

Still Buffering 237: Jewel "Pieces of You" (1995)

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[theme music plays]

Rileigh: Hello, welcome to *Still Buffering*, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Rileigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: So y'all... got some decorations up?

[all laugh quietly]

Taylor: I guess it's that time of year. I mean, it feels a little early, but then, I don't... you know. What—who cares?

Sydnee: That's—yep, that's where we were. I was like, "It's too early for Christmas decorations, but... "

Rileigh: It's fine.

Sydnee: Who cares? Why not?

Taylor: I heard, like—there was, like, a news story that was like, "[mockingly] You know, putting up your decorations can help with depression!" And I'm like, "Uh, that's just a capitalist scam to get me to buy lights."

And, like, two days later I'm like, "Mmm, and I'm buyin' into it." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Well, it—and it—I think right now, especially with the kids in the house, anything that's just different, like, new, a new stimulus that is introduced into the equation is really refreshing. And so it was like, "Here are some Christmas decorations that I'm gonna put around the house and you can break. [laughs quietly]"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Mom—Mom, at one point, bought—it was for Charlie because Cooper was not born yet, so that's how Charlie was, also—bought her a nativity set that is *Peanuts*-themed.

Raleigh: I remember this.

Taylor: Oh yeah!

Sydnee: The, uh—the characters in this nativity scene, more so than—I mean, I know that, like, if things are ceramic or whatever, they're breakable. Like, I understand that concept. But for some reason, the way these particular characters are designed, their heads come off [emphatically] so easily.

Like, I mean, you, like, barely set them down on carpet at the wrong angle and their little ceramic heads just snap right off.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: So with the introduction of Cooper in our family, she has decapitated the entire *Peanuts* gang.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well... that—of course.

Sydnee: And I keep gluing their heads back on, and she keeps decapitating them again. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: They all have little red ribbons tied around their neck.

[all laugh]

Taylor: "Don't take it off!" [laughs]

Raleigh: I, uh—I did—I left—I have some Legos built in my room, and I was hanging out with Charlie this morning, brushing her hair, and Cooper was over near my Legos, playing with the tiny people. I was like, "Oh, that's fine. She's making 'em talk to each other and stuff."

And then when they left, I went over and, on the ground, was just all the heads and all the hair. She had taken off all the hair pieces and all the heads off of all the characters, and they were just all over on the ground, and the bodies were what she had been playing with, and having just the headless bodies talk to each other. [laughs]

Sydnee: You—you should've heard this morning, I asked both the girls how they slept and Charlie said, "I had a bad dream."

Which I later learned, by the way, she made up this entire bad dream she had and then she looked at me and went, "I made all that up."

Taylor: Whoa!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And I was like, "Why?!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: But she said that, and Cooper was kind of sitting there playing with something, not really paying attention and immediately, like, jerked her head around and went, "[creepy voice] What was it about?"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: "And then what? And what was it? What was the creature? What was it? Tell me more—" I mean, it was like—

Rileigh: "[creepy voice] Tell me about your fears." [laughs]

Sydnee: "I need to know about your nightmares!"

[all laugh]

Taylor: Well, you know...

Sydnee: Those are my two children. Charlie, for no reason whatsoever, invents a nightmare, and then at the end admits it, always admits it. Would never, like, let that lie just sit there, like, "I totally made that up."

Uh, and Cooper is obsessed with, "I need more details about the nightmare."

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So...

Taylor: You know...

Sydnee: [singing] Happy holidays...

[all laugh]

Rileigh: Mom has tried to explain Santa to Cooper now multiple times, and it seems like every time then, like a day later, mom will bring up Santa. "Who—what is this Santa Claus? Who is this Santa?"

Sydnee: Oh, Cooper will ask. "Who's Santa?"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: "Like, I haven't met this guy. When—when does he come over? I've been in the house a year, and I'm only two and a half, so I have no memory of other humans now."

Rileigh: "I've spent half my life in this house." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I mean, it is kinda—I would say, like, if you'd never heard of Santa and it was a new concept to you, it is a pretty out there concept.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I realized as I was describing to her—we're sitting there on the couch, and I'm pointing at the chimney and I'm like, "So, this guy's gonna come down there. And he's gonna come out of that hole right there. And then he's gonna put presents for you guys under that tree and then go back up it. But only if you're good!"

And she's looking at me like, "That's what I get if I'm *good*?!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: "The guy comes down the chimney?!"

Taylor: "I'm gonna be bad, I think, for safety." [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh... the elf has to come back. Aw, man.

Taylor: Oh, the—

Sydnee: Oh, I gotta bring the elf back.

Raleigh: I saw a great—a great trick, a great hack on Facebook. Sometimes I get on, like, crafty Facebook mom side of Facebook and I don't—

Sydnee: Oh my.

Raleigh: —I don't know how or why. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I don't even go there! [laughs]

Raleigh: But, uh, it was for kids who will try to touch the elf, because if you touch the elf, it loses its magic. Um, of course.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] It's a high stakes elf.

Raleigh: You can't touch it. Uh, but they put it in a little, like, Tupperware, and said it was in quarantine, and gave it, you know, a little fake bottle of soap and hand sanitizer and put a mask on it so that you can't—

Sydnee: [holding back laughter] I hope they poked some holes in the top—
[bursts into laughter]

Raleigh: They did not. They did not. It was just a little box. But they said it's in quarantine, so you can't get close to it and you can't touch it, 'cause he's in quarantine.

Sydnee: That seems a little—

Taylor: That is slowly suffocating in Tupperware. It's, uh—

Sydnee: [through laughter] It's a little ghoulish.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Well, never mind.

Sydnee: I mean, I—I—to be fair—

Raleigh: Cooper tries to touch the elf every single year.

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: And it ends up with her touching it somehow and Charlie freaking out and having a breakdown, because then Cooper just took away the elf's magic.

Sydnee: See, that happens at mom's house. At our house, the elf is never anywhere that anyone can reach it. The elf flies, and so it hangs out—

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: —very high. Like, high places in the house where neither child could touch the elf.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So that is the arrangement here. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: The el—the elf has also been purchased changes of clothes by our mother, and so I also have to change the elf's clothes periodi—[quietly] It's such a pain.

Taylor: I just respect that Cooper's goal is to take the elf's magic. I think maybe she's thinking she's becoming more powerful. Maybe she *is* becoming more powerful.

Raleigh: It's possible.

Sydnee: I think it's totally possible.

Taylor: You could get presents, or... you could get power. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] "Then, I could get all the presents I want."

