

INTERMISSION XXXIII - COMMENTARY: THE FELIX CHRONICLES (WITH BEN ROWE!)

Transcript by Bloom and Theo

Transcript for The Felix Chronicles by Jenah, Karen (Count Swagula), Synthium, Theo, and Tony

[BEGIN Intermission XXXIII.]

[Waves wash against the shore in the background.]

INTRO: No, no, take that back. That's not a real yacht, that's a half yacht! That's not even good enough for Riga, and she's a dog! Look, I'll be in my trailer. Come back, and don't talk to me until you've got a full yacht. You're ruining my vacation.

Oh, uh, sorry about that. Hey, guys, I didn't see you there. Season 17 of *WOE.BEGONE* returns next week. In the meantime, I wanted to share a director's commentary that I did for the Patreon. I sat down with Ben Rowe, voice of Felix and creator of *The Felix Chronicles*—so he's the director in "director's commentary" and not me—and we listened to every episode of *The Felix Chronicles*. I talked to Ben about how he decided to start the show, what his influences and inspirations were, and how he conceptualizes the show within the greater *WOE.BEGONE* universe. It was a great conversation, and I gained a new appreciation for *The Felix Chronicles*, so I wanted to share it with you here.

And if you want even more stuff like this, you can support me on Patreon at patreon.com/woe_begone, where you get all the stuff that I always talk about. There's tons of extra material on the Patreon. Just recently, there were the two Tw1nkStar songs written by Athan for Episode 195; the March Q&A; Stinky's wanted poster from Episode 196; two behind-the-scenes videos for Episode 192, the Season 16 finale; a three-minute juggling video I made to promote Sunday's juggling stream; all of the iteration interlude songs in one place; all of the jukebox songs from the Sidewinder and the Outpost in one place; the *juggling* EP that I wrote to juggle to last Sunday; and so much more. That's patreon.com/woe_begone. Check that out if you're looking for bonus content, and enjoy this bonus content: the director's commentary of *The Felix Chronicles*.

[Distant.] No, bring that here. The hot tub goes in the trailer. There should also be a hot tub on the yacht, but it should be a bigger hot tub. This isn't difficult! Why are you making this difficult? Ah—! Has someone gotten Riga her caviar yet? She needs caviar.

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: Hello and welcome to the director's commentary for Intermission Twenty— (**SPEAK & SPELL:** –Four) of *WOE.BEGONE*, "The Felix Chronicles (Full Series)," and I have something very special for you for this commentary today. I sat down with Ben Rowe himself, the voice of Felix and the creator, writer, and star of *The Felix Chronicles*. And we listened to the show

together and talked about it, and I asked him questions, and I had a great time, and I learned a lot, and I think that you guys are going to as well. So, without further ado...

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: Okay, so, uh, I guess the first thing that I would want to ask is: what inspired you to do *The Felix Chronicles*? How did you end up making it and sending it to me?

BEN: Uh— So, um, I... was a long-term fan of, uh, of *WOE.BEGONE*, as you know. I think I first appeared in the, uh, the kind of list of patrons back in Episode 26 or something. Yeah, so it was— it was Episode 26 or 27. Incidentally, it was the same episode that David Ault first became, um, a patron as well, which is quite funny. And... we got to Episode— what was it, Episode 72 or so, where you introduced another voice? 73, I knew I'd be close. And, um, at first my reaction as a sort of 70-odd-episode fan was "oh, this is a big change, and I'm not sure I like it." And I remember posting on the, uh, the Discord. Um. "This is a great experiment but, you know, I hope we get some more just-Dylan episodes soon." And then we got David as Ty and various other people, and, uh, I-I became completely on-board with the idea of a full cast.

And you were kind enough to message me because you thought that, um... Felix would also be sort of English, to ask me if I wanted to record— I think at that stage it was a single line for Felix to support Ty as a sort of fun thing for me to do. And, um... I was on holiday at the time and wasn't checking Discord and missed it completely and became very, very upset thinking that I'd missed my chance to be on a-a show that I really liked. And, um... got a bit drunk in Colorado and wrote something and recorded something and thought, "you know what? I'm feeling sort of tipsy and confident enough to just send this to Dylan. And... he may block me, uh, both from DM-ing him and from the Discord, uh, or it might just make him smile." And... the next thing I know, you said that you were gonna put it, um, on the back end of an episode as a fun thing.

Uh, when I wrote it, it was just to flesh out what I was thinking about Felix and the sort of things that he could get up to, um, behind the scenes, and— and what I wanted to end the first episode with, which— which we'll hear, is with "and—" uh— "and this is *WOE.BEGONE*," because I'd— I'd— I'd always loved that sort of entry to—uh, and occasionally exit—to the episodes. So, um... You know, I decided to hold back throughout the whole o-of the writing that it was Felix talking, and it was just some random person and it ended up, I think, with the line, um... "My name is Felix, and this is *WOE.BEGONE*."

Um, I wanted a bit of a mystery, because I'd— I'd— I'd sort of enjoyed... uh, the idea that Felix would be involved in something, and wanted to sort of explore relationships outside of, you know, his job and— and all that sort of stuff. I had some ideas of what that would be, uh. When I wrote it originally, I had two or three ideas of who the— the triplets could be. Um. And I sent it to you, and you seemed to like it enough, and then after you posted it, you said it was canon. So, I was like "yeah, this canon now, we can crack on." And, uh, and this can be a real thing.

DYLAN: At one point, you said something about if you need someone to play, like, an English barrister or something to that effect th– that you– you volunteer. So I didn't just... I didn't just, like, cold-call the first British person I could think of... *[Ben chuckles.]* uh, when I was looking for Felix. Was the first episode the first time Felix had a spoken role on the show?

BEN: Uh– Yes, it was. You– You had intended to write him into an earlier episode, around about Episode 88. But because I hadn't replied, um—either you didn't find someone else, or no one else replied to your messages, or you were kind enough to wait for me. And so you just kind of gave Felix reported speech in that episode. Uh, and then when I turned up, I think in Episode 94, **[DYLAN: Right.]** um, he... was fully voiced for the first time and then started his tradition of appearing in the finales of series.

DYLAN: And so, I guess, uh, the first episode is short, so I guess we can just listen to it. Like, the whole way through, it's only like three minutes, **[BEN: Yup.]** right? Uh, and then we'll– we'll make some comments on it, how does that sound?

BEN: Super.

[Short chime.]

FELIX *[narrating]:* This morning, my mother called me before work. This was no great surprise, as she calls me every morning before work. She's really quite clingy. She never got over the fact that I left our little town in the southeast of England as soon as I could, and went off to university as far away as possible. I wanted a bigger life. I couldn't bear to hang around any longer. The only exciting thing that ever happened in my town is the very public rumor that an exceedingly minor member of the royal family once disgraced himself in the local pizza restaurant.

But there's a downside for moving away from home. It means that your mother wants to speak to you all the time. And after university, I moved really far away. To the other side of the continent. So she wants to speak to me all of all of the time. And so she calls me every morning before I start work, which is just super.

This morning, I had nothing to tell her, absolutely nothing. So she started getting all worked up about a new story that's been taking the U.K. by storm... Turns out that about a month ago, a body washed up on the coast of Wales on some rocks just outside of a town called Holyhead. A teenager, apparently; the police tried to identify him. But he wasn't on any of the records. No fingerprints, no D.N.A., no dental records. Just a run-of-the-mill corpse. My mother muttered something about the tidal floods from Ireland washing it across the sea, but... I lost the will to live. A couple of weeks later, some fishermen found another body in exactly the same place. Slightly older man, maybe in his 20s or 30s. But this is when my mother got really excited. Because the police did all the same tests, and... this time, there was a match. A D.N.A. match with the teenager who'd washed up before. One-in-a-billion, apparently... And now. Yes. That's right, a few days ago, they found another washed-up old corpse. This time, an elderly man. Again, with identical D.N.A. The tabloids have been going crazy. Holyhead started attracting all

sorts of weirdos. Most people think it's just some kind of hoax. I told my mother not to believe everything that she sees on the Internet.

In truth, I just didn't want to discuss it with her. No one really likes talking about their job with their parents. Especially parents who gossip too much. But happily, just as she was getting into her flow, my boss called me over the tannoy. He always has excellent timing. I just wish he wouldn't call me Fe. "Fe" is short for Fiona! And my name is not Fiona. My name is Felix.

And this is WOE.BEGONE.

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: That is Episode One. I don't get enough credit for this, but I wrote the soundtrack for the— the compendium version. *[Brief chuckle.]*

BEN: *[Chuckles.]* You did. You get all the credit, Dylan.

DYLAN: So... the things that... I wondered, listening back is, uh, how autobiographical are the details in this? Like the locations, uh, like Holyhead. Something about a politician doing something...? Like that kinda stuff.

BEN: So, um... We'll hear it in I think Episode Five or Six of *Felix*, as well. Um, but the town, um, where Felix lives is a town in Surrey just, uh, southwest of London in England. The town's called Woking. And, um... the details that I've dropped in, uh— relate to Woking. I don't live in Woking, but I live relatively nearby.

And, um, the most exciting thing that has ever happened to Woking, um— is a, an— an interview given by a member of the British royal family, uh, I think 18 months or two years ago now. Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, who was, uh, accused of certain behaviour, uh, in a nightclub in London. And he, uh, gave the memorable, um, answer that he couldn't possibly have been there, uh, because he was in a— a chain restaurant called "Pizza Express" in Woking. And it's not the sort of place that he would forget. Um, and so, um... I—It was all over the British press for a long while, frankly ridiculing, uh, him for his references to Woking Pizza Express—uh, a pizza express I have visited on many times for children's birthday parties and things, 'cause it's just one of the classic children's parties sort of locations. Um... And... um, I—I was amused, uh, by the story and just the— the— the fact that he tried to rely upon, uh, this particular restaurant and, uh, and— and chucked it in as a— a detail for— for anyone who knew the story as a little Easter egg.

