



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

Episode One: Back To The Beginning

A Production of Somethin' Else, Sony Music Entertainment, and Sony Pictures TV

Buzzy Cohen: We're walking down a nondescript Van Nuys street, and we're coming up on a house that has a fence around it. And this is the house of Bob Boden, who has the vanity license plate TV Bob. So if you see TV Bob driving around in California, you are behind one of the world's biggest game show fans.

Push, push this button.

Hey, it's Buzzy.

Marla Boden: Hey!

[door buzzes]

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Buzzy Cohen: Hi I'm Buzzy Cohen. Author, dad, husband, and trivia enthusiast.

You are probably wondering why I'm talking to you from a windy street in Southern California... Well, a few weeks back, my producer and I went on a field trip to visit one of LA's best kept secrets...

Buzzy Cohen: Hello Bob!

Bob Boden: Hi, good to see you.

Buzzy Cohen: Good to see you too. This is Mia.

Bob Boden: Hi Mia.

Buzzy Cohen: We're entering your garage and I would describe this space as anywhere you could put something you have placed 10 things. It's hard to know where to begin...

There's a lot of bright colors, there are flashing lights, there are pins, there's clippings, there's parts of sets. What am I looking at?

Bob Boden: Well, this is my-sort of game show museum. If a game show fanatic kind of threw up, this is what it would be, and that would be me...

Buzzy Cohen: We're gonna get to Bob in just a second. But first, let me explain a little more about who I am and what I'm doing here.

Some of you might know me from my days as a Jeopardy contestant. I competed on the show in 2016, won the tournament of champions in 2017 and was even a guest host in 2021.

But well-before I was on Jeopardy... I was-like 25 million other people-watching it on tv.

Every night at 7 PM... just as dinner was wrapping up at my parents' house in Short Hills, New Jersey... I'd grab the remote, flip through the channels, find ABC 7... and boom...

Archival of Jeopardy show intro:

Johnny Gilbert: This is Jeopardy! Here are today's contestants...

Buzzy Cohen: See, I've always liked knowing things. As a kid, that was kind of my super-power. I remember when I was really young, my grandfather gave me a set of world book encyclopedias, and I was completely enamored with them. There were so many random facts and cool pictures and hidden histories. When I discovered Jeopardy, it was like those books had come to life!

All the facts were so fresh, the contestants were really interesting, and I instantly became a fan. A big fan. And that's how, almost 20 years later, I ended up in a garage in Los Angeles talking to an even bigger fan...

MUSIC: bright music with momentum begins

Bob Boden: My name is Bob Boden. I'm co-founder of the National Archives of Game Show History. And I'm currently executive producer of Funny You Should Ask, a syndicated comedy celebrity game show.

Buzzy Cohen: Bob has circled around the Jeopardy universe for decades.

Bob Boden: I was a rehearsal contestant on a run through for the pilot of the current version of Jeopardy. I was in the weird Al Yankovic I lost on Jeopardy video, and I am an archivist and collector, who has many pieces of game show memorabilia, including the flashing J from the Jeopardy set circa 1985.

Buzzy Cohen: Bob is to game shows what Benjamin "Bubba" Buford Blue was to shrimp in the movie Forrest Gump. He's a fount of game show knowledge — he's the type of guy who can rattle off *years* of old daytime lineups, recite the original air times, and even hum those theme songs.

He's the type of guy who actually saves old game show ticket stubs and has boxes upon boxes to prove it.

Bob Boden: So this is just a selection. I have hundreds more of these in a filing cabinet. But here are some of the tickets. You've got Family Feud, \$10,000 Pyramid, Liar's Club, Love Connection, Jokers Wild Dating Game, Match Game, Price Is Right.

These are from Jeopardy. This is NBC radio City Studios. This is from January 30th, 1967. This one is from the last season from September 12th, 1974.

Buzzy Cohen: I love it. I'm gonna ask you a big question, but as somebody who literally lives inside game shows, someone who thinks about game shows, why Jeopardy?

Bob Boden: I was just obsessed with Jeopardy! Jeopardy came on the air when I was five years old, March 30th, 1964. And when I was in first grade—I had a lunch break at noon— I would walk home, which was about six blocks because I didn't wanna be on the playground. I wanted to be in front of my TV set to watch Jeopardy.

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Buzzy Cohen: Forgoing playground time as a first-grader? Now, that is devotion. But Bob's not alone in his decades-long love-affair. For the last 60 years, Jeopardy has been a fixture in the homes of millions of people across the country.

