

# Ditch Diggers #54

January 31st, 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:** [00:00:46] Coming to you live from Morgan Freeman's official historical retconning chamber. It's the *Ditch Diggers* with Mur Lafferty and Matt Wallace. Good morning, Matt. How are you?

**Matt:** [00:00:56] Good morning, Mur. I'm well. It's early, but I'm forcing my energy level up several octaves, so I was a little worried last time that I sounded like I was dragging ass because I've been getting up much earlier than I used to these days.

**Mur:** [00:01:11] Well you're just dealing with the new schedule man. We all can appreciate that. Or at least I can. I don't know about those other assholes, but this asshole can.

**Matt:** [00:01:18] I'm not worried about those other assholes. I appreciate that. Also, Morgan Freeman's retconning chamber is not to be confused with the time machine. It's not the same thing.

**Mur:** [00:01:30] Oh no, no, no, no.

**Matt:** [00:01:30] And the other important thing to note, is even though Morgan Freeman has the power to retcon history, he actually doesn't use it because it would be irresponsible.

**Mur:** [00:01:38] Why does he have the power then? Does he have a machine, or is it something bestowed upon him by the many times he played God?

**Matt:** [00:01:46] I mean, that is a very important and valid question. I don't have the answers to it. We're just interlopers on Morgan Freeman's estate. I don't have all the answers to these things. I just happen to know that Morgan Freeman feels too heavily the responsibility of altering history, even though he would very much like to correct many of the historical atrocities that have occurred in this world. He's worried about the butterfly effect, because he's really into butterflies, as well as bees.

**Mur:** [00:02:18] Butterflies and bees? Does he have a butterfly bee sanctuary?

**Matt:** [00:02:20] We've literally recorded in his bee sanct- ... in his apiary before. You know?

**Mur:** [00:02:24] Oh, I know! I know about that. It's the butterflies and bees thing.

**Matt:** [00:02:35] Adjacent to that is his butterfly sanctuary where he protects the beautiful Monarch butterfly from extinction.

**Mur:** [00:02:42] Does he breed butterflies and bees together?

**Matt:** [00:02:43] No, Morgan Freeman doesn't. Here's the thing, Morgan Freeman plays God, right? But Morgan Freeman would never play God. You understand?

**Mur:** [00:02:44] Ohhhhhh. I see.

**Matt:** [00:02:53] That's the important distinction. Morgan is a naturalist and a student of temporal mechanics, and he would never play tiddlywinks with either. I felt confident enough to say tiddlywinks just then, and I'm going to stand by it.

**Mur:** [00:03:08] I don't ever see you having a problem saying tiddlywinks.

**Matt:** [00:03:12] I know, it just occurred to me that I literally don't think I ever have before in my life. So, it was an interesting time to start to me. I guess I just hit that point

every author comes to in their life and their career where they start saying tiddlywinks in conversation.

**Mur:** [00:03:27] I see. Yes.

**Matt:** [00:03:28] You'll get there, Mur. You'll get there.

**Mur:** [00:03:32] Wait, I'm not cool enough to say tiddlywinks?

**Matt:** [00:03:34] It has nothing to do with being cool. See, that's your own ... That's your personal trip right there. You're projecting onto the concept. You immediately think-

**Mur:** [00:03:48] No, I thought that's what you were saying about me.

**Matt:** [00:03:50] That's not at all what I said. I just said you had-

**Mur:** [00:03:51] That's totally what you said. It's what I heard. I'm going to go back.

**Matt:** [00:03:53] I said you hadn't hit that point in your life yet. I never specified what that point in your life signifies. You're attaching coolness to it. This is exactly how the diamond trade started, Mur, right here. That's right, I'm blaming-

**Mur:** [00:04:05] Really?

**Matt:** [00:04:06] ... you personally for the diamond trade. It's the truth, people attaching value to something that had no intrinsic value because a white dude told them to. See, it all fits. It all fits together. None of this has anything to do with the writing ... the business of writing.

**Mur:** [00:04:20] Or anything else in the world.

**Matt:** [00:04:21] Which is what this podcast is about, so-

**Mur:** [00:04:22] In theory.

**Matt:** [00:04:22] ... we should probably focus on that. But why are we in Morgan Freeman's retconning chamber, Mur? What's the significance of this location to what we're talking about today?

**Mur:** [00:04:31] Well it's the whole concept of retconning, which is done most often in comics that have very, very, very long story lines. Authors write themselves into a corner and realize that if they want the character to keep going for another 20 years, they're going to have to change something that was just written. Like the entirety of J. Michael Straczynski's Spider-Man run. That was unbelievable. And then-

**Matt:** [00:04:58] The run was unbelievable or the way they retconned it was unbelievable?

**Mur:** [00:05:03] Well, the fact that they retconned his entire run of Spi- ... I think it was *The Amazing Spider-Man*. I can't remember which one it was, but he did about eight or nine graphic novels, some of it was good, some it was bad, but it was all different and all pushing the genre. It was interesting. Not being a lifelong Spider-Man fan, I did not get up in arms about it. I just thought it was interesting. But then at the end they're just like, "And it's over. It's done. That never happened." But anyway, specifically you're talking about J.K. Rowling saying that Dumbledore was gay. But in future Harry Potter media he is not going to be portrayed as gay. So what the hell does it matter that he was gay, or did it matter? Or is it real, or is it canon, or what?

**Matt:** [00:05:50] Yeah, that's what got us ... or me, and then I brought this topic to you, because you are in your ever-extended social media hiatus, so you missed all the hoopla and the tiddlywinks yesterday.

**Mur:** [00:06:03] Yes, I did. I missed all the hoopla, plus the tiddlywinks. See, I said it. And I felt good about myself.

**Matt:** [00:06:09] Yeah. No, well J.K. Rowling ... And the thing is, I'm actually glad you brought up comics to begin with because I think that's a good place to start. Retconning, at least in the vernacular of comics, I think, is an accepted thing. It's been accepted as a necessity to a certain point. I think they've certainly gone far beyond that, and many would argue that it's also led to the ruination of comics in a lot of ways and a lot of comic

lines. Like a lot of the stuff ... the new whatever D.C. did that most people didn't like or whatever it was, where they changed like literally everything.

**Mur:** [00:06:42] So, with comic books it's hard because they've been trying to tell stories about characters for, what, 80 years now? I'm doing the math, 60 years. Like 50, 60 years. But the characters are never allowed to age. So if they're these young people who go through adventures and are supposed to change and learn things, but they can't change too much or else they won't be the same. We saw that with *The Last Jedi*. Small spoiler: Luke at 60 is not the same idealistic young hotshot pilot as he was at 20. Fancy fuckin' that.

**Matt:** [00:07:18] Is that is how you describe young Luke, Mur? As a hotshot pilot?

**Mur:** [00:07:24] It is now. Why the fuck would you focus on that one point?

**Matt:** [00:07:28] I just really ... it was such a funny phrase to me. It's like saying loose cannon cop. I agree with your point entirely. I'm not disputing you. I just found the phrase, "He's no longer a cocksure hotshot pilot that he was in his youth."

