



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 308: Serena Rahhal & Reese Patterson (Or How To Make A Podcast About The Internet)

Show Notes

Episode Summary: Serena Rahhal & Reese Patterson discuss their show, “Signed, Venus”, how the pandemic impacted their production process, and how what spurred them to create a show about fandom and the internet.

Guest Information:

- [Signed, Venus Website](#)
- [Signed Venus Listening Portal](#)
- [Signed, Venus Twitter](#)
- [Signed, Venus Instagram](#)
- [Serena Rahhal’s Twitter](#)
- [Resse Patterson’s Twitter](#)

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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**‘On Their Way’ Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado
(It’s light and energetic. It puts a little pep in your step)**

Jade Madison Scott (JMS): Hey everybody it’s me Jade and you’re listening to On Their Way, the titans of tomorrow, today! This episode is special not simply because the guests themselves are but also cause there are two of them. Today it’s all about “Signed, Venus” creators, Serena Rahhal and Reese Patterson. Now if you don’t know about Signed, Venus you gotta get on the hype train because it is a good show.



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JMS: It nimbly captures the beach aesthetic while staying consistent with its themes and characterizations and the world-building lends itself to the dreamy pastel quality the story emits. It's just a neat show that is really easy to like, but don't take my word for it. We're gonna be playing the trailer in a few seconds so you can judge for yourself. But before we do that I want to remind you of two things, transcripts can be found at our website, wgcpredictions.com, and I want you to remember this is a WGC Production.

**'On Their Way' Theme Song Fades Out
'Signed, Venus' Trailer Fades In**

(The cawing of seagulls and the crash of surf on the beach)

Mirah (M): I noticed that your first destination is Arabella but that's not on your way.

Hayden (H): It's the first destination the writer went to. It's sacred.

(Jaunty Techno Music)

Kameron (K): (Laughing) Oh, how excited are you? On a scale of one to ten?

H: A billion!

(Music Fades Out To A Plucky Tune)

K: I thought the waters at Coast Venus were clear. This is....that's something else.

(The Music Continues)

Valeria (V): Visitors. Of course.

H: You're Captain Valeria, right? Of the Ultramarine?

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V: Yep. That's me. And that's her, the Ultramarine.

(The music winds on)

Nuri (N): Sentimentality is a virtue of ours. It's ingrained in our people.

Cora (C): I'm sure such a thoughtful gift will cheer her right up.

(A Drink is poured into a glass. Dreamy techno music fades in.)

H: One of the most important people we have to meet is in Arabella.

N: Who was this person?

H: No one knows, actually.

Voiceover: Signed, Venus Part I. Listen on May 27.

V: Do you two know anything?

(Cymbal Crash.)

'Signed, Venus' Trailer Ends

JMS: Serena is the co-creator and co-writer of the audio drama podcast, Signed, Venus, a story about two people who go on a road trip to uncover the identity of an anonymous traveling writer. Serena is also the voice of Mirah on Signed, Venus and Nima on Moonbase Theta, Out. Reese is the co-creator, co-writer, and voice of Zelene on Signed, Venus. Reese also runs PYROMOUR, a soap and candle shop with a pop culture twist.

(Laughing)

Hey! Hey, how are you guys?

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Reese Patterson (RP): (Laughing) Doing well.

JMS: Okay. Wonderful. I'm glad you're doing well. I'm glad you're doing well, Reese. Uh, Serena, how you doing?

Serena Rahhal (SR): I'm doing pretty good. Thank you so much for having us on your show.

JMS: You're welcome. I'm glad that you guys are here. Okay. So, I'm going to launch into this interview with the very first question I asked quite literally every single person who comes on this show: where do you guys come from, and where are your roots?

SR: Okay. I can go first. I am Palestinian and I'm currently living in London, Ontario, which is in Canada. I did live in Jordan for four years as well with family who were living there. I think all of these places are pretty formative for me, so.

RP: And, um, I am from Montgomery, Alabama, uh, born and raised, haven't lived outside of the state and Alabama is, uh, very important to me.

(Reese Laughs)

JMS: Alright, Alabama. Well, I love another Southerner and...yeah!

(Reese Laughs)

Okay. So cool stuff. Okay. So, I just want to know, in you guys' own words, what exactly is it that you do?

SR: Okay. Sure. I can go. Do you mean on the podcast?

JMS: Yeah. On the podcast, unless you feel like you want to give a more expansive answer?

SR: Was just curious. Okay. Um, yeah, so we created 'Signed, Venus' together. Um-

(Serena Laughs)

So, it was a lot of coming up with the concept, a lot of planning. Yeah, I think that what we, we do a lot of, uh, just kind of like mapping out different concepts. What needs to happen when and where.

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SR: What the themes are in the story, and then obviously there's the actual scriptwriting, um-

JMS: Mhmm.

SR: Which we've been doing, not so much a lot of that lately, but a lot of editing for the scripts that we've written. Um, so just kind of, uh, actually laying down these ideas into something solid and then going back and reading over it a million times and changing it and fixing it until it is at a level we would consider to be satisfactory.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

RP: We also, uh, direct. We have a really awesome cast. Um, they're super flexible, um, super wonderful to work with. Just, that's probably my favorite part just working with our cast. We do asynchronous recordings for the most part which gives us a lot of chances to really work with each actor directly, and it's just, it's great.

