

Still Buffering 205: "Miss Americana" (2020)

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[theme music plays]

Raleigh: Hello, and welcome to *Still Buffering*: a—[laughs] Cross-generational guide to the culture that made us! I'm Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: Sydnee, do you have a problem with something I did? [laughs]

Sydnee: What was that mouth noise you decided to make right before—
[laughs]

Taylor: [laughing]

Sydnee: Right before we start—

Raleigh: I—

Sydnee: We had—We had hit the record button—You won't hear it at home, don't worry, cause it was before anything, but it was... It was a—
[laughs]

Raleigh: Would you like me to do it again?

Taylor: It sounded like a little—Like a little yum-yum noise!

Sydnee: I don't know—

Taylor: Like a yum-yum! [smacks lips]

Raleigh: Yeah! I just had a sip let in my coffee, so I decided, let me just

finish it off real quick, because you know, I—We're about to start, so let me just finish this last sip—

Sydnee: Mmm.

Raleigh: And then I took a sip, and then you pressed record and I went "Ah! [smacks lips]"

Sydnee: Yeah, I know! It was—It was that! It was that. [laughing]

Raleigh: [laughing]

Taylor: The yum-yum sound!

Raleigh: The yum-yum sound.

Sydnee: It's like a rodent was loose in the studio.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [smacks lips again] Well, it was delicious. [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, well good. I'm glad. I'm... Glad you enjoyed your coffee.

Raleigh: Thank you.

Sydnee: Um... That we let—That we let mom go through a drive-thru to obtain.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Cause she... Isn't allowed out of the house, and it's...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Aw...

Sydnee: She's not handling it well.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: So... We have to let her occasionally go pick something up through a drive-thru so that she... I don't know.

Raleigh: Maybe some—Some pick-up groceries, where they put them in your car for you. [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement] That's—That's—

Raleigh: Some drive-thru coffee!

Sydnee: [laughs] Exactly. Exactly. Uh—

Taylor: Well she's got that big backyard! Just let her walk some laps.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughing] Are you—

Raleigh: Sounds like you're about it like a dog! Or a cat! [laughs]

Sydnee: "Are you exercising mom enough? Maybe that's the problem. Are you—Are you—"

Raleigh: "I haven't taken her on enough walks!"

Sydnee: [laughing] You need to exercise our mom more frequently, so that she can get through this quarantine situation.

Taylor: It's true!

Raleigh: I know.

Taylor: I think it—[unintelligible] sit there inside, too long.

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh, dad still has to go to work because he—Because his business is considered essential, um—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Because they—Which it is. They deal with medical records—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: So—So they can't close, and uh, he went to work and then he came here, afterwards. And when he came in, I was like "Now... I need you to... Decontaminate. I need you to like scrub down. [laughs] Like, wash your hands."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: I mean, he's not around as far as we know, anybody who has anything.

Raleigh: Or anyone.

Sydnee: Or anyone.

Raleigh: At all, really.

Sydnee: As he—[laughs]

Raleigh: He really just sits in his office by himself, at work all day. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, that's what he told me, he said—He said "Well, sure." And he went to wash his hands and he went "Now you know Syd, the only thing I've touched today is the paper, cause that's all I did at work was read the paper."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And I wanted to say “Well dad, why did you go to work—”[laughs]
“To read—Could you stay home and read the paper and then go to work later?”

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: “Let’s just reduce the number of—That is something you can do from home!” [laughs]

Taylor: They can text you if they need anything, at work. That sounds like a work-from-home kind of job! [laughs]

Sydnee: We—We should clarify that our dad runs a small business, so like—

Raleigh: Yes, he does more than read the paper, at work.

Taylor: Yeah he—He does.

Sydnee: He—He does stuff. But he sits in an office alone—

Raleigh: Don’t worry, dad. I won’t talk about you like Sydnee does! I know you do work.

Sydnee: [laughs] He does—And he sits in an office alone, and there—The building is big enough and there are few enough employees there at any given time that like—

Raleigh: I think the entire business literally has less than ten employees, but they all work... Several, probably 50-100 feet away from each other. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. They are all more than six feet apart at all times, so I—While

I would prefer everyone to be in their homes at all times right now, I am comfortable... With this—[laughs] With the—

Raleigh: [smacks lips to make the yum-yum sound] There was one last drop, in there.

Sydnee: [laughs] Degree of risk, I guess. Uh...

Raleigh: [laughing] Sorry, there was one...

Sydnee: Is everybody—I hope everybody out there is doing okay.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: I decided to be productive with my free time last night. Yesterday, all of yesterday, actually, and I Konmari'd my entire clothing—

Sydnee: Nice!

Raleigh: S-S-Supply? Um...

Sydnee: [laughs] "Clothing supply."

Raleigh: [laughs] I guess? I don't know. I dumped out everything in my closet, my drawers.

Sydnee: Wardrobe?

Raleigh: Everything I brought back from college, everything in storage... Put it all in one pile on the floor, I touched everything... Decided what brought me joy and what didn't.

Taylor: [laughing] "I touched everything!"

Raleigh: I did! I touched every single item. And uh, I ended up getting rid of about half of it. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughing] In the age of COVID, bragging that you touched everything—

Taylor: Yeah! Definitely.

Sydnee: Is never—[laughs]

Raleigh: [laughing] Well who else—Who else is gonna touch them? They're my clothes!

Sydnee: I'm just saying! Like, the—

Raleigh: If we're gonna—I'm going to wash everything that I'm getting rid of.

Sydnee: The only thing worse—The only thing worse was "I touched everything, and then I touched my face!" [laughs]

Raleigh: It was *my* clothes!

Taylor: "I touched everything to my face!"

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Oh my gosh...

Sydnee: "And then I touched my friends and family, and then my face again!" [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I'm trying to talk about some things that are not pandemic-related, and every time, Sydnee just has to bring it right back to this global crisis.

Sydnee: Everything is pandemic related, right now!

Raleigh: Who—Who else has touched my clothes? That have been in my closet for six years?

Sydnee: Okay. Hey, listen... I—Mom, cause she takes them! [laughs]

Raleigh: Okay then, it's just me and mom! And I live with her!

Sydnee: [laughing] I'm joking.

Raleigh: I have touched all my clothes, and I am proud of it, because that is what Mari Kondo told me to do.

Sydnee: I have tried to keep track of a high point and a low point of each day... During—

Taylor: Oh, that's nice.

Sydnee: During this quarantine period, because—I took a walk with Charlie and Cooper yesterday.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Charlie had to, for her virtual assignment for her class. They meet—They meet on Zoom, every morning. It's adorable.

Raleigh: That's very cute.

Sydnee: And they had to take a walk and observe shapes. And so we took a walk, and we took pictures of different shapes and then she drew the shapes and we talked about the different shapes. I tried to go past like, circle square, triangle, into like "There's a cylinder, there's a sphere—"

Raleigh: Whoa! That's three-dimensional!

Taylor: Yo! Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. We—We tried to go into that—That “There’s a cone.” Um—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] “Cone!” She’s a big fan of cone.

Taylor: I don’t know why that one was funny! Yeah, cones are funny.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Cones are funny! [laughs]

Taylor: I haven’t had human contact for a while! “Cones—Uh, that’s cool. I’ll dwell on that for a while!”

Raleigh: Are you guys okay?