**Mur:** [00:07:43] Look, I've been working on my *Top Gun* fanfic. That kind of language is in my head.

**Matt:** [00:07:49] It is, it is. It's called *The Tiddlywink* series, and we're all looking forward to it. No, but I think you hit upon a couple of very important points when it comes to the retconning thing. But I think the basic point that you hit on before you get to judging any of it is, it's really only a valid tool if you're going to keep telling the story. That's the thing with comics. They retcon shit so they can make new comics, or they retcon *Star Wars* because they're going to make new *Star Wars* movies with the same characters. Retconning as applied to novels I think gets very dicey because the novel has already been written, and a lot of cases lately we're seeing people retcon stuff that can't be changed, I guess is my point. And that's where you get into the J.K. Rowling situation. Not that you can't change stuff. I mean, Stephen King retconned the whole fucking *Gunslinger* series and actually put out new books with new stuff in them. So I guess you actually can retcon a novel. But the thing is, if you're not going to do that, then you get into a dicey area, which is what everybody was very upset about yesterday on the

Twitters where you were not, Mur. So, I should probably recap what sparked this whole conversation.

**Mur:** [00:09:12] Go for it.

**Matt:** [00:09:13] Now that we've covered what retconning is. So, and the thing is, I'm going to talk about it from my perspective. If you disagree with my perspective, you are absolutely free to chime in and correct me. But this is from my perspective when it comes to the background leading up to yesterday. Since the conclusion of the Harry Potter series ... which I don't know if you've heard of it, but it was very popular, Mur. It's a very popular series.

**Mur:** [00:09:34] Harry Potter. I think I might have heard of it. I haven't seen it in stores. It's like self-published, right?

**Matt:** [00:09:39] Yeah, it did pretty well. It did fairly well. People seem to enjoy it.

**Mur:** [00:09:44] It's a Hugh Howey?

**Matt:** [00:09:44] He might have edited it, I don't know. So anyway, after the conclusion of Harry Potter, there was ancillary material published and there's websites and forums where more information has been released. But the Harry Potter series ended, and after it ended J.K. Rowling got into this, I feel, very detrimental habit of retconning stuff from the books. She began to talk ... She began to change characters, or changed the perception of characters, in ways that are not implicit in the book. From Hermione being black to Dumbledore being actually gay, and these are ... And the reason I say it is detrimental is not because it wouldn't be amazing to have a black Hermione or a gay Dumbledore. I am so for all those things. That is not the way they're written in the books. It's just not. And people have gone to great lengths to explain why it's not unreasonable for her to say these things and how she dropped hints all through the series and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The fact is, it is not implicitly written in the series. These are all things that she came up with after the point. I wish she had written them that way, but she didn't. From my perspective ... and it's important to understand my perspective, because we're going to talk more about this and that's why I'm giving you license to disagree with me, Mur, because this is all my opinion. I really feel like J.K.

Rowling got to a point in her life where she got on social media and blew up on Twitter, and I feel she really wished she had written the Harry Potter books the way she is now describing them. But she didn't write them that way. She just didn't. She wrote a book about three little white kids learning magic in a mostly white world with really inoffensive allegories for bigotry and racism that didn't have anything that actually-

**Mur:** [00:11:33] And slavery.

**Matt:** [00:11:39] And slavery. That didn't have anything to do with actual historical bigotry or racism so everybody could be comfortable with it. Everybody can be cool with "the elves shouldn't be slaves" and "you shouldn't discriminate against Muggles," but none of that talks about real world issues. That is the book that she wrote and published. And the reason that is the book that she wrote published (from my perspective, again, these are my opinions), is if she had written the book that she is now describing it as, she would not have sold that book. And I will state that emphatically. If she had gone in to a publisher before the first Harry Potter book came out and said, "I have written a novel, and it's about this little black girl who is way smarter than her white male counterparts and is constantly saving their asses, and they all learn magic from a big gay wizard," no one is publishing that book. No one is publishing that book. It's the absolute truth. And that's why I call it detrimental that she's gotten into this habit now, and that's why it really fundamentally bothers ... has bothered me since she started doing it. That's not the book she wrote. The other reason I call it detrimental is ... So that is the background from my perspective. She's been retconning the books to make them more progressive. Whether it comes from a sincere place or not, I personally feel that it's a detrimental thing to do because things like yesterday when it was announced that the new Fantastic Beasts movie, which features Dumbledore as a very prominent character in his youth, they first announced that they weren't sure how they were going to deal with him being gay. Which right away-

**Mur:** [00:13:01] That's a problem.

**Matt:** [00:13:02] ... pissed me off. Because yeah, I just hate ... We should so be past this shit by now. We really should. And my ... I went on a whole rant about this on Twitter yesterday when I read that and I'm not going to redo the thing again. But basically, to me that's like saying, "How are they going to deal with literally every other

character's straightness?" You don't deal with it. The character is gay, then you write a gay dude. You just let him be a gay dude the way you're letting everyone else be straight in your story. So that was the first thing. Then later it was flat out ... a different story came out. It was flat out announced that Dumbledore was not going to be explicitly gay in the movie at all. They just weren't going to do it. And that was when everybody really got pissed off, especially fans who are LGBTQ and authors who are LGBT, and very legitimately because the creator of the fucking universe told them all, "No, you've got a gay character in the Harry Potter series. It's a big prominent character. He's gay. He's always been gay." Then this new media comes out and they decide no, we're not going to do that. That's a huge betrayal of a huge part of your audience, and I will classify it that way. And again, you are free to argue the point with me, Mur.

**Matt:** [00:14:11] I don't want to drag you into this if you don't agree, but I really feel that that is a bit ... Whether you intended to do it or not, and I'm not saying she intended to do this. I'm not saying she's twirling a mustache going, "I'm going to fuck with my gay fans." But that ends up being, whether you intend it or not to be, a betrayal of that audience. Because you gave them this thing. No one made you do it. No one made you come out and say Dumbledore is a gay character. You chose to do that, and now you are taking away or allowing this to be taken away from them. And I really ... that is a very harmful thing to fans who literally want nothing more than to see themselves in this thing that has meant so much to them in their lives that they grew up with. That is one of the biggest pieces of media and fiction in the history of the fucking world. It's a huge deal to them. And that got taken away. So they were very upset with that, and I felt rightly so. I was totally on their side, and I totally got their perspective. I don't know how you would view that situation or if you would like to add a counterpoint to it.

**Mur:** [00:15:11] It's a tough thing. Because I appreciate the fact that she wanted to say that the books are more diverse than they were presented. But the problem is that we default to white, straight, and if you don't say a gender, male. If you say, "Here is a person" most people, including women, including marginalized people, are going to think white straight dude.

**Matt:** [00:15:43] In America, especially.

**Mur:** [00:15:44] In America. And so, it's like some people have said, "Oh, well you know the fact that Hermione wasn't said to be black, but she had like the bushy hair, and this and that." If black people see themselves represented in her, great. That's awesome! But if you don't say she's black, then most everybody else is going to picture a white girl. It's not right. It's not good. But that is how the people think. And I mean, even if you say someone is black but you don't talk about it a whole lot, like say Rue in *The Hunger Games*, people are still going to picture her white.

