

# Ditch Diggers #53

January 24th, 2018

**Theme Song:** [00:00:04] Ditch Diggers appear, ain't no wannabes here. With some not so nice advice for your writing career. To be clear, no punches will be pulled, but the punch may be spiked, how they like before they get on the mic. To my left we got the mighty Mur Lafferty, and if I piss her off, believe me, she'll come after me. And her co-host Matt F'n Wallace on the right, yeah she may be half his height, but she could take him in a fight. So settle in folks, buckle in, and boot up. Time to meddle in a way to make you write or shut up. It's hard work, but the perk is that it's fun and exciting. Facebook will still be there when you're done writing. Ditch Diggers!

**Mur:** [00:00:44] *Ditch Diggers #53* coming to you live from Morgan Freeman's gender neutral statue factory. It's the *Ditch Diggers* with Mur Lafferty and Matt Wallace. How are you Matt?

**Matt:** [00:00:55] I'm good, Mur. I didn't expect the factory to be in New Jersey, oddly. I feel like I judged New Jersey unfairly in that respect. But here we are.

**Mur:** [00:01:03] Yeah. here we are. Often, we make up a room that sounds funny because, Morgan Freeman is cool, and we like to imagine him having a very Winchester like sprawling mansion. But, he just got a SAG award, right? Lifetime Achievement?

**Matt:** [00:01:15] Lifetime Achievement Award from the Screen Actors Guild, yes.

**Mur:** [00:01:17] Yes, and he pointed out that the statue's a dude.

**Matt:** [00:01:24] Yeah, he said it's gender specific and that's the problem with it.

**Mur:** [00:01:26] Yeah. So, go Morgan Freeman!

**Matt:** [00:01:34] We choose our patrons well, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:01:35] We do.

**Matt:** [00:01:36] I'll throw that out there. Morgan is a good dude. He's trying to make the world a better place.

**Mur:** [00:01:46] He is.

**Matt:** [00:01:48] Congratulations, Morgan, because he listens to every episode.

**Mur:** [00:01:50] Yes he does.

**Matt:** [00:01:51] Trying to locate us. He's like ... he's basically like when he played Alex Cross in whatever movie that was. He's like a forensic pathologist trying to figure out our patterns so he can catch us in his sprawling empire, trying to figure out where we'll record from next so he can be there. See, that's the thing I like. I like that he has a Winchester, sprawling estate, but my favorite thing is the idea he's chasing us around constantly like the Animaniacs, trying to kick us the hell out of here. Because we won't stop recording on his property, and he just can't find us, so he's got all the episodes. He obsesses over them, but he's always just-

**Mur:** [00:02:38] And we never do the same place twice.

**Matt:** [00:02:41] We never do. We never ... Go back. Go back through all of our episodes. Two years, we've never once recorded from the same space in Morgan Freeman's estate. So yeah, he obsesses over the episodes, but he's always a day late and dollar short trying to catch up with us. That's what I enjoy. But today I am proud-

**Mur:** [00:02:55] That's because he's busy being awesome.

**Matt:** [00:02:59] ... But today I am proud to be illegally recording on Morgan Freeman's imaginary estate.

**Mur:** [00:03:02] Yes. Me too. So what's going on with you Matt?

**Matt:** [00:03:05] I am adjusting to a new schedule and still trying to figure that schedule out, because I have a full-time job now for the first time in many a year. I'm not even going to say how long it's been, because it's been a long time. But on top of that, I'm still

doing everything else that I was doing before. I'm still writing books, and recording podcasts, and shooting a daily vlog, and doing all that jazz, so I have to figure out how best to structure my life to fit all those things in, and I'm still tweaking the process. It's been, and as my wife warned me it would be, and I scoffed, because I consider myself Superman or whatever ... She is ... It's been harder than I thought it would be, adjusting. But I'm figuring it out. I'm up bright and early. I'm already showered. We're recording this podcast. Right after I record the podcast, I'm going to shoot and post my vlog for the day. Then get to my daily tasks for my full-time job. Still got to find time in there to write the imaginary about the imaginary stuff. So yeah, it's been an adjustment period.

**Mur:** [00:04:09] I'm not even showered yet. So, well done.

**Matt:** [00:04:12] That's OK.

**Mur:** [00:04:13] So, one thing I like about your schedule is that we're going to be recording more often, and I'm going to be recording *I Should Be Writing* as well. Since I'm already recording weekly, I might as well just keep talking. But I want to apologize to the people who get the *Ditch Diggers* directly from my blog, because I put it up for the Patreon people, and then Matt sent me the show notes, and I put it in ... It went into the feed, and it went up on YouTube, but it did not go on the blog because I started traveling, and I never grabbed a moment to post the actual blog post. So, the goal is weekly and it technically was up last week, but only if you subscribe through one of those three methods, not if you just go to [murverse.com](http://murverse.com), so sorry about that. That went up this week, and then this will also go up this week, which is the week of January 21st. Although it's the 24th now.

**Matt:** [00:05:16] We have a very forgiving audience. I feel like they'll let you slide on that one.

**Mur:** [00:05:20] I know, but I'm really trying right now. I'm trying to be on a regular schedule. I'm failing myself, Matt, when I fail them.

**Matt:** [00:05:29] No, no you're not. You're not failing anyone, Mur. You're just ... You're succeeding slowly.

**Mur:** [00:05:36] I'm a professional amateur DJ. So, ConFusion was awesome.

**Matt:** [00:05:44] That's right, you were at ConFusion with everybody and I wasn't, because I'm not cool.

**Mur:** [00:05:50] You were missed. A lot of people talked about *Ditch Diggers*. I feel bad because one of our most vocal supporters is Mike Underwood, and he was there, but for some reason I never hung out with him.

**Matt:** [00:06:08] That's weird.

**Mur:** [00:06:08] It's like, there's Mike, and one of us is talking to somebody else or something, and then suddenly I'm home and I'm going, "Why didn't I talk to Mike?" So Mike, I'm sorry, I wasn't blowing you off if you worried about that. Mike Underwood is awesome.

**Matt:** [00:06:20] [Crosstalk 00:06:21] Mike Underwood is awesome. He can be elusive at Cons though. He's always hustling, and he's always doing something. I remember at WorldCon, the only good time I got to hang out with Mike was I went and found him at whatever booth he was working at. Because he's-

**Mur:** [00:06:31] That's true, he's a writer on his own, but he also works for Angry Robot, so he's very, very busy.

**Matt:** [00:06:37] He is knee deep in this publishing game, Mur. He is a G. So, yeah. We love Mike. Mike's fantastic. I'm a big fan of the [Genrenauts](#) series. If you can check that out. He does that himself. They're very funny, very cool, geeky books. I recommend them wholeheartedly.

**Mur:** [00:06:57] But I'm excited about one thing about a possible future guest. Justina Ireland is a YA author who's coming out with a book that I cannot wait for called [Dread Nation](#).