Taylor: And I think she's got a—she's got the—she's runnin' a long game on this. I respect that.

Raleigh: I did appreciate that you asked them both for their Christmas lists and Charlie's was, like, you know, a front and a back and had 50 things on it, and Cooper's was one item long. "Baby Yoda."

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: That's it.

Sydnee: That's all she wants. Baby Yoda. Uh, Charlie also wants Baby Yoda, but then she wants 85 other things. Most of them are, like, labs and kits, things that you can buy—

Raleigh: They all end with "lab."

Sydnee: Yeah, it's like, "Perfume lab, bath bomb lab, lip gloss lab." So, like, I have a ton of those things listed for her. Also, that 'Donald Trump will never be President again' is on her list. This was from her, by the way. I did not... I did not plant that seed. She was having me write it down.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: And she was reciting to me, and she went, "[little kid voice] And right now, uh, the next one is: Donald Trump never to be President again."

Raleigh: That's very good.

Sydnee: I was like, "What?" [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well... [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, "Yes, honey, we all wish that."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: At least you can get her that this year, hopefully. Hopefully!

Sydnee: Yeah. At least not for the next four years.

Taylor: Uh...

Sydnee: You know, I almost had to spend Thanksgiving in quarantine.

Raleigh: Oh no!

Sydnee: Like the elf on the shelf.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I almost was exposed at work.

Taylor: That's scary.

Raleigh: What happened?

Sydnee: Uh, one of my team was directly exposed to a positive patient, and so I was then exposed to my team member for a couple days before any of us realized what had happened. All is well.

Raleigh: Well, yes, because we are now sitting at a table with each other.

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs]

Raleigh: So I would hope so. [laughs]

Sydnee: All is well. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, glad you figured that out ahead of time. [laughs]

Sydnee: It was scary, though. I would urge everybody to not gather for this Thanksgiving holiday.

Raleigh: Yeah. I, uh—I—

Sydnee: It was a scary 48 hours there until we knew for sure.

Raleigh: Yeah. I have not been directly exposed to anyone who's positive, but the last week I was living on campus, every single person I knew and lived with had been either, like, directly exposed to someone positive or, like, secondhand exposed to someone who was exposed to someone who was positive.

Um, and it was, like, the scariest week of my life. 'Cause I just kept thinking, like, "Well, I haven't been around anyone who's tested positive." But then I

just kept going, like, "But they were, and then I was around them, and then they were..."

I ended up getting two different tests that week just because I was so, so freaked out. Both of them were negative, obviously, so...

Sydnee: Thank goodness we're all well.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: And Raleigh and I will join mom and dad, and Justin is coming with us, in the vaccine trial this Sunday!

Raleigh: Yes!

Taylor: I hope—I hope you all get the actual vaccine and not the placebo.
[laughs]

Sydnee: Ohh, me too. Me too.

Taylor: That is good. I... I saw the, uh—don't look at it if you don't wanna be bummed out, but the map of flights across America.

Sydnee: I don't wanna think about it.

Taylor: It's just like—it's all planes. It's the shape of America made out of planes.

Raleigh: It is.

Taylor: [through laughter] Whyyy?!

Raleigh: And good—I mean, in good news though, our mom had side effects after the vaccine. I mean, they weren't bad. She's fine. It was a day.

Sydnee: Mild, but enough to make me think she got the real deal.

Taylor: That's good.

Raleigh: Which resulted in me also hoping, you know, I get side effects.

Sydnee: Um, who will save... our souls... from this Thanksgiving?

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: This is my transition.

Taylor: There it is.

Sydnee: Is this anything?

Taylor: Yeah, sure.

Sydnee: Um, I—I didn't realize when I brought Jewel to the table this week, I did not realize what I was doing.

Raleigh: Bringing?

Sydnee: No. It has been so long—first of all, this is very timely. It's the 25th anniversary of *Pieces of You*. I didn't realize this. And there were just this week, like, all these new interviews with Jewel, her singing with Kelly Clarkson—

Raleigh: And that made Sydnee cry.

Sydnee: It did.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: It earnestly made me cry. Um, there have been all these new videos released by Jewel and I think, like, a new edition maybe of *Pieces of You*. So, like, I didn't realize that, but it was very timely. Um... I also have not... [holding back laughter] listened to the entire album in a very long time? [pauses] And whoa, it took me on a journey.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] So...

Taylor: Tell us about that journey, Syd! [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, Raleigh, this was your first...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I wanna know, before I start saying anything, what—Raleigh, this was your first Jewel encounter.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Did you recognize even, like, the big singles from the album?

Raleigh: I didn't, no.

Taylor: Oh wow, really?

Sydnee: None of it.

Raleigh: No. I don't—I mean, maybe it has been on, like, peripherally at some point in my life, but not that I have ever been aware of until last night and this morning.

Sydnee: What, uh—what—first impressions, before we dig.

Raleigh: It was a lot. Um, because I was trying to listen to the lyrics as I was listening to the music, um, because I figured that that was going to be as important. If there was a reason Jewel was so great, it wasn't just gonna be the music. Gotta—gotta be something in the lyrics as well.

Sydnee: She was a folk artist initially, so I think that's fair.

Rileigh: Usually, like, it's more the pop music where you're just listening for, like, you know, the refrains and the music.

Sydnee: And the hook, yeah.

Rileigh: But, like, the more indie alternative folk stuff, the lyrics. Um, so, you know, I put the album on shuffle, started listening to it—

Sydnee: [holding back laughter] Oh, you shuffled it.

Rileigh: I did. Um, and the first one that came on was, um, "You Were Meant For Me."

Sydnee: Yes.

Rileigh: The most popular one.

Sydnee: Mega hit.

Rileigh: Mega hit.

Sydnee: Mega hit when it—not right when it was released, but soon thereafter.

Rileigh: Yeah. And I was like, "Okay, I can get into this." Like, you know, the guitar start that most all of the songs, actually, almost have, the same kind of, like, slow buildup lead-in with the soul guitar.

Um, but then some of these songs I was listening and I was like, "This is nice. This is good." And then the lyrics just, like, take you somewhere and you're like, "I don't know what's going on anymore, and I don't know what I'm listening to anymore!" [laughs] Like, um, "Daddy" is a good example.

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Rileigh: Of lyrics I was like, "Okay, I get it." I knew she was a teen when she had written and performed this, like, angsty, "My dad doesn't

understand me... " [holding back laughter] And then you get to the end of the song, and...

Sydnee: Yes, then the turn is, "Daddy's in the KKK."