From its flagship show to themed-spinoffs, international adaptations, hilarious SNL parodies, classic tv cameos, watch parties, active message boards, and fan rituals (like: no phone calls during those 30 minutes, please), Jeopardy's reach is vast and its following fiercely loyal.

Still, I've always wondered, how did this 30-minute program — fundamentally about the pursuit of knowledge — endure all of these years? And become something bigger than just a game show....

Archival Montage:

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

Alex Trebek: Thank you Johnny Gilbert. Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome aboard.

Stephen Colbert: Hey, anybody here watch Jeopardy? Yeah, I love it. I love it. It's the only place outside of Crate & Barrel where you can hear somebody say, I'll take Potpourri for \$200. . .

James Cordrey: I've become obsessed with someone new. And it's getting serious. I am talking, of course, about the current reigning Jeopardy champion.

Black Jeopardy: I am a big fan of this program. Well, this might be the Blackest Black Jeopardy yet!

Men in Black Tommy Lee Jones: I don't suppose you know what kind of alien life form leaves a green spectral trail and craves sugar water, do you?

Men in Black Will Smith: Oh wait, that was on final Jeopardy last night. Damn. Alex said....

Merv Griffin: All I heard was Jeopardy. Jeopardy. What a word.

Buzzy Cohen: From its original run in the 1960s to its relaunch in '84, through the years with Alex Trebek as host, to the birth of the super champ — we're taking you behind the scenes — chronicling the victories, surprises, hurdles and many personalities which shaped Jeopardy and its place in our culture.

THEME MUSIC BEGINS

Buzzy Cohen: And for you super-fans out there, do not worry. This is not going to disappoint you. We've got you covered too.

As for me, I'm your host, Buzzy Cohen. And from Somethin' Else, Sony Music Entertainment, and Sony Pictures TV, This is Jeopardy! The Story of America's Favorite Quiz Show.

This week, how it all started.

THEME MUSIC FADES

ACT ONE

Bob Boden: Well, television quiz shows many of them were descendants of radio quiz shows.

Buzzy Cohen: That's Bob Boden again, our resident game show expert, who will be the first to tell you that to understand the significance of Jeopardy today, you have to go back to the beginning.

Archival Footage Jeopardy Pilot: Hello, ladies, gentlemen, and welcome to a brand new show called Jeopardy.

MUSIC: soft techno beat builds

Buzzy Cohen: Actually even before that... The prelude to Jeopardy dates back to the 1950s, when television was about a decade old and game shows were a network's secret weapon.

They were cheap to produce. You didn't need fancy sets or actors, and contestants were everyday people, just like the viewers themselves. Of course there was the thrill of watching someone win prizes, money, even fame.

And the moment was right for game shows...

Bob Boden: After World War II, the culture was looking for positive reinforcement of life in America, and quiz shows played a very important role in creating heroes and allowing us normal folks to play along and feel smart and be validated by having knowledge. So the quiz shows became mega, mega hits in the mid fifties.

Archival Footage Game Show Montage:

Game Show Announcer: The 64,000 Question! And now the star of our show where knowledge is king and the reward king size—Hal March!

Game Show Announcer: Geritol, the high potency tonic that helps you feel stronger, fast presents Twenty-One: Back for the fifth week, Mr. James Snodgrass and returning with \$52,500, Mr. Hank B. Garden!

Buzzy Cohen: At the peak of their popularity, 20 or so game shows were on the air, with about one third of the country tuning in. That's a lot of people, and a lot of shows competing for that number one spot. Bigger ratings meant bigger revenue.

And what perhaps started as a healthy dose of competition, ultimately snowballed into one of the biggest scandals in broadcast television.

MUSIC: suspenseful drumming beat begins

Bob Boden: At the time there were no laws against rigging quiz shows. And some producers were encouraged to manipulate the outcome of the competition by giving contestants answers, by coaching them on how to act and creating artificial results.

Buzzy Cohen: All in the name of being number one. But, that didn't work out so well. Dotto - which was kind of a mashup game of trivia and connect the dots - was the first show to be caught. It was abruptly taken off the air in 1958.

That same year, Herb Stempel, a contestant who had appeared on NBC's quiz show 21, came forward with the allegation that Twenty-One was also rigged.

In 1959, accusations of fraud led to a grand jury investigation into Twenty-One and one of its most popular contestants — Charles Van Doren.

As a champion, Van Doren had won \$129,000 in prize money, landed a cover story in Time magazine, and even got a hosting gig on NBC's Today.

