

# S2E14 - NAT CUMMINGS

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

work, cosplay, good, costumes, podcast, con, year, cosplayers, dressed, theater, convention, c2e2, part, nat, episode, film, corset, teen, character, library

## SPEAKERS

Nat Cummings, Elle Billing

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**E** Elle Billing 00:00

Hi, my name is Elle Billing. I am a chronically ill queer femme, and I'm tired. I'm here this episode and every episode to dig at the roots of our collective fatigue, explore ways to direct our care in compassionate and sustainable ways, and harness creative expression to heal ourselves and our world. And welcome to Hoorf-- Radical care in a late capitalist heckscape. My guest on this episode is Nat Cummings. Nat is a cosplayer soon to be high school graduate in Chicago who has also worked in various theater, fashion and film projects, and they are also part of a teen cosplay internship at the Harold Washington Library. They plan on pursuing a film degree after graduation. I'm really excited to have Nat on the podcast with me today. Welcome to Hoorf Hi, Nat, welcome to Hoorf

**N** Nat Cummings 01:13

Oh, hello.

**E** Elle Billing 01:14

Hello. I'm so excited to get you here today.

**N** Nat Cummings 01:17

Yay. Yay. I am also

**E** Elle Billing 01:19

Yay. I'm excited that you're excited. I have to ask do you actually listen to the podcast?

N Nat Cummings 01:27  
Um, no. And I can't I kind of forget that it exists until dad's editing it.

E Elle Billing 01:35  
Yeah, that makes sense. You have a lot going on. You're busy kid. Teen. You're not a kid. You're a teen. Yeah. Your birthday is I think the day after this episode comes out.

N Nat Cummings 01:44  
So I'll be an adult then.

E Elle Billing 01:47  
How do you feel about that?

N Nat Cummings 01:49  
Umm haha.

E Elle Billing 01:53  
Right? We kind of feel that way about you turning 18

N Nat Cummings 01:58  
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 01:59  
You know, you're you're graduating this year. Oh, my god daughter is graduating this year. And it's just a lot of like, we're not ready for people to be getting done with school.

N Nat Cummings 02:09  
I'm not either.

E Elle Billing 02:12  
.....

Yeah, I remember. I remember being your age and be really, really excited. I had senioritis starting in my junior year. And now I look back and I'm like, you fool.



02:23

I have too much going on. In these next couple of months to fall victim to senioritis.



Elle Billing 02:30

That's probably okay. Although the world is a lot different now than it was 20 years ago to



Nat Cummings 02:35

Yeah,



Elle Billing 02:36

I'm sure you hear us grumpy, geriatric Millennials saying that all the time.



Nat Cummings 02:42

A little bit,



Elle Billing 02:43

maybe a little bit in here. But you have a pretty good sense of humor about us, I think. So anyway, I'm excited to have you here. For those who haven't picked up on it in the last, just a little bit of banter. Nat is the almost adult teenager of my partner and co- producer Ricki who has been on the podcast it is works behind the scenes for this. And I'm really excited to have them on the podcast today. So I'm gonna just kick off with the first question, which is how have you received care this week?



Nat Cummings 03:21

I had therapy on Sunday.



Elle Billing 03:24

Yeah, that's cool. That's good.



.....

**N** Nat Cummings 03:28  
I still don't know how to answer this question.

**E** Elle Billing 03:30  
Oh, that's okay. All right. I started therapy when I was 17. So, yeah, I get that.

**N** Nat Cummings 03:39  
A lot of recently has just been like kind of chilling out after theater's ended because we just closed our show. And we like tore down the set and everything like that. And I suddenly have much more free time.

**E** Elle Billing 03:52  
Oh, I suppose that was the last show of this of the season.

**N** Nat Cummings 03:55  
That's the last show I'll ever have in high school at least.

**E** Elle Billing 03:59  
Yeah.

**N** Nat Cummings 04:00  
Basically, I've just been like trying to like, chill out since then. There's a lot going on during that show, just because of like theater stuff. You know?

**E** Elle Billing 04:11  
Yeah. Because theater.

**N** Nat Cummings 04:14  
But yeah, I've been it's been I've been like chilling lately, just because I have to lock in on a lot of stuff soon. And work on a lot. So like savoring the free time that I have right now.

