

The West Wing Weekly
3.14: Hartsfield's Landing

[Intro Music]

HRISHI: You're Listening to The West Wing Weekly. I'm Hrishikesh Hirway.

JOSH: And I'm Joshua Malina.

HRISHI: Today we are talking about the season three, episode 14. It's called *Hartsfield's Landing*.

JOSH: It was written by Aaron Sorkin. It was directed by Vincent Misiano and it first aired on the 27th of February in the year 2002.

HRISHI: Here's a little synopsis. In this episode, it's the night before the New Hampshire primary. The president returns from India with some chess sets. And he plays a game against Sam and one chess game against Toby while playing a real world chess game with China over war games that China is conducting in response to Taiwanese elections. Josh and Donna are trying to convince a family in Hartsfield's Landing to vote for the president and C.J. and Charlie get into a prank war.

JOSH: That sounds like the episode I watched.

HRISHI: Hartsfield's Landing is the name of the place where the first New Hampshire primary takes place and it's named well; it's kind of a fictional version of two real places in New Hampshire: Dixville Notch and Hart's Location.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

DONNA: It's 42 votes.

JOSH: That are cast at 12:01 and counted at 12:07. The rest of New Hampshire doesn't come in until 9:00 PM. That's 21 hours of the news having nothing to report but the winner at Hartsfield's Landing. I want it to be us.

[end Excerpt]

HRISHI: What did you think of the episode?

JOSH: I liked it. I realize I watch in two different ways -- or there are two different modes I can be in. One in which I go out of my way to be critical because I know I'm going to be discussing the show with you later for the podcast and my job as provocateur and need to stir things up. I need to upset some die-hard fans, hopefully starting with you. And then the other is to turn off my more critical faculties and just enjoy the show as somebody who loves the show. And I realize pendulum-like, I swing between these two poles and I even did a rewatch. At first I watched it and I wasn't loving it. I mean I always love the show on some level. The writing is great. The acting is great blah blah. But I was kind of in my own head about the "we get it with the chess".

JOSH and HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: I just did that thing where it took me out of it the whole time. And then I did a rewatch where I said to myself "I'm now going to watch the West Wing, fan that I am, that I don't have to discuss it later with Hrish" and I enjoyed it far more.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: I really did. I was able to shut it down on the second watching it. You would think I would do the reverse order. Watch for fun and then watch to carve and criticize.

HRISHI: The two Malinas.

JOSH: There you go.

HRISHI: This episode is one that I include in my crash course -- my West Wing crash course. Like say I'm trying to get someone to watch the show and catch them up to where I'm at or something just like speed them through a marathon to have them fall in love with the show. This is one of the episodes is a must watch for me

JOSH: Interesting. See, I would not have guessed that. Why is this part of the must watch canon?

HRISHI: I think it's just an exquisite episode

JOSH: Exquisite!

HRISHI: Yeah. It maybe not huge or it's not exciting as I've said many time before: The big exciting ones aren't necessarily my favorite ones. The quieter ones often are and this one I think is yeah it's really I feel like it's finally made and jumping way ahead, the exchange between the president and Sam when he tells him

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: You're gonna run for President one day. Don't be scared. You can do it. I believe in you.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: This ranks up there for me with the president giving Charlie the knife in the Thanksgiving episode. This is like HE GAVE HIM THE SPEECH.

JOSH: Yeah. Look. I'm just a little ... I have more cynical turn of mind. I just kept thinking he's got two games going. He pops into Sam and he says all that great stuff and I wanted him to pop back to Toby and say "you're never going to run for president".

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: You're Jewish. You're older. And you don't look like Rob Lowe. Checkmate.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Yeah no. I know that's one of those scenes. I got swept up in it. You know, do we want to start there or do we want to build to it. Should we just go there because we're there.

HRISHI: Uh. Sure. Yeah, we can jump right into it.

JOSH: Look, we have Bartlet in sort-of teacher/mentor mode for a lot of this episode. And particularly with Sam. And then Sam literally even takes his final exam as he tries to guess what's on that sheet of paper that Leo has handed to him. And I like all that. I like it very much. And you actually had a very good idea. Clearly this scene is a very important scene to the West Wing fandom as people find in it the seeds of where this show might have gone under Aaron.

HRISHI: Or may go still.

JOSH: Or might go still. So you suggested that I pose to Aaron some questions about that scene. Did he know how loaded a moment it was going to be?

HRISHI: This is the episode to which so many have pinned their hopes for a sequel. The president has this exchange with Sam and even when the West Wing was on the air, to me that line felt like a huge revelation and I was wondering if Aaron meant it to be so huge. Did he know how much impact that exchange would have? And how does he feel about those lines now as a possible trail of breadcrumbs that could lead to a new chapter of the series?

JOSH: I put that through the Malina translator and essentially posed those questions to him.

HRISHI: And what did he say?

JOSH: He said "I'm afraid I have to hold my cards close when it comes to going to Sergeant-Pepper levels with that line from Bartlet to Sam except to say that Rob was very curious about it himself." How do you like that for a non-answer?

HRISHI: What was that!? What does that mean even?

JOSH: Well here, I think the message boards will be alright with conjecture. My own take on it is that he sounds like he still has some end game to play.

HRISHI: Maybe.

JOSH: Right.

HRISHI: Or is he just giving us what we want? Which is like the open-ended answer; you know he's not shutting us down.

JOSH: It's a very Wonka-like response.

HRISHI: Exactly.

JOSH: Could mean nothing.

HRISHI: He is like Willy Wonka

JOSH: Yeah. Could mean nothing.

HRISHI: And I'm like Charlie and you're like Charlie's grandfather.

JOSH: Yes, I will be dead.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Yeah. It's a very, uh wow, it's a maddening response.

HRISHI: Yeah. Bradley Whitford is Veruca Salt. Sorry, I'm still going with this.

JOSH: He's certainly salty.

HRISHI: When Sam says ...

[West Wing Episode 3.14 excerpt]

SAM: *I'd like to try it without looking at the note.*

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: The final exam is you say I thought it was like a very unfunny version of Carnac the Magnificent.

JOSH: [Laughing] A battleship. A patriot missile. And, yeah, that's very funny. Did you feel the ultimate stratagem was a little bit of a let down or was it fiendishly clever.

