



Survivor

[Episodes & Clips](#) [News](#) [Cast](#) [About](#) [Fantasy Tribe](#)

[< BACK](#)

From Idol Blunders To Power Plays: Rob Cesternino Analyzes 'Survivor 50'

Posted By: John Powell | April 22, 2026





Rob Cesternino didn't just play Survivor, he built his life and business around the reality show franchise. After competing on The Amazon and All-Stars, Cesternino created his own media empire based on his [Rob Has A Podcast \(RHAP\) show](#) where he analyzes the show, taking insightful deep dives into the strategies and the moves made each week. Cesternino stopped by Global TV to not only give his take on Survivor 50 but also to talk about a new project which is very personal to him.

Rob Cesternino: Hey, John, how's it going?

John Powell: Not too bad, Rob. It's great talking to you. How's your time in Toronto so far?

Rob Cesternino: Wonderful. Everybody's been so nice and it's a beautiful day here so I can't complain.

John Powell: Well, if I sound a bit weird, it's because I'm on the balcony of my condo, because apparently they decided today was the best day to test the fire alarms. (laughs)

Rob Cesternino: Hopefully you're being very safe out there! (laughs)

John Powell: I want to get your thoughts so far on what we're seeing on Survivor 50. What do you think of this season?

Rob Cesternino: I think it's been really fun so far. I mean, it's been a wild ride and not everything has been incredibly received but we haven't been bored with Season 50. There's been so much excitement in the fan community so I think it's been a really cool experience so far.

John Powell: You're recognized as one of the more strategical players. Who do you think is playing a really good game and whose game do you think needs to pick it up?

Rob Cesternino: I think it's not a surprise to say that Cirie has been playing one of the best games so far. I love her positioning in terms of being right in the middle of the two sides. She had great luck that she made her big move and had her side decide to go and take out Chrissy and Coach on the same night that Rick Devens did his big fake idol shenanigans, which was an epic moment.

I think that Cirie is going to turn things around and blame Rick Devens for flipping out and I think she'll be able to get away with this without any blood on her hands which is really incredible. Who needs to pick it up? I would say, of the players, I don't know if there is one person that really... I think almost everybody's had a moment out of this final 11, which is pretty good.

John Powell: I think Jonathan's doing a stellar job in the sense of improving his gameplay. Who do you think has really picked up their game since the last time they played?



Clockwise from Rob as he makes a toast, Rose-Anne Cesternino, Rob's mother, Jeff Probst, Matthew Von Ertfelda, Heidi's mother, Kathy Dugas, Heidi Strobel, Jenna's Father, Michael Morasca, Jenna Morasca, Butch's Wife, Cindy Lockley, Butch Lockley, Christy's Boyfriend, Brent Corby, Christy Smith, Rob Cesternino and Rob's Mother. PHOTO BY MONTY BRINTON/CBS.

Rob Cesternino: I thought the person who was the best example of that was Genevieve, who I thought was doing some really great stuff and got extremely unlucky. Jonathan really seems to have a pretty good strategic grasp on what's going on and is trying not to make himself the center of attention. He happens to have been on the wrong side of the vote on the last round so we'll see how he can bounce back from that. I've been really impressed with Rizzo. I thought he was going to be picked off pretty early and people wouldn't want to work with him but he's really disarmed people and made them feel very warm and welcoming towards him.

John Powell: Yeah, you would think that X-factor of people not knowing how he plays the game would work against him but he seems to be doing really well. As far as Old School and New School, who do you think has the edge so far?

Rob Cesternino: I mean, the Old School players have really been running circles around the New School players, which you love to see. It's been making me very proud! Winners at War, it was a lot of players who were from the newer seasons who kind of outlasted the players who were from the older seasons. So, I think that there was a real question mark coming into the season: Are the old players going to be able to handle the new era? I think with some certainty we can say that they have.

John Powell: We've seen a lot of good personalities and a lot of great players go this season. Which boot has hit you the hardest, Rob?

Rob Cesternino: Ah, that's a great question. Genevieve was a tough one to follow, but I love Q and I was so disappointed when Q ended up getting taken out of the game because I think that he is such an entertaining player and creates so much chaos that I felt that I was in mourning for one.

John Powell: What are your thoughts about the pre-gaming controversy?

Rob Cesternino: You know, when they bring back players for these Survivor seasons, it's naturally going to happen. People want to try to get any advantage that they can. We live in the perfect world where that didn't happen but the thing with the pre-gaming is that it is not this thing that ultimately guarantees you success.

People get burned by the pre-gaming. Colby told me a story when I interviewed him, that he tried to pre-game with Cirie. He told Cirie that Jenna Lewis was good and then when Jenna Lewis started gunning for Cirie that made Cirie not trust Colby. It made Cirie think that Colby was trying to trick her and so these pre-game situations can backfire too.

