

The Hamilcast: A Hamilton Podcast

[Episode #88: The plan is to fan this spark into a flame // Part One](#)

Host: Gillian Pensavalle

Co-host: Michael Smith, You know Mike!

Guest: Lin Manuel Miranda!!!!!!!!!!

Description: Lin-Manuel Miranda came over to my apartment and we had so much fun that I have FIVE episodes for you! Welcome to #Lintoberfest, with my husband **Michael Paul Smith** joining me for these episodes. In Part One, I try to get over the fact that Lin is recording in my living room – spoiler! I don't! – But regardless, we tell the story of how Lin ended up on the podcast, details of the early days of *Hamilton*, why Lin is a Hamilton/Burr hybrid, and quote *The West Wing* a LOT. We also eat popcorn and drink the Spark Into a Flame cocktail, made especially for Lin and inspired by his Inwood, NYC roots. Stay tuned for four more episodes: two more with Lin and then the Lin B-Sides which will be outtakes, non-sequiturs, and commentary by me and Mike (you know Mike). And no, I'm still not over the fact that this happened! No chill whatsoever!

Transcribed by: Cheryl Sebrell, Proofed by: Kathy Wille
The Hamilcast's Transcribing Army

Ok, so we are doing this . . .

[Beastie Boys *Get it Together* plays in background]
[Group singalong]

LMM: *I got the ill communication*

LMM, M.SMITH, G.PEN: *Ma Bell, I got the ill communication*

M.SMITH, G.PEN: *Ma Bell, I got the ill communication..*

LMM: *Who's that!*
Word 'em up, word, word 'em up.
UH, ah, unh, unh.]

LIN MANUEL MIRANDA: Maybe the best four bars of hip-hop music ever.

GILLIAN PENSVALLE: Perfect.

LMM: Just Q going "*Uh, ah, unh, unh...*"

MIKE SMITH: ...ten second video of that 'cause that's just...

G.PEN: Can you give me a test please?

M.SMITH: Yes.

[Intro music: *Alexander Hamilton*]

G.PEN: All right, is everyone ready? This is insane.

M.SMITH: Yep.

LMM: [laughs]

G.PEN: Hey everybody, welcome to the Hamilcast. It is me, Gillian, I am here with Mike “You Know Mike”...

M.SMITH: Hey, yeah, it’s me.

G.PEN: And Lin-Manuel Miranda’s here...

LMM: What’s up, Hamilcast?

G.PEN: In my living room. You’re eating popcorn?

LMM: I AM eating popcorn ‘cause you gave me booze. And I haven’t eaten enough to eat...

G.PEN: Here, let me give you some slack on that. I don’t want you to feel like you can’t lean back. I want you to feel as comfortable as humanly possible...

LMM: Yeah...

M.SMITH: I think that’s a successful cocktail. We can already say at this early stage...

LMM: As soon as I tasted it I said “I’m gonna need some more food if I’m going to be... My voice is going to be in public when I talk to you.

G.PEN: Well, let’s talk to the listeners about what the cocktail is. And I’m sure I’m sure I’m gonna have a lot of listeners who don’t know who the hell I am because now they’re listening for you. So the cocktail is... I try to do a cocktail for specifically the person who’s on the show. Mike helps me a lot in that and I appreciate that very much. So this cocktail is... it’s called the *Spark into a Flame*.

LMM: Hmm.

G.PEN: Because I think that’s what you do. And I think the fact that you’re here means, that it’s kind of what I do? Is that a dick thing to say?

LMM: [laughter]

G.PEN: But what it is, is, uh, it’s a nutcracker. It’s our version of the nutcracker. So do you want to tell the listeners...?

LMM: And that's not ... [hums part of *Sugarplum Fairy* music from *The Nutcracker*]

G.PEN: No, no, no. It's the opposite of a beautiful classic...

LMM: No, that's a very...popular and very illegal Washington Heights alcoholic beverage... served behind your finest bodegas...

M.SMITH: Um-hum. Yes.

G.PEN: And sometimes you never know who's making it or what's in it or what's going on or how sanitary it is so I'm telling you now that we made it with the finest ingredients.

M.SMITH: It's essentially like a fruity, delicious drink that's often sold illegally, but we thought, as a reference to Lin's beginnings and to where he is now like, "*Start up from the bottom, now we're here.*"

G.PEN: Or a spark into a flame...

M.SMITH: So, we thought we would make our version of the nutcracker with the fanciest ingredients we could find. So, we found Grey Goose, we found Bacardi 151, and we just did it up.

G.PEN: We found...all the things, and it's delicious. And we're serving it in a Leo McGarry "*thick with a heavy base.*"

LMM: That's what I remember.

M.SMITH: That's one of the best episodes.

G.PEN: And the water is served... the water, that has not been touched, has been served in ...

LMM: [quoting from *The West Wing*] "*He loves being part of a team. I love him so much.*"

M.SMITH: [quoting from *The West Wing*] "*What are you doing? Well, I think he's being a little snotty so I think he's gonna have to wait and I think he's going to have to wait while the camera's on me.*"

[laughter]

G.PEN: All the *West Wing*, you guys, so get ready for that. And I just... I have to say... so for the first couple...Okay, so...God, how am I going to edit this...So this happened really fast, you being here.

LMM: Yeah.

G.PEN: ...but not... because I've been doing this for 19 months. But when we got in touch it was kind of fast. So, I just need you to know that for the last couple days I've been having a

combination ... my mind has been going from like *That Thing You Do*, like Skitch, "How did we get here?" and also...

LMM: [singing from Rent] "*Christmas Eve last year.*"

G.PEN: *Christmas Eve last year.* And also like [singing] "*Is this real life?*"

[Laughter, "Woo!"]

G.PEN: And also just like, "Of course." Like it just feels right that you're hanging out in my living room like ...

LMM: Well sure.

G.PEN: ...eating popcorn and hanging out, so...

LMM: Well you sent the Bat Signal.

G.PEN: Oh, did I?

LMM: [laughing] Absolutely.

G.PEN: Was it Mandy? Was it Shock?

LMM: It was Shock. It was Shock.

G.PEN: [exhaling] Ahhhh.

LMM: I honestly have to confess I'd not heard about the show and then ...

G.PEN: Oh, that's okay. I didn't expect you to ever hear about it honestly.

