

TFEO End of the Cornfield Transcript

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audio drama, cornfield, pandemic, feel, town, people, characters, britt, wanted, brett, murderer, disciplined, high school, writing, actor, la, relationships, podcast, good faith effort, thought

SPEAKERS

Luca, Abbey Monnin, Gia, Cassie, Brit, Will, Matt, W. Keith Tims

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 End of the Cornfield.

Will 00:37

[Begin clip from End of the Cornfield.] (somber music) (a truck pulls up outside.) Hey Matt couple of us are going out to the flats tonight. You want to come?

Matt 00:44

Uh. I don't know. Who's all going?

Luca 00:48

Us, Cassie and Britt.

Matt 00:49

I don't know man. Gia wasn't exactly friendly the last time I saw her...

Will 00:54

Dude, it's old news. No one fucking cares, get in here. (opens truck door)

Matt 00:57

Think I'll hang around here for the last game,

Will 00:59

2007 just won. Diamond 2.

Luca 01:01

Yeah, get the fuck in already Matt! (music swells and cuts out) [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 01:05

End of the Cornfield is a nine episode murder mystery created by Abby Monnin centering around six former high school classmates who reunite in their small town. Shortly after the sixth head to the cornfield, their favorite High School spot for a night of drinking and catching up, one of them ends up dead. With no clear motive and no one's stepping forward. The five remaining classmates tried to find the murderer amongst themselves. Monnin and created the story and Co-wrote it with Spencer Channel. She also voices the role of Cassie and produced it through her company Blue Tuesday Productions. I was getting over a cold when I spoke with Abby, remotely, from Los Angeles.

W. Keith Tims 01:50

Tell us a little bit about yourself as an artist and a creative type. What's your background?

Abbey Monnin 01:54

Yeah, I'm an actor, writer, producer, based in Los Angeles, originally from Ohio. You know, I really loved reading a lot when I grew up. So that's kind of where everything started. For me, I would just read hundreds of books each year, until high school really forced me to slow down.

W. Keith Tims 02:11

Nice.

Abbey Monnin 02:11

But I did my first musical The Sound of Music when I was 11. And really just kind of fell in love with the fun that you have behind the scenes and in rehearsals and the friendships you make the kind of communal shared experience of people coming to the theater and all laughing together and you know, having this great experience. So I never thought that I would want to do anything career wise creatively until I got to college and realize that that's really what I wanted to do. And then I think like a lot of people the pandemic was like a big shift for me and why the podcast even exists, because, you know, I'm a really self reflective person. But I think that the pandemic forced me to look way way into the future and kind of say, well, this career that I want to have, I'm not doing anything towards it. And if I continue down this path of like, letting my insecurities win and not attempting it, I'm definitely never going to have it if we get out of this. And if we can have a somewhat normal life again, like, what am I going to do differently? And my kind of answer to that was, well, I want to start the production company that I've had a name for for like a decade, I want to actually make it and then I want to make something and an audio drama was the kind of the first thing that came to my head.

W. Keith Tims 03:24

What were you insecure about?

Abbey Monnin 03:25

Oh, man. (laughter)

W. Keith Tims 03:28

Is it a long list? (laughter)

Abbey Monnin 03:29

So many things. Yeah, I think like, when I came to LA, I kind of ended up in these acting classes that were everyone who was kind of the prettiest or the coolest from their high school had like, come to LA to be an actor. And those were the people that were in my class. And so I just kind of felt like, oh, well, I don't look like that. And I don't have that thing. And I don't know that there's a place for me and I got really in my head about, I don't feel like I'm going to be like a CW actor. Like that's not what I'm bringing to the table. So there's just no room for me. And I didn't even like think to myself, like oh, what I really like Shameless and Ozark I like to TV shows that I would love to be, that that type of world is something that I'd like to act in. I think the other piece of it is sometimes you want to feel settled. And it's hard to feel settled in LA, you know, financially, it's hard to feel like, Oh, you have the space to take the classes and to get the headshots and to do all the stuff that you need to do. So I was always kind of living in like a scarcity mindset of like, let's not pull the trigger on that. Because then maybe I won't be able to afford rent or gas or these things. And so, like all of that combined, I had to kind of wrap my head around and figure out over the pandemic and just kind of say, like, screw it like we're going to go forward

W. Keith Tims 04:38

Making living in the arts is hard. It really is. My background is in academia, but I taught theater and film classes for like 20 years. I would always tell my students I'd say... I would say this, to focus them not to discourage them. But I would say things like you realize that for every role you go out for there gonna be 50 people that look just like you that are going to be up to the same role. You know.

