

9.16.24 Inside J!

Michael: [00:00:00] From the Alex Rebeck stage at Sony Picture Studios, this is Inside Jeopardy.

Michael: Oh, I love waiting for that first note. Johnny, on the axe. Uh, wonderful to be back on Inside Jeopardy, your exclusive and official podcast destination for all things happening in the world of Jeopardy. I'm Michael Davies, here today.

With producer Sarah Foss and, drumroll, our bon vivant man about town, Sam Buttry. Thank you, thank you, thanks for having me. Great to be here. Wow, Sam, our new podcast co host, the new man around town on Jeopardy. I've been about a number of towns, Michael, but to be about

Sam: Culver City is perhaps the dream.

Yeah,

Michael: exactly. Does Culver have a cathedral? I'm not sure that it really does count as a city, but I'll take that up with the town council.

Sarah: Well, it is called Culver City. Yeah, I know. You know, we can give it that title. And

Sam: Jeopardy fans probably know that a culver is another word for a pigeon. Wow.

Sarah: Bringing the knowledge, the professor [00:01:00] all ready.

Michael: I love that. It's like Gotham Pigeon City.

Sarah: Ah, and good luck apparently when they do

Michael: drop on you. Good. Inside Jeopardy is going to be getting a little longer, is the one thing I think we've learned in the first minute of the new podcast.

Sarah: Yes. Well, we did welcome Sam last week officially, but you were not with us because you have been About town yourself?

I've been about

Michael: town. I've been around the world. I've made a, uh, uh, went back to the old world, uh, literally. Uh, Sam went to, uh, Scotland, moved my daughter into university at Edinburgh, my alma mater. It was a very, obviously bought out all the feelings, close to tears or in tears, almost the entire trip.

Dropped off there, went down to the south of France, went to a wedding, headed over, spent a few days in the Jack Nicholson suite. Uh, in the Hotel La Tropez. Um, I didn't ask too many questions. And, uh, then had a couple of days in London. And, look, this was a, this was a very emotional trip for me in many ways, Sarah.

And

Sarah: now you're here with us, which is, is moving me. I would just

Sam: like to say I'm glad that you didn't stay in the Jack Nicholson suite at the Overlook [00:02:00] Hotel in Colorado from The Shining. Oh, that's a very different suite. That's

Michael: a different suite. Yeah. Very different suite.

Sarah: Well, Sam, reaction to you joining the pod has been pretty darn incredible, if I do say so myself.

I'm gonna share a few quotes that I love the most. Jeopardy! really said, Happy season premiere day! Wow! Can't think of a better person to bring it! Great news for buttheads everywhere! And my favorite, only Jeopardists in the building.

Sam: It's nice, and those are the least complimentary comments on the list.

That's why we picked them out.

Michael: No, I mean, we weren't surprised at all because I think we knew the moment that you joined the uh, the Jeopardy firmament. that you were going to be. You really just felt like you belonged. So many of the things that you said on the show became part of Jeopardy! lore throughout the pop culture tapings.

I don't think it's giving anything away, saying that people just bring it.

Sarah: They were bringing it. It

Michael: became a, uh, it's just almost every team said it at some point. And this is something that we've been working on for quite a while. Sarah and [00:03:00] I sitting in that little producer table on the stage where as we say to each other all the time, we get the, we get to do this.

We get the best view of Jeopardy! on a daily basis. And I think it was. One of your very early appearances that Sarah and I sort of turned to each other and said it'd be great to have Sam part of this thing and then it said yes, but then what happens about his eligibility? Then Sam can't play again. And I'm like, yeah, but there might be a time where Sam feels that he can, he can hang up the buzzer and not play anymore.

But when I called you to ask you if you'd be interested in joining us, my first question was, Or my first thing I said to you was you're going to have to be comfortable with not competing on Jeopardy anymore.

Sam: Yeah, I think, you know, the time has come to, as you say, hang up the buzzer. You talk about getting an opportunity to watch the show and how could you have a better job than that?

Here I have the opportunity. To watch Jeopardy! and talk about it. And you know what? I was going to do that anyway. Yeah. So I've had a lot of fun playing the game. Uh, but if the cost of, uh, being here with you guys and, uh, focusing on the game is retirement, sure, I'm all for

Michael: it. [00:04:00] The same year that Tom Brady leaves the field and goes into the broadcast booth, here you're doing the same thing.