**Matt:** [00:16:17] That is another very good ... You we're talking about that earlier. Feel free to elaborate on that for people who don't remember what that was all about.

**Mur:** [00:16:23] So yeah, you don't think that people default to something that they're more ... that they see more often in media. Well people ... It was explicitly stated that people in District 4 pretty much are all black.

**Matt:** [00:16:37] In the book.

**Mur:** [00:16:40] Huh?

**Matt:** [00:16:41] I'm saying in the book. I'm just [crosstalk 00:16:42]-

**Mur:** [00:16:42] In the book, yes, in the book. Rue is described with dark skin, and the other boy is described with dark skin, but because Rue is such a sweet, sympathetic character, who is sort of a stand in for Pru in Katniss' eyes, people ... Not people. Some people pictured her as white. And then when they saw the movie they're like, "Oh my god, she's black. Ew." And some person actually ... You know, I'm sure she's deleted it by now, but it was caught and screen captured, which was, "It's not as sad anymore."

**Matt:** [00:17:08] It's not as sad ... [inaudible 00:17:10].

**Mur:** [00:17:10] That's not specifically what she said. But basically she said she can't identify or feel sorry, feel as sad, now that Rue is black. It's like, are you a caricature? Are you just made of pure evil? So this is why it's important for representation to say ... you have to say it, because people are not going to believe it. So while it's great that Rowling says that these people are from a more diverse background than we initially

assumed, it doesn't change it if she doesn't say, "Dumbledore dated this guy."  
"Hermione has dark skin." I mean, it just doesn't. And you don't even have to say the color of the skin, because you know Padma Patil, you ... pretty good idea what she looks like. She was trying to diversify by grabbing several more ethnicities, and by names and putting them in, but she didn't really describe a lot of people except for Angelina. That's right, Angelina was black. Angelina was explicitly stated to be black.

**Matt:** [00:18:19] Which, I mean, to me is more damning, because it proves she was not unaware of these things when she was writing the book.

**Mur:** [00:18:26] Yeah. So, I don't know. It's a weird thing. So I've been having this problem with *Star Wars*. Because as a fan, I am ... I am in love, as all of us fans of a certain age are, of the original three movies. Many of us can accept the problems with the original three movies. Diversity's one of them, but the whole ... When Lucas went back and started fiddling with it. That feeling of anger and "what have you done?" And "this is my childhood you're fucking with," which is really a bit far to go I think. I just hate that thing of-

**Matt:** [00:19:11] You've ruined my childhood?

**Mur:** [00:19:12] Yeah.

**Matt:** [00:19:13] Yeah, I always get iffy on that. That's where people kind of lose me.

**Mur:** [00:19:17] I mean, I'm like ... To go on a small tangent, I used to love the show *Bill Cosby: Himself*. It was playing on HBO constantly when I was a kid, and I would watch it, and I would laugh so hard. And then later on in life, Jim and I would make little jokes of Cosby things. And now whenever I think of one of those jokes, I feel all icky inside. That's about as close as it's come to ruining my childhood. Which is, these things I used to laugh at with great pleasure were said by a rapist and that's not cool. So, that's bad. But you turned somebody ... you say something that we didn't assume and that ruins things. No. No, female *Ghostbusters* do not ruin childhoods. But-

**Matt:** [00:19:59] Yeah, female *Ghost* ... the women *Ghostbusters* do not ruin the original male *Ghostbusters*, it has nothing to do with anything.

**Mur:** [00:20:05] But the thing is, as a creator, I'm like, it's your fucking world man. Your fans are going to respond, and you've got to be ready for that. But it is your world. So I don't know what to do, and I don't know if Rowling lost power with the *Fantastic Beasts* because I know she kept a whole lot of editorial power regarding the ori-

**Matt:** [00:20:33] I have a really hard time accepting that thesis.

**Mur:** [00:20:33] What, that she lost she lost power with *Fantastic Beasts*?

**Matt:** [00:20:35] Or that she ceded power to begin with. This is not ... This is no longer even her tenth foray into this kind of medium, you know? She knows what she's doing right now. Here's the thing, I completely ... The other thing I wanted to say just to cap off the ruining your childhood thing, I think the argument should always be about the work itself. I really think, if you're talking about retconning something or changing something, I think you should look at how it's affecting the work and whether that's a good thing or a bad thing. That's how I approach it. I absolutely agree with you, Mur, that it is her world to do whatever she wants with. You have to accept the consequences of that. And you also have to look to the execution of that. She ... Again, totally on board with gay Dumbledore or black Hermione, all those things. If she wanted to write another book and talk about and include Dumbledore's sexuality in there, or explore Hermione's cultural background or whatever she wanted to do, that would be another thing to look at. The problem is, she did this ... she keeps doing this off screen shit. She wrote a story and concluded a story and now she's trying to change that specific story secondhand. And that's really poor execution on a lot of levels there. You're failing technically in a lot of ways, first of all.

**Matt:** [00:22:08] And second of all, the reason I wanted to talk about this on *Ditch Diggers*, and I wanted to say this too is, not just to capitalize on the hot tea or the hot gossip that's going around. It's not about that. I really do think there are a plethora of business lessons in this situation here because what you're really talking about with Rowling at this point is brand management, among other things. I don't want to reduce it to just that because that sounds cold, but there are lessons in there for authors about how to handle your IP and how not to handle your IP in this situation. And I genuinely feel that J.K. Rowling is handling her IP very poorly in a lot of respects. From a business

standpoint, and also just from a fan interaction standpoint, I really feel like she's legitimately harming a lot of her readers who really put a lot of stock and a lot of faith in her and these books, and those are two things that I don't ever advise anyone to do. Whether you are ... the thing is, Rowling is also a rare case because few books ever become as popular as the *Harry Potter* novels. But that doesn't mean that there aren't series out there ... There are plenty of series out there on all tiers of this industry and all levels of success that mean something to a core demographic. And I feel like, even though this is the highest level of this lesson, I feel like these lessons are applicable to anybody out there who writes a series that a core audience enjoys, and that's why I wanted to talk about it on the show because I think it's relevant.

**Mur:** [00:23:23] Excellent.

**Matt:** [00:23:23] So yeah, that's the reason I wanted to talk about it on the show. The other thing I wanted to say is, I am aware that when I talk about how J.K. Rowling is mismanaging her brand, I am a very small author saying this about a very large author, who is in fact at this point too big to fail. I'm totally aware of that. J.K. Rowling is going to be fine. My point is, you are not J.K. Rowling out there listening to this. I truly believe that if you are an author with a smaller series or even a mid-range series that does fairly well, if you make the kind of mistakes that I ... (and again, this is all my opinion), that I perceive J.K. Rowling to be making right now, I firmly believe it can really negatively impact the series that you are writing and your bottom line as an author who is also not as successful as J.K. Rowling. That's really what I'm talking about here, and why I think these lessons are important.