Abbey Monnin 05:00

Oh, definitely yeah.

W. Keith Tims 05:01

And even now in the audio drama world, which is, has a lot less gatekeepers involved, it's still difficult to and challenging to take something that you make and as a product and then monetize it, sell it and make a little money to make the next thing with, you know.

Abbey Monnin 05:17

Oh, yeah, definitely.

W. Keith Tims 05:18

When did you move to LA to start to start your career was this right before the pandemic hit, or?

Abbey Monnin 05:23

Well, I've been in and out of LA since summer 2013. But when all the pandemic stuff came down, I had like just gotten, I was just about to sign a lease for a place. It was like, April 2020. And thought, hmmm, I don't know that this is like, make sense, I should probably just go home like, I'm the oldest of three

kids. And both of my brothers are out of the house. So my parents had these extra rooms, they're like, well, just come back and stay here until it makes sense for you to actually be in LA. I came back to LA September 2021.

W. Keith Tims 05:59

Are you still interested in film and TV work? Or is audio drama, your thing now?

Abbey Monnin 06:04

Oh, I want to do all of it. Yeah. And also throw in the theater for good measure. Anything where I get to act, I love it. So that I would, you know, acting as my first love, but then writing and producing I, I would really like to write and produce more audio dramas, and also short films, and also, someday feature films. And I'd like to kind of just build up and see where I can go with creating stuff.

W. Keith Tims 06:28

Yeah. How did you get into writing? Did you study that as well?

Abbey Monnin 06:31

I took some screenwriting classes in college. But I think just like two. I have a hard time calling myself a writer. I always felt like I could write like a novel or essays or copy for clients, but I, writing something like for the screen or the stage or for a podcast, like I don't feel quite there yet. And I think it's just because I haven't done it that long or read that much about it. I think some of it is like the template stuff. We listen or we watch these audio dramas or these shows and you don't read the actual scripts a lot of times, especially for audio dramas, I mean, you can't find an actual written script for most of these shows. So understanding like that template of kind of how things work and how things progress with plot and story sequences. I think it's harder to like wrap your head around how to put things into a format that works. So I still feel like I'm still kind of sussing that out for myself.

W. Keith Tims 07:22

You said the pandemic was what made you make the leap into audio drama. Had you ever done anything with that before?

Abbey Monnin 07:27

No, I hadn't. But there's this company in LA that I absolutely adore called LA TheatreWorks. Essentially, they bring in TV and film actors. And then they'll do a play where they have a foley artist and they record into a mic. So all the actors still have their scripts, and they're like, facing outwards the whole time. There's no costumes, there's no set design, and then they put it...

W. Keith Tims 07:48

It's like a live radio play.

Abbey Monnin 07:50

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And you can watch you know, the foley artists do his thing. He's got a mic for all of his different supplies. And I've gone to most of their productions over the years. I really love kind of

everything they do. So I had that in mind. But then, right before I moved back, I listened to a podcast by QCode. Like, I think, their earliest podcasts, maybe I had never heard anything that had like a cinematic sound design to it like that. I thought that that was a really interesting way to tell a story. And then from there, I just kind of thought, well, it's a lower barrier to entry than like a short film or a feature film, because you can kind of easily ascertain what all the parts are, you know, and so I could already kind of start going through and say, Okay, well, once we have a script, and once we have money once we have a cast and once we have a Director, sound designer, cover art designer, that all makes sense to me, like I understand what those steps are. And so it just felt like something that was actually like tangible that I was like, I could really make this happen. So I'm going to do this.

W. Keith Tims 08:50

Tell me a bit about End of the Cornfield in your own words, when you think about the show, what do you think about.

