



# Survivor

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## “I’m Renting Space In Your Mind”: Coach Embraces Polarizing Legacy, Details Unseen Moments

Posted By: John Powell | April 16, 2026



Benjamin "Coach" Wade. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.



*Coach has left the game*  
*No more haikus, no nicknames*  
*Fifty holds their mark*

Love him or hate him, everyone is always talking about him. Benjamin “Coach” Wade is one of the most polarizing castaways in Survivor history which is one of the big reasons why he was cast on this, the 50th season.

From his “snaking” Ozzy at the Supply Challenge to his inventive Haiku and nicknames, Coach left his fingerprints all over this anniversary season. Coach also made his fair share of mistakes that he not only admits to but regrets.

John Powell: Coach, it’s great to be talking to you today. Thanks for taking the time to speak with us. How are you doing?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: I’m doing great, man. It’s, you know, destiny above all, as the saying goes. It was the right time for me to go. I got no regrets and I’m doing good.

John Powell: There’s an ancient samurai saying that goes like this: “A man may change his mask, but not his nature.” We saw you enter the game and you said you’re going to take it a little bit differently, you were going to put the Dragon Slayer aside but then he came out. What happened?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: Well done on that quote! Yeah, I played a great game, you know, for about 14 days. (laughs) Then, the idiocy of people saying, “We will not split the votes. Let’s put all 12 votes on Dee” was just preposterous to me.



Ozzy Lusth, Q Burdette, Benjamin “Coach” Wade. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

When we’re backed into a corner, anger is a secondary emotion, right? So, I was rooted in fear that I was going to get voted off, that there was going to be a shot in the dark played, it was going to hit, and I had a one-in-six chance of going home. So it clouded my judgment and made me act like the Dragon Slayer of old but now I’m a happy guy. I’m back to the old coach.

John Powell: What is it like playing with the New School players?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: You know, I wasn’t bothered by it. I actually felt better playing with the New School players because sometimes the Old School players weren’t buying into the Dragon Slayer antics but the New School players, you look at them, Rizo and Kamilla and those people, they love me. I liked playing with them. I felt like it’s less of an “Ozzy, draw a line in the sand, screw you, and I’m pissed that you did this,” right? You know, they’re very magnanimous, I think. So I actually really enjoyed playing with the New Era players.

John Powell: The online sentiment is divided because you talk about “integrity” and then we see some of the moves you make in the game. Help explain that so people understand what you mean.

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: I actually haven’t said this yet this way, right? Integrity is like my currency out there. I don’t have Ozzy’s challenge prowess. I don’t have a Cirie’s strategic nature. I have one currency out there and that is when I say I’m going to vote a certain way, I’m going to vote that way. I’ve done it every single time. I’ve never gone into Tribal saying I’m going to vote this way and then done another, right? And so it’s my currency.

I have to put that out there. It’s why the Ozzy thing bothered me so much because I thought if people think that I’m going into this season and I’m going to play different than I have, which I knew I was going to play different, I was going to evolve, I was going to have to get blood on my hands and admit to it, right, that was my currency and he

was devaluing my currency in that moment.



Benjamin "Coach" Wade and Jonathan Young. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

For me, it's also that safety blanket that I put around me when I go out there. I'm going to play with integrity and I got messy, and I got sloppy, and I made mistakes, for sure, you know? It was so funny because I was watching the show last night and Tiffany asked me that question. And, I mean, I'm a bad liar, right? I really am.

Jessica, my wife, she says, "That's a bad look."

I said, "No, I really paused that long. I couldn't say it."

And so, you know, it's funny because, sometimes the fans they love to hate. I'm a big target. I get that and it's okay. It's okay that they want to feel a certain way. As a very famous man said to me multiple times, and even in recent weeks, Sir Probst, you know, "Everybody's talking about you." Yeah, every time, everybody's talking about you, every time. And there will never be somebody like you again on the show, you know?

So it's like that's what I bring to the table. I bring that eclectic fun, right? Joy. You know, poetic, philosophical, messing up Haikus. I actually get such a kick out of it when people are like, "Does he even know what a Haiku is?"

Look, if you were to give me a Haiku, I would not sit there and go, "Karen, yeah, gave me eight." No, I would just take it for what it's worth but the fact that these people are so fanatical about me that they have to count it up and say, "Did he do a 5-7-5?" I freaking love it. I really do. Hate me. Love me. My name's in your mouth. I'm renting space in your mind and I will always rent space in your mind.

John Powell: Well, you have English teachers talking about Haikus, which is a good thing as far as literacy goes. (laughs) A lot of people were questioning the move you made against Ozzy at the beginning of the game in that challenge. Now, the rules of the challenge were that you could take it at the end. I don't see a problem with it. Can you understand people's reaction?