LMM: I heard Shockwave's episode while I was in London and went, "All riiiiight." And I loved, you know, I loved the way you guys talk about the show and then I heard the Mandy episode and the Ian episode and I then I was like, "All right," and so I sent you a message on Twitter. "So, right. When do you need me?" I said, "I'm home" ... I think I said, "I'm home in August..."

G.PEN: No, you said, "Okay."

[LMM bursts into laughter]

G.PEN: You said, "Okay, I loved your Mandy episode. I think I'm ready. [LMM laughs] Talk in September?" Question mark.

LMM: Yeah.

G.PEN: And so I took a moment... did a little bit of pacing in this living room that you're in. [inhales] Took a breath...

M.SMITH: You braced yourself on the chair and I had to ask you if you were okay.

G.PEN: And I said, "Yeah."

M.SMITH: Yeah.

G.PEN: Did a *West Wing* "Yeah."

M.SMITH: Yeah.

LMM: Yeah.

G.PEN: Okay. Lin just did the takeoff thing, 100%. And . . . I just said, "Lin just did the takeoff thing..." That's insane. I promise I'll stop doing that...And so then, I was like, "Yes!" We'll be out of the Heat Dome. Spoiler: we're not. It's also the first day of school literally, so the kids will be screaming.

LMM: You'll hear "*hundreds of children, we'll get to see them growing up...*"

G.PEN: Why!

LMM: I mean, you think I can't quote it as much as you quote it? I fuckin' wrote it!

[laughter]

G.PEN: Okay, so we're doing this. We might have to open a window though. Okay anyway. So then I said, I was like, "Oh god, oh god." So, I was like, "Yes, September works." [on the verge of laughter] Trying to play it super close, like "September works, we'll be out of the Heat Dome," because that's when you were still like not... quote, "not on Twitter..." I was like, "Have a great time on the rest of your vacation..."

LMM: That's right, I was...yeah.

G.PEN: ...and "I'll talk to you in a couple weeks." Here's a fun fact. I wrote down... 'cause I still have a handwritten calendar... I was gonna follow up with you on the 12th. So, I wrote, "Follow up with LMM."

LMM: You wrote on a napkin, "Bartlet for America..." and under that, "Follow up with Lin-Manuel."

G.PEN: Right. [Continues *West Wing* references] While holding the thick with the heavy base...someone cut my tie off, it was crazy...Mike was cutting my tie off for the energy of it... and, uh, and I got to cross that out, which was really amazing. Which is like the Poet Laureate says to Toby, "*Do you like making lists? Do you like crossing things out?*"

M.SMITH: What was the Thursday direct message?

G.PEN: It was just, "How's Thursday?"

M.SMITH: How's Thursday.

G.PEN: So I wake up to... I had a whole thing, I was like, 'It's gonna be September, I'm not gonna like... you know... you're a busy person, you have a lot going on, so I was like, "All right, by September 12th, cause that'll be the episode... you know, like Thayne's gonna come out the day before. And we had the best time and I was like, maybe he'll hear that and maybe he'll remember and... I don't know, I don't know if you're subscribed.

LMM: I think I'm a nice tonic after Thayne, 'cause Thayne's a crazy person.

G.PEN: Thayne...in the best way...

LMM: In the best way.

G.PEN: All we did was like laugh and scream and talk at each other, the entire time.

LMM: Yeah, that's Thayne.

G.PEN: We talked about ghosts and we talked about like, me as a freelancer, how I like, resent that I have to write a check to the Treasury...

LMM: You know how in *Gremlins 2* there are like different specialized gremlins...

M.SMITH: *Gremlins 2, the New Batch*?

LMM: Yeah, like Electricity Gremlin and there's the... Lady Gremlin and there's the...Thayne's like the Joy Gremlin. Like if Joy took on...

G.PEN: He's a pixie.

LMM: human form.

M.SMITH: *Gremlins 2, the New Batch*. Things that I didn't think would be mentioned during this interview.

G.PEN: He's an actual pixie.

LMM: He's the Joy Gremlin.

G.PEN: Ya, Ya

G.PEN: So, then I was, oh, okay. And then I wake up to a message from you saying, "How's Thursday?"

M.SMITH: And I have to tell you what I saw when that happened. We were laying in bed, I was still asleep, and remember how The Undertaker ... [laughing] Lin just did it ... The Undertaker would go from a dead laying...

LMM: [Undertaker lying down gif](#).

M.SMITH: ...to a full 90 degree sit up, like he just resurrected himself? And the audience would go crazy? That's what Gillian did, it was so ...sudden that I thought she was still asleep and was having a terrible dream. So, I was like, "What's wrong?" "Nothing, nothing is wrong." And then that's what happened.

LMM: And then you sent me a [Leslie Knope break dancing](#) gif. And we were off to the races...

G.PEN: Oh, you're a "jif" person? I'm a "gif" person.

LMM: The guy's name was Jif. The guy who invented it.

G.PEN: But the first word is graphic.

LMM: Right. I go back and forth.

G.PEN: Lin, I don't want to fight with you.

LMM: I don't want to fight with you. It isn't House Stark.

G.PEN: I know, right, please. But, yeah ... a lot of people had questions for, like, how this happened and I was, "I don't know, I can't tell you," but I just think it's funny I was like, for a man of so many words who, thanks to Ian Weinberger, I know was a 571 page libretto, you're a man of very few on the Twitter DMs. So, it was just like, "Time. Date. Place. Location. Leslie Knope gif."

LMM: Well I know you have specialized listeners who have very specific questions and I know you need time to get that together, and so I also wanted to ... you know... it's your time too.

G.PEN: So, you knew about the Patreon Peeps?

LMM: I knew about the Patreon because you mentioned it in the show. You said, "and here are the questions from the Patreon Peeps." It's your time, guys, it's your time.

G.PEN: Well, we will get to them. You guys hear that? You still alive?

G.PEN: They have been... I just want to shout out the Patreon Peeps. And we will get to you, we will get to your questions, but they have been... they have made me cry so many times, with the quoting, like "There's nothing you can do that won't make us proud of you..."

LMM: Aw, come on! Now you're making ME cry!