I

Sam: am like Brady in so many ways.

Sarah: Yeah, I think that was the only negative comments that we saw online to the announcement was But wait, does this mean we don't get to see Sam compete? And like you said, you were going to be watching the show and talking about it anyway, but now a lot more people get to listen and hear what you have to share.

Sam: And of course, I have to be a little bit wary of communicating with players who are still eligible now that I'm more or less part of the team. So I've changed my phone to read when I call people, it just says Sam likely. Do you

Michael: see what I did there? So, um, Your role, you probably talked about this last week, but you're going to be joining us on Inside Jeopardy.

Um, but you're going to be a general man about Town on Jeopardy. We're still like defining the role and everything you're going to get to doing. I sort of like the idea of you almost being like a, a sort of a spokesperson or figurehead for all of our players, all of our contestants. And now as we sort of, Build our little sort of traveling band of, of, [00:05:00] of, of, of jeopardy troopers.

Um, I like the idea, especially because of your background in, in higher education, as we sort of build out our college program, going out to these college kids and going out to these colleges around the country. So we're still working on all of that.

Sam: I love college towns, university towns. That's where the action is.

So, uh,

Michael: send me. Put me in, coach. Fantastic. Um, with Sam joining us, of course, a lot of questions about Buzzy and what Buzzy's relationship with Jeopardy is going to be. He is going to remain, we're sure, the world of Buzzy, that he is going to remain part of the Inside Jeopardy family as a contributor as well.

Sarah: Yes. And Buzzy has been busy. We haven't even had a chance to talk about his most recent role, but Buzzy actually selected Blind Submissions as one of the writers for Pop Culture. So you're going to get to see Buzzy's work. He wrote

Michael: a brilliant submission, actually, a brilliant submission. And it was a sort of a delight for us when we sort of, you know, peeled off the tape at the top and it was like, Wow, it's Buzzy Cohen.

That was wonderful.

Sarah: Yeah. So his gifts keep on giving. We'll be sure to have him on the pod to talk about writing for pop culture and that different role. But [00:06:00] certainly, as you mentioned, Buzzy's still a part of our Jeopardy! family.

Michael: Sarah, congratulations. Yet another Emmy win for Jeopardy! because I was traveling.

You stood up there, looked amazing, but what you had to say, beautiful, beautiful stuff. Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah: Well, it actually aired over the weekend. So let's take a listen.

And the Emmy goes to Jeopardy!

Sarah: Thank you to the Television Academy for acknowledging our show. Jeopardy! is actually celebrating its 60th birthday this year. And what a [00:07:00] special way to honor the enduring legacy of what Merv and Julianne Griffin created in 1964. I want to acknowledge our dedicated staff and crew, our incredibly talented writers, many of whom are here today.

right on this stage with me, our fearless leader and executive producer Michael Davies, who's in Scotland taking his daughter to college this weekend, our host Ken Jennings, I know you're down here somewhere, who 20 years ago first appeared as a Jeopardy contestant and now just brings a uniquely perfect skill set to the role of host, which is not Something easy to do.

In the footsteps of the great Alex Trebek, who we all miss so much. And to our beloved announcer, Johnny Gilbert, the Golden Voice, who has introduced more than 9, 000 episodes of Jeopardy! We love you, Johnny. Everyone at Sony Pictures Television, the incredible leadership team, thank you [00:08:00] for continuing to find ways to support our show.

Thank you so much.

Michael: Wonderful job, Sarah. You got so much in there. I've never managed to get that much into a, uh, into an Emmy acceptance speech.

Sarah: Well, but they, they cued the music. But I didn't expect there were so many applause. There were applause when we talked about the show's success. 60th birthday.

There were applause for Ken Alex, so it was a really special moment. I will be happy to hand the baton back to you next year if we are lucky enough to win. But it was an honor, and I can't believe it. 21 Emmys for outstanding game show.

Michael: Um, I'm so glad you thank Mervin Julian because I would say the one thing, you know, obviously, we're now in post production on pop culture jeopardy in in J.

P. T. It's Jeopardy

Sarah: production time, Sam. You're gonna get the little lingo that, yeah, what we do.

