



This Is Jeopardy! The Story of America's Favorite Quiz Show

Episode Four: The Trebek Effect

A Production of Sony Music Entertainment and Sony Pictures TV

Buzzy Cohen: In the 90s, Alex Trebek was everywhere.

On an episode of the X-Files, playing a mysterious character known as the second Man in Black.

Archival from X-Files

Alex Trebek: You're feeling very sleepy, very relaxed.

Buzzy Cohen: Guest-starring as himself in a dream sequence on the *Golden Girls*...where Dorothy and Rose were contestants on the show.

Archival from Golden Girls

Johnny Gilbert: And now the host of Jeopardy!, Alex Trebek.

Alex Trebek: Thank you Johnny Gilbert, thank you ladies and gentlemen. Hi everyone and welcome to another special program coming to you from Florida. You have just met our three contestants. They are all very eager to get underway. The categories are: Cows, Babes, Chickens, More Babes, Chicken Babes, and finally, Baby Chickens.

Buzzy Cohen: Voicing Alan Quebec, host of *Super Stumpers*, on Nickelodeon's *Rugrats* —

Archival from Rugrats

Alex Trebek: Good evening and welcome to another mind-expanding edition of Super Stumpers

Buzzy Cohen: There was the cartoon version of Alex Trebek, in a suit, with pocket square, who prevents Marge Simpson from leaving the *Jeopardy!* studio...

Archival from The Simpsons

Alex Trebek: *Aren't we forgetting something Marge? You were down 5.200 dollars.*

Marge: *But Mr. Trebek!*

Alex Trebek: *I asked you before the game if you knew the rules and you said you did. Judges?*

Marge: *Run mom!*

Buzzy Cohen: And of course Alex was part of the iconic storyline in 'White Men Can't Jump,' where Rosie Perez's character, Gloria Clemente, fulfills her lifelong dream of competing on *Jeopardy!*...

Archival from White Men Can't Jump

Gloria: *All right. Let's go with the foods that Start with the letter Q please.*

Alex Trebek: *A game bird related to a partridge. Gloria,*

Gloria: *What is a quail*

Alex Trebek: *correct? You get to pick again.*

Gloria: *who's the south? letter for 200. Please*

Alex Trebek: *Answer: A custard pie often made with cheese and bacon. Gloria,*

Gloria: *what is quiche?*

Alex Trebek: *Yes.*

Gloria: *Okay. Foods with Q for 300, please.*

Alex Trebek: *A large edible clam of the Atlantic Coast. Gloria,*

Gloria: *what is a [inaudible]?*

Alex Trebek: *Right?*

Gloria: *Okay. Foods with Q for 400.*

Alex Trebek: *The answer there is the daily double well glory. \$2,100. You're performing beautifully. How much of that are you gonna risk on your knowledge of the subject Foods that start with a letter Q,*

Gloria: *all of it.*

Alex Trebek: *According to legend, it was the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.*

Gloria: *What is a quince?*

Alex Trebek: *Yes.*

MUX: Whimsical spacey music begins

Buzzy Cohen: Quick side note, Foods that start with the letter Q went on to become a real category on *Jeopardy!* in 1997, but the point is by the early aughts, even if you weren't a *Jeopardy!* fan, you knew who Alex Trebek was.

Which in some ways, seemed counter to what *Jeopardy!* creator, Merv Griffin, believed about game show hosts in general.

LISA BROFMAN: You know, Merv, through all the years that I was with him, he was very adamant that the host is not critical on a game show. It's the game that's critical. And he felt very strongly about that.

Buzzy Cohen: But Lisa Brofman, Co-Executive producer of *Jeopardy!*, saw something different in Alex — and she told him so.

LISA BROFMAN: I said, I have to tell you that you have become critical to this show. You are synonymous with *Jeopardy!*.

THEME MUSIC

Buzzy Cohen: From countless cameos to quintessential quizzing, Alex had catapulted from public figure to icon.

