

Still Buffering 344: The Ergs!

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[theme music plays]

Rileigh: [through laughter] Hello, 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.

Rileigh: Syd?

Sydnee: I'm sorry. I'm here.

Rileigh: Did you forget what comes after five?

Sydnee: No... I know what comes after five.

Taylor: You're a doctor.

Sydnee: I was having trouble functioning this early.

Rileigh: For those listening at home, we do a count-in to make sure we're all in sync, and we alternate and we count to six. And it's like a one, then two, then three kind of situation, like how you do when you count to six. And Sydnee got to six and... [laughs quietly] just wasn't there.

Sydnee: I don't know! I just spaced out. I was... do you know the thought I was having? Gosh, this is— I am not— okay. I'm not a morning person. I don't like mornings. I don't function well in the morning.

Rileigh: Same.

Taylor: Same.

Sydnee: I— I would rather sleep in and stay up late than get up early and go to bed early. That's just how I'm— I've been that way my entire life. [laughs quietly]

I do get up early. I do it. And I drink a lot of coffee and force myself to function. So it's not like I'm incapable, but like... it takes a lot of effort. So at that exact moment in my very sleepy morning brain as we were counting, I thought... "Did the gl— did the Golden Globes happen?"

Raleigh: [snorts] They did.

Sydnee: I think I missed 'em.

Raleigh: They did happen last week.

Taylor: They happened. I saw— there were some really beautiful speeches at the Golden Globes.

Sydnee: See, I didn't see any of the— here is what— here is the only reason. I had this thought. I saw Jennifer Coolidge at the Golden Globes, so the Golden Globes must have happened, because I saw—

Taylor: That's what happened between five and six for you?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: "Jennifer Coolidge at the Golden Globes."

Sydnee: Yeah. I had the thought, like, did the Golden Globes happen?

Taylor: You should've said that instead of six.

Sydnee: And then I thought, "Well, I saw Jennifer Coolidge at the Golden Globes, so they must've happened. So why didn't I see the Golden Glo— why didn't I watch the— we used to watch shows like that. Like, I used to like to watch to see, like, I don't know. I used to watch movies, so I'd be like, "What movies won?" And also just, like, to see all the celebrities, and what are they gonna say, and who's gonna make a big speech, and who's gonna do something funny, and like...

Raleigh: Who's gonna punch Chris Rock?

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I like to see what they're wearing. I like to see the suits and the dresses and, I mean, you know. Fashion's not my thing, but I like to look at 'em and go "Oh, that's lovely. Oh, that's pretty." I mean, I like that, you know?

Taylor: I don't have any interest in watching Hollywood pat itself on the back. But this particular awards season I'm paying attention because I just want to see *Everything Everywhere All At Once* win everything. I need to see that. And so far so good. But that is— I have one [laughs] I am rooting for one thing this awards season, is that movie and that cast. And so far they— I mean, I think that they swept...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Did they?

Taylor: The Golden Globes. So... I just want to see them win. I don't care about the Oscars other than— I felt the same way about *Parasite*. Like, I've got one interest in this. I got one— one card in this. I just wanna make sure that it wins. I'm good. So that's the only reason I know it happened, because I made sure that that won.

Raleigh: I feel like all the awards shows used to happen on a Sunday night, and it was, like, the thing. This one was on a Tuesday. Maybe that's why you missed it. They had it last Tuesday. [laughs] I don't know why.

Sydnee: You know, that— that does feel right to me, 'cause I feel like it was something that— I mean, like— I don't know. Again, I agree with you, Tey. I have no— I'm not really concerned with who wins awards in the sense that like, I get that it's a bunch of very... [laughs quietly] very, very famous rich people saying like, "Oh, you're the best famous rich person." Like, I get that. And so, like, I don't have— I'm not, like, invested. But I used to watch them, because it was kind of a fun thing to, like, have a little get-together. Sometimes do those little things where you fill out your card and see who can guess the most winners. And, like, and then I would sit there and look and, like, I don't even know what these categories mean. I didn't know that the— I guess I— I guess it makes sense that these are things that people do in movies, but I didn't know that those were things people did in movies. You know? Like... I don't know. But... but at some point we stopped— maybe it is because they moved it to weeknights.

Raleigh: Yeah. I don't know why it was on a Tuesday.

Sydnee: I don't know. I've got... we've gotta do homework. We've got lunches to pack. We've got kids to get ready for bed. That's a rough... which I guess we did on Sunday, we just maybe didn't care? I don't know.

Raleigh: Well, if nothing else you just need to watch Jennifer Coolidge's little speech about why she didn't want to present anything at the Golden Globes.

Sydnee: I saw that.

Raleigh: It's so good. [laughs]

Sydnee: That was what clued me in. Like, there must've been a Golden Globes because I watched that Jennifer Coolidge TikTok.

Raleigh: Yeah. I love that. I just feel like she's always in character, and it's just her character is herself.

Sydnee: She's [crosstalk].

Taylor: Well, that's fine. She's great at that.

Sydnee: Yeah. She's fantastic.

Raleigh: [crosstalk] And it's great.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I—

Taylor: If you've got any kind of brand that is "I'm really good at being myself," you won. 'Cause that's not hard.