Abbey Monnin 08:56

I grew up reading my dad's Hardy Boys. And so kind of the first thing that I did in terms of stories, I just looked at all of these other audio dramas, and I noticed that that seemed to be sci fi, or mystery or crime. And those seem to just be like the most common kind of genres for for audio drama that that makes sense. Because there's something then pulling you back to keep listening. Really, for me everything kind of started with the genesis of the town. The town of New Wilton, Ohio is based on the town that I grew up in, which is a extremely tiny village. Really, it's like 600 people all together. And when I was in high school, we had one cop. So when you saw his cop car at his house, like you knew, you know, there's no one policing there's no one and there's never been a murder in my town either as long, going back to, I don't know, at least the mid 1800s. I just thought you know, if you had these group of six characters, and they are out by this cornfield, just drinking, doing their thing like hanging out like they used to in high school, and one of them gets murdered, and they realize it has to be someone within the group. You know, I think in most cases, you're just calling that in, you're not sticking around to figure out who it was like, you're freaked out that it was someone there and you're calling it in. I thought that if the fictional town was similar to my town, and these characters knew that it would give them the opportunity to say like, yes, we'll be calling this in. But like, first we're going to figure out like, who did this, this group of six characters who, once one of them is murdered, you're left with the five kind of looking around, like what can't possibly be any of these people, which also goes back to... you know, my town is K through 12 is in one building. So it was never, it was never, you know, it was never a big deal to go to high school or go to middle school. You just, lockers moved to a new location. That's it, you're still eating in the same spot, same kids. So when you know, kids from like, age five to 18, you're just like, How could possibly be one of these people? And I wanted to explore that trust element.

Luca 10:50

[Begin clip] (the truck is stuck in the mud) Ugh.

Gia 10:52

(A little ways off). Matt! Come here.

Will 10:53

No, you guys come over here and help us with this!

Brit 10:56

We're not getting dirty.

Cassie 10:57

Dig yourselves out.

Gia 10:58

Except for Matt. Matt. Come here!

Matt 11:01

Uh, Gia wants me over there? (he walks over, the other two men grunt as they try to free the truck from the mud, the engine revving)

Gia 11:08

It's so good to see you.

Matt 11:10

Wait, aren't we...? Are we good?

Gia 11:14

Matt. Like it or not, I'm always gonna stick my neck out for you.

Cassie 11:18

Matt!

Matt 11:19

Cassie!

Brit 11:19

It's really good to see you, Matt.

Matt 11:20

Hey, Brit. (sound of the truck tires spinning in mud, Will and Luca arguing.) So this is the spot. I remember being closer to the cornfield.

Gia 11:28

It is we're gonna walk in a little ways once these losers...

Luca 11:34

Woooo! (the truck comes free, drives closer, horn honks) [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 11:40

It does have a very authentic feel in terms of like the dialogue and the way they talk to each other. Apart from being like your hometown. Is this an autobiographical story in any way. And I don't mean to imply that there was a murder or that you're that you murdered anyone or anything like that. (laughter) But I'm just curious as to how much of yourself is in this story.

Abbey Monnin 11:59

I mean, the character that I play, Cassie is definitely similar to me. And a lot of ways like I made her a reader. I had her move to New York, which my first like, big experience was going to Boston, my second was going to New York. I think that there's a lot of similarities there. But the rest of the characters are not based on anyone that I know or knew from any of my years in my town, so I would say really, the piece that's most kind of reminiscent of anything personal would just be the town. The town is really similar. You know, it's fictionalized. But it's very similar to where I grew up. And I think that's probably the only piece.

W. Keith Tims 12:37

Is there something about revisiting your hometown or setting it that way that that attracted you? Or drew you to the setting?

Abbey Monnin 12:43

even when I meet new people, and I'll be like, Oh, I'm from this really small town? And they'll be like, oh, yeah, me too. And I'll be like, Well, how many kids? Did you graduate with your high school? And I'd be like, oh, like, you know, like, 200, or like, 100 or something. And I'm like, Yeah, my class was 27, including me. (laughter) So, there's, I think that a lot of people don't know what it's like to grow up in a place that's that small. It's almost like a 1950s vibe, but in a modern day, and it's just there's a lot of interesting elements to it. I think this happens no matter where you're from. But, you know, because I was home during the pandemic, I was able to have a lot of time to consider what parts of me felt like they still belonged in that place. And what parts of me were like, there's no room for me, or this doesn't fit or this feels so weird, or I don't know, I remember reading a quote years ago that said something about like, when you go back to the places that you've been, nothing helps you see yourself better than that. Being home, when I started writing this, I was in Ohio, and I was walking around like 3am, the cicadas are going crazy. And I'm looking at this tiny town and just thinking of like how these characters could live here. And so I think it was a unique setting, but it was also everything with the pandemic and being home and kind of being in that environment gave me the clear connection to it, then I would maybe normally have,