**Matt:** [00:07:10] Yeah, *Dread Nation*, that's on my must-read list for year.

**Mur:** [00:07:21] It's a post-civil war zombie hunter book. It's zombies, right?

**Matt:** [00:07:26] Yeah.

**Mur:** [00:07:30] Some sort of undead, yeah, but it just looks amazing.

**Matt:** [00:07:33] It really [inaudible 00:07:34]. I love alternate history stuff, and this is a perspective we don't get often in that really ... I'm very excited about that, and Justina, her [Twitter](#) is hot fire all the time. [crosstalk 00:07:43]

**Mur:** [00:07:43] It is. It is.

**Matt:** [00:07:44] I enjoy it very much, so it'd be great to-

**Mur:** [00:07:45] So that's what I was going to bring up, is the fact that I'm not on Twitter very much lately. It's like for mental health. I feel bad when I miss things, but then I'm still happier. So I logged on, and I saw her tweet about ... I think it was the end of a thread, but she's just like, "You know what? Whenever anybody asks me how to get into publishing, this is what I'm going to say." And then there's an animated GIF of a guy putting on sunglasses and saying, "murder." And I posted ... I retweeted it and said, "We have got to get her on *Ditch Diggers*."

**Matt:** [00:08:18] No, I completely agree.

**Mur:** [00:08:18] And she replied that she was up for it, so I'm going to be getting in touch with her publicist to schedule something with her closer to her book launch.

**Matt:** [00:08:23] That would be very cool

**Mur:** [00:08:28] Yes. OK, so we had to take a little break there, which you guys didn't hear, to deal with my very loud dog trying to find the best place where he's satisfied to not be very loud. Sorry about that. I didn't realize the mic was picking it up, but I can't remember what we were talking about, so we don't have a good segue.

**Matt:** [00:08:47] We were talking about Justina Ireland being on the show, possibly, and how excited we were about that. And then I was going to ask you how you're doing, because you asked me how I was doing earlier and I didn't reciprocate, because I'm a callous, callous man.

**Mur:** [00:09:03] I'm doing pretty good.

**Matt:** [00:09:06] You were having some trouble this morning you wanted to talk about, right?

**Mur:** [00:09:09] Yeah. I was having ... well to be fair, I've missed a couple of antidepressants last week, and I always know that it's a delayed effect for me. So, I know that if I have a bad week of missing like two or three (I take two a day), then it's going to hit me in the next week. So, that's probably what this is. But I just woke up, and the dog woke me up, and I'm lying there going, I was going to make my day start well with yoga and breakfast and then I've got all this stuff to do, and I've got cleaning to do, and none of it's worth it. It wasn't ... it didn't feel like the incredible despair of depression of "I don't want to do anything," but really I had a strong feeling of none of this was worth it. And I made myself get up, and I made myself do yoga, and I ate breakfast, and I cleaned up. But, I had an epiphany. And that is, I finally understand the whole mindfulness thing. Like you're supposed ... Like if you sit down to eat, you should sit down and eat and do nothing else and enjoy your food. And I found that boring, frankly. But that's not what it is for me. Because my biggest problem with things like productivity stuff or goal setting books and all that crap, is that it sounds great when I'm listening to it, and then I forget about it. It's not that I can't do it, it's just that I don't even think to do it. And I'm always jealous at the end of the year when people say, "Wow I wrote 500,000 words this year." I'm like, well I wrote a lot, but I didn't track it anywhere. I don't think to track it.

**Mur:** [00:10:56] I realize that what happened was, I'm addicted to a certain computer game right now, and sometimes at night I'll just close my computer, which means it just pauses the game, and then in the morning when I intend on doing work, I open up the computer and there's the game. I have lost hours to this, I'll just be honest. I've lost hours to this because it's right there and I'm excited. And so, I thought, okay, I need to charge my computer and back it up before we talk. And I thought, oh crap, I did it again.

I closed my computer last night in the middle of the game and I thought, no I'm going to go to my computer and I'm going to close the fucking game and I'm going to do my work. And I realize that was being mindful. That was, I'm going to focus on the one thing that I am doing and therefore I'm going to do it. It's not like sit there and make sure you appreciate that broccoli a whole lot. It's make sure that you remember that you're ... well, I guess for eating it's enjoying time with your family or whatever, not being distracted by something else. But when it comes to work if I ... my hope is this, I just had this epiphany like an hour ago, I hope that if I'm mindful, then I'm not going to fuck up by getting distracted by a game or anything really. It's like you plan on this is what I'm going to do. And then do it.

**Mur:** [00:12:40] And that sounds so simple. Oh my god, just saying it out loud sounds so simple. But that's the thing, is I'm not going to take my phone with me. I'm going to sit down and do the thing. And the fact that addicted to technology is a real thing and a thing I struggle with, it is a challenge. It's not that easy. I can't remember if we talked about this last week or not but, I talked about it on *I Should Be Writing*, but my New Year's resolution is actually to get bored more, because-

**Matt:** [00:13:10] To get bored more?

**Mur:** [00:12:40] ... when you're bored your mind just starts racing, and you come up with interesting stuff. And usually, I carry my tablet around and just stream Netflix while I clean up. And today I decided I wasn't going to do that. I was just going to wander around the silent house and clean up. And so, I'm trying out this thing. If I pay attention to what I'm doing, I'll be better at being productive because I'll be focused on stuff.

**Matt:** [00:13:48] But you don't have to savor every bite of broccoli to do that.

**Mur:** [00:13:50] No I don't.

**Matt:** [00:13:55] No, I think that makes a lot of sense, and I think it seems so simple that it should occur naturally. But the truth is, it just doesn't, you know? For some people, it may be easier, but I still think it always takes effort to be mindful and make mindful choices. It's interesting for me to hear that because Nikki and I are doing Weight

Watchers with her mom, and they talk about mindfulness a lot. But it all has to do with food. So, you're talking about not wanting to apply it to your dinner. But, no-

**Mur:** [00:14:21] So how do you apply it to food?

**Matt:** [00:14:21] Well, you're supposed to make mindful choices when you choose what you're eating. You're supposed to ask yourself, "Do I really want ... do I really need this, or do I just want it?" "Am I hungry, or am I actually bored?" If I'm hungry, then I should drink a glass of water first. And if I'm still hungry, then I can eat, but if the water takes care of it, then I didn't really need that food to begin with. You know, stuff like that.

**Mur:** [00:14:43] So that's actually what mindful eating is. It's not savoring broccoli.

**Matt:** [00:14:46] I mean it can be. I think you're just talking about mindfulness in a different context. They do ... but that's part of it, they tell you you're supposed to take more ... being mindful is also taking more time when you eat, and not just wolfing everything down, because you give your stomach a chance to catch up with your brain. They tell you to put down the fork. That's another big one. Not like, "Put down the fork." Not like the way fat shaming people say it: put down the fork and stop eating. Literally, take a bite, put the fork down between bites and give yourself time. Yeah, that's a mindful thing with food which has nothing to do with writing, but it's also relevant to life. I guess my point being, none of these things come naturally. They all take work. It's just for some people they are much easier than they are for other people.

**Mur:** [00:15:36] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:15:38] And it's nothing to be ashamed of or to feel like, "This is so simple, why can't I get this down?"

**Mur:** [00:15:44] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:15:45] And I think there is a lot of shame, and a lot of frustration, and a lot of anger that comes with that, and I think that's why a morning like this can put you in a bad mood. I mean you specifically, Mur, because you were testy when we got on the Skype today. Not with me.

**Mur:** [00:15:59] Well I was worried about where the dogs would be and how much noise they'd be making. So, sorry.

**Matt:** [00:16:03] You had a lot of things going on, and that's ... But I'm saying, the frustration comes with having to acclimate to all these things. There's nothing wrong with that, is my point. It's OK that you were frazzled. We all get frazzled. Even I get frazzled.