A—And then later on, when Felix describes, um, driving home... um, in a few episodes time, I describe some roads through Woking in— in quite particular detail. And I remember one of the people on Discord, uh, followed this through 'cause they knew the area, and actually DM-ed me and said, "Felix's dad lives on so-and-so road." And I said, "Yes. Yes, he does." *[Brief chuckle.]* I don't have a house picked out, but I have a road picked out, um, because, um, I have a friend

that lives on that road. Uh, and so when I was writing it, I, um... I sort of knew roughly where I wanted to go because—and again, we'll talk about this in a minute, but, um, when I recorded I think it was Episode Five, which is where Felix is driving in his car on the way to his dad's house, I was actually driving. Uh, I'd memorized the script for that one and drove to the road where, in my head, Felix's dad lives, um, at— during recording the episode. Um, so that I had all of the turn signals in the right place and all of the braking and accelerating and all that sort of stuff. And I pulled up, um... o-on that road, um, as Felix would have done.

DYLAN: For a long time, in my head, it all took place in Holyhead. But it— tha— that doesn't— that makes more sense that it's not in Holyhead.

BEN: Uh, I'd worked out early... um, that I needed the... the bodies to have washed up in the sea and moved. And I looked at sort of currents around the British Isles and which ones move in certain directions and— and that sort of stuff... and figured landing in— in Holyhead on the coast of Wales would make sense. Uh, especially with the mistake that I had in mind for Felix. But, um... apart from the bodies washing up there, I-I didn't have it in mind as a particular location, and I've never been there.

DYLAN: I've got a— a— one more question before we start Episode Two, which is: how much of the story did you know when you wrote Episode One?

BEN: I had two ideas... three ideas for who the triplets could be. They were either gonna be Felix or Ty or Mike. And... I... decided while writing Episode Two that it would be Felix. Um, for each of those options, I had a rough story in mind, but I think I always knew that it would be Felix.

DYLAN: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think that Felix is the best choice. I think we should hop into Episode Two... Uh, we can listen to the whole thing, or if you think of something that you want to say midway, you can just say pause and I'll pause it and we'll talk about it. How does that sound?

BEN: Sure. Yeah, great!

[Short chime.]

FELIX *[narrating]:* I think I started making a new friend today. *[Continues talking in the background.]*

BEN: There's one thing I noticed when listening to Episode One, and there's an immediate contrast in Episode Two. Um, not only does the... quality of the recording change because I get a better set up, but Felix's voice changes. In Episode One, Felix's voice is much more similar to my actual voice. Uh, a little bit lower in pitch. But from Episode Two onwards and in every, um, performance of him since, he's a bit lighter, bit higher-pitched. Um, a little bit, sort of airier and, um, not— not silly, but, um... j-just sort of lighter on his feet and his voice. And, um... I-I realised that in terms of the— the direction of the story, he— he— he couldn't be quite as grounded,

couldn't be as— as... as, um... as calm and in control as he sounds in Episode One. He— He needed to be a little— a little more goofy, a little more out of control, and— and that sort of stayed with my performance of him since.

FELIX *[narrating]*: —never been particularly good with some of those tech interfaces. I mean, I *[Puffs.]* could use a computer well enough. It's vital for some of the work we do! But I... sometimes slip up a little. Nothing major! Just the odd copy-and-paste issue in Excel when all of the formatting goes wrong, and the columns aren't big enough, and everything disappears, and then you realize you actually hid the columns, and you don't really know what "freeze panes" means. And what on earth does "con-cat-e-nate", or... is it "con-cer-teen-ate"? Ugh, I don't know. What does that mean!? *[Huffs.]* Sorry. MP3 players.

It took a whole evening. But I filled it with some of my absolute favorite stuff, and I'm really pleased with it. And, the next morning, my boss looked at the track listing and said, "Oh, this is just perfect," in that sort of extra self-satisfied voice of his that means he's absolutely delighted by something. I think it went pretty well. Mi— M-My— Uh, my friend? said that the music was fine! I think maybe he'd have liked a little more variety, but it seemed to go down pretty well in the end. And you know what? I didn't even mind when my mother called. I was actually quite excited to tell her about the kind thing I'd done! But once again, all she wanted to talk about was some rumor she'd heard from one of the morons who she speaks to online. That the police were finally going to release pictures of the bodies that washed up in Wales.

...Oh, dear. That would not be good for my long-term employment prospects. I think I'm going to have to deal with it.

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: So yeah, that was Episode Two. Uh, do you have any thoughts?

BEN: Yeah, the... um... Felix's approach to tech was intentionally, um, addressed here for reasons of plot in five episodes' time. Uh, i-it... it felt like a sort of fun, quirky part of his character, but also I needed to establish some hints about exactly what has gone wrong and how he made it go wrong. Um, I obviously was inspired by the... kind of Arctic Monkeys thing, um, that you had written 40, 50 episodes before to— uh— to do the— the MP3 player stuff... uh— and I loved the idea tha— that Felix is t-this weird, little, kind of obsessive gremlin just listening to the same albums over and over and over again while running around madly. And the best thing that he can come up with to cheer someone up, um, is— is just an iPod filled with all the same music over and over again. I-It's so well meaning but also so insane.

DYLAN: So, in a I— episode after this one came out, I think that there's... there's an episode where it's implied that Ty's deleting the non Arc— Arctic Monkeys songs in order to mess with Mike.

BEN: Uh. Yes. Um, so, um... w-within this episode and later on, there is a-a suggestion that— um... Ty is vetting them and making stuff be, uh, be deleted. I-I think that is right. I think there was some variety but not much when Felix gave it to Ty to check. But in the... in the end, Ty ensured there was no variety.

DYLAN: Uh, you hide that Mike is the subject of this story which, to me, implies that there's an audience. So, wh— how do you— who do you imagine Felix is— is recording this for?

BEN: I-I assumed it was for the same people that Mike was recording for in the first few seasons. Um, which is why the first episode ends with "I'm Felix, and this is *WOE.BEGONE*." So the— the— the audience is some nebulous bunch of— of listeners. Um... In hindsight, I wish it had been something as fun as kind of experiment logs o-o-or anything like that in the Compound or that— that Felix was recording for some other version of himself o-o-o-or... for a Ty or just to keep a record. But i-in reality I think it has to be an uninformed audience, um, who know very little of Felix, what he does, what his organization is like. But much like the... principle of the— the main *WOE.BEGONE* podcast kind of evolving from a direct podcast with listeners and an audience into a sort of more dramatic podcast and the— the kind of... the— the original conceit evolved, and then we— we had the... the kind of return to the— the podcast and the investigations in, what was it, Season 14, o-or whatever it was. Um... When we get the Felix stuff, i-it naturally evolves and becomes, uh, reported speech and extra characters, so I intentionally, across the seven episodes of *Felix*, tried to follow the same path of the first hundred episodes of *WOE.BEGONE*, of starting out with the conceit of it being recorded for people who don't know much, but then involving into... a sort of full-cast thing, because I-I really liked the way you did it, and I wanted to emulate that.

DYLAN: Yes, uh, speaking of... other episodes, we've still got 41 minutes, so I say we get onto [BEN: Christ.] Episode Three. [BEN: Okay.] And just tell me if you want me to pause it.

[Short chime.]

FELIX [narrating]: It's always nice to try new things. A lot of jobs at my level don't come with perks. But we actually have a very generous travel policy. The company has its own transportation, and as long as you're signed off by a manager, you can basically jump off to wherever you want. Likewise, the lunches are *really good!* You can order in basically any world food you want, and it arrives in no time at all. And I was having a bit of a chat with my new friend the other day about food. And he got so enthusiastic about some curious American dish called "biscuits and gravy." He said it was worth dying for a hundred times over, and... I've always enjoyed that sort of sweet-and-savory mixed flavors in some of those Asian cuisines, so it made perfect sense! I had to try it.

I thought I'd head down to the kitchen and, you know, do it for real. See if I could rustle something up. Unfortunately, the only biscuits they had in stock were Oreos. And I'd have much preferred a jammie dodger. And they didn't have proper gravy, just some beef-flavored instant granules. But I gave it a whirl! Boiled the kettle, stirred up the gravy. But how to serve it? Hmm. I

didn't really know the correct biscuit-versus-gravy ratio, and I didn't want soggy Oreos, so dunking seemed to make most sense. And you know what? It was actually really pleasant. The sticky, salty, beefy goodness of the gravy mixed with the sweet chocolatey delight of the biscuit and its creamy filling. What's not to like? It put me in mind of those party snacks that used to be everywhere, back when I was a kid, with pineapple and cheddar cheese on a cocktail stick. I honestly had no idea that Americans had such refined palates. And when my mother called, I asked her if she remembered the pineapple and cheese on a stick things. And I wanted to tell her all about biscuits and gravy...

But. She was in no mood, because I had forgotten. Today is the anniversary of the day my dad died. It's curious, really. Regardless of what's going on in her life, regardless of how happy she might be the day before, the very moment midnight ticks around, she sinks into a well of despondency. She might not have thought about him in days or weeks or even months. But the date comes round, and it's fresh for her all again. And then, 24 hours later, she'll bounce back, back to her bloody obsession with those bodies in Wales. I hadn't thought about him in quite some time. I was 16 when he died, just finished my GCSEs, a couple years from university. There was a time until very recently when I'd have given a limb just to lay in my childhood bed and hear the sound of him snoring through the wall, even for a few seconds...

Ah, well. I know my friend's been having a rough time with loss recently, as well. I really want to help... I know! I'll make him some biscuits and gravy! Hah! That'll do the trick!

[Short chime.]

BEN: "Biscuit-versus-gravy ratio" is one of my favourite things that I've ever written.

DYLAN: And that was Episode Three. I can't believe how rare biscuits are outside of America, like, our biscuits? Because they're very easy to make, and they're very tasty.

BEN: So I, um, have tried now, in four different states of the USA, biscuits a-and gravy and, um... I had varying qualities of biscuit, but I can't say that gravy has ever really been to my taste. Um, because— 'cause gravy just means something very different, um, to me. Um... but the best, um, I-I found— um, was— uh, was in the south. Uh, the stuff I had in Colorado: abysmal; stuff I had in, uh, in California: terrible; um, but in the south, um, they seemed to know, uh, what they were doing. And the kind of balance of the fluffiness and— and the mouthfeel of the— the biscuits alongside the sort of unctuousness and umami of the gravy. Actually, I could see why people might like it. Um... but, you know, I-I— Really, half of that was just so that I could make a sly, off-hand comment about American palates. Um, and, bis— biscuit-to-gravy ratio... um, was— was... a marvel, a-a joy to say.