And the laundry list of things that were certifiably Trebekian began to cement.

Harry Friedman: So the Alex mustache...

Johnny Gilbert: He had an incredible sense of humor.

Michele Loud: He was a stickler. I mean, he would tell us when we were wrong and there were things he knew. And you know if it was a category about tools or home repair— God help you—because you probably didn't get it right and he would fine tune it.

Suzanne Stone: Alex was very keen on making sure things were pronounced correctly.

Corina Nusu: He was very consistent, but Alex loved to play with the contestants and enjoy that silliness too.

Buzzy Cohen:I'm your host, Buzzy Cohen. And from Sony Music Entertainment and Sony Pictures TV, This is *Jeopardy: The Story of America's Favorite Quiz Show*.

This week, a look at some of the unforgettable traits and moments that made Alex uniquely Alex.

THEME MUSIC OUT

ACT I

MUSIC: Fun drum beat with momentum begins

Buzzy Cohen: We need to start with the facial hair that launched 1,000 tweets.

Alex's mustache.

It caught eyes when Alex first showed up on the American game show scene and, as former Executive Producer Harry Friedman recalls, it set him apart from the other hosts.

Harry Friedman: The game show hosts in those days were, very smooth, very slick. And they brought in this brand new to us host from Canada, uh, Mustachioed, curly haired, Alex Trebek.

Buzzy Cohen: Alex was equally smooth, just in more of a Burt Reynolds / Tom Selleck kind of way. And his mustache quickly became one of his trademarks.

Which is why a fateful day in 2001 sent a shockwave through the *Jeopardy!*-verse, beginning with the staff and crew.

Harry Friedman: He came out on stage and I noticed right away. And it was between the third and fourth shows of the day. Alex decided to shave off his mustache.

Buzzy Cohen: Alex's longtime hairstylist, Renee Ferrugia, remembers the moment of reveal as well.

Renee Ferrugia: And I said, what have you done? Like, I was kind of shocked, like he just decided in between shows just to shave it off and he did.

And I remember thinking, oh my God, what if they have to go back and reshoot something with his mustache? He doesn't have one now.

Buzzy Cohen: Luckily, they didn't need any reshoots, but when the 18th season of *Jeopardy!* went live, fans were losing it.

Harry Friedman: Well, soon there became this outpouring of grief over Alex's mustache. I mean, people were so upset that he had shaved off his mustache.

Buzzy Cohen: Alex had been rocking the same look for nearly 20 years! Viewers wanted answers! Turns out, as Alex told late-night host Larry King, it was all on a whim.

Archival from Larry King Show

Alex Trebek: I just walked into the makeup room and I said 'give me the hair clippers.' And I just want zoop. Took it right off. Just to see what it would look like on camera.

Buzzy Cohen: And then 13 years later, also on a whim, he grew it back!

Archival from Jeopardy! Season 31 - Premiere - Show 6896

Alex Trebek: Thank you Johnny, thank you ladies and gentlemen and welcome as Jeopardy begins its 31st season on the air.

I hope you all enjoyed the past six weeks in which we replayed some of our special tournaments from last season...Because I had nothing to do in those 6 weeks, I re-grew this.

Buzzy Cohen: The stache's 2001 disappearing act had caused quite a stir, but the spontaneous comeback stache of 2014...that made headlines!

Talk Show Archival Montage:

Announcer: I have breaking news! Jeopardy! host Alex Trebek has grown his mustache back.

Announcer: So last week was the season premiere of Jeopardy! After 13 years, Alex Trebek brought back his mustache. Big news, everybody's excited about it.

Announcer: There is someone that is making a comeback, or maybe I should say something...Alex Trebek, the host of Jeopardy!, is bringing back his famous mustache.

Buzzy Cohen: And soon, Alex's facial hair took on a life of its own.

Harry Friedman: I'm pretty sure Alex's mustache had its own Twitter handle.