He had been America's sweetheart... but he was about to be in the hot seat.

Archival Footage News Clip Covering Grand Jury Hearing 1959:

Reporter: In the Senate hearing room, the dramatic climax of the probe of fixed and rig quiz shows. Charles Van Doran's wife and father poet Mark Van Doren are in the audience as committee chairman Senator Oren Harris opens the hearing.

Buzzy Cohen: At first, Van Doren insisted he was innocent. But eventually, he admitted to receiving questions and answers before games, and dramatic coaching by the show's producers. The watershed moment was later depicted in Robert Redford's 1994 film, Quiz Show.

Archival Footage Clip from Quiz Show film:

Ralph Fiennes as Van Doren: I was involved, deeply involved in a deception. I have deceived my friends and I had millions of them. I lied to the American people. I lied about what I knew and then I lied about what I did not know.

MUSIC: driving beat with string instruments begins

Bob Boden: America was stunned. America had been led to believe that these shows were honest, not because anyone ever really said they were honest, but why wouldn't they be honest? The public very much felt duped. And keep in mind, television was barely a decade old. This was a huge shock.

Buzzy Cohen: And a huge reckoning for broadcast television! In 1960, Congress made rigging quiz shows a federal crime, and the genre nearly disappeared...

That is, until Julann Wright, who was then married to legendary game show producer Merv Griffin, got an idea...

Lisa Broffman: It just popped into her head and she said, well, what if we give the answers rather than the questions?

Buzzy Cohen: More on that after the break.

ACT TWO

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Tony Griffin: My father loved– he absolutely loved games.

Buzzy Cohen: That's Tony Griffin. Merv Griffin and Julann Wright's son.

Tony Griffin: When my mom met him on the Robert Q. Lewis Show, they became best friends and then they got married. And it was during that time he was doing Play Your Hunch as a game show host.

And The \$64,000 Question game show just got outed. They cheated, and my dad was really upset about that, because that meant the end of game shows, he thought.

And they were on a plane going somewhere, and he said, game shows are over. And my mom said, why do you say that? And he goes, because they got caught cheating! They were giving the contestants the answers.

And my mom said, well, why don't you do a game show where they give the answers to the contestants? And he said, what are you talking about? And she said, five 5,280. And he said, how many feet in a mile? And she said, 221 Baker Street. And he said where does Sherlock Holmes live? And she said, that's the game.

Lisa Broffman: I could imagine his eyes light up.

Buzzy Cohen: That's the Co-Executive Producer of Jeopardy, Lisa Broffman. She worked with Merv in the 80s' and heard this story almost as many times as Tony did.

Lisa Broffman: And he would've shot one back at Julann, and then she would've shot one back at him and probably for the rest of the flight when they landed. When they got home, they probably stayed up all night shooting these back and forth with each other. He was so excited.

And the thing about Merv was that year after year, day after day after day, he would walk in the room and say, ooh, I just came up with a new puzzle...

Tony Griffin: He had a unique style of speaking and laughing, and he'd be like, ooh.

Buzzy Cohen: And Julann's idea was definitely ooh-worthy.

MUSIC: bright drum beat with wooden blocks begin

Buzzy Cohen: Within a matter of days, Merv had put together a team to work on the concept.

That was just how he operated full steam ahead —

Lisa Broffman: Merv was so confident and he functioned with his instincts. He was a brilliant businessman and a brilliant producer. He always had this twinkle in his eye. You knew something fun was gonna happen. Something interesting was gonna happen.

Buzzy Cohen: Merv went on to create Wheel of Fortune and the Merv Griffin show, which is considered one of the top talk shows in the history of television.

But in 1964, he was on a mission: to bring quiz shows back from the brink.

The team had the first ingredient nailed down - the reverse q&a format. Next, Griffin came up with a list of categories - answers that pertained to each one - and set dollar amounts for every answer.

But there was still another twist.

Tony Griffin: He said, we're going to take money away when they miss an answer.

And my mom said, you can't do that. No one's ever taken money away. And he says, no, we're gonna do it because that's, that's more interesting. And even a bunch of television execs said, you cannot take money away from the contestants.

He goes, well, then we're not doing the show because that's the way the show is.

Buzzy Cohen: As Merv and his team continued to workshop ideas, doing run-throughs of the show in his Central Park West apartment, there were a couple of other pieces of the puzzle that needed solving.

Here's Merv Griffin in a 2002 interview.