(Reese Laughs)

JMS: Alright, cool! And could, and could you just sort of explain to our audience what exactly it is that 'Signed, Venus' is about? Like in a nutshell, what makes the story special, special, et cetera?

SR: So, 'Signed, Venus' is like, like you said a little bit earlier, it's a story about two people who go on a road trip trying to uncover the identity of a mysterious traveling writer. And so I think 'Signed, Venus' is about a lot of different things, but, one of those things is about, like, fandom and autism. Hayden is autistic and very focused on the identity of the writer because the series that they wrote is Hayden's special interest. It's also about, uh, sort of relationships and travel and what you call home and narratives, you know, all those good things.

JMS: Okay. So, then that answer leads me to want to say a couple of things. One, we're definitely going to get into the themes of 'Signed, Venus' cause that's, like, one of my favorite parts of the show is just, like, the stuff it explores, cause I don't see that a lot in media.

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JMS: Like, especially when it comes to the, the act of fandom and parasocial, parasocial relationships, so we'll get to that. But before we do that, I wanted to ask both of you where exactly did this show come from? Cause it's a really unique, interesting look, like you said, at fandom and parasocial relationships and, uh, and, like, special interests of autistic people and all that jazz. And it has such a specific feel and tone. Like when I listen to it, I see pastels-

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

And yet, like, there's this certain darkness looking underneath it-

(Serena Laughs)

Which can kind of be seen an episode at the end of part one, so like, I wanted to know, like, how did you come up with this interesting and unique concept?

RP: Okay, so, we both use Pinterest for character ideas and concepts. Um, and I had a bunch of Pinterest boards for original characters that I had really nowhere to put them, I didn't have a story for them.

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Um, and I think using Pinterest, like we use Pinterest for the show and it's, uh, really, really helpful. And I think that that really also like brings forward, like, uh, like the kinds of like the pastel vibes, like you mentioned.

JMS: (Laughing) Mhmm.

RP: Because it, uh, since it's so visual, uh, in our planning and everything, um, but anyway, so I had, um, these OC boards and I didn't know what to do with them, and we had just finished listening to Wolf 359, which is my favorite thing ever.

(Jade and Reese Laugh)

And, uh, I was like, "I would like, a, I would like to do a podcast." And we were like, "yeah, sure, okay." Um, and so that's where the, like, original origins and I wanted it to be a road trip podcast that's uh, and then it filled up and built up from there. And Serena you can continue.

(Jade and Resse Laugh)

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SR: Yeah. I think the fact that we had, we had created these mood boards before we got started was a huge part in shaping like the tone and aesthetic of the show. Um, a lot of our ideas sprung pretty much directly from just collaging different kinds of images together based on stuff that we find cool and stuff that we find interesting.

I think the medically, um, it kind of springs a lot from what we tend to be interested in. Reese and I are both autistic so we're kind of naturally inclined to read about and write about, um, autistic characters. And I think that, for me anyway, um, these sort of questions about like, you know, "where are the lines between reality and fiction and how solid are those lines exactly," that's something that me, and I know Reese as well, we've both been interested in for a very long time. So, I think it was just kind of merging a lot of different aesthetics and then also, uh, concepts, themes, that we like in a way that we haven't really seen before.

JMS: Hmm, and I, I, want to touch on that, one of those things that you said, which was, uh, exploring the line between reality and fiction and that kind of links to another question I was going to ask, because besides, like, the themes of the show, which is one of my favorite things about the show, another thing that I really like is the world-building that you do. And, like, in Conclaire, like there's this, like the fact that there were places that aren't real and yet there are places, like, California, which apparently exists and Kameron's from, and all that jazz, like, this sort of line between reality and fiction is definitely a thing that pops up like in the actual world-building of the show. So, I wanted to know, like, what was that process like building this world that is both in half in and half out of our own reality?

SR: We actually got a great review a while back from someone who had mentioned as like, uh, it was a really great review overall. Like it was, it was super sweet toward the show, and the one line in it that was a criticism was actually something that we both took as a compliment, which was that, um, the reviewer mentioned that, um, because of the mixing of different place names, like the real ones, like Conclaire with fictional settings, like Arabella, um, it can be a little bit confusing sometimes to see, like, what's real in the story and what isn't, and that was pretty much exactly the kind of effect that we were going for. It wasn't so much intentional like we want to confuse people, but it was definitely like, we knew that we wanted to tell a story about the real world and, um, in a way that is a bit more literal than what you would get in, in something like fantasy or something that takes place entirely in a different universe.

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SR: But at the same time, we wanted to have the freedom to, uh, create these really unique settings and kind of just infuse our own mythology into them. And so the way that it kind of ended up playing out was like, “okay, well, why don't we create a fictional country? It's not like the entire universe needs to be fictional, but we can have it so that this one place is.”