**Matt:** [00:24:14] And so the two ways that I really think J.K. Rowling is mismanaging her brand right now is: one, she is making promises to fans that she either cannot keep or is not keeping. And that is a very detrimental thing to do with your series and your brand as an author. And again, no one is forcing her to do these things. She takes it upon herself to make these retroactive changes and to create these things, and there's been a lot of other stuff and additional things have been uncovered. There was the thing with Pottermore and creating the American visiting houses, where she took a bunch of folklore and [crosstalk 00:24:54] from indigenous people and stewed them all up and didn't consult any indigenous people in doing it. And indigenous people were very upset about that. So it's been a constant thing since the conclusion of the series where she

just makes these really bad choices and makes these promises she can't deliver on. So that's the first thing she's doing that I feel is detrimental.

**Matt:** [00:25:13] The second thing, and this leads us into the next part of it for me, is she seems thoroughly unwilling to ever accept any consequences for doing these things or engage in any way with the people criticizing her about them who have valid points. That's another thing that people have been very upset with her about. She doesn't engage on any of this stuff. She doesn't fix any of it. She doesn't really even acknowledge it other than to say, "Oh, everybody is being really mean to me about this, and I don't want to talk about it anymore." And I'm sure she does get a ton of hate. She's a woman on the internet. That is not an easy thing to ever be, and I don't want to dismiss that. I don't want to dismiss how much shit she's taking from people who I'm sure are way over the line and are just flat out trolls and just being terrible people. I know that absolutely does happen, and because she's J.K. Rowling, it probably happens on a mass scale, and it is a very hard thing to deal with. I do not believe that excuses her from engaging the legitimate side of that argument, and especially consistently. Because she consistently does that with indigenous people who were upset. She didn't want to engage them. She doesn't want to engage with any of the people who are like, "none of this was implicit in the books" and you're hurting people by promising them that these characters and these things, and then we're never going to see them this way in any of the ancillary stuff. She just continually does this, and I really feel that's a mistake. It's incredibly alienating, and it also elevates her in a way above these demographics among her fans, who, again, were fully committed to her and her works and loved all of them and just felt betrayed and I think legitimately had a lot of valid criticism to offer.

**Matt:** [00:26:56] So not engaging in any way, even on her own terms. I'm not saying she had to go into the streets and talk to everybody individually. But to never engage or never talk about it or never seem the least bit reticent or regretful or even open to the possibility that she fucked up. I think really presents a kind of an alienating face to all these demographics of her fans who felt very, again, alienated about this stuff, and I think that is a branding mistake that a lot of people can learn from, is when you do fuck up, and people are going to fuck up. We all screw up as authors, especially when we're out there in the social media spaces, or we have platforms where we're very loud and we talk consistently. Eventually you're going to say something problematic; eventually

you're going to make a mistake. It's going to happen, despite your best intentions. And when that does happen, the exact wrong thing to do (especially if you're not J.K. Rowling and you can't get away with it because you're not insulated by billions of dollars), I think the worst thing you can do is tell everyone they're the assholes and refuse to talk about it ever again. I just think that compounds the problem. So those are the two huge mistakes I see with the situation. And those are two things that I would hope people studying the situation from a business and a brand perspective would ... those are lessons that they would take away from it. And then also under that, again, because I don't just want to sound cold and calculated like we should only look at this as a business decision, just don't do shit to hurt your fans that could have been easily avoided. It's just a shitty thing to do, man. People ... We always talk about how authors don't owe anything to readers, readers don't owe anything to authors. And I agree with that, but there's also a limit. You don't go out of your way to fuck with people who have given you their heart. It's just a messed up thing to do in my mind. You know?

**Mur:** [00:28:39] Yeah, and I mean, the plus side of writing something that affects people so much, is when you fuck up, it hurts them a lot more than it would have just reading another book. So when people ... I found this out when I thought it was obvious the whole Ron-Hermione thing. I thought that was telegraphed from the very beginning. And when I said that on a podcast many years ago, I had somebody contact me saying how insulting it was for me to say that because I was putting out all the people who shipped Harry and Hermione. I'm like, no, no I'm just saying, I thought it was obvious that Ron and Hermione were destined. It's obvious. And she was just so offended that I said that.

**Matt:** [00:29:34] Yeah, people feel a lot of ways about these things, and that to me is an irrational reaction. So with all the irrational reactions out there and how delicate you have to be to avoid those, when you actually do something that is problematic, I think it's even worse in a lot of ways. I'm sorry that ... I'm sorry that your prescient sense of literature got you in trouble, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:29:53] Oh it's okay, I just kinda didn't know what to do about it, so I don't think I responded or maybe just refused to engage. I can't remember.

**Matt:** [00:30:04] And I think that that's okay.

**Mur:** [00:30:04] Getting into email fights is not something I do, so ...

**Matt:** [00:30:10] Nor ... and the thing is, you're not obligated to, and neither is J.K. Rowling. Again, I'm not saying she should get into email fights with every fan around the world who fucking emails her, and she shouldn't have to. She has a big enough platform where she can discuss all of these things on her own terms, insulated from the throngs out there with torches. She has that ... she does have that privilege, and I feel like not doing that just compounds everything. The other thing I wanted to kind of talk about with this, and this was another kind of fallout thing from it, was ... and this again relates to the branding thing we're talking about, how you comport yourself online, and how you respond to fans when they get up in arms about things like this. Even if it does ... Even if it's not happening to you, being a member of the community, the things ... and you were just ... actually this kind of ties in to what you were just saying, Mur. You were commenting on J.K. Rowling's books, and you got shit for it. Because you chose to take a position on the books. A lot of people were also upset at larger name authors and the SF/F community yesterday, who they felt like were sucking up to J.K. Rowling and taking her side and defending her against legitimate criticism from queer fans and queer authors. And I personally ... and again these are all my takes, my opinions, and you're free to disagree or offer a counterpoint, I think there's validity to that as well. I think no one ... Here's the thing, you're never forced to take a side in these situations. Right now, I don't have to be talking about this. We don't have to be talking about this. We are choosing to throw our hats in the ring and talk about this. We can agree on this, right?

**Mur:** [00:31:51] Yes, that is a thing that is happening.

**Matt:** [00:31:53] We could just as ... Yes, that is the reality of this moment. But we could just as easily have picked another topic for the show and not discuss this ever publicly. We could have just as easily have done that. Would you also agree with that, Mur?

**Mur:** [00:32:06] Yes, except we didn't have a whole lot of other ideas.

**Matt:** [00:32:18] I had another good idea.

**Mur:** [00:32:20] You did, and we haven't talked about that at all. Maybe we can talk about that next week.

**Matt:** [00:32:21] We'll have to because this turned into a what I feel has become a pretty good episode and I'm on a roll so I'm going to keep going with it.

