

May '72: A Mysterious 48-Year-Old Magazine Appears

1 message

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Warning: This newsletter contains spoilers up to the first eight episodes of *The Leftovers*.
Wondering why you're getting this? Catch up here with **Streaming TV Party's** previous newsletters.

Introduction: [Streaming TV Party: We're watching *The Leftovers*](#)

Season 1: ["Pilot" and "Penguin One, Us Zero"; "Two Boats and a Helicopter" and "B.J. and the A.C."; "Gladys" and "Guest"](#)

The First—And Probably Not the Last—Deep Dive Into That May '72 Issue of *National Geographic*

The days of having to pause our TiVo recordings or zoom in on [a grainy picture of *Lost's* blast door map](#) online are far behind us, and more often than not, a show will now linger on details long enough for us to analyze.

The MacGuffin at the center of "Solace for Tired Feet" is the May 1972 issue of *National Geographic*, a magazine issue that actually exists and you can purchase for yourself for [far less money](#) than the \$200 [asking price](#) that Kevin Garvey Sr. (Scott Glenn) had to fork over to [obtain it](#). Kevin Sr. went through a lot to get it only for Kevin Jr. to reject it; he also tossed the issue his daughter Jill (Margaret Qualley) bought him in the trash.

Since I don't have the issue to explore on my own, I went to [Reddit](#) and [Watching *The Leftovers*](#) for help and insight—but [one of the articles is available to read](#). And here are just some of the articles in the May 1972 issue, which has a great cover with a vintage bus and a bear standing upright:

Yellowstone's Hundredth Birthday: A Four-Part Report

Cairo, Troubled Capital of the Arab World

The Spider That Lives Underwater

Have Excavations on the Island of Thera Solved the Riddle of the Minoans?

“Solace for Tired Feet” [gets its name from that issue](#), as does a [line of dialogue about spiders living underwater from Christine](#); at least two of the magazine’s images—[Kevin’s shoes](#) and a [background piece of art](#)—are closely recreated in “Cairo.” (You can also hear “Cairo” spoken in a dream sequence.) And the feature on the “Riddle of the Minoans” refers to an ancient civilization on Crete that [vanished at the height of their power](#) that fueled a mystery for thousands of years, not unlike the Sudden Departure is for *The Leftovers* now. It wasn’t until recently that archaeologists discovered that the Minoans’ downfall was due to a [volcano eruption that caused a tsunami](#) that wiped them out.

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[Start Cooking](#)

Man of Science, Man of Faith

As I watched Kevin Sr. and Kevin Jr. in the diner they used to go to after church on Sundays, it’s hard not to think of the distinctions once allotted to Jack Shephard and John Locke and the roundabout ways those characters ended up mirroring one another. A similar feeling popped up at the end of “Cairo” as Patti laid the eventual plans of the Guilty Remnant at Kevin Garvey’s feet. (More on that in a bit.)

At first glance, it’s a conversation between father and son, one that’s strained in part to lived experiences we have yet to see. Kevin Sr., the stand-in for Locke in this instance, hears voices, and they’re instructing him to give his son the *National Geographic* issue, but it’s not just about physically taking the magazine; he has to accept it. “Your services are being requested—eyes open, wide awake,” Kevin Sr. says. “This is your invitation. This is your purpose. This is what you fucking accept.”

Kevin, the Jack Shephard analog in *The Leftovers* ([and a pretty explicit one at that](#)), refuses to accept it even as his life is upended far beyond what he can comprehend. Even as he inexplicably blacks out for periods of time to shoot feral dogs with Dean, or to kidnap Patti and tie her up in a cabin in Cairo, New York, he can barely process that he’s been there often enough that a pile of shoes form around a fire or that his uniform shirts are hanging on the trees. It took him months to realize that he lost Laurie; it might take him longer to process the very real possibility of losing Jill too.

Recommended

Some of Hollywood's most prominent trans storytellers delve into the vast history of trans representation in television and film in the Netflix documentary [Disclosure](#).

It only takes a few hours to play through [Gris](#) on the Nintendo Switch, but in that time, it relays an intricate and breathtaking exploration of grief.

Hulu's testing out [Watch Party](#), a new feature to share movies and shows with your friends and fam. Look out for the Watch Party icon to give it a try!

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[Kick Off the Watch Party](#)

The Guilty Remnant Reveals Its Purpose

I still might not know the [Guilty Remnant's cigarette budget](#), but "Cairo" did clear up plenty about what they want. They want you to remember the Sudden Departure, they deprive themselves of every single thing that could distract them to do it, they want you to remember them, and they're willing to become martyrs to do it.

"The difference between you and me is that I accept that it did," Patti explains. "And while you push it aside, while you ignore it, we strip ourselves of everything that distracts us from it...until we are erased, until we are a blank slate. We are living reminders of what you try so desperately to forget."

It's a very narrow view of grief. It's not like people who focus on things other than their loss or their grief don't grieve in their own way. You can accept it and not be all-consumed by it, but it's OK if it does. And for Jill, it's become all-consuming in such a massive way that by the end of "Cairo," the Guilty Remnant starts to make sense.

Discussion Questions

- What is Holy Wayne's endgame? How many pregnant women does he have in hiding?
- Do you want to know what was going on in Laurie's head the moment Jill walked in the door as much as I do?
- What do you think the Guilty Remnant plan to do with those [Loved Ones Bereavement Figures](#)? And are they made to look like the Departed, or themselves?

Next Week: Be sure to watch up to episodes 9 and 10, "The Garvey's at Their Best" and "The Prodigal Son Returns," respectively.

Thoughts? Contact me at newsletters@dailydot.com and drop me a reader's note: We just might include it next time.



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