But, um... a-alongside it, there were, you know, as— as— as people have picked up, little references, so you know, "I'd gi— I'd give a limb to... to have, um, to listen to my dad's breathing again" and "I'd die a hundred times over for— for various things," Mike's comment. So, I— I...

a-a-as kind of fun a-as it was to- to write what felt relatively fresh, i-it is just littered throughout with your writing. Uh, and so absolutely nothing is original. Uh, and, uh, and it's all stolen.

DYLAN: Well, it's not that it's... stolen, it's that it's in- it's in a very... serious conversation with *WOE.BEGONE*.

BEN: The- The minute you declared *Felix* one to be canon, uh, I was astonished, um, because I-I... I think I wrote on the- the Discord, "Oh, it's lovely that Dylan's put it out there, but remember nothing I say is canon and it's all nonsense." And within minutes, you'd said, "Everything Ben writes is canon." And I was like "oh, there's some responsibility here... [Laughs.] Oh, dear..." Um.

DYLAN: It's time travel, if i- if you... do something that's canon that I don't like, I can- I can fix it, don't worry. They'll- They'll all just time travel about it. [Ben laughs.] Um, you don't have to answer this question if you don't want to, but, uh... s- the... y-you write- uh- there's a lot of stuff about parents and parent dynamic in this. How much of that is based on your... experience with your parents?

BEN: Uh- So, my dad died while I was quite young. He died while I was ten. Um, but the... relationship Felix has with his mother and the... kind of how needy she is and how she sort of uses him as a quasi... sort of almost husband replacement and all that sort of stuff was not at all my experience with my mother, who, um, was... you know, she- she did the very, very best she could, uh, being left with, uh, an annoying only child, uh, and no husband when I was only- only ten.

Uh, I-I- My mom met my stepdad, uh, when I was about 12, 13, and that's 30 years ago, nearly, now. And he's been absolutely brilliant; I love him dearly. So, I-I- I've had two strong father figures, uh, and a very solid relationship with my mother throughout, you know, the whole time, so... R-Really it was an exploration of... i-if- if I'd had- I always kind of thought to myself, "In some ways, the timing of my father's death was- was- was quite lucky." I-I have enough memories of him... um... that I-I kind of have that happy childhood stuff, but it wasn't so far into my life and into my teenage years and really sensitive times that it completely messed me up. Uh- There's no good time for a child to lose a parent... but, um, I-I- I remember thinking through my teenage years and early 20s that, you know, i-i-it's certainly timing that worked... for me. God, that sounds callous. But, um... i-i-it sort of- [Laughs.] i-i-it sort of- yeah, it's fine, you know, um. I-I- If I could have chosen any day, that's the day tha- that it would've happened.

Um- But, um... I-I- what I started thinking about when I was writing *Felix* was "wha- what if I'd had another five or six years with my dad?" Because I was very, very close to my dad. Um, i- Felix and his dad's relationship is an exaggeration. I-I- I- You know, I did a lot with my dad, my- but my mom wasn't excluded in the same way that Felix's mother, uh, was in their- in their relationship. Um... But in another five, six years, who knows how it would have gone, and it was a sort of exploration of what what that perhaps could have been with if I'd- I'd had a bit longer with my dad and if that relationship had developed further and- and sort of how... you know,

that— that— that relationship dynamic could have changed. So, invented, but... sort of with— with a baseline of sort of a quarter of that experience.

DYLAN: Yeah, I totally get what you mean about... how... uh, it was probably better for your development that it didn't happen when you were 15. Uh, because 15 is a terrible time for anything catastrophic to happen. Uh, 'cause your body is just pushing all of these hormones through it and, like, you can't... you— you don't think straight for a good three or four years. And also, everything that happens when you're 15 gets super calcified. Like, people listen to the music that was— that they liked when they were 15, because your brain is, like, writing what is to be expected forever. And so anything super catastrophic that happens at that time, I feel like, gets elevated in your subconscious.

BEN: Yeah. And— And— And I was lucky, as I said, my stepdad came on the scene when I was 12, so... that relationship, by like— by the time I got to those kind of difficult years where Felix really suffered, I'd already had my stepdad around for three years, and... you know, he— he— he... h-he was and is amazing and is just the loveliest guy. And, um... You know, so, I-I-I can't, sadly— well, not sadly— I-I— From a writer's perspective, I-I sadly don't share... Felix's trauma. But, um... But there was some inspiration there that I sort of— that I took from. And I— I started thinking, "If Felix were to play WOE.BEGONE, who would be his prize?" And that's sort of the launching point.

DYLAN: He says, uh... he goes to college across the country and then he went to s— uh— a job across the continent? Do you imagine him getting... a job at the Compound right out of college?

BEN: Straight away. So, t-t-to my mind, I don't think it was working with Ty straight away. I-I think, um... t-to my mind, Co— the Compound must be a relatively large organization, it can't just be filled with one Kaz, one Ty and 5,000— sorry, o-one Kaz, one Felix and 5,000 Tys. There'd— There'd have to be... sort of random maintenance people and people thin— keeping things clean and other assistants and, you know, we— we know that there's at least, you know, a dozen Samanthas and things as well. So, to my mind, Felix, you know, went to the— the far north or maybe even Scotland for university, away from the south of England. And then the minute he saw an interesting, uh, sort of engineering-y sort of job far away, um, he— he took that opportunity to try to give himself some distance. And, um, despite his occasional failures with Excel, I-I think he's a remarkably competent... um... and conscientious person and progressed quickly. And, uh, t-to my mind, Ty was looking for and desperately needed someone like him... and, uh, and found him.

DYLAN: Yeah, that makes sense, and there is at least one maintenance guy in the Compound, because Mike tricks him by flooding the toilet [**BEN:** Yeah! That's absolutely right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.] in whatever season that was. Uh— And, they shut down the whole Ty wing in for whatever season finale that was— Wow, I should really listen to my show sometime. But, the— [**BEN:** It's really good, I'd recommend it.] the Ty— the— the Ty wing getting shut down implies that there are other wings. Um... And I— it's s-sort of the freedom that they're allowed makes me feel like they

aren't the most important thing at the Compound. Uh, 'cause Ty is allowed to do... whatever he fancies, really.

So, that was Episode Three, let's hop into Episode Four.

[Short chime.]

FELIX *[narrating]*: I'm not sure if I mentioned it before, but my new friend is from America. And I've definitely not mentioned that he is really into cowboy movies. Now, until this week, I had only ever seen two cowboy films before. When I was six, I saw *An American Tail Two: Fievel Goes West*, and then a few years later, I saw *Back to the Future Three*. Both absolute masterpieces in their way. And clearly superior to their predecessors. ...And I remembered, when I shared my iPod with him, my friend was really excited to listen to all of my music. So I thought it'd be nice to return the favor, and maybe try one of his Westerns!

I asked him about which one to watch, and he told me all his favorite films and directors. But I honestly can't remember them. So I decided to look online at the "Top List of the Greatest 50 Western Movies Ever Made Ever." And got stuck. You see, if I watched the best cowboy movie ever, the number one, all other cowboy movies would be terrible in comparison afterwards. So I can't watch that. And if I choose something too far down, say number 50, then it would probably be awful, as there can't be that many Westerns anyway. So watching a rubbish one would be a complete waste of time. And then I wouldn't really have anything to talk to him about.

So. Top ten, but not too near the top. I settled for number eight. *Rio Bravo*. I looked it up, and immediately got excited. You see, before he died, my dad's favorite ever singer was Dean Martin. You know, the Rat Pack guy with Sinatra. My dad told stories of being on national service with the Air Force in the 1950s and listening to "Deano," as he used to call him, on the radio in his barracks. And guess what? Dean Martin was one of the main actors in this film. A complete stroke of luck! *[Continues talking in the background.]*

BEN: This bit, or some of this, is lifted directly from reality. And from... uh, my dad. Um, he absolutely loved Dean Martin and did serve, um, with the Air Force in the 50s, and that's where he loved... uh, Deano from, and he raised me with a lot of that music. And, um... So, when I was thinking about this stage of the story, um, the end o-of this movie i-is- wa- was, like, clearly in my head as that point. A-And so, um... I-I- I just kind of lifted directly the truth of my dad's relationship with the movie, uh, and what Deano does and all that sort of stuff, and then shoehorned things in backwards.

So, um, although I-I realize that for Felix to find the cowboy movie—uh, and you've commented on this previously—it- his method makes perfect sense... for Felix and his character. Um, in terms of the way he would go about choosing a cowboy movie. Uh, the problem was in a lot of the, um, cowboy lists I found, *Rio Bravo* was rink- ranked either too high or too low, so I spent a good hour trying to find one where it was ranked eighth. Uh, or- or in the kind of- in the low tens, and eventually found one so I could justify it to myself that it made sense. Um... And, in th- in the- Of course, I mean I've always loved Westerns and cowboy movies anyway, but also

discovered some other fun stuff, uh, in the course of doing that. Um... But tha— that is a direct biographical lift.

FELIX *[narrating]*: —before the newspapers publish the photos from Wales. I can't take company transport all the way. I can't have my boss know where I'm going. I'm going to get the firm to drop me as far as Paris, and I've told them that I'm going to go to Disneyland for a day's holiday. But then I'm going to rent a car, drive across France, get a ferry to Dover, and then home. I should get to my mother just as she's making her morning cup of tea. ...But I have to wait. I can't go yet. Like the cowboys in *Rio Bravo*, I can't escape the consequences of my decisions.

But first, and most importantly, a good night's sleep. ...So, I guess, like Deano... *[Singing.]* It's time for a cowboy to dream. *[Normal voice.]* Good night.

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: So, yeah, uh, that's... my favorite character moment in *The Felix Chronicles*. At the end there.