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Yeah, having, uh, the country be fictional, like it also gives us, uh, the freedom to like, have influences from like the real world reality without having to really, uh, be stuck in certain places.

(Reese Laughs)

And I really love that, uh, because you get to play with different cultures, different, uh, scenery, um-

SR: And historical influences too I think.

JMS: Historical influences like what?

SR: Well, I think that-

(Serena Laughs)

It's hard to talk about without getting into some of the stuff that's coming up in part two-

JMS: Oh, okay. Okay.

SR: But, um, yeah.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

JMS: Got it. Okay. Um, all right, well then I'm going to pivot so that you guys don't spoil your upcoming, uh, your upcoming part II. Season.....part two.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

Um, so, so I, I kind of want to talk about those aspects that we mentioned earlier when it comes to, like, the themes of the show cause again, I just think they're really cool and it's interesting because as a, like I'm 21, so I grew up with the internet in a very real and tangible way....”real and tangible” “the internet”.

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JMS: What a juxtaposition.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

Um, but I grew up with it like in a very prominent way, and so it's interesting seeing how fan culture is sort of, it sort of manifested through the character of Hayden, and it's also interesting that you mentioned that they're autistic, cause I... don't know if I wasn't listening closely, but I didn't pick that up in the show. I just thought they were like a, like a super fan, like it says on the website. So, I wanted to, to ask, like, what was your, um, at what point did you realize that this theme about sort of the, um, sort of the way that fan culture interacts with, like, our personal lives...like at what point did you realize that was a theme that you guys were working on? And like, how did the exploration of that theme developed during the writing and production of the show?

(Reese Laughs)

SR: Do you want to answer or should I?

RP: (Laughing) You can go ahead.

SR: Okay. Well, Reese and I were also raised on the internet. I think me a little bit more than Reese.

(Serena Laughs)

Uh, and specifically in fandom. We actually met through fandom.

RP: Yep.

SR: And so I think that we just have this, like, um, really deep, intimate knowledge of how fandom has affected our own lives and how it's kind of shaped our own identities and also our relationships and the way that we see the world. So, it's definitely coming from a place of just kind of personal experience, you know? Um, this idea of like, uh, how do you think about your different influences? Like, how do you be so invested in something and feel like, you know it, and also have that thing be sort of the creation of somebody else, you know?

JMS: Mhmm.

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RP: So, like, Serena said, fandom is, like, so deeply important to us. I really don't see, especially for like our first work, I can't see a scenario where our first thing wouldn't really focus on fandom so much because like, it's so important and it's also like, it's fun to explore. Like, it doesn't really-

(Reese Sighs)

When I see it, it's usually done in, like, a mocking way or it's just like, it's playing it for jokes. And it's like, well, that's not that's....silly.

(Reese and Jade Laugh)

SR: It's often, yeah, I feel like we so often see it done in a way that's like overly critical, but also like overly celebratory in a way that can be superficial sometimes without really getting into like what that experience is like and what it's like to have such a deep and important part of your identity be shaped by fandom and how that feels like when you're actually in it and not just an observer.

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Yeah. Yeah.

JMS: Hmm. And the show also makes comments on, I mean, like one of the big cruxes of the, of the show is Hayden's attachment to The Writer, uh, which is in itself like a massive parasocial relationship, which in itself it's neither good nor bad thing, but like, uh, parasocial relationships are a big part of the show.

(Reese Laughs)

But it's interesting, right, that the entire show is sort of based around this parasocial relationship between Hayden and The Writer and Hayden and, like, even, even their own sort of country, because, like, they go to these different places and figure out, like, the places are not quite what they thought they were.

SR: Mhmm.

JMS: And so there's even, like, this parasocial relationship to the land.

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JMS: And so, I kind of wanted to ask like, as creators yourself, especially in the audio drama world, which does focus a lot on, from what I've seen, uh, not focus on, but rather the parasocial relationships also play a large part in the audio drama world if only for the fact that because it's so international and yet we use social media to interact, like, there's a lot of *that* just going on. So, I wanted to know, like, how do you navigate parasocial relationships in your own business/audio drama endeavors.

SR: That is such a good question.

(Serena, Reese, and Jade Laugh)

RP: Go ahead.

SR: Honestly, like...and it's such a good question because that's honestly something that we're grappling with, like, all the time. Like I genuinely feel like not a month has gone by that we've been involved in audio drama, where we aren't constantly thinking about things like relationship boundaries and internet safety-

RP: Mhmm.

SR: And all these different things that are so important when you're working with people remotely, and especially when you're building connections remotely. Um, so yeah, I don't know, like, it's hard. Um, I don't think there's necessarily a right answer, but, um, the way....I think that what we're learning is kind of like, um.....to have an open mind and be receptive to building relationships with others, but also to, um, sort of keep in mind, like, your goals and the nature of the relationship that you're, that you feel comfortable having as a professional, um, as someone who is working in an industry and not just being in a fandom space where it's a bit more casual. And deciding, like, to be selective about who you maintain relationships with and also about the way that you engage.

RP: Yeah, um, I'm a very very, we both are, um, but big proponent for, uh, separating your spaces. Um, like, uh, particularly on social media. Um, I think everybody needs a private account on Twitter.

