

Christian Kelley-Madera
Hey all,

Today's bonus content is a slightly new format we're trying out, we're calling it a showcase, where we talk to somebody else working in the audio drama/audio fiction space. We ask them a few questions about their work, then we play a chunk of their work, and then we come back for a few more questions.

Our featured guest for the pilot episode of this format - that's a pun as you'll see in a moment - is Jordan Cobb, which is a name that should definitely be on your podcast radar - got 'em again - and you'll get to hear a full episode of her sci-fi horror saga JANUS DESCENDING. I'm gonna let Jordan speak for herself, and her work speak for itself, in just a moment. But first...

I wanna tell you about Tavour. Tavour is THE app for fans of beer, craft brews, and trying new and exciting labels. Once you sign up in the app, you can choose the beers you're interested in (including two new ones DAILY) and add them to your personalized crate. Pay for the beers as you add them, then ship whenever you're ready. The shipping price will not change with the size of your order. Tavour only works with independent breweries around the world, and if you like trying new beers it's much more cost-effective than buying and shipping one-offs. So download Tavour on the apple or google store to try it now. Use code TOAFN for \$10 off after your first order of \$25 or more, That's Tavour on the apple or google store, discount code TOAFN.

Also, I wanna remind you that, re: what I said last time about a marathon not a sprint, there's still plenty you can be doing to help Black people, to help trans people. As always we encourage you to do your own research, but there's a link in the show notes for blacklivesmatters.carrd.co, which is really helpful for compiling petitions and actions and requests for donations in one place, and also the Marsha P Johnson institute, which works to protect and defend the human rights of Black transgender people.

OK. Enjoy the showcase of JANUS DESCENDING by Jordan Cobb, and we'll see you again in another two weeks.

Christian Kelley-Madera
Hello everyone. Today I'm talking to Jordan Cobb of JANUS DESCENDING and many other shows. Jordan, thank you for for joining us today on the the pilot episode of this community showcase project that we're trying out

Jordan Cobb

Yeah, thanks so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

Christian Kelley-Madera

Yes, well, welcome. Um, before we...I guess the way to start is if you want to give anyone who hasn't heard of, or heard an episode of JANUS DESCENDING just a little brief, kind of elevator pitch, what would it be?

Jordan Cobb

Okay, so JANUS DESCENDING is a science fiction horror story, that is told from two perspectives of these two archaeologists who go out to explore the ancient alien ruins on this very, very distant planet. And when they get there, they find a little bit more than they're bargaining for. Half of the story is

told from one characters perspective from beginning to end. And the other half of the story is told from the other characters perspective from the end to the beginning, and they meet in the middle and then sort of crossover. So it's a little bit of piecing together the mystery of what went horribly, horribly wrong.

Christian Kelley-Madera

Great. Yeah, and it really... I'm glad that our listeners are getting - are gonna get to hear an episode today because it really is a terrific show. And one of the things that I that I love about it and think it's so interesting is that that two person structure because I feel like I've you know, I'm familiar with the kind of sci fi thriller that's like one person all alone, and I'm familiar with the the sci fi thriller that is, you know, a whole crew. But the the two people and having that be a central element to the to the story was kind of, was new and exciting to, to me at least I hope that our listeners enjoy it as much as I did. I want to ask you something that I love to ask other creators is what was the first thing that "sang" to you about this story? Like, when did you feel like there was something you really wanted to pursue?

Jordan Cobb

Oh, that's a tough one. Um, okay, so, uh, I've, in the past, I've kind of referred to JANUS DESCENDING as my love letter to the universe, which is, you know, actually, I think about that, and I think of how the story ends up and I'm like, I should probably rephrase that somehow.

So many things go so badly wrong. It's not a happy love letter. But really, the thing

that started me kind of really going with the story. I mean, on a perfectly technical level, it was that my partner in

this Anthony Olivieri, who plays Peter, who is the other character in the story. I play Chel for those who haven't listened to yet. We just really, really wanted to have a project that we could work on together. But he lives all the way in Texas. And I live in New York. So the physical getting together to actually be able to record something was kind of not in the cards. So on a very technical level, it was just kind of playing around with the idea of how exactly I could tell this story in a way that we could both be very thoroughly involved but not necessarily in the same room together. And it started kind of coming into place when I decided to take half of the story and then flip it sort of back to front. And then I just got very, very caught up in the kind of putting together the puzzle of Okay, wait, but if he's over here, when this is happening, how can I incorporate that in this part of the story where she's over here doing this thing? And how do I get it all to line up? Basically, if you put a puzzle in front of me and like leave me alone for 10 minutes, I'm completely absorbed in it. And there's there's no going back.