Michael: Watching Pop Culture Jeopardy, which is a, you know, it's, it's the most modern iteration of the program yet made. I was continually struck by the fact that we are working on a [00:09:00] format that is 60 years old, that Merv, And Julianne also deserves an enormous amount of credit for the, for the show, as you rightly pointed out.

They created something so perfect in 1964, the format of Jeopardy! has not really changed. And it's just remarkable what they built.

Sam: You know, uh, it's possible to go on YouTube and other platforms and find clips from the old Art Fleming and Don Pardo days, and you're right. The game is, uh, 100 percent recognizable.

The dollar amounts are a little bit different, and, and, you know, Art walks over to the contestants in a way that Ken doesn't. But it's, uh, a beautiful thing to see the game largely unchanged between then and now.

Sarah: And to think that they came up with a format that 60 years later could stay relevant, because although the format is the same, the way that we can customize the material to come up with shows like Pop Culture, but also just to evolve over six decades of what's happening, not only historically, but in current times, it's just really, So incredible and it never is lost on me [00:10:00] Just what they created and that we get to keep it going.

Michael: Lots of online chatter over The summer that I read about questions about Jeopardy streaming and Jeopardy being available in streaming We were on Pluto no longer available on Pluto It was wasn't a huge selection of episodes on Pluto But there were a number and people really enjoyed having them there Uh, this was a decision made by Pluto and so Jeopardy is not continuing at Pluto.

It was not our choice. We would have loved to have continued over there. Um, but streaming and what we're going to do and how we're going to gradually

transition Jeopardy into streaming. We're never leaving broadcast. As long as broadcast exists, Jeopardy will be in broadcast. We're so happy with our relationship with both ABC Primetime, the ABC television stations in the major markets, and the, you know, 200 plus broadcast stations we have all around the country who do an amazing job with our program, but we, like everyone else, and certainly as part of this studio at Sony, we see the change in behavior, especially amongst younger viewers, and we just [00:11:00] noticed that they They want access to streaming.

Already, a huge percentage of our views on Jeopardy come on YouTube. And it's been interesting for us to analyze the data of what happens when people do find episodes there. We know that the demand is there for Jeopardy episodes. And I think I have mentioned this on this podcast before, as part of the renewal deal with the ABC stations, we got the next day streaming rights.

So, 24 hours after the initial broadcast and syndication, we have the ability to go and sell those episodes of streaming. So these conversations are heavily ongoing right now with multiple streamers about the next day's streaming rights. I think in the future, it may get even sooner than next day. And in addition, we've obviously made the Amazon streaming deal for Pop Culture Jeopardy.

So, there's a lot. Believe me, this is probably And I've said this to Sarah, I'm, I, my contract is up in May, and I would say my big thing that I'm working on for the next, um, for the next slightly more than half a [00:12:00] year is working on the, is working on the streaming rights. Tennis doesn't run itself, Sarah, so we'll, we'll, this is a very big thing that we're working on.

Sarah: And when you talk about the streaming, the 24 hour, that would be for 2025. Yes,

Michael: September 2025, we have the rights for next day streaming. So that's what we're now exploring so that 24 hours after the program, you know, debuts on WBC or WPVI or whatever station you watch it on, it would be available to watch on a streamer.

That's what we're working on right now.

Sarah: Oh, so exciting, right? Doesn't that get you excited, Sam? This is

Sam: huge. That's a Jeopardy fan. This is exactly the news I wanted to hear. Now, the thing about Michael Davies contract being up in May, I hadn't heard,

so there was a brief moment of panic back here on my side, but I'm, I'm certain it'll all work out and the show will go on ever better.

Michael: Look, what I would say is that, believe me, I wasn't trying to turn this into a Michael Davies contract conversation, but I would get slammed. I would get slammed down by my bosses. I love Jeopardy! I love working here, but I also never take anything for [00:13:00] granted. I never, you know, I never know what's going to happen, but I would actually say in Sarah watching you give that Emmy speech and then seeing the job that Barry Jean Dorman, producer Barry Jean, did on Pop Culture Jeopardy!

and looking at our team here, producers Alexa and producer Carlos sitting here, um, in the Inside Jeopardy! studio, I would say over the last five years, and this is what you don't get to watch on air, but it's the really the reality of what's happened here. That there's a huge strong bench at Jeopardy right now.