Sydnee: I, uh— I love Jennifer Coolidge. I saw that, and then I saw her acceptance speech, which made me laugh, and then I saw her, um... uh, they were interviewing her I think afterwards. And they were like, "What kind of— like, what's your dream role? What would you want to do next? What—" you know. Whatever. And she was like, "I've always wanted to play a dolphin."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And they were like... "Like Flipper? [through laughter] Like a dolphin?"

Rleigh: Someone let her play a dolphin.

Sydnee: I know! "I've always wanted to play a dolphin."

Like, "You wanna be a dolphin?" [laughs] Who says that? It was hilarious.

Rleigh: Heidi Klum was a worm.

[pause]

Taylor: For her Halloween party, yeah.

Sydnee: Oh yeah, yeah. I saw the still photo of when Jennifer Coolidge was walking up to the stage and Colin Farrell, like, knocked a dude out of the way so that he could be the one to, like, take her hand and walk her up on the stage. [laughs quietly] And she has a look on her face like, "Ooh. [laughs] Ooh." [laughs]

Taylor: There were multiple excellent speeches given by winners for *Everything Everywhere*. That you should check out. 'Cause they're great, and they also are very much calling out Hollywood for their consistent racism, and they were powerful. They used their time... in a very beautiful way.

Sydnee: Ah, I will.

Taylor: And they were all winners.

Sydnee: I will check that out. I very much enjoyed that movie, so I do believe that it should win.

Taylor: Well, I knew that—

Rleigh: [simultaneously] And *Abbott Elementary*.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rleigh: I recommend to watch, and to watch the speeches.

Taylor: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Sydnee: Which one?

Raleigh: *Abbott Elementary*.

Sydnee: Oh, okay.

Raleigh: Quinta Brunson—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] I was about to say—

Raleigh: Like, writes it and creates all of it and stars in it, and she's just so funny and such a good writer.

Sydnee: I didn't know. That's the— I think that's the other reason I stopped watching a lot of awards shows. I would have to make an effort to try to watch all the movies and things that are nominated, typically, because I just don't see movies as much. You know? So I don't really wanna... Justin used to try to put in that effort. Like, "Oh, we've gotta watch all these movies before the Oscars." [laughs quietly] It's like, "Ehh... I don't really want to see any of those movies. I don't know."

Some of them are very good. I've seen that one, and I enjoyed that one.

Raleigh: I find that in recent years usually I've seen the animated movies that are nominated for awards, but not any of the other ones. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Any time there's an *Avatar* up for awards I'm like, "I'm not gonna watch that." I refuse. I will never watch a single *Avatar* that's not *The Last Airbender*.

Sydnee: Okay, that's what I was gonna ask. Which *Avatar* are you refusing?

Taylor: No, no, no.

Raleigh: [simultaneously] I love *The Last Airbender*.

Taylor: Airbender? Great. Absolutely. Will watch every iteration of that. The one where the people are blue? No. I won't do it. You can't make me. I don't know why, I just won't.

Sydney: I— Taylor, this is one of the things, like, that sometimes I feel like—

Taylor: And I love when people are blue! I just— not that one.

Sydney: It really— I have said this many times. It is— the whole *Avatar* thing, and by the *Avatar* I mean the Na'vi, the blue people, not the airbender. Every time I think about, like— we've been to Disney World and there's that whole section of Animal Kingdom the is supposed to be, like, their planet. And to devote that much, like... there's a— a world, and a ride, and there's merchandise, and there's this whole other thing. And the whole thing makes me think, like, people must've really frickin' loved that movie, right? Like, there must be this intense, giant fandom for that, if all that exists around it. Like, that's what that sort of makes me think. And I... it makes me feel like I just landed on this planet, and I don't understand. 'Cause, like, why— why?

Taylor: I don't put on my tin hat often, but sometimes I feel like, "Oh, we're part of a simulation." And then the simulation *Avatar* means something, and I missed that download, because it means nothing to me! [laughs]

Riley: Do you think they're gaslighting us into thinking that it's popular?

Taylor: Like, is it that?

Sydney: [simultaneously] I've wondered that!

Taylor: Like, there's just enough money behind it. They're like, "People have to believe in this movie, that it matters."

I'm like, I can't! You couldn't drag me to— to the theater and make me watch that movie.

Riley: It's, like, four hours long!

Taylor: I will not watch it!

Sydney: And I watched the first one. And I went, "Okay?"

Taylor: Oh!

Sydnee: I... okay? And that was it! Like, I have no reaction to that. Like, I didn't— I don't— I can't do 3D, it makes me nauseous, so there's that. But, like, I don't— I watched the first movie and I went, "Why do people like this?" Like, unobtainium? Come on.

Like, I don't know. I just di— it didn't do anything for me. And then it was *huge*, and everyone loved it. And, I mean, I guess? Or maybe they didn't. Maybe they didn't! I don't know! But there's a world at Disney World about it.

Taylor: I want to meet the pe— no I don't. No. I was gonna say I want to meet the people that love it. No I— they'll come out. They'll come out in comments and tell me they loved it. And that's good. Love the things you love. That is totally fine.

Sydnee: Yeah, I don't care! I'm not... I just—

Taylor: I just didn't. I can't. I don't understand it.

Raleigh: I also just IRL have never met more than, like, maybe two people that genuinely, like, love *Avatar* that much.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: So that's where my— that's my question is, like, where are all these people, if every time I've talked about it with a person I've met it's been like, either "Yeah, I saw it and it was okay," or like, "Oh no, I haven't seen it." Like, I have not met any of these blue guy fanatics.