HRISHI: It felt a little bit like *Deus Ex Machina* in that the Aegis destroyers, yeah you know a little bit of a let down because we don't have all the information ourselves. We aren't looking at the whole board in a way in which we can see "Oh, these are the things that are happening. This is what everything means." We don't know that four of those destroyers would eat up half of Taiwan's defense budget. I feel this way often with mystery shows where what I want most is to be able have the chance to solve the mystery myself. So, it's like "give me the clues and then let me see if I come to the correct conclusion on my own." But in so many mystery shows and detective shows you just have to sit there and watch as the main characters come to the revelations and the solution is revealed -- only *you* know at the last minute so you don't have a chance to solve it yourself.

JOSH: Yes. I think that's what is bothering me. Ultimately, is that you get the solution just moments after the whole framework has been filled in and that could have been spread out along the ways so we could have been thinking like "Hmm, can I figure out how world leaders might have tricked this one out?"

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: Right so it's all a little, all a little ... With that being said, I do like these moments and I do like little peek into the kind of thinking that has to go on at that level. I'm reading a book called [A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East](#). I was just reading as I was watching this episode. I'll probably get this all wrong but a passage about the Ottomans creating a secret treaty. Allying themselves with Germany and using a promise of two battleships that were being built in British shipyards that Churchill ended up requisitioning. These battleships that Turkey had paid for that were being built in Britain. And, knowing that on the Ottoman side they were sort of ... dangling to Germany that maybe they would use these two ships on Germany's behalf if Germany would pledge to protect them. So it was a little bit like the situation in this episode where the Turks are dangling the promise of something they knew they weren't going to deliver in order to get Germany to commit on paper to an alliance and it just, it was very interesting to be reading that as I was watching this.

HRISHI: This episode makes me think of the word “brinkmanship” because this is basically what he is doing. He’s playing a game of chicken with China and it sounds sort of like what’s happening in the book that you’re talking about, too. And I was thinking about that word and I thought I would look up what the etymology of it is because it’s a great word. It turns out that “brinkmanship” was coined by Adlai Stephenson, former presidential candidate, when he was criticizing the policies of John Foster Dulles who was Eisenhower’s Secretary of State. Dulles the namesake of Washington-Dulles airport. He said the Dulles and the Eisenhower administration engaged in brinkmanship so that was in the 50’s. So, it’s pretty cool.

JOSH: Brinkmanship was very high stakes in the 50’s. It was of an atomic nature.

HRISHI: Right. Exactly. Seems like the first use of it was a quote by Stephenson saying, criticizing Dulles, saying he’s boasting of his brinkmanship, the art of bringing us to the edge of nuclear abyss.

JOSH: There you go. And why do I feel like I want to put an “s” in there. Is that just the plural, “brinksmanship” rather than “brinkmanships”?

HRISHI: People definitely say “brinksmanship”, too. I think maybe because of sportsmanship. I don’t know. Salesmanship.

JOSHI: Sure.

HRISHI: I don’t know.

JOSHI: I feel like we need to bring in the illusionist again.

HRISHI: Exactly. I tried to get her actually.

JOSH: I just feel like we should have a red phone that we can pick up and Helen would be on the other end, no matter what, whenever we need her. I wonder if she could do that with a subscription model if you paid enough money.

HRISHI: Well I’ve got her on Slack. I was talking to her about this episode.

JOSH: You talk to other people.

HRISHI: I mean over Slack. It’s not real.

JOSH: I still don’t really understand what Slack is although I think I’ve been invited to over 180 Slack meetings.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: I think I might not be the best PRX company man.

HRISHI: Maybe not.

JOSH: You know I hear the word “slack” and I’m like “ehh f*** it.”

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: It’s not a name that inspires you to show up on time and do what you been asked. Sign me up for alert. That’s a system I would show up for. Oh, I did a funny thing by the way. Tangent.

HRISHI: A brinkmanship tangent.

JOSH: No a completely really-nothing-to-do-with-anything-we’re-talking-about tangent but I wanted to mention it to you on-mic. I was trying to put together a poker game and my dear friend, David Pressman, whom I think have made into a friend of the podcast.

HRISHI: Yeah, I admire him for his pressmanship.

JOSH: Yes. Very nice. I think it’s Pressmansship. I wanted to invite him and inadvertently sent an email to Ambassador David Pressman.

HRISHI: Did you really?

JOSH: I did.

HRISHI::That is amazing. Did he respond?

JOSH: Yes. He said, I think this was intended for your other friend David Pressman of whom I’ve become aware thanks to your podcast. I made clear to him that he was welcome at the poker game nonetheless and all future poker games but that I suspect his living in New York, he will not show. That was really embarrassing.

HRISHI: Wow. That’s great though. I mean he handled it with diplomacy as one would expect of a former diplomat.

JOSH: Indeed. You don’t play poker do you?

HRISHI: No, I don’t.

JOSH: Wanna come?

HRISHI: Yeah. I've played once for money and won 30 bucks and then had to go and I think that's kind of not very cool because you're supposed to give everybody a chance to win their money back. Right?

JOSH: I don't agree with that. My feeling is that Kenny Rogers and others be damned-- you go when you wanna go. You don't have to sense it. You don't have to know when to go. You go when you feel like leaving and if you sit down and win everybody's money in one hand and then leave ... this is a minority opinion ...

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: My feeling is that poker all about money management. You're not going to get invited back to that game if you take everyone's money in the first hand and leave, but I do think that's your prerogative. If you're literally retiring from poker up 30 dollars, that puts you ahead of, I would think, the vast majority of casual poker players.

HRISHI: I'm one-for-one. Then, I'd like to keep my record spotless.

JOSH: You're in the black.

HRISHI: Ok. Let's go back for a little bit and start from the beginning of the episode.

JOSH: Let's.

HRISHI: The President is returning from Air Force One and I just think "my god just like they're just showing off." They've got Air Force One there. You know, like, he comes off of the plane and does a little chat about the history of chess as C.J. says and then Leo says "OK, you need to get him in the car bring him back". This is just showing off the fact they've got the production values. Because they really don't need to do this scene on the tarmac, on location, with the plane in the background necessarily.