Buzzy Cohen: Oh you mean @alex's_mustache? Yeah, it joined twitter in July 2014, and posted a whopping 240 tweets - starting with:

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

People of Twitter. I mustache you to follow me.

And

Naked lips sink ships.

And

Friday is #FurryLipFriday

And my personal favorite...

Alex had soup for lunch. I think he forgot I was here. #Soaked #IsThatANoodle

There was lots of hype, but this time around, Alex's mustache proved much more divisive.

Harry Friedman: Well, by that point, all of his hair had turned grey. So it turned out that a grey mustache just didn't have quite the appeal of a black mustache. And we took an audience vote.

Archival of Jeopardy! Season 31 - Premiere - Show 6896

Alex Trebek: Love it? Hate it? Let us know what you think via Facebook or Twitter and we'll make a decision in the next few weeks.

Buzzy Cohen: Ultimately, some votes counted *a little* more than others.

Harry Friedman: Alex's wife, Jeannie said, no, shave it.

Buzzy Cohen: Which he did.

Still, the stache saga seemed to reveal something else about Alex entirely. He was *full* of surprises.

Johnny Gilbert: We were in the middle of a tournament several years ago.

That's legendary *Jeopardy!* Announcer, Johnny Gilbert.

Johnny Gilbert: The contestants were really good and you could feel the tension in the air from everybody.

Buzzy Cohen: It was the first of three final games in the 2005 Ultimate Tournament of Champions. Ken Jennings was about to face off against two other *Jeopardy!* all-stars: Brad Rutter and Jerome Vered.

Before the cameras started rolling, the contestants were just chatting — mostly to calm their nerves, but also to commiserate. Jerome hadn't slept well, Ken and Brad were a little under the weather, and the Ultimate Tournament of Champions was for all the marbles.

Here's Jerome.

Jerome Vered: I turned to Brad, and said, this isn't comfortable. What do you say we play without our pants on?

And Brad said, well, I'll do it if Ken does it. And we turned to, Ken said, well, I'll do it if Alex does it. And we're like, ha, ha, ha. We forgot we were mic'd already. And they could hear us backstage, and someone said to Alex, this is what they just said, said, oh, okay, fine....

Buzzy Cohen: They laughed at the absurdity of the idea but didn't think much of it. Johnny Gilbert remembers what happened next.

Johnny Gilbert: We had a live studio audience. We are telecasting ultimately to millions of people. So at the beginning of the show, I introduced Alex as I always do.

Archival from 2005 Ultimate Tournament of Champions

Johnny Gilbert: And now, here is the host of Jeopardy, Alex Trebek.

Johnny Gilbert: And he came out, standing on stage, saying hello... with no pants on.

Archival 2005 Ultimate Tournament of Champions

Alex Trebek: Thank you Johnny Gilbert, ladies and gentlemen...

[laughter]

Alex Trebek: I was informed backstage a few minutes ago that our three contestants Ken, Brad, and Jerome wanted to relieve some of the tension and they said we must do the game without trousers.

Johnny Gilbert: He had an incredible sense of humor. So he said, I'm going to break the tension on this show. I'm going to throw everybody totally off guard. So everybody's laughing, hopefully.

Buzzy Cohen. They were. Here's Jerome Vered again.

Jerome Vered: We all start laughing very hard and it really broke the ice. If you've seen the footage, I mean, he's got these very elegant *[inaudible]* on and he's got the garters on. I mean, he looks just very elegant.

Buzzy Cohen: Lisa Brofman again.

Lisa Brofman: Today, we might consider broadcasting that, but the players had to sort of regroup, stop laughing, calm down a little bit, get their game face on and start all over again...

MUSIC BEGINS: soft optimistic music begins...

Suzanne Prete, Executive Vice President of Game Shows at Sony, remembers another time the Jeopardy host defied expectations.

SUZANNE PRETE: We had Gene Simmons from KISS as a guest star reading a category on the show, and Alex was in makeup for four hours, and he walked out in full KISS Costuming.