It's a, it's a really beautiful place. I'm very grateful to you, Sarah, uh, particularly for everything you've done over the last few years. Okay, that's enough. I'm gonna, I'm gonna cry again. So, huge new changes for season 41. If you're watching on air, you probably don't notice a lot. You're probably thinking, well, were they going to do a new set?

Were they going to have a new open? And, and, uh, those things aren't really there. We should say. That the set will be new for the shows that we start taping today in Jeopardy! production time. You'll start to see a new set on the [00:14:00] shows that start airing in 5 months. October 14th. October 14th. About a month's time.

Sam: You know, I've been saving this up until the podcast, but boy, I tell you, the game sure has changed since I was a player. Which was like, 20 minutes ago before we announced my loss of eligibility.

Michael: You know, you're like a great football quarterback who played in the era before the forward pass. Yeah, with a leather helmet.

Exactly. Leatherhead, Sam Butcher. I can picture you, uh, right there. The other change that we've been working on, the one that we wanted to do this season, I have to credit Sarah. This was Sarah's idea, is the We've wanted to bring back the beep boop beep boop beep. We've wanted to bring them back, the beep boops.

Sam does it

Sarah: so well. Do it, Sam. Oh, I

Michael: think Michael's ruined it for me, but yeah. Beep boop boop beep boop beep boop boop boop boop boop. Oh, that's good. I love the way you end it. You really land it at the end, which I need to work on. So, uh, we've wanted to bring back those. It's like many things in the world of Jeopardy.

It's gone through searching through mountains of paperwork to figure out Who is responsible for the original, uh, sounds. There's a lot of music clearance that happens in television. And, in [00:15:00] the end, it's posing some challenges to us, bringing them back, because of the authorship of the beep boop beep boop boop boop boos are a little bit in, uh, in, in question.

Um, and so, but we're still working on that way. We want to get the people people. We hear you back.

Sarah: That's the biggest thing I want you to know. We hear you and we are trying to make it happen. And there's just a little bit more to it than we thought. Well, I'd say it's time to take a look at the top highlights from our first week of season 41.

Great game to kick off the season. Returning champion Rachel Bradley was hoping for a second win, but it was Adam Reifen who became our first champion of season 41 after taking the lead into final where he was the only player to come up with the correct response. Now, Rachel, of course, had a brief hiatus.

You know, we think she had a big six weeks off, but as we know, we did tape these first five weeks back in May, so it 24 hours for her.

Sam: It's a little rough to, uh, pretend to be the summer champion of Jeopardy!, but [00:16:00] you can't tell anybody because, you know, you only have, uh, one dinner before the taping resumes the next day.

So do you think it helped or hurt her? As a former player,

Sarah: I think What do you think, Sam? I,

Sam: my opinion is I think it would help to come back the next day and resume taping. You've got your, uh, you're in the zone. She had a nice win at the end of the preceding week. Um, it didn't help her against a tough player in Adam, but I, I feel like if it had been me, I would have welcomed the chance to resume.

Sarah: But it's not you cause you're now retired, but let's hear from Adam, our first champion of season 41.

Ken: Adam, you're a Jeopardy champion now. Does a naval career, is that anything military training is good? Jeopardy prep?

I mean, I think so in as much as, um, the sort of the discipline and the focus and the ability to sort of calm yourself when you're about to go do something.

Um, that is difficult or otherwise important, uh, has come in really handy. And then having a spouse and family who understand the rigors of having to prep for things and train for things. My wife's active duty as [00:17:00] well. So she's been a huge help. My in laws are watching the kids while we're up here. Uh, it's a family affair and more than anything, I think a military career is a family affair.

Ken: I guess there is the added pressure of playing in uniform where. Most people are just representing themselves because they're wearing a nice sweater or a top or something.

Yes, making sure that I appropriately represent the service has been a huge component of all of this. Thank you to my public affairs team back on the ship that have been so helpful more than anything, though, just not wanting to spill on a white shirt on TV.

Um, yeah, but the rest of the contestants and the crew have been super solicitous and helpful of that. And, um, So far, so good.

Michael: Oh, we love a Jeopardy! player in uniform, Sam.

Sam: Yeah, there's no better uniform than the Navy Summer Whites. The favorite uniform of everyone who doesn't have to actually wear Navy Summer Whites.

Michael: Okay, on Tuesday, we witnessed our first runaway of the season by Will Weiss with 20 correct responses and 17, 000 heading into Final Jeopardy!