John Powell: Well, we've seen friendships dissolve like with Lex and Boston Rob. I mean, that's a famous example of how things turned wrong once you're put into the game. You have some big news, because you've written a book about Survivor. Tell us a little bit about it, when it comes out and what it's all about.

Rob Cesternino: Sure! My book is called [The Tribe Has Spoken](#) and it is the 25-year history of Survivor from my perspective. I don't believe that the true story of Survivor has ever been told of how did Survivor go from this worldwide phenomenon that took us by storm in the year 2000 to ultimately what it is now, 50 seasons in, in the new era.

I really try to talk about that first season and then get into the evolution of Jeff (Probst) and all of the great players that have come along and all of these milestone moments in the history of the show and talk about that transformation that Survivor has undergone during that time. Plus, I'm also going to give you a strategy guide for every game so that, unlike me, you can go and win Survivor. (laughs)



Butch Lockley, Heidi Strobel, Jenna Morasca, Rob Cesternino and Matthew Von Ertfelda, of the Jacare tribe during the reward challenge. PHOTO BY MONTY BRINTON/CBS.

John Powell: I've been covering Survivor since the very first season, along with some other shows; it's been a big part of my life as a fan and as a reporter. The same with you, Rob; it's become synonymous with your life. Now, what has that meant to you? What would you be doing if you weren't covering Survivor?

Rob Cesternino: I would probably be working in some insurance office on Long Island, and it would be maybe a very depressing situation for me. (laughs) But, instead, every great thing that's happened in my life has been in some way because of Survivor, where I ended up going to go and have this amazing experience.

By way of that, my parents used to have watch parties and then there was a girl that was friends with my sister who went on to be my wife and the mother of my two children. I ended up having this whole second act with podcasting about Survivor and being able to do all these fun things, like come to Toronto, all because of Survivor choosing me to be on the show. So I am eternally grateful for what Survivor has given me.

John Powell: Now here's a question. Rob, why aren't you on Survivor 50?

Rob Cesternino: That wasn't my call! (laughs) I would do it, I said that I would, but ultimately they went in a different direction. So it was ultimately okay with me because I got to go and play on The Traitors, which was also a really cool experience but I'm having so much fun podcasting about it; I can't imagine not getting to be talking about everything that's happening in the season.

John Powell: There's been a lot of big moves this season and some I've questioned a lot. What do you think about Aubrey playing her idol at Tribal Council?

Rob Cesternino: So, I would say that it seemed immediately like it was a mistake for her to do it. She said that, “Hey, an idol when everybody knows you have it is not an idol; it’s a scarlet letter.” Yeah, Riz God, I think, would disagree with that—where he was able to take an idol that everybody knew about, and he understood how difficult it is for people to split the votes on you.

Aubrey had the ability to also say, like, “Hey, you want to vote me out with my idol? Sure. You want to give Rick Devens an idol?” And people are like, “Oh, I guess we don’t want to blindside her.” “I’m not playing it tonight. If you vote me out, Rick Devens gets an idol. Is that what you guys want? Would you rather me have the idol or Rick Devens have the idol?” And I felt like there was a missed opportunity to really leverage the Billie Eilish Boomerang Idol.

That being said, and she really needed an idol this week, the fact that she played the idol at the last Tribal Council did help sell the lie that Rick Devens found an idol and was able to play this. So, in a way, it did kind of help her in a roundabout way, where she ended up being partnered with Rick Devens, and the fact that her idol was recycled let it be a more believable lie that Rick Devens was telling.

John Powell: We’ve had another situation. I talked to Coach about it, obviously not yet Ozzy, because he’s still in the game, but Coach and Ozzy during that first challenge...you know, Ozzy said, “You stole it,” and Coach says, “Hey, it didn’t say I couldn’t; I didn’t agree to anything.” What do you think about that whole controversial situation?