**E** Elle Billina 04:29

Right. So what was the show that you did? What was the last one of the

N

Nat Cummings 04:33

it was called failure love story.

E

Elle Billing 04:35

Okay,

N

Nat Cummings 04:36

which is set in Chicago in the 20s. And it's about this family, the Fail family. Their family owns and like has a clock shop and stuff that they run. And there's this guy named Mortimer Mortimer, okay. He falls in love with each of the sisters in this family, like one by one and as he does that they all die by various means,

E

Elle Billing 05:04

oh goodness.

N

Nat Cummings 05:06

The youngest one, which is the first one that he falls in love with, has like a statue fall on her, on the day that they're gonna get married,

E

Elle Billing 05:15

oh my god,

N

Nat Cummings 05:16

the second one dies because she tried to swim across Lake Michigan, to Indiana, and basically falls, like under the boat that's following her. And then the last one dies of consumption.

E

Elle Billing 05:32

Okay.

N

Nat Cummings 05:34

N Nat Cummings 05:34

It's like, mostly, it's a pretty light hearted show until like, the the, towards the end, starts talking about a lot grief and handling that and stuff. And like enjoying the time that you had, like the experience that you had. Very fitting for a senior show.

E Elle Billing 05:55

It is that does sound really fitting. So you go to an arts high school. Right?

N Nat Cummings 06:01

Well, it's, it's, I mean, kind of like there's a good art program, but it's not just arts, It's, it's there's a very strong like, stem stuff as well. It's a selective enrollment school, which, in this school system, like you have to take a test to get in and to have like a good GPA in middle school and stuff like that. I don't know, they've changed some of the requirements to get into selective enrollment schools. But

E Elle Billing 06:07

okay. I got to go see one of your shows over Thanksgiving when I was there. And I was super impressed with like the quality of the production,

N Nat Cummings 06:41

which one is that?

E Elle Billing 06:43

Wait Until Dark?

N Nat Cummings 06:44

Oh, yeah!

E Elle Billing 06:46

Yeah. Well, it was really neat.

N Nat Cummings 06:47

That was a good show.

E

Elle Billing 06:48

And I'd seen that one done professionally before. And so like, I was trying to temper my expectations, because I'd seen it done professionally in Idaho. And I was like, Okay, this is a high school show. Like, you've seen this before, but like, these are teenagers. And it was so good. Yeah, this was really good. Like I-- the fight choreography was-- I was really impressed by how they handled it with high school kids

N

Nat Cummings 07:11

for, like fight choreography and stuff, we have like a professional come in and train us because we are just teenagers.

E

Elle Billing 07:19

Exactly. Yeah. And that. Wait Until Dark was pretty intense. But I was like, so excited. Because I knew what was coming and your parents didn't know. It was like hehehhe this is gonna be so good.

N

Nat Cummings 07:30

It was really good. I really liked that show. The run crew that run crew for it was fairly small, which was disappointing. But that's okay. I was on the run crew for this show. For Failure. I also switched from props to scenic for this one too.

E

Elle Billing 07:47

Oh, so, you got to do a little bit of a lot of the crew.

N

Nat Cummings 07:50

I also worked on puppets.

E

Elle Billing 07:51

Oh, you'd worked on puppets? Yeah,

N

Nat Cummings 07:53

I worked on the puppets for failure as well. So like I was kind of doing props and scenic.

**E** Elle Billing 07:58  
Have you done costumes?

**N** Nat Cummings 07:59  
I haven't worked on costumes. I'm friends with people who are on our costumes crew. But I whenever I have to like so for something --I ironically, I tend to get burned out of it really quickly.

**E** Elle Billing 08:15  
Now I understand what that's like.

**N** Nat Cummings 08:18  
Yeah, I would have gotten so sick of costumes honestly.

**E** Elle Billing 08:22  
I understand. But that kind of brings me to what we were going to talk about. You know, also today is you didn't do costumes for for The Young Company, but you do a lot of cosplay. So you have experience with putting together characters and developing costume designs. And so is it okay, if we talk about that for a little bit?

