

Still Buffering 343: "The Sandlot" (1993)

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[theme music plays]

Rileigh: Hello everyone, and 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: Um, I just got back from a place called Malibu Jack's.

Taylor: Sounds... sounds— does it involve boats? Sounds like something that would involve boats.

Sydnee: No. This is a place Justin has taken Charlie and Cooper several times, and they kept insisting that they wanted me to come along. And it just sounded like not my scene, but I finally went today. It is in an old, abandoned mall... in Ashland. And they have filled it with... oh, it's just everything. There's a mini golf course. There's a bounce... park. There's, like, Billy Bob style games with tickets and prizes you can get. There's, like, a roller coaster? And a boat swing-y ride.

Taylor: Ah! I was right.

Sydnee: And there's laser tag, and go-carts, and bowling... and a big giant food court. Anyway, a lot of the rides involve spinning in circles, and I feel terrible.

[laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh no.

Sydnee: Yeah, I kept trying to avoid them, but the girls were so excited, and I wanted to be a good sport. But, um, as I get older, my motion sickness has just gotten worse and worse, and now I'm the person who's, like, turning green riding all these rides. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Kids love spinning in circles.

Sydnee: I don't understand that. And I can't do the— they have a lot of, like, VR-type things. I can't do those either. It's like, I know I'm not in that world, and so when my visual input starts saying that I am... ugh. It's just, like, instant nausea.

Rileigh: Are you saying you refuse to partake in make believe, and imagination, and creativity, 'cause your brain refuses to accept that it's your reality? [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I played the claw games.

Rileigh: Okay.

Sydnee: I told 'em, like, "Just let me do the claw games. I'm great at those."

Rileigh: Did you win any? Did you win anything?

Sydnee: Yeah. I always win.

Rileigh: Well, what— what'd you win?

Sydnee: Candy. They wanted to do the candy ones.

Rileigh: Well, those aren't very fun.

Sydnee: They wanted specific candies, though. They had these, like, gummy hot dogs. They look like hot dogs but they're made of gummies. So, like, I had to manipulate to get just gummy hot dogs. And I'm very good at claw machines, but I'm bad at riding rides.

Rileigh: Well, we all have our strengths.

Taylor: That's fine. You've a ride parent and a claw game parent.

Sydnee: They have a— the entire thing is owned by, like, the one company, and so even all the different restaurants in the food court are all just, like... they're all the same thing, right? So they have a place where you can get hot dogs and hamburgers, and then they have a place called The Watering Hole where you can get, like, liquor [laughs quietly] and beer. And then they have a place, uh, for hibachi food. They have a pizza place, and they have a cookie place called Chunk.

Rileigh: That sounds good.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Except it's got, like, an umlaut over the U, so I guess it's like...

Rileigh: Chünk?

Sydnee: Chünk?

Rileigh: I think that's how that works, right?

Sydnee: I don't know. And then they have a custard place. Anyway, it's quite the thing. They have beer on draft.

Rileigh: Does the custard place have a— does the custard place have a fun name?

Sydnee: It's...

Rileigh: Cüstard?

Sydnee: I don't know... Whit's old-fashioned custard or something. You know?

Rileigh: Oh. Well, no. That's not fun.

Sydnee: They're relying on "old-fashioned" in there somewhere.

Rileigh: Like olde with an E?

Sydnee: Like Old-ee fashioned.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I don't know. The food was okay. And, I mean, you know, they've got beer on draft. That's exciting.

Rileigh: That is exciting. Can you just walk around with it?

Sydnee: No, they have, like, a very clearly— like, they have giant signs all around the food court that are like, "Do not take your alcohol past this point."

Raleigh: Yeah, that makes sense.

Sydnee: 'Cause, like, the bowling is directly across from the food court, so I think you'd have a natural inclination. I mean, you're bowling.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: To, you know, want to grab a brew.

Raleigh: So you can't even have it while you bowl?

Sydnee: Well, I didn't try. I don't know. Guess I could've attempted.

Raleigh: Yeah. Although I was gonna say, your kids are kind of small for bowling. I feel like the ball would just, like, tip 'em over.

Sydnee: Well, they make smaller balls for kids. But Charlie and I just had this conversation the other day. She said, "I've never been bowling."

And I said, "Well, it's not, like, my favorite thing. But if you want to go bowling we could all go bowling. [laughs quietly] I don't mind."

And she's like, "Nah. I'm way too little. Those balls are huge."

And I'm like, "Well, they make kid— like, kids can ball. Like, they make lighter balls. Like, they have bumpers in the lanes. Kids can bowl."

She's like, "Nah. There's just no way I could lift that ball."

I'm like, "No, you— [laughs quietly] they— they facilitate child bowling." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: You know, her fear is probably actually what Cooper would do once she got her hands on a big heavy bowling ball, which I don't blame her for that.

Sydnee: They also have axe throwing at this place.

Raleigh: That's fun.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I'm very bad at it.

Sydnee: Yeah, I'm not very good at axe throwing.

Raleigh: Justin's very good at it. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, he picked it up right away. I'll never really get over the embarrassment that Justin's better at axe throwing than me.

Raleigh: Well, you're better at claw games.

Sydnee: We each bring something to the table, really.

Raleigh: [laughs] You need an axe throwing partner and a claw game partner. That's... that's a perfect union.

Sydnee: Um... that's not— but we're not talking about Malibu Jack's today. [laughs quietly] Now that I've experienced it, I fear I will be forced to go back many times, so I'll tell you more stories about Malibu Jack's some other time.

Raleigh: I'll be anxiously waiting on the edge of my seat.

Sydnee: It's a whole mall of things. It's a whole old mall.