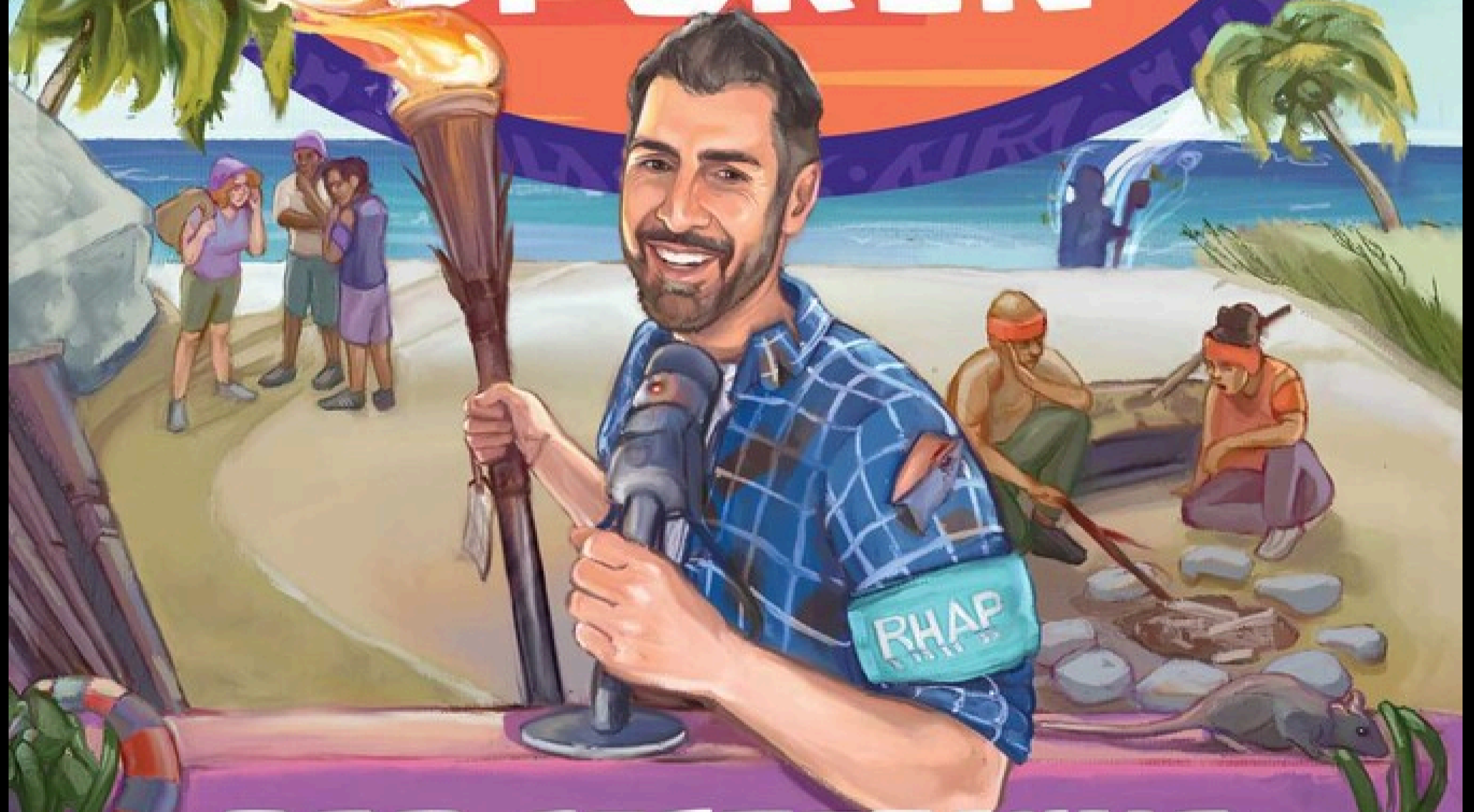
Rob Cesternino: Look, that was an incredible moment in the premiere. Coach and Ozzy had sort of buried the hatchet and then immediately went right back into another conflict. I’m a little disappointed that we never really got to see a true culmination of that conflict in the season. Coach ends up going out without another real confrontation but that was a really incredible moment.

John Powell: Why do you think Survivor is far more popular in Canada than it is in America?

Rob Cesternino: So that’s a really interesting question and I’ve noticed that too. With Rob Has a Podcast, our audience is disproportionately Canadian. About a third of our audience is Canadian, which, population-wise, that number should be lower.

**The Definitive (Unofficial) Lore and Legacy
from the Game's Smartest Surviving Loser**

**THE
TRIBE
AND I HAVE
SPOKEN**



ROB CESTERNINO

HOST OF ROB HAS A PODCAST

with Alex Kavutskiy • Illustrated by Sam Bond

Check out Rob's book here: <https://www.amazon.ca/Tribe-Have-Spoken-Definitive-Unofficial/dp/1668087472>

Canadians have always been great supporters of reality TV. I used to think it was because they would not let Canadians play. I kind of felt like there was a little bit of, you know, you're sort of like with your nose pressed up against the glass, wanting that thing that's in the store window. They've let Canadians play now and they've played wonderfully. So I don't have a great answer for why that is. What's your theory?

John Powell: Well, I think we are bred on a culture of harsh winters. It's sort of like what you see in other countries like Australia when the climate affects the people so much. I think that because we go through so much here, we're more in tune with real-life stories and real-life struggles and those kinds of things. I think it's just based on our culture and our environment around us.