**Mur:** [00:16:15] Even you.

**Matt:** [00:16:18] And I call it getting frazzled. So, that's fun. Frazzled's a fun word. Say frazzled, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:16:22] Frazzled.

**Matt:** [00:16:27] I know, that was a good time, wasn't it?

**Mur:** [00:16:27] It was, it was a good time, that moment. So, what are we talking about?

**Matt:** [00:16:35] What are we talking about today?

**Mur:** [00:16:36] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:16:37] Well we were talking about that just then. God, we continue to be monumentally awful at segues, and I love it, I love-

**Mur:** [00:16:46] Yeah, this was a rhetorical question because you know I know the answer.

**Matt:** [00:16:50] I know you know the answer. That's why it caught me off guard. I thought you were asking it sincerely, and then I remembered, oh, we're doing a show and that was a set up and we're professional.

**Mur:** [00:16:59] You do realize that after all this bullshit of “how do we move from one topic to the next,” we're going to be asking for a Hugo nomination if you are inclined, and that just-

**Matt:** [00:17:10] But this is part of our shtick. You need to commit to the shtick, Mur. Everybody has ... everybody needs shtick.

**Mur:** [00:17:20] That's true.

**Matt:** [00:17:20] I said shtick a lot just then.

**Mur:** [00:17:22] You did. Frazzled shtick. That's hard-

**Matt:** [00:17:23] Frazzled?

**Mur:** [00:17:23] ... to say together.

**Matt:** [00:17:24] Frazzled shtick.

**Mur:** [00:17:27] Anyway.

**Matt:** [00:17:27] That would be my 18th century haberdasher name. I must go see Frazzled ... I must go see Frazzled Shtick! He'll know what to do about my hat emergency.

**Mur:** [00:17:39] So if you go to Twitter ... Actually, Matt should be able to find the link to the beginning of the thread. [Fonda Lee](#) had a really interesting thread recently that was honest about money.

**Matt:** [00:17:54] You may recall we had Fonda on our amazing first ever live *Ditch Diggers* where we had everybody play author D&D. And she was fantastic and is fantastic. Fantastic author, fantastic person.

**Mur:** [00:18:08] Yes, and I can't wait to read her new book, and we hope we can get her on the show soon, but this was just recent, and I wanted to talk about it while it was

fresh. But she's talking about money and talking ... being absolutely honest about money. But the first thing she says is, why don't authors talk more about money? Because it's embarrassing.

**Matt:** [00:18:29] Yeah.

**Mur:** [00:18:29] Yeah, and she said it's embarrassing on both sides. It's embarrassing to admit that you worked for a year on something and you made five thousand dollars and that's it. Or it's embarrassing if you happen to get a really good deal, but you know all of your friends made five thousand dollars, and that can create resentment even among the best of friends. But she talks a lot about money, so I wanted to bring that up because we do talk about business here on *Ditch Diggers*.

**Matt:** [00:19:01] This is what we do and how we do it. She's not ... It's a fantastic thing she's doing, and I don't mean ... I'm not trying to be mean in any way, but she's not the first author to be blunt and frank and transparent about how much money they're making. It just doesn't happen often enough. I remember Kameron Hurley has done this several times and-

**Mur:** [00:19:23] Jim Hines.

**Matt:** [00:19:24] ... it seems like every time an author does this, it creates some kind of scandalous atmosphere around it, or some kind of social ripple thing because one, it doesn't happen ... not enough authors do it. Secondly, all the things you just said, Mur. There's a negative air around sharing your income. It's like asking somebody how much their house costs.

**Mur:** [00:19:46] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:19:49] But there shouldn't be, is my point to that. There shouldn't be a stigma around it.

**Mur:** [00:19:53] And you know, there's so many factors that go into how much you earn, at least in advances. Because the publisher takes into account how your book sold last, what you have planned in the future. Not so much what you have in the future, but really

looking at the past and how you've performed in the past. So they're not going to reward you if you've done poorly, even if they think the next book is going to be amazing. It is how good your agent is at negotiating.

**Matt:** [00:20:34] Yeah. That's a huge factor. Who they know and how they negotiate.

**Mur:** [00:20:36] Whether they can get more than one publisher interested in the book.

**Matt:** [00:20:42] Yeah. Bidding war!

**Mur:** [00:20:43] Yeah. So all those things go into account. It's not just, "We're going to give you five thousand dollars."

**Matt:** [00:20:51] No, and I mean, measuring the perspective value of a book or a story is a completely intangible made up thing. Nobody has any idea what's going to be popular and what's not. But that is a factor that comes into play as they're trying ... One of the other things they're trying to do is figure out OK, how appealing is this book, and how well do we think it can do, and how well do we think we could market it? Which is, you know, like throwing knives in the dark, which is one of my favorite hobbies.

**Mur:** [00:21:25] Yes, it is. It is fun.

**Matt:** [00:21:27] Also the name of my new prog rock album, dropping in May.

**Mur:** [00:21:32] Knives in the Dark?

**Matt:** [00:21:34] Throwing Knives in the Dark.

**Mur:** [00:21:34] Throwing Knives in the Dark, sorry.

**Matt:** [00:21:36] All acoustic, Mur. All acoustic. You didn't know what to do with that, did you?

**Mur:** [00:21:37] I did not know what to do with the acoustic, no. So do you think the answer is be ... you think we should be ... people should be more upfront about what they make? With women, there's a weight attached to that. But go ahead, sorry.

**Matt:** [00:21:54] No, no, and I absolutely want to talk about the gender disparity thing and in all aspects of that I think it's ... but just for ... as far as sharing what you make and being transparent about that, I think it's part of it. I think it's a tool. I don't think it's the answer to authors making more money, but you also have to realize that keeping authors twitchy and silent about what they make is also a tactic used by the publishing industry to kind of keep us quiet about the money, so they can pay us whatever they want. That's a common ... the thing is, that sounds very nefarious. That is a very common thing with any industry that is dependent on freelance or for hire workers. They all tend to do that. When I was a professional wrestler, that was actually a huge thing, if I can use professional wrestling as an analogy briefly, Mur, if that's OK.

**Mur:** [00:22:56] No, it's great.

**Matt:** [00:22:57] One of the things when I was coming up as a professional wrestler, and learning the craft, and learning the culture, and learning the etiquette of professional wrestling, one of the big taboos is you'd never ask another wrestler how much money they're making, because not everybody is making the same thing on a show, and it's considered very rude. And I just accepted that when told it originally. I was like, OK, you don't ask or talk about money with other workers. It's an etiquette thing. And that's how it was packaged to me. It was packaged as, this is part of the etiquette of the business you're in, and this is considered rude. What I didn't realize until later, was that it is absolutely a tactic that promoters use to pay workers as little as possible, except for the guys they absolutely had to give money to, whose names had more value or whatever. And early in the 90s in the WWF, the biggest company around, the closest that we ever came as wrestlers to unionization was a small group of top guys in the WWF who formed this clique, and they started breaking that taboo. They started talking to each other about how much they were making, and for a pay-per-view event everybody was paid proportionally to how much money the event made, or at least that was the theory, and how big their role of the pay-per-view was. So, when these guys start talking, they figured out, "Well this guy didn't work as much as me, but he made \$20,000 more than me." And this was a huge problem for the promoters

because suddenly these guys are talking, and every time they talk it costs the promoters money because the one guy who didn't make as much would go back to the promoter and say, "I know for a fact that I performed longer and am drawing more money for you than this guy, and he got paid more money than me. I want another \$20,000."