BEN: Um... I... I debated long and hard as to whether or not to— to do it. Um... Because it— it sort of... w-was not sort of normal within the... the show itself and— and sort of hadn't established that for Felix as something that he might do. Um... But the more I thought about it, h-he— he is quite an obsessive little soul. He— He does love, um, the things that he gets into; he becomes obsessive about the food before he goes off on a little run about, um, different functions in Excel; uh, and he's now become obsessive about cowboy movies. And so it makes perfect sense to me that that enthusiasm, um... is sort of bubbling out of him to the extent that he's— he's starting to sing the stuff by way of references and... and starting to imprint them onto his own life. A-And so it worked for me.

DYLAN: Yeah, uh, I think— uh— I think it's extremely poignant, and... uh... we're— we're moving now! At the end of that episode, we're— we're really about to go somewhere. Uh, we've been doing... s-slice of life kind of, but now we're... we're gonna do plot. And I think that the— the transition from that was really seamless and really interesting and builds his character in the right way at the right moment. Uh, this was the— the one where I remember thinking like "oh, this is— this isn't just nice, it's really cool."

BEN: We've laid all the groundwork. Now, for *Felix*, we've done the slice-of-life stuff, as you say, um... and the consequences are coming.

DYLAN: Yeah. So, uh, do we wanna go ahead and hop into Episode Five?

BEN: Yeah.

DYLAN: This was recorded in your car, right?

BEN: Yup, recorded in my car.

[Short chime.]

BEN: I memorized the script and drove around Woking.

[Ambience of a moving car. Felix sounds like he's recording with his phone.]

FELIX: I really like Disneyland Paris. I mean. It's not... like proper Disney. But it's still really fun Disney? And it's still got the rides, and you still get to... cuddle... Goofy? *[Continues talking in the background.]*

DYLAN: What do you mean by cuddle?

BEN: As in, like, give him a quick hug. But Disney characters are trained not to release the hug until you're ready to release the hug, and Goofy's great. So why would I release the hug of Goofy? I'd stand there for hours.

FELIX: "Go and explore, Fe." Felix. Felix! My name is *Felix*, Ty! "Go and explore, Fe. Have a lovely time!" ...So I did. Um... And it was marvelous. Today will be less marvelous. After the M25, I have to drive... down the A320. To go past Six Ways Roundabout. Down Woodham Lane. And then, down— *[Continues talking in the background.]*

DYLAN: Did you do multiple takes?

BEN: I did multiple takes; this is the only one where I got through the whole thing.

[Momentary silence with car ambience.]

FELIX: And in four minute's time, my mother is going to set out for the news agent. Because she believes that the very greatest news is *fresh* news. She likes to be the first person through the door. Getting the paper. And then she likes to call me about it for an hour. And then complains that I haven't read the paper yet. So I've got that to look forward to. But... first. I am... *[Sighs.]* six minutes away. From Mum's house. And she's gonna leave the house in three minute's time. So I'm going to call her and tell her I am nearby. Tell her to stick the kettle on. And tell her that the news can *wait*? ...And we will have a lovely chat. *[Muttering.]* Oh, boy. Sure. *[Sighs.]* See how we go.

[A cell phone dials through the car speaker. Someone picks up.]

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]:* 8732, good morning?

FELIX: *[Pause.]* Oh, sorry! I, um... I think I've got the, um... the wrong number... Um, i— So— So— What number did you say?

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: ...87...32... Ha- Ha- Hang on, is that Fe?

FELIX: ..."Fe"-? This is Felix...?

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: ...Fe. **[FELIX: Who's-?]** Fe, what are you doing, it's nearly six o'clock in the morning, why are you calling so early?

FELIX: Sor- Who's tha- Who- Who- Who's that?

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: *[Laughing.]* ...Fe. Fe, it's Dad.

FELIX: *[Pause.]* ...Dad. Uh- Ah- Da-... Da- Um...

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: Fe, is everything okay? **[FELIX: S- Uh- (Exhales.)]** You sound... You don't sound yourself.

FELIX: *[Coughs loudly.]* Um... Um, you, um... I, um, I... I-I, um, I-I've- I've got the... I've got the day off... I'm- I'm nearly home! I-!

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: ...I'm sorry, you're nearly home? As in... As in this home.

FELIX: I- I'm nearly- I'm nearly... there... wi- **[FELIX'S DAD: Uh, tha- Uh, uh-... Uh-]** there with you, Dad! Um... Sorry-!

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: Tha- That's great, Fe! *[Felix audibly breathes.]* Um... Uh, I'll- I'll- I'll put the kettle on, um... It- It'll be lovely to see you, I probably haven't seen you for a f- for a while now! Um. Uh... I-I'm glad you're coming, actually, 'cause I... was woken up about five minutes ago by this very... odd chap called Ty, I believe he said. **[FELIX: C-? T- Ty!?)** He said he was your boss? **[FELIX (whispering):** Oh, my god... **]** Yes. **[FELIX: Um...]** I was hoping that you'd be able to **[FELIX: W-?]** shed some light on what he said to me, 'cause... **[FELIX: He called you five minute-?] very... he's very odd guy.**

FELIX: Fi- Five minutes ago? He called you. He called *you*.

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: That's right, yes? Uh-... *[Felix sighs.]* Is everything okay?

FELIX: Um... Um... Um... Um, um, um... No, it's fine! Dad, It's fine. I, um... *[Sighs.]* I... Ah... Ah-

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]*: Fe, you- you sound very distressed. D- Are you- Are you okay? Are you driving?

FELIX: I- F- I'm- I'm- I'm five- I'm five minutes away, Dad, um... [**FELIX'S DAD:** Okay, well-] Is- Is- Is Mu- Is Mum there, Dad?

[*Beat.*]

FELIX'S DAD [*via car speaker*]: ...Fe, what do you mean?

FELIX: I- [*Sighs.*] ...Mum, i-is- is she there? Is she with you?

FELIX'S DAD [*via car speaker*]: [*Pause, then sighs.*] Fe. Fe, Mum's dead, you know this. I'm very worried about you, yo- ...You really don't sound well. [**FELIX:** I-... I-...] If- If you're driving, please be safe. Please get here soon.

FELIX: I-I'll be the-! I'll-! I'm- I'm-... I'm- I'm- I'm- I'm- I'm five minutes away, Dad. I... [*Exhales.*] [**FELIX'S DAD:** Okay.] I've got to go. I... I- Dad, I love you, I- I... [**FELIX'S DAD:** I-I love you, too. Be careful, son.] I'll see you soon! Okay, by- bye. Bye. Bye bye. Bye bye... [*There's a light thud. He breathes heavily. He laughs hysterically.*] Ty... Ty, what on earth have you done!?

[*Short chime.*]

DYLAN: So, this whole thing was one take, but how many takes made it to the phone call?

BEN: Uh, one take made it to the phone call. Uh, we did that phone call, which was that take. And then, while driving around, we did another phone call take. But what you heard in that episode was one continual take from when I started driving through to the end of the phone call.

DYLAN: This episode co-stars Seb Junemann as Felix's father. Could you tell me more about him? What his relationship is to you; has he heard the show before? Stuff like that.

BEN: Seb Junemann is, um, a really old friend of mine. So, um, Seb is not a regular listener to *WOE.BEGONE*, but he has been... talking to me about it for a long time. He's a really good actor and director. Um... He was part of the whole crowd, uh- that I was part of in my late teens and early 20s where we all got together, did various acting things, lots of theatre, and he, uh, directed the, um... musical theatre production in which I met my wife! Uh- It was a production of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, um... Sondheim musical... uh, and he cast me and, um... he asked a friend of his, um, who was on his university course with him to be in the chorus, uh, and that was Mrs. Rowe! And now—I think that was 2009, so 16 years later—all because of Seb, um, I am married and have children. Uh, and I am godfather to his daughter.

EDITING DYLAN: Full disclosure, this is Editing Dylan. During the call, our connection got dropped, and so most of my questions during this part are: "What?" "Can you hear me?"

DYLAN: And could you talk about how this scene came together with him?

BEN: So, I worked with Seb in... um... kind of devising how that would work. The— The plotting was mine, the writing was largely mine, but I had to trust him as an actor to, um... be able to improvise if I went off-script. He had the script with him at his end, so if I started going off-script, he— he knew that he could guide me back, uh— if I— if I sort of wasn't where I wanted to be at sort of p— certain parts of the journey, and I tried to time it. It wasn't quite right, but I tried to time it, you know— "Oh, I'm three minutes out." And to kind of end the call being three minutes out and— and that sort of stuff. Um, i-it didn't work 100%, but it came... close. And, uh, I relied on— on Seb a lot to— **[DYLAN: (Dramatic voice.) Ooh...! Whoa!]** to— to guide me through it and to work with me and— and to be flexible enough to... to make the recording work there. Uh, I'm really happy with it. And the— And the fact that the whole episode is one take... um... i-i-is a nice thing. Uh, and as we record this now, um, in the UK, the whole country has gone wild for a— a kind of one-take TV show called *Adolescence*, uh, which I inspired in no way at all, but it's been on my mind this week, and when I listened to this earlier... um... the sort of one-take nature of it appealed to me as well. And... as I finished that answer, we've gone green.

EDITING DYLAN: Something that I didn't get to say in our conversation because of the connection issues was that I almost did something very similar for Episode 36 of *WOE.BEGONE*, "Safehouse." I was going to record in my car, Mike driving, on his way to go to Matt's house. But it was too daunting, and what I wanted to do was too emotional, and I didn't have the right tools for it, and... it's— it's too much for a 20+ minute episode. I think it works much better here in *The Felix Chronicles* where it's one conversation.

DYLAN: And I'm sure that whatever you said was really enlightening as to its production. Uh... but I heard every tenth word.

BEN: *[Quiet laugh.]* You can, uh— You can react to it separately later.

DYLAN: Yeah, I'll... I'll— I'll add like, *[Dramatic voice.]* "Ooh...! Whoa!" *[Normal voice.]* *[Ben laughs.]* I'll— I'll put those exact ones in, 'cause I just recorded them. So, yeah, do we have any more thoughts on this episode?