Sydnee: [laughs] I always think of that part from *The Wedding Singer* when he says “They were cones!”

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Anyway... Uh—[laughs] That was my high point.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: It was—

Raleigh: The cones!

Sydnee: It’s a pretty decent movie. But uh, that was a high point of my day, and then the low point was I—I had the—I was kind of... Taking care of the girls on my own, cause Justin had a really busy schedule yesterday, from here. From home. And I was picking up after them constantly, and I picked up a pizza crust off the carpet that one of them had dropped there, and I was hungry and I thought “Well, I’ll take a little nibble...”

Raleigh: You didn't... Sydnee!!

Sydnee: "I'll take a little nibble of this pizza—"

Raleigh: No!

Sydnee: It was from—I mean, I knew like, it was recent. It was a recently dropped pizza crust—

Raleigh: You don't get to say a word to me about touching all of my clothes!

Sydnee: So—I—[laughs]

Taylor: Yeah! Yeah! [laughs]

Sydnee: I said—I go to take a bite, and as—Right as I start to put it on my—Like, to my mouth, I look and it's also covered in rainbow sprinkles, inexplicably—[laughs] So that was my low point, was taking a bite of rainbow sprinkle covered...

Taylor: I don't think that—

Sydnee: Ol pizza crust off the floor.

Taylor: I like that the offensive part to you was the rainbow sprinkles.

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Not the fact that it was *on the floor*.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And you used—

Raleigh: And it was old pizza crust.

Sydnee: Hey, listen. When you have little kids, you eat a lot of stuff off the floor.

Taylor: Look—

Sydnee: It's just the way it—[laughs]

Taylor: I eat a lot of stuff off the floor, and I don't have kids, like—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like that's fine, but like—

Raleigh: I also do.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: You're a doctor. You need to be better than me! [laughs]

Sydnee: I know. Well, I mean, it—Like I said, it had been recently dropped, and...

Taylor: Recently—You're not defining a time period.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: It's pizza—

Taylor: That's not how the five second rule works! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's also pizza crust. Kids are crazy, in that they don't like pizza crust. My kids will not eat the crust and the crust is the best part.

Raleigh: That's not true.

Taylor: Hey—

Sydnee: Yes it is.

Taylor: I would agree—I—Hmm...

Raleigh: The whole—

Taylor: I would agree.

Sydnee: I love the crusts...

Raleigh: That it's the best part?

Taylor: Well, I like the little bit right up to the crust, you know? That—That back part—

Raleigh: Yeah! That still has a little bit of sauce and cheese on it?

Taylor: That—Yeah! When you get a crust that has a little bit of—

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: The pizza bit, to it. That's—

Raleigh: That's—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's exactly it. And then you can kinda roll it?

Taylor: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: No, I—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [crosstalk] The little crusts—

Raleigh: I like the pizza part of the pizza.

Sydnee: Yup!

Raleigh: That has the pizza on it.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughing still] Well... To each their own, I suppose.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: But any time you try to mention anything to me about things I have touched, I will bring up the fact that you have eaten... Rainbow-sprinkled pizza crust off the floor.

Sydnee: That's fair. That's fair. That's fair—There's nobody—No one comes here. There's no—We just stay here, now. This is where we live.

Raleigh: No one comes in my house, either. It's—It's just me and mom and dad. All the time.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: All the time! [laughs]

Raleigh: It's—It's a lot, guys! [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, mom and dad, I know you listen to our show, so I just want to say: you're so lucky, Raleigh. I wish it could just be me—

Raleigh: Oh my gosh, Sydnee!

Taylor: Oh my—I'm up here, on my own with just a couple cats, and yeah—The—The love of your parents...

Sydnee: Aren't you so jealous of her, right now?

Taylor: Yeah. Boy...

Sydnee: Oh... Were that I could switch places...

Raleigh: You all—Man...

Sydnee: With you.

Raleigh: Man...

Taylor: Were that I could!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Anyways! [laughs]

Sydnee: So what was our assignment, this week? [laughing]

Raleigh: We're *not* talking about you all kissing our parent's butts!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: We're talking about—

Taylor: I think that's not very good, in the days of COVID, either! [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No, do not do that!

Taylor: No butt kissing.

Sydnee: No butt kissing!

Raleigh: It was a—[stammers, then sighs]

Sydnee: Unless they're in your—I guess, infectious co—In your isolation pod. [laughs]

Taylor: [crosstalk]

Raleigh: Uh—Uh—I--Okay. Um... Anyways, we're talking about Taylor Swift! [laughs] Um, I told you all to watch the uh, *Miss Americana* documentary on Netflix about Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: And I want to know—

Sydnee: And I did. I completed the assignment.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: It just came out this year. It premiered at Sundance.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Raleigh: And it just came out on Netflix this year. Um, it's all about her—It's more recent, I mean it's all about her writing her most recent album, and all of the... The stuff that has happened with her leaving her previous record company, and... All of that stuff, so... I want to know your initial thoughts.

Sydnee: Tey, would you like to go first?

Taylor: Uh, yeah. I really didn't know what I was—How I was gonna feel about it. I'll be honest, like I don't have anything against Taylor Swift?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: Her music is definitely catchy, it's not necessarily my kind of music? So I didn't, like... Have strong feelings going in? But I was surprised by how much I related to it and felt for her?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: Uh, like... I thought it was—It was very eye-opening and—And very well done, and gave a lot of... Uh... I don't know, like, reality, to Taylor Swift, for me. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Which was weird!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: I would agree. I—I actually have to say, I was a little skeptical going in.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydney: Because I thought like... I mean A—Again, I feel the same way you do about her music, Tey. I don't... It was never exactly my thing. I don't dislike it, certainly, and there are some of the songs—Especially since Charlie really likes some of her music.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydney: That—I mean, they're good songs, they're good—Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's good music. I enjoy—I enjoy listening to it, but like I haven't sought it out, you know?

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: I don't—I don't have the songs, like, in my library, um... Except for probably one that Charlie downloaded. But uh, I—

Raleigh: Charlie really likes "Shake It Off".

Sydnee: She loves—Well, she loves "Shake It Off", there's also like a weird video, where they do like a Disney "Shake It Off"?

Raleigh: That's her favorite.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, but she still does love the original "Shake It Off", and she loves "Me".

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: She wants the dress at the end of "Me", that's actually C—

Raleigh: The butterfly dress?

Sydnee: No, the CGI paint dress.

Raleigh: Oh! Okay. That's not real.

Sydnee: But she—That's not real.

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: That's the one she wants.

Raleigh: Okay! [laughing] Yeah.

Sydnee: Obviously, she wants the one that doesn't exist in real life!
[laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So, easy for me.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But uh, I was impressed by, having like... I—I don't want to say low expectations, but thinking like "Well, this is probably not really made for me."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: How—How much I did connect with the things that she said, and with kind of, her challenges, and how it did humanize her a lot more for me, and—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Um... I would say like I'm more of a fan, than I was before?
[laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I think that's good. I mean, I—Okay, so I grew up with Taylor Swift. Like, when she was releasing her first album when she was only like 16, 15, I was in... Probably 5th grade. I was like 10 years old, going into middle school. And she was still doing country music, but I was still surrounded, you may know, by a lot of friends here that also liked country music, so I did like country music for a while and Taylor Swift was my favorite country artist. Who's—

Sydnee: You liked LeAnn Rimes too, didn't you?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Sydnee: Yeah, I remember that.