**Matt:** [00:24:30] So that's a fear that people who deal with freelancers constantly live with, because they want to make choices that are good for their bottom line, the industry and the promoters do. And that doesn't always include being completely upfront and honest and paying people based on merit. And that's the thing, so they don't want their freelancers talking with each other about how much money they make. It's not an etiquette thing. It's not about being rude with each other. It's a tactic industries use to keep certain people underpaid. And that's just something I learned early on. So talking to each other, and being honest about it, is a tool to break that tactic and to take that tactic away from them. But it's not necessarily going to be the answer to fixing the problem, because you also have to have leverage. That's the other thing. Like the analogy I'm using, these were top guys and top performers in the business, so they could get away with that. If it's a bunch of ... we're talking about people who make \$5,000 as an advance for a book or whatever, 10 of those people in a room talking about how much they make are not going to have any pull in the industry, and they're not going to worry the industry because they're talking to each other. You know, it's just a leverage thing. You really need the top earners to get together. That's how that shit really starts to get cooking. So that's my take on it. But you also wanted to talk about the weight attached to being a woman doing this.

**Mur:** [00:26:01] Just that people are more used to ... well, they think women don't need money because men provide for them. I remember when Amanda Palmer did a very successful Kickstarter, someone's like, "She's married to Neil Gaiman, who's got more money than God, why does she need this?" And-

**Matt:** [00:26:18] Why can't he just pay for it? Yeah, right, I remember that.

**Mur:** [00:26:23] And it's like, they don't like women earning money. There's something in the brain that says, no this is wrong, which is why we get paid less. But when we talk

about it, we get a lot more pushback of, “You don't need ... Why do you need that much? The book wasn't that good.” That doesn't happen to dudes.

**Matt:** [00:26:52] No, it absolutely doesn't. Yeah, it's a pure misogyny thing. And people don't ... You know what kills me about when people act like these things ... like when we talk about wage gaps and people are like, “Ah, wage gap, that's not a thing. Everybody's paid on merit.” It's just incredible to me how people are able to dismiss prevalent attitudes that, not only still exists, but even on a widespread thing when women were ... when in the days when there was no such thing as a sexual harassment lawsuit, and women were just openly seen as second class citizens in the workplace. That was not long ago when that was a real attitude like you're talking about. Women were not seen as people who needed to earn money. That's a real attitude that exists in America not decades ago. And we have this tremendous ability to dismiss those attitudes like we were able to cure all that in the interim somehow, and there's not going to be any fallout from that, so it's ridiculous that any remnants of that long-ago time can still exist now, when it really wasn't that long ago that it was fairly standard procedure to pay women way less than men. And even if it's gotten a little better, we still retain that wage gap attitude because of that stuff. And it's remarkable to me. I think it comes from a place ... It comes from several different places, but the thing that always hits on me about that, is no one likes hearing about privilege, because automatically they feel like it's demeaning their accomplishments. Or whatever they've accomplished they haven't earned or somehow makes them less. I think that's a big knee jerk reaction that people have. Which, you know, is also a bunch of crap. But that's a real thing when women talk about money. There's this huge pushback. Saw it with ... Again, talking about Kameron Hurley, I saw a bunch of comments that reeked of that back when she did it, which was, “Why do you need money?” Which is such a ridiculous attitude to have. “You should be grateful you made anything for this.”

**Mur:** [00:28:48] Oh yeah, the gratefulness.

**Matt:** [00:28:48] “Put it in your pin money and move on.”

**Mur:** [00:28:51] What's really funny is that we supposedly live in a capitalist society that doesn't ask how much money you need, and therefore you should get that and nothing else. And if people are going to pay me X number of dollars for a book, then they have

the right to do that. And if you don't think the book's worth that, who cares, and fuck you. It's just a huge mess, really.

**Matt:** [00:29:25] Yeah, and that's a good circumstance. That's when you're paid an amount of money that they see as excessive. Try making the argument to people that your work is actually worth more than you're being paid. That's even harder. Because I think the only thing people and those people enjoy more than telling you you didn't earn the money that you got, is reinforcing the fact that you're not worth anything and you don't deserve any money. They love shitting on you about that. So it makes it impossible for the people at the bottom, or even the middle, to make any headway, because the people at the top are taking shit for the money they are making. It's just, it's such a backwards ass viewpoint, and it's so prevalent and so widespread. But I think that's also why it's important that people like Fonda and Kameron Hurley and everybody do these things, because the more you do it, the more you break through that barrier. The more common you make it, the more it starts to alter people's attitudes, or at least gets them to shut the fuck up about it. But I think one of the problems with this is it is too rare. So every time it happens, it becomes this isolated incident happening in a vacuum. You know with everybody going after just Fonda for talking about this, it becomes about an author instead of what they're talking about and an industry problem that they're talking about. It becomes personalized. Instead of examining the issue and how it affects everybody, we focus on the one person sharing this information and whether or not they should be doing that. It's the whole derailment thing.

**Matt:** [00:30:59] Which is a base tactic that just continues to be so effective in preventing any actual change anywhere. You know the minute you derail the argument, you impede any kind of potential progress that raising that issue is going to make in the first place. And it happens every single time. And I would rather talk to the people who get embroiled in that argument than ... I don't need to say anything to Fonda. Fonda knows what she's doing. She's fantastically talented and confident and is doing the right thing. I would talk to the people who get embroiled in the argument about, "Should she be sharing these numbers?" "Is it a good thing for authors to talk about their money?" And get those people to realize that even if they're arguing on the positive side, they're participating in derailing what she's actually trying to do by talking about this stuff. We should be focusing on what authors make, why they make that, and how can they make more money than they're getting. That's what I would like to talk ... That is the core

issue, and what I would like to talk about. So that would be my thing to people out there who get into this stuff. When this happens with authors and get embroiled in those discussions is, considering what you're doing by arguing with the people about what you're arguing about, and are you actually focusing on the core issues, or are you getting involved in the derailment of those core issues? I think that's important.

**Mur:** [00:32:20] I agree.

**Matt:** [00:32:21] So what's the next ... So, how do you build on this, Mur? That's what we really need to talk about. How do you build on what Fonda is doing? How do you take it to the next level? How do you keep the discussion going, and how do you turn that discussion into something that is affecting?

**Mur:** [00:32:40] I guess more people have to talk straight about what they're making.

**Matt:** [00:32:51] And so you think that is something that should happen? Like all authors should do that?

**Mur:** [00:32:53] It's hard to say that, because immediately I balk. I mean, I can give percentages. Like, because *Shambling Guides* did not do as well as Orbit wanted, my advance for *Six Wakes* was less by 30%. You know, I could say when I earn out. Last year I earned out both *Shambling Guides* and *Six Wakes*, so now I'm going to be receiving royalty money, which is awesome.

**Matt:** [00:33:24] Always a good thing, yeah. But I think ... is it 'bak' or 'balk?' I've never been clear on that.

**Mur:** [00:33:32] Balk. B-A-L-K.

**Matt:** [00:33:34] I know, but do you pronounce the 'L' when you say it?

**Mur:** [00:33:35] I think so.

**Matt:** [00:33:38] It doesn't matter. I'm derailing now by going off on this tangent.

What occurred to me when you were saying that just then, is I understand ... I absolutely understand how difficult it is to belly up to the bar and be honest about this stuff. But stuff like your last book underperforming and a publisher wanting to give you less for a next book, if they agree to do a next book with you, I absolutely think that's something that needs to be discussed and shared with people. Because people who get in that situation, I think, are going to be totally unprepared for it most of the time. When you found yourself in that situation, Mur, were you surprised by it? Were you prepared for it? Did you expect it?