BEN: Uh— No, I mean, i—... it's relatively simple in its plotting. Um, the first half is just fun fun fun Disney, and the second half is "what the fuck is going on with Felix?" So, um... there's nothing— there's nothing really further I think we— we need to add to kind of— There's no real nuance to it; the— the whole point in this episode is the performance and the acting, really.

DYLAN: Alright, then. Without further ado, here is Episode Six.

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: Is this also recorded in your car?

[A cell phone dials.]

BEN: Yeah, I needed the, um... room sound to be the same.

[Felix's Dad picks up.]

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]:* Fe. Fe, is that you, Fe?

FELIX: Yes. Yes, Dad, it's me.

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]: [Sighs.]* Where on earth are you? Your tea is stone cold, you **[FELIX: Dad, I'm s-]** told me you were five minutes away.

FELIX: I'm sorry.

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]:* It's been over an hour! Wh-? I've been incredibly worried about you. What's happening!? **[FELIX: D- Dad, I just-]** Where are you? Do you need me to come and get you?

FELIX: D- Dad-!

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]:* Look- Are you safe? *[Felix sighs.]* I don't think you're safe to drive, right. Stay where you are, I'm getting in the car, and I'm **[FELIX: Dad-]** coming to find you.

FELIX: Dad, listen! *[Pause.]* I'm fine. I've pulled over; I'm just around the corner.

FELIX'S DAD *[via car speaker]:* Around the corner? Why aren't you here!?

FELIX: Dad, I have to be... extremely careful... about what I say. I need to explain some things to you. Things that will sound ...well, mad. Actually, quite mad. I've had to spend... quite some time trying to... work out... how to explain it to you? I... I've written some stuff down-

FELIX'S DAD: Does this have something to do with that man- *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

BEN: So, uh- at this point I had to... find a reason why you would hear paper shuffling in the background of the car. Uh, 'cause I couldn't really have a screen with me. Um, but I wanted to be precise in the use of language here, so I had a script in front of me, and I couldn't escape the sound of paper shuffling. So, I included that Felix had, uh, made notes for his conversation with his father. As a sort of pretext for shuffling papers and getting away with it.

FELIX: -you need me to. Um... Honestly, I-I-I- I don't... think you'll believe a word of it, and you'll try to get me sectioned, but please. Just give me one chance to try to explain.

FELIX'S DAD: Please, Fe, just... please. *[Felix shuffles papers.]* Of course I'll listen, but please, are you safe?

FELIX: Yes, Dad, I'm— I'm— I'm perfectly fine. I'm... quite confused... and I've behaved horrendously at work, but I'm fine.

FELIX'S DAD: ...Alright. Carry on.

FELIX: *[Sighs.]* Okay. Um. Here goes. *[Shuffles papers. Mutters.]* Um, where are— Um. Dad. I don't have an ordinary job. I work in quite a specialist field, whe—

FELIX'S DAD: Time travel.

FELIX: ...Wha— W-What? Wha— *[Brief chuckle.]* What did you just say?

FELIX'S DAD: Well, time travel. Your company, you... conduct research in time travel and its various practical uses.

FELIX: I— *[Chuckles in disbelief.]* I— wha— you— uh... T-Time travel! Uh, who, uh, who— who told you that?

FELIX'S DAD: Fe... you did. We discussed it! Many, many times.

FELIX: *[Shuffles paper.]* ...Jesus! Um, heh... Okay...

FELIX'S DAD: So... I guess we're in Contingency Six territory, are we?

FELIX: Contingency... Six? I... I have no idea what you're talking about.

FELIX'S DAD: ...Ah. *[Sharp inhale.]* Definitely Contingency Six by the sounds of things. Look, when you first started working at your organization, you set up various scenarios that might occur. Things that might go wrong, and the steps you'd like me to take if any of them occurred. Contingency One was for a situation where I could remember you, but nobody else could. *[Continues talking in the background.]*

DYLAN: Is that a connectivity strike? Is that what Contingency One is supposed to be?

BEN: That's sort of what it is, yeah.

FELIX: D-Dad? Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad. What's— What's Contingency Six?

FELIX'S DAD: It's where you turn up asking for your mother. *[Felix shuffles papers.]* It's happened before, but this is a particularly extreme case.

FELIX: Um... Phew— O— Um, um... [*He nervously claps.*] Okay, w-what, um... What did you say to Ty? D-Di— Did— Did you tell him that you know any of this, that I told you any of this?

FELIX'S DAD: Of course not. I wasn't sure exactly what was going on an hour ago, and you had me very worried, but I'm not stupid.

FELIX: Um... Okay, um. How much have I told you?

FELIX'S DAD: Beyond a rough outline of your work? Not very much. You explained that things sometimes go wrong. You explained timelines... and how to solve problems.

FELIX: T-Timelines? That's... That's not something that I, um... What did I say?

FELIX'S DAD: Well... you didn't tell me exactly how things worked, but you gave me a sort of... analogy for it. [*Chuckles.*] You were at great pains to explain that it doesn't strictly work this way. Great pain. ...But in effect, you asked me to imagine a tree diagram. For every decision we make, the tree branches into two or three or... a hundred, depending on the complexity of the decision. And on every branch, there is a Felix and a me and... a post office and... You get the idea. Every branch is a copy of its neighbor, but with very slight difference. Similar decisions lead to very similar branches, but significant variety leads to... wildly different outcomes. You said that sometimes people get, uh, well... lost. They end up on the wrong branch. Sometimes they replace their copy on the new branch. Sometimes there are two versions on the same branch; one who is in the right place, and... one who really is not.

FELIX: Wow...

FELIX'S DAD: And so I can only assume that... you are lost. Horribly lost, by the sounds of it. I'm so sorry, my darling.

FELIX: I, uh... [*Takes a breath.*] Yes, that's, um, that's about the sum of it. Um... [*Pause.*] I just— I just can't believe how close you are to your Felix. How much he's... told you! ...That means your Felix is probably asleep somewhere, back in his bunk at work or, um... Hah! Maybe he's gone to Euro Disney! [*Bursts into laughter.*]

FELIX'S DAD: To Euro Disney?

FELIX: Um, no, uh... No, um... Um, no, no— No, no, no, um. Listen, Dad, um... Dad, this is important. Uh, the news, uh, last few weeks. How many strange bodies have washed up in Wales? Has, um, anyone said anything to you about it?

FELIX'S DAD: Um... I'm afraid you've lost me again.

FELIX: No... strange bodies, identical twins, triplets, washing up weeks apart just outside of Holyhead?

FELIX'S DAD: No, nothing of the sort.

FELIX: *[Soft exhale.]* Well, thank heavens for that. Um... It's been causing Mum *[Brief chortle.]* a great deal of excitement!

FELIX'S DAD: Mum... So Mum is alive on your branch.

FELIX: ...Uh, yes, she's alive...

FELIX'S DAD: Ah! Fe, that's wonderful news! How are we getting on over there? Do you have any photos? I have to see them when you get here.

FELIX: She's, um... We're, uh, we're fine. It's— It's not always easy.

FELIX'S DAD: ...Felix.

FELIX *[hesitantly]:* Uh, yes?

FELIX'S DAD: How long have I been dead?

FELIX: Since I... was 15.

FELIX'S DAD: ...Ah.

FELIX: *[Inhales.]* It's, um... It's been a long time, Dad, I, um... It's not suited Mum to be a widow.

FELIX'S DAD: *[Chuckles.]* Ah... No. I can't imagine it has. *[Felix exhales.]* Fe, come home. We can talk about this properly on the sofa. I— I'll stick the kettle back on. Please.

FELIX: Um... *[Shuffles papers.]* Um, al— alright. Um, I, um... *[Car starts.]* I'm only just parked round the corner. I, um... I'm 30 seconds away.

FELIX'S DAD: ...Alright. I'll see you shortly, Fe.

FELIX: Alright, I'll, um— I'll see you in a minute, Dad. Buh-bye.

[Ambience of a moving car.]

FELIX *[angrily]:* I can't believe... that his Fe has told him all of this! I mean— ah... Is this what I'm like when I'm happy? When I've got my dad? Am I a complete bloody moron? *[Groans.]* His Ty is gonna kill him. My Ty's gonna kill me! *[Quietly.]* How much does he know? Here's Dad's. Um, oh... Oh, look who's here...

[Engine stops. Sounds of Felix exiting the car.]

TY: Ah! Fe, good morning! Your father has a lovely home. I-I wonder, can I join you both inside for a quick, ah, tête-à-tête?

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: And that is the penultimate episode. Uh, I remember you messaging me about time travel metaphors.

BEN: I-I didn't wanna step on any toes, and I-I didn't wanna get in the way of... like, your- your concept for time travel, but I wanted to make sure that you'd be happy with me describing things in a certain way. But then, um... intentionally myself building into the script enough wiggle room that nothing I said made any difference whatsoever to the main *WOE.BEGONE* timeline in any case.

DYLAN: Yeah, when I'm discussing the show with people, I'll often say, like, "There aren't different- They- People aren't hopping in between different timelines." And that's really important if you're a *WOE.BEGONE* listener. But if you're Felix's dad, it's different.

BEN: Yeah. E-Exactly. Uh- Felix just needed to be able to communicate to him... um, what the issue is quickly. I-I- I liked the i- And this is the thing about Felix: he- he's goofy as hell, but he does have an organised mind. And so of course he's got numbered contingencies and plans and i-intentionally, I-I- I put in there that he- he put these plans in place soon after he was first employed, um, by the Compound, because I-I thought he- he was worried that far ahead, even perhaps before he was working with Ty, he was worried about, um... what could actually go wrong in the time travel environment. And so he... the happy version of him, at least, had put different contingency plans, uh, in place with his dad. Um, something he'd never do with his mother.

DYLAN: Uh, these longer episodes came at a great time for me. Uh, I was having some... writer's block is the wrong word, 'cause I got- I got there, but, like, there were some shorter episodes in whatever season this aired in. Uh, and these came at a really great time, uh... for me to give you more of the spotlight when I needed a little more room.