JOSH: I wrote the same thing down. Also, what really strikes me is just the change in technology because we're looking at a 747 that they have on set and they're filming around it. And, nowadays, in *Scandal*: One, we never visit D.C. (and we see some exteriors in this episode of actual D.C.) nor do we need aircraft. Tony Goldman is constantly stepping out of Marine One. But I've seen them film him. We go to Griffith Park, they set up a wooden platform. Tony stands on a wooden platform and waves in front of a green screen and later you watch it and it sure looks like Marine One is there.

HRISHI: Wow.

JOSH: Yeah it's unbelievable. It's staggering. And they were still doing these things in a practical fashion back in 2002.

HRISHI: Yeah. Well it looks amazing.

JOSH: It does look great.

HRISHI: Yeah. We just get the one scene. And then Leo tells the president he needs to come back because of China. The president brings the chess sets back to the White House and he distributes them as gifts. He says that his set was once used by Jawaharlal Nehru. But that's at least that's who I think he means because he says.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: Jawaharlal Nehru.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Nehru was the first prime minister of India and maybe the president should have just stuck to calling him Nehru but in keeping with the president's sort of detail-oriented trivia he goes for the full name.

JOSH: Yeah. And it devolves into like Tuvan throat singing or whatever that's called where it sounds like he stops in the middle of the name to take a couple pills

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Also, interestingly the current prime minister fictional in this episode is a woman.

HRISHI: That's right. It's supposed to maybe be Indira Gandhi because they talk about the prime minister as a she and then also they talk about her grandfather.

JOSH: Yeah. But when was she killed?

HRISHI: Before that.

JOSH: Early 80's.

HRISHI: Yeah. Well before that.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: It's hand-carved and belonged to the prime minister's grandfather who used it to play with Lord Mounbatten.

[End Excerpt]

HRISHI: Nehru is actually Indira Gandhi's father. But then later. Ok. We've figured it out here.

JOSH: Yes, please help me.

HRISHI: In the fictional world of The West Wing the current prime minister is Indira Gandhi's daughter because they say that her grandfather was Nehru pretty much. They don't put it back-to-back like that.

JOSH: OK. So, it's her daughter Winifred Gandhi.

HRISHI: Right. Exactly.

JOSH: Not mentioned by name but implied.

HRISHI: And we're in safe, fictional West Wing territory because Indira Gandhi only had sons.

JOSH: There you go.

HRISHI: Well, yeah, it's always interesting where the fictional world leaders show up and where the real ones do. Because we do get King Gustav name-checked. There's no problem having a non-fictional king of Sweden.

JOSH: That's right.

[West Wing Episode 3.14 excerpt]

TOBY: And what made Abbey's story remarkable was that the party you were at was in Stockholm and the man you were talking to was King Gustav who two hours earlier had given you the Nobel Prize in economics.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I wonder why that is in this instance. So it's interesting that, like, King Gustav gets to be the real King Gustav but not the real, you know.

JOSH: I guess in an anecdote that's supposed to impress us with how down to earth he is despite having met someone you gotta go with somebody real. Not that King Gustav necessarily knocked my socks off but ...

HRISHI: I mean he is the guy who gives out the Nobel Prizes so it needed that.

JOSH: That little umph.

HRISHI: Yeah. And he has been king for a very long time so there's some sense that that's not really like a current event that he's the king of just like I mean Marbury again he doesn't come in and say I work for his majesty the King of England, it's still got the queen over there. So when they were actually shooting this who was prime minister of India?

JOSH: Vajpayee. Unless maybe is there a greater argument to be made that third world and middle eastern sections of the ...

HRISHI: Or developing nations ...

JOSH: Yeah. Developing nations were more likely to be treated with the fiction bath for some reason.

HRISHI: I mean that was sort of a point that I was trying to make when we were talking about this earlier when we were talking about Equatorial Kundu and Qumar in "The Women of Qumar" here that certain states and their heads get to be fictionalized.

JOSH: I think they're whole bodies.

HRISHI: Yeah. But then again, the U.S. has got a fictional head of state too so I don't know if I have a gripe here

JOSH: Somebody write a thesis and explain to us what we're talking about. There seems like there's something there, though.

HRISHI: Yeah. I feel like it's a little more clear-cut in the fictionalization of actual nations then it is necessarily with the seemingly arbitrary fictionalization of heads of state.

JOSH: I wonder whether it's a presumption of ignorance on the viewers' behalf in terms of the world outside of the western world, so they feel like they can fictionalize there more freely or I'm not sure what the motivation exactly is.

HRISHI: Yeah, definitely I think there is and I think that, there's some safety in it of course in fictionalizing as much as possible you know you don't want to ruffle feathers or cause controversy by saying something, I guess, potentially damaging. The reason why you fictionalize Qumar is if you don't want to actually go out on a limb and call a particular nation evil or responsible for the abuse of women.

JOSH: Yeah. I get where it's more sensitive. But why can't you say Prime Minister Vajpayee gave me some beautiful chess sets that I'm going to hand out as gifts.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: Why bother here? I don't know.

HRISHI: Maybe he's not famous enough. That might be part of it too Maybe at that time when people thought of India they still thought of Indira Gandhi first and foremost. Maybe it's kinda nice too that they get to sneak in a female head of state.

JOSH: Sure, pad the numbers in our fictional world. Why not.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: We get a little C.J. exposition. I thought of you.

[West Wing Episode 3.14 excerpt]

C.J.: Hartsfield's Landing is a town in New Hampshire population 63. While the rest of New Hampshire goes to the polls at 8 AM tomorrow, all of the 42 registered voters of Hartsfield vote at one minute past midnight -- or a little over two hours from now. Hartsfield has accurately predicted the winner in every presidential election since William Howard Taft, who by the way... (scene fades out)

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yeah. For all the new people who have been assigned to the White House and probably should know this, I'm going to explain to you about Hartsfield Landing.

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: Although interestingly. There is a little fictionalizing there too because according to C.J., the tiny electorate of Hartsfield Landing is remarkably accurate and I think it turns out that the voters of Dixfield Notch, not so much. I found a Nate Silver article that we can link to about is Dixfield Notch predictive and to sum up in a word, "no". There is no historical relationship between the performances of the two major party candidates in Dixfield Notch in their performance in the rest of New Hampshire, never mind the rest of the country. So ...