And I guess there's also, when it comes to things like Big Brother and shows like that, and The Amazing Race, that we have our own. There's a lot of FOMO that happens as well.

Rob Cesternino: I know Survivor 50 is another big ratings winner. I think maybe you're onto something.

John Powell: If you could make a few changes to Survivor what would you do?

Rob Cesternino: So, I think that the things that I would try to implement, if they brought me on for a day, number one, I would say, "Hey, next season, Season 51, we're gonna have two tribes, and we're going to have it be a theme." Because I think that that helps hook people. Rather than, "Hey, this fall on CBS and Global, it's Survivor 51," We come up with a fun theme that gets people excited, like, "Oh, I can't believe they're doing that. Oh, I gotta see how that goes." And I think that would be a really cool way to kick off the 50s.

I think that I would do a little bit less in terms of the advantages and the journeys and losing of the votes. I think that's the kind of stuff that makes the show a little bit too confusing for people and I think it takes away from a lot of the options that the players have in terms of the moves that they can make. Like, the players are good, right? Just let them play Survivor.

Rob Cesternino Breaks Down Survivor 50

John Powell's Reality Roundup



Watch on

John Powell: Well, and that's true. I mean, one of the biggest arguments, especially about the American version of Survivor, is that there's this thought that advantages are now overwhelming strategy because there's so many hidden immunity idols and so many different advantages. What do you think about that whole situation? Because, on one hand, it does provide a lot of intrigue and it kind of forces the players to make decisions. On the other hand, they're not relying on their core skills like a social game, and those kinds of things become maybe less of an importance.

Rob Cesternino: I think that the producers' biggest fear is that there's going to be a boring episode where nothing's happening but I understand that, especially because of the shooting schedule, when they used to shoot every three days and be in Tribal Council, it's like, okay, there's always going to be something going on.

Maybe there's a concern of, "Okay, maybe if it's only two days, maybe there's nothing that exciting happening and it's a boring vote, so we gotta spice it up and have some things that we can bank on." But I just think that the players are so smart and they're so good that if you just let them play, they're going to come up with crazy ideas. Maybe you have a boring episode, but I think you would rather have a boring episode than do these twists that could kind of ruin the season.

John Powell: Is there anything, Rob, that you want to plug besides your book that you have going on right now?

Rob Cesternino: I'm going to be tonight in Toronto doing the live show. I'll be in New York City on May 6th to do the live show again. I just hope that everybody, if you haven't ever checked out Rob Has a Podcast, just search [RHAP](#) wherever you can listen to podcasts or on [YouTube](#).

John Powell: Now, the one final question I have for you, Rob, is probably one that you've been asked before, but we're gonna do it again. Rob, would you ever play again?

Rob Cesternino: You know, I would. I think that the challenge is just: What do I do with the podcast if I was ever going to play Survivor? I had so much fun getting to go do The Traitors that the idea of getting to go play on a show another time is appealing.

John Powell: Well, that's great. Well, Rob, all the best of luck in the future. I love your insights. Take care and again, have a great time in Toronto while you're here.

Rob Cesternino: Yeah, thank you so much, John, and good luck getting back into the apartment with the fire alarm. (laughs)

News From Survivor



[Forced to Fail: Christian Hubicki On His Brutal Survivor Exit](#)

Apr 23, 2026

[Survivor](#)



[Survivor 50 Fantasy Tribe](#)

Apr 23, 2026

[Survivor](#)



["I'm Renting Space in Your Mind": Coach Embraces Polarizing Legacy, Details Unseen Moments](#)

Apr 16, 2026

[Survivor](#)



[Survivor 50 Mid-Season Report Card](#)

Apr 15, 2026

[Survivor](#)

You may also like



Saturday Night Live

The Late Show with Stephen Colbert



Hollywood Squares

America's Culinary Cup
New Series

[SEE MORE SHOWS](#)

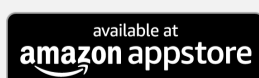


More Channels in 1 App! Get the Global TV app FREE

More Channels in 1 App! Get the Global TV app FREE

Top shows from Global TV, W Network, Home Network, Flavour Network, Showcase, HISTORY® Channel, Slice, and Global News are on the **Global TV App!** Stream live, on-demand, or free!

** Available content may vary through participating service providers.*





[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Terms Of Use](#)

[Advertising Standard Terms & Conditions](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Faq](#)

[Where To Watch](#)

[Global TV APP](#)

[Accessibility Feedback](#)

© 2026 Corus Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Corus Television.

CORUS.

Other Corus Websites



STACKTV