**Mur:** [00:32:27] Keep going.

**Matt:** [00:32:27] So we did not have to do any of that. We chose to do that. Having chosen to do that, I am open to accepting the consequences of that. If a J.K. Rowling mega-fan gets really pissed off at me and starts railing at me on Twitter, or feels betrayed by the things I have said, it is something I have invited. Now, I can react to that in any way I want. If I don't want to engage with them, I don't need to engage with them. If I want to mute them or block them, I can do whatever I want. But I have chosen to incur that. That is something I am openly taking on. You always have the option of shutting the fuck up, and that's a big one in the social media age. I don't think a lot of people realize that. We get into these patterns and modes where we feel like we've got to be in there commenting on everything that's going on all the time. Our voice must be heard. Our opinion must be shared. Our take must be heeded and served hot. We've always got to be in there choosing a side and everything. And you don't. You really don't, and that can also be a self-care thing. It's okay to take a break from the social media drama or the community drama or the industry drama. There's nothing wrong with doing that. You are not obligated to do that.

**Matt:** [00:33:21] So when something like this J.K. Rowling thing happens, even if you're a larger author, I don't agree with the standpoint that they have to come out on the side of the marginalized people if they don't want to say anything. I will give them that, and people may disagree with that. They may think that's a cowardly thing to do or whatever. I happen to think it's okay to choose your battles and choose your moments, and you don't have to go all in on everything that comes up. So if they don't want to do that, I'm fine with that. However, if you consciously make a choice that "I'm going to dive into this argument, and I'm going to choose a side," then you are taking on the responsibility of that choice. And if you are someone who is seen as a community leader in SF/F, someone who's seen as a progressive, who presents themselves and actively and vocally campaigns and builds their brand on being a vocal loud progressive person who's on the side of marginalized creators, and you go all in and you tweeted J.K. Rowling and you say, "You're absolutely right to completely dismiss everybody. I

agree with that position,” then you are making a choice to go against all the legitimate criticism of queer authors and queer readers who are mad about what she's done. Especially if you don't qualify anything. That's kind of the problem. If you don't qualify it and say, “Hey look, I don't think J.K. Rowling should take troll level abuse for this. I do think she could do better with engaging legitimate criticism and her devoted audience who feels betrayed.” Even if you said that, that would be one thing. But if you just do the first thing, and you offer no further commentary, then people are going to think you're a dick, and you're kind of being a dick. I'm sorry, you are. You absolutely are. You are dismissing that huge section of the SF/F community and of SF/F fandom when you take that kind of position and don't qualify it. And I think that is another huge branding mistake to make. I think it's a shitty thing to do as a person, again, just like J.K. Rowling, inadvertently or not, betraying her fucking fans and harming them. I think it's a shitty thing to do just as a person. But I also think it's a big mistake professionally and from a branding perspective, because you are offending a huge segment of readers and you're also alienating and offending a huge segment of your peers in that field.

**Matt:** [00:35:40] And these are things you have to think about. And for the sake of what? J.K. Rowling isn't inviting you to fucking tea, dude. Like it's not happening. It's cool ... I'm just saying, if you look at it strictly from a perspective of social media capital or professional capital, fantastic man, you got a retweet from J.K. Rowling. That means nothing. You take nothing from that. You have, however, just pissed off a lot of people who are never going to forget that. They are not. Because they get shit on all the time and they expect better from SF/F leaders who present themselves as progressives. And when we betray those people, they never fucking forget. So, I really feel that's a huge, huge mistake from a branding perspective, as well as just a human perspective. And that was the other kind of side of the coin yesterday, was people backing her up without qualification, without any thought, or paying any kind of service or engagement to the communities that were hurt by what happened. So that was the other thing. And again, Mur, free to offer any counterpoint or any counter perspective or any defense or anything you want to do there. I was diplomatic, though. I left out names. I was going to name names, but I decided this is what ... We're doing a business show, I want to make it about the business lesson.

**Mur:** [00:36:52] No, no you get a gold star for that. I've got stars here, and I'm going to peel one off, I'm going to put it on your face on the Skype thing. So, there you go. Yeah, it's ... what?

**Matt:** [00:37:15] I'm going to abstain from commenting on that, but thank you.

**Mur:** [00:37:18] What, you don't want a gold star? I can take it off.

**Matt:** [00:37:19] No, I'll absolutely take your condescending gold star.

**Mur:** [00:37:23] It's not condescending. It's a little gold star.

**Matt:** [00:37:25] Okay.

**Mur:** [00:37:25] Damn.

**Matt:** [00:37:26] If there's an actual little gold star-

**Mur:** [00:37:27] There was!

**Matt:** [00:37:27] I mean, I shouldn't doubt you. You did literally send me and Nikki My Little Ponies once when you said I deserve a My Little Pony.

**Mur:** [00:37:37] That's right.

**Matt:** [00:37:38] Okay, I apologize. You weren't being condescending.

**Mur:** [00:37:40] I'm going to take a picture of this, and this is going in the show notes, man.

**Matt:** [00:37:44] Okay. That's what we'll do, but proceed, please.

**Mur:** [00:37:45] That's what we'll do. (laughs) There, I have a picture I must ... I'm going to text that to you right now. You've been very adamant, and I don't really have a whole lot to add. It's just that it is a tough thing simply because you have to pick your battles,

and you're right, you don't have to engage in every single thing. And if you believe in engaging in every single thing, then that's fine, but you got to remember not everybody's going to agree with you. Rowling has the enviable/unenviable position of being so popular almost anything she does is going to cause a wave of glee or discomfort, and I think she ... I think the whole retconning of making it more diverse means almost nothing if she's not going to move forward with it. And this was a chance for her to move forward with it, and she didn't.

**Matt:** [00:38:51] Yeah, and [crosstalk 00:38:52] thing, I just ... Yeah, I'm sorry, I didn't mean-

**Mur:** [00:38:52] And as for the whole branding thing. Yeah, she's going to have a little Twitter storm in a teapot, and then it's going to go away, while you or I could ruin our careers. Maybe not that bad, but it would hurt us a lot more than it's going to hurt the woman who is richer than the queen. Actually, I think she gave enough money to charity so she's not richer than the queen anymore, but she's up there.

**Matt:** [00:39:21] (laughs)

**Mur:** [00:39:22] I'm serious, it's ... I wanted to point it out that-

**Matt:** [00:39:26] No, I was just thinking how little sympathy I have for billionaires in any respect, but I'm not even ... we're not even going to get into that. We'll just stick with the merits of being just an author, period. There is something to be said for a "let's all shed a tear for the billionaire."

**Mur:** [00:39:45] (laughs) Yeah, exactly. What's interesting to me is, I don't see how she can engage with fans online, because I can't even imagine what her @ stream is like.

**Matt:** [00:39:51] I would assume she has a team that deals with it, just like every person with her means does, however personal facing their accounts seem to be. She has a lot of software and a lot of people that are vetting that shit, and it would be ridiculous if she didn't. She absolutely should have that. It's the only way to make it even semi-manageable. But again, it's a choice, man. I don't understand it, to be honest with you. If

I had J.K. Rowling's career, the last fucking place I would be on the planet is on Twitter. I don't understand that at all.

**Mur:** [00:40:34] It's funny, because I feel like it's almost vital to our careers and it's not so much ... I mean maybe she thinks it's fun. I don't know. I don't see how it's going to amplify her career. Maybe she gets bored. Maybe she likes reading Twitter moments.

