (rising static) Hello. Hello. [End clip.]

**W. Keith Tims** 38:27
Parkdale Haunt is a classic example of using the found footage format well. The realistic style afforded by the format makes the scares and supernatural sounds all the more frightening. But it's because we get invested in the characters that we keep listening and hope they will come out of it alive. [End theme music plays.] You can listen to Parkdale Haunt on most major podcast platforms, or see our show notes

For more information. The First Episode Of is written and produced by W. Keith Tims. All the opinions expressed in this show belong to the people who expressed them and not necessarily to anyone else. The theme song is Mockingbird by David Mumford. This show is a production of Alien Ghost Robot Creative Media. If you want more information, want to sign up for our newsletter, or are an audio drama creator and would like to be on the show visit our website at thefirstepisodeof.com. We're happy to be a part of the Audio Drama Lab, a Discord-based resource for audio drama, development and networking. Check it out at audiodramalab.com. Keep telling stories. It's the only way we're going to get out of this mess. Until next time.

**W. Keith Tims** 39:42

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