Raleigh: So—I mean—Her music wasn't like... It was still kind of pop-country. But it—She was young, and she was a female and she was making really good music, and it was very kind of relatable, to like the teen angst-y, like, experiences of like, the first guy you have a crush on, and your first heartbreak, and losing a best friend, and getting a new best friend. Like—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: All that kind of—All that kind of stuff, you know? That—That happens when you're—

Sydnee: Is that all one s—

Raleigh: Middle school—

Sydnee: Wait, was that one song, where you lose your best friend and you get a new best friend, or are those two separate—Was that like part one and part two?

Raleigh: I think they're two separate songs—

[Sydnee and Teylor both laugh]

Raleigh: The ones I'm thinking of. It's not just one song! [laughs] Um... But I kind of fell out with Taylor Swift—We had a little—I'm just kidding. We didn't have a falling out, but—

Teylor: Oh no! Did you get some "Bad Blood"?

Raleigh: [laughing]

Sydnee: You too?

Taylor: Is that song about you? Oh no! [laughing]

Rileigh: No—[laughs] It's about me, okay that's—Okay guys, listen.

Sydnee: Hold up, are you Katy Perry? [laughs]

Rileigh: Yes!

Taylor: All along!

Rileigh: I'm sorry! [laughs] I didn't know it was gonna come out this way, um—

Sydnee: [laughing]

Rileigh: No, I kind of stopped listening to her music for a while, because she transitioned from the country music I had grown up with, that was her first like two or three albums that is till listen to, to this day. Like all of her original hits, are—Like my entire throwback playlist, are just those.

Sydnee: Country?

Rileigh: Yeah. I still love them.

Sydnee: You still listen to country music?

Rileigh: Just those. I don't listen to any other country music except for those Taylor Swift songs.

Sydnee: I'm fascinated by this.

Rileigh: And I love them. Because like, they're—They're that... It's the kind of music—I don't know. I'm sure you all have bands like this—That you listened to a lot when you were growing up, and even if they're not kind of

the music you would listen to now, it's just, you have memories associated with them and you remember, like, watching the artist and looking up to the artist. Just like, I love these songs because I've known them for probably a decade.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I guess—I guess that's true. I guess that's true—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I'm trying—[sighs] Maybe my taste in music hasn't evolved as much, over the years, is what I'm learning...

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: But carry on! [laughs]

Raleigh: I mean... I—I still listen to like old Miley Cyrus that was Hannah Montana, or like old Jonas Brothers, or whatever, like—

Sydnee: How did you—how do you have these—This is a side-note, but how—What format are you listening—Are they like—Did you re-download these songs—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Sydnee: Like did you're—You're seeking them out fresh?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: I mean, when I downloaded them the first time, I didn't have an iPhone.

Sydnee: Right.

Rileigh: They were like... Actually, I had the CDs of all of them. So—

Sydnee: Cause I—Well, see. Then I don't know. Yeah. I mean I—Yeah.

Rileigh: Uh, that was the uh—Taylor Swift's album *Fearless*, was the first one I ever kept in mom's car, was the CD? And it had the little booklet in it that had all the lyrics--

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: To all the songs. So I would always tell mom to put it in whenever she'd like pick me up from school, and I would pull out that little booklet and sing along until I knew all of the lyrics. Um... That's one of the last and first memories I have with a CD, but—[laughs]

Sydnee: I guess--I guess that can happen. I guess that if Spin Doctors came on, I would leave it on.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: So... Does that—Is that analogous? [laughs]

Rileigh: Sure! Yeah. Um... But then she—She transitioned, she changed her record label to pop, and that is what she started making, and I guess I just didn't... It felt very different. It's like when... Celebrities make a transition, and then everyone kinda does that gross toxic thing, it's like "No, I want the *old* one back! I want the *old* Taylor Swift!"

Taylor: Ah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: It's like, no. They're evolving because they're a person. They're not just there to like, create entertainment for you. They're evolving because they want to. And um... I stopped listening to her for a few years, and then she came out with her most recent album *Lover*, and left her

record label, and... Those awful people kept her music, so now she doesn't own any of her old music, but now she owns all of this music, now, and uh...

Sydnee: Were you not into *Reputation*?

Rileigh: I wasn't. I actually hadn't listened to any of it, when it came out because it was when Taylor Swift was going through all of that very—the various dramas, with like... Katy Perry, with Kanye, all that stuff. Um... I don't know. It just didn't really interest me, I guess. I tried to listen to a few, and it just wasn't my... My style. But then I listened to... Well, *1989* and *Red* came out before that, and those were pop.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Rileigh: I did listen to those, but *Reputation*—

Sydnee: Cause—

Rileigh: Was kinda where I—I stopped.

Sydnee: Charlie became obsessed with “Look What You Made Me Do”, so—

Rileigh: She did!

Sydnee: I have listened to that, and seen that music video...

Rileigh: And I have listened to that and seen that music video many times.

Sydnee: Many times. Yeah. [laughs]

Rileigh: Um, but the rest of the songs—

Sydnee: You—

Rileigh: The—The less popular ones, I have not...

Sydnee: I would highly recommend, uh, if you have the opportunity to ever hear this—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] The Charlie McElroy version of “Look What You Made Me Do”—

Raleigh: It is very good! [laughs]

Sydnee: Except for, um, she would run out of the room during the part of the music video when she says, uh “Taylor can’t come to the phone right now. Why? Because she’s dead.”

Raleigh: “Because she’s dead.” Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs] She would run out of the room because that was too scary for her.

Raleigh: Yeah. Right.

Taylor: I don’t—I don’t like that line, like, abstractly! [laughs] Just...

Raleigh: “Old Taylor is dead!”

Taylor: From... One Taylor to another! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah, do you feel like it’s a personal attack to you, Teylor? [laughs]

Taylor: Hey now—Hey now, T-Swift! [laughing]

Raleigh: I’m fine, I’m right here! [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughing]

Taylor: The old—The old Taylor is still right here!

Raleigh: Yeah! [laughs] Um... So yeah, recently she came out with *Lover*, and it is a very good album. It's her first album that she—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Raleigh: Owns entirely, I'm pretty sure. And—I mean, since she was—I should clarify, since she has started making music, she has written all of her music.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: She has other writers, but they have all been her songs.

Sydnee: It—It is—That is a cool—So there's a lot in the documentary, if you're not—If you haven't seen it. Like, scenes of her, working on her new album—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And it is really neat, just to see that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I like that process. They had that—That reality show, for a while, that was like that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Where they would have people come on, and like... Play a song they had written, and then they would have like a famous recording artist, and producers and people work with them, to like turn it into something that—

Raleigh: I remember that.

Sydnee: Whoever the famous person is—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Could then—

Raleigh: Perform, yeah.

Sydnee: Perform. Um, and watching people like, work songs out and like find the parts that really work—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: And like, build on those, to the rest of it? Is really fascinating.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And so I really enjoyed those parts.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And you can tell, I mean... Whatever you think of her music personally, like your tastes...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: She's obviously very musically talented.

Raleigh: Oh yeah!