Sydnee: We listen to this podcast, Justin and I, and they were talking about the fact that, um, Yanni, you know, the singer Yanni...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Okay. Was not a huge star until Yanni did this huge concert, like this super expensive concert at the Acropolis... and filmed it, and put it on PBS. And then it looked like watching him perform to this giant crowd at the Acropolis, it looked like "Oh my gosh, who is this gigantic star?"

Raleigh: Ohh.

Sydnee: So he, like, flipped it. Like, he did the big, giant concert that you get to do when you're super famous first. And everybody went, "Oh, this guy's super famous!" And then he became super famous. Is that what happened?

Raleigh: [simultaneously] That's what *Avatar* did? [laughs]

Sydnee: Is it like that?

[pause]

Raleigh: I guess.

Taylor: It's like a wag the dog situation.

Sydnee: Yeah. Is it— is it a—

Taylor: It's a faking the moon landing [through laughter] situation.

[all laugh]

Sydnee: I mean, I don't know.

Taylor: We're gonna tell you that A— we're gonna build the popularity of *Avatar* so that you assume everybody loved it. I don't—I mean—I don't—maybe. Maybe.

Sydnee: I don't know. I—I—

Raleigh: We're not—

[pause]

Raleigh: We're not talking about big blue people today.

Sydnee: I know. And—and—

Taylor: No, and I don't think we ever will!

Sydnee: No! I mean, we won't. 'Cause I don't think that movie means anything to any of us. Other than the confusion that surrounds it for me.

Rileigh: [simultaneously] Confusion, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, confusion. Um, but— and that— and a— and this is— just, before we move on, if you like *Avatar*, that's fine. Like, [crosstalk].

Taylor: No, no, of course, of course, absolutely.

Sydnee: We all like weird stuff. Like, I—

Rileigh: There's nothing wrong with it. I just—

Sydnee: I go to the mat for Shock Treatment. So, like, we all have our weird things.

Rileigh: And *Grease 2*.

Sydnee: Yes. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: So...

Taylor: I mean, I can— I mean, even this episode, I consistently bring weird, not-very-popular bands and movies and things to the... to the—the—the forefront. So love what you love! I just... I— I feel like there's something broken in me that I don't get *Avatar*. I feel like I've done something wrong.

Sydnee: I have felt that way my en— ever since the movie came out, I have felt that way.

Taylor: 'Cause, like, I go down with, like, the Marvel stuff. Like, I love it. Like, you know, like, I know it's popcorn cinema, but I love it. Like, I keep up with it. *Avatar* is this weird blank space where I'm like, "I know I should like this. Everything about me should like this. What's wrong with me that I don't?"

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't— I mean, I'm— I don't get it either. I don't get it.

Taylor: We're a bad *Avatar* podcast.

Raleigh: Bad *Avatar* podcast.

Sydnee: This is a very—

[cat meows]

Sydnee: —this is a bad *Avatar* podcast. Okay.

Taylor: This is an offensive *Avatar* podcast.

Sydnee: I know. I don't want to offend people if you— I mean, I— I have—

Taylor: I don't either!

Sydnee: Listen. I went to the world, whatever it's called, at Disney World. And... I rode the ride. [pause] It's nice.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't know. I don't know! The boat ride is kinda boring, but like, most dark boke ri— boat rides are. Whatever. [pause] Okay. [laughs quietly] Let's not talk about—

Raleigh: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Huh?

Raleigh: Not blue people.

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: Not— not what we're talking about.

Sydnee: What are we talking about, Tey?

Taylor: Uh, we're talking about, uh, the Ergs! Exclamation point. Which is a band that I— I mean, I guess they had... a bit of a reunion. But, um, they were a part of my young collegiate years, and I love them very much.

Sydnee: Um, you know, Tey, I had— I had not heard— well, with the exception of "Hey Jealousy," I had not heard—

Taylor: Well, that's a cover. That's a cover, so.

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs quietly] I had a moment. I was listening to all the songs and "Hey Jealousy" came on, and I'm standing there, like, in the kitchen, and I'm listening, and I'm like, "I've heard this one. Oh, wow! I didn't know they did this song. I've heard this." And then, like, I stopped and went... "No, wait, wait, wait. This is 'Hey Jealousy.'" [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, that's a Gin Blossoms cover. They do a lot of— I mean, they've done a couple good covers, but yeah.

Raleigh: I didn't know that was a cover.

Taylor: Yeah. It's a good— I mean, they do a great cover of it.

Sydnee: Yeah, they do.

Raleigh: Yeah. That's why I thought it was just theirs.

Sydnee: You've probably heard that.

Taylor: Well, that's one of the first songs I heard from them, yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah, I had. That song stood out to me.

Sydnee: That song was huge. Yeah, that song was huge back in our day. It's a good song. But yeah, I had never heard their music. I don't know how I missed that. Maybe just that— it's that time period— we get into that time period where I was in med school, and my life just— I don't know. All of pop culture disappeared for me.

Taylor: Well, I feel like, you know, we had the unique experience of like, when we were both high school age, like, our music interest overlapped, you know? I tried to introduce you to the music I was into. You introduced me to music that you were into. And then when we both went our— our collegiate separate ways, there's a whole aftermath of music that, you know. You were unfortunately not

there for. And it is always surprising. I'm like, "Oh, this was a huge thing for me. How was this not a huge thing for you?"