G.PEN: And like "Let Bartlet be Bartlet, Let Gillian be Gillian." Like "He's here because he likes what you do," and I'm like "Oh my god!" [laughter] It's been an insane couple of days and they have been so excited and I just...a lot of them...I started the Patreon in February so, like a year-ish after I started the podcast, but many of them have been here since Day One.

LMM: Right.

G.PEN: So they have been following like when Scott Wasserman was on the show in Episode 9...giving...

LMM: DJ Buttons.

G.PEN: ... all the street cred, and like all this cool shit and like, they've been so excited, so I just want to shout you guys out and thank you for everything, it's been a time. So anyway, Lin, how are you?

LMM: I'm great!

G.PEN: Thanks for comin' by.

LMM: Thanks. You caught me on a really free day so it's nice.

G.PEN: Yeah? Oh good. You picked it so...

LMM: Yeah. I got nothing going on today, so lovely.

G.PEN: Yeah? Great. What do you wanna ... I mean, we can talk about anything you want...

LMM: Honestly, it's your time. I know how deep you guys go. Like we can go super nerdy. We can go super esoteric.

M.SMITH: "*Screw around if you want.*"

LMM: We can go humble beginnings, like, you know, because there is several years before any cast gets involved with this thing, where it was just me and Tommy kicking shit back and forth. So, we can talk about that, we can talk about stuff once cast got involved...I mean, it's your time. I have seven years and my brain is at your disposal.

M.SMITH: Can I do another *West Wing* quote? "*Screw around if you want. But it's your money. It's about to be my money. And I sleep fine.*"

[laughter]

G.PEN: "*I bet all the money in my pockets against all the money in your pockets...*"

LMM: God, if only Arkin was my shrink.

G.PEN: ...*that Lin's gonna be awesome.*

M.SMITH: Oh my god!

G.PEN: So I did wanta say one little like fangirly thing. That you tweeted not too long ago that... I love your good morning tweets and good night tweets, and my mom actually ... I tweeted this, I don't know if you saw it, but my mom printed out one about courage, like even

when fear is in the back of your throat...she like printed it out, and made this really cool banner for my dad.

M.SMITH: Yeah, She has it on the windowsill in the kitchen.

LMM: Oh, cool!

G.PEN: Yeah, she's like... My parents are really psyched.

[Bell-like clang]

LMM: [laughing] That was me hitting my alcoholic drink against my popcorn bowl.

G.PEN: Also Mike... isn't it great? Mike is the best popcorn maker ever. It's just 'cause you know the timing on the microwave.

LMM: I'm sorry. I interrupted... you were about to say a very heartfelt...

G.PEN: I interrupt everyone all the time.

M.SMITH: I'm very attentive to the one-to-three seconds between pops. I'm very good at microwave popcorn.

G.PEN: It's very good. But your... the tweet really that resonated with me the most was "Good morning. Don't wait on anyone to make your favorite thing. Make your own favorite thing. Go." And that's ... what I did with this podcast?

LMM: And here we are.

G.PEN: So, you made the thing that was my favorite thing and then I made the thing that is my favorite thing to do. All the time...

LMM: And here we are.

G.PEN: And here we are!

LMM: And that's how it's supposed to work...

G.PEN: Right?

LMM: Ladies, and gentlemen, listening at home. You know, I remember. I really wanted to just be in musicals. Like that was like the thing I wanted. And when you're a Puerto Rican dude and you can't sing well enough... I'll never sound like Brian Stokes Mitchell, so I can't play *Man of La Mancha*. And I will never be able to dance well enough to play Paul in *Chorus Line* or Bernardo, so I didn't have a gig. And I didn't see a gig. And I remember being so excited when *The Capeman* was coming to Broadway, 'cause it was like.... It was like a supergroup of my heroes. It was like, Rubén Blades, Mark Anthony, singing Paul Simon music.

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: And Derek Walcott, I was just like, oh, these are all my favorite artists coming together. And then the show just lived and died like super quickly and...

G.PEN: I remember seeing that...

LMM: It was almost like the universe going [hits glass against popcorn bowl again - *Ding!*] "No one's going to make your favorite thing." And it wasn't, I mean, there was a lot I loved in the show, but it didn't quite work onstage. And I just remember thinking this was supposed to be your dream musical. No one's going to make your dream musical. It's up to you.

G.PEN: Right and the difference is, I think, is that I didn't know that I was gonna be a podcaster.

LMM: [laughing] Podcasting didn't exist when we were growing up

G.PEN: Yeah, but it was just...

LMM: And I'm so lucky... I have friends who make their living podcasting. And I think it's so incredible It is not an occupation that existed when we were little.

G.PEN: No, it's not my official occupation. This is the ultimate passion project and I just can't believe, and I promise I'll get over it in maybe five minutes...

LMM: [Laughter]

G.PEN: ...but I just can't believe that you made the thing that made me want to make the thing and this community has formed, like, the Patreon Peeps, we have this closed Facebook group, and they say these beautiful things like: the people in their lives don't know the version of them that they show in this group, like they feel safe. And I said very early on in this podcast in the first couple episodes, and I said it as a joke first and it super...it really quickly became not-a-joke, like this is a safe space. Lin, you and I have a lot in common. The one thing we have in common mostly is there's no chill whatsoever.

LMM: [Laughs]

G.PEN: Like I am the worst actress in the world, in the sense where like, when I'm in love with something, or if I love it and want to talk about it, that's what it is. And there are people from all over the world, in Hawaii and Singapore and all this stuff, and they found each other. And it's just kind of amazing.

LMM: There's something about podcasting in particular that unlocks that because it's not radio, you don't have to put commercials in it, there's also this intimacy. Like the podcasts that I listen to... I'm like itchy, waiting for them to show up. It is this thing like you know they're with you when you're walking your dog or driving your car, they're with you in the moments when you're alone. Almost by definition. I don't 'group listen' to any podcasts. You know, at most I'll put on a podcast that my wife will listen to with me.

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: But you listen to them when you're alone and so there is an intimacy and there is this feeling of communion that I don't... I really haven't seen in a lot of other art forms. I mean, and this is really an emerging form.

G.PEN: Yeah.

G.PEN: So, before we really get into it, I just want to just want to ask you one question. And Patreon peeps we're going to do a whole section about you guys... But someone has a question about *Hamilton* who is employed by *Hamilton*.

LMM: Oh boy.

G.PEN: Ian Weinberger...