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean... Her ability to take—To find the hook...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: Is very impressive.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Cause when—When you see her, like developing these songs, she starts with a hook.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Like, she knows... The thing...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then she builds the song around it, and it—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They're very personal, and I—I was very impressed with all that.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: Especially when you know the songs that end up coming out of it? And you can see the changes she made, and like how much of it even has stayed the same? Which was... I think most shocking to me, because to me, songwriting seems like a process—I have never written any music—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Raleigh: But it seems like a process that you would go through a lot of like... Trial and error. Like, starting with something that doesn't work, so you gotta start over? But when she was writing her songs, pretty much everything she started with ended up staying in the song.

Sydnee: We assume.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: We assume.

Sydnee: I—I don't know—[laughs]

Raleigh: I don't know if these drafts were like the very, very first ones that we've seen.

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: But, a lot of the first times she was singing through these songs, now the final versions you can hear are every similar.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: Yeah, I—

Raleigh: So, I mean—

Sydnee: I enjoyed all those—All those bits.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And I like how commanding of a role she took in those... Parts, too.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: Like, she was always working with a producer, uh, you know. Somebody who, I'm assuming, is older, maybe more experienced than her, and she definitely was like—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: “Nope, this is what—Let’s go this direction. Like, let’s do this.”

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, I’m sure she had to fight for that ability, starting so young. Like—you know.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: We’re seeing her produce an album now, on the cusp of 30, and started, what? At 16, or something like that?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: So I—I imagine that probably was a hard-fought ability to like, you know... Be opinionated, and—And be clear about what you want. But she definitely can do that now.

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: And that’s—That’s hard to do! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, and you can see... The—She talks about, in the very beginning, that she always... Like, her defining thing was she wanted to be... She doesn’t just say “good”. She says “A good girl.”

Taylor: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Which I feel like is such a loaded concept.

Taylor: Uh-huh. [agreement]

Sydnee: It's—It's so much bigger than just those words.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: Um, that she always wanted to be a good girl. And I—I felt like that... Resonated with me...

Raleigh: Sorry, Sydnee has a ghost, in her studio. Door just opened.

Sydnee: Sorry, the door just opened up. Okay...

Raleigh: [laughs] There's no one in here, right?

Taylor: Uh-oh....

Sydnee: Uh...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Anyway. The—The ghost of the patriarchy is coming in to haunt me.

Raleigh: Yeah! [laughs]

Taylor: [laughing]

Raleigh: As we're talking about Taylor Swift!

Taylor: Uh-oh!

Sydnee: As I—As I dissect the concept of "a good girl". [laughs] But, I—I felt like that... That was so powerful...Like—And I—I mean, as an adult, these are things I've already kind of thought through.

Taylor: In a way.

Sydnee: I've—I've had this revelation. But if you're a young person watching this, to see somebody that successful talk about like... Because I started so young, and because when you're that age, so much of your success is tied up with the adults around you—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: And like wanting to make them happy, and proud, and please others... And that all—Like, eventually that becomes who you are

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: That is your entire identity, is someone whose job it is to make others happy and proud, and pleased with you. And if at any point you... You fail in that goal, even if it's just one Twitter troll—

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, then you have—Your entire identity crumbles.

Raleigh: Yup.

Sydnee: You failed, as a human. I mean that's... Oof.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You feel that. Like, you feel her...

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: Stress, in that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and I—I think it's because... Women with power are culturally, like that's—You're evil, you're conniving, you're wicked. You did something to get that! So I feel like when you're a woman with power, you have to bend over backwards to be like "I'm still nice! I'm still pleasant! Look how—" Like, I think of like Anne Hathaway, like maybe a decade ago, you know?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Versus Anne Hathaway now?

Raleigh: Mmm.

Taylor: Which I... I feel like she's very—Come in her own! [laughs] But it's like—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I bet she just like had to be so, like, sweet and then just like "Oh, I can't believe this! Oh, I'm so shocked, I'm so humble! I can't—I'm—I'm garbage? How did I win anything?" It's like no! You're amazingly talented! Own it, like—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: But you kind of have to go through that breaking point, of just being like oh, it—I'm never gonna be good enough, am I? Okay then I'm just gonna be whatever. [laughs]

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Yeah, I think—I think we're very trained to do that, to downplay our own successes, and to be hypercritical, and—Then like, give other people credit for when we do something well.

Raleigh: Mmm.

Sydnee: And you—I will say, even though she talks about, towards the end, that like... Uh, she says that like... There's a saying about famous people, that they remain forever the same age—

Taylor: Uh-huh.

Sydnee: That they were when they became famous?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: And that it's taken her a lot of work to get to 29, like—[laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sydnee: To catch up with the age that she actually is? Uh... I would say that she still, like—You still see those insecurities—

Raleigh: Oh, yeah.

Sydnee: Because she's watching—She's watching the like, playback of the video they're filming for "Me"?

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And she's... So mean to herself! [laughs]

Taylor: Uh, well—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: She's so hypercritical of herself!

Raleigh: That's her only criticism of the video, at any point—When they show it—

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Is, while they're filming it, is how she looks. And what she's doing.

Sydnee: She—She says "Look at my face! It's a very slap-able face."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: You could just see how deeply, I think, all of the hate she's gotten has—Has seeped under her skin, because—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: She views her work, as if she's viewing it the way that all of her haters will. Like, that—That—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Part was really troubling, to me, cause it was clear—It's like, this is what people are gonna say about me, so I'm gonna say it first. And I get that—[laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Yes—

Taylor: But—But also, it's like, ah... That—That's hard to see, play out.

Raleigh: And you know that those have to be things that, maybe not to that extent, but that directors and producers have said to her, before. Like, "No, you don't look right in this. You have to do this better, or this doesn't sound right, and this is how you need to dress, and this is how you need to present yourself." Like... Those have to be things that she's learned—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rileigh: From the men that... She worked for.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: And that owned her, and her music, and her rights to do pretty much anything. Which, she talks a little bit about, like the—The... Uh, ease at which you can sign a really bad record deal when you're young, and you're— You know, a female, and you want to get into music or entertainment, or whatever... And you just want someone to like your music, so you sign this deal, not knowing what it means, and then you end up with someone controlling you and owning everything you've created, basically.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rileigh: Which I think is really... Interesting to see, because I feel like that's the kind of thing that you... Just figure, happens in Hollywood, but you don't really see it happening?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Because most people are just like "Yeah, I just want to be famous, so... Whatever."

Taylor: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rileigh: But she's very much like "I did, but also now... I'm an adult, and I want my stuff I've made."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: "And I just want to do this for me. This isn't... To be, like, a famous teenager, anymore."

Sydnee: Well, and she... She clearly still—I mean, it's—It's really interesting. It's a really well made film, because uh, it's not, um... It... It's her viewpoint, obviously.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: I mean, you get plenty from her perspective.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: But there is another eye, on the film. There is a—There is an observer on the film who is helping flesh out that story, and tell the whole story, because at the same time that she's getting control over her life, she has a conversation, when she's eating burritos—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs] About how she... She can't really make plans for the future, yet—

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Because the next two years of her life are planned out—

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: So she can't just say like "Well maybe that'll happen, or maybe this, or maybe I could get married and have kids" or whatever.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: She wants to do, because... And it's very external.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: "The next two years of my life are—Will be planned for me."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And—And like, those things contradict her kind of assertions—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: Of like self con—Of like, control over her own life—It's a very fascinating—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Thing to see play out, cause even though she definitely has much more freedom than she used to, I—Well, I mean, I think we have to assume—

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Based on her—Her narrative, her story... There are still aspects of her life that are so controlled, that she... She—And she's so used to it—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: She don't even see it, you know?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. Well—

Raleigh: I mean that has to be how her life has been planned out, since she started making music.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: You know? You make an album, you spent all this time writing it, producing it, you record it, you release it, then you play it on tour. You go on tour—Okay, you're back from tour. Well, it's time to start all over. You start writing—

Sydnee: Next album—Yeah.