**N** Nat Cummings 08:51  
Yeah.

**E** Elle Billing 08:51  
Okay, cool. So do, do you remember your first con?

**N** Nat Cummings 08:57  
I-- Not really. I remember going to like C2E2 like, relatively every year as a kid, but I also don't remember the first time because all of those years kind of jumbled together. Jumble Together. I really I think the only one that I really remember is that one is the the-- I think is the one that you were there for-- where I was dressed as Fiona from Adventure Time and like the voice actor for you were there for that right?



**E** Elle Billing 09:29  
Yeah, yep, that's one

**N** Nat Cummings 09:31  
the voice actor for Finn and Princess Bubblegum were both there. And I don't think it was my first time going to C2E2. Because the first time I had gone I probably hadn't even considered, I didn't even know cosplay was a thing I don't think, and I probably wasn't very aware of what was going on around me because it was the con conventions are very overwhelming.

**E** Elle Billing 09:57  
But the one were you dressed as-- What was the character again? Sorry, Fiona.

**N** Nat Cummings 10:03  
Fiona.

**E** Elle Billing 10:03  
Yeah, that was my first Con was when we went to C2E2. And I was also overwhelmed. It was so exciting, like just the energy and you were so excited to dress up. And I was so disappointed that I didn't have a costume because like I hadn't planned for it. But it was just really inspiring to be around all these people who were dressed up. And I heard-- I just got so many ideas and wanted to go back and I don't --have I gone back to C2E2? I don't think I have-- I've been to Denver Comic Con. But I don't think I ever made it back to Chicago.

**N** Nat Cummings 10:42  
Yeah, I really like going to Cons like they're super overwhelming. But it's nice. Like the community is nice. Just knowing that community exists. Like a super nerdy community.

**E** Elle Billing 10:55  
Yeah. So do you want to tell me a little bit about, like some of your favorite? Some of your favorite, like characters or costumes that you've done? Since you got-- because you're pretty. I mean, that was, you were like nine I think when we went to C2E2 together. And you're going to be 18 next week.

**N** Nat Cummings 11:15  
Yeah,

**E** Elle Billing 11:16  
this week, I guess when once this releases, so you've had several years of experience.

**N** Nat Cummings 11:22  
Tomorrow once this releases, so what were

**E** Elle Billing 11:25  
some of your favorites that you've done over the last half your life?

**N** Nat Cummings 11:28  
Um, most of the time when I've gone to cons in cosplay. It's been ones that mom has helped me work on. Because, you know, I didn't know how to sew yet. Or like I knew how to sew, I was just scared of sewing machine. And I started-- that's that basically ended once I started taking my fashion class. But I haven't actually like made all that many full ones of my own. Just because like the the time that I started getting that skill was also quarantine and conventions aren't really like that, you know, quarantine-friendly places.

**E** Elle Billing 12:11  
True.

**N** Nat Cummings 12:12  
Like people barely wear deodorant there, man. You think they're gonna wear masks?

**E** Elle Billing 12:17  
No, they're not.

**N** Nat Cummings 12:18  
They're not unless it's part of the character then they will.

**E** Elle Billing 12:21  
Yeah.

N

Nat Cummings 12:22

But I remember. Obviously the Fiona one. I was really memorable. I really enjoyed that one.

E

Elle Billing 12:29

Oh, the hat was so cute I couldn't handle it

N

Nat Cummings 12:31

I still I still have it. It still fits. I think I also really enjoyed dressing up as Link. It was a Halloween costume for me originally. And then I just rewore for a convention in Fort Wayne. I think it was Fort Wayne. I remember seeing another person who was also dressed up as Link, all grown up and we got a picture together and it was so nice. And I don't actually know what that picture is anymore. But it was fun. I was very happy

E

Elle Billing 13:01

that that happened when I was in Denver and I was dressed as Holtzman from Ghostbusters and I would see another Holtzman and there was always like that hey, moment of like [??]

N

Nat Cummings 13:10

It's always like the Spider Man meme. Whenever you see someone dressed up as the same character that you're dressed as

E

Elle Billing 13:15

Yep,

N

Nat Cummings 13:16

Spider Man cosplayers themselves always do that. If because there's always like a billion SpiderMan.