Christian Kelley-Madera

I love that. So it was kind of it was almost like a challenge that you were excited to rise to meet.

Jordan Cobb

Oh, very much so especially because I don't like horror. I say this all the time. And people no longer believe me. They just laugh at me. But I am the biggest scaredy cat on the face of the planet. I don't like horror movies. I don't like being scared. So this was kind of a challenge of like, Well, can I still write in a genre that if given the choice, I wouldn't touch with a 30 foot pole and just kind of trying to figure out you know how horror works? And I guess it kind of worked because I know what scares me. So then the point became, how do I scare everybody else the same way I would get scared.

Christian Kelley-Madera

So is that why it became a horror because you know, it was a challenge? Was there something about it that made you necessarily want to do a horror before that even though you don't like horror? Like, whence the decision to do a genre you don't like?

Jordan Cobb

I think it came out of the fact that when I tell stories I very much like to get into the humanity of the situation that's going on. And I think there are stories that can be told that have a great amount of beauty, but that the beauty really pops when you get to see those darker undertones that you get to see all shades of this world that you are experiencing and space in general. You know, it's one of my

three favorite things. But it's, you know, it's space dinosaurs and the ocean. Boom. That's it. You know me. I'm done.

Christian Kelley-Madera
All kinds of big, potentially scary things

Jordan Cobb
Exactly. That have this great beauty and this great depth and this huge amount of room for things go horribly, horribly wrong. And I think that you can't really tell stories about people - because ultimately, JANUS DESCENDING is in its own twisted perverse way, ultimately, it's a love story, which is how I always tend to think of it, but I think that also when you add in the extremes of the situation that they are in, and of course, I was going to have aliens in the story, like you have to have some alien monsters in there. You can't really do that, when it's a story that is also so much about isolation, if it's not going to have a little bit of that scarier, darker element that kind of keeps you on the edge of your seat.

Christian Kelley-Madera
Sure that makes sense. So as a horror writer who doesn't normally enjoy horror, can you talk about some of your your creative influences for the show?

Jordan Cobb
Oh, absolutely. Um, so actually writing JANUS DESCENDING was what got me into the ALIEN series with Sigourney Weaver. And then from there, I had to watch all of the PREDATOR movies so that I could watch ALIEN VS. PREDATOR. So I knew what was going on. I listened to a lot of Bastille when I was working on this. It was pretty much the only, like, their music was the only thing I was listening to. I tend to pick an album and stick with it whenever I'm writing something and just let the words kind of spark new inspirations. Um, oh, god, there's like a million different things, you know, because we're always pulling from a million different things to tell our stories, but those are the two really big ones that stick in my mind. Oh, and THE LAST FIVE YEARS, of course! Which is where I got the idea for the format. THE LAST FIVE YEARS is a musical, which tells the story of this couple's relationship. And one character, the man, starts at the beginning and tells it all the way to the end, and the woman starts at the end and tells it all the way to the beginning. And they meet in the middle for this one beautiful duet, and then they pass each other by, ships in the night. It's just so good. It's so good.

Christian Kelley-Madera
So you saw that and you're like, awesome, needs aliens.

Jordan Cobb

Oh yep, absolutely. That's, that's exactly what I was thinking. Well, the first time I saw the last five years, I was like, What? 12 years old. But I'm always thinking things need more aliens. So it's, it's very probable that was exactly my response. Like, this is cool. Could use...could use some more aliens.

Christian Kelley-Madera

Sure, sure. Okay, so you've brought an episode to share with us today. Can you give people just a little introduction to this episode in particular to kind of orient them if this is the first bit of JANUS DESCENDING that they're hearing?

Jordan Cobb

Yes, absolutely. Um, so unfortunately, this is kind of a spoiler heavy episode, but it was probably my favorite one that I wrote. So that's the one I'm going to share. This is Episode 10. This takes place just after the crossover. So we have moved from Chel telling the story and she's in the beginning half, to she is now in the end half of the story. And Peter has been telling the end half of the story he has now moved to the beginning. This particular episode, Episode 10, takes place deep down underneath the surface of the planet where Chel has found herself trapped, and she is alone and trying to escape and get back to the ship. And she's desperately trying to contact Peter and he isn't picking up and he isn't picking up. She doesn't know where she is and she doesn't know where he is. And I feel like if I say any more than that, it will be way too spoilery. But I also feel like I should say more, because I don't know how much people will actually understand about the episode otherwise, but I think generally if you just understand that she is alone and the creatures that have inhabited this planet are chasing her through these tunnels, then you'll have a pretty good sense of what's going on.