Sydnee: I really— because in med school I just relistened to the same music over and over again to comfort me.

Rileigh: And I was a baby, so no one was showing me any cool music. So... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I don't think you would've appreciated the Ergs! when you were four.

Rileigh: That's fair.

Taylor: Or maybe you would've, honestly. Who knows?

Rileigh: Honestly, I don't know.

Sydnee: You were just [crosstalk].

Taylor: It's pretty fun music.

Sydnee: You were really deep into *Veggie Tales*, so.

Rileigh: That's true.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: We don't need to... we don't need to talk about that. Once I figured out that was all Bible stories, when I was way too old to not know those were Bible stories, it was a whole... reflective experience for me.

Taylor: This is— I mean, this is only tangential. But apparently the creator of *Veggie Tales* is pretty chill.

Rileigh: Oh, good.

Taylor: So I think that they were trying to do, like, "We're gonna tell you Bible stories, but in a way that's okay." And you know what? Whatever. But anyway.

Sydnee: He did. He tweeted something sort of insinuating that maybe Bob and Larry were trans.

Taylor: He— he's not opposed to the idea that Bob and Larry were trans.

Rileigh: Really?

Taylor: And to that I just say, hats off to you, sir. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. He opened the door for that, which was pretty cool.

Rileigh: I didn't know that.

Sydnee: Also the song "Where is My Hairbrush" is not religious so, you know.

Rileigh: Well, Madam Blueberry is not religious, right? Like, I loved her.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] No, that's Madam Bovary.

[pause]

Is what that's—

Rileigh: Oh.

Sydnee: That's a play on the book Madam Bovary, which is definitely not religious. [laughs]

Rileigh: Oh, no, it's not. I never knew that until this moment. Okay, I have a lot of deep diving to do into *Veggie Tales* after we're done.

Taylor: You can bring *Veggie Tales* to the table.

Sydnee: Oh my god.

Rileigh: Honestly. [laughs]

Taylor: This episode's about me, alright? [laughs]

Sydnee: We're talking about the Ergs!, not the Veggies.

Taylor: Alright. Well, just tell me what you all li— I gave you a— so I mentioned that, um, *Hindsight is 20/20*, that's the album that I gave you. But that's a bit of, like, a collection album. It's pretty long. So I gave Sydnee and Rileigh a kind of redux of, like, a few of their hits and a few songs that I liked off that particular album. So, what— what was your takeaway?

Sydnee: Yeah. I always wonder when you say, like, when we do these, which ones were— 'cause I don't know what the hits were. The ones that stood out— I loved "Pray For Rain."

Taylor: Mmm.

Sydnee: That was one of the ones I really enjoyed. Um, and I really liked "Out On the Interstate." That was the other one. I mean, I liked a lot of 'em, but those are two that stood out to me. But especially that "Pray For the Rain." I went back and listened to that one again.

Taylor: Well, it's just a band that's like, I don't think they ever had any, like, big hits. Like, they were never radio play, you know?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. I don't remember ever— I mean... it's the kind of music that I could imagine I may have encountered in, like, certain clubs or bars, but it wouldn't have computed. You know what I mean? Like, I don't remember hearing it on the radio.

Taylor: I mean, they've been consi— I should say that, like, all the members of this band, like, they, you know, became a band in high— in their high school years. They've all gone on to do, like, other projects and, like, they've been consistently employed successfully in music for their entire adult life. Um, I mean, you can kind of— like, they're a few— maybe a few years older than me. But, like, they're around our age, Sydnee. So, like, they've had successful careers. But they've never had that, like, mainstream kind of breakout. Which is, you know— so it is interesting to just, like, talk about a band that's like, I can't tell you what the radio hits were, because I gave you all songs that mean something to me. But none of these are radio hits.

Rileigh: You know, that's interesting to me, because I— and I mean this in, like, the best way possible. When "Running, Jumping, Standing Still" started, I was getting into it and I was like, you know, this feels like a song that would've blown

up as, like, the intro song for some, like, classic 90's... movie. You know what I mean? Like, the vibes of it. Just, like, the rhythm and the sound. I was like, this sounds like something that people would get really into in that, um... in that era as, like, a soundtrack song.

Sydnee: Yeah, it does.

Raleigh: And I'm surprised to hear you say it wasn't, like, a— like, they weren't, you know, mainstream.

Taylor: I mean, they had— I think they— they recorded, like, a song for Adult Swim. Like, they were out there. Like, they did successful things. But, like, it's just not that, like, Green Day level of, like, everybody's boppin' to this. I mean, their cover of "Hey Jealousy" was a hit.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: But that's a cover of a song. And I like a lot of their personal songs more than that, as much as I love that cover.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, and it stood out. Like, I— once I remembered, like, "Oh, I know this song." [laughs quietly] It's a different— it is a different flavor than I think their music is generally, at least from my— you know, the little bit that I've listened to.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

[pause]

Sydnee: Um...

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: Oh, go ahead. Sorry.

Raleigh: I was just gonna say, I really like "Thinking of Whiskey Blues."

Taylor: Yeah!

Raleigh: I know that's, like, a sad— like, I look looking at lyrics while I'm listening to new music, so I was looking at the new lyrics as they were coming up. I was like, "Oh, man, this is sad."