Sarah: Yes, but let's be [00:18:00] honest, what people are talking about is not Will's runaway, but rather Will's buzzer technique, the crossed arms. Have you seen anything like it, Sam?

Sam: This is the first I've seen that specific Wakanda look. Yeah. Yeah, he was holding that right arm very still, and that'll come into play in one of the subsequent games. We want to talk about that, I think, but it worked for him. Yeah. It's true that Adam got all three daily doubles and missed all three. All three.

All three. This was a difficult week for Daily Doubles, by the way. In the first four games of the week, the players went 2 and 10.

Sarah: Wow. Well, and it turns out that Will actually had the chance to be on Jeopardy! 20 years ago, but, you know, didn't have the chance to play. So now he's feeling like maybe those 20 years of experience really may have helped him.

And, you know, when Ken went to take his picture with Will, he said, Nice to meet you, Will, my near opponent in April. Parallel universe heading into Wednesday. Will continued his strong gameplay, notching another runaway and becoming our first multi day [00:19:00] champion of season 41.

Michael: I mean this final superb, a triple stumper, uh, in this game, the clue world borders after Canada and the U S these two countries share the longest land border at more than 4, 700 miles.

Sam: I have to admit, I didn't have that one. I expected it to be Mongolia's border with Russia, which is in the top five. Yeah. Um,

Sarah: Kazakhstan.

Sam: Yeah. It was Russia and Kazakhstan, of course, uh, some of us are from the days when the USSR didn't have a Kazakhstan. Yeah. So I'm claiming old guy rights to that. I like that.

Sarah: I think that's a good thing. Age

Sam: bias.

Sarah: Well, Ken caught up with Will after the game to see how he was feeling after pulling off a second win.

Ken: Will, it's uh, two in a row now. Are you getting settled in at all? Is it, is it old hat? I don't know.

I, I wouldn't say that. Um, I, I will say that it's, you had mentioned this talking to the contestants during rehearsal, uh, to just let go of the outcomes.

And the toughest one is the first one. And [00:20:00] then how you got progressively calmer. And I took that to heart. Uh, and I've just really tried to calm myself down and roll with whatever the board is up there and just read and react.

Ken: I just remember being a contestant and on TV, everybody looks very calm and presentable and the home audience doesn't know that you guys are feeling a lot of feelings, you know, like it's, it's very intense.

Maybe you've never been on TV before. That's one thing I always tell people. It's like, just try to have fun out there and and just enjoy how cool it is to be on Jeopardy because. It does go fast.

Michael: On Thursday, it was Mark Palmeer who came from behind to defeat Will Weiss, after Will, could not come up with the correct response in Final Jeopardy.

Sarah: Well, you call him Mark, but Ken, and I think everyone watching, wanted to call him Freddie Mercury. Ken even commented he didn't think he'd ever seen a contestant in all of the history who looked so much like Freddie Mercury. You know, he's done a lot of costumes with mustaches over the years. Perhaps he'll do Alex [00:21:00] Trebek.

After his win, Ken said, You are now a crazy little thing called a Jeopardy champion. Congratulations.

Sam: I wanted to point out that Will had no Uh, incorrect responses in his first game, and also in the Jeopardy round in this game, he did have one plus a daily double here, and then it was the final Jeopardy that killed him.

But he led going in, so he was a strong player in all three of his games. Yeah.

Sarah: Yeah, good play this week. And we ended the week with a champion in Evan Sattel, who managed to take the lead into Final Jeopardy, where he was correct. The real story, though, was still the Freddie Mercury jokes on Reddit. They were just having fun with it.

You know, another one beat the champ.

Michael: Yeah.

Sarah: Uh, he was the champion. I'm trying not to sing these, but you know, I love our Reddit friends and the fun that they have with our contestants.

Michael: Yeah, it's absolutely good. I mean, we've seen, you know, since the sort of the end of season 40 and into season 41, these emergence of some great characters [00:22:00] as champions.

Like I love great Japanese players like first and foremost, but I'm. Just the characters that we're starting to see and that part of building the storyline with our Redditors and with the people on X and people on Instagram and people starting to sort of get into this. I love that kind of communication.