**Mur:** [00:34:22] That was a weird, weird time. They had said they didn't want any more *Shambling Guides*, but they had the option on my next book. So I pitched a couple of ideas. I pitched them three ideas, and they picked my least favorite one and offered a one book deal for less money, and I was unsure about what to do. My agent pointed out that I will have ... I had a drought without a book from 2014 to beginning of 2017. So, she said, "You need to publish another book." And I thought it was just all weird. It's like, they pick my least favorite one, and then offered me less for it, and it took me a while to come around to the fact of ... that I was going to take it. And nothing in this book has happened the way I thought it would, starting from the very beginning, and it's just been weird. So ...

**Matt:** [00:35:38] No, it is weird. I mean, that's kind of my point though, is there's so many ... You find yourself in such awkward, unfamiliar, tenuous positions that nobody prepares you for. You know? And you don't know how to deal with them, and I think, I really do think this relates to the money thing. Because it all becomes based around money, around deals, and around the dynamics of deals that involve money, and we don't discuss these things enough. And I guess the point I'm trying to make is, like with Fonda, there's talking about dollar figures. But I think even if you're getting offered, say, more money than you heard an author talking about getting, the dynamics of the deal that surrounded whatever they were offered that money for, that might relate to your situation. You might be able to take something away from that that you could use in your negotiations. So when we don't talk about money, we're also not educating people about the deals and the conditions and the dynamics that surround that money in this business. Does that make sense, what I'm saying?

**Mur:** [00:36:40] Yeah, yeah. It makes sense.

**Matt:** [00:36:42] So it's not purely about transparency in the numbers so we can all figure out how to get paid more, it's also about a lack of business edu ... which is what we talk about on this podcast all the time. It's a lack about business education surrounding publishing deals and how they work and how they come out, which is another thing we need to talk about more. So I think it just opens a gate of stuff that we really need to hear more about and that authors need to learn more about. Because I think that would have helped you in that particular situation to talk to authors who had been exactly where you were before, and hear how they dealt with it and what their deciding factors were. We just need like a hive brain of knowledge, Mur. We need like something you could hook your brain up to and you can access the knowledge of all authors.

**Mur:** [00:37:21] Isn't that kind of what Twitter is? Not Twitter, but the internet?

**Matt:** [00:37:31] Not really. I don't think. Because you get ... it's obfuscated by words. I'm talking about knowledge. Because people lie, that's the thing. That's why we're talking about Fonda being unique and sharing her numbers with people. Not everybody does that. They talk in generalities, and then when you get in generalities, you're tempted to tweak facts or tweak perceptions or omit things to make yourself seem more favorable than you are. So words obfuscate truth and knowledge. I want to just be able to plug my brain into something and just have access to unfettered knowledge and facts about what actually happened.

**Mur:** [00:38:12] Yeah, that would be cool. Unfortunately, what you're saying is nigh impossible.

**Matt:** [00:38:18] It is, but I'm trying to make a point.

**Mur:** [00:38:21] Yes.

**Matt:** [00:38:30] Which is, we obfuscate facts and perspective with our own tainted version of things, I guess is what I was going for. Especially authors who lie for a living. That's the other thing, we're conditioned to manipulate reality, which is another reason why, and I'm not joking, I'm actually kind of being serious and making a serious point, is

not that if you don't tell everybody exactly how much you're making, you're lying to people. But I think it's one more thing that lends to ... And the thing is, I've done this in the past. I think we all do this in some respects. We comport ourselves as more successful and more important and more viable than we actually are sometimes. Especially early on when you start to publish books but you're not very well known, your books aren't doing very well, you want credibility, and you want the perception that you're valuable and that your books are good and that you're doing well. So you kind of let people think that, and you do certain things to encourage, even if it's subconsciously or passively. And I think that's counterproductive to what ... to the stuff we're talking about here with trying to peel those layers back and be honest about things, and honestly educate people and get us to a place where we all have access to the same information and have the same perspective and the same education about business.

**Mur:** [00:39:47] Yeah. I don't got nothing to say to that. You're ... I agree.

**Matt:** [00:39:53] It's just interesting. It's interesting how, I don't know, we create so many defense mechanisms to compensate for the lack of things in our industry and our profession and in our careers. Particularly, yeah ... Particularly writers.

**Mur:** [00:40:02] We're going to do the thing, you know, they say don't ... the things you see about other people, especially when they post online, you're seeing their highlight reel, and don't compare your rough draft to someone else's highlight reel, when of course your rough draft is always in your mind. When we present ourselves, we make our own highlight reel.

**Matt:** [00:40:23] Yeah. We learn how to create our own highlight reel from watching other people's highlight reels. Yeah, and we definitely do it ourselves. Part of that is marketing, and part of that, I think, is even ... there's a legitimate need for it, but a lot of that is also just an ego emotional psychological defense mechanism against being perceived as a loser, really. I mean, I think that's really what it comes down to is, past it all, you feel like you're a loser, like you haven't done ... And I'm talking, again, I'm talking about stuff I've experienced personally. You feel like you didn't do well enough, or you're not doing enough, or you're not rising to the level of everybody around you. You feel like you have to present this persona to be allowed into the club, right?

**Mur:** [00:41:14] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:41:15] You don't want to be sent back down to the minors with all the wannabe writers, because you remember being a wannabe writer. You remember before you had anything published, and you were on the outside looking in, and now maybe you've got a couple of books under your belt or whatever, and you've been sort of allowed admittance into the club, and you start to hobnob with other authors. You start to be included in Twitter chains and Twitter conversations, and it's like you have to maintain this credibility to stay part of that. Because of the absence of money and actual professional success, that's all the stuff that is validated and keeps you going, and that's what becomes validated and keeps you going. And you start attaching a value to that social professional peer credibility. That becomes a huge part of your existence. And it's another thing that obfuscates reality, and takes attention away from the shit that you should be focusing on. And I just, I wish we could all be more honest about everything. Really, I think honesty is the key.

**Mur:** [00:42:08] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:42:10] Not that there isn't value in community and professional peers and those relationships, not that you don't need that, but it shouldn't be a substitute for the actual goals you want to accomplish in your career. You know what I mean?

**Mur:** [00:42:24] Yeah, although I did think you were going to say, "Not that we shouldn't lie to each other too," but you didn't say that, so ...

**Matt:** [00:42:30] Well, you know. We will always lie to each other, Mur. As long as we remain human beings in our current form, we will lie to each other constantly. We lie to each other a hundred times a day in little tiny ways. It's just the thing ... It's just the thing we do. We're insecure little organisms, and we always will be. So, yeah. What are we arriving at here, Mur? Is there a conclusion that we come to from all of this?