BEN: And David Ault was happy to have the spotlight whether you wrote it or I wrote it. Uh, I was very lucky that David, um... was willing to... jump in. Um, y-you- we were speaking earlier about sort of friendships we'd made and people we worked with and- and some are friends and- and some are, you know, just people that we're terrified of because they're sort of semi-famous in our minds. But- But David, over the last year or two, has genuinely become, um, you know, a-a-a- a decent friend, and we- we chat offline, and he sends me birthday messages, and- and- and all that sort of stuff. So, um, if nothing else, uh, ever comes of any of this, I've made a number of very good friends because of the involvement in *WOE.BEGONE*

and the wider community. Um, so it's— it's sort of fun just seeing how your sort of wild idea a few years back has just spawned this whole network of great stuff.

DYLAN: When did you first meet David? Was it for the "Easter Egg Hunt" special?

BEN: The first time we... Yeah, the first time we spoke properly was the "Easter Egg Hunt." He— He had messaged me after *Felix One* to say, "welcome aboard, I really like what you're doing," um... "t-this is fun, let me know if I can ever be... of— of assistance," because he's a genuinely lovely man, although I hope he never hears this, because he mustn't know that I like him. Um... But then he came up with the idea of the Easter Egg... um... the— the— the— yeah, the "Easter Egg Hunt," um, that he wrote for the intermission. And I— I added some ideas as well, and then from then on, he— he messages me every few weeks saying, "I have an idea of something separate that we can do that's really special and fun." And we work on it, and some of them turn into something that we put out, and— and some of them don't. But there— there's a fun collaboration building there.

DYLAN: Yeah, so... that puts us at the... the series finale, I guess, of *The Felix Chronicles*? I guess we could talk a— Is it th— Is it the series finale?

BEN: Yeah! I— Well, I-I can't imagine myself writing another Felix chronicle, but even in the midst of writing the Felix story, I had an idea for another Compound story. Which is... Samantha. And *The Samantha Chronicles*. So, I—I think, you know, whe— when I first started the Felix thing, there— there wasn't any fleshed out version of Felix, we didn't know what Felix did, we didn't know what motivated him, we didn't know much about his relationship with Ty. But alongside the seven episodes of *Felix*, you included him more within the standard episodes, um, and we got to flesh out the character a bit more there, and not just his relationship with— with Ty and the Compound, but also how he interacts with some wider characters. So, I— I haven't felt the need to— to sort of explore him personally, um, further. I—I think, kind of, the chronicles with Felix stand on their own. But I— I have really enjoyed... And— And *S-Samantha*, I-I think it's sort of obvious already, will— will be an exploration o-of power in a shifting landscape. And, um— And what that means for— for Ty, for Samantha, and for the people around them, and how that might be impacted. So, um, tha— that's gonna be, um— continue to be... um... my little exploration there. And then after *Samantha*, I'll write... I— no— I might make a character called Dylan and write *The Dylan Chronicles*. That'll be fun.

DYLAN: I was very deliberate not to name Mike after myself. Uh, but before I forget about this question... Did I come up with the name "*The Felix Chronicles*"? Did I just stick that... to it?

BEN: Yeah... [Chuckles.] Uh, yeah, so, uh, just before the... second episode, or just after the second episode, on Discord you just referred to it as the— "*The Felix Chronicles*." Um, I— I just considered it a sort of... fun Felix monologue thing without any proper name. But you just referred to it one day, um, in front of all the Woebegoblins as, uh, "*The Felix Chronicles*." "*The second episode of The Felix Chronicles*." And that's what it's been ever since.

DYLAN: Alright, without further ado, here it is: the finale of *The Felix Chronicles*.

[Short chime.]

FELIX *[narrating]:* It's been quite a week. I knew that I would have to speak to Ty about all of this eventually... but I honestly was not expecting to find him sitting outside of my mum's house. Or my dad's house, or whoever's house it was when I arrived there early that morning. Yes, I was trying to cover up a huge mistake; yes, I had lied to the whole team about going to Euro Disney— *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

DYLAN: He didn't lie about Euro Disney. He just did other stuff.

BEN: He did all sorts of other things.

TY: Fe, Fe Fe. *[Felix sighs.]* Uh— Oh. Uh, can I check? Can you hear me? **[FELIX:** Hello, Ty.] Hello? Am I coming through loud and clear? **[FELIX:** Ty, I can hear you.] Ah! Excellent. Sorry, I'm a little late, how far have we got? Are we onto EuroDisney already? Was it fun? **[FELIX:** Ty, please.] Everything you could possibly want? **[FELIX:** Plea—] All the magic in the universe **[FELIX:** Ty?] or least the Euroverse.

FELIX: Really?

TY: Ah. Very well, very well, I'll wait a moment before my grand reveal. I can hold on.

FELIX: Thank you. *[Narrating.]* ...I wasn't expecting to see Ty at what I guess I have to call my dad's house? And—

TY: Oh, I really can't wait, this is delicious! *[Dylan starts commenting.]* Felix is *terrible* at spreadsheets, truly terrible. Excel, Sheets, Numbers! I even got him a copy of Lotus 1-2-3 from 1984, and he still absolutely butchered it, even in VGA. *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

DYLAN: That reminds me so much of something that you did. You messaged me, and you were like "guess who I got for *The Samantha Chronicles*. Guess." And then, like, five minutes go by, and you're like "Fay Roberts!"

BEN *[laughing]:* Okay, yes. I...

DYLAN: Um... And it— it just reminds me a lot of that moment. I-I— "Guess! Guess who it is, guess who it is!" When I was re-listening to that moment earlier today, I was like "Ben did that to me!"

BEN: I-I was— I was so excited when Fay, um, agreed to, um... to come aboard for *Samantha*. Um. Because they're absolutely amazing, and the fact that they would want to work with just

some random person with no history, no pedigree, o-on the say-so of a couple of mutual friends who said that I could write some interesting stuff was one of the greatest compliments I think I've ever received.

DYLAN: Yeah, I just assumed that all British people knew each other is how that happened.

BEN: Oh, yea– W-We– I mean– It just so happens that we're next-door neighbours, of course, as well. Um... But, um... But yeah, no, um... V-Very grateful to, um... to Lou on the, um... WOE.BEGONE Discord for– for putting us in touch.

FELIX: –some new thing he'd read recently, some idea, some concept. We dominated the house. We rolled our eyes whenever my mother sought to join in with our little world. We were truly awful to her. But she seemed happy enough back then. She had her two boys to love and protect, she almost encouraged it. She loved my father, and I think she loved the idea that I was growing and developing and turning into him.

Of course, she wasn't always so needy. She took his death terribly badly. And I was the last thing she had to cling onto. Suddenly every time I wanted to leave the house, she needed to know exactly where I was going. Who with, why I was going, how I was getting there, what time I'd be back. Not the usual protectiveness of a parent of a teenager. Something stronger. A desperate fear and a need to control, a need to know everything.

Our relationship had never been strong. That was my fault. I was obsessed with my dad. Every parent says they don't have a favorite child. I have no idea whether or not that's true, but I can assure you that every single child has a favorite parent. My mother knew that my dad was the chosen one, of course she did!

By the time I was 16 or 17 and only a couple years away from leaving for university, she was all that I had left. But we'd never started developing anything other than the most perfunctory mother-son relationship. She tried her best. And I pulled away. Very, very, far away. To university the other side of the country, and then to a job the other side of the continent. I threw myself into our work. The only distractions were the daily phone calls with my mother. And I grew resentful of her and pitied her.

It sounds awful to say it out loud, but at one point at work I began to see our visitors, real people, as something akin to cattle. I could watch people die dozens of times a day in the name of our research, and I became quite immune to their suffering. But something was scratching away at my core. Every morning I'd speak to my mother and hear the desperation in her voice. Hear the hope that today we would really connect about something. The hope that she would, a couple of days later, start to get as close to me as my father once had. But in time I began to appreciate that, apart from my... psychopathic boss, she was the only real human connection I had left. *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

DYLAN: I like this description... uh, "Ty is psychopathic, and he means well," which he said a couple minutes ago.

BEN: Yeah. I-I think the "means well" was... sort of chuck away, but it also is— is sort of representative of— of just how far Fe has fallen. Um... And there's lots of people who think that, sort of— Fe is the sort of nice one in— in the Compound. But Fe can only be doing this job with his eyes open.

DYLAN: But I wanted to point out, uh, I just did the commentary for Episode 144, and when Felix is talking to, uh— 'cause Cole's like "how could y—?" "how do y—?" "how do you deal with him?" And, uh... do you remember what Felix says?

BEN: Uh, yeah, "I'm very fond of him."

DYLAN: Yeah. Did you—? You ad libbed that, right? Or you s— You contributed to it.

BEN: I did. I-I can't remember what was there in the original script, but I-I—

DYLAN: "I have the patience of a saint," I believe was the line.

BEN: Yeah, that's what you wrote, yeah. Uh, and I added the "and— and I'm very fond of him." 'Cause I-I-I believe that to be true. I-I think Fe genuinely likes every Ty. I wouldn't like to say which one it is, 'cause I'm not sure, but much like Felix said that every... every child has a favourite parent, I suspect that every Felix has a favourite Ty. He has to like Ty, um, and he... he has to be utterly morally corrupt. Uh— I-In terms of the shades of gray, his is a sort of... lighter, very dark gray. But it's still... as close to... black as— as you wanna be, because of the stuff that he's doing. But he... has so many people to justify the work by virtue of the personal relationships they've built.

TY: Secondly, he couldn't bear to witness once again the grief of the Felix who lost his father. Thirdly, he couldn't bring himself even to look at the Felix who was happily growing up with his father. And lastly, he was worried about me... Weren't you, Fe? Fe?

FELIX: Oh, **[TY:** Ah, yes. Uh. *(Clears throat.)* Um...) you found your way back in, well done. Yes, Ty, our jobs are not simple. On an average day, we have to keep a dozen contradictory ideas in our minds all at once. All of which are provably incorrect when compared against the others. And yet all of which are completely undeniably true. I can't begin to explain the power that our technology can have over a person. It makes you feel like... a god.

TY: Ah, yes, it does create a certain *frisson*, doesn't it? Although, I can't say it has ever caused *me* to seek to clone and then murder myself on multiple occasions.