(Jade Laughs)

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RP: Don't put all of your stuff out there. Um, that's like, uh, just personally just going to call myself out, I found myself, like, putting a little bit too much than I was comfortable out.

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Um, so I was like, "okay, uh, stepping away for a little bit." I don't use my main Twitter as much as I used to and I think that's like a good, it's a good personal boundary to make. Yeah, just curating my space is really important.

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Like I have a list for like a podcast accounts and other like news sources and things where I'm not necessarily following them, but they are there. Like it's just, yeah, it's really about curation for me.

SR: And I think it's so interesting to think about how that works on the internet, right? Because like, in, in real life, I feel like it's a little bit, well, not real life, like the internet is real life, but like, you know, offline-

(Jade Laughs)

I think it's a little bit easier to kind of, um, make those mental separations where it's like, okay, you have the people you go to work with and you might be friends with some of the people that you go to work with, but, like, generally there's an understood difference between being in the workplace and like, being at a restaurant or being at someone's house, right?

RP & JMS: Mhmm.

SR: Whereas on the internet, it's so much less clear because whether you're friends with someone or not, there's someone on the same follower list. And so I feel like a lot of people, um, might struggle with this where it's like, okay, my friends are here so I'm going to post the way that I want to post for my friends. But at the same time, it's like, okay, but a lot of the people that you're working with professionally are also here so maybe this isn't really your friend space.

JMS: Hmm.

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RP: Yeah. Yep.

JMS: Okay, so that brings up a question for me, since you two are friends and like we're talking about setting boundaries and like all of this stuff and, like, designating, this is work, this is not work. This is personal business and this is business business. How do you two, as friends, navigate the sort of, um, this sort of, uh, just creating something together?

(Serena Laughs)

SR: We actually, um, so we use Discord mostly, um, to talk to each other in general, so I feel like we, we, we do have our own Discord server that we use for a whole bunch of different projects, including 'Signed, Venus', but also creative stuff that we're working with. I just realized I'm, like, talking a lot. You wanna answer Reese?

RP: No, that, that works for me.

(Serena, Reese, and Jade Laugh)

SR: Yeah, and so I feel like we're both just naturally kind of drawn to compartmentalizing. So, what's great about the server that we have is that we can kind of demarcate it. Like, we don't really talk about our work on 'Signed, Venus' outside of the designated area for talking about 'Signed, Venus'

JMS: Mhmm.

SR: Um, other than that, like we have our private conversations elsewhere. Um, we are like best friends so our relationship is definitely a lot more casual and with less, um, barriers, I guess you would say than with someone who I'd consider to be, uh, more strictly someone I have a professional relationship with, but even within that very, very casual, close friendship, um, we still kind of have our designated spaces, so it's like, okay, let's not, uh, mix work with our like super private personal conversations too much.

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JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Yeah, yeah. Um, yeah, the compartmentalizing is very good. Um-

(Reese Laughs)

JMS: Alright. Okay, cool! Um, okay. So, I'm going to do a slight pivot, and I'm going to ask about the development process for Part II, which you have been, you, I don't know who runs the 'Signed, Venus' account, but which the 'Signed, Venus' account has been very open about, you've been very open about the fact that there have been some, um, roadblocks in the initial development, like things just sort of kept happening. So, I want to ask about, like, how have you navigated those to make a work environment that is flexible to all the people in your cast and crew while still being mindful of the various things that, um, many of your cast and crew went through, uh, doing the initial process development process for season two. I think I phrased that, right. Yeah.

RP: This past year...it's been a mess for everyone.

(Serena, Reese, and Jade Laugh)

RP: Um, we lucked out. We have the best, uh, cast and crew ever.

(Reese Laughs)

Really. Yeah, it's, it's been, it's, it's been rough. Um, but, our casts they're so understanding and they also, um, they have other things happening. We, uh, Serena and I talked about this a bit, um, a little while ago and, we're just not anybodies, like, first priority and that gives us so much freedom.

(Reese Laughs)

It works that we can be extremely flexible, we don't have to like...a lot of our casts are super busy, they have a lot going on. And it works that we can be really flexible with, like, recording and rehearsals and getting lines in, um, because like there, it's not an added stress, like, like a bad stressor really. Um, and I really love that, uh, and yeah, we just, we want to take everybody's, like, physical and mental health, uh, that, that comes first. I mean, the show, the show is important, but our people are so much more important.

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JMS: Serena would you like to add anything?

SR: Sure. Yeah. I think part of it too is just like maintaining communication with people while also recognizing that, like, you don't want to harass people either when it comes to stuff like this, just because like, um, the way that we're doing...developing...the development for Part II has been so different than it was for Part I. Like when we were doing Part I we had very, very strict deadlines and thankfully we were able to meet all of those deadlines, you know, but, um, with everything that's happened in the world, it has just like, besides being really difficult, it also just simply has not been possible to work the same way that we were working on part one. Um, and I'm hoping that, uh, once the state of the world has stabilized a little bit and we'll be able to move closer to that kind of model again. But I do think that flexibility, being understanding of people's circumstances, like, that's always important regardless of whether there's a global crisis happening or not.