**Mur:** [00:42:53] Honesty is good, but it's also difficult. We are insecure little organisms.

**Matt:** [00:43:14] Fonda Lee is much braver than all of us.

**Matt:** [00:43:16] Fonda Lee is much braver than all of us.

**Matt:** [00:43:19] We should make her Empress of Publishing, I think.

**Mur:** [00:43:21] Will she still write, though?

**Matt:** [00:43:16] I assume, yes, she would still write. I don't ... She would have ceremonial duties, but I think she could find time to still-

**Mur:** [00:43:26] Because I don't think the Queen does much.

**Matt:** [00:43:31] Well, you know, this would be a new structure. That's why I didn't say queen, I said empress.

**Mur:** [00:43:33] I know, I'm thinking of the Queen of England, though.

**Matt:** [00:43:37] Right, but she's not an empress.

**Mur:** [00:43:42] We know you all tune in for semantic arguments between me and Matt, so, you're welcome.

**Matt:** [00:43:48] I actually ... I think they do to a certain extent. I think that's part of the entertainment value. But I don't know, Mur. I just, these are important things, and I don't know. It's always ... taking it to the next level is very hard. It's like, I look at Fonda, and I say, "That is a good thing she is doing." In the end, nothing widespread or wide-changing will probably come of it. Maybe she'll make a few more people wiser for the wear, and that's a valid thing. I think that makes it worth doing in and of itself, but I look at what she's doing, and it takes guts and moxie to do that. It takes a lot to put yourself out there, and I want her to get ... I want her, and everyone else who makes that attempt, to get maximum return on their investments of themselves putting themselves out there like that. And I just don't know how to get it to that next level and make sure that it does. And that makes me sad, you know?

**Matt:** [00:44:44] But I think all those things factor ... and at least it got us talking about it, and now everybody else is hearing us, and I hope people will take something away

from all that. Maybe even just be a little more aware in their own careers and their own pursuits of this from everything we've said, and maybe not fall into some of those perceptual traps that we set for ourselves. Perceptual bear traps that we set for ourselves, Mur. We're messed up.

**Mur:** [00:45:14] I know, I know. We set our own traps all the time.

**Matt:** [00:45:15] We really do. If they were physical traps, they'd haul you off to an asylum. They really would. If you heard some guy set a bear trap for himself and then stepped in it, you'd be like, "That motherfucker's crazy! Cart him off." Like he's ... obviously. But if you set an emotional trap that is every bit as psychologically damaging as a bear trap is physically damaging, then you are just ... you're part of the group. That's perfectly normal behavior. We all do that. You kind of shrug, you're like, "Eh, what can you do?" We all set emotional traps for ourselves. I know, that got really deep, didn't it?

**Mur:** [00:45:51] Yeah, it did. It did.

**Matt:** [00:46:53] That will really fuck with who you are when you start to think about it like that. I'm helping nothing. I'm just making everything worse. You're not ... No one is equipped to deal with any of the stuff I'm talking about, and I should really learn to pull back. Because I'm just giving you complexes and problems that you're not going to be able to resolve on your own, and I apologize.

**Mur:** [00:46:15] Yay! So, while people did help by re-Tweeting Matt on his call for Twitter, I don't see that anybody has actually asked us any questions, unless they didn't tag me, so ...

**Matt:** [00:46:25] It's very early in the morning, Mur. We're not getting that late afternoon or early evening traffic.

**Mur:** [00:46:43] I see. Well-

**Matt:** [00:46:46] I'm just making excuses.

**Mur:** [00:46:46] No, no. Sure, sure.

**Matt:** [00:46:52] Lying! That's what I'm doing.

**Mur:** [00:46:52] Lying, yeah. Well we haven't gotten any new emails, either. This is going to be the problem with recording so frequently, we're going to have a lot fewer-

**Matt:** [00:47:02] Questions.

**Mur:** [00:47:02] ... feedback stuff. But remember, if you have any questions, you can email us at [mightymur@gmail.com](mailto:mightymur@gmail.com). And then we will put it on the show. Just make sure you say *Ditch Diggers* in the subject line.

**Matt:** [00:47:08] The thing is we'll start to get questions two hours from ... I'm being totally serious, this is what actually happens. We'll start to get questions like two hours from now after we've already recorded.

**Mur:** [00:47:10] Yeah. Well, you can mark them ... mark what they are, and then we'll address them next week.

**Matt:** [00:47:18] We'll save them for next time, when hopefully I'm coughing less, and the dogs are barking less.

**Mur:** [00:47:23] Yeah. Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:47:25] But that's life, Mur. That's just life.

**Mur:** [00:47:29] Before we get to the promised Matt saying his Hugo recommendations, I would like to say Ursula K. Le Guin died yesterday, and that is a very sad thing.

**Matt:** [00:47:41] That is a very sad thing. I was very sad to hear about it. I always hoped I'd get to meet her at least once, and I never did. And I will always be very, very sad about that. She was brilliant.

**Mur:** [00:47:53] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:47:53] Brilliant!

**Mur:** [00:47:53] Frighteningly so.

**Matt:** [00:47:54] Yeah, just one of those writers who makes you realize, "I will never be that good, no matter how hard I try." You either have that or you don't. At least that's what it makes me think.

**Mur:** [00:48:09] Well, I think she's somebody who sees ... she saw the ... what was worthy in life, and she made her priorities, like most of us can't do. So she wrote essays, she wrote books, she wrote book reviews, she wrote writing books, and she kept doing it. I don't know if she'd done any fiction lately, but she kept writing her essays. And I think there's a new one out even, a collection. But she was just brilliant. She's ... and we've ... She was super old. Well 88. And so, it's not a shock, like when Octavia Butler died. That was a huge shock. And, I don't know where I'm going with this, I'm sorry. I'm not trying to say it's not sad, but it's like, you could look back and say, "Damn! You had a shit ton of a career, and it was amazing."

**Matt:** [00:49:20] No, nobody ... Yeah, I understand, everybody understands what you're saying. That's the thing, it always gets awkward when you want to say someone lived a full life, so it isn't as sad that they died [inaudible 00:49:31] that they died 20 years earlier. Because that sounds harsh, but it's absolutely the truth. I am very happy that we had ... we got to enjoy and experience Ursula K. Le Guin for as long as we did. I'm grateful for that and I'm grateful that she stuck around for as long as she deigned to. I say, because I assume Ursula just decided when she was done.

**Mur:** [00:49:48] Yes, she shuffled off the mortal coil. Decided to.

**Matt:** [00:49:53] No, she lived an immensely full life, and that's not a platitude or ... it's the truth. A lot of people don't get to do that. It's very cool that she got to do that. I'm glad that she got to do that. And I'm less sad for, I guess for her, than I am for the rest of us who just, like I said, I never got the chance to meet her. I would have read anything else she put out for as long as she was able to do it. I'm sorry that we were deprived any more of her words. I'm sorry for us. I think that's what it usually boils down to.

**Mur:** [00:50:23] Yeah, but she has a lot of stuff out there. So, if you're sad, go see if there's something you haven't read, because there's probably something.

**Matt:** [00:50:36] There definitely is.

**Mur:** [00:50:38] I mean she even ... She has a translation of the *Tao Te Ching*.

**Matt:** [00:50:41] That's insane.

**Mur:** [00:50:41] Yeah. So yes, we're ... A truly amazing writer, a grandmaster, and ... I would have liked to meet her, but I always had this secret fear that she would not have liked me.