Raleigh: I know I would've been all about that as a kid, 'cause I loved me some Billy Bob's, so I know I would've been all about that.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, it's... I mean, it doesn't have, like, the charm of Billy Bob's in the sense that, like, there are no decaying... giant animatronics.

[pause]

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: That... don't— like, all their parts don't move, but also it's the last one in the country, and no one knows how to fix them anymore, I guess?

Rileigh: But they're not gonna get rid of 'em.

Sydnee: But they're not gonna— no. Do you know the— now, I— don't hold me to this. But I am 99% certain we have the last Billy Bob's... here.

Rileigh: That makes sense.

Sydnee: Like, I'm fairly certain we are not officially the last remaining Billy Bob's. Technically in Barbersville, not in Huntington. Technically in Barbersville. I mean, close enough.

Rileigh: It's the same. It's the same place.

Sydnee: Yes. And so I don't know, like, how you get those. How do you do the maintenance on those guys? On the cheerleader who sings "Desperado"?

Rileigh: It sounds like we need an engineer to come save our town. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: That sounds like the plot of a Hallmark movie. Big city engineer comes to fix the animatronics that's— this place is run by the local... small-town... animatronic gal. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: At the world's last remaining Billy Bob's.

Rileigh: Yeah. And big city engineer has to come fix it.

Sydnee: You know the pizza, it really isn't bad.

Rileigh: It's not.

Sydnee: It's really not.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like, you'd expect it to be very bad, and it's really not very bad. Anyway, we have the last Billy Bob's here, if you are ever looking to make a pilgrimage to the last Billy Bob's. It is here.

Rileigh: As I'm sure many people do.

Sydnee: There— it's right next to the mall. So, like, you can go visit the mall.

Rileigh: Well, really it's right next to the Cracker Barrel, Syd. [laughs]

Sydnee: Okay. Well, it is next— okay, physically, you're right. It is next to the Cracker Barrel. But I am not advising you to eat at the Cracker Barrel. I am saying you can come see the mall. We have a food court. You can eat at Big Loafer. [pause] There's meatloaf. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Do you think going from the Billy Bob's pizza to the Big Loafer meatloaf is a good... good tummy choice? 'Cause I feel like my tummy couldn't handle that.

Sydnee: Well, you can come and go to Claire's if you prefer. We have Claire's. We still have a Claire's.

Rileigh: A bottomless pit.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Go to Billy Bob's and then come buy yourself at least 32 items at Claire's.

Rileigh: 'Cause you're gonna get ten and they're gonna tell you you have to get 20 more.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Buy 5, get 20 free. And then if you've bought 5, and they are— so— yeah, it's endless.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, no. We're gonna talk about *The Sandlot*. So did you all both watch this movie?

Rileigh: Yes.

[pause]

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Taylor, had you seen it? Back in the day, back in our youth when it would've been popular?

Taylor: I definitely saw it. There are a lot of things that I remember differently that I'm sure I saw it with a kid brain, but I definitely saw it.

Sydnee: Raleigh, I assuming this was the first time you saw it.

Raleigh: Uh, no. You know, funny enough, I don't know why, but I remember very clearly being in an elementary school classroom and voting on what movie to watch for field day. You know, where we got one day where we just got to sit inside and watch movies and have snacks, and then the next day it was the one with all the inflatables and fun stuff. For the movie day, everyone voted on this movie, and I had no idea what it was. And I voted for the other one that was probably, like, *High School Musical*. I don't know. I voted for whatever the other one was and got stuck watching this and class and I was really upset about it when I was, like, 11.

Sydnee: So really negative memories of this. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well, it was more so just, like, I really was— really was vibing with the other movie that was presented to me. And they—

Sydnee: When did they stop doing all the stuff on field day with water balloons and, like, egg and spoon races?

Raleigh: Um, we had water balloons. That was just— we had two days. We had two days at the end of the year that were, like, fun. I don't know if one was when we did testing and the second half of the day we got to watch movies. Um, and then we had the fun water balloon, water slide... day. It was two days.

Sydnee: You know what I hated most out of those sorts of things? Did you ever have to do the thing where you have an orange under your chin and you have to pass it to the next person under their chin, and you can't use your hands?

[pause]

Rileigh: No.

Sydnee: You all never did that?

[pause]

Taylor: I thought that was like a makeout party thing, not a field day thing.

Rileigh: Yeah.

[pause]

Sydnee: Well, my field days were very different. [wheezes]

Taylor: You had a spicy field day.

Sydnee: Anyway... [laughs quietly] I guess it all depends on when you grew up.

Rileigh: That seems like a lot of contact for... elementary school.

Sydnee: Well, that's why I was saying! It was, like, my least favorite thing to do. Um... so *The Sandlot* is from 1993, so I would've been 10 years old when this movie came out, which was, like... I mean, you know, this is age— aimed at that sort of age. 10 to 13, preteen kind of thing. I would say it's a little young for teenagers. Um, I... I remember that it was extremely popular and everyone loved it, which as I was watching it now as an adult I was trying to figure out why, as kids, we loved this movie so much. 'Cause it's very clearly written by adults about a time that, especially as a ten-year-old, I knew nothing about and would have no context for. You know? Like, the movie's set in 1962.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I had no idea about that.

Rileigh: I bet our dad really liked this movie.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean it—

Taylor: [crosstalk]—

Sydnee: Oh, go ahead, Tey.

Taylor: No, I was just gonna say, I assumed that the target audience was reflective dads. Not children.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Right? Well, but— okay. So—

Raleigh: I bet when that came out Dad was really into it.