HRISHI: Alright.

JOSH: Yeah.

HRISHI: C.J. Exposition. Just to go back to your use of the term for any who missed it the first time around. "C.J. Exposition" comes from a movie in which a radio DJ was telling everyone, you know, like the way news announcers always do, catching everybody up with what's going on and we nicknamed that radio announcer "D.J. Exposition". So, this is C.J. Exposition and I feel like every time we say "C.J. Exposition" we need do it with an FM-radio-morning-show kind of sound effect to the voice so it's like (MORNING RADIO STYLE MUSIC/AUDIO EFFECTS) "C.J. Exposition."

JOSH: But then we have to come with a term for what you just did which is just explain a term about someone who explains something else. I mean you just provided exposition about C.J. Exposition. I don't know. It's getting very Esher-like.

HRISHI: Exactly.

JOSH: This also reminds me. I think you are resistant to it so I'm just going to throw it out on-mic to the listeners. I want to create some sort of t-shirt or piece of merch that memorializes some of the fabulous phrases and words that are specific to this podcast.

HRISHI: Did they respond?

JOSH: Uh no. I'm still waiting to hear. But, you can respond why you don't like that idea? Too self congratulatory?

HRISHI: Yes.

JOSH: Well, let's do it anyway. That's what merchandise is: "Look how great we are." You feel like part of the club. Or. if you give us money you can feel like part of the club.

HRISHI: I feel like the spirit of it is: "Look how great *The West Wing* is, we love it and you love it too."

JOSH: EMMM, no. I think that would be illegal. That would be selling *West Wing* merchandise.

HRISHI: Copyright.

JOSH: I think we are really only legally allowed to sell *The West Wing Weekly* merchandise.

HRISHI: No. What I mean is. It's not merch about *The West Wing*, it's merch about love of *The West Wing*.

JOSH: Hmm. I think there's room, and back me up listenership, for merchandise that celebrates love of the podcast.

HRISHI: I'm not sold and neither is that merch.

JOSH: Alright.

HRISHI: I'm not yet convinced but I'm open to being convinced. By the way, I love the look that Toby gives the president when he learns that the chess set is a gift for him. Just the baleful suspicion in his eyes, he like kind of regards the president with a few seconds of silence -- just looking at him.

JOSH: Yeah, it's a bit of a contrast from Sam who was just like "oh a gift".

HRISHI: Yeah.

JOSH: You gave me the chess set.

HRISHI: He gave him the chess set. Exactly.

JOSH: I asked you about poker. Do you play chess?

HRISHI: Not well.

JOSH: Nor do I.

HRISHI: I used to love playing chess. I used to play with my grandfather in India. He's who taught me how to play chess but I was a little kid. I was a child and I really liked it but like so many things, it's something that I kind of abandoned once i realized how much better people were at it than I and I would never be as good as people who were great.

JOSH: Em Hmm. So let's take that piece of information and look at what you *do* participate in because that's obviously what you think you are as good at as anyone else in the world.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Podcasting, musical composition, board games, snappy dressing, interior design. And anything else?

HRISHI: The only thing I'm going to comment on that list is the way I dress. When we did the live show and I wore my suit and my shoes with no-show socks and people could see my ankles we got some comments from *West Wing Weekly* listeners saying "put on some socks" and making other comments about that and these comments had no effect on me whatsoever. I felt perfectly secure in my sartorial choices especially because I've met some of you people and I see how you dress.

JOSH: Oh ho, snap. That's another merchandise idea. *The West Wing Weekly* no-show socks for the show that doesn't really want to congratulate itself.

HRISHI: Wait. Josh. Hold on. Hold on one second.

JOSH: Hold the presses. Yes?

HRISHI: I have a present for you. One second. Hold on.

JOSH: This is very exciting. I don't know whether we will keep this in but I will share with you my mounting excitement. God, I hope it's something good. Is it a knife? Is it a chess set? It seems like it's more likely going to be a pair of no-show socks. Starting to feel that my enthusiasm is now flagging and it better be something good. Oh, he's coming back.

HRISHI: And I was going to give these to you in person, wait until I could see you, but since we are on the subject I think I better present them to you now.

JOSH: Did you buy me socks?

HRISHI: I did buy you socks.

JOSH: I love socks.

HRISHI: See what they say?

JOSH: Ain't no bad joke like a dad joke. Wow.

HRISHI and JOSH: [laughter]

JOSH: Those socks were made for me.

HRISHI: And there's a picture with a guy reclining on some kind of lawn ...

JOSH: No bad joke like a dad joke. Ok, I got the rhyme now. I'm going to wear these to the live event in San Francisco

HRISHI: Oh, fantastic.

JOSH: That's an awesome gift. I will wear them proudly.

HRISHI: Excellent. Some more thoughts about the chess game.

JOSH: Yeah, well one of the reasons I asked is I also am no great chess player. Although occasionally I get interested and then I start reading books about different openings, how to play. It never seems to sink in. I always seem terrible. But I do know enough to know there is some weirdly terrible moments of chess played during this episode. There are like a couple different moments where one of the players will make a move and say “check” and the other person’s response is just to take the piece that put them in check which is kind of like, “why use your bishop to put the other person in check if they can respond by taking your bisho?” “Well, I put them in check once and then I lost a piece.” It doesn’t make any sense. So, I found that odd.

HRISHI: Um Hmm. I found that the Evans Gambit says ...

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: Ah, the Evans Gambit.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: ... and Toby says ...

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

TOBY: There’s no such thing as the Evans Gambit.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: And it is, in fact, a thing but you can’t detect the Evans Gambit in one move.

JOSH: Right.

HRISHI: The moving of the pawn ... Actually you need four moves in order for it to actually be the Evans Gambit but the thing that’s really interesting to me is that they do end up playing the Evans Gambit in the episode which made me realize that in addition to the words that they had to learn and perform they actually had to learn where the chess pieces were supposed to go.