But it was just like the intro of it, 'cause I listened to it in the order you sent us. So, like, "Running, Jumping, Standing Still" and "Pray For Rain" both have, like, a similar kind of vibe. But then the intro and the guitar start on "Thinking of Whiskey Blues," I was like, "Oh, this is different." So I had to sit and listen, and then I heard the words start and I was like, "Oh no! This is sad, but it's so good!"

Taylor: Well, I mean, it's— I don't know what to say other than it's relatable. Like, these— this band... [sighs heavily] You know, there's a story atta— I don't know. I don't know when our break is so, like, I don't want to get into, like, the—the, like, "Let me tell you why I love this band" if we gotta do, like, an ad. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, okay. Then that's the perfect lead-in.

Raleigh: There you go. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] So what are we gonna do, Raleigh?

Raleigh: We're gonna check the group message. I was giving you a "Let's check the group message" look a second ago and you didn't pick up on it.

Taylor: Okay, good, good. Alright.

Sydnee: Alright.

Raleigh: Syd, there you go.

Sydnee: Uh... the new year is here. It is upon us. We're, what, 16 days into it as of this recording. And maybe you are ready to make some big changes, or you don't have to. You could just, you know, carry on with your routine. Either way, you may be thinking it's about time I up my audio game. Maybe you like listening to podcasts. Maybe you like listening to books. Maybe you like just listening to some of the music that we talk about on the show. Um, but you need a good pair of wireless earbuds if you're gonna do that, 'cause a lot of us listen to whether they're our podcasts or our music or whatever, on the go, or out in the world, or while we're doing all the other things we do in life. And, um, Raycon has a great

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Teylor: They should go to buyraycon.com/buffering today to get 15% off your Raycon order. That's buyraycon.com/buffering to score 15% off. Again, that's buyraycon.com/buffering

Sydnee: Alright. Now... [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Teylor, you were about to tell us about what this band and this music mean to you.

Teylor: Alright. So... this is a band that crossed my path in college. They were playing around in New York at the time. And there were a couple... God, this is embarrassing, but it's the truth. There were a couple, like, cool punk dudes in my department. I went to school for cartooning. And I knew they liked the band. And I, uh... [sighs] [pause] I really wanted to have, like, dude friends? 'Cause, I mean, you know...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Teylor: As a trans person, you just— you don't understand why your perceptors are broken. Like, you don't get why, like, "I would like to be friends with these

people. I don't want to make out with them. I just feel like I would like that friendship." And, like, everything about you appears... wrong in that context. So, like, I would go to their shows. I went to a couple Ergs! shows and, like, there were cool dudes from my apartment— er, from my department in school that just, like, in their mind I was just like, a girl, but like, an ugly girl that was way too into them, so I went to shows that they were at. And it's like, no, I just— I wanted to be friends with you. Uh... so it's kind of tied to some bummer stuff. But, uh, I liked the music. And, I mean, to me any band that's like, a dude with a higher pitched voice that sings about being sad I'm like, "I relate to that."

[all laugh]

Sydnee: Well.

Taylor: I never made friends with the other dudes in my department that liked the Ergs!. They just thought I was a pathetic *woman* that was in love with them. And, like, no, I just wanted to be bros, but whatever. It's fine.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, it does not sound like you missed out on anything with those guys.

Taylor: No, no. But I got the band out of it, which is fine. And I do like the band.

Raleigh: That's what I was gonna say. Yeah, you got the band.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. [crosstalk] You took the good part.

Taylor: Yeah, I've done some poster artwork for them. Like, it's cool. Like, not directly, but through other— I've gotten to do some work for them, which is cool.

Sydnee: That is cool.

Raleigh: That's awesome.

Sydnee: Yeah, no. I think— well, thank you. I'm— thank you for sharing that. I know that's a painful thing to have to share.

Taylor: Well, [crosstalk].

Sydnee: You did take the best bit of that away from it, though.

Taylor: And I don't share it, again, for sympathy reasons. I share it because if there are other young people who are confused about their gender and, like, you know, I know what it feels like to be like, "Dude, I just want bros. I just want buddies." And anybody just thinks that I'm— like, they only look at me in the way of like, "Can I make out with you or not? 'Cause that's the only way I process you."

And like, what about friend, though? Why isn't that a thing? And that's hard. I mean, that's hard— it's not about necessarily being trans. That's hard, as women, that sucks for women to be viewed that way.

Sydnee: Sure, sure. I think that's a relatable problem.

Taylor: It's a fun viewpoint that I get on things. Yeah, like, it's you know, like, I just... it's not about being trans. It's just in my case, it was [through laughter] definitely about being trans!

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I think that's a very relatable problem. It's something that I hope, like... I don't know 'cause I am an old person now. I'm not a young person in 2023.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] But I would hope young people in 2023 are better at, I would think, I would hope, with a more complex understanding of like... I don't know. Friendships, and gender, and sexuality. The idea of approaching a group of people with the intent of friendship regardless of everyone's gender I would feel like would be easier. You know what I mean?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I don't know.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Raleigh, you can speak to that. I can't. I don't know. [laughs]

Raleigh: Well, I just feel like I have somewhat of a skewed perception, because one, my last couple years of college when I was meeting people, it was a pandemic. So I wasn't really meeting people. And then I got to law school, which is, like, the weirdest combination of super, you know, accepting, kind, like, open-minded people, but also, like, some super conservative people that you're like, why are you here? Why did you want to be here?