Sydnee: I agree with you. I agree with you. It feels like a movie for our Dads. It's a very boomer movie. Um, but at the same time, there's a significant amount of the plot where a bunch of children are trying to thwart a giant dog. And so, like, is that what grown-ups like?

[pause]

Are they banking entirely on nostalgia?

Taylor: Uh...

Raleigh: I was gonna say, I can't answer that, as a not-grown-up. I can't tell you what they like.

Taylor: I think maybe it fills the same void as, like, *A Christmas Story*, you know? It has the same setup. Like, who's— that movie was kind of for both. Or nobody. I don't know. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Everybody or nobody, equally.

Taylor: Young old souls and old young souls.

Raleigh: Maybe it's just one of those cases of like, they knew that families were gonna have to watch it together. So it was like, what do we make for the kids that have to watch this, and what do we make for the grown-ups that have to watch this? You know how *Spongebob* always had jokes in it that were for the parents that were watching with the kids?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Like, maybe this was like, overall it was for the parents to enjoy watching it, but then you had to throw a big dog in there so that kids would get a kick out of it.

Sydnee: Um, I did not enjoy it as much as an adult.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [holding back laughter] Watching it, I was trying— Justin caught me fast-forwarding a little bit through some of, like, the "Get the ball with the erector set" moments. 'Cause I'm like, "Oh my god. I can't with this."

Um, but— okay. So the general plot of *The Sandlot*. There's a bunch of...

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] There's a bunch of kids in 1962 who play baseball on a sand lot. And at one point the ball gets hit over the fence into the yard of this giant dog named The Beast that everybody's scared of, and they have this whole backstory about how The Beast used to kill people. Anyway, the point is... they need to get the ball back, because it is a baseball that was signed by Babe Ruth. Because our main character protagonist did not understand the significance of a baseball signed by Babe Ruth, and he took it from his, let's be honest, jerk stepfather.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Um, and so now they've gotta get this ball back. So they go through some shenanigans to try to get the ball back. They finally do, um, make friends with the dog and the guy who owns the dog. And... I don't know. And then they all grow up?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. And some of 'em become, like, very bad people. I don't know. Who were ones that invented, like, mini malls. [laughs] And, like...

Sydnee: Right?

Taylor: Like, I don't... and also the one little kid— and I know when I saw it when I was young, I didn't think much of it. But the kid that pretends to drown just so he assault... the lifeguard. Like, forcibly make out with her. And then they grow up to get married. I'm like, I don't know— I don't know about that. That plot line wouldn't fly today. [laughs]

Sydnee: Right? No, that whole plot line, his whole thing. So, like, yeah. There's a scene where they go to the public pool and one of the boys pretends to drown so that the lifeguard, who he thinks is hot, will give him mouth-to-mouth. Um, that... yes. That whole scene I was like, "Is thi— I don't remember this! This is in the movie?!" I think—

Raleigh: That scene stuck with me for so long. I can't tell you. Like, the one image I had in my brain from the movie was watching that in a class room and the teacher just being like, "Oh! Um... well, hmm. You're all nine. That's old enough, right? It's fine." [laughs quietly] I remember that so clearly.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Old enough for what?!

Raleigh: I guess to see people kissing? I don't know. 'Cause we all were nine, so of course it was a chorus of like "Oooh, ahhh!" When they started kissing. But, I mean, it was mouth-to-mouth. But, you know, we knew his intentions. [pause] Yeah, I don't know.

Taylor: I feel like there's always that element in any, like, I don't know, young men bonding type of movie. Where it's like, oh, you know, I can enjoy this story. This is nice. And then there's just gotta be a little casual, like, misogyny or sexual assault just thrown in there somewhere. And it's like, "Oh, okay. I'm outta this now." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's really a shame. Because, like, most of the movie is just, you know, whatever, kids playing baseball and, I mean, who cares? But, like— and they call him, by the way— I noticed they call him a perv at one point. So they recognize that what he's doing is gross. But like in a "Aww, that's so funny. He's a pervert." [laughs quietly] Like, kind of way. Like it's hilarious. And...

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] And they do, like, the major insult— I thought about this, that I saw this as a young girl. The major insult that they hurl at— when the— like, the rich kid baseball team shows up. Who are like, "We have uniforms. We're the rich kids, and we're gonna beat you all, you sandlot kids, at baseball."

Um, the insult that triggers, like, "We're gonna play you and kick your butts," is "You play baseball like a girl."

Taylor: Yeah... yeah, that seemed like that was the whole... point of that whole plot moment. 'Cause the team shows up, they hurl insults back and forth. One of 'em really throws the gauntlet by calling the other one— saying that, that you play like a girl. And then they beat them, and then that's it. It's like, so that was— is that just— is that it? That was the point?

Sydnee: What was the point of that?

Taylor: I say this with a— I still enjoyed watching this movie. But there was an element that was a bit of a primer for like, when we think of toxic masculinity we think of, like, big man raging! Rahh! Like, no, it's all, like, these little insidious things. Like the dad shaking the hand of the stepson instead of any sort of love or affection. Like, sort of dismissing him when he can't throw very well. The weird, like, approval of casual misogyny and assault. It's like, no, I think this is the stuff that creates problems down the line.

Sydnee: It does. And it's all seen, like, because it is being narrated by the adult version of one of the characters, it's very intentionally like— it's wistful. You know? It's like, "Oh. Remember the good old days when we did all these misogynist gross things? And, like, remember how my stepdad was this complete, like, unemotional, distant— [laughs] I mean, seems a little threatening, jerk that I was, like, terrified of, and I asked him to teach me to play catch and when I didn't know how to play catch even though I'd never learned, 'cause that's the whole thing, 'cause like—" They start off by saying, like, his bio dad died, right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So, like, they say that! Like, he never learned how to play catch 'cause his dad died, and now this other guy is like, "Can you teach me how to play catch, dad?" That he's being forced to call him dad. And he's like, "I can't believe you don't know how to throw. Anyway, I'm taking off for a business trip."