JOSH: Which I find fascinating because there are moments of indefensible chess played and then there is, as you said, this Evans Gambit. I read somewhere else, too, that you can’t tell from the first move. Ahh, the moving of pawn maneuver. I feel like they had a chess consultant on Monday and Wednesday and they shot chess scenes on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

HRISHI: There's another moment that I like that's aside from the actual chess playing but at one point they're in the middle of a game, they're coming back to conversation, the president has stepped away from the game and is at his desk and then he comes back, you know, he and Toby are carrying on the conversation, then he walks back over and sits down to play again. When he walks over to sit down, Toby gets up and then sits down again with him. Like, he repeats the thing when the president is standing everybody stands and you only sit when the president sits. Even though they've already been in the room together, Toby's been sitting down, the president is standing you know they're having this conversation, then he walks over it's almost like it restarts the sequence or something. It's something, it's a very subtle, gentle kind of sign of respect, I think, from Toby that I thought was a really nice piece of blocking.

JOSH: As a gentleman might do when a lady returns to the table.

HRISHI: Right. Yeah. Exactly.

JOSH: Pretty chivalrous.

HRISHI: I like Toby's demeanor in general throughout most of the episode. Where he is much less aggressive than he has been in the previous conversations. He apologizes for whatever part he might have played in keeping the president up and, you know, his bouts of sleeplessness. And that plays out so well. And I think that ends up making the last exchange again where suddenly temperatures rise a little bit. It's so nice how it sets the foundation for that last scene as opposed to, like this contentious dynamic between them throughout the whole thing.

JOSH: Yes. Well one of the things I like about this episode is in addition to the obvious on-the-nose chess being played, there are other levels of chess being played. Charlie and C.J. have their own little prank game of chess. They're playing my style of chess in this game and also I think you're talking about the sort of different vibe Toby gives out in his encounters with Bartlet in this episode. And, I think in part, that is a result of a little piece of social chess that Bartlet plays with Toby. He kind of passive-aggressively pulls an apology out of him at one point early in the scene. He says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: Come on man, you were out of line. I was a jackass. Let's call a truce.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Which is a kind of non-apology apology that's really sort of tipping Toby to the fact that he needs to apologize. I wrote down that's the biggest chess move of this whole episode. Because there is a long pause and then Toby's kind-of in a position, mulling over his next move, and his response is "I certainly apologize, sir", and I thought like wow, Bartlet is playing multi-dimensional chess here.

HRISHI: That's interesting. I didn't think of it that way. I thought that really the president had kind-of moved on and he was like, "it is fine". But, Toby knowing that he was in the doghouse for a little while, is being extra-cautious and also may be a little bit suspicious so he's going above and beyond where the president says "the table is set" and saying like "no, no, no, really let me make everything ok".

JOSH: Maybe you're right. I recognized it as the Malina Gambit which is sort of a say, "Hey, look, we were both assholes and you'll notice I'm not actually apologizing but you're probably going to apologize to me now because after all we were both assholes. OK, now you say something."

HRISHI and JOSH: [laughter]

HRISHI: You're a passive-aggressive heavyweight. Alright. Let's jump to the end of this whole plot with the president and Toby and get to this other part that makes me love this episode where Toby tells him:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

TOBY: You're a good man, you don't have to act like it. You're not just folks. You're not plain-spoken. Do not, do not, do not, act like it.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: This is a sentiment that I really agree with. I don't want politicians who have these, like, finely-honed minds to have to blunt their intellect for the sake of seeming folksy. This is the *West Wing* bias in me or this is why I love *The West Wing*. One or the other. This is the thing that I really believe in: That a president should be smart. They should be someone who seems not *just* smart but like razor-sharp and I always bristle when I hear politicians in what seems like just blatant pandering -- changing the way that they speak in order to suit a particular audience. This kind of like presidential code-switching that happens when they're like, "hey let me show you how relatable I am by speaking to you. Hey, I'm in the south let me add a little twang to the way that I deliver my words or hey, I'm speaking at this factory I'm going to take my tie off and roll up my sleeves, and drop my g's". It just seems deceitful to me.

JOSH: Yeah, it is. Absolutely, it's disingenuous. Sadly, the first thing I think of is the Hillary Clinton classic

[Excerpt from Hillary Clinton campaign rally somewhere in the south]

HILLARY CLINTON: (Southern Accent) I don't feel noways tired. I come too far from where I started from.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Oh, right.

JOSH: That was rough.

HRISHI: I mean, Hillary Clinton. There are speeches that Hillary Clinton gave in the 80's when she was married to then-Arkansas-governor Bill Clinton where she has a southern accent. You know, this woman from Chicago who went to Wesley and then Yale suddenly has a southern accent.

JOSH: Right. There are ways of acknowledging, in substance, the values and thoughts and issues of the crowd you're addressing without somehow trying to imply that you are of this crowd.

HRISHI: I mean code-switching is a thing that I know a lot of people engage in and have to engage in. And everybody really, in some ways, probably comport themselves differently depending on who they're speaking to or whatever and I do it.

JOSH: Oh. I'm sure I do to. It's also a nuanced thing. It can be a sign of respect and outreach but I think what you're just talking about and objecting to is when it is completely disingenuous.

HRISHI: Yeah. When it's a put on.

JOSH: When it's a complete put on, it's a veneer that you are adopting to, on some level, trick the people that you are interacting with. Politicians do that all the time if you fear alienating people, you shouldn't be who you are as a person which is a super sharp smart guy.

HRISHI: Um hmm. I mean the president describes himself as plain-spoken and then Toby's like, "you're not plain spoken" and at that moment they were, I think, responding to George W. Bush and his relatability. He had the relatability factor. He's a guy I want to have a beer with. That whole refrain -- but it just really bothers me that it even works. Clearly, it still works because politicians still do it all the time and it makes me feel like people are falling for a trick and a cheap trick at that. And this is not something that falls on one party or another. Everybody does it and I listen to it and I'm like, "who's buying this?"

JOSH: Look, well as much as we can paint with a broad brush, I would also argue that the modern Republican party is trying to convince a certain segment of society that they represent their interests and it's a huge duping and very successful one and some of the tools being employed are these false suggestions that "hey we're just like you". I think it's happening on a very grand scale.

HRISHI: Right. Using cultural flags for political misdirection.

JOSH: Right. Just don't look at the fine print. Or at this point -- the large print.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: Just don't look at any of the print of the legislation

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: We're pushing.

HRISHI: Anyway, I love this episode so much, in part, because of just that speech -- those lines from Toby and then the following lines.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

TOBY: Then make this election about smart and not. Make it about engaged and not. Qualified and not. Make it about a heavyweight. You're a heavyweight. And you've been holding me up for too many rounds.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: It's so good.