LMM: [with mock annoyance] What's Ian want?

G.PEN: Ian wants to come over and watch *The West Wing*. You're invited to all that.

LMM: I'll talk *West Wing* with Ian anytime.

G.PEN : Any day of the week... So he and I had a little bit of our first fight during our recording, where he thinks that the first couple bars of *Hamilton*... You know them, I'm not going to do them... is the same rhythm of "*I am not throwing away my shot.*"

[Music excerpt: *Not Throwing Away My Shot*]

G.PEN: And he likes to think that the show starts with "I am not throwing away my shot" so his argument for that is: It's a coincidence. Then he cited you and Sir Alex Lacamoire - Ian said I can call him Lac... is that okay?

LMM: You can call him Lac.

G.PEN: Okay.

LMM: We ALL call him Lac.

G.PEN: ...but I'm like, I met him once, I'm like a nobody.

[Laughter]

G.PEN: ...but he thinks it's a coincidence, and he's citing the White House performance. He was like, "Yeah, well, he performed that well before he, Lin, wrote *My Shot*." And I was like, "That proves that it's not a coincidence! There are no coincidences in this show." So, who's right?

LMM: You're both right.

G.PEN: Okay.

LMM: [laughs] Honestly, I will tell you, I can only tell you what went into the making of both songs. I wrote *Alexander Hamilton*, the song at the White House, to a beat I created on GarageBand. You went into the door-screaming sound effect and how we found the piano equivalent of that for the White House Performance...

G.PEN: The keyboard is here just saying, just saying...

LMM: Okay, alright, I brought my computer too. I got old files and shit.

M.SMITH: [Loud Gasp]

G.PEN: I am now the skull emoji. We're all skull emojis. It's weird how like a spiritual entity can be picked up by a microphone when you're dead.

LMM: So, I wrote that and you know what's interesting? I've never told anyone this, there was a there was a moment where I thought maybe Eliza's in on this too. And there was a song called... there was a hook called *There Won't Be Monuments* - "*there are no monuments for you*," that was going to kind of go between the verses about Hamilton...

G.PEN: Like "*palaces out of paragraphs*?"

LMM: Kind of, except then I went on Google and was like, "Oh, there's a lot of Hamilton monuments. This lyric is bullshit!"

[laughter]

M.SMITH: There are several in New York alone...

LMM: It's a beautiful lyric, but it's bullshit.

G.PEN: But so was "*I punched the Bursar*."

LMM: Yeah yeah. Well, that...yeah, that's true.

G.PEN: ... but some of them you were okay with.

LMM: But sometimes bullshit justifies a really good '*Burr, Sir*' rhyme.

G.PEN: It was a good rhyme, come on!

M.SMITH: Justifiable bullshit.

LMM: Yeah exactly.

G.PEN: Hashtag...

M.SMITH: #JustifiableBullshit.

LMM: So, Alex and I really, basically adapted this music loop I'd created on GarageBand for piano together, when the White House called. And then in the year I was writing *My Shot*... and this was really... everyone asks us "what comes first, music or lyrics?" The lyrics really came first in *My Shot*. So, I had that hook "*I am not throwing away my shot*" and I had Hamilton's verses and I was so... like, I was just starting, and I was so scared of getting it wrong because I was just starting and I really thought this was a good idea and I didn't want to screw it up with my own poor musicianship.

G.PEN: And you had no contact with Chernow yet, like this was all you.

LMM: I had no contact with Chernow yet and I just started... I think I found a beat I liked but I wouldn't commit to a chord progression. I was just like I'm just going to make the words as good as possible and that's why it took so long, was like "this is not quite right," "Uhh, this is not quite right," so all this to say that rhythm at the top of *Alexander Hamilton* was the only music I could draw from because I didn't have any chords. So "*I'm not throwing away my shot*" absolutely evokes the drum pattern at the top, or the piano figure, rather...

G.PEN: Right.

LMM: ...but that's because I wasn't committing to any music because... it was just like, I was scared to get started.

M.SMITH: Um humm.

LMM: Does that make sense?

G.PEN: It makes all the sense in the world

LMM: So I wrote Hamilton's whole first verse, "*I'm a diamond in the rough, a shiny piece...*" I wrote all of that without a chord progression under it, I just wrote it to drums, because I was scared of getting it wrong.

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: And then once I finally committed to it, you know, I was able to find lots of really fun stuff. I really like the "Whoa" section. I call that the...I don't think anyone said this on your show yet, I called that the AOL modem...

[intake of breath]

LMM: That interval which is a bitch to sing, the [sings] "*whoa whoa whoa...*"

[Music excerpt: *Whoa/Rise Up* section of *Alexander Hamilton*]

LMM: That *du-duh-duh-duh-dinnng* [imitating AOL dial tone] ...

G.PEN: Yes, oh my god, totally!

LMM: Back in the day... [Uses announcer voice] "Hey kids, back in the day, we used to have to sign in to the internet through our parents' phone lines."

G.PEN: I actually played it once...

M.SMITH : Only one person could be on and you had to ask everyone else in the house "Is it okay if I..."

LMM: "Don't pick up the phone cuz you'll kick me off the internet!"

G.PEN: That was in your head when you...?

LMM: That *du-duh-duh-duh-dinnn...* [imitating AOL dial tone] Yeah, that was me, like...

G.PEN: Transferring...

LMM: ...that circle transferring it to the wider world. That sound of an idea spreading.

M. SMITH: Cool. Lin, did you ever have moments of despair like Sam Seaborn? Did you ever say, "*We're starting all over again from a blank piece of paper?*"

LMM: Constantly, constantly.

G.PEN: [Quoting *The West Wing*] "*In a half hour I want to make Toby laugh.*" Who was your... who was your Toby?

LMM: [Quoting *The West Wing*] "*When'd you write that?*" "*In the car on the way here.*" "*Freak.*"

G.PEN: Did you have a Toby?

LMM: The room is always...My cabinet is always Tommy, Alex and Andy. And it was a while before it was Andy even. You know ... Andy ... I'll never forget... I don't know if Shockwave described this, but when we did the Lincoln Center Concert... You know, again, in my head this was still maybe an album, so we didn't need a choreographer yet. That's the only reason we hadn't called Andy. I love Andy. And I remember, we hadn't written the duet yet. So, Tommy said, "Why don't we close with the song everyone knows?" which is the song that I had done at the White House.