Buzzy Cohen: We're talking wig, facepaint, and body armor.

AX: *Alex in Kiss Costume*

Alex Trebek: Boy, I hope I got this kiss makeup right. Is there, is there anybody here who can tell me if I got this right?

Gene Simmons: Yeah, you nailed it. Don't worry.

Alex Trebek: Oh, thanks, Gene.

Gene Simmons: Yeah. Well, now for the heels.

Buzzy Cohen: Whether ad libbed or planned, Alex would commit to the bit. every. single. time. Even if that meant not showing up at all —

Archival of 1997 April Fools Gag

Announcer: *And now, here is the host of Jeopardy: Pat Sajak*

Pat Sajak: *Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank everybody. Welcome to Jeopardy!.*

Buzzy Cohen: On April Fools Day, 1997, Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune audiences were thrown for a loop when they learned their beloved hosts had switched places.

Archival of 1997 April Fools Gag

Audience: *Wheel of Fortune!*

Announcer: *From the Sony Studio's...it's America's Game...Wheel of Fortune - and now here is your host, Alex Trebek.*

Alex Trebek: *Thank you Charlie-O and Johnny Gilbert. Thank you ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to our special... Thank you. Welcome to our special Tuesday, April 1st edition of Wheel of Fortune. I'll leave you to figure out why I'm here today.*

Buzzy Cohen: Harry Friedman had the inside scoop.

Harry Friedman: **To make the switch happen, we had to keep it top secret. And Alex and Pat both readily agreed. They jumped right in. And each of them later confided to me, Oh, I've wanted to do that, you know, because I'm sure it's not as hard as what I do. And they both admitted later. That's hard. That's hard.**

MUSIC: **Whimsical spacey music begins**

Buzzy Cohen: The April Fools host swap would go down as one of the most memorable moments in game show history.

But more than hijinks, it was Alex's ability to have fun with the game material (and the contestants) that felt unique.

More on that after the break.

ACT II

MUSIC: **Drum beat with momentum begins**

Michele Loud: The thing about Alex is he could have been pickier and fussier with us and said, no, I don't wanna do that.

Buzzy Cohen: This is Michele Loud, one of the co-head writers of *Jeopardy!*.

Michele: But he was so game if we wanted him to read rap lyrics and those were the kind of clues that went viral.

Archival of Let's Rap Kids Category

Alex Trebek: Started from the bottom now we're here...

Buzzy Cohen: A little Drake...

Archival of Let's Rap Kids Category

Six foot, seven foot, eight foot bunch, young money militia. And I am the commissioner. You no wan' start wheezy cuz the F is for finisher.

Buzzy Cohen: Some Lil' Wayne...

Michele: I mean, we had him read Panda, Panda, Panda, Panda, Panda, and he knew that he wasn't reading it right. And he knew that that was the fun of it.

Archival of Let's Rap Kids Category

Contestant: Let's wrap for a thousand.

Alex Trebek: Panda. Panda. Panda, Panda, Panda, Panda. Panda. Lily.

Contestant: Who's designer?

Alex Trebek: Designer. Yes.

Michele: And he did not have an ego about I'm gonna sound dumb, or people are gonna be laughing at me. He was in on it. He knew how funny it was that he was doing something like that. And I think he enjoyed it as much as we did.

Buzzy Cohen: That's what people, especially in later years, came to associate with Alex.

Part of his charm was that he was okay being the butt of a joke, especially for the sake of a great *Jeopardy!* category.

Archival of The Medical File of Alex Trebek Category

Alex Trebek: The Medical file of Alex Trebek[laugh]

Buzzy Cohen: Which included *this* unforgettable story.

Archival of The Medical File of Alex Trebek Category

Alex Trebek: Running after a thief down a hotel hallway, I blew out this body part named for the son of a nymph, Nick

Contestant: What is an achilles tendon?