E

Elle Billing 13:21

Yep.



N

Nat Cummings 13:22

And they always do that at cons, especially if there's a meetup. I really liked that Link one though. Because when I dressed as Link for Halloween, like barely anybody, like I went trick or treating, barely anybody got the character. And some people just confused me for Peter Pan. Because of the hat.

E

Elle Billing 13:42

Oh, I can see that.

N

Nat Cummings 13:44

Like, we went to this one guy's house. And like this older guy was like, Are you Peter Pan and this younger guy who was clearly his son was like, No, dude, it's Link from Legend of Zelda. But that did not happen at that one convention. It was a very core memory that I think that was a point where I knew that I wanted to do cosplay as a hobby more. And then I think the first one that I tried to make completely by myself was a character called Party Poison. Which is like it was like a My Chemical Romance thing. Because there was there's this concept that-- I mean, they all have their albums are concept albums-- but the it's this concept album called Danger Days, which is like, it's like post apocalyptic and it's set in like a desert in California. And like, there's this main city where dystopian stuff happens and then there's the desert outside where like cool stuff happens.

E

Elle Billing 14:42

Okay,

N

Nat Cummings 14:43

and all of the people like all of the people in this desert are like, try to be super colorful and like as what is it called? When everything's like the same?

E

Elle Billing 14:54

When everything's the same like hegemonic? Are you looking for a big fancy word or like just a really easy word.

N

Nat Cummings 15:01

I don't know what I'm looking for, but like their

E

Elle Billing 15:03

conformity?

N

Nat Cummings 15:04

Yes. Okay. Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 15:06

So like anti conformist.

N

Nat Cummings 15:08

Yeah. And so they all they make up these like, really cool names and they have like really bright colors and stuff and Party Poison is the one that Gerard Way was. And he has like red hair and stuff like that and a cool motorcycle jacket.

E

Elle Billing 15:23

Okay, that would have been the year you were asking for brightly colored wigs for Christmas. Probably,

N

Nat Cummings 15:30

I don't remember. But I remember that one. It was kind of like haphazardly put together because I didn't really know what I was doing. But I still enjoyed it.

E

Elle Billing 15:39

Yeah, that's really cool.

N

Nat Cummings 15:41

That was also like, the month before quarantine started. So it was like, my first time making my own little costume. And then I couldn't really make any more of them for like, you know, a few years. Yeah. And since then, I haven't really made like a full full costume. I mean, I had like, like, I was Crowley for Halloween --Crowley from Good Omens for Halloween. And that was like a full costume. And I I really liked that one. But I haven't really made a full one. Or, like, completely tried to make a full one until pretty recently, actually. I mean, there was some little like costumey stuff that I had done over quarantine, and like I would like I would have like, TikTok and stuff. And I would like post stuff on TikTok. Which I have now deleted. I have deleted the app. Because, man,

**E** Elle Billing 16:37  
it's easy to get sucked into that stuff.

**N** Nat Cummings 16:39  
Yeah, there's like a huge cosplay community on like Tiktok and Instagram reels and all that stuff.

**E** Elle Billing 16:51  
Okay, so you have this internship at the Harold Washington Library. And I know it has something to do with like their teen makerspace. But I don't really know much else beyond that.

**N** Nat Cummings 17:04  
So it's, it's called the intern. Like the internship itself is like this thing called the Chicago Teen Gamers Guild.

**E** Elle Billing 17:12  
There we go.

**N** Nat Cummings 17:13  
And the area that we work in is called YOUmedia, which is like the teen, like high school teen area in the library. It's got like gaming stuff, it's got a ton of manga. And there's like sewing machines and stuff in there. And like it's, you know, library stuff. I first found out about the internship, because one of my friends was part of it, my friend Ren. And I would tag along with them, sometimes the library just because like I had nothing better to do, the library is cool. I just go to the library. And I ended up kind of sitting in a little bit on one of their like sessions or like meetings. And basically, they would, they were working on a bunch of cosplays of their own. And all of them were like, super chill. And I ended up helping Ren out with their cosplay a little bit, and just kind of hanging out. And, and then their boss told me to apply. And so late last year, I applied to it. And now Ren's boss is also my boss. And I, I actually told her about this, and she told me that I should send it to her when it comes out.