Christian Kelley-Madera

Fantastic. Okay, so, without further ado, here is Episode 10 of JANUS DESCENDING, written by Jordan Cobb and performed by Jordan Cobb and Anthony Olivieri. Enjoy.

[The episode plays here. Original transcript of the episode can be found at: https://a0a58400-8a5b-4300-94a9-88f1bc728bd4.filesusr.com/ugd/f0a977_1fc5fc7e92a04888a4f9a2ef89c9235d.pdf]

Christian Kelley-Madera

All right, and thank you for sharing that with us, Jordan. That was again, that was Episode 10 of Jordan's show JANUS DESCENDING. You mentioned before we listened to it that you wanted to show it off because you were especially proud of

the writing. Is there an element of the writing in particular that you you feel proud of? Here's your permission to brag if you'd like.

Jordan Cobb

Oh, God, um, the moment where Chel is - she's just run out of oxygen. And she takes off her helmet and she just goes through

this moment where she's so close to giving up but then decides that she's got to continue on got to keep pushing through, was probably my favorite moment that I wrote in the entire series. That whole "I will not burn out" because that is a lot of times where I find myself. For better or for worse, I have a tendency to push myself very hard. And I also have a tendency to find myself sitting at the bottom of the barrel and not really knowing what to do and not wanting to go any further and just desperately wanting to like, lay down and die. Well, not DIE die. But yeah, sorry, that got darker than I wanted.

But just to you know, lay down and give up and just stop and not have to deal with any of the things that I have either piled onto my own plate or other people have piled there, that the world just gets really desperately overwhelming sometimes. But that there is something that I can always find in myself some small spark of energy of just that love and desperation and wanting to live and explore and see everything that there is to see and do all the things there are to do that keeps pushing me forward. And so it was a really rare moment where I got to almost perfectly articulate something that I experience fairly frequently, almost every day. And getting to move forward, and then kind of rise to the occasion and kind of succeed, no matter how much it necessarily costs. It's that moment of taking that first breath of fresh air, again, after having stumbled around in the darkness for so long. And that was a really wonderful, precious moment for me to get to kind of share with people. Because I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels that way. And I like being able to articulate those kinds of moments for other people if they don't necessarily have the words to do it themselves.

Christian Kelley-Madera

Right. Well, thank you for that, Jordan, and we hope you're taking good care of yourself. But also, we're very glad that you're out in the world living and putting out awesome work like JANUS DESCENDING. If people if people heard this and they liked it and they want to hear more, where can they go? And what can they do to kind of support your work generally?

Jordan Cobb

Oh, absolutely. Um, so pretty much all of our shows at No Such Thing productions are on Apple and Spotify and luminary. You can find everything in one place at nosuchthingradio.com. That will give you links to where you can listen to all of our work and find blurbs for our upcoming stuff. You can also find links to our Patreon there which I think it's just, what is it? No, I'm gonna get this wrong because I'm not staring directly at it, but I'm pretty sure it's patreon.com/nosuchthingproductions. But yeah, that's got links to pretty much everything you need on our website. Yeah.

Christian Kelley-Madera
Great.

Thank you. And before I let you go, is there an audio drama not made by you that you love right now that you'd like to mention?

Jordan Cobb

Oh, absolutely. Um, one of my all time favorite audio dramas of just of just all time is STARCALLED by Gabriel Alvarez. It is - I'm always so bad at describing this - but it's such a cool story. It's one of the best produced audio dramas I have ever heard. It is about so it takes place in the far far future with this fleet of ships orbiting this dusty, barren planet. And there is a war going on between these two non human factions, I guess species rather. And there's this whole glorious mystery that's getting unraveled. There's political intrigue. It's just so so good, there are space battles. The music is incredible. Gabe Alvarez is just one of the most talented creators out there right now. And I'm always I get so geeked out whenever I see a new episode available, I just like start freaking out and I start texting all my friends. I'm like, there's a new STARCALLED everybody go listen. Yeah, it's so good.

Christian Kelley-Madera
Well, we'll definitely have to check that out. Jordan Cobb, thank you so much. It was such a pleasure to talk to you today.

Jordan Cobb
Thank you so much for having me.

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