G.PEN: Right.

LMM: We closed with *Alexander Hamilton*; that's how we closed the concert. And then we did an encore of *When You're Home* because we had Chris and Mandy there.

[Laughter]

G.PEN: I mean, when you have Chris and Mandy in one spot...

LMM: You just make them sing *When You're Home* ... at any time even if we're just at a kids' party...

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: "Sing *When You're Home!* You're standing next to each other!"

M.SMITH: I'm sure they really appreciate that.

[Music excerpt from "In The Heights": *When You're Home*]

LMM: I remember looking out into the crowd, singing *Alexander Hamilton* and seeing Andy's neck just about fall off his head. Like his head was...

G.PEN: He was choreogra...

LMM: You can't see how far my head is gyrating around my neck, but I could see him choreographing it from his chair in the Allen Room at Lincoln Center and I will never forget that moment of like, how hard he was feeling it.

G.PEN: Well my question... I have a main question that when I was watching *The West Wing* the other day, like I do, I was inspired to ask you. Remember that scene when Donna is Canadian, and then it's for Abbey's birthday and then she's like "*Let's get hammered*" and then Mary-Louise Parker said "*The first lady just asked me to get boozy with her. You don't think I want to write a book someday?*" And CJ wants to ask her "*Are you First Lady now, or are you Abbey?*" So, Mike and I have worked with our friends a lot, it's what we do, when we made our web series *The Residuals*, which is like... we're so insanely proud of it and it's just, we...

M.SMITH: Our baby...

G.PEN: Ya, I feel you can relate to that. So, when are you First Lady and when are you Lin? Because I feel like you have all these geniuses, and your cabinet is full of geniuses, including you. So, is there ever a time where you have to balance when you're First Lady, when you are Lin? Or, is that even a thing? Or do you guys know each other so well that that's not even an issue?

LMM: Well, we got a real shorthand during *Heights* ... That was sort of the crucible for us. And that was way... in a lot of ways harder than *Hamilton* because there was no spine. And Quiara's very much a part of that even though she didn't work on *Hamilton*. Like we all have a shorthand when we are around each other because we've just made a million decisions together.

G.PEN: Right.

LMM: And so, the benefit of that shorthand is great but...

G.PEN: How did you get to that shorthand then? Like was that tricky?

LMM: Well, Tommy's really smart. That's the thing. Tommy's much smarter than me. Like the Leo McGarry metaphor applies in every situation. Like, I'm very much Bartlet.

G.PEN: [Quoting *The West Wing*] "*Oh man, I love him so much.*"

LMM: And my way of contributing is bringing in a song, and then he's gonna bring in everyone else and make my work better. And that's about as one-to-one a metaphor as you can get. When Tommy realized I was serious about this was after I performed *My Shot* for an ARS Nova benefit, with just Shock doing beatbox and me rapping. Again, still hadn't committed to chords. [laughs] Like there was no chord progression, that was just me rapping to Shock. But I did both verses. Both of Hamilton's verses at that point. And Tommy's first thing he said was, "Well let me go read the Chernow book. I'm going to circle the things I think are a musical. You circle the things you think are a musical and we'll sorta see where we meet." So already he's getting us on the same page.

G.PEN: I love how he says, "Let me just read it" like that's an easy thing to do, to read this 700-zillion...

LMM: Well, listen, I know there's a lot of boring history books out there. I don't consider Chernow's books one of them. I read that thing like it was Dickens.

G.PEN: I don't think it's boring at all but I have put this pressure on myself that when I don't have awesome... And I promise you guys I will get back to it... Mike and I have committed. I will get back to dissecting the Chernow chapters that, I know super annoyingly, I call the cherpters...

LMM: [Laughs Loudly]

G.PEN: I'm trying *to make fetch happen*; I'm calling them cherpters. I get it. But it's hard, because that is not how my brain works at all. But I do want to understand it because... you've sort of woken us all up. My friend Zeke from GLAAD who was on the show was like, "you have turned us all into history buffs" so it's hard when I'm trying to understand it and then explain it to people in a recorded medium.

LMM: Yeah.

G.PEN: But... it's dense but it's great. If I didn't have to explain it to people, I'd probably blow through it.

LMM: Yeah, I think what Ron did that was so brilliant was... he sort of latched onto "this guy is relentless." This guy's relentless, and he's gonna throw twenty things at the wall... and so he infuses his understanding of it through every biographical detail and that's what makes it interesting. I mean, that's what made it interesting to me. I just... you know, I was reminded of my dad, I was reminded of so many immigrants I grew up with who worked twenty jobs... I read the book and was like "I know this guy." That was never something I ever felt reading a historical piece.

G.PEN: So, it felt super familiar to you.

LMM: Yeah, I was like, I know this dude.

M.SMITH: [singing from Mixtape] "*Got one job, two job, three when I need 'em...*"

LMM: Yeah, exactly. [laughing]

G.PEN: There you go... I also love the absolute shade that Chernow throws where he says... my favorite line is, because it's Jefferson, 'you have to take it with *a pound of salt.*' A pound! Not a grain. Not a pinch, a pound of salt. He hates Jefferson.

LMM: But that's also where his job and my job are different, right? Because I've got to get inside Jefferson. I gotta be Jefferson for as long as I need to be him to write his music. I gotta be Burr. So, I think by definition, by having to step into their skin... it's more sympathetic because I've got to figure my way into them. So, I think my Burr is a lot more sympathetic than his Burr. And we talked about that; we discussed that. I read another book that was really great in terms of unlocking Burr. It's called *The Heartbreak Of Aaron Burr* by H. W. Brands. You'll read that in a day. It's 200 pages and ...it examines Burr specifically through his relationship with his wife and his daughter, and that was my way into Burr. Because when you see him that way, when you see him through the light of... first of all, he is the early feminist. He educated his daughter the way...

G.PEN: He really did...

LMM: ...men were educated at the time. He married an older woman and she was really smart and... And his mom was... That was just how he grew up, and that's what he believed, and so when you see everything through that prism, his actions make a lot more sense. Because he doesn't explain his own actions.

G.PEN: No.

LMM: He does not leave behind this insane, footnoted trail like Hamilton does. With Hamilton, you know, he writes down everything that's in his fuckin' head for better or worse... Burr we've got to figure out.