**E** Elle Billing 18:28  
Cool.

N

Nat Cummings 18:28

So what I actually do is the Chicago Teen Gamers Guild is like there's sub guilds in it. And all of those sub guilds work together to put on a gaming convention in June at the end of June at the library. And so there's like a bunch of different sub guilds, the one I'm part of is the cosplay sub guild. But there's also one for con planning. There's one for like, there's a bunch of game design ones that are scattered all across the city at various libraries there. And they have been working on like, interactive games and escape rooms and stuff like that. Last year, they made board games. This year, they're making escape rooms. So that's cool. There's another one for Esports and they organize tournaments and stuff. What the cosplay sub guild does is we organize a cosplay competition at the con. And we are the ones who are emceeing it. We're not judging it or anything we have, like actual judges.

E

Elle Billing 19:27

That's good.

N

Nat Cummings 19:28

We're also like, organizing a couple panels for it. I think we're running one of them. That's like all about cosplay. And like what we've learned as we've worked on it, and one of the requirements for the cosplay sub guild is that we have to make our own. And the nice thing about it is that I get paid for it.

E

Elle Billing 19:47

That's pretty rad.

N

Nat Cummings 19:49

It is, because usually when you're a cosplayer, you pay large amounts of money to do it all yourself.

E

Elle Billing 19:56

It's a very expensive hobby.

N

Nat Cummings 19:58

Yes, but for This one we were allocated a budget. So some of stuff can get covered. And I mean, we still have to be careful with the budgeting and stuff like that. Because again, expensive hobby. All the materials get pretty expensive. But we have like, we have our own 3d

printers, we have our own, like, we have a Cricut machine, a bunch of that stuff. We have sewing machines. So we have ultimate, like the tools that we need to make stuff. And then we also get our materials and all of us make our own cosplay. Which is, which is pretty cool.

**E** Elle Billing 20:35  
That is pretty cool.

**N** Nat Cummings 20:36  
Pretty rad. And then we have like two adults there. Who makes sure everything goes smoothly.

**E** Elle Billing 20:42  
I was just going to ask. So all of the guilds just to clarify this, these are all teen, teen guilds.

**N** Nat Cummings 20:49  
Yes,

**E** Elle Billing 20:49  
these are all like high school students.

**N** Nat Cummings 20:51  
Yes.

**E** Elle Billing 20:52  
Putting on this entire game convention,

**N** Nat Cummings 20:55  
led by adults

**E** Elle Billing 20:57  
led by



N Nat Cummings 20:58  
like guided, guided,

E Elle Billing 20:59  
guided, like guided by adult

N Nat Cummings 21:01  
kinda in a similar way that the young company is student run, and stuff like that. We'd still have adults who make sure we don't like do wrong stuff,

E Elle Billing 21:12  
break the law or burn down the school

N Nat Cummings 21:15  
or not organized correctly and stuff like that.

E Elle Billing 21:18  
Right. That that too. meet your deadlines.

N Nat Cummings 21:20  
Yeah, yeah. So I basically have two bosses, one of them's Amy, who actually like works at YOUmedia and is like a librarian there and stuff like that. And then the other one, coincidentally, also named Ren. That's the one that I that asked to listen to this. She is like, gives a lot more of the advice for making this stuff. Because she's experienced, like running panels at conventions and volunteering and making cosplays of her own and stuff like that. And so she, like, guides us and stuff with that. Yeah, it's pretty neat.

E Elle Billing 22:01  
That is neat.

N Nat Cummings 22:02  
And all the people that I'm working with are like, very nerdy, because it's cosplay.

**E** Elle Billing 22:08  
Yeah, it's a certain it's a niche hobbyist group, for sure.

**N** Nat Cummings 22:12  
Yeah, it's it's very fun. I choose a very ambitious character, that I'm cosplaying, but it's a character from Genshin impact, which is a it's it's a gacha video game. His name is Kobe, and the character designs in Ginshin are very complicated. And I've mildly regret picking it.