Benjamin "Coach" Wade. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

Benjamin "Coach" Wade: I'm putting myself up here on a pedestal. Yeah, you know, if I were to go in there and just say, "Well, guys, I just got off the couch and I just decided to do this. I really have not done anything in my life, but I'm out here, Survivor is my life," I mean, then people wouldn't take shots at me but I'm like, "I am the Dragon Slayer. I'm the Tide Walker and I'm going to play with integrity."

Just saying that is going to get people to roll up their sleeves and say, "Let's tear him down." Everybody wants to tear down that person that's on top.



Benjamin "Coach" Wade. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

I do make myself an easy target and so the rules of the game stated that you could snake the key. It's funny, we're all watching it at the premiere. We're all in New York. The producers are there, Jeff's there, our family plus-one is there and right before that moment happened, the cast was like, "Yeah, now we're really going to see what happens." Because, I mean, I was saying this is what happened. I never agreed to it. Ozzy agreed. He agreed to it.

So the whole room just erupted when they showed me. I kept my mouth shut. Everybody said, "Oh yeah, Coach was telling the truth." It was a really fun moment.

John Powell: Do you regret going after Dee and leading that charge?

Benjamin "Coach" Wade: It was actually really sad, right, John? Because if you look at this day—we're in 2026, right? Survivor 50. So you know what? If you go into a vote and there's an idol or a Shot in the Dark looming, what are you going to do? Split the votes. Nobody wanted to split the votes. I couldn't believe it! I could not believe, in that moment, the infancy of Survivor IQ that everybody displayed. I said, "Chrissy, you want to go 12–0 on D?" Yes, absolutely. Joe, absolutely. Stephanie, absolutely. I asked everybody, and they were like, "We don't want to vote for anybody else." People wanted to go into that tribal council 12–0.

I could have handled it better. I could have finessed it better but I thought so securely that I had the numbers. I thought it was absolutely preposterous that we would go into a vote not splitting it!

If we were sitting here last week because the Shot in the Dark hit and I went home, then I would have said, "Damn, I should have fought harder." So, you know, I could have finessed it more. I got way too aggressive and it started to lead to my downfall.

John Powell: We saw Chrissy telling you to stay in the hammock and not get involved. Did you actually stay there?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: You’ve got to remember, Chrissy actually came up to me right before tribal and said, “I think I screwed up, man. I was playing just as aggressive as you were yesterday.” When she said that, I was like, “Oh, we really are in trouble now.”

I did sit in the hammock for a while. I was breaking the fourth wall, talking, singing, making Haikus for the camera, they got a big kick out of it, but I did sneak out of the hammock and I did talk to Joe and some others.

Joe actually said to me, “Coach, how much do you trust your alliance?” He whispered it, said I could never repeat it. And I said I trust Stephenie, Chrissy, you, Jonathan. I think I trust Ozzy and I think I trust Cirie.

He said, “Alright.” Then he went and talked to Chrissy and said he felt better but something was brewing. Going into tribal it was probably 60–40 that we were going home. When Rick got the idol, it became 70–30. A slam dunk.



Chrissy Hofbeck, Benjamin “Coach” Wade and Aubry Bracco. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

John Powell: Watching the show back what surprised you most?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: I was surprised at Ozzy’s different gameplay. He’s always been the challenge beast not strategic but now he’s thinking strategically. That surprised me. We could do without the eye rolls and people making me look like a clown but, you know, they’re going to do what they’re going to do.

John Powell: Is there anything that you wish made the edit?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: Jonathan and I had such a beautiful bond. I was doing “Coach-Chi” on the beach and he ran down excited! It was great!

At the merge, I actually transferred the name “Tide Walker” to Jonathan, but they didn’t air that.

And at the final tribal, I told Jeff to drop the Dragon Slayer stuff and said I’m a happy person. He told me I’m a litmus test for fans. That was a really cool moment. I wish that aired.

John Powell: As a juror, what do you look for in a winner?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: I look for someone good at challenges, strategic, all-around strong. Challenge beasts vote for challenge beasts. Strategic players vote for strategic players. And for me, integrity means staying true to your alliance. That’s my currency, a well-rounded player.

John Powell: Would you ever play again?

Benjamin “Coach” Wade: Before we go, have I told you how much I love Canada and Canadians? I could pull out my trumpet and play “O Canada.” It was harder at 53 than 38, sleeping in the dirt, all that. I look at myself and think, man, I look old out there but honestly, I should probably wrap it up unless Jeff calls. If he says they need me, I’ll pause, pray on it and decide. I feel blessed to be part of this monumental season.

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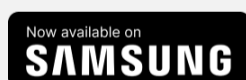
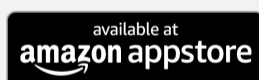


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