FELIX [narrating]: The tech allows you to lose sight of the fact that, at your core, you're still a terrified teenager grieving for his daddy. I knew Ty would discover what I'd been up to

eventually, so I decided to cut my losses. The exercise had to end. The clones had to go. Creating so many little pocket timelines was dangerous. There was too much to keep track of. I thought I'd planned it perfectly. Yellow's section are always very accommodating. If someone appears in their waiting room unannounced, they know it's time to get out the bolt gun and—

TY: The metaphorical bolt gun, I think you mean. I like to think we're a little more sophisticated than that.

FELIX: They know it's time to get out the metaphorical bolt gun and then send them off to the metaphorical woodchipper.

TY: I have actually seen Yellow use a non-metaphorical woodchipper on occasion. He gets terribly bored of the furnace. *[Felix briefly chuckles.]* And the lye. *[Felix chuckles a bit louder.]* And the acid.

FELIX: *[Laughs.]* Okay. I didn't want to be... *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

DYLAN: Uh— Ty will give you a speech about the greater good if you ask him about what he's doing. Do you think that Felix believes in the greater good... in this situation?

BEN: I-I think that Felix... enjoys the sort of practical uses of time travel and is— is interested in the sort of potential health and medical outcomes, 'cause he— he mentions that earlier in the *Felix Chronicles* stuff, mentions it to his father as well. But... in reality, I-I think Felix's loyalty primarily is to Ty. Uh— More than to the Compound, to the work. Um— And it's— it's— it's sort of something we see in the orbit of horrific men... a-and women... but especially men through history. Um— Is... Is loyalty to the man, not the project. And the longer that goes on, the— the more the man becomes the project. And so, for Ty, he is, uh— for Felix, he is so corrupted by his, um, affection for Ty that the greater good, I think, to Felix, is more or less whatever— whatever Ty says it is. Um, Because... you know, by the end of this episode, we— we know exactly what Ty has done to Felix and what Ty had put Felix through, but Felix is still perfectly happy to crack on.

He— He's really interested in personal relationships and just being surrounded by loads of Tys. As much as he likes Ty, they must be exhausting. And so, having someone a bit different... and especially given his sort of trauma and feelings of abandonment and— and kind of his difficulties with interpersonal relationships through his mid-teens and onwards. A-As you said earlier, these things calcify, and they've left their mark, and with Felix, it is trying to find that sense of community a-and trying to sort of find some kind of fellowship around. He's hitched his— his wagon to Ty, but he is very capable of forming other loyalties as well and— and making his decisions. And I-I— I think he's got a-a— a misguided morality, um— but he has a morality, and he— he has a view of what he thinks is right and wrong. And— And when given the opportunity to express that, uh, he does. So, in terms of, as you say, fermenting rebellion, in terms of playing people off against each other, in terms of finding his own path through this stuff, uh— he's very

happy to do it. But, uh, his first loyalty, I think, is to Ty. Much more than to the Compound specifically.

FELIX: –you asked me to arrange transport. It wasn't strictly approved, and you asked me to do it off-book. A whole spreadsheet of transporting lots of Tys all to the same time and place for your little jolly! It played havoc with my Felix spreadsheet. To cut a long story short, when I eventually finalized the Felix operation, I may have reused the Ty Boat Party spreadsheet, forgot to replace the destination location, and then maybe reversed some columns. So instead of -4, 54 for the Seychelles, it became 54, -4, a point in the middle of the Irish seas, slap bang in the middle of the sea current to Holyhead.

TY: Now. *[Clears throat.]* As Felix is perfectly aware, we have several delightful women called Samantha who carry out all sorts of media monitoring for us. *[Continues talking in the background.]*

DYLAN: Do you think of her as, like, the head of that department?

BEN: I– I do, I–I think of her as... the entire department with iterations of herself to run it.

TY: Can't be too careful, especially these days. The "Holyhead Triplets" were all over the news in the UK, of course we noticed it. Within minutes of the second corpse, I knew exactly what had happened, how it had happened, and who was responsible. But I didn't know why, exactly, Felix had decided to go on some sort of auto-rampage. I thought it might've been fun to see how it played out. I very much enjoyed your visit to Disneyland Paris! I'm not entirely convinced that you needed to go on "It's a Small World" eleven times, though.

FELIX: I–It– I–I–It's–! I–It's a magical world where everyone is friendly, Ty!

TY: I'm afraid I can't see the attraction– *[Episode continues playing in the background.]*

DYLAN: Did he do anything other than go on It's a Small World and hug Goofy?

BEN: Uh– No. No, he didn't.

DYLAN: I was about to say. It doesn't sound like there's time.

BEN: Well, in all fairness, It's a Small World doesn't have that long a queue most of the time, and I did spend some time before writing this checking the, uh... queue app for Disneyland Paris to see, sort of, how many times he could get on stuff in a day. Uh– So, to my mind, he could have lunch, he could go on It's a Small World, you know, a dozen times, and wander around a bit, and that's it.

FELIX: Only ever to follow the plan. *[Sighing.]* And you were right. And I'm sorry. *[Pauses.]* But, Ty...

TY: But?

FELIX: But, Ty, you didn't have to make me choose. You didn't have to do that to me. Y— You turned up to my father's home, unannounced. It was the first time I'd seen him in decades! I knew you'd done something, but god knows what, and you... sat there, and you made me choose in front of him! You told my father everything you knew. You told my father everything I had done, every mistake I had made. Do you have any idea of the shame that made me feel? That I was sitting there while you explained my inability over decades to deal with his death? That it had led me to murder three people! That it had led to the eradication of my mother? He never said it, Ty, but... I could see it in his eyes. Do you have any idea how disappointed he was in me? Can you imagine how that felt, to finally see him, the man I have missed? And to look at him and only feel shame? I think it may be the most awful thing you've ever done.

TY: There was no other way, Fe. I'm sorry, but it's true. What would've happened if you'd got to your mother? How would you have redeemed this situation? What would you have done? "Oh, don't buy a paper mum." "Why not?" "Uh, I don't know."

FELIX: I— I would've been fine. It's true I had choices to make, but they would have been my choices. Instead, you gave me *your* choices.

TY: And what lovely choices they were? One, amalgamate with your father's Felix; live a life with both sets of happy, happy memories. Two, have me undo everything back to the point where you set off for France; never remember that you met your father. Or three, Just come back to work, leave your father to his Felix, and carry on dealing with your mother. And I must remind you that you still have not made your choice. It's been the best part of two weeks now, and your poor father must be quite worried wondering if and how he might suddenly pop out of existence.

FELIX: The— The— T-The problem with your oh-so-special choices, Ty, is that none of them actually deal with the bodies in Wales. Nothing you've done sorts any of that out. The whole country's still in hysteria about this insane mystery!

TY: Are they? [*Scoffs.*] Do you really think I would let that happen? That I would risk our little project coming under any scrutiny? Oh, Fe, surely it must've been obvious to you by now that the bodies were the very first thing I resolved.

FELIX: Th— T-Th— [*Episode continues playing in the background.*]

DYLAN: I like my solution where he gets rid of Wales. [*Ben laughs.*] "Felix... Wales never existed. It's just water there."

TY: I didn't want to interfere too much. As we speak, there are three corpses decomposing on my yacht in the Indian Ocean. And I shall hold you responsible for cleaning it in due course. But check the papers. The "Holyhead Triplets" never existed.

FELIX: S-So- So- So- What was this, all some kind of-?

TY: Honestly, a bit of a prank. Fe, you know I care for you very, very dearly, but you really shouldn't have messed around with things the way you did! You are the last person on earth that I would wish to punish, and I can't do without you around here. So I had to find some way of regaining your concentration without destroying you completely. *[Sighs.]* But I do need you now to make a choice. Which Felix do you want to be?

FELIX: I-I want to be me. I want to be Felix.

TY: We both know that's meaningless, Felix.

FELIX: I-I... I know we disagree on this philosophically, but... you know what I believe. I am this Felix because of the experiences I have had as this Felix. Another very similar Felix will not and cannot be me, only I can be me. It's true that the last two months have been absolute hell, but they have been my hell, so I'm stuck with them! I can't choose to be anyone else, that would be impossible. Another Felix might have a very different taste in music, or... or perhaps... not have discovered the recipe for English biscuits and gravy!

TY: That was perhaps even more moronic than your adventures in space and time. Bourbons and bisto. I ask h-

FELIX: You have no idea, they were *delicious*. But... I might not have made the decisions... about our cowboy friend. *[Continues talking in the background.]*

DYLAN: Cowboy friend. As opposed to cow boyfriend.

[Ben laughs.]

FELIX: -as trite as that sounds. And I cocked up, and I tried to fix it, and I failed, and I met my dad, and I suffered his disappointment, and I tried to fix it, and I failed, and I couldn't. And then you fixed it, and in your own entirely warped way, I-I think... you tried to help? And you may be one of the most terrible men on Earth. And you have caused me untold, unnecessary suffering in recent days for your own amusement.

TY *[cheerfully]:* I know. It's been a pleasure.

FELIX: But the sum of all that is me. Felix. Fe. Your friend... So, um... should we just crack on?

[Short chime.]

DYLAN: The end. That was the entire *Felix Chronicles*. I love the discussion of iterative personhood at the end there. I've been watching *Severance* since I've been watching, uh, the people who are fans of *Severance* think about these sorts of things for the first time, so I really appreciate, uh— at the end, when he's talking about, like, what— iterative personhood, what Ty believes about it and what Felix believes about it.

BEN: I-It's... I-It's one thing I was always really interested in the show, um— was, um... E-Everyone is somewhere on a scale of t-their views of iterative personhood. Exploring that, i-it wasn't my initial aim when I plotted out *Felix*, but by Episode Four, I knew it's what I wanted to explore with the Felix triplets, uh, more. And... I-I really enjoyed that and getting into that. And i-it's been really rewarding seeing a lot of people using *The Felix Chronicles* and the kind of Ty-Felix spectrum informing their other discussions about other characters.