W. Keith Tims 13:58

I did remind me a lot of like Agatha Christie murder mystery where it's on an island somewhere, you know, and, well, there's no, you have to have to figure it out themselves. Because, you know, well, there's a storm and that no one can get here for two days or whatever. But I mean, well, it's not a that's not technically an island, it still is remote enough that you know, help's not going to be able to come for a couple of days.

Abbey Monnin 14:20

Yeah, and I mean, we did that in high school, I went to numerous end of the cornfields with friends that I didn't know who owned that property, but one of them did, or it was someone's cousin's cousin or whatever. And we sit out there and drink and talk and then leave and no one comes to be like, Why are you on this property? How do you know this person? The owner doesn't come. It just felt like yeah, very secluded, kind of remote place and also something that would be natural that these characters are coming home and they're all hanging out and yeah, they're gonna go check out like the old place that they used to go drink and have fires and chat like they're just gonna go do that again one more time.

W. Keith Tims 14:57

End of the Cornfield is about a group. They were in high school together, but now they're adults, young adults out in the world. And they've come back for a softball tournament to their little tiny town afterwards they go hang out what they call The Spot which is just a little place at the end of a cornfield to drink and hang out reminisce. But one of the six, Brit, wanders off from the group, and then her body is found at the car strangled. And from there that the group which is terrified that they'll be blamed and they end up actually burying the body and starting accusing each other of being the murderer and it turns into a whodunnit. And you've got an interesting cast of characters here. You've got Matt who is the sort of the loner who's never left town. He's just kind of stayed there. You got Will who was sort of the prom king type Luka strikes me as a party boy, a wild kid. Cassie, who you voice who is the bookworm who got out to the big city. Gia, who's kind of an instigator stirs the pot, that kind of thing. And then Brit who's the victim is she seems to be hiding something especially early on. And even though she dies in the first episode, we do get to meet more of her in flashbacks that happen later on.

Matt 16:00

[Begin clip] (tense music, distant coyote howl) We have to call someone Gia we can't just...

Gia 16:04

Will, did you kill Brett?

Will 16:06

No!

Gia 16:06

Cassie?

Cassie 16:08

No.

Gia 16:09

Okay. Come here. I want you by my side.

Luca 16:13

Oh.

Matt 16:14

What

Luca 16:15

It's three guys and two girls now?

Will 16:19

We're certain there's no pulse?

Cassie 16:21

We checked over and over. No pulse. No, nothing.

Gia 16:26

Luca, did you kill Brit?

Luca 16:28

Of course not!

Gia 16:29

Matt.

Matt 16:29

No!

Gia 16:30

So no one did it.

Will 16:32

But did you...

Gia 16:33

Don't even say it! I was with Cassie.

Cassie 16:36

Actually, we got separated.

Gia 16:39

I said I want you by my side.

Cassie 16:41

Sorry.

Matt 16:41

I saw everyone from the end of the cornfield. There was plenty of time between the sparklers going out and all of us walking back to the fire. Time to spare for anyone to make it to her car and back.

Luca 16:51

What if no one did it? None of us anyway?

Cassie 16:54

Are you saying she strangled herself?

Luca 16:56

No. I mean, what if someone was just passing by?

Gia 16:59

What's the motive?

Will 17:01

Hate crime.

Matt 17:03

I would have seen headlights.

Will 17:05

Then they walked.

Matt 17:06

No one walks out here.

Cassie 17:08

We walked out here. [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 17:11

Talk to me about this cast of characters, why you wanted to assemble this particular group to tell your story.