Archival Footage Merv Griffin 2002 Interview:

Merv Griffin: The show was called **What's the Question, which is not very exciting. And it didn't connote danger or excitement or anything. And I was sitting in an office with two of the daytime executives of the network. And they kept saying, I remember the last run through, the problem with the show is there's no jeopardies in it. You know, it's not, it doesn't get you on the edge of your chair when the contestants are playing. It should have more jeopardies. I never heard a word they were saying to me. All I heard was Jeopardy. Jeopardy, what a word.**

Buzzy Cohen: That clinched it. They had a new title. Then came the song.

Tony Griffin: My father was a songwriter and an incredible piano player. And when he was single, he was in an apartment and he lived right next door to Marlon Brando. And Brando was doing Broadway plays and he was getting famous but he wasn't quite Marlon Brando yet, but everyone knew he was going to be huge.

And my dad and he were buddies and he said, I've got this piano. I can't use this piano. Do you want it?' And my dad's like, oh, I love pianos. Let me see. Oh yes, bring it in. Yes, I'll take it.

And one night before my mom and he were gonna go out to dinner, my dad was like, oh, just a second.. I got something in my head, I gotta put it down.

So he went to the piano that Marlon gave him, and he wrote the Think music: da da da....

So he wrote that, and that became huge, huge! So much so he always claimed it was as big as Happy Birthday.

Buzzy Cohen: And by the way, those 30 seconds have generated upwards of 80 million dollars in royalties for the Griffin family estate.

But back to the story...

Things were really coming together for Merv. He had the Think music down. And a more streamlined game design: they would divide the show into two rounds — Jeopardy and double Jeopardy—6 categories in each round, then end with a final.

And on March 30th, 1964, America was formally introduced to Jeopardy.

Archival Footage First Episode of Jeopardy:

Don Pardo: The following program is brought to you in living color on NBC. And now entering the studio are today's contestants. This is Mrs. Mary Eubanks, a housewife from Candor, North Carolina.

Buzzy Cohen: Don Pardo, who later became the voice of Saturday Night Live, was hired as the announcer.

Archival Footage First Episode of Jeopardy:

Don Pardo: This is [inaudible], an ex school teacher from Iran. This is [inaudible], a registered nurse from Greenwich, Connecticut. These three people will compete for cash prizes today on Jeopardy. And now, here's the star of Jeopardy, Art Fleming.

Art Fleming: Thank you. Thank you!

Buzzy Cohen: Art was a navy pilot turned actor. And this was his first time hosting a show. If he was nervous, you couldn't tell. He had a ton of charisma, and those broad shoulders didn't hurt either.

Archival Footage First Episode of Jeopardy:

Art Fleming: Thank you very much. Welcome to a brand new show called Jeopardy. This is a very unusual question and answer program. You see, we give our contestants the answers. All they have to do is come up with the questions. Whoever wins the most money today becomes our champion and returns to play the game again tomorrow.

Present Day Mary Eubanks: When I was on the game, in early '64, it was beginning...

Buzzy Cohen: That's Mary Eubanks. She was one of Jeopardy's first ever contestants. Today she's 84 years old, but she made her debut on the show when she was 26.

MUSIC: bright drum beat begins

Buzzy Cohen: It all started after she and her husband moved from North Carolina to New York, and Mary and her friend were waiting to get into a taping of The Price is Right...

Present Day Mary Eubanks: We were in line, and across the way, there was a guy who was moving around in the various groups and had his coat wrapped up real tight. So anyway, he eventually did come sidling across the way and came up to the two of us and said, how would you all like to go to try out for a show? So that's what we did.

It didn't ever occur to me that it would really happen. [laughs]

Buzzy Cohen: But a couple days later....

Present Day Mary Eubanks: I was ironing my husband's shirt and the phone rang and I picked it up with one hand and kept the iron going with the other. And it was a lady from the show. And she said, how would you like to be a contestant on the first Jeopardy show.

And I said, what shall I wear? That was my first question was, what shall I wear? She said, don't wear anything white. That has just remained in my memory so clearly.

Buzzy Cohen: On game day, Mary arrived in a pink blouse.

Present Day Mary Eubanks: Light pink, and it was short sleeves. I was just amazed because the audience was dressed up with long dresses on and sparkling things. It was just—they were all just dressed to the nines.

Buzzy Cohen: And at the helm, was the ever-fashionable and charming host, Art Fleming.

Present Day Mary Eubanks: Naturally, he was handsome, and he was friendly. And he really knew what he was doing about getting the audience involved.