[Music excerpt: *Room Where It Happens* -1m15s long clip]

G.PEN: So, did you go through... like, "This week I'm going into Jefferson's head. This week...?" How did you separate trying to get... I feel like you captured, really captured, them for this musical so well, and I know that there are... I love Hercules Mulligan. It's a thing. I'm saying it. Like I have a tattoo idea about him.

LMM: That's one where I fell in love with the name and then learned more about the guy.

G.PEN: Right.

LMM: Hercules Mulligan is the greatest hip hop name a hip hop artist never had.

G.PEN: Come on, come on. I always say I love YOUR version of Hercules Mulligan because I know there's a lot that we don't know... I know they were not all at Fraunces Tavern at the same time...

LMM: Yeah.

G.PEN: ...but ...did you have to separate that ...to get into so many people's minds at one time?

LMM: I mean that's, that's the fun, you know, that's the fun. When you think about any of your favorite musical writers you have to remember that they get to play every part. Sondheim has Sweeney Todd and Tony and Maria inside him somewhere. He found the words that they say to each other. And we're actors at the end of the day. Any great musical theatre writer is an actor.

Jason Robert Brown is a great actor. Adam Guettel is a great actor. Jeanine Tesori is a great actor. You know, it's about putting yourself in those shoes and talking to yourself 'til it feels real. The distance between me and these characters is so much more different than me writing people in my neighborhood in *In the Heights*, right? So, the only way to bridge that distance is empathy and research. Those are the only tools you have. You do research until you sort of understand their day-to-day circumstances as much as possible, and then you get in there and you figure it out and... that's a joy. It's a joy to be Eliza. You know Eliza is so... is so much fun to be. It was so much fuckin' fun being Angelica. You know I wrote a lot of ...

G.PEN: I was going to say, I feel it's not so much fun to be Eliza because she had a lot of work to do...

LMM: She did but she also ... she's smarter than Hamilton in a lot of ways. In terms of common sense, in terms of taking a breath, in terms of just being a person...

G.PEN: Hey right here, right here.

LMM: And so she's your best instinct and so that's a joy to write. I'll never forget writing *That Would Be Enough*. There's no historical precedent for *That Would Be Enough*. That was... it's funny, the songs that really linger are the ones I have to write the day before a workshop or a reading, and that was like the day before we had... this was not even an official reading for people. This was like a bunch of actors we got in a room. I remember Kanita Miller was playing Eliza for us. She's going to be in *Once on This Island* that's coming in. She's incredible. And it was the day before and *That Would Be Enough* just tumbled out. I mean, I just wrote it and... I'm bawling while I'm writing it. I could play you my demo...I'm off key the whole time because I was crying while I was writing it.

G.PEN: And you had a deadline? Like *That Would Be Enough* has to be done...

LMM: It wasn't that it had to be DONE, it was that we've got actors for this week. So, what do you want to hear actors sing here and not your own terrible voice? What do you want to hear actors playing with so you can learn about what you've written?

[Excerpt from *That Would Be Enough*]

LMM: Yeah, another one of those was *History Has Its Eyes On You*. *History Has Its Eyes On You* was a night before. This is the last day we have the actor, so... let's have Chris sing *History Has Its Eyes On You*.

G.PEN: Yeah, let's not waste Chris Jackson, everybody.

[Excerpt from *History Has Its Eyes On You*]

LMM: It's funny because there are moments that are very rooted in research, but there are moments that are very...I went into these people's lives and I found something personal in there. I think I mentioned this in the *Hamilton* book, but like the scene where like Philip is doing his little rap for Hamilton...I'm all three of those people. I was the kid whose parents worked a lot, so any scrap of attention I could get from my parents... "Oh, I did something. I made something! I made something! Look, I made this!" I am now the parent who is a very busy parent and has to be torn away from work sometimes, and I am also like the kid at the...like the parent next to my kid who loves playing the piano. So that's one of those situations where I can see myself very clearly as Eliza, Philip, and Hamilton in this moment. And there is no historical precedent for that. That's just a moment that needed to happen between those characters at that point.

G.PEN: Well. Scott Wasserman said that you originally wanted to play Burr and everyone was like "That's hilarious. You are way too Hamilton."

LMM: ...yeah....

G.PEN: So what about that? Was it just because you knew you wrote amazing songs...?

LMM: 'Cause Burr has all the best songs in the show. I mean, and... I mean it's true. If you wrote *Wait for It*, wouldn't you want to play the guy who sings that song? [laughs]

G.PEN: I have said Hercules Mulligan is my favorite, but we have talked about this on the podcast a million times. If there's anyone I could play, it's Burr.

LMM: Yeah. *Wait for It* was such a gift when that song arrived. And I say 'arrived' because again, you do your research, you do your research, and then one day when you're riding the train "*my grandfather was a fire and brimstone preacher*" just sort of comes into your head. You think of "*homilies and hymns won't teach you.*" Oh, 'that's a nice little four-syllable agreement that's happening there,' and then the rest of it starts to... I don't know how to describe it, but it's like... you put a piece down and then the outline of another piece starts to emerge...

G.PEN: It's like unraveling but it's all coming together at the same time.

LMM: Yeah, yeah, and that happened very quick.... That was the first verse I wrote actually - the second verse I wrote first. I wrote "*brimstone preacher... hymns won't teach you,*" and then it all started showing up, and when I finished writing that song I was like, "Well, yeah, I wanta sing that song." [Laughs.]

[Excerpt: *Wait for It*]

LMM: And it's also it's also the thing of playing against type in a way, you know.

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: I know no one thinks of me as being chill or hiding an emotion.

G.PEN: Same.

LMM: I mean, by nature of my job there's tons I have to hide.

G.PEN: Sure.

LMM: Like there's stuff I'm working on that you don't know about until the day we have to announce it because people above my pay grade are supposed to announce it on the day.

G.PEN: A zillion percent, yeah.

LMM: You know, I have my Slytherin ways. I can keep a secret as well as Burr. I have that side to me and *Wait for It* feels just as personal as *My Shot*. As *That Would Be Enough* feels personal as *What Did I Miss?* ... My job's to find my way into all of them. Sondheim very famously says "None of

this is autobiographical. None of this is autobiographical.” Almost to a fault. He’s like, “You will not find me in my shows.”