So I don't— for the most part, yeah, I think that's true. But I do think that, um, at least in my experience, that vibe of like, you can't walk up to a group of men without them wondering, like— like Teylor said, if they can make out with you or not. Like, that's not totally gone. I just don't know if, like, it's as... common.

Teylor: Yeah, I feel like we maybe brought more issues to the table, but we didn't resolve our initial issues. And that's why— I'm always like— like, I know that transphobia and transmisogyny and all these things, that there's new problems, but we never just figured out old-fashioned misogyny. So, like, it all still matters. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Sure.

Teylor: We didn't get better. We just recognized more problems, honestly.

Raleigh: Good old-fashioned misogyny.

Teylor: It's still there.

Sydnee: That is one way— I mean, I'm very analog in the way I look at things. And, like, I like to talk to people in person. [laughs quietly] And be places out in the world, physically, with other humans.

Teylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And, I mean, I— well, but I'm saying that because I do think there's, like, a generational divide there. I think that there are a lot of people who are like,

"I'm just fine with— like, I can see you on the screen. [laughs] This is good. This is good enough for me. And I can turn you off when I'm done." [laughs] Like, I do think there's a shift. Um, but maybe that's an advantage of, like, I assume as you're meeting people, those are things you can, like, set profiles and things for. What are you looking for? I'm looking for friendship, and I'm not interested in anything else, and here's who I am, and here's what I'm into.

Rileigh: Aww, Syd. You can tell you've never been on a modern dating app. [laughs]

Sydnee: Can't you do all that?

Taylor: Yeah, that's not how it works. No, that's not how it works.

Sydnee: Aww.

Taylor: Again, I think it's— no. I mean... we've recognized more problems. We never solved the old-school problems. That's where we're at.

Sydnee: I would've thought—

Rileigh: Technically there's an— there's an app where you can pick either you want, like, romantic relationships or friends or, like, networking. But in my experience, there's always someone who's just gonna infiltrate all the... all the places.

[pause]

Sydnee: You can't just have, like, a buddy setting? "I'm just looking for buddies."

Rileigh: I mean, you can have one. But the question is, are the other people actually—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Taylor, the look you're giving me...

Rileigh: —just looking for buddies?

Taylor: I don't— the look I'm giving you is because I don't— if we're talking specifically about dating apps, I don't— as a trans person, it's a nightmarescape. I am either a woman, or somebody's fetish, and it's not good.

Sydnee: I just meant gener— I don't know. I just meant generally on the inter— I thought maybe the internet could solve that problem.

Taylor: No, the internet's not— no! What are— what?! [laughs] Have you met the internet?!

Sydnee: I don't know... anyway... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: It's worse!

Sydnee: I—I understand.

Taylor: Okay. The music, though. The music.

Sydnee: The music. Back to the music.

Taylor: Um... I... I love the Ergs!. And this is something I've had a lot, a problem with a lot in punk music. Where I hear the music, and I listen to it, and I think the people that like this should— we should get along. And then I meet the people that like it, and they suck. And, you know, it's even like when we were talking about Against Me! which, like, that— like, that was a hugely impactful thing. But the people that loved Against Me! also, I mean... when Laura Jane Grace came out as trans, it was like a certain element in the punk scene was just like, "What? No! Like, we don't... "

Like, punk by origin should be a little— a little fruity. A little, like, accepting. Like, that's the whole idea behind it. It's like, we're different. We don't care how you're different. We're just accepting. And, like, you don't— punk crowds, punk scenes, the visibility of it is different than the music. And this is one of those bands where, like, the music means something the me. The crowd is kind of awful.

Sydnee: Ohh, okay. So this— you are saying that the audience for this band is one of those?

Taylor: No. No, I just, like, that's my— that was my experience. Was like... I hear these songs and I'm like, I relate to a lot of it. Like, it's— you know, I mean,

it is what it is. Like, there's a lot of songs about being sad, and about being bummed out, but also trying to be upbeat. Like, the fact that the music is upbeat but the lyrics are kind of bummed? I relate to that exact dynamic, 'cause I think that's my dynamic. [laughs] I'm always trying to be cool, while I'm also expressing, "I'm in pain, but let me make a joke about it!" And I relate to that.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I know what you mean. And when people make music that is very relatable, there will be— you create a big tent. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And that's— there— that's— sometimes that's a plus and a minus, right? 'Cause sometimes you look around that tent and go, "Who's in here with me?" [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: As a Jimmy Buffett fan I've had that moment many times in my life.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I've looked around and gone, "Whoa! Whoa! You're in here with me?"

Taylor: It's one of those things where you think that, like— yeah. Like, I've... I've gotten into something that's like, we all agree. Like, we like this because they're talking about being, like, you know, like... like, upbeat, but also there's, like, a lot of pain and, like, "I'm different, I'm weird, I'm not, like, accepted." And then it's also like, "But we've imposed strict social rules on if you feel accepted or not in our intense punk scene." And that's a bummer.

Sydnee: I gotcha.

Taylor: Like, "If you don't look like us and you don't have the same genitals as us, you don't belong." It's like, "Oh. Okay." I don't think the band would agree with that, but you've decided that.