Alex Trebek: That's what I blew out.

Buzzy Cohen: All completely true. And the postscript to that story is... when Alex ran into the hallway... he happened to be in his underwear. So when he came back to set, the entire crew greeted him wearing t-shirts that said Alex Trebek: Superman, Captain Underpants.

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

He loved it.

Never above a good ribbing, Alex brought the same energy to Jeopardy's contestant interviews. But in those, he was often the zinger, rather than the zing-ee.

Archival of Contestant Interview

Alex Trebek: Laura Sykes Jambon.

Contestant: Hi

Alex Trebek: French for ham from Rochester had a pygmy goat in college. Why?

Contestant: Uh, for the cuteness factor. Yeah.

Alex Trebek: Well, there are a lot of other things that are cute. How about a little cat?

Contestant: I had a little cat one time but the goat ate a chunk of her fur. She didn't enjoy that. No. Billy also enjoyed eating a lot of things like a three week candle, an entire bag of Hershey kisses. And unfortunately, he met his demise by eating a bag of [inaudible]...

Alex Trebek: What? Wait a minute. Was it a 60 pound or an 80 pound bag? Because..

Contestant: Alex, you're being insensitive.

Alex Trebek: You're right [laugh]

Buzzy Cohen: Don't worry guys, Laura, the pet-goat-owner, is definitely laughing too. Still, Alex's humor could have some bite.

Corina Nusu: Sometimes people would be like, oh he's being so mean...

Buzzy Cohen: That's former contestant coordinator Corina Nusu.

Corina Nusu: But it was usually just because he liked to be playful with the contestants.

Buzzy Cohen: Like this classic moment during a 2004 game with another GOAT, Ken Jennings.

Archival from Jeopardy! Game

Alex Trebek: This term for a long-handled gardening tool can also mean an immoral pleasure seeker

Ken Jennings: What is a hoe...

Alex Trebek: Whoa... Whoa... They teach you that in school in Utah, huh?

Contestant: What's a rake?

Alex Trebek: A rake is right.

Buzzy Cohen: Or the much-memed moment from a 2018 game, when an entire trio of contestants couldn't answer a single question about football.

Archival of Talkin Football Category

Contestant: Uh, football 200,

Alex Trebek: your choice: Do or don't name this play in which the quarterback runs the ball and can choose to pitch it to another back. That's an option play, Ryan.

Contestant: Uh, football 400.

Alex Trebek: I can tell you guys are big football fans. Tom Landry perfected the shotgun formation with this team....Dallas Cowboys, uh, do you think we should go to commercial? Ryan?

Contestant: Take it on to 600.

Alex Trebek: Okay. By signaling for one of these, a returner can reel in a kick without fear of getting tackled. Fair catch. Two clues left Ryan

Contestant: 800.

Alex Trebek: These penalties are simultaneous violations by the offense and defense that cancel each other out and they're called offsetting penalty. Let's look at the uh, thousand dollars clue just for the fun of it.

Jimmy: as Minneapolis's US Bank Stadium prepares to host Super Bowl 52. I'm looking at the Ring of Honor with names from this defensive line. They took the Vikings to four Super Bowls. Alex Trebek: If you guys ring in and get this one, I will die.

Buzzy Cohen: Alex's deadpan deliveries were parodied to the extreme on SNL's *Celebrity Jeopardy!* sketches.

Archival of SNL

Host Actor: *And in last place, Tony Bennett, whose score is so low it can't be represented by a real number.*

Host Actor: *I'd like to once again remind our contestants that there are proper bathroom facilities located in the studio.*

Host Actor: *Tom, that is a pen not a microphone.*

Buzzy Cohen: But his playful jabs ultimately came from a place of love. Here's former producer Maggie Speak.

Maggie Speak: **We would take questions during tape days and Alex would answer questions from the audience, and he was often asked what his favorite part of doing Jeopardy was.**

And he would always say...