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: The—the titular daddy. I don't know if Jewel's actual daddy, but the—

Raleigh: Sure, the daddy—the aforementioned daddy.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Um—[laughs quietly] and I had to stop the music and think about what I had just listened to—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: —and then back it up about ten seconds and just re-listen. Like, "I couldn't have heard that right. I misheard. Let me listen again." And I did that several times with Jewel. [laughs]

Sydnee: So... I think that's fair. I think that's fair. And to—like, I realized, I listened to the whole album when I was young, when I first got it, many, many times. So I definitely heard all those songs. But I also realized, like, I think I skipped around after the first few listens a lot, like, to my favorite ones. I don't think I just... I wasn't crankin' "Adrian" and "Daddy."

Raleigh: Sure. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] And the title track, "*Pieces of You*—"

Raleigh: Oh man.

Sydnee: —a lot.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh... the album, I should say—so, it came out in 1995, obviously, 25 years ago. Which, the fact that that album came out 25 years ago, I can't quite wrap my head around, but it did. And when it first came out, I guess it wasn't a giant hit. Like, Atlantic released it, and it wasn't a complete flop, but kind of.

And then after that, within, like, a year after that is when Jewel, who was already touring constantly—Jewel was constantly playing shows all over the Us—started—and she opened for—like, every band that was big at the time, Jewel opened for.

Uh, and then she got picked up to open for Bob Dylan and Neil Young, and that was really—she opened for them and did all these shows, and that's when she took off and just, like... uh, "You Were Meant For Me," "Foolish Games," "Who Will Save Your Soul," those songs were just gi—I mean, every time you turn on the radio they were on. The music videos were every—they were just constantly—everybody knew them. Everybody was singin' 'em.

Um, and she became this giant hit. And that's when all, like, kind of the lore around Jewel everybody knew, like, "What's her story? She's a teenager, she lived in her car for a while, like, who is this person?"

Um, she used to kick people out of Bob Dylan's shows, because she would open for Bob Dylan and if anybody would be, like, going to the bathroom or talking or something during her set, she would get so offended that she would stand up on stage and tell them to leave.

Raleigh: Whoa.

Sydnee: That was why Bob Dylan first called her back to her dressing room to talk to her was, like, "Who is this person who's opening for me and throwing people out of my shows?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Man.

Sydnee: She says she still does that to this day.

Raleigh: Really?

Sydnee: If you don't pay attention to her when she's singing, she'll throw you out.

Raleigh: Oh my gosh. I would have to pee my pants. Just stand there. Like, I can't go to the bathroom! Jewel will be offended.

Sydnee: Jewel—[laughs] She's—hey, listen.

Raleigh: Gotta—gotta wear a diaper. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: She told you she's sensitive.

Raleigh: Yeah. She—[laughs] she did.

Sydnee: She wrote a whole song about it.

Taylor: Well, I—you know, she—it seems like—'cause a read an interview where she's talking about how much she needed to steel herself to be a young woman, as young as she was, in the industry. So I don't know. Like, maybe that's a bit of a hard line, but maybe she felt she had to have that because of just how much young women are taken advantage of.

Sydnee: I think she did. I think, like... [sighs] That was the thing. So she—she left home, she lived—I forget where—somewhere in Alaska when she was 16, came down to, like, San Diego, and her mom went back home, and she stayed. And she really did just, like, hitchhike and sleep outside, and she lived in her car for a while. She talks about, like, hitchhiking around Mexico and giving foot rubs on the boardwalk in Cabo.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: To make money—

Taylor: Oh, okay. [laughs]

Sydnee: —so she could play gigs. [holding back laughter] Yeah.

Taylor: I was like, just 'cause?

Raleigh: Just to be nice.

Taylor: Something you do in Cabo, right?

Sydnee: 'Cause she was like that, she's nice. No.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Before she got, like, a standing gig at a coffee shop, and then from there, she got discovered. So, like, it really was all about the music and the storytelling, but I think that it is important to frame it as the storytelling from a 16, 17, 18, I think, like, 19 before she got really big, year old.

So it's not like... someone with decades of wisdom and life experience.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: It's very raw, it's very earnest, it's exactly what she thinks at every moment, written down and made into an album, and it got a ton of criticism for that. I mean, she just... oh my gosh. Critics hated that she seemed immature, that she seemed childish. They talked about how high school-ish all her lyrics were.

Raleigh: I mean, she was in high school. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: And, I mean, she really got torn apart critically, even as she was selling just tons of albums. And I know, like, for me, I was what, like, 12 when this came out? So—and it probably was something I bought when I was around 13. That CD was... I mean, just huge for me. I felt like, here was someone who was singing the things that I was feeling and thinking, and...

caring about. But, I mean, I was, like, a 13, 14 year old girl. Of course these things spoke to me! She was just a little bit older than me.

Rileigh: You know, the connection I am now making is this is... this is the Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: This is—yes!

Rileigh: This is Taylor Swift.

Sydnee: Jewel walked so Taylor Swift could run! [laughs]

Rileigh: Exactly! 'Cause Taylor Swift was a teenager, like, probably 16 to 19, writing songs from the perspective of a teenage girl that all the, you know, adults criticized and said they were immature, and they were dumb, and they were bad. And all the young teenage girls were obsessed with them. I'm now, just now making this connection! Like, the music is different, sure. But, like, that is the same exact thing.

Taylor: That's such, like—I mean, especially in the late '90s, we're talking about the rise of, like, the very manufactured pop princess, right? Like, this is, you know—

Sydnee: Yes.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: —we've got Britney Spears and Xtina coming to the forefront. And I think... you know, you had, like, the—the more, uh... the more adult, like... folk singers. Like, you had, like, uh... what am I trying to think of? Like, um, Ani DiFranco and, I mean, even, like, Fiona Apple, that were a little scarier, that were a little bit—or like Tori Amos, that were a little, like, harder to relate to. There were a little bit more complex emotions.

Sydnee: The critics called them the angry girls.

Taylor: Yeah, they were angry.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: And Jewel was sensitive and earnest. And I think that that was something that you just—you didn't—you could relate to, and it was nice to see a young woman that wasn't being sexualized represent your feelings, I think.

Sydnee: I think that's very true. And, you know, it's interesting, too. As I listen to 'em, some of it is *sexual*. And she got criti—she got a lot of criticism for talking about her feelings and her own, like, sexuality, which... hello, that's every women who has ever..