Abbey Monnin 17:18

When it comes to creating the characters that was something where I really kind of started with a sense of who they might be and gave them a name and kind of did the thing where you're looking through a lot of different personality traits. And you're just kind of thinking about who this person could be or their background. And so I had that thought out before things really went into writing. You know, I really like each character. And so for me, it didn't really devolve from having a clear sense of who they should be, but sort of just kind of making making them up and making up their histories before we went into the

writing of it. So that when it was time to do the actual dialogue writing, I just it felt really clear to me what these characters would and wouldn't say or how they would and wouldn't respond. They was nervous that you know, with an ensemble of six characters that I didn't want any of the characters to be too similar to each other. And I wanted to make sure that you felt like each were their own unique person instead of kind of carbon copies of each other. So I would say that was probably the most important thing to me.

W. Keith Tims 18:16

Yeah, that makes sense. Especially when you got six voices basically talking all the time, and you have a very limited amount of time for the audience to kind of get to know them. They need to not only sound different, which I think you do a good job of casting here, everyone kind of has their own voice, but they also need to be quickly recognizable, especially by audio because we can't rely on things like costume or looks or hair color or whatever. This reminded me a lot of like a kind of a cross between, I don't know Breakfast Club or Big Chill, you know, that kind of with the different types. But then also, I also got kind of shades of the teen horror movies like I Know What You Did Last Summer and that kind of thing. Where those horror movies get sensational with lots of you know gore and gruesome killings, this show is a lot more relationship oriented. It's about them really dealing with each other, and the kind of fears that they had,

Abbey Monnin 19:05

You know, it's interesting because some of their views of like the relationship dynamic, and some of them have not, but we definitely wanted that to be there. When my co writer Spencer and I were writing it one thing that I sent him very early on, as I just said, even if someone figures out who the murderer is, or they know it going in, I still want them to enjoy it. Sandra Bullock said this thing about being in rom coms where she said you know how it's going to end. So it's really just about the journey and is the journey fun for the audience because you know that they're getting together you know how it ends and I wanted to have a similar thing with End of the Cornfield where if you know who the murderer is, you still can have an enjoyable time exploring these relationships and seeing like, who seemed like they were going to be the murderer or kind of looking at the interpersonal dynamics of each person with Brit, you know, so each person has a flashback that kind of sheds light on their relationship with her. More so than the murder or the thriller aspect, the ensemble was what I focused on most was that their relationships would feel real and that you would be horrified also, as you get to know each of them and you hopefully, like each of them that you're like, really one of these people is going to be it. Like, who ends up becoming the murderer, the flashback is so much more heartbreaking because you're like, really, that's, really? You know, hopefully you feel that with all of them. Because you are, you're feeling for all of them. Really, I think for me, that's where I wanted most of the horror to come from was just like, if you've known people that long, and then something like this happens. It's how? You know how could How could something possibly happen like this, like you've known these people for so long? I just think that that element of trust and familiarity, in relationships is an interesting thing to explore.

Luca 20:47

[Begin clip] (distant owl call) What are we doing?

Will 20:49

I don't know.

Matt 20:51

I think we need to take Brit into town.

Gia 20:54

No one's going anywhere until I know the truth.

Will 20:57

We can't leave her in the car.

Cassie 20:59

Oh, God. Brian.

Luca 21:03

Ugh. And little Mimi.

Will 21:04

If we can't take her into town or leave her where she is then we need to go get her and bury her.

Cassie 21:12

What? That's gonna make us look guilty, Will! If we didn't kill her, why would we bury her out here?

Will 21:18

Do you really think anyone is gonna believe us?

Matt 21:21

It looks like one of us did it! I didn't see anyone. It's flat for miles. And none of us saw anyone. Are we really going to tell a cop that we just lit sparklers on an open field that doesn't belong to us. And we just happen to miss some rando walking out here to murder Britt. Come on, who is going to buy that? [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 21:40

What do you struggle with?

Abbey Monnin 21:42

Really the thing that everybody does, which is just confidence, because when you're creating something, or you're trying to produce something, there are all of these moments that come up where you're kind of like, oh, like, Can I do this? Or am I allowed to do this or because there's no one kind of telling you what you can and can't do. There's no one kind of watching over your shoulder. There's a lot of just kind of making things up. Like when I wanted to send an offer letter to one of our actors, to Ashley an offer her the part of Brit and I asked an actor friend of mine was like, Do you have any offer

letters that I could just look at? Because I don't know, like, I don't know what that's supposed to look like, and I don't have anyone to ask. And you know, he's been in a lot of things. And he was like, honestly, I've never got an offer letter. And I was like you never got an offer... okay, well, so I'm just Googling, like, what is an offer letter look like? Like, I don't want this to look like an amateur email or contract. But I don't, I don't know what it's supposed to look like. I think moments like that happen a lot. When you're producing and you kind of just have to make it up. There's a confidence factor there that can be daunting.