**Matt:** [00:50:50] That she would not have liked you? What are you talking about?

**Mur:** [00:50:52] Yeah. I don't know.

**Matt:** [00:50:54] Ohhh, wow. We got-

**Mur:** [00:50:55] I know, it's pathetic. It's so sad.

**Matt:** [00:50:57] That is ridiculous, she would have loved you. Who doesn't love you?

**Mur:** [00:51:01] Oh, well there are some, but-

**Matt:** [00:51:05] Well, there are some people that don't like cake, that doesn't mean ...

**Mur:** [00:51:11] I am cake! I am the cake of science fiction.

**Matt:** [00:51:27] You are the ... Mur, you are the cake of science fiction and don't ever forget that.

**Mur:** [00:51:27] Exactly. So, do you want to talk about your Hugo thoughts?

**Matt:** [00:51:33] Oh yeah, that was the thing I was supposed to do, wasn't it?

**Mur:** [00:51:34] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:51:35] I will be honest, I prepared nothing, but I suppose I can shoot from the hip a little. You know there's a little novel called *Six Wakes* that I enjoyed very much in 2017.

**Mur:** [00:51:57] Thank you for that.

**Matt:** [00:51:58] You know you scoffed, you know you're trending right now. You know your book is trending?

**Mur:** [00:52:01] Trending?

**Matt:** [00:52:04] Yeah, on like fandom, the Hugo nominees 2018 Wiki. You're trending, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:52:07] Oh, I did not know trending was a thing on the Wiki.

**Matt:** [00:52:10] Yes, you're trending on the Wiki. I know that because it says 'trending,' and then you're one of like four books under that.

**Mur:** [00:52:18] Wow.

**Matt:** [00:52:20] People are talking, dude. People are talking. Here's the thing, Mur. All bullshit aside, if I didn't think you'd written a book worthy of an award, I wouldn't say anything. I really wouldn't. I honestly wouldn't. I wouldn't bring it up. I wouldn't go out of my way to say, "Hey, Mur? You know that book you wrote? It's not award worthy." I wouldn't do that, either, but I wouldn't push it. I honestly think that *Six Wakes* was as good as any of the top books from last year. I think it is entirely award worthy and I would like to see it. I would like to see you do the hat trick. So that is what ... I'm going to make that my top pick. I don't care that I'm biased. I still entirely stand by that position. I read the book and it is worthy. It is absolutely worthy of all the awards.

**Matt:** [00:53:15] Another one I would put forth is *Null States* by Malka Older. Malka? Is that how you pronounce ... Yeah, Malka Older.

**Mur:** [00:53:28] I think so.

**Matt:** [00:53:28] I love that series that she's doing. I think it's one of the smartest SF series' going. That's the second book in the series, I believe, and that is eligible this year. And the first book in that series was her first novel, which is bananas to me. So that was good, and *Null States* was just as good as the first book too, so I would absolutely ... I know second books ... second books generally don't .... do they generally get nominated for awards? They generally don't, do they?

**Mur:** [00:54:09] Usually not, but, the-

**Matt:** [00:54:12] If the first one didn't?

**Mur:** [00:54:13] Yeah, definitely not. If the first one didn't. But-

**Matt:** [00:54:18] I don't care.

**Mur:** [00:54:18] Because I was about to say, there's Jemisin's, but she was-

**Matt:** [00:54:19] She was nominated.

**Mur:** [00:54:20] ... an anomaly. But she did win the first one. Nominated and won, for the first one.

**Matt:** [00:54:24] Right. But I don't care. That series deserves recognition, because I really think it's that good. What else was good in novels this past year that I think could do the dance? I didn't read *The Baron and the Nightingale*, but I heard good-

**Mur:** [00:54:43] Neither did I, but a lot of people have talked about it.

**Matt:** [00:54:47] Yeah, I'm just literally looking at books now. I mean, I'll always vote for Margaret Atwood. Whatever. Oh, you know novellas, *River of Teeth* by Sarah Gailey. That was amazing. That should win an award.

**Mur:** [00:54:59] Yeah, that was seriously ... Also, *All Systems Red*.

**Matt:** [00:55:02] *All Systems Red*, there you go, that's-

**Mur:** [00:55:03] The *Murderbot* book.

**Matt:** [00:55:04] I'll put that on mine, as well. In terms of short stories, trying to remember what I really liked this year.

**Mur:** [00:55:15] Short stories are so hard, and I even-

**Matt:** [00:55:17] Yeah, short stories are-

**Mur:** [00:55:18] ... edit them.

**Matt:** [00:55:22] You do. Did you make recommendations for short stories?

**Mur:** [00:55:29] No, I didn't. But we do have a post at [escapepod.org](http://escapepod.org) about which stories are award ... qualify for awards this year. So all the new stories and the ones we got for reprints but were still ... came out originally in 2017.

**Matt:** [00:55:49] So, I don't know. If Brooke Bolander wrote anything that's eligible this year, I'd vote for Brooke. She's amazing.

**Mur:** [00:55:57] Yeah, I think her first novella came out, but in 2018, didn't it?

**Matt:** [00:56:01] Yeah, that just dropped like this week, like literally yesterday. So that's not ... That will be eligible next year. And that will probably win something next year because that's ... I have read that, and that's amazing. Everything she does is amazing. Iconoclastic gem, everything she writes.

**Matt:** [00:56:18] You know, I wrote some novellas, Mur. That would be shameless to put myself on the list, so I won't do that. But yeah, I don't know. *Six Wakes* and *Null States* are honestly, those are the first two books that came to my mind. So I'm going to stick with that. And Sarah Gailey and *River of Teeth* for best novella. Putting that out there.

**Mur:** [00:56:46] Yeah. Obama read *The Power*.

**Matt:** [00:56:47] I'm sorry, what?

**Mur:** [00:56:49] Obama. Read *The Power*. Listed *The Power* on one of his favorite books of 2017.

**Matt:** [00:56:55] That's really cool.

**Mur:** [00:56:56] Yeah, I know.

**Mat:** [00:57:00] I just want to hear him ... I thought you meant he narrated it. I was like, I want to hear that.

**Mur:** [00:57:03] He has so much free time now. Why not?

**Matt:** [00:57:05] Just go around narrating books. Oh man, I would love to have him narrate something I wrote. That'd be crazy.

**Mur:** [00:57:08] Oh, *An Unkindness of Magicians* by Kat Howard. That was-

**Matt:** [00:57:15] Ah yeah, Kat.

**Mur:** [00:57:16] ... pretty amazing.

**Matt:** [00:57:17] Love Kat. Anyway, I'm going ... We'll go with that, because we need to wrap the show up, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:57:24] Yeah, we do. All right. You do your pitch first. Your shilling.

**Matt:** [00:57:31] Well, since we're talking about the Hugo's, Mur, did you know that this podcast that we're doing right now, *Ditch Diggers*, is eligible for a Hugo Award for Best Fancast? Did you further know we were nominated last year for Best Fancast?

**Mur:** [00:57:42] I did know that.

**Matt:** [00:57:42] Though we did not win.

**Mur:** [00:57:44] We did not win, but we were nominated.

**Matt:** [00:57:49] We very much would like the opportunity to go to San Jose as nominees in 2018 and finally take the award home. That would mean a lot to me and Mur to do that. So if you're a Hugo voter, or you know Hugo voters, you might mention it, and you might vote for it if you're able to vote for it. If you're not able to vote for it, but you know Hugo voters, I would have a custom cake made that says 'Vote for Ditch Diggers for Best Fancast 2018.' I would give that to the Hugo voters that you know to make them aware of it, because Mur-

**Mur:** [00:58:17] Because I am the cake.

**Matt:** [00:58:26] Mur is the cake of SF/F, that is the thing that is true. So do that, and we'll see you in San Jose. Aside from that, my own personal crap. [Gluttony Bay](#), the sixth and penultimate book in my signature series is out now. The series concludes next year with [Taste of Wrath](#) coming out in April. I would really appreciate it if you haven't checked out the series yet to go back and start with the first book: [Envy of Angels](#), and get caught up so you could experience this epic finale of this seven book series with the rest of us.