Raleigh: I mean, that has to be... You know two year sections of her life, planned out, into “That’s when I started writing *Fearless*, and that’s when I went on tour. That’s why I started writing *Red*, that’s when I went on tour...”

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Like that’s...

Taylor: Yeah...

Raleigh: Her whole life.

Taylor: Well, and I—

Sydnee: Um...

Taylor: I found it—When she was talking about how uh, you know, seeing pictures of herself online, she tries not to look as much and uh...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: I guess I should say “trigger-warning”, she talks about... Starving herself. I mean, she’s—She’s talking about—She’s verbalizing an eating disorder, but even her discomfort in saying that...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, you know? I—It’s that way you talk about it when you’re not quite ready to say, like “I have an eating disorder, and it’s-it’s—”

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: “Part of my life.” Like, she’s still kind of like “Uh, I did a bad thing

sometimes, where I wouldn't eat" and "Oh, that was bad", but it's still like, good-and-bad, you know? It's like "I did a bad thing. I would do a bad thing."

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: And it's—That part was like—I—Kind of going to what you were saying, Syd, where it's like, yeah she's coming into her power, she's coming into her abilities, but it's also revealing like she still has a lot to work through, from what she's had to live through.

Sydney: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: Uh, which is weird to say, seeing as she's you know, a pop starlet and a millionaire, but like that's still—Trauma is trauma.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: Yeah, and you—I—I found... I had—I always wonder about that, when people—When young people are kind of thrust into the spotlight—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydney: And have to grow up that way, and be criticized constantly. And I think it can be worse, if you're a woman. I think that's fair to say. Like, with physical appearance.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydney: Um... I always wonder, like, what does that do to your—To your body image and your relationship with your body, and with food and all that kind of stuff. And I—I think because of my own history, I always wonder that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: And so I can't say I was shocked, when she started to talk about

that. But I agree with you Tey... It wasn't... It wasn't an acceptance of like "I have disordered eating, and it is something that, you know. I'm working through." It was—It still felt very external—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um... And that's—But I mean I can't imagine what that's—That she—she wears those outfits—Which they—they show her being put in that disco ball, the melted-down-disco-ball she calls it, outfit?

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sydnee: And she's very uncomfortable. Like, she says that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Um... And everyone around her is saying "You look so beautiful! Oh my gosh, she looks so beautiful! Oh my gosh she looks so amazing!" And all she's talking about is how uncomfortable she feels in it—

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: And I feel like that was a very revealing moment, cause in between when she's writing songs and stuff—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I believe—I believe she's dressed as what we would call a "VSCO girl".

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: The giant shirts?

Taylor: Yup!

Raleigh: Hoodies and shirts, and leggings and scrunchies and—yeah.

Taylor: She looks so comfy!

Sydnee: Yes! Extremely comfortable—

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: Very comfortable.

Raleigh: Yes!

Sydnee: Extremely comfortable. Hyper-comfortable.

Raleigh: Like, to the point where I'm like "Man, I want to dress like that. That looks very comfy."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yes. I would wear the clothes that Taylor Swift wears when she is *making* music, but not the clothes she wears when she is—

Raleigh: Performing music—

Sydnee: Performing music.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because, much like she says in the movie, I would be very uncomfortable. [laughs]

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: There's—Like, I hope—I hope there's an evolution of Taylor Swift where she's just out on stage, in her big ol cat sweater, with her guitar and her hair—[laughs] In a pony.

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: It's like, yeah! This is me! I write this music, you love it—This is what you get!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement] And if she wants to wear the sparkle jumpsuits, she can.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: I'm not saying you can't, but the—

Raleigh: She was obviously stating she was uncomfortable in something, that everyone was like "No, wear it! You look great!"

Sydnee: Yes! That was the only moment we get like any insight into how she feels about it, she's telling us she's uncomfortable.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um... I just—I—I can't—They showed a lot of back and forth between when he was young, and people criticizing her for looking too thin and too small, and now that she's older, she said, "You know, I finally feel like I've gotten healthy, and I've maybe finally developed this healthy relationship with food."

Still, you know, has moments where she definitely does not, but... She's gained weight and she says she feels better about herself, and she feels healthy. And then there's all the comments and clips of people talking about how she looks overweight now, she looks like she's let herself go—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: She looks different in her stage outfits, than she did when she was 16. Which, like... Yeah!

Sydnee: I mean, yeah, I would hope so! That's—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: You're on stage in—in a dress when you're 16, obviously you're gonna look different then when you're a 29 year old woman!

Sydnee: Yeah!

Raleigh: Like that's just—That's what your body does!

Sydnee: I—I have thought about that a lot, because there's a lot of rhetoric around—And this is... Different, but related. There's always a lot of rhetoric around after you have a baby—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: That you want to get back to your pre-baby body?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: [pauses] This is the body that gave birth.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't wanna go back to the body that didn't give birth, cause now I have a body that gave birth and I got kids from it. I'm very proud of that. I have no need to make my body—

Raleigh: The body before birth did not have kids!

Sydnee: Yeah!

Raleigh: Now you have kids.

Sydnee: This—This is my body now—I don't need to make it what it was be—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: It—It has learned and grown and changed in ways that reflect life experiences, and I embrace it with all of it's stretch marks and sags and wrinkles, and... That's the same at all ages.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Your body leveled-up. It evolved. It's like a Pokémon! You—You know—[laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Don't tell it to go back! Hell no, you were—Well, some people do. You were cute, when you were—When you were a little bulbasaur—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And eh, I like you now—[laughs]

Sydnee: [laughing] Exactly!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's what it feels like! Like, obviously she doesn't look like she did when she was 16, uh... None of us do!

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: I mean, unless you're still 16, in which case...

Raleigh: You do.

Sydnee: You do! [laughs]

Raleigh: Because you're 16. Um... I think another important aspect of Taylor Swift's career, and this movie is her many relationships, and the various romantic relationships, she has had. Because that's always been a thing that I've seen... Growing up, that people criticize her for, that I never really understood? But I also just like kind of accepted was a thing that happened to woman in media? Was how many men she had dated.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And criticizing, like, "Wow, she just—She broke up with... Harry Styles last week, and now she's dating John Mayer!" Like... She's had many relationships, which is normal, for people to date different people, if they want to. To go on lots of dates, to have different relationships, to not spend as long as another person recovering from a relationship, and wanting to date someone else, or just spend time platonically—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: With a friend of the gender that you would also date romantically, and people assume that's a romantic relationship. But... That was always a thing people talked badly about her for, was—Was how many people she dated... And um... To the point where now she's in a long term relationship with someone, who she has barely been photographed with, who she barely talks about in interviews—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And... Just writes music about, because she doesn't want to be criticized if anything were to happen!