Archival Footage of First Episode of Jeopardy:

Art Fleming: Now I'd like to talk a little bit with our contestants for the day— the very first contestants. And here's a young lady, Mary Eubanks, a housewife from North Carolina. How did you meet your husband, Mary?

26 year old Mary Eubanks: A blind date in college.

Art Fleming: A blind date in college. I bet you the college was University of Vermont.

26 year old Mary Eubanks: No, it was the University of North Carolina.

Art Fleming: You fooled me, Mary.

Present Day Mary Eubanks: He wanted me to speak because my southern accent was going to put the audience on. And it did.

26 year old Mary Eubanks: What's James Bond's number?

Art Fleming: What's his number? His telephone number? No, you are right. Anyway, I'm just kidding with you, joshing with you, Mary!

Present Day Mary Eubanks: They laughed. They clapped. They shrieked. It carried on over everything I said, whether it was right or wrong.

Buzzy Cohen: It was a close game and Mary was actually in second place going into final Jeopardy.

Present Day Mary Eubanks: Art Fleming read aloud the clue, goodnight sweet prince. And the music's going and then...

MUSIC: Think music begins

Art Fleming: Time is up. Please put down your pencils. Now, let's see. Homer, what your question is? Oh, what did Juliet say to Romeo? Ooh.

Now, Mary, you said, what quote was made to Hamlet in Shakespeare's Hamlet? Correct! Now, let's see what you have wagered being in second position with 230. Your wager is 115. You now have 345.

Buzzy Cohen: Dollars. That's dollars.

Art Fleming: And Mary, you are our champion. Our very first champion! Congratulations!

Present Day Mary Eubanks: Hamlet. That's what I won on. It was exciting, I mean, I'm still kind of breathless.

Buzzy Cohen: The game had gone off without a hitch, but NBC wasn't *quite* ready to toast Jeopardy's success.

MUSIC: Soft, contemplative music begins

Buzzy Cohen: There was still a nervousness in the air about quiz shows. Even with Jeopardy's unique format, which was designed to be a failsafe — a promise to audiences that this show was inherently different — executives wondered — would it work?

And as NBC rolled the dice, they were scrutinizing everything...

Here's Lisa Broffman again.

Lisa Broffman: The network was getting letters from viewers. So they called Merv and they said that the viewers think that the show is too hard. They can't get very many of the questions correct. You're gonna have to make it easier, because the only people that are gonna watch this show is this elite group of intellectuals in New York City that dress in black and hang out at the local bar and ponder existentialism. This can't be.

And so Merv said, I listened to what they were saying, and I said, okay. And you know what I did? I made it harder.

Buzzy Cohen: More after the break...

ACT THREE

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Jeff Goldstein: I saw Jeopardy once when I was at college. Everybody wound up minus, there was no final jeopardy. And I thought, what is this show? This is a terrible show. This show won't last.

Buzzy Cohen: That's Jeff Goldstein. Ironically, Jeff would go on to have quite the career at Jeopardy. But in the beginning, he was nervous...

Jeff Goldstein: I grew up around show business and I sort of wanted to be a part of it, but I didn't know what I wanted to do.

So I went to a couple of interviews, and one of the people that I met with was this fellow called Ron Greenberg. He'd been in game shows forever and he said Bob Rubin over at Jeopardy is looking for somebody. He said, why don't you go see Bob Rubin?

And I said, wow, Jeopardy. That's sort of scary. I... Jeopardy's for smart people.
[laughs]

And Ronnie Greenberg said to me, let me tell you something kid... Jeopardy will be on after we are all dead, you should go to Jeopardy.

Buzzy Cohen: And as it turns out, that was some sage advice. Within weeks of its debut, ratings skyrocketed. Harder questions and all, Jeopardy had nabbed about 40% of viewers in its time slot. The show was, undeniably, a hit! Merv got his punchline and Jeff got a job as a production assistant.

MUSIC: Uplifting techno music begins

Jeff Goldstein: In the beginning of Jeopardy, there were no computers. There was no electronics, and every one of the answers was hand painted by the NBC Scenic Shop on 18th Street and Sixth Avenue in New York. So, my job was to go through these individual answer cards and identify mistakes.

Buzzy Cohen: Don't worry... it wasn't all bad...

Jeff Goldstein: It was thrilling to show up at what was then the RCA Building, 30 Rock, you know, and go to that funky little studio.

And at the end of the day, I could go across the hall and watch the Tonight Show rehearsal. Especially if there was a musical act it was like, oh my God I'm sitting there, you know, nose to nose with whoever was playing.