**E** Elle Billing 22:13  
If you're gonna go, go big.

**N** Nat Cummings 22:31  
Yeah. I mean, it's a lot to work on. But it's it's fun to work on. And also, because that's the hobby.

**E** Elle Billing 22:37  
Yeah. When I was in Idaho, I had a friend at the time who ran a, who had a photography business. And he was looking to expand his portfolio. And he said, Hey, I'm getting some people together to do a steampunk photo shoot.

**N** Nat Cummings 22:55  
Oh, that's cool.

**E** Elle Billing 22:56  
For free. I just need people in their costumes. I need bodies and costumes. And then you will, you'll you'll get the photos. I was like, ah, heck yeah. I mean, a free photo shoot, and I get to bring my own costumes. The problem was, I did not at that point in time own any steampunk costumes. That's not a problem. I can sew. I've been sewing since I was seven. Okay, you know how much money this free photoshoot cost me.

**N** Nat Cummings 23:29  
Large amounts of it

**E** Elle Billing 23:31  
several hundred dollars invested in building costumes. Because I was like, oooo I wanna go play.

**N** Nat Cummings 23:40  
Yeah,

**E** Elle Billing 23:41  
I made like two full costumes. Like,

**N** Nat Cummings 23:44  
oh my god. And

**E** Elle Billing 23:46  
then I get home at the end and I realized that I am single. I live alone. And somebody else had laced me into my corset. I couldn't get out of it.

**N** Nat Cummings 23:59  
Oh, no.

**E** Elle Billing 24:00  
Oh, man. It was funny. Yeah, obviously I got out of it because I'm not still wearing it. Yeah, that would be 10 years is really a long time to wear a corset

**N** Nat Cummings 24:10  
and uncomfortable. I'm sure I'm sure a lot of like, that's that's probably a very universal experience with cosplayers, a lot of a lot of them will use corsets and stuff. Yeah.

**E** Elle Billing 24:25  
So C2E2 is in just a couple of weeks.

N Nat Cummings 24:28  
it's in one week,

E Elle Billing 24:29  
in one week.

N Nat Cummings 24:30  
It is next week.

E Elle Billing 24:31  
Are you all like are all the gamers guild? The team? What is it the teen gaming, Chicago teen gamers guild? Do--

N Nat Cummings 24:40  
you can just say Interns?

E Elle Billing 24:42  
Interns. Sorry. I wanted to be, wanted to be nice.

N Nat Cummings 24:45  
It's ok, We call ourselves interns.

E Elle Billing 24:47  
Okay. Are you all involved at C to E to this year?

N Nat Cummings 24:51  
The nice thing about the internship is like there's a like, there's a couple of cons going on at like, in the first half of the year that we have field trips to, and we get to go for free, which is like really cool because oh my god, these are expensive.

E Elle Billing 25:06

**E** Elle Billing 25:06

Yeah, free field trip. Yay. It's like being in school when school was fun.

**N** Nat Cummings 25:13

I have fun in school. It's just like a lot to do.

**E** Elle Billing 25:17

There's just a lot to do. Yeah.

**N** Nat Cummings 25:18

But there's, we have a table set up for the library. And it's mainly the adults that are in charge of running that. And then the rest of us are kind of set loose to experience being at a con. Like the, depending on like, what, like sub guild you're part of. There's like different things that they tell us to like, check out and stuff like that. Those of us who were cosplaying were meant to like talk to a cosplayer. Ask them how they made it, like take a picture with someone, things like that. And also, like get the convention experience.

**E** Elle Billing 25:55

Yeah,

**N** Nat Cummings 25:56

our con is considerably smaller than C2E2.

**E** Elle Billing 25:59

Yeah.

**N** Nat Cummings 26:00

Because you know, library, but it's nice having the experience of it and being able to go for free. There's also like a couple people, a couple interns who are part of a panel I think, I don't actually know everything that's going on about that, because I missed that week, because I was in theater. Oops. Um, but there's, there's some people who are doing running like a panel or being part of a panel. If the cosplay competition was happening on Saturday, we would probably be asked to go to the cosplay competition. But the main portion of it is on Sunday, I think. And we're going on Saturday. But yeah, it's it's it's fun. I'm looking forward to it.