JOSH: It is great writing. Look, to me this is one of the reasons why we see a 747 in the cold open and it's because again this is one of those things where the action (and there's major action going on) is completely off-screen and it's the beauty and the nuance of the episode is in the writing and in the dialogue and in the interpersonal reactions in these couple different games.

HRISHI: By the way, Richard Schiff was nominated for an Emmy based, in part, on this episode. Dule Hill was also nominated for an Emmy for this season based, in part, on this episode. And this was also one of the episodes they submitted for *The West Wing* "Outstanding Drama" win.

JOSH: Here's what I think when you have a show that's a giant hit: It doesn't really matter what episode you're submitting. I think most of the voters have watched all of it and so it's a body of work.

HRISHI: This season of *The West Wing*, the third season, ended up earning them 12 acting nominations at the Emmys. It's the most Emmy nominations for acting for drama ever in history.

JOSH: Wow. How about that?

HRISHI: Yeah. Richard Schiff, John Spencer who won, Bradley Whitford, Dule Hill. They were all nominated for supporting actors. Allison Janney won in her category. Mary Louise Parker was nominated. Stockard Channing won in her category. Janel Maloney was nominated and then Martin Sheen was nominated. I mean it just goes on. And then Tim Matheson was nominated, other guest actors who've yet to appear. It's crazy.

JOSH: Yeah. This show was a phenomenon. It was a huge critical and popular success at this point.

HRISHI: OK. So let's go to the Charlie-C.J. stuff. Josh, as a master pranker, how do you rank the pranks?

JOSH: I mean huge hat tip for the desk falling apart.

HRISHI: OK. Let's start small. The first one is OK. C.J. gets admonished by Charlie for losing the president's private schedule. It's supposed to be private and she's lost track of it. In response to getting admonished, she hides Charlie's, leading to maybe my favorite Ed and Larry aside so far

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

LARRY: I don't really want to know what he's going to find in his filing cabinet, do you?

ED: No.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yes. Peter Duffy played that moment beautifully. Very subtly played. They didn't make a meal out of it. Sometimes when you have just one little hit in a scene or that's your bit for the entire episode you make the mistake of hammering it home too hard and they did a beautiful job there.

HRISHI: OK. So prank one.

JOSH: I like it. Sure. Not super-creative but you're going right at a person's weakness and I respect that. I mean you know that he's super-worried about something so let's take that thing.

HRISHI: I actually think I might like this one the most.

JOSH: It's simple but it goes right to the heart of the matter.

HRISHI: Exactly, heart or the anal.

JOSH: There you go.

HRISHI: Right to the ass. I do like Charlie's response when C.J says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

C.J.: The anal-retentive side of you is not gonna help you get girls

CHARLIE: I do OK.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I do too. I like that, too.

HRISHI: It's like that. It reminds me of when Sam asks him "how smart are you, Charlie?" when he's talking about his AP classes and he says, "I got some game". OK. So, next prank the phone, right?

JOSH: While watching this it made me wonder whether I was inspired by this. I played a phone prank on Allison that we'll revisit. I think it might be in the "Angel Maintenance" episode. There's an episode that takes place on Air Force One and Allison had a ... C.J., had a phone-call scene and I did put a bunch of nasty stuff on the ear piece.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Like Vaseline.

HRISHI: Not Will Bailey, but Josh Malina.

JOSH: No, Josh Malina. Correct. Vaseline and suntan, sunscreen, and stuff like that so she got an earful of it. I actually got in trouble because it takes a while to reset.

HRISHI: So you got an earful as well.

JOSH: Indeed, I did. But I didn't realize it. I think it was an unintentional hat-tip to the "Hartsfield's Landing" episode.

HRISHI: OK. So, yeah, Charlie crazy glues her phone. Not really poetic.

JOSH: I like the physical humor of it, though, and the willingness to damage government property.

HRISHI: [laughter]

JOSH: Which is a deep commitment to the game

HRISHI: I think the next one is not really a chess move. This is because she only gets to misfile Charlie's copy. He responds by Krazy-gluing her phone and then replacing her security card with his which he knows somehow will set off the alarm. I'm not exactly sure why that is. Maybe it's because you punch in a code and then you also scan a card and if they don't match up. Something like that.

JOSH: Yes. Something's gone badly wrong for her.

HRISHI: Yeah. My favorite bit here is the way C.J., she tries to lean forward and the guards get up in her face and she says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

LEO: What the hell?

C.J.: Charlie's getting me back for...

OFFICER: Stay where you are, please.

C.J.: Oh. My. God.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Yeah, it's pretty great because they're serious and I kept thinking are they in on the joke. Oh no, they're just doing their jobs.

HRISHI: Yeah, exactly. But I was thinking about in "The Two Bartlets", I had said when C.J. was talking on the phone with her dad she says "oh my god, dad". Allison Janney's really good at saying the words "oh my god".

JOSH: She's good at saying all words, though, in fairness.

HRISHI: She is good at all words but those three in particular. I like when she delivers those.

JOSH: Yes, well I like first of all that Charlie is clearly the better prankster because you know he's got that whole Chicago-way thing going. You hit me once and I hit you back three times. You know you're just going to get wave after wave. This isn't going to be a back and forth thing, I'm just going to destroy youWwhich is the approach I like to take.

HRISHI: It is. OK.

JOSH: So yeah, I like Charlie's style.

HRISHI: And then they have a little confrontation in Leo's office which is so great.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

LEO: What the hell.

(C.J. and Charlie start talking at once).

C.J.: I want a copy of the daily schedule and Maryann the librarian over here told me I had to sign it out ...

CHARLIE: You sign out a copy and this copy doesn't leave the building, when C.J. decides she's above all that ...

More inaudible shouting.

C.J.: And he Krazy-glued my phone!!!

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: I loved watching that scene a couple times and just trying to track each of their lines. The crosstalk is fantastic. But even before that when C.J says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

CJ: You really wanna dance with me?

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: To Charlie, and then we get the desk falling apart (Sound of desk breaking).

JOSH: Yes.

HRISHI: It turns out Charlie's also like David Copperfield or something.