**Matt:** [00:40:53] Maybe, I don't know. I think you like feeling relevant, and there's a gratification, and everybody ... you tweet something and people retweet it a million times. I don't know. I don't know what her motivation is, I'm just looking at the results of it. And there is ... The final thing I want to ... Another thing occurred to me when we were talking about the ... or I said "don't shed a tear for the billionaires" thing, or I was going to. Which sounds kind of callous, I guess, in retrospect, but fuck it, I meant it, and I still mean it. I think one of the things with (whether you're J.K. Rowling or whether you're kind of at the top of the heap of SF/F), you're the big fish in the little pond and you've got a few hundred thousand followers or whatever. I feel like you can get to a place where you feel like because you take so much shit on the internet, that you should get a pass when you fuck up. Or like there's a perception of that. You know what I mean?

**Mur:** [00:41:52] Yeah. Yeah, it's like sometimes if you're a marginalized person, and you take a lot of shit anyway, and you fuck up, sometimes people feel you should get a pass. Which is not right either.

**Matt:** [00:42:05] No, but I'm specifically thinking about white dudes right now. I'm just thinking about bland ass white people. That is a separate category, and we can talk about that too, but I'm specifically thinking about non-marginalized, really successful authors who just benefit by ... benefit of being very successful within this sphere and being very vocal. Or especially if you're a woman in this sphere who's successful and vocal, you will take a lot of shit online and that's not cool, and it's not right, it's not fair, and it sucks. But I don't ... I feel like too often people who are really popular and who make a lot of progressive stances, a lot of broad progressive stances, and are seen as being very progressive and very [inaudible 00:42:40]. Because they take so much shit from trolls, when they do actually fuck up, everybody kind of wants to let them skate. And I really have a huge problem with that. I don't think the one thing excuses the other.

I've seen a lot of instances of that lately, and it really just grinds my fucking gears. It really does.

**Matt:** [00:43:12] I feel like honestly what happens, and a huge problem with that, is there tends to be not one single clique, but there are cliques of more popular SF/F authors that tend to congregate in con spaces and social media, and a lot of times they will tend to be just a bunch of white people and even though all of them individually espouse very progressively (and I'm not saying they're disingenuous in their beliefs or whatever), but whenever one of them screws up they all seem to close ranks to protect that person against the marginalized people they've pissed off. And I feel like that's where progressivism ... I feel like that's where white progressivism ends when you form a group like that, especially of like the cool kids in the lunchroom. You know what I mean?

**Mur:** [00:44:01] Oh, it's where you get people to say ... where you hear people say, "Well if you're going to be like that, then maybe I won't be your ally." Which is-

**Matt:** [00:44:02] Exactly. That is exactly-

**Mur:** [00:44:02] ... it kinda shows off that you weren't an ally in the first place. Even if someone's a complete asshole to you, you really should believe in their equal rights and just don't hang out with them. But no, I hate it when people are just like ... they yell at marginalized people that "Well maybe I won't be your ally!" Well, you know if-

**Matt:** [00:44:27] That's it. You fucking ... You hit the nail right on the head, Mur. And that's what ... I said, that's where progressivism ends, I should've said that's where allyship ends, because that's exactly right. That's exactly what I'm talking about. It's, you're an ally until one of your boys gets called out, and then it's time to circle the wagons and fuck everybody else. That really bothers me and that's a thing that should ... those people who are in those groups (they fucking know who they are, and they pretend like they don't, but they absolutely fucking do), really need to take a look at themselves and how they're operating, and even if they're generally good people who do genuinely good things, it doesn't excuse you when you fuck up and dismiss a huge group of marginalized people who already have enough problems without you choosing to stomp on them, whether you meant to or not. And then because "Well I'm a good guy,

and I do good things, and I'm progressive, and I take a lot of shit from trolls," you're like, "I shouldn't be subjected to the heat from that." It's bullshit. You should.

**Matt:** [00:45:19] And the other thing I just want to say to all the people who are in the marginalized groups, who have suffered that from people they may even have looked up to or from larger authors, I want to say those people, those marginalized groups: you are not wrong. They are wrong. I just want them to hear that from a white dude. I don't know if that helps at all, because I'm fucking nobody in the grand scheme, but I just wanted to say that. I keep seeing that online, and it just pisses me off. So you're not wrong, they're wrong. They're the ones who need to correct their behavior. No matter how many of their friends they get to tell you you're out of line. That was just the other thing I wanted ... That's the other thing I wanted to talk about, that idea of consequence not applying to you if you're nice enough otherwise. If you've built up enough merit points, you get to cash them in and get a 'get out of jail free' card. That's such an absurd, stupid idea.

**Mur:** [00:46:10] I mean, if you fuck up, you should probably acknowledge it and apologize, but-

**Matt:** [00:46:19] You should. And listen, I fuck up a lot. I fuck up all the time. I say ... I mean, not so much anymore. I try to be more aware of it, but I still have thoughtless moments, and then ... but the thing is, I actually ... and I'm not getting into "some of my best friends are black," but I'm saying I actually have enough friends who are marginalized who will tell me, "Hey Matt, you're being a fucking asshole. Knock it off." And I stop and I go, "Oh yeah, that thing I said? That was an asshole thing to say. I apologize." It's not a hard situation to deal with, man. You just have to be aware enough to not double down on it, or not ignore it, or dismiss it and just hope it goes away. It's something you should confront, and you should deal with, and you should learn from going forward. You should thank the people who took the time to point that out instead of roasting your ass. But that's just the way I see it. I think I've rambled on about that enough. Do you have anything you want to bullet point on top of that, Mur?

**Mur:** [00:47:07] I don't think so. You were on a tear, and you pretty much said everything that I would add to it. The whole fan engagement thing is tough and if you

choose to do it, then you ... or even choose to do fan appeasement, you might realize that that might get you into some murky waters. And I still-

**Matt:** [00:47:30] Yeah, and you don't have to do it, is the thing, right? That's the other thing that bugs me about that. No one's forcing you to do it.

**Mur:** [00:47:38] Yeah. So yeah. I'm sorry, I don't have ... I'll just say it enough ... I'll just say this now. I will be editing this together, but I got some news halfway through this podcast so I've been a little distracted, so-

**Matt:** [00:47:57] You did. I tweeted that. I said "Mur had to go ... We had to stop our podcast about writing business so Mur could go take a business call from her agent."

**Mur:** [00:47:57] (laughs) I didn't see that.

**Matt:** [00:47:58] Which proves that we walk the walk, mofos, right?

**Mur:** [00:47:59] That's right. We do walk the walk.

**Matt:** [00:48:02] We've lived this game 24/7. We have a business on top of our business.

**Mur:** [00:48:08] That's right, so-

**Matt:** [00:48:10] That's double business.

**Mur:** [00:48:11] That's a ... little distracted now, but this is our recording time so we're going to record. So I think really my big takeaway is, yes, listen to people when they're hurt, especially marginalized people. Admit when you fuck up, but also on a larger business sense, think about your branding and what you say is canon that does not show up in your stories. Don't think about what that means now, but think about what that means in the future. Because ... I'm curious to know whether it was like ... Hollywood's just like, "No, we cannot have a gay Dumbledore in this movie." And-

**Matt:** [00:49:03] That's exactly what happened. I guarantee it, that's exactly what happened.

**Mur:** [00:49:06] Well, I mean, you said you didn't believe whether she had the clout ... that she didn't have the clout to make it happen.