**E** Elle Billing 26:40  
That's good.

**N** Nat Cummings 26:41  
I am not looking forward to the days leading up to it, because I have a lot that I need to work on.

**E** Elle Billing 26:46  
Right. Before we hit record, you were talking about con crunch. And that wasn't a phrase that I'd heard before. Is that what you're referring to? You're not looking forward to the time before?

**N** Nat Cummings 26:58  
Yeah.

**E** Elle Billing 26:59  
Is it con crunch? Can you tell us a bit about that.

**N** Nat Cummings 27:03  
So con crunch is basically it's a term that's basically used to refer to like, like you you working on all of the everything last minute because you might have procrastinated it or something like that. And you basically run yourself like as close up to the deadline as possible. Which I have a lot going on, like I there's like a school event that I'm going to the Friday before. So like I obviously won't be working like right up until the night before. But for me, I have a lot of my life has been taken up by theater in the past, like two months. So I haven't had a lot of time to like work on the costume that I'm going to have for C2E2, who is different from the one that I'm working on for the internship. Like the the one that I'm working on right now is like purely for the hobby. It's en from Pokemon Black and White. And thankfully, he has a very simple outfit. There's just like some alterations that he needs to make. And there's a lot of stuff going on with his wig that I need to work on. Thankfully, I have free time again. So that's, I'm gonna end up working on that, like, this week, up and up until C2E2. I mean, you know how procrastination works?

**E** Elle Billing 28:29  
I'm well aware, personally and with teenagers because I was a high school teacher.

**N** Nat Cummings 28:30  
Yeah.

N Nat Cummings 28:34

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 28:35

And I used to be I and I was a teenager. What am I talking about? You taught, you mentioned con crunch. And then I was like so similar to Hell Week with theater, like the week before opening but

N Nat Cummings 28:46

yeah,

E Elle Billing 28:47

when I was your age and younger, I was doing a lot of 4H and other like, sewing competitions. And fair week, like the week before, the Fair was always frantic around our house and talk about last minute there were times where mom was driving to the fair and we were sewing buttons on in the car.

N Nat Cummings 29:10

I have seen a lot of I've heard of a lot of stories of cosplayers doing stuff like that, like a lot of them will like a lot of people will travel to go to a convention, right and so they'll book a hotel room. And because we're all broke, it'll be like a bunch of people in one hotel room and there's like, I've never experienced this. People have had like, a bunch of miscellaneous crap supplies kind of everywhere, like last minute sewing something together. Last minute styling a wig literally like the evening before, which is that seems awful.

E Elle Billing 29:49

I think one of the things that's really different or difficult too like cosplay, and like theater costuming, like it just has to hold together and look good from the outside. I had, like when I worked in the costume shop in college, or like, they would get after me because I would take too long because I was worried about like, the quality of my workmanship. And like, just if you can't see it from the back of a galloping horse like, it's, it's from, you see it from a distance, like, no one looks at the inside of what you made and just the outside. But like when we were driving to the fair, we, like someone's gonna be looking at the inside of this. They're gonna be looking at how well I sewed on that button. I better trim all my little threads. Make sure I did a good job. I mean, imagine trying to put together Yeah, I mean, it's it's similar types of stress. Like yeah, I would have much rather have been doing it the like the little more slapdash. Just make it look good. Have fun doing it.

N Nat Cummings 29:52

N Nat Cummings 30:52

I think craftsmanship wise, I most people I think that's more of like a bigger concern. Specifically, if someone is entering in a costume like a cosplay competition. Yeah.

E Elle Billing 31:04

And that's not to downplay the craftsmanship. Sorry. Yeah. The of, of, of, like, really dedicated cosplayers. Yeah, I've seen some incredible, incredible work at the couple conventions I've been to. Yeah,

N Nat Cummings 31:17

it's of, I cannot. It's so it's, it's cool.

E Elle Billing 31:23

It's just a completely different type of, of making, yeah, than what I was used to.