Right. No. He's like a master carpenter who can even include a time element as to when and how the desk will fall apart. This is where we're pushing and veering into fantasy world. But I still loved it. It made me laugh.

HRISHI: Yeah. It's a liberal prankster fantasy world

JOSH: There you go.

HRISHI: So overall what do you give it.

JOSH: I give it a strong "eight" for pranking.

HRISHI: OK. So, here's what I was wondering. Were you also pulling pranks on the set of *Sports Night*?

JOSH: Yes.

HRISHI: And could this prank war at all be inspired by you and your pranking?

JOSH: Never even crossed my mind. Now I think almost certainly. It really didn't even cross my mind. Aaron pulls inspiration from all places and yeah I absolutely did things. This is actually where I got into it a little bit with Alex Graves. I can't even remember exactly what I originally did to him. It might have been stuff with his car. I know at some point I took his prized iPod that had, like, 6000 songs on it and I changed the settings to Mandarin Chinese and it's very hard actually to get it back to English unless you know a little Mandarin Chinese. I don't know, I did this series of fairly innocuous things to him and then I was walking down to set because our dressing rooms were upstairs at Disney and Alex just popped out and, like, doused me with the fire extinguisher. His responses were always, like, physical. I would take him aside. Let me just explain to you the subtle difference between a prank and physical assault.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: So, I enjoyed going back and forth with him.

HRISHI: And why was Alex the target of your pranking?

JOSH: It's usually a sign of fondness on my part. So, I think it was probably I like to attack people that will not get me fired in response and that will take the joke well and even, to be honest, that might fight back because I do like getting a little ...

HRISHI: Retribution.

JOSH: Fight going, yeah.

HRISHI: You're opening yourself up to it.

JOSH: I remember covering ... I think Dule got a new car and I covered it in orange parking cones and I wrote "Dumb" on his windshield in whipped cream.

HRISHI: Lot of poetry in that one.

JOSH: Yeah, I thought so. I remember Clark Gregg, our very own Mike Casper, but during the *Sports Night* days? Calvin Trager?

HRISHI: Yes, exactly. Wow, look at you.

JOSH: Oh my god. What!?

HRISHI: Look at you and your recall.

JOSH: Wow. That was like an LSD flashback. Calvin Trager. I remember early on his rehearsing a scene, I think at a bar, and I hid my recently purchased-fart machine.

HRISHI: What is a fart machine?

JOSH: It's a remote-controlled machine that makes all manner of flatulence sound effects.

HRISHI: OK.

JOSH: And I just kept playing it. The best part was it was from afar. You wouldn't know that it was I. I had the thing in my pocket. Of course, everybody knew that it was I.

HRISHI: Right.

JOSH: But I remember Clark was really laughing hard to the point where it was disrupting work and at one point he was kind of crying (Hrishi laughing in background) and just going "Josh, please stop it. Please dude, just stop it."

Yeah, that's the kind of thing I did, maybe less sophisticated than the stuff Aaron came up with for this episode but ...

HRISHI: That's great. Where did you get that machine? I mean I think now if you go on Amazon you can find all manner of much more technologically sophisticated farts machine but I don't know where I got that originally.

JOSH: Yeah, there it is. When I Google fart machine. Second result, Amazon.com remote controlled-fart machine. That's amazing.

HRISHI: I recommend everyone get out there and send us video.

JOSH: On that note, let's take a quick break.

[Ad Break]

HRISHI: Ok, let's get back to the episode.

JOSH: Perhaps we should.

HRISHI: Although, I did notice that there were two things in this episode that made me think of *Game of Thrones*. Dixville Notch is pretty weird. Harts Location is pretty weird. I mean Harts Location is the name of your town.

JOSH: That's odd.

HRISHI: Hartsfield's Landing is a funny name. The only other landing I know is King's Landing from *Game of Thrones*.

JOSH: Mrs. Landingham. What, I can't just say random phrases?

HRISHI: Sure. Sure. I like when Donna says that Mackie who lives in New Hampshire doesn't like northerners which reminded me of *Game of Thrones*, the way Wildlings of the free folk call people who live in the north, you know who live in Winterfell, they call everyone south of the wall, southerners. What about the Flenders?

JOSH: The Flenders. Yes, opportunity for saying funny names and getting them wrong.

HRISHI: I thought it was nice to have this plot line up against Toby telling the president not to be plain-spoken because the reason why you do this folksy kind of thing is in order to, like, reach voters in a more personal way and the phrase in New Hampshire politics, "retail" is taken to such an extreme level here. I mean you can not get any more personal than calling a voter on the phone and trying to get them to vote for your candidate. I mean, like, it's the most extreme version of this idea and I like that they're put next to each other in this episode.

JOSH: I like that they're still taking her calls.

HRISHI: I mean, wouldn't you though if you were a family and White House staff were calling you>

JOSH: Just for sport, absolutely, yeah.

HRISHI: I don't know exactly what happens, though, with Josh and why he decides to change his mind where he says "let them go vote". He's telling Donna you have to go call them and you have to make them vote for the President and then he comes out and says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

[end excerpt]

JOSH: Let them vote.

DONNA: What does that mean?

JOSH: I came out here to tell you to let them vote.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: I had a slight objection all together to try and to wrap this up in some sort of heartfelt moment. Like it was kind of a minor comic subplot and all of a sudden we get "heartfelt's landing." I don't think it had the emotional ...

HRISHI: Wow. Wow. Wow.

JOSH: Let it go. I don't think it had the emotional (Hrishi laughing) it earned the emotional heft we were, that Aaron was allotting to it and the end of the episode.

HRISHI: So not a heartfelt landing for you.

JOSH: There you go. No.

HRISHI: You're missed though.

JOSH: But do you not agree with me. It's sort of supposed to be like "ahhh, democracy".

HRISHI: OK. Here's the piece of merch that we could make inspired by this episode of *The West Wing Weekly*. A remote fart machine, a remote-controlled fart machine that's called "Fartsmelt Landing".

JOSH: [laughter I thought you were going to say that with each push you get a fart like attempt on Bartlet's part to pronounce a foreign name.

HRISHI: [laughter] It's called "Fartsmelt Landing", it's signed, it's got a genuine signature from President Josiah Fartlet.