W. Keith Tims 22:38

You just push on through? You just try and hope that it works is that that's your solution?

Abbey Monnin 22:43

Yeah, you know, my motto really is just, you know that the old British thing of the "keep calm and carry on." When I was in high school, there was some website that we were on where you could change the end of it, and make these placemats or whatever I don't know, we were bored in study hall, and we were on computers and messing around this. And I just put, "keep calm and show up." And I've never forgotten that. And that for me, like as someone who deals with a lot of anxiety and definitely with social anxiety is like for me, if I show up, I'm going to be fine. You might not even know that I have any anxiety, like everything's gonna be fine. But me, before I show up, before I get to that place is just is going to be a mess. So for me, that's kind of my motto, just keep calm and show up, just show up and do the thing. I mean, I was so nervous the first day that we were going into record and I just kept telling myself, just your show up, because I know once I show up, then I'm going to be so fine. But I just have to get to the recording studio and just show up. So that's really, that's, that's really how I do everything is just focused on, focus on getting there. Because I know that for me at least, I'm just going to be present in the moment and everything's going to be fine. Once I'm actually there.

W. Keith Tims 23:53

I can totally relate. I deal with anxiety, too. I don't have social anxiety, but I do have sort of depressive anxiety sometimes. So I got the negative talk cycles in my head, you know what I mean?

Abbey Monnin 24:04

If you like what you're doing, you get you get focused on what you're doing. Or when you show up, and then you start talking to people, you're focused on the other people you stop, there's no internal focus, like happening, at least for me, like, once those things have started going on. So yeah, it was really just a matter of showing up and also just doing the thing, like even hiring our sound designer, you know, it's not like I know how to vet sound designers. It's not like I know, all of these questions to ask, I just knew kind of what I wanted, try to find someone who could deliver that and like, had conversations to suss that out. And like, I think a lot of it is just, it is just doing the thing, and then you'll make whatever you'll make and you can improve on it. But you have to do it to be able to improve on it.

W. Keith Tims 24:45

And I think that's something that's a good lesson for lots of people to know is that making the good faith effort is really all that we can ask ourselves. To say, All right, I'm going to try to do this thing. I'm going to

do the best that I possibly can. And I'm going to make the good faith effort and if it works great if it doesn't work, at least I made my good faith effort and something good will come anyway and trust the process. Maybe not be the thing that I anticipated, but it's something will happen. And that's, I think, better than not having something happen.

Abbey Monnin 25:13

Oh, yeah. Yeah. 100% agree.

W. Keith Tims 25:15

So how do you measure success?

Abbey Monnin 25:17

I think for me with another cornfield, I came into it with two really clear objectives. So that was really what I used to measure success, which the first one was just, I hadn't acted in a long time, I wanted to act. And I wanted to have everybody together in one room. And we did that. So that was a great success for me. And then the other one was, I really wanted to feel like okay, I like this project. And I'm proud of this project. And maybe it's not, you know, the most perfect award winning thing ever, but it's good. And I like it. And I'm happy with it. And I'm not embarrassed to to the next thing that I'm trying to do to say like, oh, yeah, and, and you know, my production company, we made this fiction podcast, here's the link. I wanted to kind of use it as a calling card and not beat not feel bad about that feel like no, this is actually pretty good. Like, I like it. And here it is. I'm really love everybody that was involved with the project. That is how I feel about the project. I feel good about it. I like it. You know, I'm happy with it.

W. Keith Tims 26:13

Well you know, you have won some awards, and you've been into festivals, and, and so congratulations for that.

Abbey Monnin 26:18

Thanks.

W. Keith Tims 26:18

Do those, those accolades have any bearing on your feeling of success?