JMS: (Snorts) Mhmm.

SR: And just kind of maintaining communication with people, checking in like, “are you feeling okay to work on this right now?” And just sort of asking those questions and keeping people in the loop and being open about, uh, the progress that's being made while also understanding that like, “okay, you don't need to be asking people every single day, you don't want to be harassing anybody.” Um, I think that balance is kind of important.

JMS: You kind of touched on it and I had a question of my own, but since there was such a distinctive gap between when you guys produced Part I and when you guys are producing Part II, how has the time provided, uh, impacted your process when it comes to the writing, when it comes to the world, when it comes to the characters?

SR: Oh God, I'm doing a lot more obsessive editing for better or worse.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

Because now that I have all the time in the world before, it was like, “okay, obsessive editing for a month,” but now it's like “obsessive editing for three months.” And, like, that's not the best thing.

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RP: Now I have to bully her into putting it down.

(Jade Laughs)

SR: But I will say that it is nice being able to, like, put something down for like two weeks and then come back to it and see how it reads different and stuff. Um, it's, it's nice having that time and also just kind of, um, getting more chances to just kind of pour over the themes and the characterization and to think like, “okay, is this serving the end game well,” and being in communication with actors about like, “okay, at this point in the script, this is where your character is at mentally,” which like we were doing that before, but, um, we're able to do it with like a depth that we weren't necessarily able to do it before. So...that's cool. There's pros and cons.

(Reese Laughs)

JMS: Where exactly did that depth come from?

SR: In what way?

JMS: You mentioned how you were able to get depth in a way that you hadn't before, uh, what, what sort of shifted to the point where you could do that?

SR: I think it's just about being able to have, like, more conversations about different things. So, like we end up having...because there are sort of gaps we might, um, visit a scene once and then we'll end up coming back to it, like, two weeks later, three weeks later. Um, and so each time, like when you've had that kind of time to not just be away from the script also to kind of grow a little bit as a person, it's like the next time you see it, you come to it with these new ideas that you didn't necessarily have when it was originally conceptualized or when it was originally written. So, I think it just gives you a chance to put like a new spin on things, um, and to develop concepts more than they might've been developed had you done it in two weeks? You know?

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JMS: I see. Okay. I understand. Thank you. One thing that I did also want to ask about, Reese mentioned earlier, how you guys record asynchronously. So, I wanted to know, because personally as a person with a background in theater, that's not my vibe.

(Jade Laughs)

And, and I like to record things all at once. So, I wanted to know, like, what are the, what is your process like for recording asynchronously? And like, why do you like it and why does it work for you?

SR: Should I go, or-

RP: Um, I, I have a little bit, uh, you probably have more, um-

SR: Go for it.

(Serena and Reese Laugh)

RP: So, doing it a, uh, a, uh, asynchronously, I really like it personally, um, because we get a chance to really direct and go into, like, I mean, you can direct with multiple people, but like you can really get into it, um-

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: With the actor. Like, you can talk about, like, where the character's coming from in depth and discuss, like, different ways that they could do it, and it, you know, you can really, really get into it, and also, uh, everybody's busy, so scheduling can be a complete nightmare.

(Reese Laughs)

SR: We do do rehearsals when we can with as many actors as we can.

RP: Um, and then we just read the parts for people who weren't able to come. Um, but yeah, so. We tried to get as many people for rehearsals as possible, but when it's actually, like, recording, it's just, it just works better to get everybody to just do it one-on-one, um, or two-on-one, whatever.

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(Serena and Reese Laughs)

RP: Uh, and yeah, I just, I like it. It's a little bit more intimate. Um, I am weird about things where I don't like mentioning something if I feel like it's going to take, like, take time away. And so, uh, it works for me personally. Um, just having like the one person, like, we're focused on the same thing, nobody's focused on something else, you know? It, it just works.

JMS: Oh, okay.

RP: Yeah.

JMS: Okay.

SR: It also, yeah, it also depends a little bit on the individual actor. So, we're working with people who have a variety of different processes and ways that they like to do things, which is cool, um, but it also means that like on an actor-by-actor basis, we are in general really doing things the exact same way with everybody.

So, for example, we have, um, one actor who likes to sort of go one line at a time until they like the way that line sounds and then move on to the next line. And so if we were to record synchronously, they wouldn't have the chance to do that. Um, and it also like if someone has, like, a visual processing disorder, for example, um, it can be just kind of difficult to record synchronously because you have to be going so quickly and it might take a few tries to get the same line.

JMS: Okay.

SR: Um, so. It meets an accessibility need, um, and it also just lets us kind of have different people work through their processes. Some other actors would prefer a more, um, synchronous environment, so, um, in one case we actually did do a synchronous recording with two of our actors because both of them, um, had expressed that they were interested in doing that, and those were the only two characters in the scene.

JMS: Mhmm.

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SR: But otherwise for actors who do prefer that method, generally Reese and I will read for the other characters who are in the scene. Um, and we'll just kind of run through the script that way.