JOSH: Wow. This is probably a sign that we should wrap it up but, that's a real niche product.

HRISHI: Yeah, look for it on Amazon, folks. Before we go, I was going to say I think part of the reason why I also like this episode is just the general way the president carries himself throughout the whole episode. He has this understated quality in the way he's talking about everything whether it's Sam's presidential run, you know, the gravity of that statement he says just so, if he's at all plain spoken, he says it plainly here. He says "you're gonna run for president someday don't be scared. I believe in you" and that casual delivery -- you see Sam actually has tears in his eyes.

JOSH: Yes, it's sweet, he is moved.

HRISHI: But the president doesn't, he doesn't hammer it home, he just says the word.

JOSH: Right. I'm actually a little disappointed in Sam when his response is kind of this super gee-wiz like

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

SAM: I don't know how you... I don't know the word, I... don't know how you do it.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: And the president's like "well I have advisors and we discuss what would be the most important and I pick one thing. You know what, maybe you're not going to be president one day".

HRISHI: But then he also has this very understated quality to the way he tells the story about David Wheaton's murder when he tells Toby about his friend who taught him how to play chess and again and in both instances I think the dramatic effect is made larger because of how simply he delivers both lines. I thought those were great choices.

JOSH: It speaks to the validity of the criticism of Bartlett as being falsely folksy. There is an element to him as erudite and educated and knowledgeable as he is about various arcane things he also does know how to connect with people simply, on a simple human level and how to express himself without florid language or pretense.

HRISHI: Yeah, there's a difference between the president's house of useless knowledge and the version of him that reacts after Toby says his father was stupid.

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: Can we talk about...God, can we talk about, please, can we talk about my father with some respect? The man's gone, can we ... he's my father, he wasn't a Dickens character.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: This is another moment of fantastic delivery by Martin Sheen where he says, I mean if we're talking about which episode to nominate people for, I would have put this one up for Martin Sheen. I mean he's great in all of them but I do love those moments and I love this part where he ends up interrupting himself. This is a combination of great acting and great writing the way he interjects and self interrupts as he tries to get the line out. The way he stammers through that.

JOSH: Yeah, it's a great performance. I also like the writing there. You know that Aaron wrote it exactly the way it should be played. I'm sure it was written out exactly like that. It's just very very good writing. I also love that moment, I'm glad you pointed it. I forgot we were blown by it. It just speaks to the complexity of his feelings about his father and in a sort of off-hand throw away line, Toby has reduced him to an idiot and it's more complicated than that. Reality always is and it has to be noted the president feels, I've allowed you in a bit but again there are lines with me and understand if we're going to talk about this relationship at all there has to be a bottom line level of respect.

HRISHI: And that whole concept, that whole line of thinking and questioning that's going on between Toby and the president and then continuing on with Adam Arkin, with Dr. Keyworth, the president is just barely opening up to this idea. He really hasn't been through therapy on this, he's not ready to I think see his father as a mere mortal in this way and even though he's called a truce with Toby, when Toby comes back with this reductive, insulting comment, the president's age old consideration of his father comes right out, which makes sense. And even there, he's like, he's not saying hey you're totally wrong, he's just like come on let's address the man with respect.

JOSH: Right. It also is a social blunder on Toby's part. It wasn't a calculated thing. He just sort of threw it out. He's still looking down at the chessboard when the president makes a moment out of it. You can see there that Toby actually just kind of misspoke, just kind of came out without editing.

HRISHI: Yeah. I think it's also an indication of that little bit of the version of Toby that we first saw who confronted him about this. You know, Toby's like "I've been hanging back this whole time. I've been deferential but don't doubt for a second like my mind has changed at all. I still feel the way I feel about everything I said even if maybe I could have approached it differently or you know it was lacking in respect, I'm still right". But then I love how the president comes back after that and just puts Toby in-check on the chess board over and over and over again and then fires off this line:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: Don't cheat. I know exactly where the pieces on the board are. I know exactly where the pieces are on Sam's board. I know exactly where the pieces still are on David Wheaton's.

[end excerpt]

HRISHI: Cause Toby bares his teeth a little bit with that line and the president comes back blazing and I think that is in some ways what Toby's was even looking for. He wants to draw out that vicious side of Bartlet. The part that is like "look at what a giant this guy is".

JOSH: Well said. That's the multi-layer chess going on. The game, within the game, within the game ...

HRISHI: Yeah. Toby even, you know, he surrenders his king. He tries to forfeit. I think that is his end game. His end game is not to win the chess match, it is to bring out the best version of the president, the one who is the master strategist and tactician and player.

JOSH: And that's a great little exchange there too. The fact that the president's response then is "I'm not going to let you resign, I'm going to beat you". I think the killer instinct is what Toby's trying to pull out of him.

HRISHI: Yeah. And then in his quiet way he ends his game with Sam by dropping him into checkmate, too and then walking out and you know, "yeah he's the master". He's just really having his way with both Sam and Toby in all regards. You know when hell tells Sam to pick a hand so they can decide whose gonna go first and he hits, he taps his hand and he says:

[West Wing Episode 3.15 excerpt]

BARTLET: You're white, but don't ever touch me.

[end excerpt]

JOSH: That's funny. Thanks for listening to this episode of *The West Wing Weekly*. Join us again next week, won't you? This episode, as all other episodes, was made with the help of Zach McNees and Margaret Miller and Izzy Malina. *The West Wing Weekly* is a proud member of Radiotopia, a finely-curated selection of the finest podcasts available from PRX. You can find out about the other shows at *Radiotopia.fm*.

HRISHI: You can leave a comment for other *West Wing Weekly* listeners about this episode on our website *TheWestWingWeekly.com*. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. And, while we ready a prototype of "Fartsmelt Landing", you can still get some actual merch. You can get a pin that shows you're part of Bartlet's Army. It says "What's Next?". It's on *The West Wing Weekly* website you can go to *TheWestWingWeekly.com/pin* and send us a picture when you get it.

JOSH: We have seen wonderful evidence of our shirts and pins all over the world. Want to thank Wimbledon Boy, that was very exciting.

HRISHI: Yes Major points if you can wear some *West Wing* merch on T.V. Send us a screenshot, that'd be great.

JOSH OK.

HRISHI: OK.

JOSH: What's next?

[Outro Music]