Taylor: Mmm.

Sydnee: Yeah, that... Uh, and unfortunately I think that's fairly common.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because not only is it tolerated... If you are a man.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: It's celebrated, often.

Raleigh: Expected. Yeah.

Sydnee: Like... You know. If you're—If you're a man in—Especially if you're famous and attractive.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Like, Taylor Swift is famous and attractive, and you date a bunch of people who are also attractive and maybe also famous.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: [pauses] It—If you're a man, that's like "Whoa!"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, that's so cool.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You're—You're a playboy. Like, that's what you are! But... Not Taylor Swift.

Raleigh: What she says, in her song "The Man", she says you now, if I were a man, they'd say I played the field, before I found someone to commit to, and that would be okay... And I'd be like... Leonardo Dicaprio, is who she calls out.

Taylor: Right?

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: But like, she says that. She's like if I were a man, and I dated a bunch of attractive women... Everyone would be like "Yeah! Cool! And now you've settled down and you're getting married."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: "Cool!"

Taylor: Well—

Raleigh: But she's not.

Taylor: No, she gets—And it's not even like—It's like the read that she gets from that, is she can't make anybody stay. Like, "Oh, she must be crazy."

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: "Like, nobody wants to stay with her." It's like, oh no. It's not that she's just having fun, like, having relationships—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: And learning about herself—No no no! She must—She must be broken, somehow, cause she can't make a man stay.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Well... And who... That's a wild thing too, because like if you consider she started her career when she was 15 or 16... Tay—Like, let's take away all of the fame, and talent, and all that, and she's just a normal teenager, and she dates a guy, and then they break up... Would you say "Why couldn't you make him stay?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: Like, that would be a wild thing to say to a—like a 16 or 17 year old, right?

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: Like, you would never say that. And—I mean, even the same, when you're, you know, in your early twenties.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: I mean like, who's looking at a 20 year old and going "I can't believe that person you dated, you didn't marry."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like—Obviously, everybody you date when you're 20, you marry. [sarcasm]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: What's wrong with you, like—Well no! I mean the... For most of us, the average age of marriage is getting older. People are waiting longer.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They—It's expected they'll date more, or investigate more, if that's—You know, if you're somebody who likes to date—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: And wants a partner, of a romantic type. I—

Taylor: Well...

Sydnee: It's totally normal! It's all—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: Normal.

Taylor: But it goes into that—That same sort of "good-girl" stereotype, right? Like if you're—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: If you're a woman and you date around, either you're trying to find "the one" and you're just broken and you can't, or you're—you're a bad girl, because you're just—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: You're just sleeping around. Like there's two choices, so yeah—
[laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: There's—Neither are good!

Raleigh: And you—I mean... You have to imagine, if she released her first album when she was 16... She has had all of her serious relationships and all of her first relationships, since she has been under the public eye. So I can't even imagine, like, your first ever relationship, your first ever breakup...

Sydnee: Her—

Raleigh: Being, just—Everyone knows it, everyone sees it and everyone's saying that you did something wrong.

Sydnee: And everybody—And everybody has an opinion on it. It—That was one thing, as was watching—Justin was watching a little bit of it with me, and he said it makes him feel claustrophobic, because... If you start out and you're this kind of prodigy...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Which, she's pretty young, so I think you can make that case.

Raleigh: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: Kind of prodigy, in terms of like musical success and talent. And then you start making albums that... What did they say? Like her album— She tied The Beatles, with having the most—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Albums that stayed at number one for the longest, or whatever?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Sydnee: And then you're winning Grammys and all this, so you're the best.

So you hit a moment where you're the best. And you're that young. What do you do with the rest of your life?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like how do you—How do you rationalize that?

Raleigh: Right?

Sydnee: How do you process that? Because we all do well when we have goals.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: If your talent and your skillset have made you the best in your field—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: In your—You know. Your chosen pathway. If you've become the best, at that age... There's only one way to go. So either you continue to make the best music in world, for the rest of your life—

Raleigh: Which is impossible.

Sydnee: [laughs] Which is impossible.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or you're not the best anymore, and so now you're on the downfall.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And-And that, like psychologically, that has to just be...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I can't imagine what that would be like...

Raleigh: Yeah. Right.

Sydnee: Having never been the best podcaster—[laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Well I mean, I can—I can relate, you know, being the best most famous, teenage podcaster.

Taylor: Oh right.

Raleigh: To exist.

Sydnee: Uh-huh, uh-huh! [affirmative] Right. Yeah, sure.

Raleigh: Now I just feel like my whole career is just on a downward trajectory.

Sydnee: I—I am the best family doctor in the—[laughs] Not really.

Raleigh: I mean, you're probably, like, the best family doctor-podcaster.

Sydnee: I don't know. There are other family doctor podcasters? [laughs]

Raleigh: If you get—If you get your little categories—

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Small enough, everyone's the best at something.

Taylor: There you go!

Sydnee: That's true. I'll keep narrowing it down, till I get to be the best.

Raleigh: Um... Yeah!

Sydnee: I'm just the best Sydnee I can be. [laughs]

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: There you go! That's what matters. Uh... I think another one, and one of the last things they touch on... And one of the last things we'll touch on, cause it's a big part of the documentary, is her willingness to speak about important issues.

Sydnee: Political issues?

Raleigh: Like, politics.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Um, and elections. And... There's a very emotional scene, that I will say, I did kind of tear up a little bit, when she was fighting—I believe with her dad? And then like, her producer, or something?

Sydnee: Hmm.

Raleigh: Um, maybe PR director? About... Making a statement about one of the elections going on in Tennessee, where she's from.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Between this woman? Right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Raleigh: Who is—

Sydnee: A republican.

Rileigh: Republican, who is—

Sydnee: Marsha Blackburn.

Rileigh: Who has voted against many bills that would have supported women, would have supported LGBTQ people, would have supported minorities... And saying she wants people to vote for this other candidate, who is a democrat who...

Sydnee: Is more progressive.

Rileigh: Who wants to fix all these things.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: And is more progressive. And she's crying and arguing, and saying like I want to be able to do this. I've stayed silent about all of these things for too long... How am I gonna be up here singing this song, if it's about like "Yay women! Yay minorities! Yay the LGBTQ community! "But also like... I'm not gonna say anything about this election.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: That's going to hurt you, in my home state? Like that—And—And she's basically—I mean she's, what? 28, 29 years old at that point? And having to say, like "Dad, let me talk about politics!"

Sydnee: "Let me speak out about politics."

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: "Let me talk about something that's important to me." Because that's the first time in her career she ever has. She's always—She's said

she's always been expected to stay silent about those things, and smile and nod, and talk about her music... And that's it.

Taylor: Well I'm...

Raleigh: Like, that's what she's for.

Taylor: Yeah. And they bring up the Dixie Chicks, which were absolutely—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: I mean... Destroyed—[laughs] The origins of cancel culture is maybe the Dixie Chicks!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, their career—I mean... I—Their careers really fell apart, after that.

Raleigh: And their uh—I don't know if y'all know this, but they do a song with Taylor, on her new album.

Taylor: Oh!

Sydnee: Oh—

Raleigh: I don't know if they touch on that in the documentary, but she wrote a song about her mom, because her mom was diagnosed with cancer—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And she wrote a song about her mom, and the Dixie Chicks, uh, sing it with her.