JMS: Okay. All right. Interesting. I hadn't considered the, um, the accessibility angle, so I'm glad to glad to now know more.

(Serena Laughs)

One thing I also wanted to ask was, or one thing that I saw and I wanted to ask about was that on March 12th, 'Signed, Venus' launched a, March 12 2021, uh, but 'Signed, Venus' launched a blog for Hayden and it Instagram for Kameron. Uh, and I wanted to ask, like, do you plan to use more of this one, two questions? Okay. So first question-

(Reese Laughs)

How do you plan to, like, use these sort of multimedia elements to further inform your story? Second question. Uh, what are your thoughts on multimedia creation like this and like how do you want to develop it more in the future for this project?

RP: Oh, that's such a good question.

(Serena and Reese Laughs)

Wow. I absolutely love multimedia, uh, projects. It's definitely one of my favorite things. I love just the level of immersion you get. Um, yeah, we, we had the idea for, uh, Hayden's blog and Kam's Instagram for quite a while.

(Reese Laughs)

Um, and it's been, it's always been one of the things I've been most excited about because, you know, Hayden has their blog in cannon, um, and it's you and it's referenced a lot. And I, it's just very exciting having it there. Um, it started off, it was just going to be like the blog for, uh, for the trip and it evolved into like just a personal blog that also has, uh, the blog post. Um, and I just, I love that because it gives you more of a perspective, um, into like their personality, their interests, uh, their aesthetic, um, and same with Kam and with Kam, uh, his Instagram. Oh my gosh. And so excited about it.

(Jade and Reese Laugh)

Um, there are, uh, several posts and it's just, it's so cool. I, I, I'm very excited about it.

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RP: Um, we're going to continue, uh, um, posting to it, uh, for the remainder of the posting to both of them, for the remainder of the show. Um, and it's just so exciting.

JMS: Alright!

RP: Well, we both used to, uh, role play like, uh, text role-play, and it feels like, like a nod to that, which like, that was a really formative experience. I did that for like a long time.

(Reese Laughs)

Um, that was my main form of writing and my main engagement with fandom. So, it's really fun having like these in-character spaces for, um, Hayden and Kameron and I just...I love it. Okay.

(Reese and Jade Laugh)

JMS: Alright. That's wonderful. I think your enthusiasm really comes through, like when you're looking at the blogs or when you're looking at the Instagram. Especially the Instagram, which you can tell is like, from the captions to the actual art, which is I'm pretty sure provided by Serena, your sister? Um-

RP: Yeah, that's my sister's art she's @shiginope on Twitter and she is just a really talented marvelous artist, and, um, she had basically come up with some concepts for, she was like, her favorite character is Kameron, by far.

(Reese Laughs)

And so she had just kind of been doodling a concept for him because she felt like it, and we were like, "oh my God, we love that." And then, um, she had offered to do a little bit of art for the show, and so we were really excited about that. We love working with her. We have some creative projects that we're doing with her as well. Um, so it was really nice to be able to loop her into 'Signed, Venus'

RP: Yeah. I love her art so much and it's so cool.

(Jade Laughs)

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JMS: Okay. So that is question one, but question two: since, like, you're clearly very passionate about it, how would you like to sort of incorporate multimedia creation into not even just necessarily just this project, but like into your future works as well?

RP: Oooo.

(Reese Laughs)

Ahh, that's such a good question. Um, I don't really have a good answer for it, like yes, at the board.

(Serena, Reese, and Jade Laugh)

SR: Yeah. It's definitely something that we want to keep doing. We have a few, um, we have ideas specific to other projects, but even for 'Signed, Venus' as well, there's a few different things that we want to be able to do in the future if we can. Um, so I'm just gonna...like, one of the things that we wanna do at some point is we want to do like a little recipe book.

JMS: Oh.

SR: Um, and so, yeah, and so that's just like a little idea that we have that we're hoping that we'll be able to do if we have the resources to do that in the future. But, um, I think it's just like going back to what you said earlier, but world-building like, I think that when you have that multimedia angle, it gives you the opportunity to do so much world-building that you don't necessarily, um, get to do just with the one medium. Um, it allows you to expand and get creative in different ways. Um, and I know that we're both fans of multimedia projects and other media that we're interested in, like, um, I love Dragon Age, for example, which is a video game series-

JMS: Mhmm.

SR: But there's also, like, novels that go with it. And then, um, concept art books that include things like, um, even within the game, like they have a codex system, which is basically a lore written from the perspective of people who live in the world of the game.

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SR: And so I've always just thought stuff like that was really neat, and I love how allows you, um, insight into the world, but not necessarily in a “objective” way, like it stays subjective and in the realm of characters. So, yeah, it's just something really neat that we're big fans of it definitely want to keep doing.

RP: Yeah, a lot of things that I love, um, one of my favorite video game series, Bioshock, um, beforefor the, uh, before the unfortunate third game came out-

(Jade Laughs)

They had, um, an ARG, an alternate reality game, in it and a lot of video games, uh, tend to do like real world, like scavenger hunts or, um, ARDs, uh, to promote their upcoming games, so they just, I absolutely love that. And, uh, video games, uh, since, um, a couple of our favorite things are video games, um, like our favorite pieces of media, that tends to come up like, uh, when we're trying to think of ideas and stuff a lot.