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: ... *ever* talked about their own sexuality on their terms. Um, but she was—she was held up sort of in that way initially as, like, "Here's someone who is a female singer-songwriter who's not so angry." [laughs]

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: "Isn't that nice?" But, I mean, it was folk music, and so it wasn't just about her feelings and love and that kind of thing. It was about her perspective on the world, and I think that that's where things do, especially looking at through the lens of 2020, there are parts of the lyrics where you're like, "What?!"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] And I had not thought about that since... oh, gosh. Who knows the last time I sat down and listened to the entire album?

Raleigh: Yeah. I did have to remind myself a few times, like, this was from 1995. I'm not gonna listen to this as someone in 2020. I'll listen to this as, you know, through the lens in which it was written. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yes. Uh, yeah. I have to say, um, Justin had never heard—he, of course, did not own the CD back in the day. He had heard the mega hits that everybody had heard, but he was not familiar with some of the lesser known

tracks from that album. And so I played the song "Pieces of You" for him last night, for the first time he'd ever heard it.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: And, uh, Justin was literally crawling onto the kitchen counter—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: —and, like, hiding his head—like, his face from me, like, cringing. And he looked at me. He was like, "These can't be the words!"

And I was like, "These are..."

Raleigh: "[holding back laughter] These are the words."

Sydnee: "The words."

Taylor: It's—it was a hard-to-listen-to song. I mean, especially 'cause it's the title track, you know? Uh... and, I mean, obviously centering on the fact that there's a whole string of lyrics that center on the F-slur.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And that...

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: You know, that—that—the... that's—coming from—I'm pretty sure Jewel is straight—a straight cis woman singing that lyric repeatedly, it's like, "Oh, no! [through laughter] Please stop."

But...

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: ... you know, you put it in the context of the time. I mean, we were pretty homophobic in the '90s. It was a mainstream musician framing a lyric around, like, sort of throwing that word back in the faces of people that might use it. It doesn't make it okay by today's standards, but I do remember hearing that as a young person, and it was kind of one of the first times that it was ever presented to me, like, "Hey. You shouldn't—these words shouldn't be used against people."

Like, the first time it was kind of a, you know, a mainstream artist standing up on behalf of young queers. So that—I don't know.

Sydnee: Well, I think you're very right. I wanna—what you're saying about the. I wanna talk about that idea more. But before we do that...

Raleigh: Let's check the group message.

--

Raleigh: Um, you all know what time it is.

Taylor: It's...

Sydnee: It's, like, 11... 50—

Taylor: [simultaneously] Lunch?

Raleigh: No, I mean, like, the time—[pauses]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I mean, that too. It is... [laughs quietly] I am pretty hungry for lunch. No, it's—it's—it's time to start looking for your gifts.

Sydnee: Ah.

Raleigh: For the people in your life that you love, this holiday season. Um, and that's because it's never too early, especially this year, um, to start shopping for holiday gifts, even though we haven't even hit December yet. That's okay. Time doesn't exist this year.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um, and especially because today, you can save big on a gift that everyone you love will use every day. And that's Raycon wireless earbuds.

Um, I know for me, I have been doing all my classes online, so having reliable headphones that work, and that are comfortable, and that block out all the other noise, um, is very important. So I can pay attention to my teachers, I can take notes, but also not disturb my roommates, or other people in the library, or my parents. Um, all those kinds of things. And that is what has been great about Raycon wireless earbuds. They have seamless Bluetooth pairing and a comfortable, noise-isolating fit, and they keep you listening for hours.

They have a great battery life. Um, you know, you can block out all the other noise around you so you can listen on the go. Maybe you're on a bus, on a train, those kinds of things. Keep listening to whatever you gotta listen to. Nothing else will interfere.

And the audio quality is amazing, comparable to what you would get from other premium bands—brands, except... Raycons start at half the price.

Sydnee: Wow!

Raleigh: So, this holiday season, get everyone in your life something they can use for calls or music, work or play, at home or on the go, especially in this age of everyone working and schooling and doing everything from home. Um, get them something like Raycon wireless earbuds.

So, Tey, if our listeners want to check out Raycon, what should they do?

Taylor: You can go to buyraycon.com/buffering today to get 20% off your Raycon order. But hurry! This offer is available for a limited time only, and

you don't wanna miss out. So, once again, that's buyraycon.com/buffering, get that 20% off your Raycons.

Sydnee: Uh, as Rileigh already mentioned, a lot of us are working from home these days, and it can be really tempting when you're at home all day long, you want to be comfortable, to just, like, leave on your pajamas. But that's not really a great mindset, I have found personally, to do my work in. It doesn't make me feel, you know, like I'm workin'.

Uh, and that is why I can't recommend enough Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants, because they are dress pants. So when you put 'em on—I've worn 'em to work many, many times. I've been a fan for a long time. You're in your work mindset. You're, like, ready to go to work, ready to get down to business.

But they're as comfortable as yoga pants, so you'll still feel good. Whether you're doing your work at a desk or you're hanging out on the couch, um, you'll feel very comfortable in your dress pants, 'cause they feel like yoga pants.

But you'll look good, and if you do have a Zoom meeting where they can see you from the waist down...

Rileigh: That's a little weird.

Sydnee: ... I don't know why.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: But you're dressed.

Rileigh: Maybe you gotta—maybe you gotta give a presentation.

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: Hey! There you go. And to be fair, some of us are still going to work. So, um, dress pant yoga pants from Betabrand are essential, so that you feel comfortable and you look good when you're at work.

Um, they combine customer experience with their expertise to make work wear that's as functional, comfortable, and inspiring as your favorite workout gear. And their dress pant yoga pants are made of wrinkle-resistant, stretch-knit fabric, so they're perfect, whether you're working a long day outside your house, inside your house, you got places to go right after work, playing with your kids. All that stuff, Betabrand's got you covered.

So, Tey, if our listeners wanna get these pants, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, right now, our listeners can get 25% off their first order, when you go to [Betabrand.com/buffering](https://betabrand.com/buffering). That's 25% off your first order for a limited time at [Betabrand.com/buffering](https://betabrand.com/buffering). Find out why people are ditching typical work pants for Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants. Go to [Betabrand.com/buffering](https://betabrand.com/buffering) for 25% off.

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Sydnee: Uh, so Tey, you were kind of getting into one of the core things that I was thinking, as I was really, like, trying to reckon with my love of Jewel last night—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —and throughout the last couple days as I was relistening—

Taylor: That was a reckoning. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] Well, because Jewel represent—her work, especially this album, and Jewel as, like, an artist, represented something that I—like, it was very much part of who I thought I was as a teenage girl. Um, she was—like, that music meant something to me. Uh, and I—when I think about—it's funny. I was watching a video of her performing with Kelly Clarkson. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Just from, like, yesterday or the day before. I mean, this just happened within the last couple days. She was on the Kelly Clarkson show, like, digitally, and they performed "Foolish Games" together in a duet, which, by the way, is beautiful. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: It was beautiful.