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "I hate my stepson and I'm not hiding it."

Taylor: Yeah. There are very charming elements of the movie, but there's a little— there's some stuff. [laughs]

Raleigh: I will say, it did make me think about the kind of man that I know now that I'm sure loved this movie as a kid. Um, and that would still watch it today and probably get a kick out of it. Like, I know that kind of man. I've met that kind of grown-up now. Like, not just ones that were like, "Oh yeah, I liked that as a kid." But I don't know. Ones that like, "Oh yeah. I know what we should watch. Let's watch *The Sandlot* as grown adults."

Sydnee: Well, 'cause there were lots of shots of, like, the— okay, the girls at the pool. This caught my attention. And, I mean, these are things I don't really think about, but I guess that they've changed. They have camera angles on these young women in bathing suits...

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: ... that are so vilely inappropriate. Just, like, I am assuming these are teenage girls. And the angles are just, like, grody! And whose eyes are those for?

Taylor: I thought the same. Like, when we first are introduced to the attractive lifeguard, like, the— when she's walking towards in the slo-mo it's like, even that one I was like, "I don't— how old is this girl?" Like, she looks like a young teenager. But then they do this very purposeful from behind shot that's just a close-up on her butt and I'm like, "Oh no! [through laughter] This isn't cool."

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. Like, there's her butt. And you're like— I mean, that was— immediately Justin went, "Oh no! How old is she? Oh no! Oh no!"

[all laugh]

Sydnee: Like, "What are we—" he kept looking at me going—

Taylor: [simultaneously] It's a whole five seconds of butt.

Sydnee: I know! He kept looking at me going "You picked this? You picked this?"

Taylor: Well, now, wait. Now, Syd, this was— you saw this movie 'cause you were on a date, and I can't imagine as a young woman seeing this movie on a date, that's a whole level that I feel like— it is odd that it's a good memory for you. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. So, I want to talk about— I want to talk about why I picked this movie. And do I regret it? Maybe. But... [laughs] before we do that...

Raleigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: Taylor, I have a message for you.

Taylor: Oh, do you?

Sydnee: I am not doing this Jum— you are not doing this— usually Taylor does our Jumbotrons, but Taylor's not gonna do this Jumbotron, because this Jumbotron is for Taylor, for your birthday!

Taylor: Aww.

Sydnee: Which was just a couple days ago. Joe Whitaker and Family say:

"Happiest of birthdays to Joe's birthday twin." Oh, and you Joe share a birthday!

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I didn't realize that. Oh, I didn't— I didn't realize that.

Raleigh: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Well, happy birthday, Joe, too.

Taylor: Happy birthday, Joe. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: "Happiest of birthdays." Yeah. [laughs] "Happiest of birthdays to Joe's birthday twin, neatest bartender and awesomest human/moth person. You make the world better by being you and we love you for it. Happy level up day! Select

two attributes to improve by one." So that was very sweet, Joe. Happy birthday Tey, happy birthday Joe, happy birthday to both of you.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, happy birthday, Joe, and thank you very much. I did not have the best birthday, so that was very sweet of you. [through laughter] Thank you.

Sydnee: Okay. So, you both probably watched this movie and thought, "Why would Sydnee pick this?"

I mean, like, it feels like an old white guy movie, right?

Taylor: A little bit.

Sydnee: Right? Like, this is a movie that old white guys watch and are like, "The good old days." [laughs quietly] But, um— and I mean, even— there are scenes like that, like where they have the block part and they've got, like, fireworks lining the streets? That's not a thing that ha— I mean, like, some of this stuff just feels like... I mean, maybe that's intentional, because it's all, like, memory.

Taylor: I mean, that maybe—

Sydnee: Like, "Do you remember the good old days when we ran around the neighborhood playing baseball by firework-light and... "

Raleigh: I don't know. That sounds like a story our dad has told before.

Sydnee: Yeah, well, maybe.

Raleigh: Just walking out with his friends, and they don't come back home till dark, and no one knows where they were, and they ride their bikes, and they tell stories, and they get in shenanigans. I don't know.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and the big bad is— it's the dog, but it's also the guy that owns the dog that's scary. And there are a lot of movies from this era where the bad— the bad guy is just, like, a weird old person. Or not even weird, just an old person that keeps to themself. And I don't know if it's just we're talking, like, limited writer room demographics in the early 90's, so it's like, "Oh, what problems did we have growing up? I don't know. Sometimes there was, like, an old person on the street that we made up stories about." [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, and specifically in this case, like, what we finally find out by the end is, like, it's an older man who also is Black, which adds a whole other layer of like, "Why were you so scared of this older gentleman?"

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: "Uhh... " [laughs quietly] Do we want to dissect that?

Taylor: And you really wreck his backyard and you almost murder his dog, and he rewards you with a really cool new baseball signed by all the Yankees. Like, I really needed an after credits scene where they fixed his fence. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: That bothered me too, the fence being knocked down. I will also say that the fence falls on the dog in a way that would never happen in movies today! [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yes, that's true.

Rileigh: Yep.

Sydnee: Yes. There would be so much outcry from the younger generation that it would be aimed at if a fence fell on a dog— the dog is fine. The dog is okay. But still. It is a very, like, intense fence-falling-on-the-dog moment. I feel like I should put that out there. The dog is fine. The dog lives. But it is an intense moment.