JMS: Mhmm.

RP: Um, so it makes sense that we would want to bring in, uh, the multimedia angle, um, because like, it's just, it's always there in other things that we love.

SR: I feel like that says a lot about both of us that neither of us are really like big fans of Harry Styles per se, but when he did that weird thing where he was leaving ads all over the place for like travel to some country that didn't exist, we were like, “whoa, Harry Styles is cool.”

(Serena and Jade Laugh)

RP: I was, I was so jealous when he was doing that, like with the travel ads and everything was like, why didn't we think of this? Why didn't we make accounts for, uh, towns in Conclaire? Why didn't we like, do like an ARG sort of thing?

SR: Thankfully we can use the defense that it wouldn't work because tourism doesn't exist there.

(Serena Laughs)

RP: Yeah, but

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RP & JMS: Still.

JMS: Okay, well that actually-

RP: I was so jealous.

(Jade Laughs)

JMS: That actually provides a slick transition into another question that I wanted to ask. So again, because the world building is so tight and there's so much that can be explored in it, right? I want to know, like once the story of Hayden and Kameron, once that's done, once the quest for The Writer is complete, do you have any intention of continuing, continuing to write stories that exist within this world?

RP: I, I think we have like, discussed, like, small things possibly. Uh, don't want to give much away for possible plans. Um, but I don't think we have any plans for, like, a main line sort of thing.

SR: Yeah, I think if we did anything else with Conclaire, it would be, like, bonus content for 'Signed, Venus.' Um, at the moment we don't have any further plans for independent stories within this world, but who knows, maybe we'll want to revisit it in like 10 years.

JMS: Okay. 10 years? Woof.

RP: Yeah, maybe.

(Jade Laughs. Serena and Reese Laugh)

SR: Anything could happen.

JMS: Anything can happen. Yes. Yes, it's a beautiful world, full of,, full of possibility.

(Reese Laughs)

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JMS: Um, one thing that I also wanted to ask, this isn't even really about 'Signed, Venus', as much as it's sort of something that I saw in the account that I thought was, uh, very interesting, and I wanted to ask you about it, especially since, um, no, I just wanted to ask you about it. So, a few months ago, when, uh, uh, when Israel was attacking Palestine, right? You...the account put out, also sorry for the tonal shift, there was absolutely no-

(Serena Laughs)

Preparation for this, but, but, uh, yeah, a few months ago, uh, doing the, the sieges against Palestine, uh, the 'Signed, Venus' account started a hashtag called #PodcastsAgainstApartheid. So, I wanted to ask you about what spurred that, what you hope it will do, and now that, even though the abuses haven't stopped, but a lot of Western eyes have moved off of it for the time being, I wanted to ask, like, what do you still, what, what intentions do you still have for the, for the hashtag and, and, and so on?

SR: Yeah. Um, so I'm, I'm Palestinian, uh, as I mentioned at the beginning of the show, and so obviously these are issues that are just super, super close to my heart. Um, and in recent months I've become more, um, more involved in local organizing than I had been before. Um, And one thing that happened in my city is that, uh, this really fast, this really fantastic company called Reimagine Co. declared itself to be an "Apartheid Free Zone."

Um, "Apartheid Free Zone" is a term that comes from the BDS movement, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement for Palestine, and basically, um, what an "Apartheid Free Zone" is, is that it's, um...it's a versatile term. So, it could be like a community center. It could be a business, it could be a group, um, any sort of thing that has a bit of an organizational structure, really, that declares itself to, um, basically be in support of BDS principles.

So, what that means is things like not using, uh, products that were made on Israeli settlements, um, and generally just, uh, committing, um, not to work with, uh, any kinds of efforts or people that support Israel. So, I was really inspired by that. I thought that was a really awesome effort by Reimagine Co. and I was trying to think like, okay, how can I, um, how can we implement the concept of an "Apartheid Free Zone" in our own spaces? Um, so that, that was kind of what, when I was like, okay, well, the main thing that I'm working on right now is this podcast, 'Signed, Venus.' And so, um, I think what's really important to me about the concept of an "Apartheid Free Zone" is that as you said, a focus has kind of shifted away from Palestine for the moment, which is natural.

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SR: Like, there's no injustice in the world that everyone is going to be paying attention to all the time. Like it just isn't possible, but what I think, um, taking a pledge to BDS principles does is that it keeps Palestine on your mind, at least once in a while. Every time you want to start something new, you have to kind of do a little bit of research in order to honor that commitment, right?

JMS: Mhmm.

SR: So, um, yeah, I think that was why it was really important for me to kind of start this initiative in the space that I'm in, in the audio drama space, in the podcasting space. We wanted it to be a bit broader, um, and not just be limited to audio drama so that's why we use the hashtag, PodcastsAgainstApartheid. And we basically, um, just translated the “Apartheid Free Zone”, um, framework to a individual pod in the hopes that more people would take this pledge, keep Palestine in their minds, um, and support in the way the activists are asking us to support them.