Sydnee: And you should—it was, right?

Raleigh: Yes, yes.

Sydnee: Everyone should watch this video. And I started crying. [laughs quietly] Because, uh—well, one, like, Kelly Clarkson can make me cry always.

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] Sydnee might be crying a little bit right now!

Sydnee: Kelly Clarkson has the key to my heart, and always will. But, um... and I—why do I love Kelly Clarkson? Well, probably because, like, she... she's sort of Jewel-esque. Like, there is a Jewel-ness there.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Um, but then Jewel's singing, and, like, oh, her voice, and her whole thing! I mean, it was the—the earnesty of it really was something that was important to me. Because I did feel like, for all of the stuff that is a little overwrought that she says... there was a time where it felt like living in the world and trying to just earnestly be nice and be open was very difficult, and the—the world, especially in the '90s, felt very cynical. It felt very sarcastic.

I always felt like everyone around me was in on a joke that I wasn't in on. And Jewel talked to—I mean, she wasn't talking about that, but that was what I felt like she was talking about. Just trying to be a nice person in a world where being a nice person is bad.

And I do feel like that sensibility is actually a lot more in touch with today. Like, with 2020. That idea, that earnesty, that is something that I have tried to carry with me my whole life, and I feel like Jewel taps into that. But I

think what comes with that is that she was of a time where... she uses, like you said, Teylor, the F-slur. And I would recommend, if that is something that you would rather not hear, don't listen to the song "Pieces of You," if you've never heard this album before.

Taylor: Yeah, absolutely.

Sydnee: 'Cause she—yes, she definitely uses that. And the way she talks about things, it's very clumsy. I mean, it's not handled well, and it's not handled with the sort of, uh, care and thoughtfulness and understanding that we would expect of an artist today. Um, she was 16. It was 1995. I don't think she had that sort of understanding, or had the kind of education or mentoring from other people in her life to tell her why this was not okay.

Um, so I don't know. I don't know if you can say, like, she was trying. At the time, very few people were trying. So I don't know if there's any credit there. But it is of a time. And folk music can have that sort of feel, that, like, at the moment it was produced, it may have been very powerful. She was talking about how ugly these ideas and words are in that song, but also she was using them, which... we know better now.

Raleigh: I was thinking about—you know, often now—all of this was released together as once, right? Like, as one album?

Sydnee: *Pieces of You?*

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, that was an album.

Raleigh: Because often now, artists will release the titular track of their album first, and then you know, later you get the full album. And I was just thinking, like, could you imagine this album coming out now and that's, like, your little teaser bit? Like, "Here's the titular track. Full thing's dropping in a week!" [laughs] I don't know if that would get me into the album! I had to—I had to listen past that one to get to, you know, all the other stuff.

Taylor: And there is a bit—there's an interesting divide, I think, on the album. Because when you look at the songs that were the big hits—I mean, "Save Your Soul" kinda gets into some social commentary, but there are a lot of songs that are just flat out, like, normal teenage stuff. Love songs, songs about longing, songs about being in relationships that aren't rewarding but you're still in love. And then there's kind of the other side of it, songs that don't make you comfortable, songs that bring up stuff that, however clumsily she handles it, the point is not to be, like, "Oh, this is just a little bop."

It's like, "No, I'm confronting you with something that I want you to think about."

So there is—so I think that that folk music sensibility that Sydnee's talking about, that has always been an important presence in that scene. But then you're pairing it with the very earnest teen girl feelings, and it's an interesting... not exactly fluid mesh on the album.

Sydnee: Well, and you can see where, like, it make sense that—because she talks about how she was mentored by Bob Dylan and Neil Young and how, like, they probably could see that potential there, with more life experience and understanding, and exposure to diverse people who would maybe inform her, the way she talks about things, a little better.

I mean, you can see all that there, 'cause underneath it, there is that raw, like—her voice is incredible.

Raleigh: Oh, yeah.

Sydnee: You didn't even hear her yodel.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: She yodels.

Raleigh: I did not know this.

Sydnee: That was a big thing when she first came out, was the yodeling.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Okay.

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] Good—good to know. Good to put on the list to watch later.

Sydnee: Yeah, that was—I remember that being one of the big deal things. Like, I remember playing her CD and mom asking me, "Is that that girl who lived in her car and yodels?"

Raleigh: [snorts]

Taylor: Accurate, accurate.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly] And the answer is, "Yes."

Sydnee: That was what people knew about her. Like, "Oh, okay, yeah." Um, but you can—I mean, her voice is incredible. It's beautiful. By the way, it's still every bit as beautiful. It hasn't, like, suffered with time at all.

Raleigh: Oh, no.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Um, and she talks about, like, in the beginning, she knew, like, three chords. And she got better with the guitar as time went on. Which, again, she gets so much flack for stuff. When you look back at it, it's really easy to see. Her lyrics were ridiculed, and her guitar, like, was—it's only this—was ridiculed. Where, like, other artists at the time who were not women... were not given that.

Every time somebody talks about a woman who doesn't play the guitar well, I think of, like, that The Ramones knew, like, four chords or whatever.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Oh, that's being generous.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Uh, yeah. Like, the foundation of punk rock is you can scream and you know two chords. [laughs] Like, you know the power chords. That's it. Like...

Sydnee: And that was the stuff that she got flack for. And the—the thing—I think—'cause she came out with that, and then a couple albums that followed, which were similar in that folk thing. A lot more, um, produced. Because that first album is really... it sounds like it's being recorded in a coffee shop, a lot of the time.

Raleigh: It does, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like, you have a live audience clapping after some of the songs. And you know you can see people sitting out there, like, snapping instead. [laughs] You can just see it. You can see the crowd, from the song, the guitar, the clapping at the end—like, you can feel what this is. Um, and it got more produced, but it also started to veer pop. And that's where things sort of, I think, went off the rails, in those early years, and why she kinda di—I think disappeared, like, from the major stage, is fair to say.

Because her music was trying to get poppier, I think in response to probably pressures from her label and from the time, and like you said, Tey, as we're moving into, like, the late '90s when... she wasn't a pop princess, but she had a great voice, and she was, you know, attractive, so you could certainly try to turn her into one.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: Um, and then she came out with her poetry book.

Raleigh: What?

Taylor: [crosstalk] *A Night Without Armor*?

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Oh, that's right. You told me about this.