Taylor: I remember even my child brain being confused. 'Cause when you first see the dog it's like an animatronic giant dog, so you get the idea, like, maybe this really is a giant dog. But then the whole point is— the reveal, it's like, just a regular dog.

And even as a kid I'm like, "Well, why were they— why were they so mean to— that's just a regular dog! That's just an old regular dog. Why are these kids scared of this old regular dog?" [laughs]

Sydnee: And I think they're trying to do something that's like— again, he's looking back, and in his memory the dog was a giant. And that's why they were afraid of it. I think that's what they're trying to play around with. Which I guess can help excuse some of the more fantastic elements. When they're, like,

lowering people over the fence with pulleys... like, flying them over the fence to retrieve— or, like, building an erector set that catapult the ball back over. I don't know. Um, I... so I went on my first date in 4th grade. That's kind of early, I guess.

Raleigh: It is early. I went on my first date in 8th grade, so.

Sydnee: I will say, I went with somebody to a spaghetti social in kindergarten. So I don't know if that was a date.

[pause]

Raleigh: You've had a kindergartner. If she went to a spaghetti social with someone would you say it's a date?

Sydnee: No, but you know, we lived in Georgia at the time, and... [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well...

Sydnee: It was a different world. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Spaghetti socials are also important in West Virginia, still to this day.

Sydnee: Yeah. That's true. I don't know. Either way. I went to the movies with a kid in my 4th grade class. He asked me to the movies. And Dad took me. And we met— I don't remember his parent being there. But I feel like his parent probably was, too. We were 4th graders. Um, Dad definitely sat in the back of the theater and watched the movie, too. I bet Dad really liked it.

Taylor: I was gonna say, I bet Dad just wanted to see *The Sandlot*.

Sydnee: Yeah. But Dad sat in the back. And me and the guy who asked me to the movies sat elsewhere, not with him. But, like, where he could see us. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Oh. He sat in the back.

Sydnee: And he tried to put his arm around me, and his watch got tangled in my hair, and then I had to help him untangle his watch from my hair. I remember that.

Rileigh: That sounds about right.

Sydnee: And this was the movie we saw on my big first date.

Rileigh: And now you're married!

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] No, no. It was not Justin.

Rileigh: [simultaneously] I'm just kidding.

Taylor: That's not the reveal. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: But that'd be a funnier— that'd be a funnier end to that story.

Sydnee: It would be a funnier. End. No, it was at the cinema which is now a church downtown. That movie theater is now a church.

Rileigh: Oh yeah. It's actually not the only movie theater we had that's now a church. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Is there another one that's a church?

Rileigh: Aren't there multiple? Or am I thinking of the comedy club that's now a church?

Sydnee: The comedy club is church.

Rileigh: Comedy club is now a church, okay.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Wasn't it always a church, in a way?

Sydnee: [laughs] Everything in Huntington always becomes— like, it either becomes a church or a bar. Like, everything's on a trajectory to being a church or a bar.

Raleigh: Or both.

Taylor: I don't know what it says about my neighborhood in Brooklyn, but everything's becoming a healthcare center, and I don't know if that's good. Sometimes I feel like they're preparing for something. [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, I think—

Raleigh: I was gonna say, that would be concerning for me, I think.

Taylor: Yeah. Like, everything that closed— I mean, I'm like— I'm not in cool area. I'm more out, like in a— like, where people— regular people live. And, like, any business that closes, there's a healthcare center that opens up.

Sydnee: That's really interesting.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Hmm. Is it? Or is it scary? [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, I mean, maybe they're trying to get healthcare out to people who need it? And that's good.

Taylor: No, 'cause these are all, like, the— these are all, like, the pay to play healthcare places, you know?

Sydnee: Ohh. Doc in a box kind of things?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Where, like, you're gonna pay a lot to go to those but, you know, it's on your block.

Sydnee: Uh... that's a whole o—

Raleigh: [crosstalk] All I have near me is a little strip mall type thing with one big awning, and the font is the same for all the businesses, and it's the same big awning for all the businesses. And it's, um... um, deli, market, tailor, cobbler, Pilates studio. And—

Sydnee: There's a cobbler?

Rileigh: Yes. Right next to the tailor. Um, not this Teylor. Like a— like a tai-lor.

Teylor: Like a real tailor.

Rileigh: Yeah. Like a T-A-I-L-O—that kind of t— yeah. Um, yeah. Right next to the tailor there's a cobbler, and it's all in that one big thing with the same awning and the same font on it. So I don't know if, like, one person or one group just has a wide variety of businesses, but, uh...

Teylor: I would say I bet at least the tailor and the cobbler are the same person.

Rileigh: I would think so.

Teylor: [crosstalk] someone advertising their skills.

Rileigh: And, like, deli and market next to each other. That feels like they're probably the same.

Teylor: That's one business, yeah.

Rileigh: But then the Pilates studio at the end, I'm just like, what... where'd you come from?

Sydnee: Maybe it's like a big family business, and like all the different members of the family— like, they're all, like, living their... dream, and have their own little business where they do their skill set. [laughs quietly] Wouldn't that be nice? [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: I mean, that would be nice.

Teylor: I think that's also called the mafia sometimes.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah I've never [crosstalk].

Taylor: They just own the whole building, and then they own the whole block, and sometimes they own the whole town. It's so nice. It's a family business.

Sydnee: And they'll protect you, is the really cool thing. You do have to pay them for that, and also it's not optional, but they will protect you! [laughs]

Taylor: And they will take your garbage away. They're good about that.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's true. I've never been in any of them. They could be fronts. This is a good point.