G.PEN: Does he not protest too much? Like come on.

M.SMITH: He doth protest too much.

LMM: But at the same time, I know that he had to find his way into them because they are that good because he found his way into them.

G.PEN: Exactly.

LMM: So that's the gig and... so yeah, so when you write *Room Where It Happens*, yeah, the selfish performer part of me was like “I would love to sing this song.”

G.PEN: No shit... Well Mike, what do you...

LMM: ...and I have a running joke because I would stand on the side during *Room Where It Happens*, and you know, it brings the house down every night and I would just turn to whoever was next to me and go “I’m an idiot.”

[laughter]

LMM: I'm an idiot playing Hamilton over here.

G.PEN: ...what do you call the *Room Where It Happens*,?

M.SMITH: We started calling it Burr’s Truth Serum Song.

G.PEN: And because so many amazing people who have been on the show... like Nik Walker and Greg Treco have said “Oh no, it happens three times” and I cannot even get into the emails that I get and they, “I’m sorry, what?” and this conversation happens from three points of view?

LMM: I think what I relate to in Burr is the notion of... because we’ve all been at this point in our lives and our careers of, “I have everything it takes to be where that person is on TV, that person is onstage, that person is in movies. I have everything they’ve got. Why am I sitting on my couch eating Cheetos?” Why are they there? That’s the part of me that relates to Burr. Certainly, his devotion to his family I relate to. That was very important to find his human side and his familial side. But Burr is also... the difference between Burr and Hamilton is - they’re both orphans, they both have these weirdly hard upbringings. But Burr grew up with everything and Hamilton grew up with nothing. So, Hamilton has nothing to lose and Burr has everything to lose. And that marks you. That makes you go, “I’m not gonna step out on this position until I’m sure what everyone feels.”

G.PEN: Right.

LMM: You know when ... I’ve known people whose parents have done great things, and it’s tough. It’s tough when your father or your mother is the best at this one thing. Burr’s dad was the president of Princeton. Burr’s grandfather was an infamous preacher. So, you grow up and you go, [whispers] “What am I gonna be?”

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: "I'm gonna be great. I just haven't figured out what I'm gonna be great at yet." And I also went to... you know, I spent kindergarten through twelfth grade at Hunter which was a school for... I mean it was Professor X's School for Gifted Teens and I met a million kids who... if they had just picked musicals ahead of me, they would be the ones you're talking to right now. And I'm not blowing smoke. Like, more musically talented than me, more verbally gifted than me, more, just fuckin smarter than me. But they had the Burr thing of like, "What am I gonna do with it?" And so, they never chose. I've had my heart break with incredibly talented people who just never committed to the thing they're doing...

G.PEN: Totally. Yeah.

LMM: ...and, you know, great actors I went to college with, great actors I went to high school with, who just never... fuckin' did it.

G.PEN: Did the thing!

LMM: Just show up and take the... take the losses and do it, cuz you're good at it. And so I relate to that part of Burr... Of the... "I know I'm good enough to do this but I'm terrified to make a step towards it." And I think that's very relatable. In a lot of ways more relatable than Hamilton who is like, "I know what the fuck I'm gonna do. I have no time. Let's go."

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: You know, that to me is ... you know, I don't see myself as that. I see people like Lennon and McCartney like that. I see Outkast like that. You know, the Beatles broke up when they were 27 years old...

G.PEN: They were kids. They were KIDS!

LMM: But they just knew what they wanted to do and they got great at it. And they never stopped experimenting and they never stopped surprising themselves. And so, I look at people like that in awe. And I feel Burr-like when I see people like that....

G.PEN: Yeah.

LMM: You know? And so that's.... The fun of the show was figuring out what Hamilton and Burr's relationship was and also realizing this is not Valjean/Javert. This is not one pursuing the other. This is not Salieri/Mozart. This is not... "Hamilton is gifted and Burr is not." They're equally gifted. It's just that Hamilton's got an engine in him and Burr doesn't.

G.PEN: I can't believe that Jefferson's not the guy who killed him.

LMM: Right.

G.PEN: They fucking hated each other...

LMM: And I have to figure that out as a dramatist. So, I have to make it a contrast in temperament. And because Hamilton and Burr circle each other much more, you know, Jefferson doesn't show up until Act II. He was kinda gone when Hamilton was making an impression in the colonies. And so...

that's the play. That's the groove. That's how you make for maximum drama. You make a difference of temperament and it's a lot of fun. Can we take a bathroom break?

M.SMITH: That's a great idea. I concur.

[Music excerpt: *Take a Break*]

G.PEN: Hey, M dot Smith.

M.SMITH: Hey, G dot Pen.

G.PEN: That's the end of #Lintoberfest Episode One.

M.SMITH: Just gettin' started.

G.PEN: Just getting started. There's a full month, almost. Four episodes in October. But it's called, #Lintoberfest.

M.SMITH: Guys, it's really exhausting, sitting here watching TV while Gillian edits. I gotta tell you, my job is really difficult.

G.PEN: You know, I cannot stand the sound of myself anymore. It's just been constant. Especially episode 2 because it's what I call freestyle o'clock. It is... you guys, I'm so mortified by it, I can't... like I'm not done editing it yet, I still have my finishing touches and stuff to do. I cannot wait for it to be over because even listening to it, I'm the worst freestyler in the world. Mike is an amazing beatboxer who beat boxes under Lin-Manuel Miranda freestyling, and I forget every word in the English language - like actually every word.

M.SMITH: Here's a little confession: I took on the beatboxing role because I knew I would be just as bad at freestyling as you are.

G.PEN: So, you threw me under the bus a little bit?

M.SMITH: A little bit. I just made myself useful in other ways so ... simple.

G.PEN: Great. Anyway...

M.SMITH: And I didn't have a Shockwave master class, so I'll give myself a little credit for that.

G.PEN: That is true. "*Boots/cut.*" That's all I can do. That's it. Thank you, Shockwave, for indulging me. So, we have two more real episodes, I guess you can say, and then we have the "Lin B sides" for Episode 4, which is going to be out-takes and non sequiturs and things that maybe need some explanation or corrections, and Mike here will be my co-host for that and we'll do some commentary and some behind-the-scenes stuff.