Sydnee: *A Night Without Armor*, but it's spelled like N-I-G-H—so Night. 'Cause it's... you get it.

Taylor: A K-night.

Raleigh: Right. Like a nighttime... but—

Sydnee: Yes. And she's taken her armor off.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Right.

Raleigh: Oh man. [laughs]

Sydnee: And I think—

Taylor: Ehh... [laughs]

Sydnee: I think that came out in '99. And she just—people were merciless about—I owned the book. Just full disclosure.

Raleigh: Do you still?

Sydnee: It's somewhere here. I never get rid of books. It's somewhere in this house. Um—

Raleigh: Gotta find that. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. And, I mean, again, it was poetry that, at the time, I found incredibly beautiful and moving and touching, 'cause she had written it as, you know, a teenager and early 20s, and... it spoke to me.

Um, but... a lot of critics thought it was just... just so schlocky and bad. And there was that interview she did on MTV with Kurt Loder where he, like... I

mean, I don't want to say "made fun of her," but it really feels like he's mocking her—

Raleigh: It feels like it, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: —her misunderstanding of, like, grammar, and the way certain words—I don't know. It's—it's rough! It's rough to watch. And, like, you wouldn't—if you saw that, if that happened now in 2020 with a female artist, oh my gosh. Can you imagine Twitter?

Raleigh: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs] Like, the interviewer would just be... destroyed. But at the time it was like, "Oh, he got her. Oh, he got her. Look how well he got her."

Taylor: "She misused a word one time."

Sydnee: "Look how clever he is."

Taylor: You know, it's interesting, 'cause I think that it—this all comes back to, I think, a bigger concept that I'm very curious about what happened in the '90s, and I think maybe we're getting it out of our system. Where honesty and earnest feelings became cringe, and we combat that with irony.

If you say something kind of ironically or kinda—"Oh, I'm not really serious, but whatever!" Then you're fine. Nobody can make fun of you. As long as you never really have strong feelings, as long as you don't care, you're safe.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like, it's a way of protecting our real emotions, by kind of treating every—like, "Well, it's not a big deal. Who cares? Like, it's stupid."

And she had the audacity to say, "No, my feelings matter, and I'm serious about them, and they're real!" And we—we cringe at that. We recoil at that. We don't like that. And I think that that's something that is just interesting. It's a way that we padded ourselves.

Because once again, like you said, folk music was always that earnestness, it was always that honesty about my feelings, and you would speak about love in flowery ways, and you would speak about the world in terms of, like, "You know, we need to be kind, and we need to save each other."

And at some point, that became, like, distasteful to us. It's just interesting, culturally.

Sydnee: I think that's very true. I think that was really part of what made Jewel important to me, and why I don't think—I don't think she is irrelevant. You know, even though you could criticize some of her lyrics for not being, you know, particularly complicated or—or, you know, meaningful.

Um, and she is limited. I think, like—that's what—I think that's what the problem is. There are fair criticism that you can level at Jewel, like we just talked about. Like, I understand you're trying to stand up for the person in this song, who I guess is gay. But the way that you're trying to do that is not helpful, and here's why. And, I mean, like, there are fair criticisms.

And she is a white woman who is talking about white woman problems, white woman sensitivities, from a very white woman perspective, so it's limited. There's only so much that she can talk about, and you can make the case that she tries to talk about stuff that she doesn't have the... experience, understanding, vocabulary to talk about. All that stuff is fair game.

But that wasn't—that wasn't the hate that was thrown at Jewel. That may have been there, but the large part of the hate was grounded in, I think, that sort of misogynistic distaste for anything that young women like.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: You're young, you're a woman, it must be stupid. It must—ditsy. Everything about—that was the big thing. "She's so ditsy. Look at how ditsy she is."

Taylor: [laughs] Well, like, that's—like the song "I'm Sensitive" on this album. Got so much—just so made fun of. And, I mean, I kind of get it on basis. It's literally just like, "I'm sensitive! Don't hurt me! I'm a soft 'lil baby, don't hurt me!" [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] But like—

Raleigh: But you know what? I *am* sensitive—

Taylor: [laughs loudly]

Raleigh: —and I *am* a soft 'lil baby, and I *don't* want you to hurt me! So I get it! I listened to that song and I was like, "You know what? Okay."

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: "Okay, Jewel. Okay." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: But I feel the same way about that song, actually.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Like, I kind of feel like, you know, there's this idea that's introduced to you at a young age. Like, you gotta—you gotta build up that thick skin. You gotta just learn how to take it. You gotta just—and at some point I realized, like, I don't think I have that ability to, A. And B, I don't think I want to! Because I like the parts of me that can feel things, and that can respond to the world around me with sensitivity. Like, I don't think it's actually a bad idea in that song.

Sydnee: I—I, uh—I do not—I would not say that I am, um...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: ... particularly sensitive. [laughs] I did not necessarily relate with that. But I do—I do think that, uh, in her—in that song, she is a little bit ahead of her team. Because you're right, you're both right, in that it's fine if you're sensitive. That's okay. And I think, like, that idea that you're talking about, Tey, that, like, you've gotta have this thick skin so that—because the world's gonna beat you up.

That was a really unhealthy idea that I have seen fade in the recent, I would say, decade or so. And I think that's a good thing. 'Cause, like, it also is a way to excuse all number of, you know, inequities in the system. Like, "Well, it's just 'cause the world is hard. And only the tough survive."

And that's a terrible—no, you just are saying that because you're rich and powerful, and you want to stay rich and powerful, so you're telling everybody who's not that you just have to be tougher, and someday you can be like me.

And, like, those beliefs are really damaging to society. And so I think, like—I don't know if she knew she was walking about that...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, because it was just her earnest thought. "This is how I feel." And she says that about, like—I always thought that line, that "If we're told we're bad then that's the only idea we'll ever have," I always thought that was a really powerful idea. Like, the idea of looking at people and saying, "You're a bad person." I always remember dad saying that. Remember, dad tells us that story?

Taylor: Oh yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: About how his first day of school, his dad walked him into the classroom, walked him up to the teacher, and said, "You're gonna have problems with this one."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And so he was always a troublemaker. And, like, what if—what if maybe his dad hadn't done that?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I always thought about that!

Taylor: Who would dad be?! [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Are you gonna write a song about it?

Taylor: I know, right?

Sydnee: "Daddy." [laughs]

Raleigh: "Who Would Daddy Be?" [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Oh no.

Sydnee: No. I don't—"Daddy" has nothing to do with my dad, or our dad. [laughs]

Taylor: No, no.