**Matt:** [00:49:11] Whether she has the clout or not, I guarantee you that's where it started. It started with the studio going, "We don't want to deal with this. We don't want to include this in this movie. We don't want the blowback. We don't want to have to handle it. So we just don't want to do it." I don't know where she began or ended on that argument. I don't know if she agreed outright, if she caved, if she didn't have the clout. I'm not pretending to know that situation. I will 100 percent guarantee you it started with a studio executive going, "No gay Dumbledore. We're not doing that." I promise you that that was the start of the conversation.

**Mur:** [00:49:42] So you need to ... If you retcon something and you don't carry it forward in an actual piece of work, think about what that's going to mean in the future. And you may not be as big as J.K. Rowling. Well, no one is, but-

**Matt:** [00:49:54] No one is, and that's the point. You don't have the protection of being as big as J.K. Rowling.

**Mur:** [00:50:02] Well it's not even the protection. I'm more thinking of, well you don't think about, "Well when my book becomes a movie, is this character going to be portrayed like x?" People don't usually think about that. But if you're thinking of writing as a business, then you have to think about what's going to happen to your work as things move forward.

**Matt:** [00:50:19] Yeah, and even if you can't ... That's a very good point, Mur. You don't think about that generally when you're a smaller author, but even if you're not thinking about "well when my book becomes a movie," you have to think about how the things you say about your work will impact the readers and the fans of that work. I think that's really the important thing is, how is what I'm saying about this story going to affect these people who are invested in it, and could that have a negative outcome at the end of the day? I think that's an easy enough question for writers of any level to ask themselves,

who have published books and are being read. And I don't think there's anything wrong with putting that out there. Again, it's just the emotional humanistic aspects of it aside, it's just good business and good brand management to be aware of these things. That's all.

**Mur:** [00:51:02] No kidding. All right, so do we have any questions or comments or notes from the peanut gallery?

**Matt:** [00:51:11] I will go to the Twitters, Mur, because as you know, we use the goddamn Twitters.

**Mur:** [00:51:16] We do. Sometimes we don't like it, but sometimes we do.

**Matt:** [00:51:17] Sometimes we do.

**Mur:** [00:51:17] I've been ... I took it off my phone because I was looking at it too much, and then I had it on my tablet, and I took it off my tablet because the app so much fucking sucked that I just lost all ... When I mentioned I used it, Gail Carriger hops on. She's like, "Why? Why would you do that, Mur?" And I'm like, "Do what?" Because I didn't know what she was referring to. She's actually referring to me using that program in the first place. So, it was-

**Matt:** [00:51:40] Oh. That was a good Gail impression, by the way.

**Mur:** [00:51:44] Oh, thank you!

**Matt:** [00:51:45] It was very like Victorian demure.

**Mur:** [00:51:49] Very stern librarian?

**Matt:** [00:51:49] Very stern librarian. That's a very good way to put it. I'm sorry, I'm checking the *Ditch Diggers* hashtag for unanswered questions. Mostly it's just people quoting you affectionately.

**Mur:** [00:52:00] (laughs) How do you know it's affectionate?

**Matt:** [00:52:01] Because it's in the timbre of ... Timbre? Is that the word?

**Mur:** [00:52:07] Sure. Whatever.

**Matt:** [00:52:07] Timbre? Timbre?

**Mur:** [00:52:08] I thought it was timbre, but you know, that's also-

**Matt:** [00:52:09] Timbre?

**Mur:** [00:52:10] I don't know.

**Matt:** [00:52:12] No, it says, "My laugh for the morning: 'Scatterbrain people need to stick together so we can find our keys.' Mur Lafferty, *Ditch Diggers* 21." So they said they laughed.

**Mur:** [00:52:25] Did I say that?

**Matt:** [00:52:24] Apparently.

**Mur:** [00:52:24] Oh. That was a long time ago. (laughs) I don't remember saying that.

**Matt:** [00:52:29] That was a long time ago. Well, that was in January. That was somebody catching up on the podcast, apparently.

**Mur:** [00:52:37] Gotcha.

**Matt:** [00:52:41] So yeah, you're quoted warmly and affectionately. I don't think we have any new Twitter questions today. Do we have anything in the email bag, or have we cleared all of it out?

**Mur:** [00:52:52] I think we've cleared all of it out except for our one agent question, and we do have our agents scheduled!

**Matt:** [00:52:53] We do. Both of them will be on the show. We're going to talk about contracts and all kinds of agency things.

**Mur:** [00:53:03] Yes, we've got it scheduled for a couple of weeks ... in two weeks I think, right?

**Matt:** [00:53:07] Yeah. And who are we ... We have a guest next week as well, don't we?

**Mur:** [00:53:07] Yeah, we're going to be talking to Christopher Brown of the *Tropic of Kansas* book.

**Matt:** [00:53:09] I like it. I like it all. Doing it all for you, audience. Yeah, so apparently we need some new questions. If you'd like to ... Mur, how can they submit questions to the podcast?

**Mur:** [00:53:20] They can email [mightymur@gmail.com](mailto:mightymur@gmail.com) or hit us up on the Twitters with [#ditichdiggers](https://twitter.com/ditichdiggers). I'm [@mightymur](https://twitter.com/mightymur) and Matt is [@MattFnWallace](https://twitter.com/MattFnWallace).

**Matt:** [00:53:23] And I'm sure after this episode we're going to get some emails.

**Mur:** [00:53:25] Probably.

**Matt:** [00:53:41] You know what? We chose to do. We took that upon ourselves. So if you send us a rational email, I'll be happy to engage with it and reply, because I'm better than J.K. Rowling. I'm just kidding. That part was a joke. Everything else I said in this episode was sincere, except for the last 15 seconds. That part was a joke.

**Mur:** [00:53:48] (laughs) Yes.

**Matt:** [00:53:50] (laughs) Mur is just like, why-

**Mur:** [00:53:51] No, I screwed something up. I'm just making sure ... Okay.

**Matt:** [00:53:54] Are we okay recording wise?

**Mur:** [00:53:57] Yeah, we're fine. I panicked that Christopher Brown was not the name of the guy we were ... and then I wiki ... and then I Googled him and it got Chris Brown, the asshole singer-songwriter abuser, and then I panicked, but no, his name is Christopher Brown.

**Matt:** [00:54:28] We're not having Chris Brown on the podcast. I refuse.

**Mur:** [00:54:32] No. God, no. No, no, no, no. Okay, sorry. So yeah, if you want to see the blog and show notes and the transcription, which is something new that we have that we are offering to Patreon people the minute it goes up, and it will go up for the general audience about a week afterwards. We are having our episodes transcribed, and it is not free, and it is not terribly cheap. So if you want to support us on the Patreon so we can continue doing transcriptions to make our site more accessible, please go to [patreon.com/mightymur](https://patreon.com/mightymur) and throw us a couple of bucks. Because this is something I've been wanting to do for a long time and I'm very happy to offer it, but would like some support as well.