M.SMITH: Sounds good. I'll be here.

G.PEN: And how 'bout this? I'll take questions if you're in the Patreon Facebook group, how about that?

M.SMITH: Why the hell not?

G.PEN: Why not?

G.PEN: Okay so we also... just as Lin has been saying on his Twitter ... these are not ordinary times. I just wanted to use this platform to let you know what you can do to help Puerto Rico which is struggling right now. Our fellow Americans and just fellow humans. And also, how to help with relief to other locations and areas that have really been affected by these natural disasters as of late. So, you can go to HispanicFederation.org/donate. That is what Lin has been pushing. A hundred percent of the proceeds are going to Puerto Rico.

M.SMITH: Just donate a dollar. Anything. Anything helps.

G.PEN: Do you wanta explain why? Cause I'm gonna get mad about it.

M.SMITH: Yeah. I think we're all pretty mad about a lot of things these days involving the hurricane and the response and its results and as Lin has encouraged us on Twitter: "Channel the rage, channel the anger. Do something good. Go to hispanicfederation.org. And also just be nice to the person next to you." But it's getting reinforced on the news a lot that Puerto Rico is part of the United States of America which is really important for some people to hear over and over and over again. Why is that important? I've been thinking about that myself because we're all in this together. We're all citizens of the world; we're all here; we're all relying on each other. But for better or for worse, it matters because Puerto Rico relies on the fifty states of the United States of America. Because of the way that it works...

M.SMITH: When you're part of a country and everything that it implies, they rely on us. More so than they rely on other countries and we're also still a very wealthy country. AND because Puerto Rico and its citizens and its economy "a hundred miles across" as Lin rapped on *John Oliver*, they were there for us. They were recently, during Harvey and Irma, and during Katrina and during Sandy here in New York. They need our help. And they rely on the US because they're part of the US. So they're getting help from all over the world but they rely on the US more than any other country because that's their country. So it's as simple as that really.

G.PEN: It seems so easy, right?

M.SMITH: I'm like rubbing my temples right now.

G.PEN: Thank you for taking...I know it's a very frustrating thing to explain. I appreciate it because I would just be flipping tables right now, screaming.

M.SMITH: I know that I'm preaching to the choir here, that we all understand.

G.PEN: And even if they weren't part of this country... that's why I have links to help Mexico from the earthquake. Like, people are in need and humans helping humans - that's not political; that's just what we should do when people are in need.

M.SMITH: And we would be doing it no matter what, but the point is if if we weren't the number one contributors to their recovery, they would really be lost, because we are their country and they are us.

G.PEN: Right. hispanicfederation.org/donate. A dollar. That's it.

M.SMITH: That's it.

G.PEN: If you have more and you want to do more, awesome. But if all of us did a dollar that would be more helpful than I think we can even fathom right now. And I also have... there's an awesome link on businessinsider.com that has all the charities like local charities. Local in Florida, local in Texas and Mexico.

M.SMITH: So Carmelo Anthony has a great charity.

G.PEN: What's that?

M.SMITH: The Carmelo Anthony Foundation is another great charity...

G.PEN: And I also have listed BakerRipley.org. OneAmericaAppeal.org. TheHumaneSociety.org. Let's not forget about the animals, everybody. So, there are tons of resources @[thehamilcast.com](https://twitter.com/thehamilcast) under this episode, all the links. And also, all the links to the episodes that we talked about in the show: Shockwave's two episodes, Mandy Gonzalez episode and the Ian Weinberger episodes. Y'all, we talk about Ian Weinberger a lot, the associate musical director and conductor of Hamilton, so definitely listen to those because in these next episodes we mention and reference him a lot, so just wanted to shout those out as well. Did you have anything else that you wanted to add?

M.SMITH: Yeah, let me just say, keep watching the news or reading the news, as frustrating as it is because given what we're learning about the red tape down in Puerto Rico, it might become necessary - or more necessary - for you to call your representatives and make sure that the process is getting streamlined as much as possible.

G.PEN: That's why we are recording this on Sunday night, hours before this episode goes live because things can change at any moment and I want to make sure that you guys have everything up-to-date. When in doubt, look it up. Everything is there for you at your disposal, and Lin is being so amazingly vocal about it so ... he will he will let you know what to do and where to go.

G.PEN: Okay, I guess that's it. Thank you guys so much for listening. It's as exciting for me as it is for you.

M.SMITH: And me.

G.PEN: And you. Yeah, I still cannot believe it and I never told anyone what your social media was. We broke and stopped and we were taking breaks. And we were just going on and on and then it just was crazy, so I forgot to do that. Can you please tell the lovely listeners where they can find you on social media?

M.SMITH: I am @MPSmithNYC on Twitter. You can find me on Facebook too: Michael Paul Smith...

G.PEN: Look at you! Are you just going to accept all the listeners? How nice!

M.SMITH: Hell yeah and on Instagram it's also @MPSmithNYC.

G.PEN: You're very easy to find.

M.SMITH: Easy to find...

G.PEN: If you want to learn about the New York Cosmos, follow Mike on social media and you will learn about the New York Cosmos.

M.SMITH: There are a lot of tweets about... yeah, a lot of posts about jazz and soccer. And this very show. Oh, and did you hear the news we have a webseries?

G.PEN: We what?

M.SMITH: I know, I know they know that.

G.PEN: What?

M.SMITH: theresiduals.tv

G.PEN: What? What?

M.SMITH: Shocked, shocked I tell you.

G.PEN: To find that there's gambling in this establishment.

G.PEN: So yeah, all right. Next week is mostly like the music ep with Lin. There's freestyling... We go in on some musical motifs more than with Ian. We reference Ian's episodes, so definitely check those out... and that's it. All right, I'm going to finish this and put it online so you guys can actually hear it. Thanks for listening, guys. I'm G.Pen.

M.SMITH: I'm M.Smith.

[Exit music]

Find more information about Lin Manuel Miranda on the Hamilcast website:

<https://www.thehamilcast.com/episode-88-the-plan-is-to-fan-this-spark-into-a-flame/>

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We now include the Hamilcast Sign off from 2018 to let you know what host Gillian is currently up to.

[Music: Hamilton – The World turned upside down – Instrumentals play]

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Thank you again for listening to the Hamilcast, I will I will talk to you in five seconds on Twitter.