Sydnee: That is not—no.

Taylor: Our dad cries at McDonald's commercials. He somehow managed to, uh—to—[laughs] Keep some sensitivity!

Raleigh: Our daddy is sensitive. [laughs]

Sydnee: He's sensitive, and he'd like to stay that way.

[all laugh]

Taylor: There's a lot of that in his family. Uh, but I—it's such an important thought. 'Cause I know, like, having a platform, any sort of social media presence, I've gotten the criticism directly, and also told myself, like, maybe I'm just not cut out for this. I'm not—I'm too sensitive.

And a lot of people say that. If you can't handle it, you shouldn't do it. But that means that the only people that get voices are people that have hardened themselves to be able to take all forms of criticism. And is that—is that the only person that should be heard? I don't think so! [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: It's also, you know, kind of in the world—I think about this a lot as it relates to world of, like, entertainment and comedy and what's funny, and that kind of stuff. For so long, that was used to excuse, like, punching down type humor. Like, "Well, you just can't take it 'cause you're too sensitive."

And it was like, "Well, no, maybe you're just not very funny or creative if the only thing you can—"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Right? Like, if the only thing you can think to make jokes about are people who have less social power than you. Like, maybe that's what it is. And maybe it's just not that funny to begin with. That's why I'm not laughing. You're not funny. [laughs quietly] And that wasn't clever. And be better... or be best. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Well, I remember that, uh, the Taylor Swift—

Sydnee: We—we could be best, you know. [laughs]

Taylor: We don't have to be best anymore, now.

Sydnee: [through laughter] That's true.

Taylor: We can just be good.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Uh, but I remember in that Taylor Swift documentary that you had us watch, Rileigh, uh, Taylor Swift talking about maintaining her sensitivity as something important to her, and I think that was a really empowering moment in that, and I think kind of brings it full circle, that she's owning that that's something that she's actively doing for herself.

Rileigh: Yeah. Yeah, she kinda—I mean, when you think about it, almost went in the opposite direction of Jewel. Not, like, in the music, but in that she started out being under a record label that was kind of telling her how to act and how to present herself as this, like, perfect nice girl who, you know, doesn't have opinions on things and just sings music, and it's very, you know, harmless and just there, and young girls like it.

But then she grew up and moved out of that, and moved more into where, like, the kind of territory music Jewel was when Jewel started, with, like, "No, this is just, like—I'm just gonna write about what I want to write about, and be myself, and that's okay."

Like, it was almost the opposite direction.

Sydnee: Reverse Jewel.

Rileigh: It was r—she pulled a reverse Jewel, is what she did. [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] The Uno reverse Jewel card.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know what's interesting? I was reading—'cause, like, a lot of it too, is—I see a lot of criticism leveled in this sort of unspoken idea that Jewel isn't smart enough. You see that, like, in—especially back in a lot of the criticism of her early.

She didn't take an advance for her first album. She said she could've. There was a bidding war. They were, like, welcoming people from the industry into this tiny coffee shop where she was performing, like, guys in suits with limos who were there to see her and try to sign her, and there was this huge bidding war over who would get to sign her.

And she didn't take a big advance, 'cause she read this big book about the music industry to try to figure out how to navigate this, and she realized that if she did, they would have a ton of control over what kind of music she made, but that if she didn't take a big advance then, because they weren't in for too much with her, they would let her have more freedom and more control, and that's why *Pieces of You* got made. If she had taken the big advance—

Raleigh: It wouldn't be the same.

Sydnee: —it probably would never have been made like that. Um, which I thought was—I mean, like, that's really smart. She made the album she wanted to make, she said what she wanted to say. She got sort of... you know, sidelined as time went on to try to make her into this—if you watch some of her music videos as time moves on...

Taylor: [groans]

Raleigh: [muffled laughter]

Taylor: "Intuition." [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: "Intuition."

Taylor: Ughh!

Sydnee: It's wi—it's wild. I mean, when you take it from, like—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —so—[laughs] so—

Raleigh: I'm just thinking about the music video you had me watch.

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: "Foolish Games."

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Which opens—"Foolish Games" opens with a saddled but, like, riderless horse running wild. Like, that's the—

Raleigh: Slow motion.

Sydnee: Slow motion. That is the first thing you see. Um... [laughs quietly] but "Who Will Save Your Soul?" was filmed in a bathroom.

Taylor: Oh yeah!

Sydnee: In a busy public restroom. It was filmed there, because at the time, Jewel said, "When you don't have a home, when you're a person facing homelessness and there's nowhere you can go to be alone, the restroom, the bathroom becomes very important to you, because you can sit in a bathroom stall and be alone."

And it was the only place at the time that she could be alone, so that's why she filmed it in this bathroom is because it's, like, a place where all humanity goes, but you can also be alone, and she thought that was very important. That's cool! [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah! Yeah!

Taylor: And the way it's shot is, like, her particular stall is like a little shrine, almost.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like, it's very—it's a magical bathroom stall! [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: It is! It was very clever and cool, and then—yes, and then "Intuition" happened. And, like, all of a sudden she does have, like—like you

said, Tey, almost a Britney Spears moment. She's in, like, a really pretty, sparkly, tight dress, and... she dancing, and—[laughs]

Taylor: And it's clear that it's supposed to be kind of tongue in cheek. Like, she's making fun of that kind of presentation.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: But even that doesn't sit well with me, 'cause now she's mocking other women and their careers, and that seems very anti that earnestness that we all related to.

Sydnee: Exactly, exactly. That was not Jewel.

Taylor: I do have—I have to ask, Syd, 'cause I have this memory. Maybe it's a false one. But the look of Jewel in the "Foolish Games" video. Did you not base a prom look around that, or a homecoming look?

Sydnee: I never had, like, that sheer dress with, like, the tank top underneath kinda thing. I never had that. Um, I did have a lot of—now, I wore sheer shirts with tank tops underneath constantly in high school. I mean, yes, that was very much part of my look. And the hair, I would say.

Taylor: Okay, maybe it's that. [laughs]

Sydnee: The hair, definitely. That hair look inspired many, um, dance, date night—yes. Um, of, like, all kind of piled up messily on the top with some sort of flowers or butterflies or something stuck up there, kind of scattered amongst it. And then the, like, little piecey strands all hanging down around my face. Yes.

Taylor: The moment where she is brooding while doing a mirroring exercise—

Raleigh: Yes.

Taylor: —in "Foolish Games."