Sydnee: Right. I definitely remember that vibe, especially back in the day when it came to, like, punk shows and stuff. Not that I went to a lot of them in Huntington. But, like, what passed for punk shows in Huntington. There was

definitely that kind of feel. You know? Like, you're only— I was only welcome if I was there as, like, a girlfriend.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Like, "Oh, that's nice. You brought your girlfriend." [laughs quietly] "Can she hang?" You know? It was definitely that vibe. But, like, I appreciated, too— I was thinking about the songs that I liked. I was looking at the lyrics too, 'cause I do that too. And, um, in the, um... in the one song that I liked, "Pray For Rain," there's a... he— they use the line "Regrettably inform me." I think that's really cool to—[laughs] who does that in a punk song? "You'll regrettably inform me." [laughs] [crosstalk]

Taylor: Well, and that's— that what I—

Sydnee: I think that's so cool.

Taylor: Well, and the Ergs!, like, they're a smart— they were a smart band. Like, they made a point— they even had, like— ah, I forget what it said. Like, xe— [laughs] it's, like, kind of like a— a joke about "Xerox your genitals, not the Ramones." Where it's like, punk should sound different. Like, you should make— that's what punk should be. You should make your own unique sound. And that's what I related to. 'Cause I also love the Ramones, but I felt like they sounded different. They made a point of, like, being a little nerdy and a little intellectual and hanging out how kind of pathetic they were willing to be on the line, which I related to. I related to all things to this band. I just didn't share their gender. And I don't think the band would care. It's just that I felt like I was segmented from their crowd because of that.

Sydnee: Yeah. I know what you're saying. I mean, I would say that in the early days, like, going to Weezer concerts—

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: —there was a similar vibe. Like, I went, and it would be hard for me to understand because it was that time period— I was dressed like everybody else. Like, it was the moment of skinny jeans and Chuck Taylors, Clever t-shirts, glasses. Like, I was there with them in that moment. I was one of you. But I wasn't. And I remember going to concerts and feeling that. Like, this is for— this is for these guys with me. I'm glad I get to be here, but this is not for me. And I

don't think— I don't think Rivers Cuomo felt that way. You know what I mean? Like, I don't think [crosstalk]. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Rivers had my back!

Sydnee: I think Rivers would've defended my right to rock out to Weezer. And, you know, it's a funny contrast, too. 'Cause Tey, you and I went to that Weezer concert not too long ago, and I didn't feel like that then. Even with the sort of, like... like, 80's rock undertones that Rivers is now bringing to the party, which is even more masculine and could be more, you know, a barrier.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But you know what? There's an element there that, like— and what Sydnee's talking about is— what was that? Super Hella Mega Fest? [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I, like—I—I—I got us tickets. I mean, I just bought tickets in, like, I don't know, a post-COVID haze. It was an outdoor event, it was safe. But, um... it was a lot. It was Green Day, it was Weezer, it was supposed— what was the band that c—[laughs] Fallout Boy? Fallout Boy got COVID, I think.

Sydnee: That's who got COVID, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Um, but as I watch some of the bands I love age, I know I was right in loving them. Like, Weezer, Green Day, even, I mean, the Ergs!. Like, they're still out there doing stuff. They've done reunions. Like, I don't doubt the music. It's kind of like the *American Psycho* thing where, like, you— or the *Fight Club* thing where, like, a bunch of dudes see the wrong things in something and it kind of ruins the art. Where you're like, "I don't think this was the art to begin with." Like, I don't know. I... it made me really happy to see, like... you know, like, Rivers Cuomo, like... that's a band that kind of got... raked over the coals for not being cool when they were supposed to be cool. And they just kept being weird. And they kept being unapproachable, and I love that. And Green Day kind of did the same thing. Like, "We want to make musicals, and I get that our audience doesn't like this right now or it's gonna call us lame, but we're gonna do it." I love that. And I don't— I never feel— I don't feel I'm wrong in my tastes. I feel like it's the crowd that I've gotta fight against.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Well, I mean, that's the thing with art. Everybody's gonna bring their own stuff to it and interpret it their own way... for better or for worse.

Taylor: Punk's always been a little— it's about being vulnerable. It's about being the outsider. It's about being rejected. It's about being a little different. And anybody that tries to oppose being the same over top of it ruins it. And the crowds do that, but the bands don't.

Raleigh: Yeah. It's interesting, though. I was thinking about that 'cause I was thinking about my experience at shows, and with bands I like and artists I like, and I feel like I've just been— what the music I naturally gravitate towards doesn't have... that kind of crowd? Like, I feel like just as a woman, people expect me to, like, "Oh, of course you're gonna like Taylor Swift or whatever." Like, that's not like, "This isn't for you." But you also get the same treatment of like, they don't want you there in their circles, and their crowds that they think are for them. But if you're in a crowd that they think you should be in, then it's like, "Oh, well, you're not cool. You don't have actual taste. You don't like art."

Sydnee: "Of course you like that."

Raleigh: Like, "Yeah, of course you like that. You're a woman." Like, it's just a judgment of, like, what you do like, but they also don't want you to like what they like because they don't want you in what they think is theirs. You know what I mean? Like, it's like you can't win. It's like you can't outwardly [laughs] like anything. 'Cause it's like, either it's lame, or you don't deserve it. It's not for you.