**Mur:** [00:58:53] It's amazing. It's an amazing series.

**Matt:** [00:58:55] It is amazing. It really is. Thank you for that, Mur. My other novella out right now, [Rencor: Llife in Grudge City](#) from Parts Unknown Publishing. Get it on Amazon in permanent and e-book form. Luchadores, buddy cops, monsters, mayhem, bacon wrapped hot dogs, everything that's good. And of course, I do my daily vlog on my YouTube channel: [Angry Writer](#). Do them every week day. I try to tell stories and tell hard truths. People send in fan art of my mascot for the vlog, Hamshackle Pig, and we have a good time. So go check that out and subscribe to that, Angry Writer on YouTube. And those are my things, Mur. What are your things?

**Mur:** [00:59:36] My things are [Six Wakes](#), the Philip K. Dick nominated novel, woo!

**Matt:** [00:59:43] Soon to be Nebula and Hugo nominated. HAT TRICK!

**Mur:** [00:59:49] Dude, I'm happy with one nomination, seriously.

**Matt:** [00:59:50] #hattrick.

**Mur:** [00:59:52] No, it's not ... Seriously, stop.

**Matt:** [01:00:00] #hattrick.

**Mur:** [01:00:01] That is murder, clones, space, spaceship stuff.

**Matt:** [01:00:06] But not space deli. It's not a space-

**Mur:** [01:00:08] No space deli. I might put a space deli in my next thing. But ... And then if you like to write, which we hope you do because you're listening to this, my book [I Should Be Writing](#) came out in August and it is ... I suppose that would be eligible for Best Related Work but, yeah, it's fiction ... It's nonfiction. It was a lot of fun to write and yeah.

**Matt:** [01:00:36] And it's a book that you can write in.

**Mur:** [01:00:36] Yes, it is a workbook.

**Matt:** [01:00:43] That shit got meta!

**Mur:** [01:00:44] Indeed. I forgot to tell you, I read from a brand-new novel at ConFusion.

**Matt:** [01:00:57] Did you really?

**Mur:** [01:00:59] Yeah, yeah, something I ... I had like a thousand words, and Friday afternoon I ran upstairs and I wrote another thousand words, and then I read them. Out loud. It was kind of crazy, so ...

**Matt:** [01:01:04] Wow, that is so unlike you, and I applaud you for that.

**Mur:** [01:01:07] And people liked it, so that was awesome.

**Matt:** [01:01:14] Of course they liked it! You are tremendously talented, why wouldn't they like it?

**Mur:** [01:01:15] Because it was a super rough draft.

**Matt:** [01:01:19] Well, that is very encouraging. You should write more of the thing that people liked, and you should send it to me so I can read it. They got to read it and I didn't get to read it? Or hear it and I didn't get to read it? That's not fair.

**Mur:** [01:01:30] Yes. You weren't there!

**Matt:** [01:01:32] I know I wasn't there. Thank you for rubbing it in. Can I also just say to the audience, so Mur texts me pictures from these cons, and she takes a picture from the Con that I'm not at, with my agent. Semi-mocking me, I felt. In the middle of the night.

**Mur:** [01:01:46] It was nothing like that. It was not mocking. It's, "Hey, there's that guy we both like. Let's send him a picture. Say we miss him."

**Matt:** [01:01:59] It was like that "if she'd stolen my date at the High School Prom" thing. That was the tone of the picture that I got.

**Mur:** [01:02:06] Yes, he did say that he's dropping you and stealing me away from Jen, after our immense night of bonding of taking one selfie together.

**Matt:** [01:02:10] Who wouldn't drop me for a Hugo-Nebula-Philip K. Dick nominated author? Come on. Which you will be after-

**Mur:** [01:02:20] No.

**Matt:** [01:02:20] ... you get the #hatrick.

**Mur:** [01:02:22] I won't send you any more pictures from cons if you're going to be so annoying about it. I thought it was saying "we were thinking of you." Also, "look at your agent's crazy glitter-filled eyebrows."

**Matt:** [01:02:42] No, I enjoyed it immensely, and I do enjoy the pics from cons, it's just, I was sad that I wasn't there, that's all.

**Mur:** [01:02:51] We were sad too!

**Matt:** [01:02:53] Yeah, but it was ... No, I enjoyed the glitter very much. DongWon looked beautiful, and so did you. Thank you for sending me con pics. I'm just giving you shit.

**Mur:** [01:02:58] I know.

**Matt:** [01:02:59] Except about the hat trick, that's actually going to happen.

**Mur:** [01:03:07] Okay, you can think that. I find that hoping for that will lead to despair most likely so-

**Matt:** [01:03:19] Dude, you're trending.

**Mur:** [01:03:19] ... I'm just going to be grateful for the one that I have.

**Matt:** [01:03:23] Trending! Nothing you can do about. You're trending. Accept it. But yeah, go buy all of Mur's books, including the one you can write in.

**Mur:** [01:03:30] And go buy all of Matt's, because *Sin du Jour* is awesome, and you're going to want to be all caught up.

**Matt:** [01:03:32] Thank you. You could write in my books, too, but you're not really supposed to. But if that's your thing, man, once you buy it, you can do whatever you want with it. You want to do weird sex stuff with it, I'm totally fine with that.

**Mur:** [01:03:45] Just don't tell us at the *Ditch Diggers* email address.

**Matt:** [01:03:50] Well, I'm vaguely interested.

**Mur:** [01:03:56] What better note to end the show on! The podcast, you could find it at: [murverse.com](http://murverse.com), and you can e-mail me at: [mightymur@gmail.com](mailto:mightymur@gmail.com). I am on Twitter intermittently as: [@mightymur](https://twitter.com/mightymur).

**Matt:** [01:04:09] And I'm on Twitter: [@MattFnWallace](https://twitter.com/MattFnWallace). And yeah, I'm sure I have other things, but they're not coming to mind.

**Mur:** [01:04:12] Don't you have a website?

**Matt:** [01:04:20] [matt-wallace.com](http://matt-wallace.com). There you go, thank you. I just kinda trailed off there. Again, I haven't been feeling well.

**Mur:** [01:04:28] I know. I'm sorry, dude. Go drink some tea or something.

**Matt:** [01:04:32] I drink all the tea.

**Mur:** [01:04:34] You can't have the tea I have.

**Matt:** [01:04:36] I spill tea too, Mur, that's the thing I do.

**Mur:** [01:04:40] I'm so proud of you.

**Matt:** [01:04:41] I know.

**Remember you can support the show (and also get the podcasts and transcriptions earlier) at [patreon.com/mightymur](https://patreon.com/mightymur).**

**Gail:** [01:04:48] I'm Gail Carriger, and I travel a lot. Or I thought I did, until I met Piper, who travels more than I do. We are both super travel dorks, so we thought, let's get

together and talk about travel hacks, tips, tricks, and horror stories. Check us out on 20 Minute Delay: a new podcast about travel.

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