Archival from a 2016 Alex Q&A

Alex Trebek: *Favorite part of my job is the 30 minutes I spend on stage with three very bright people.*

Buzzy Cohen: Here's Corina Nusu again.

Corina: **He had a reverence for our contestants. He rooted for them. You could tell, you know when daily doubles would come up and he could feel a contestant, rounding a corner on a response. You could see him just kind of like, come on, you got it. It's there. You know, he wanted them to do well. And then of course, certain contestants tickled him.**

Buzzy Cohen: Like retired Berkley Professor Dan Melia who became a five-time champion in 1997 and went on to win the tournament of champions in 1998.

Dan Melia: **My summer job when I was in college was with the Department of Public Works. In addition to digging ditches and you know, throwing refrigerators onto trucks.**

One of the things that I did was picking up garbage. And, uh, Alex and I got to talking and I found that he had had the same job in Cincinnati. We had the common experience of having been temporary garbage men.

Buzzy Cohen: It was an unexpected point of connection but an even bigger surprise came in 2005, when Alex made an appearance at Dan's wedding...

Dan Melia: The wedding was interesting because Dara and I were talking about getting married in 2004 and five and Dara didn't want to have a sort of poofy dress. So we were kind of split between a drive-through Elvis Chapel in Reno and the National Cathedral. So at one point she said, well, why don't we get married on *Jeopardy!* and I said, yeah, that's a good idea. Why not?

Buzzy Cohen: Why not??

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Dan Melia: So, I emailed, and said, you know, is this possible? And then about two weeks later, I got a call back from staff people who said, when do you wanna do this? And they were just incredibly gracious. And funny thing, Alex was the official witness and signed the marriage certificate.

Buzzy Cohen: Now *THAT'S* how you get an autograph.

After the break, Alex switches into game mode and gets down to business.

ACT III.

Buzzy Cohen: As *Jeopardy!*'s frontman, Alex could surprise people, he could joke around, but another Trebekian idiosyncrasy was how seriously he took the game.

Here's Maggie Speak.

Maggie Speak: Alex would take the *Jeopardy!* test and he would say, if I don't pass the test, I'm not gonna sign my contract. And he would pass the test and he would sign his contracts.

But he really cared that the material was interesting and that the contestants got it and knew how to play the game.

Buzzy Cohen: Harry Friedman again.

Harry Friedman: He had probably the most unique skill set I have ever seen in a host. He was smart. He had a wonderful, beautiful, easy to listen to voice, and he cared about the quality of the game.

And that distinction meant a lot, because we needed someone who was more than just a host. We needed someone who could know without looking at the script whether a response was correct or incorrect.

Buzzy Cohen: As a *Jeopardy!* guest host, I can personally attest to the fact that *this* is no easy feat. But Alex had a natural affinity for trivia.

Co-head writer Michele Loud.

Michele Loud: Alex liked literature. He loved movies. History. So he definitely suggested material pretty regularly.

And in fact, Alex suggested a category of fashion logos, and actually drew the logos of the little interlocking C's of Chanel and the little Gucci, the G's...

He wanted it to be an all video category, but the brands were not playing ball with us. So we couldn't do it as Alex envisioned it.

Buzzy Cohen: But in 2019, they did it as a text-based category instead.

Archival of Show 8,216 Fashion Brands

Contestant: Fashion brands for six.

Alex Trebek: Coco Crush is a jewelry collection from this brand. Karen,

Contestant: Chanel

Alex Trebek: Yes.

Contestant: Fashion for eight.

Alex Trebek: This footwear brand turns up often in hip-hop lyrics. The notorious B I G and Smith and Wesson called them Tims. Karen

Contestant: What is Timberlands?

Alex Trebek: Yes.

Buzzy Cohen: In 2020, Alex penned another set of clues for the dreaded football category in the hopes that — with a slightly different tack — the material might actually play.