Taylor: Aw!

Sydnee: Aw! That's nice.

Raleigh: On the album. It's very nice.

Sydnee: And, they're—They're back, right? Aren't they...

Raleigh: Yeah, right?

Sydnee: Didn't they make a new album or they're touring, or... Something.

Raleigh: Something?

Sydnee: They're back.

Raleigh: Um, yeah—

Sydnee: Never had a problem with the Dixie Chicks.

Raleigh: Yeah. But—I mean, it's—It's very evident that she's never been able to voice her opinions on things, and it's gotten her negative press, and negative commentary, for being this silent, just watching... You know. All of this stuff happen, and never saying how she feels about it. But the minute that she also says how she feels about it, as an educated adult woman, who has taken the time to read up on issues, and know how she feels, and try to do the best thing for the biggest amount of people—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm?

Raleigh: Is also criticized for saying how she feels. Which, I think anyone who has any sort of platform, and any social media has experienced that, you know? You say anything about politics, about current events, someone will disagree with you—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: But, just feeling like you can't when you're almost 30 years old,

and knowing that you've never spoken about those things... And to see that shift, from her saying "I just want to talk about this election" to writing songs on an album, that are entirely about politics.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: The song that the documentary's named after, "Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince"... They don't talk a lot about in the documentary, but is about the 2016 election and is about... Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. It is about democrats and republicans. And it's about her, for the first time in her life... Wanting to be a part of something, wanting to fight for something she believes in, and losing.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And comparing it to like this high school couple.

Sydnee: She—She does take in stride, I will say, too, the flack she got from... All the Fox news, talking heads.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And from the president.

Taylor: Right? [laughs]

Raleigh: From the president—She like—I think at one point, didn't she say—Like laugh about it?

Sydnee: Yeah!

Raleigh: And was like "Yeah! Donald Trump tweeted at me. Man!" [laughs] Like, she was—Excited about it!

Sydnee: Well that's—I mean, I think... You know, which was relatable, cause you know you're on the right side...

Raleigh: Right, yeah.

Sydnee: Of things, right now, if Donald Trump doesn't like you.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um... Yeah, I actually found—I found that moving, but the part at the end, where she's um, finding out that Marsha Blackburn... Won again?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or won? I guess not again. Won.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—I found that, um... Extremely relatable, and very moving.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Cause she was experiencing... I—I guess, because she wasn't as involved in 2016? She didn't have that moment then—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or at least she didn't talk about it, but the moment she's having when Marsha Blackburn wins, is, I think, the moment a lot of us had...

Raleigh: In 2016.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: In 2016, when Trump won. Where you're just like—You keep looking at your phone—She's looking at her phone, trying to see that something will be different, and it's not different.

Raleigh: And it's not—Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Sydnee: It is what it is, and you just can't process... That that is really...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: The world. That—You—You can see that on her face.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I found that a little heartbreaking.

Raleigh: And there was even another level to that, for me, that I feel like we could all relate to, the three of us. Um... Anyone else from somewhere, like Appalachia, where she was talking about, you know...Yes, I live in Hollywood now and I make music, but I'm from Tennessee, and that's where I'm from, and I don't want people thinking of Tennessee as this...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Hateful... You know... Not-progressive state, that elects people who are hateful, not-progressive people. And I feel like that's very relatable for people like us, that come from... Somewhere like West Virginia, who people—A lot of people from not-here see as a place where we elect... Hateful, not-progressive people...

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: And that's what we're full of. And she wants to use her platform to show, like "That's not what Tennessee is, that's not the Tennessee I know..." And then, you know.

Sydnee: And that undercuts it, yeah.

Raleigh: And to do all that... Yeah. And to lose again, is... I can't imagine that being your first moment speaking out. But, it did talk about the number

of voters that were new, that were between the ages of like 18 and 24 that she had gotten to go register to vote—

Sydnee: That they assume, yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah... Since she announced like, her support for the other candidate—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Which I cannot remember their name. But, um... All the people that registered to vote, as soon as she shared that.

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: Which, is a good thing. Even if the person didn't win, just getting people to vote—

Sydnee: Yeah, of co—

Raleigh: And getting young people excited about politics... Is a good thing. So I have to imagine that was... Some sort of consolation.

Sydnee: MM-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: For her. Um...

Taylor: Well... And it's—Like, I think that, you know, transition for her that you kind of see is maybe what—What it's getting at, is like, as entertainers, you all kind of—You know, we all kind of learn that there's the—the version of us that people are... Showing up to see? There's, you know, the stuff that they like about us, but it's never your whole—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: Person, it's just, this is your act. And it—

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: When you're act becomes a big enough part of your life—When its everything you do and everything you wake up and do, it's gotta be all of you. At some point, you can't—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You can't keep hacking off parts of you, and hiding them away, because when it takes over your life, it's like "You gotta see all of me." And I think that's kind of—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: You know... Her being able to be open about her opinions and herself, it's like her career is her entire life, so she's gotta be—

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Allowed to exist fully in it, which... You know, is—Is... A good evolution, for—For T-Swift. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. Um—

Sydnee: And similar to the plot of *Frozen 2*.

Raleigh: Exactly.

Taylor: Oh, is that—[laughs]

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Precisely. Exactly what I was thinking.

Taylor: Well—[laughs] And I really—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I had “Show Yourself” going on in my head, as—as you were talking, Tey.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: Oh—That’s—That’s what it’s about. It’s—It’s actually, uh... It’s uh...

Sydnee: [laughs] It’s actually about Taylor Swift.

Taylor: It’s about Taylor Swift.

Raleigh: [laughs] Yeah!

Taylor: Uh...

Sydnee: Didn’t see that coming!

Taylor: I was gonna say-okay. I-I did not, um—I didn’t get teary at any point, uh, during this, except for like at the very end, she has a line where she says that she—What’d she say? A sharp—A sharp pin, and then skin? Is how she wants to go forward?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

Taylor: And I thought that was—It was really, kind of a beautiful statement because I think that also, like you know, you always get the—The rhetoric like You gotta toughen up. You gotta get used to criticism. You gotta toughen up.” But when you’re an artist and a creative person, it’s like “Well...

The whole thing that I do, is I'm not tough. I'm sensitive. I'm emotional. I express my emotions, and I'm in touch with them."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: So the whole idea of "toughening up" and just learning to deal with it, and not letting it affect me, it's like everything affects me! That's why I'm an artist! And I think that that—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm—hmm. [agreement]

Taylor: You know, is kind of what she was saying with that line, it's like "Oh, it's gonna keep hurting, but I'm gonna keep dealing with it. "

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Which is so much more powerful than "I'm just gonna learn to be numb to other people's hatred towards me." [laughs]

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Yes. I agree.

Raleigh: Um... The last thing I will say, I will talk—I could talk about Taylor Swift forever.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um, her music, this—this movie, all of it. But... She was nominated and voted as artist of the decade—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: At the VMAs in—This year, for 2010-2020, um, for all of her music, and she wasn't going to be able to perform any of her songs from before this

album, because she doesn't own them anymore? Um... Which is a whole other thing, but she ended up wearing this... Outfit, at the very beginning— Which if you haven't watched the performance, you should because it's very great.