Sarah: And there was definitely a character in Hillary, I think, potential, uh, best interview moment for Jeopardy! Honors. You know, I don't know, but Talking about that time when she found the perfect composition of fruit in the toilet. And we all are wondering, was it real fruit or was it an art piece? What do we think?

Sam: She wasn't clear. And originally when she gave the interview, it made it sound very much like she walked into the stall and there was a big basket of fresh fruit there. And I just could not wrap my head around it. But I've decided that somebody made a painting in the stall, which makes a lot more sense, I think.

Michael: Yeah, that's what it was like in the Jack Nicholson suite at the Hotel LaPonche, I can tell you that.

Sarah: Wow. Well, a lot of people talking about Mark's final Jeopardy [00:23:00] wager. He talked about it on Reddit, talking that he really didn't like the category. You know, he knew he had enough to at least cover Evan and still win if they both got it wrong, so he figured he should do that.

He wanted to cover by a little over a hundred, and he picked this number that was kind of funny, and, You know, he didn't realize until days later that the margin was not what he had thought. And so he says maybe it's being bad at math, either one is plausible, but that's the way it goes. He said he's not proud of the wager, but overall he's proud of his brief time on the Alex Trebek stage.

So.

Sam: Well, he was a fun and memorable contestant. I will say Evan's wager was somewhat non standard as well. The usual strategy would have been to bet enough to ensure that he won even if Mark himself bet it all and got it right. Evan didn't make that wager, but it worked out for him when he was able to change his final Jeopardy!

response at the last second. And come up with Syringo Star.

Sarah: And buzzer technique was certainly something we talked about a lot this week. Evan having his own special technique. Ken was interested to know [00:24:00] just what was going on exactly and spoke with Evan after the game about it. Let's take a listen.

Ken: I was very invested in that game and I was trying to figure out why.

And I think it's because Especially you two, Evan and Mark, are very, very vehement buzzers. Tell us about your signaling technique.

I used to play Quizbowl in college, so I just would always jump on it if I knew it.

Ken: It's like a full upper body workout? Yeah,

pretty much. I mean, I want

Ken: to get

passionate

Ken: with it.

Yeah, why do rows or anything when you can just, like, get a Jeopardy buzzer? What about you, Mark? Strength in the arms.

Um, I don't know. I I just think the harder I do it, the more likely it'll be first.

Ken: I'm sure that's how electronics work. Do you feel like there was an escalating thing where like, Evan being a very big buzzer was making you buzz bigger and vice versa?

Oh,

at least at my end, yeah. I was definitely buzzed harder because he was.

Ken: My favorite thing was when both of you were going like crazy and then like, you'd both be too early and then so Hillary would very calmly get in.

Sam: I'm just [00:25:00] glad they moved the podiums apart because in the old days those guys would have been in an actual fistfight

Sarah: Yes, I've never seen anything quite like it the battle of the buzzer. I mean they were physical I'm surprised we didn't see sweat dripping down from how intensely they were going at it

Sam: For those of you listening at home, you press the buzzer with a finger not with the arm So all that arm movement seems a little Unnecessary, but very entertaining to watch.

Michael: Yeah, like watching Del Potro and Kyrgios exchange forehands. That's a, an analogy that will work for about three people out there. Um,

Sarah: Well, and we tell people, you know, the more that you're motioning, the, just the up motion to get to the down, it's taking away time. So, um, I think that maybe Hillary had the right technique in this game.

Obviously, Evan pulled off the win, but it was entertaining to watch and, uh, it was a pretty great week of shows. Now it's time for us to introduce our brand new segment, but wait, there's more. We have asked Sam, our professor and Jeopardy champion to take us [00:26:00] behind a clue each week. This may be something that has captured his interest or a clue that has a particularly interesting story in the writing or the research process.

So, Sam. What have you prepared for us this week, Professor?

Sam: Well, thanks for asking. This week's clue comes from Tuesday's game, the one in which our Navy man, Adam, was the defending champion. Let's take a listen.

Sarah: The Mafia for 800? In

Ken: the 1980s, an FBI agent infiltrated the Bonanno family under this alias, the title of a 1997 Johnny Depp movie.

Sam: What is Donnie Brasco? That's correct. Many of us remember that Johnny Depp movie. It turns out that Donnie Brasco is the alias of Joseph Pistone, a New Jersey man of Sicilian heritage who spoke fluent Italian. So that made him a good FBI candidate to infiltrate the mob. He went undercover in the Bonanno family in the New York Mafia in 1976 and stayed there until 1981, emerging to give testimony to the FBI.