Sydnee: I think, Taylor, it's kind of what you— that's exactly what you were hitting on with, like, we have new problems that maybe we're facing, but we're still not solving the old ones. We've talked about this show— on this show about when you're a young woman especially, everything you like is criticized.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: If you like the stuff that girls like, it's criticized. If you like the stuff that boys like, it's criticized. You can't win, 'cause whatever you like, it's the wrong thing. There is an element of that that probably is still, I would imagine, still true today.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It is. And that's— you know, I don't have a... it's not a better perspective, it's just a specific perspective of being somebody that was in the closet as a transmasculine person through a lot of my youth. Like, you really— it's just a unique perspective where I'm like, you know, I know— I feel very— it's embarrassing for me to recount. But, like, I got to know this band because I wanted dudes that I knew... not to date me. I wanted them to be my friends.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And I was only ever processed in their minds as a woman. And the thing is, it's not about like, "But I'm a dude." It's like, no, a woman shouldn't be processed that way. If a girl had those same experiences and just wanted to be your friend, she shouldn't been processed as a human. So I can't... it's less about like, "But I was trans all along!" And more like, why are women treated this way? Why was I locked out of a scene that I related to so hardcore?

And, I mean, again, like, that's why Laura Jane Grace coming out with Against Me!, like, meant so much. It was like, okay, this was for me, and I knew it all along, and it was always for me. And, I mean, not that— I love the Ergs!. I love this band. But why was I locked out of punk because of my anatomy?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And why is anyone out of anything, you know? Why is that part of any of the calculations we do when we let— I don't even know how we "let" people enjoy things, but I guess we do "let" people enjoy things. But, yeah.

Taylor: Well, I mean, I was— I was, like... not— I mean, it was not that long ago. It was less than a decade ago that, you know, I went to a punk show with a— a friend who is a woman, and we got the chant "No... " and I don't think we can even say this on the show. But a word that rhymes with "pit," "No," this word, "in the pit."

Sydnee: Oh...

Raleigh: Oh...

Sydnee: Ew.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [sighs]

Sydnee: Ew. That's... ugh. I don't even— that's... who comes up with stuff like this and thinks they're clever?

Taylor: The wrong kind— the cra— some dudes rock. Some dudes suck. The dudes that suck come up with that. I love dudes. I— I am one. But man, the worst kind of dudes come up with that.

Sydnee: Yeah. Blegh. Ugh.

[pause]

Sydnee: Well, all of this to say that if you like *Avatar*... [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] [crosstalk]

Sydnee: We are—[laughs loudly] We are not criticizing! No, I'm kidding.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: We... [laughs] we love you and celebrate whoever you are. Your love... of those... big... beau— blue, beautiful... people.

Taylor: Let—let—let the... love the music. The scene sometimes sucks, 'cause the scene gets homogenized often.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Well, I'm still glad you got this band.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Nah, I mean, that's the—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I feel like I have to wrestle bands I love away from the certain elements. But it's fine. And I don't even know. Maybe they wouldn't agree with me. Maybe they— they don't like people like me. Who knows? I don't know them personally. Again, I've done some posters for them, but through third parties, so who knows? But...

Sydnee: Unless we know otherwise, we won't assume the worst.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And it's music that I related to as a young person. I appreciated a man singing in a higher tone about being sad and feeling lonely. It felt... right for me. So I appreciate this band.

Sydnee: Well, and I appreciate you sharing it with us. I enjoyed—

Raleigh: Yeah, thank you for sharing.

Sydnee: I enjoyed what we listened to, and I'm surprised, like I said, that I hadn't encountered it sooner, but I'm glad I did now.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: Um... Raleigh?

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: What's next?

Raleigh: Um... so, I also want to talk about music next. But I was inspired by a new song that has blown up recently— it just came out, like, two days ago— by Miley Cyrus called "Flowers," 'cause it's got this whole drama-y backstory, and obviously I have been a Miley Cyrus fan since she was best friends with Hannah Montana, because they're obviously two separate people. But, since then, so I want talk about—

Sydnee: Well, they have different color hair.

Rileigh: Right, right, and different names. So...

Sydnee: They can't be the same person.

Rileigh: They can't be the same person. Um, but yeah. [laughs] I want to talk about Miley Cyrus, because I think she's always been prevalent, and I really like her music, so.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, next week we will talk about Miley Cyrus. In the meantime, where— where can our listeners find all of the Ergs! music? I mean, I know you sent us a Spotify playlist. I assume Spotify?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. It's definitely on Spotify. But you should also just buy their albums, their LPs, that stuff, if you want to support them. And I think their, um— I think they had a reunion, so they might be playing shows out. I don't know. I'm old and I don't leave my house, but... [laughs] find the Ergs!. They're good. They also have, like, a lot of spin off bands. Like, I love the Night Birds. That's one of their after projects.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, thank you, Tey. Thank you, listeners. You should go to Maximumfun.org for a lot of other podcasts you would enjoy. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, and thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Rileigh: I am still buffering...

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

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: We should go to a show.

Taylor: [laughs] An Ergs! show?

Sydnee: Yeah. If they're doing shows we should go to a show. Haven't been to a show in a long time.

Taylor: You know, I... I would like that.

[music plays]

Jesse: This week on *Bullseye*: Tom Hanks as you've never heard him before. Mad.

Tom: You moron! Thank you for the use of the turn signal! Way to use your blinker, idiot!

Jesse: That's *Bullseye*, from Maximumfun.org and NPR.

[music and ad end]

[chord]

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