Sydnee: I have not seen anyone advertising that they're a cobbler... ever in my life. I think that's kind of cool. I mean, I assume that— I guess— if you asked me, like, "Are there still cobblers?" I would've said, like, "Well, there must be. Like, obviously— I mean, there must be, somewhere." But, like, I've never seen—

Taylor: You believe that cobblers exist. It's not like elves.

Sydnee: [laughs] I've just, I've never seen a business that does that in my whole life, that I know of, that I remember.

Raleigh: It's a tiny little place. You can, like, see the whole place through the glass when you walk by, and all that's in there that you can see is just like... you know, some threads and some fabrics and some shoes, and whatever the little stands are that cobblers use to cobble. Um... yeah. I also didn't know that that was a real thing that exists, but there's one right around the corner if I ever need... cobbling... services. So yeah.

Sydnee: That's very cool. That's very old school.

Raleigh: Again, it is a little sketch, though. 'Cause how many real other cobblers are there? Maybe there's something else going on.

Taylor: Well, wait. I don't wanna spread cobbler propaganda. There are real cobblers. I know of a few. I've been recommended some. Like, as somebody that wears the same boots until the soles fall off, cobblers are absolutely a modern career path. [laughs]

Rileigh: I know logically it is a career path and a profession that exists. It's just the seeing one in the wild is unexpected.

Taylor: I just don't— I don't wanna— like, cobbler propaganda podcast. We don't want that label. We respect cobblers here.

Sydnee: We're a bad cobbler podcast.

Taylor: [laughs] I mean, we're probably bad at— I don't think any of us could cobble.

Sydnee: No. No. Well, I've never required the services, 'cause most of my adult life I've worn the same... not the same pair of Chuck Taylors, but just once they all have holes in them I get new ones. And I don't know if you can take Chuck Taylors to a cobbler.

Taylor: No. They will not. I don't think— when the top half is paper, that's the problem. The bottom half is, you know, fine.

Sydnee: I was gonna say, I feel like they would laugh at me if I brought them my... [laughs] my Converse and said, "Can you... "

Rileigh: "Cobble?"

Sydnee: "Please?"

Taylor: "Co—cobble my Converse?"

Sydnee: "Can you cobble— there's holes in them." [laughs]

Taylor: That requires the tailor, actually.

Sydnee: Ah, yeah. No, that's true.

Rileigh: [simultaneously] There you go. Next door.

Sydnee: The stripes have worn off the sides. Um...

Taylor: You should've gotten PF Flyers!

Sydnee: Yeah. Aw, man! You know what? I was— as we were watching the movie I asked Justin, "Are PF Flyers real?" and he did know.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then I— are they?

Taylor: No, they absolutely are, because Mom got me a pair back when I played tennis in, like, middle school.

Sydnee: Aww. They're kind of cool. I'm just looking at them. Did you like 'em?

Taylor: I feel like because— I don't— I mean, [quietly] I don't know. [normal volume] That's a weird thing, like, for a small child. "Do you like your tennis shoes?" They were fine. They were shoes.

Sydnee: They look similar to Converse.

Raleigh: Yeah, very similar.

Taylor: Yeah. I think mine were white with the green on the side, but that's usually green is, I think, the color that they always are in some way. The writing.

Sydnee: Yeah, I see both. They got both. That's kinda groovy. I mean, nothing'll ever peel me— yeah! These look very similar to Converse. Nothing'll ever peel me away from my... my Chucks. But... they're kinda groovy. I get it. I like it. Um...

Raleigh: Well, you would. You only wear Converse.

Sydnee: I know.

Taylor: I don't know. Maybe you should switch out a pair, see how you feel.

Sydnee: Try out some PF Flyers? That would make me seem— I feel like that would be such an eccentricity if I just started wearing PF Flyers all the time.

Taylor: I don't— if a doctor walked into your room at the hospital wearing PF Flyers, [through laughter] I don't know how you would— I don't know what I would— I'd be like— this is gonna be the best medical service, or I'm going to die. There's no in between.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't—well, I mean, I will say I get a reaction from the— especially now that I wear purple Chucks. The navies didn't get quite the same reaction, but then Charlie and Cooper started buying me purple, 'cause they thought I needed more color in my life. And I do get quite a reaction from those. Not infrequently. It's usually positive

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: That's good.

Sydnee: Um... before we were talking about shoes— oh. So, my recollection is that I don't— we watched the movie. In my mind it was all about a mean dog and that was, like, all I remembered about it. Like, I don't know, there's baseball and a mean dog. Not really my thing. I got why I was taken to the movie on a date, 'cause he played baseball. So I thought maybe he liked— like, it's like a baseball movie, so he must... like baseball. And also there's, like, your classic, like, "this movie is for teen boys" scene where they all puke.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: So that was the scene that confused me, 'cause in my head they got drunk, and the song "Tequila" played, and that's why they all puked. But it was chewing tobacco. And I just felt like I got— what are they called when you're— a Mandala effect moment. I'm like, "No, I was sure they drank." It was tobacco.

Sydnee: No, it was tobacco. And I remembered that they puked at some point. Like, as we got closer to that scene I was like, "I am not watching this. I do not want to watch a bunch of young boys vomit. Like, I'm an adult. I don't have to watch this." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] It's a very disgusting scene.

Sydnee: It's really grody.

Raleigh: It is very gross.

Sydnee: And I— I feel like they do— there are a lot of— that's a thing in movies. They really think that, like, guys wanna see people puke or poop or something, and it'll be funny.

Taylor: Well, and then there's, like, the movies that are like the feminist take on that where we're gonna show you a bunch of women puking and pooping. And it's like, you know, I don't— I don't wanna see this in any gender. [laughs]

Raleigh: *Bridesmaids*.