Buzzy Cohen: Free concerts at 30 Rock? Now we're talking! And much like the Jeopardy of today, a lot of the action took place on those tape days...

Jeff Goldstein: Rehearsal started at 10:00 AM. If it was five seconds after 10 and rehearsal hadn't started, something was really wrong because everything was really like clockwork.

So, the rehearsal was, you know, just for the players to make sure they got comfortable. I mean, they come in and there's lights and Art Fleming and cameras and it's a totally different environment for them.

Buzzy Cohen: So they would play practice games with mock clues and responses, and then they'd reset.

During the actual games, Jeff was the official scorekeeper.

Jeff Goldstein: So if a player got a daily double, or if a player wanted to figure out how much to bet in final, they had a score that they could look across the room and see. The current show has electronic score readouts, but in my day, it was me. And I was adding and subtracting. And I have math teachers from when I was a kid that would be rolling in their graves with laughter that I got a job doing math.

The guy on camera four, whose lens was closest to me for some reason, didn't like me. And every once in a while he would swing his lens over and hit me in the head with it.

Buzzy Cohen: We all know someone like the guy on camera four, right? Still, Jeff loved being on set! The staff were a really tight-knit bunch...

MUSIC: Whimsical spacey music begins

Jeff Goldstein: It was Bob Rubin and George Vosburgh and the head writer Lynnette Williams. The guy who loaded the game board, Tommy Casabona, who was strong as an ox and just ran the stage. And I think it was really major for me, as a young guy starting out, to be surrounded by people whose job it was to make this program, and that's all they cared about. I mean, it was a small mission, but everyone was totally invested in what they were doing.

MUSIC: uplifting techno begins

Jeff Goldstein: The thing about television was we didn't know the audience. We knew the hundred or so people who got a ticket downstairs and came upstairs and watched us record, but we didn't know who was really out there until one day, Art Fleming, the host, he said, 'they're having an Art Fleming Day in Erie, Pennsylvania.' And I said, well, it sounds great. He said you wanna come?

So I drove up to Westchester Airport and sure enough, there was a private plane, and Fleming and I flew up to Erie, Pennsylvania. The police escorted us into town with motorcycles and there were people along the route waving, clapping.

And we went into this typical VFW Hall. And I was walking with Fleming and this lovely woman came up and she grabbed his arm with both of her hands and she stopped him and she stared at him. She said, you come into my home every day.

And he said, well, thank you. Fleming was remarkably gracious. But it was my first experience with the audience. There was a connection there that I had never seen before.

Buzzy Cohen: The original Jeopardy ran for 11 years, from 1964 - 1975. And Jeff actually became the director for many of them.

But despite the show's popularity, by the mid 70's, networks were eager to usher in a new era of television.

The last episode of Jeopardy aired on January, 3, 1975. Here's Bob Boden again:

MUSIC: driving beat with string instruments begins

Bob Boden: And I remember it like it was yesterday. I was riveted to the tv. I put a little microphone of my cassette recorder up to the speaker so that I could record the show and keep it forever. And I still have that recording.

After Art Fleming thanked everyone and said goodbye for the last time, they cut to a single light bulb on a stand in the middle of the stage, which was all dark. And that was reminiscent of how Broadway theaters were set up when the shows were not being produced.

The soundtrack was the song Smile– smile, though your heart is aching...smile, even though it's breaking.

It was a very sad day for me.

Buzzy Cohen: It was a sad day for a lot of folks. The viewers, the production team, Merv...

Tony Griffin: That was a tough time for my dad cuz my dad really loved that show.

Buzzy Cohen: But as you know, that wasn't really the end...

Tony Griffin: The King Brothers, these two young guys, they had a meeting with my dad and they said, we wanna syndicate Jeopardy.

Buzzy Cohen: Next week, the relaunch seen around the world, and a new host (mustache and all) at the center of it.

Archival Footage Jeopardy Premiere 1984:

Johnny Gilbert: Now entering the studio are today's competitors. An advertising copywriter originally from Miami, Florida, Frank Selevan. A freelance copywriter originally from Plainview, New York, Lois Feinstein, and an energy demonstrator from Waverly, Ohio. Greg Hopkins. And now, here is the host of Jeopardy, Alex Trebek.

Alex Trebek: Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of all of us, welcome to America's favorite answer and question game, Jeopardy. You know how we play it....

THEME MUSIC BEGINS

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

It's hosted by me, Buzzy Cohen.

This episode was produced by Sylvie Lubow.

The series producers are Julia Doyle, Sylvie Lubow, 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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CITATION

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