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I'm like, "Oh, that's just Syd. That is Syd in high school right there." [laughs]

Sydnee: I was very much—I mean, Jewel's whole look—I also, on a very shallow note, I, despite having braces, still have crooked teeth to this day. And I remember the first time I watched Jewel sing thinking, "She—we both have crooked teeth!"

[all laugh]

Sydnee: I loved that. As a teenage girl, it was very meaningful to me that she didn't have her teeth fixed, because my teeth were also crooked. And are to this day. [laughs quietly] So... yeah, I tried to—I tried to be like Jewel. Her music made me cry. It still makes me cry.

Raleigh: Yeah, obviously.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: But it's also 2020, so most things make me cry.

Raleigh: Sure.

Taylor: Yeah... she had some—

Raleigh: Doesn't take much.

Taylor: She had a later—she had a later bop. What was that, uh—the "Hands" song was good, and then that, uh—

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: —"Am I Standin' Still?" That song?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: She had a couple later songs, you know. I—I remember.

Sydnee: Yeah, no, I loved some of her later songs. Um... yeah. [laughs] I—I really got into some of her later stuff, and then I didn't really make the country turn. I've never been a huge country fan, and so when she went full in the country dire—it was a natural progression for her, but, I mean, it was just not my favorite stuff, but—

Raleigh: It is on that edge between country and alternative. Even, like, in "*Pieces of You*," there are moments where it sounds very... I could get that transition.

Taylor: Wait, so she—she went—sorry. She went all the way to country at the end? I didn't follow her that far. Her and Taylor Swift really did go in opposite directions. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah, it really was opposite.

Sydnee: Yeah, she started with this, like, really raw folk stuff, kinda made a pop turn, and then ended country.

Raleigh: And there was some pop in the middle?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And see? Taylor Swift just came out with her first alternative folk album, and has been pop in between, but started out country. Man! Taylor Swift just took Jewel's career and said, "Let me flip it."

Sydnee: "Let me flip it." [laughs] It really is. And I guess she has said recently in interviews that she is gonna come out with another—like, what she calls, like, a bookend to *Pieces of You*.

Raleigh: Oh yeah.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: Like, back to the raw, folk, honest stuff that made her Jewel... supposedly. And I—I will be—I mean—

Raleigh: So we'll be talking about that when that comes out.

Sydnee: I'll be right there for that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, "Life Uncommon" is a good song she did later. I sing that to the girls sometimes to go to sleep, so I would recommend that. But, um—but thank you both. And again, I would recommend, if you are not familiar with the album *Pieces of You*, it's very good, but that—that is a good point, Tey, that you made. That song, "*Pieces of You*," the title song, um, does have the F-slur in it, so that is a... it is—I skip it when I listen to the album.

Taylor: Yeah, it's not fun—it's not fun to listen to now, for me. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: No, no, and I wouldn't want to recommend to people to listen to it without knowing that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, what's up next, Tey?

Taylor: Well, um, I was very happy to see that there is new *Animaniacs* in the world. It just came out on Hulu. Uh, so I haven't gotten a chance to check it out yet, but I loved the *Animaniacs*, as, uh, as a young person. Um, I hope it holds the test of time, but I wanna watch some *Animaniacs* and talk about. Originally I think it came out in '93, I think? '93 or '95? I think '93. Uh—

Sydnee: Something like that. I'm excited. We've seen one episode of the new *Animaniacs*, and it—in my opinion, it holds up. So I'm really excited to show the girls more of both the old and the new.

Raleigh: And I've never seen original *Animaniacs*, so.

Sydnee: They're good.

Taylor: Yeah, it's good. I was a bigger fan of *Tiny Toons* when I was young, but they both were kind of on at the same time, produced by the same people. Uh, but as I got older, like, my teenage self appreciated *Animaniacs* a lot more, 'cause I think it was kind of that—had those jokes meant for adults, even though it was a kids' show.

Sydnee: Well, I think that'll be fun. I look forward to that. And thank you again, both of you, for... [laughs quietly] ... indulging me.

Raleigh: It was a journey.

Sydnee: [laughs] Um, yeah. I didn't realize the journey I was about to go on, so—so thank you. Or Justin. Watching Justin, like—

Raleigh: Oh man.

Sydnee: —body surf across the kitchen counter, with discomfort—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: To get away.

Sydnee: —yeah, to get away from the song "Pieces of You" was a lot. Um, but thank you. Thank you, listeners. Uh, I hope that you all have a safe, socially distanced holiday, where you have lovely Zoom or whatever other digital platform you gather on gatherings with your family, and not in person. Please, please.

Taylor: Please.

Sydnee: Please. Um, but eat something that brings you joy. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: You can have a meal together over Zoom.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: It's fine. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: We'll be communicating with Teylor over Zoom, or... Skype. I'm trying to remember what program we're using.

Raleigh: It's Skype.

Sydnee: Skype.

Teylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Something. Something were I look at Teylor on the computer.
[laughs quietly]

Teylor: You can watch me eat tofurkey. I'm gonna try to make tofurkey for the first time.

Raleigh: Ooh!

Sydnee: Uh, thank you. Go to MaximumFun.org for a lot of wonderful podcasts you would enjoy. You can tweet at us, @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org for questions or comments or suggestions or whatever. And, uh, thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

[theme music begins in the background]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Teylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering...

Sydnee and Teylor: And I... am... too.

Raleigh: Should I...

Sydnee: Yeah. Jewel—

Taylor: This is—this is like the secret track at the end of a—

Raleigh: This is the secret track at the end.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Jewel redid her song "Hands" to make it about hand washing for COVID-19.

Taylor: [giggles]

Raleigh: So just remember, in this holiday season...

Taylor: Yeah.

[theme music ends]

[clip plays]

Jewel: [singing] Only hygiene matters!

[clip ends]

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs loudly]

Raleigh: That's it!

Sydnee: That's all that matters.

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] That's all that matters.

Sydnee: That's it.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [sighs] And she's still so earnest! [laughs quietly]

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[music plays]

Justin: Hi, everybody! My name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin: We're both doctors, and—

Sydnee: Nope! Just me.

Justin: Okay, well, Sydnee's a doctor, and I'm a medical enthusiast, and we create *Sawbones*: a marital tour of misguided medicine.

Sydnee: Every week, I dig through the annals of medical history to bring you the wildest, grossest, sometimes dumbest tales of ways we've tried to treat people throughout history.

Justin: And lately, we do a lot of modern fake medicine... because everything's a disaster. But it's slightly less of a disaster every Friday, right here on Maximumfun.org as we bring you *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine. And remember...

Sydnee: Don't drill a hole in your head.

[music and advertisement end]

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