In 1982, this clue resonated with me because I lived in New York in the [00:27:00] 80s and 90s, and the Mafia was the stuff of tabloid legend. We used to read the New York Post and the Daily News to get Mafia highlights. In particular, Paul Castellano, the mob leader, put out a 500,000 contract on Joe Pistone's head.

Now, I don't really remember Pistone, but I do remember Big Paul E. Castellano being murdered in front of a New York steakhouse in 1985. That was grist for the tabloid mill for days. And it was one of the crimes for which John Gotti was eventually convicted. Gotti, of course, appearing in the 400 clue in that same category.

Well, Pistone wrote a few books about his adventures and even wrote some novels with Donnie Brasco as the protagonist. But despite the years since his testimony, he and his family had to change their names. And they lived today in As they say, an undisclosed location.

Michael: Wow.

Sam: Wonderful.

Michael: Is that

Sam: in

Michael: Delaware County?

Uh, potentially producer Alexa. We may be, we may have just done an entire, uh, segment about Alexa's family. We have no, uh, we have no idea. [00:28:00]

Sarah: What I do know is, I can only imagine how great it was to have a seat in one of your classrooms. That was wonderful.

Sam: Hardly any of my students fell asleep, but that's because they were military officers and would have gone

Michael: to jail.

Did you only ever teach one subject, or did you teach multiple things over your whole life?

Sam: I taught a number of things, although they were largely based on similar stuff. So we would teach service courses to other departments, but also, um, you know, I taught data analysis, I taught linear regression, I taught probability and statistics, all the exciting stuff.

All the stuff they're teaching at the University of Edinburgh right now.

Michael: Wow. And as an undergraduate yourself, I've never asked you this question. What did you actually study? What was your specialization as a student? I

Sam: majored in statistics. Wow. I was in the last year of my university's statistics major.

There was such little interest that they dissolved it the year after I graduated. This is

Sarah: why JeopardData is coming so naturally to you.

Sam: I'm in conversation with the producers of the podcast to get hold of the data. I want the data in my hands.

Michael: I want it.

Sarah: JeopardData. He wants

Michael: the raw [00:29:00] data. He wants it coming straight from the Elvis.

I love it. Well, the buzzer, you can maybe help us because the buzzer data, which we have a lot more of, but we haven't figured out how to really extrapolate. I would love to figure out really buzzer speed, but of course it can be polluted a little bit because sometimes if you. Do a bounce back or it's a, you know, it's competitive, but I don't know that it's just tough to really figure that out.

This

Sam: is what I'm

Michael: excited about, Michael. Let me in. Okay. Buzzer data. You're in. You're the only qualified statistician. I would say Carlos does an unbelievable job on JEPA data. And as he knows, this has been my passion for so long. Okay. Now onto this week's host chat, as though there hasn't been enough. An audience member asked Ken.

Is there another show that you would want to host?

Ken: I really like this British format called Only Connect. I don't know if any of you have seen this. It's an incredibly difficult show. It just makes, you know, it makes Jeopardy! look like Wheel of Fortune, basically. It's a [00:30:00] It's just a very hard problem solving kind of a show.

And the host in the UK is perfect, Victoria Coren Mitchell. But if she ever didn't want to do a UK version, I'm available.

Michael: Only Connect, one of my favorite television programs. I've inquired many times about the rights. Um, you know, many of our contestants, Buzzy, I think is a huge Only Connect fan. Many of our contestants, you know, too many to name have come to me and spoken to me about, uh, about Only Connect over the last couple of years.

It's a brilliant program, unfortunately owned by a different studio. They're never gonna, they're never going to give it up and we'll see. I don't know where. The place would be in the, in the U. S. television multi channel universe to place it.

Sarah: The only thing we do know, Ken, you can't host it.

Michael: Yeah, that's true.

Sarah: Sorry. Well, that wraps up today's show. Join us next week for more game highlights, and don't forget to send your questions to InsideJeopardyPodcast at gmail. com for the three of us to answer here on the pod. Thanks for joining us, everyone, and we'll see you next week.

Michael: Three of us. Lovely. Welcome, Sam.

Thank [00:31:00] [00:32:00] [00:33:00] you.