Archival from Football Category 2020

Alex Trebek: We had some difficulty with the football category, so we thought we would try it again, but in this category it deals entirely with referee signals. And I'm going to be giving you three players the signals.

Contestant: Okay, let's do football for 200.

Alex Trebek: Alright. Offensive teams love to see this sign. It means points. Mark, what is touchdown?

Alex Trebek: Correct

Contestant: Football? 400

Alex Trebek: an equal opportunity foul. It can be called against the offense or the defense. Paul,

Contestant: what is holding

Alex Trebek: Right

Contestant: football for 600.

Alex Trebek: Just a little pre-snap movement by an offensive lineman causes this five yard penalty. Mark,

Contestant: what is false start

Alex Trebek: correct

Buzzy Cohen: Big improvement from the *last* time football was on the Jeopardy board. And that's how Alex, even when he wasn't writing, often approached the game.

In the spirit of making it better:

Michele Loud: He came in early on tape days and he would read the games and he would make all his diacritical marks of how he wanted to read the clue. And it was really something to see, and um, he was a stickler.

I mean, he would tell us when we were wrong and there were things he knew and, you know, if it was a category about tools or home repair, God help you because you probably didn't get it right and he would fine tune it.

Buzzy Cohen: Maggie Speak again.

Maggie Speak: He would take the material for the games and he would sit down in his office and go through them all with a dictionary and an encyclopedia and do some research.

All the information that Alex would give after somebody gave a response to a clue was all of his own information. And he was really, really diligent about knowledge.

Buzzy Cohen: He was also diligent about pronunciations. Here's former senior researcher Suzanne Stone.

Suzanne Stone: Alex was very keen on making sure things were pronounced correctly. And of course, he was bilingual. He spoke perfect French and people would enjoy that too over the years.

Buzzy Cohen: We certainly did. One pronunciation in particular soared above the rest.

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Archival of "Genre" Montage

A genre category, this genre of art, this genre of novel, this genre of game, this alliterative genre, this fantasy genre, this spooky genre, this popular genre, this six letter genre. This genre about a low born scam, the genre of American.

Local color ballet, genre...genre...genre...genre...

Buzzy Cohen: Maybe fans got a little carried away, but the genre montage, like the cameos, cartoon voice overs, and Celebrity Jeopardy sketches on SNL, were a form of flattery. And Alex knew that.

Archival of American Television Interview with Alex Trebek:

Alex Trebek: I love them. It means you've arrived.

Buzzy Cohen: Which was true, but Alex never made *Jeopardy!* about himself.

Here's Harry Friedman again.

Harry Friedman: Alex always said the game was about the material and about the contestants. That was where his focus was.

Buzzy Cohen: Which was, perhaps, the most quintessential thing about him.

THEME MUSIC

Next week on This Is Jeopardy, The Story of America's Favorite Quiz Show, it's all about the experience of being a contestant.

Crystal: There was a state of mind that I was in. Where everything that I passed on the street or saw on an internet ad—everything—I was like, oh, do I need to maybe learn this fact? Do I need to dive down into this hole too?

Buzzy Cohen: This Is Jeopardy! The Story of America's Favorite Quiz Show is a production of Sony Music Entertainment, and Sony Pictures TV.

It's hosted by me, Buzzy Cohen.

This episode was co-produced by Julia Doyle and Sylvie Lubow.

The series producers are Julia Doyle, Sylvie Lubow, Rob Dossier, and Mia Warren. Associate producer is Serena Chow. Our series editor is Sarah Kramer. Executive producers are Lizzie Jacobs, Tom Koenig, Sarah Kramer, Michael Davies, and Suzanne Preté.

Production management help from Susonya Davenport, Tameeka Ballance-Kolasny , and Ike Egbetola.

Our theme song was composed by Hannis Brown. Cedric Wilson is our engineer.

Special thanks to Charlie Yedor and Steve Ackerman.

And a big thank you to the *Jeopardy!* staff and crew for all of their time and help on this. Shout out to Alexa Macchia.

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