DYLAN: Yeah, I tried to make sure that— 'Cause Ty has a— a radical stance that's counter-intuitive... maybe not the average— but— to the— to the lens of the show, I feel like this— the show points you in the opposite direction of Ty in— on this question. So, I did try... to make it— to give him a little bit of evidence in Episode, uh, I guess that would be 107 or 108? Whenever he uses all of the Tys to have a single thought about what to do at the end of that season. Um— 'Cause I don't— I have my own opinions of iterative personhood, and I think that there is a correct answer, but I don't think that there's... Uh, li— I wanna give valid arguments. Like, I want there to be an argument to refute.

BEN: Yeah. And— And it makes sense, and— and— and e-even in the real world, when there are matters—which to my mind at all, there isn't really an argument—and— and things seem pretty stark and black and white in some ways, there will be people that want to have that argument and will, for whatever reason, disagree. And sometimes that's frustrating, sometimes it's entirely reasonable to have those discussions, but at the end of it, it's still very, very human. So even if you and I— And I— We— We've not discussed this personally what our views are, uh— on iterative personhood, but e-even, you know, even if we, uh, have exactly the same view on it, the characters having different views... i-is one of the most human things they can have.

Um, while we've been talking, I looked up the, um, Seychelles island things. I've still got the notes. And it's not that they are exact, uh— antipodes, it's that, uh, Ireland is, um... in— in latitude and longitude... is, um, -5 West and 53 North, and if you then flip latitude and longitude, Seychelles is 5° South and 53° East. So, it's— it's an— it's a swapping of the numbers as opposed to an exact antipode, but I did do the maths.

DYLAN: Is it Ty's yacht, or is the yacht the property of the Compound?

BEN: Uh— I— In my head, when I wrote it, Ty— Ty has sort of either created using the technology or via embezzlement or something. Um, ha— has created himself a special yacht, uh, for the Tys' personal use on their weekends away. And, um, in my head, there are sort of 30 of David Ault just floating around in the, uh— in the Indi— Indian Ocean. I-I'm one of those people that, as soon

as— especially in audio drama— as soon as I see what the actor looks like, I-I can't get that out of my head, so unfortunately, you know, I-I've just never had the imagination to— to sort of separate that, um, because the— the— the person starts looking like their voice in my mind, and— and so I try to avoid knowing what people look like. But— But, to my mind at least, uh, Ty is a— is a carbon copy o-of David. And, uh, and so we— we have, floating around, uh, in the Indian Ocean outside of the Seychelles, along with three copies of Felix's corpse, we've got sort of 25 versions of David Ault sitting around in his speedo, uh, trying to sun himself to the sky and having a lovely time with it.

So David, um... helped a lot with the energy of that scene. Uh, I sent him the script, uh, first, and he did his standard thing of sort of recording what I wrote but actually recording something that's much better with a lot more energy. Uh— So, I then took his, um... his takes and... uh, reacted to them and kind of edited a bit of Felix around it. And the more jokes he added, the more amused Felix had to be in that sort of mid-section by him, before remembering that he was a bit pissed off at him, uh— and then coming back round, but with that kind of light and dark of Ty making Felix laugh and remembering what the friendship is, kind of then contrasting against the negative aspects of their— their relationship. I-I think it sort of gives a bit more context, actually, and David's a genius for doing it. B— It gives a bit more context as to why Felix would actually choose to keep going with Ty at the end.

DYLAN: Did he ad lib some stuff in that... Excel spreadsheet thing? There's like a long time that he talks, and he says, like, "We even bought him 1-2-3 Lotus from the 80s." I don't know what that is, so it sounded like a— a David thing.

BEN: Okay. No, that was all me. Um... I— So, the very first spreadsheet program I used on my first PC was, um... Lotus 1-2-3. And so I-I said, you know, "we— we tried him in Sheets, we even tried him in Lotus 1-2-3." David took that and added another four spreadsheet packages that he either knew or had researched. Um. But— Uh— I-I-I had a couple of items in the list, including Lotus 1-2-3, because I found it amusing. And, as always, David took it to the next degree and made it better.

DYLAN: Yeah, he will... often jus— he'll— he'll generally get to the idea. Some people give me really great ri— line reads that are exactly what I wrote, and then some people will take it and be like, "Oh, I get the idea. And so I'll just— I'll just say what Ty Betteridge would say."

BEN: I'm far freer when I am recording other people writing Felix than you writing Felix. So when we did the beach episode, for instance, I was happier to be... sort of far more free and ad libby. But throughout this whole process, I-I'm very, very aware that I'm playing in your sandbox. And although I've got to know Felix relatively well by... writing him for, you know, the best part of two years now, in fact coming up two years. And I've enjoyed sort of playing with him and speaking about him to others, I-I'm still very aware that primarily I am a— a fan. And... you— you've given me a great privilege to be able to explore that character. But it— But at the same time, i-i-it's your world, it's your universe, which is why i-it had to end with nothing being different... at all. We— We've explored the characters, we've explored their views a bit, but

nothing has changed at the end of it in terms of their relationship. You can listen to... *WOE.BEGONE* completely and not know anything about Felix and not know that anything has— ha— never listened to a chronicle episode and no— n— just not notice it at all. I—It can only be a drop-in, it can't be a real thing.

Th— Th— The last thing that I wanted to explore with Felix in— in... in the chronicles was the kind of three... key relationships, which are by now obvious, this will sound trite, but being his mother, his father, and Ty. Interestingly, the— the biggest and realest one of all of them is his relationship with his mother, and that's the only person we never hear from. Um, but she still feels like to me as if she's— she's a character that I— that I got to know. I—I— I sort of e-e-enjoy that she's this sort of looming presence over it all. But, um... but we just never ever hear from her. Uh, I considered at one point voicing her. But I— I sort of— I liked... I liked where we ended up by never hearing her.

DYLAN: I—It feels like s— speaking about those who aren't there is just, like, very core to... like— or especially early *WOE.BEGONE*.

BEN: Yeah, it's a fine tradition. Oh— The other thing as well I was thinking of, you asked me whether, um, Contingency One back in— sorry, Episode Six, it's just occurred to me. So you can drop this in earlier. Whether Contingency One, um, is a connectivity strike. That was in my mind, but also I was thinking of what it means in Episode One of *WOE.BEGONE*. For— For Matt to be alive... and Mike to be the only person who remembered he was dead? At any point? And the inverse of that is for someone to be dead and-or never existed, and the only— only one person ever remembers they ever existed at all. A—And being kind of lost in the inverse of— of the Episode One thing and— and how that could be and how we could get there. Uh, and, of course, um, you having thought a great deal about the physics and technology of your universe, have the— the language of connectivity strike ready to go and explain it in two words when I've just used 40. But, you know, I am a barrister, and I have to use all these words, otherwise I don't get paid.

DYLAN: Alright, Ben. Thank you so much for letting me pick your brain about *The Felix Chronicles*. Is there any concluding thoughts that you want to leave us with about the show?

BEN: I— I don't think so, I don't have anything extra I want to say other than the stuff we've interjected. I listened through your individual commentaries to them. Um. When you recorded them with the individual episodes bit-by-bit over the last six months or so. And I found myself replying on the... the Discord quite often in the commentary section, sort of saying, "Yes, Dylan! You did notice this thing, and that's entirely right." Um... And I'm just... trying to think what some of those were. Um... And now I can't, so... forget it. But i—... I really... was bo— I—I found it enjoyable and occasionally sort of, um, disheartening about how transparent I've been about some stuff, so, um, the thing you picked out straight away from the conversation with his dad when— when Felix says, "Oh, it's not exactly how it works, but it sort of works a bit like this." Um, you said, "I think that's because Ben didn't wanna— didn't wanna impact canon, and he was just

being generous," and I was like, "Yes, yes, that's exactly what was going on, I'm... really sad that I'm not at all surprising."

But no, I've got— I've got no real... extra comment, um, on, um, the chronicles other than the fact that it was just the most amazing journey. And personally it gave me a lot more confidence in my recording and in my writing and in my acting. I'd— I'd done a lot of acting up until 15–20 years ago and then just focused on other stuff. Your faith in me and the— the reaction of the— the— the whole, um, community just filled me with confidence, and my wife saw just how much it sort of lit me up and, um... and how much joy it brought me, so she, you know, bought me a better microphone and— and— and a-all bits and pieces like that, and— and little by little, my recording setup has improved. Uh, and now, you know, I-I've recorded for three or four other podcasts, and I— I'm very, very close to finishing writing... um, something quite fun with a good friend of mine. Um, which will appear at some point, but it— it's only because, um, of your ideas and— and— and the faith y-you showed really, really early.

So the, uh... the kinda final thought for me on the whole of Felix, uh— on *The Felix Chronicles*... um, is thank you. Thank you to you, Dylan, because it's been... really, really super. And, uh, I'm constantly grateful for you using me in your show and for letting me do the mad little chronicle stuff on the side.

DYLAN: Well, thank you, uh, and I'm so glad that you were able to find that inside of my work. Uh, that feels really valuable. It's... It's easy to discount, uh, writing and performing fiction for a living as like something that doesn't really count. Uh, and so it feels really rewarding to see material effects of it.

BEN: A-Art is— is never ever superfluous to society. Art is— is— is the heart, um, really, to me, of— of society. There's... You know, ve— very few of us can sort of add, you know, wealth to the universe or anything like that, but any single person anywhere, whether they're doing it just for themselves and to entertain a couple of friends or whether they're doing it o-on a— a podcast like yours or— or whether they're making, you know, something that— that goes out to millions or billions of people. Uh, art is the way that any single human can contribute to the overall good of humanity. And, uh, it's the only kind of uniform, uh, way that any of us can do it. Um... It's the most primal urge, I think—for me, at least, i-is to create and try to entertain and share stories and— and have a good time, and I love it. And... just as a facilitator of community, there's nothing else quite like it.

DYLAN: I think that is a very poignant place to end it. I had so much fun talking to you, Ben. And this has been the commentary for Intermission XXVI of *WOE.BEGONE*, "The Felix Chronicles." Next week, we will be talking about Episode One of Season 13, "Journaling." And I will see you guys then. Alright. Bye, guys.

BEN: Happy days.

[END Intermission XXXIII.]