Abbey Monnin 26:22

Yeah, I mean, it feels good to know that people are interested or that they recognize something good about the project. So yeah, I think that they make you feel good. I mean, the one that I think felt the most successful for me is and some of my cast went to the award show, but that we got into the Indie Series Awards, and that was one of the ones that I had really kind of wanted to get into, because I really liked the caliber of, of content that they had. And so that then made me feel definitely successful, just in kind of looking at the other audio dramas and going well, these are really well done. And whatever governing board made this decision felt like, you know, we belonged in a couple of these categories. So that's really great. And that, you know, of course, that makes you feel good. Yeah. So I

would say, that definitely makes you feel successful. And just like, Okay, well, I didn't make something that's absolutely terrible. Because it's getting put in these categories with these other people who stuff I can objectively like, you know, see as good because I think that's the thing, it's hard to evaluate your own stuff.

W. Keith Tims 27:22

Yeah, it is.

Abbey Monnin 27:23

And I have to skip over, like, all of my voice when I listen to the episodes, I don't want to hear mine. (laughter) So it's just hard to evaluate. And, and so when you can look at other projects and go, Okay, well, I like, I like these, like these indie audio dramas are cool. And you want to put me on that list? Well, yeah, that does feel good, you know,

W. Keith Tims 27:44

What makes you motivated to keep coming back to storytelling and acting and performance and things like that?

Abbey Monnin 27:51

Well, I think motivation is really tricky. I used to really focus a lot on motivation. And now I think it's just, I think motivation is for hobbyists. So it's, it's not for people who want to make a career out of working in the business. Because if it's something that you're you're creating in your free time, you know, for fun, then motivation works. Because whenever you're motivated, you can work on it when you're not, you don't, that's great. But if you want to have an actual career, I don't think you can wait for being motivated. I think it's really about discipline, it's, what are you going to do every day that brings you closer to this goal. And that's really what it has to be. So the way that I use motivation, with discipline is, for me, it's really about the reason or the purpose for why I'm being disciplined. So if I kind of look at my life, and I see what I'd like it to be, and I, you know, I know how I like my career to be whether or not I ever actually get to have that. But I know what it looks like, then when I'm not feeling motivated, but I know I need to be disciplined, I can just kind of tell myself, well, I need to do this, because maybe, maybe you can get to that or get somewhat close to that or a different version of that thing that you really want. Which when I think about like being somebody who could just be an actor or writer, producer, and there are no day jobs, a world with no jobs, I just think oh my God, heaven on earth, like, can you imagine what that would be like? That can keep me disciplined, like thinking of what I'd love to have that and I for sure will never have it. If I'm not disciplined. And if I'm disciplined, maybe I won't get it, but at least I'll do something that's also, you know, it's also easy to talk about all this career stuff, but it's fun. You know, like, I like to do it because something I love doing so yeah, the hardest parts for being disciplined are like, you know how I had a day of like contracts. Then if a cornfield in an ideal world, I would have somebody else doing contracts, I don't want to get contracts, right? I want to spend 10 hours, you know, doing this and sending it off to a lawyer to eat to look at and all that stuff, but it's kind of like well, if you're producing something or creating something, you have to deal with that to get to do the fun stuff. And I don't know like, I don't think I'm ever going to be motivated to do contracts, like it just has to be a discipline thing of this has to happen to do the next thing, so for me, it's more. I know

what future I'm like working towards. And I know that it's little things every day that bring me closer to it. Yeah. And, and that's it for me.

Gia 30:11

[Begin clip.] (melancholy string music) Britt knew when you were manipulating her, she was bulletproof. She won't even stop you. Fuck with her all you want somehow it made no difference. And then she would find a way to ask you just the right question like Will said. She cared about the truth more than most people. I really liked that about her. She didn't want your bullshit. She wanted people to be honest and be compassionate. And she felt everything so deeply. Not a lot of people wear their heart on their sleeve like that, you know? Britt's light will never go out.

Luca 30:54

(running up) Come with me, guys. Now! There's something you have to see. (tense music swells, and cuts out). [End clip.]

W. Keith Tims 31:07

End of the Cornfield packs a lot of tension into its short episodes, buoyed by a strong ensemble cast and sound design. What elevates the story further though, is the time the story takes to build the relationships between the characters, their struggles and past, giving them something to fight for. [Begin end theme music] You can listen to End of the Cornfield on most major podcast platforms, or see our show notes for more details. 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 gonna get out of this mess. Until next time.

W. Keith Tims 32:22

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