**Matt:** [00:55:13] Me too, Mur. I echo all of that. I'm really excited that we're doing that. I am intensely proud of this podcast and what we do and how we're doing it. We're always looking for ways to make it better. And like Mur said, the Patreon thing is actually really huge. It helps us do all of this. It's not cheap or easy. Mur has to pay me an obscene amount just to show up because I'm a greedy [inaudible 00:55:21]. But no, seriously. And a lot of people thinking, "Well, I can't afford that." Here's the thing, if you can't, that's totally cool. But my point is a lot of people seem to think dollar donations don't matter.

**Mur:** [00:55:38] Oh, they do.

**Matt:** [00:55:38] Dollar donations are huge. If you can donate a dollar a month to this podcast, that is amazing. That stuff adds up so beneficially for us. So if you can throw us a buck a month on the Patreon, you'd be making a huge difference. You'd be allowing us to do more and better shows, and make the show more accessible, and we really appreciate that. So do take that under serious consideration. If you have the

ability, go on Patreon: [patreon.com/mightymur](https://patreon.com/mightymur), drop a buck in there. We'd really appreciate that.

**Mur:** [00:56:14] Yes, and at the dollar level you get early podcast, you get the transcriptions the minute they're done, you get almost weekly emails by me. So you still get a lot at a dollar level.

**Matt:** [00:56:15] I'll show up at your house in the middle of night and dance in your yard.

**Mur:** [00:56:18] And at the five dollar level-

**Matt:** [00:56:19] Clothing optional, that's the thing.

**Mur:** [00:56:20] ... I'll make sure Matt doesn't go to your house and dance.

**Matt:** [00:56:24] (laughs) How dare you. I have such rhythm that I want to share with the world and nobody will let me.

**Mur:** [00:56:34] Although one dollar people will.

**Matt:** [00:56:36] Apparently. Asterisk, Matt not guaranteed to dance in your yard clothing optional. Yeah, so thank you all, and thank you to everyone who already supports us on Patreon. We really appreciate it immensely.

**Mur:** [00:56:59] Yeah, if you guys didn't do it, the transcription idea would not even be feasible. So it's a definite perk. Thank you so much.

**Matt:** [00:57:05] Well then let's bring the show home, Mur, what do you say?

**Mur:** [00:57:07] Alright, we'll bring it home. If you want to support us outside the Patreon, my books can be found where books can be found, and they are: [Six Wakes](#), my space murder-mystery Philip K. Dick nominee for this year.

**Matt:** [00:57:17] (coughs) Hat trick.

**Mur:** [00:57:07] And [\*I Should Be Writing\*](#), which is my nonfiction book about writing based on my other podcast, *I Should Be Writing*. Both of those were out last year and are ... should be available where fine books are sold.

**Matt:** [00:57:31] The book you can write in, Mur.

**Mur:** [00:57:32] Yes, the writer's workshop you can write in.

**Matt:** [00:57:38] You can pay money to write in Mur's book. (laughs)

**Mur:** [00:57:41] You can buy *Six Wakes* and write in that too. I mean, I don't care.

**Matt:** [00:57:45] She doesn't care. Yeah, whatever. As long as you pay for it, she doesn't care. Even though it's soon to be a Nebula nominated book. Mur doesn't believe that, but it's going to happen.

**Mur:** [00:57:54] No, I don't. But thank you-

**Matt:** [00:57:55] Hat trick!

**Mur:** [00:57:55] ... for reminding me, I need to-

**Matt:** [00:57:58] Hat trick.

**Mur:** [00:58:01] ... I need to list the ... I need to make my Nebula nominations. Did you have any more Hugo or Nebula nominee suggestions for this week?

**Matt:** [00:58:10] I was supposed to do that, but then I didn't.

**Mur:** [00:58:12] Okey dokey.

**Matt:** [00:58:14] But I promise I will put a pin in that, and I'll do it next episode. Nominations will still be open, so we've still got some time.

**Mur:** [00:58:28] Yes, yes. Nebula nominations are open for the next two weeks. Hugo nominations haven't opened yet. But I do want to add one more thing. One of my favorite novelettes of last year is [The Revolution, Brought to You by Nike](#) by Andrea Phillips on Fireside: [firesidefiction.com](http://firesidefiction.com). It's free to read, and it is a fascinating futuristic tale of a corporation actually deciding to fight against the government.

**Matt:** [00:58:45] It's a cool title. I haven't read it, but I love Andrea. She has fudge.

**Mur:** [00:58:49] Yes. (laughs) And she did not bribe me with fudge to make this recommendation. I did it because I love the story, and I don't think enough people are talking about it. So, *The Revolution, Brought to You by Nike* at Fireside Fiction. Go read it.

**Matt:** [00:59:01] And if you do get the chance to sample Andrea's fudge, you should do that. But no, she's a fantastic writer. *Revision* is a great novel. I did read that.

**Mur:** [00:59:19] Yeah. Shill your stuff, Matt.

**Matt:** [00:59:23] Yeah, no, I have books. They're available for purchase. My newest book is [Gluttony Bay](#), it's the sixth and penultimate book in my *Sin du Jour* series. The final book, [Taste of Wrath](#) comes out in April, the seventh and final book. It's coming to an end, people. The series is coming to an end. And if you're not a part of it, you're not hip. I'll just say it right now. So yeah, go check out the entire *Sin du Jour* series if you haven't. First Book was [Envy of Angels](#). It came out in October of 2015, and we're wrapping things up pretty soon here, so you still have time to get caught up. I also have [Rencor: Life in Grudge City](#), my masked Mexican, wrestler, supernatural, comedy, buddy cop, action, thriller, mummies, and bacon wrapped hot dogs yarn from Parts Unknown Publishing. You can get that as well on Amazon in print or ebook form. And please check out my YouTube channel, that's a thing now. [Angry Writer](#) is what it's called, and we just passed 400 subscribers, Mur. Our first 400 subscribers, yeah. Going strong. It's only been going for three months, but I vlog every single weekday and do a bunch of other cool stuff on there, so check out Angry Writer on YouTube. Consider subscribing. It would make me happy.

**Mur:** [01:00:23] Awesome.

**Matt:** [01:00:23] Oh, and I'm on Twitter [@MattFnWallace](#) and my website is [matt-wallace.com](#).

**Mur:** [01:00:28] Sounds good. And guys, even if you can't support on Patreon, tell a friend about *Ditch Diggers*. Because more listeners are always awesome.

**Matt:** [01:00:40] And we need more education advocacy for freelance writers. Business education. It's an important thing. I'll say that. We do an important thing. I don't have a problem. I'll put that right out there. I think we're important.

**Mur:** [01:00:47] Yes.

**Matt:** [01:00:48] So yeah, tell a friend.

**Mur:** [01:00:49] Okay. (laughs) All right, I'll see you next week, Matt.

**Matt:** [01:00:49] See you next week, Mur.

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