JMS: All right. Uh, thank you. Thank you for sharing about that. Um, so we're coming to the end of the interview-

SR: Thank you for asking.

JMS: Well, of course, uh, yeah, it was something that you were very clearly passionate about for obvious reasons. Uh, so I just wanted to, yeah-

(Serena Laughs)

But, um, but so we're coming to the end of the interview. Uh, it's been lovely having you, but we have about three questions left, three and a half, two and a half. Okay. So first questions first, um, uh, I invited you here. You're a podcast that I like and one good turn deserves another. So, can you give us some recommendations for podcasts that you like?

RP: Um, okay. Yeah. Um, so one of my very favorite podcasts right now and in general, and I think about it constantly, even though I first listened to it like a while back, um, is, uh, The One Stars.

JMS: Oh, yes.

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RP: From Good Pointe.

JMS: (Laughing) Yeah.

RS: Oh my God. It's...oh my gosh.

(Reese Laughs)

Um, it's just, it's so funny. It it's so funny and, um, it's so cool and it's brilliant, and the writing is just wonderful, and I think about it all the time.

(Reese Laughs)

Um, I just, I love it. I can't, I can't recommend it enough.

JMS: (Laughing) Okay.

SR: I think, um, one show that I really admire right now is OZ9, which is like, it's a comedy about, um, about some people on a spaceship who were very bad at their jobs, and it is hilarious. Like, honestly, I would, like, if I had to pick, like, what I think the quintessence of comedy is, I'd say OZ9, because it is just so consistently funny all the time. I don't know how they do that, and I wish I could do that.

JMS: Mhmm.

(Serena Laughs)

Wonderful. So we got OZ9, we got The One Stars. We've got some, some, uh, number-entitled podcast recommendations, add them to the list. Got it.

(Serena Laughs0)

Okay. So, so before, so this is our last question, essentially. So Reese, Serena, you guys are doing really cool stuff like, uh, like this entire podcast is this entire interview has been about, like, you guys are creating a really neat, unique show that, like, combines so many interesting tonal elements. Uh, like, it's just, it's a really good...it's a good listen.

RP: Aww.

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JMS: It's altogether a good piece of art. You're making more stuff in the future. You're coming out with Part II soon. So, like, as you just sort of climbing your way up this own artistic ladder, I want to ask you both, how will you guys know when you've made it?

RP: Ooh,

(Reese Laughs)

My answer is very silly and very simple. Um, when we've made a video game.

(Reese and Serena Laugh)

JMS: Okay.

RP: I, I've been fixated on the idea of going into game development for years, and it's never seemed more like a reality than it does now. Um, and I just want to make a game. I want to make multiple games, but I'll be happy if I just get one.

(Serena, Reese, and Jade Laugh)

Um, yeah, it's very simple.

(Reese Laughs)

JMS: Alright, making a video game is Reese's benchmark for making it. I got, that's pretty dope. Video games are cool. Yeah.

SR: (Laughing) I love that for you.

(Reese Laughs)

SR: Oh man. I don't, I don't, I honestly, I'm not sure how to answer it because I feel like, um, I feel like art is such an ongoing thing for me that it's like, in some ways I feel like I've already kind of made it now because like five years ago I was like, "I'm never going to write original fiction." Like that was just something I had no interest in.

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JMS: Mhmm.

SR: And so moving into this and creating something and putting it out there and putting my name on it, like, that's a pretty big deal for me. Um, and I know that I just want to keep making more things and keep putting work out there. So...I dunno, I'm not sure if there's like one defining thing. I just want to keep doing this for....until I get bored.

(Serena Laughs)

JMS: (Laughing) Okay. Alright. “Video games” and “I've already made it and I want to keep doing it.” All right. Wonderful. Uh, so can you tell the people where they can find y'all and your work?

RP: Yep. So, uh, ‘Signed, Venus’ uh, you can find it, um, at our website signedvenus.com. Um, we're on, you know, every major podcatcher, uh, Spotify, iTunes, all that jazz. Um, and, uh, me personally, uh, you can find me on Twitter @exolexic. I also make, uh, soaps and candles with a pop culture twist over at Pyromour, um, which you can find on Etsy.

SR: We're also ‘Signed, Venus’ on Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr. Um, my personal handle @elevenverses 11 spelled E-L-E-V-E-N on Twitter.

‘On Their Way’ Theme Song Fades In

JMS: Thank you for listening to episode 8 of On Their Way season 3. On Their Way was created, hosted, and edited by me, Jade Madison Scott. The theme was composed by **Bajio Alvarado**, and the logo was created by Amaka Korie. If you'd like to help us continue to make podcasts like On Their Way or our other show, Retribution, you can support us on Patreon for as little as one dollar a month. In addition to helping us pay for crew and overhead, you'd also gain early access to episodes and exclusive content. You can find the link on our website, wgcproductions.com. You can also show us some love by following us @withgoodco on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and telling your friends about us. Next week we'll be talking to actor, B. Narr. As always I appreciate you for listening, and please take care of yourself and each other.