Sydnee: Yeah!

Taylor: Yes, exactly. Yes.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Exactly. Like, that's all I could think during that scene was like, I don't— I mean, if we're trying to take things back from men, this is not high on my list. [laughs quietly] Having diarrhea in a movie is not, like... the pinnacle of, like... "We've come a long way, baby."

Taylor: I would like adequate pay before I'm allowed to poop myself on film for laughs. Just...

Sydnee: I know. [laughs] It's just not funny, either! Like, it's not— I don't know. In my personal opinion, it's not funny. There's lots of things [crosstalk].

Raleigh: I feel like we could advance the world of comedy more.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: [crosstalk]

Taylor: I mean, not us personally. I don't think we—[laughs]

Raleigh: No. No, not us. I just mean we as a species.

Taylor: I just don't— I didn't want to take on that burden. You all can, I just... I know my limits.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: No. I'm now six months into law school. If anything I've become significantly less funny. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Um, but that is my— my connotation with this movie, is that it was special to me 'cause, like, you know, what was the first date you ever went on? I saw the movie *The Sandlot*. I always remembered that. I thought that, uh, the— Ben was dreamy.

Taylor: Benny.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Benny. I thought he was dreamy.

Taylor: I would say I think that's the one salvation in this movie is Benny's just great the whole time, the whole way. He brings in the kid that, you know, is left out of the group. Helps him out. He gets a good ending. Benny. 10/10 dude.

Sydnee: Yeah. Benny is cool.

Raleigh: Can I ask, though, I feel like usually when we watch these movies from like the, you know, 90's, early 2000's, there's people in them when they're much younger that I've now seen in a bunch of stuff when they've grown up, and I'm like, "Oh, I know that person." I did not recognize anyone in this movie as someone I'd seen in something else. Is this one of those rare occasions where, like, this movie blew up and it was huge, and then no one in it ever did anything, like, as of-note— as notable?

Sydnee: I think— I think— Justin started giving me a— he was, like, googling while we were watching a "where are they now" of all the cast members.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And there were some... I mean, if you wanna take yourself on a journey, please feel free to do the same. I what repeat all the things, but no. I don't think the majority of them continued, like, an acting career. I think the one kid with the red hair is like— does TikTok stuff, and is pretty popular on TikTok.

But I don't think... I don't think— I mean, the stepdad is Denis Leary. But I mean—

Taylor: I was gonna say, there's one exception here, but it's Denis Leary.
[laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs] Otherwise...

Raleigh: I just, like— I was expecting it. I was looking for it. Like, I was looking at all those boys and I was convinced that I was sure I was going to know some of them from something. 'Cause that usually is the case. But, uh...

Taylor: Well, and also James Earl Jones is the—

Sydnee: Yes. James Earl Jones is the— is, uh— what's his—

Taylor: Mis—Mertle? is that...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Sounds right.

Taylor: Mr. Mertle. Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Yeah, I knew him. Um... I don't know why I just thought that the boys in that movie went on to be stars. I don't know what other movie I was thinking of, but.

Taylor: I feel like so many of them look like other famous people. Like the one that makes out with the lifeguard looks like Steve-O to me. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah?

Sydnee: Yeah, I can see that.

Taylor: And the redhead looks so much like, uh... Billy Joe from Green Day.

Sydnee: Yeah?

Raleigh: Yeah?

Sydnee: Yeah. There—

Taylor: Also, I know there's another actor that looks like that. Like, that is a blueprint of some type of person. I don't know.

Sydnee: No, there were quite a few kids that Justin was like, "Is that so-and-so?" And then he was googling and like, "No? Huh." Like, this was the only movie this person did. Or like, they went on to a career in something else entirely. I don't know. Like, this was not...

Raleigh: [laughs] The pictures on, like, the google thing when you look up the movie and it shows you the cast real quick with like names underneath, usually when you look up movies it's like, a headshot or, like, a red carpet picture or something when they're celebrities. But all these guys it's just— one of them is like a picture of him from the movie, and the rest just look like selfies. Um...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Very interesting lineup. I don't blame 'em, honestly. I feel like probably there are a lot of people that do movies like that that blow up unintentionally and they're like, "Nah. That wasn't for me."

Taylor: That's probably the safest way to be a child star, right? Like, you make your one big hit, you collect those residuals, and then you just do whatever you want with your life.

Sydnee: Then you're done.

Raleigh: I love seeing old Disney stars on TikTok talk about how they just, like, left acting, and now they just have a regular, normal life.

Taylor: I have to ask, 'cause I don't know how this lines up timeline-wise, but— okay. So two of the boys are Timmy and Tommy, and one of them repeats the other one. Is this before or after *Animal Crossing* came out?

Sydnee: Hmm.

Raleigh: Ohh.

Sydnee: Well, this was '93.

Raleigh: That's gotta be before, right?

Taylor: I mean, I'm not— their names are—

Raleigh: Their names are Timmy and Tommy.

Taylor: Okay. Right? And then they're twins. And one repeats the other.

Raleigh: [simultaneously] Timmy and Tommy.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] This has to be— yeah, this had to have been before.

Taylor: That is a weird— but that can't— is that a weird coincidence?

Raleigh: That can't be. Right?

Taylor: I don't know. I just... it took me a minute 'cause I was like, "Oh, these kinda— these two characters remind me of the two kids from *Animal Crossing*." I'm like, "Wait. They have the same names, and the same gimmick. [through laughter] This can't be accidental."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I am— no, I think you're total— it has to be. This ha— and I mean, this would've had to be first. There's no way.

Raleigh: I think the first *Animal Crossing* came out in 2001, I think.

Sydnee: Um...