But it's a white oversized jacket that just has in big block letters, all the names of all of her albums. And she's up there singing "The Man", is how she starts, with a bunch of little girls surrounding her and helping her. And all wearing the same exact thing.

And then she goes into all these songs that's she's written, and all like, the progression of her career from the very beginning to the very end. It's just— It's beautiful. Because it's like—There's representation of "I was a little girl, I didn't know what I was doing, and here I am, and this is everything I've owned. This is my work. This is mine."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: "And this is who I am now." And it's—it's very good. I think it's a very good... Representation of how far she has come.

Sydnee: Well, I—I would say that, um... Even if you're not necessarily a big Taylor Swift fan, like—like myself—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And again, I was never an anti-fan.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: It's just—

Raleigh: It's not your—Not your thing.

Sydnee: No, but I—But I mean, some of her songs are—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Are great. I like "Me", a lot.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: We listen to that one a lot now. Uh, but... I would—I would say this is actually a really good... Film, in terms of what it's like to be a young girl in this country. And obviously, there are other parts about fame and stuff—

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: That are not... Broadly applicable, but like the pressure that you feel, as a young woman, especially—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: If like... You're trying to be successful and something, and the way that... I—I—It was very insightful.

Raleigh: It was.

Sydnee: It was very well done, as like a picture of a young woman, in—In the United states, I thought.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: There—There was—There were a lot of things said, there.

Raleigh: Yeah. Probably even more so for young girls now.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Raleigh: Younger than me. Because I didn't grow up with the Taylor Swift who was doing these kinds of things, I grew up with Taylor Swift who was silent, and did what men told her to do, and all that stuff, so...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: You know...

Sydnee: I thought—I thought it was a very interesting, thoughtful story.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Thank you.

Raleigh: Yeah. So, if you wanna watch *Miss Americana*, it's on Netflix. I highly recommend.

Sydnee: And if you, uh, know where I can buy a CGI dress—

Raleigh: [laughs] Paint dress—

Sydnee: That looks like paint—

Raleigh: Yes!

Sydnee: Spilling off of a human—[laughs] Uh, just uh tweet that at me—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Please, or something. [laughs] So that I can get it for my daughter.

Raleigh: Um... Thank you all for watching this with me, this week. Sydnee, what are we doing next week?

Sydnee: Uh, next week, we're... We're gonna do a—You talked about Leo, and if it was the end of the episode, it would've been a perfect segue.

Raleigh: Aw, I didn't even think about it!

Sydnee: But it's—It was—I—It was too early. Uh, I thought we should all watch or re-watch—In, I think, all of our cases—Uh the Leo—The Leonardo Dicaprio, Claire Danes *Romeo + Juliet*—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: By Baz Luherman. I believe it was 1996?

Taylor: Oh boy.

Raleigh: M'kay?

Sydnee: Was when it came out?

Raleigh: I have watched this before, I'm very excited.

Taylor: Yes, I like this movie.

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah, so—So let's talk about that. If you want a real treat, listen to the soundtrack too.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh man! I listened to that soundtrack so much.

Taylor: I love it so much.

Sydnee: Anyway—

Raleigh: I'm excited.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: So that's next week.

Taylor: Next week.

Sydnee: That's next week. Yup.

Raleigh: If you want to watch along with us.

Sydnee: Well, thank you both. Thank you, listeners. Uh, everybody... Keep hanging in there. If you're staying at home, you're doing great. If you're not staying at home, please go home right now. [laughs] Unless you have an essential job—

Raleigh: Yes,

Sydnee: In which case you can't, and I'm sorry. Then wash your hands a lot, decontaminate when you get home, and stay home as much as you can. We're all going to get through this. We're all going to be fine, if we just take care of each other and support each other, and stick up for each other, and... Um... I guess keep... I don't know—Does Taylor Swift have some words of wisdom right now?

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: Looking to you, Raleigh.

Raleigh: I—I don't know... Now all of her old songs are stuck in my head, and no, they're all just about boys.

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: They're very good, but I don't think they apply. To this situation.

Sydnee: Well, hey. If listening to songs about teenage breakups is what you need right now, that's okay too. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, you can tweet at us @stillbuff, you can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, and uh, thank you to maximumfun.org for

hosting our show, as well as many other wonderful podcasts. Hey, uh, we— We've talked about special things, uh, you both need to get your outfit of the day, your "oot-ta-doo"—

Taylor: Oh yes.

Raleigh: Yes.

Taylor: Alright. [laughs]

Sydnee: Out there, cause Charlie has already styled me once, and I have that picture—

Raleigh: I hate you—

Sydnee: And I have not put it on the internet yet, because it would have no context and be very confusing for everyone—

Raleigh: Now that I have organized all of my clothing...

Sydnee: Get—

Raleigh: Now I will be able to put together a good "oot-ta-doo".

Sydnee: Yeah, get—Get together your "oot-ta-doo's", put 'em out there, so then I can share the "oot-ta-doo" that Charlie—There's hair and makeup and the whole thing—

Taylor: Oh, wow! Alright!

Raleigh: Oh man...

Sydnee: So, I gotta put that on Twitter, but it—Without context, it will just look like I've... Like being in the house too long has really gotten to me.
[laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Alright. Well that—

Raleigh: Which maybe is also applicable.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I mean, yeah. That—That’s good though. I—I uh, I haven’t put on—I mean, I’ve been trying to put on human clothes, but doing the whole thing, I haven’t done that. Hair, makeup, that’s... I should remember how to do that..

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. I haven’t even put on real clothes. [laughs]

Taylor: Well... [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, well if Charlie was there, she would do it. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. Um—

Sydnee: Alright, well everybody hang in there.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Stay safe. Stay home, stay safe. Stay healthy. And thank you to The Novellas for our theme song “Baby You Change Your Mind” .

Raleigh: This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I’m Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I’m Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering...

Sydnee: And I... Am... Too...

Taylor: And I... Am... Too...

[theme music plays]

Rileigh: “Shake It Off”? Is that one? Like...

Taylor: [singing to the tune of “Shake It Off”] “Wash your hands, wash your hands!”

Sydnee: Ah...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Before next week, you need to—You need to find a twenty-second snippet of a Taylor Swift song that they can wash—Everybody can wash their hands to.

Rileigh: Okay, I can do that.

Sydnee: Okay.

[theme music ends]

Speaker 1: Alright Adam, uh... Maximum Fun wants us to record, like a promo to tell people that they should listen to *The Greatest Generation*. You wanna do that?

Adam: No! I am tired of all the extra work. I just want to talk about *Star Trek* with my friend.

Speaker 1: I-I think it-It would be good to like try and get some new listeners by appealing to the audiences of other shows? Like this—This will only take a minute or two. It could be good for us.

Speaker 1: We sit down for an hour every week and talk about a *Star Trek* episode, and make a bunch of idiotic fart jokes about it. It’s embarrassing. If it got out that we made this show, I think it would make us unemployable.

Speaker 1: Um... I have bad news for you. We have tens of thousands of listeners at maximumfun.org.

Adam: Oh my god... I think I'm gonna throw up...

Speaker 1: *The Greatest Generation: A Star Trek* Podcasts by a couple of guys who are a little bit embarrassed to have a *Star Trek* podcast. Every Monday, on maximumfun.org.

Adam: I'm really gonna be sick...

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