N Nat Cummings 31:28

And especially with, like, having ADHD at the same time, makes that like, a billion times worse.

E Elle Billing 31:36

I am aware.

N Nat Cummings 31:37

You never know how long something's gonna take to make. Or you just kind of ignore how long it takes to make something. And then surprise, it's stressful. It is.

E Elle Billing 31:54

So you you've done cosplay, you were part of The Young Company and you did you did scenic and props. You were in, you took film class and fashion classes in high school. How is all of this sort of playing into your future plans?

N Nat Cummings 32:11

I am planning on getting a degree for film, I've actually made a decision now. I'm going to DePaul for film at DePaul University. And so a lot of that kind of like ties into, like visually designing a film, I guess. Because like when it comes to my fashion class, we have to make a



mini collection and like that all has to be cohesive visually in some way. Or they have to tell a story or something like that. With cosplay. It's like the craftsmanship aspect. And like, all these little details and stuff, or like being creative with it like cosplay, whatever you want it to be. The fun thing about cosplay for it is you like kind of break down how things get put together and stuff, which is helpful in that regard. props for theater, I'm going to be honest, did not enjoy that very much. Just because it was a lot of sitting and looking at Amazon on the floor in the corner of the back of the Arts Building at my school, I got kind of sick of it, especially for our fall show or last fall show. And that's part of why I switched to scenic. Because I wanted something that was a little more hands on. I still enjoy making props and stuff like that. But I get more enjoyment out of it when I'm the one that's making it. And I'm making it for myself and things like that. It's a little bit more difficult when you kind of have to figure out something from text, I guess, like the skills that I learned prop wise in theater are helpful. I just I love not doing that. And then scenic was helpful in the way that you learn like construction and stuff like that you know how things get built and put together. My fashion class also helped a lot with learning how to actually construct things and like so and not be scared of a sewing machine and know how different tools work and stuff like that. And it's a basically I've just done a ton of visual stuff.

**E** Elle Billing 34:25

And all of it's part of that whole storytelling package.

**N** Nat Cummings 34:29

Yeah. When it comes to film, like there's a ton of things that you can do do with film. Honestly, no idea what I'm planning on doing.

**E** Elle Billing 34:38

You have time to decide.

**N** Nat Cummings 34:40

Well, yeah, and I can always probably jump between things too. I've jumped through a lot in my film class of like doing production design for one film, I've done cinematography for another and the the film that I'm currently working on. I'm the director for which is kind of like a little bit of everything. thing and also like being in charge of it, which is a little stressful. Um, it helps a lot with like the practical aspects, I suppose. And I'll be learning a lot more about the, I guess less practical aspects. I don't-- Well, practical as in like physically like non digital stuff. And then I'll be learning more about the digital stuff in college. Yeah, it's okay. It's good hobby. And also, I just, I'm probably going to have, keep cosplay as just a regular hobby to do because it's fun to work on. It's fun to dress up as these characters from really nerdy thing like shows and, and movies and stuff. And even more fun like with friends.

**E** Elle Billing 35:19

Elle Billing 35:49

Yeah. Well, thank you for sharing all of that. And thank you for being here.

N Nat Cummings 35:52

Yeah,

E Elle Billing 35:53

I for one, I'm excited to see what you do. And be able to say that I knew you when, okay, know what I said, I wasn't going to embarrass you and like do that thing where like, I was going to treat you like a regular guest and not like family and now like, and now I'm like, wanting to say I knew you back when you were a kid. And that's exactly what I would say to somebody in my family. I'm sorry, I lied. I tried. I really did. Well, let's see. We had cat barf. We had me being embarrassing. Anything else. Anything else? I think we're good. Thanks for being here. Nat. It was great.

N Nat Cummings 36:34

It's good to good as well.

E Elle Billing 36:38

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N Nat Cummings 38:13

Oh! Bao!

E Elle Billing 38:14

is my cat being a dork?

N Nat Cummings 38:16

Yeah, I'm gonna go pick her up, one second. She didn't want to be picked up; she just kind of ran off.

E Elle Billing 38:23

She just wants to create mayhem.

N Nat Cummings 38:25

Yeah