Raleigh: So yeah, before.

Sydnee: I am reading, uh, reviews of this. Like, I looked on Rotten Tomatoes. 64%, by the way, which I would say is a little high, Rotten Tomatoes, but that's just me. I'm guessing there are a lot of, um— a lot of white dudes of the boomer generation who are up in that score. [laughs] Who are in here like— like "Best movie ever. Love this movie."

Raleigh: Yeah, is that the critic score or is that the audience score?"

Sydnee: Oh, hold on. Well, I mean... no!

Raleigh: [simultaneously] I just think it's funny to see the difference.

Sydnee: So the au— the critic score is 64%. The audience score is 89%! [laughs]

Raleigh: That checks out. That makes sense.

Sydnee: There you go. Um, but I'm just— I am loving, like... "*The Sandlot's* nostalgia for simpler times. A single-sex world seems to be a key component." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Oh.

Sydnee: Oh, this is— this is clever. "The kids even have their own treehouse, which means that the production designer is the only person connected with this project who actually went out on a limb."

[pause]

Taylor: Oh. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: "Here's another 90's movie that was beloved by boys." [laughs]

Raleigh: Well... yeah.

Taylor: Okay. Yeah.

Raleigh: That's fair.

Taylor: I did really want to know, like, that— the whole setup. I think... suspension of disbelief. But the— so there's this lot that they get to use for free, and they've built a treehouse in it? And it hangs right over where this evil dog is. It's just all very convenient architecture [through laughter] in this story line.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: This is a positive review. "I like this movie 'cause I like doggies and baseball.

Taylor: Okay, yeah.

Raleigh: Well, yeah. If you like those two things.

Sydnee: I mean, I think if you like doggies and baseball and hijinks... I think if you actually look at the 1960's, as some of these critics call it, "the age of innocence," or...

Raleigh: Hmm...

Sydnee: "... simpler times," which I would say I do not agree with either of those takes.

Raleigh: For whom? Simpler times for whom?

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: When they say "simpler times" do they just mean, like, technology wasn't as hard?

Taylor: No, they don't mean that. They don't mean that at all. [laughs]

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: "I don't know how to use a computer, and back then there weren't computers."

Raleigh: I think people that say they were simpler times usually mean they could just do and say whatever they wanted and there were was no consequence, 'cause they were the only ones who had a voice. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: And you didn't have to have any empathy for people unlike you.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And it's very simple when you live your life that way.

[pause]

Sydnee: They try— I will say, they try in the movie— the misogyny is just rampant. I kept thinking, like, isn't there a part where girls show up? Nope.

Raleigh: I thought so, too.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: I think I made that up.

Taylor: This definitely— other than the one, the little bit of autonomy of the girl diving in the pool to save the one character, this is a sexy lamp situation where all women could be sexy lamps. Even, like, the mother. Like, the scene where she has to sort of formally ask her [dubiously] *husband*... to pay attention to her son... in, like, a very— like, it seems like, "Oh no. He'll say yes. We're gonna try this. We'll try this with this man that lives in our house and I have married! I have wedded!"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah.

Raleigh: Very sexy lamp.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, you just know that kids gonna grow up to have, like, a Sorkin-esque difficult relationship with his father. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I don't know. I'm just gonna say that he and Benny stay friends forever, you know. He announces while Benny plays, and I'm just gonna say he's got— they're best friends, and that's the one good thing that came out of this. Two best friends forever.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: yeah.

Sydnee: And I went on my first date.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: There you go.

Sydnee: My second was to Camden Park.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: The local amusement park.

Raleigh: I don't know which of those is worse.

Taylor: I mean, danger-wise... you know. You were not gonna get tetanus at *The Sandlot*.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: That's true.

Sydnee: But I did not— yeah. I won't talk about— we'll save the second date for another episode. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: About Camden Park.

Taylor: Yeah. That's gonna—

Sydnee: Yeah. [through laughter] An episode about Camden Park.

Taylor: I don't think I wanna fly home to do that research.

Sydnee: Mm-mm. No, no.

Raleigh: I certainly don't.

Sydnee: Um, well, thank you both for—[laughs quietly] for enduring *The Sandlot* for me. I appreciate it.

Raleigh: It wasn't that bad. It really was— there— yes, there is some problems.

Taylor: [simultaneously] I enjoyed it.

Raleigh: Of course, yeah. But it's just one of those that's easy to turn on and just kind of... turn your brain off.

Taylor: I'm also now— I need to know the end of this Timmy Tommy situation from *Animal Crossing*. 'cause I looked it up and there are apparently— lots of people have put the— they've put to dots together, but no one's said anything officially, so I don't know.

Raleigh: Interesting.

Sydnee: Hmm. Uh, Taylor, what's next?

Taylor: Next is— I wanna talk about a band that was one of my college favorites. It's a band called The Ergs. But I think that the album— it's a little later in their career that I want you to listen to is *Hindsight Is 20/20, My Friend*.

Sydnee: Alright.

Raleigh: Sounds good.

Sydnee: That is what we will do for next week. Thank you both. As we've mentioned, *The Sandlot* is... you know. There some people who really love it. [laughs quietly] If you're not interested in a movie where misogyny is just sort of, like, intrinsic to the plot, perhaps take a pass on this one. But if you like doggies and baseball... I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah. That's been vouched for by people who love doggies and baseball.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [laughs quietly] Um, thank you all. Thank you Maximum Fun. You should go to Maximumfun.org. Check out all the great podcasts there. You can tweet at us at @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering...

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

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: I don't remember if I ever got the soundtrack to this movie. I think I really liked it.

Raleigh: Yeah?

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

[chord]

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