

Still Buffering 361: Paramore

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[Intro, theme music plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm looking at Justin's computer screen here, because it's still on. I'm not like... creeping on his stuff.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: It's just right here in front of me in the studio where we're recording. And he has a request from Charlie. So when Charlie wants to download something from the App Store, she has to send a request to her parents so that she doesn't... Just 'cause she would buy—

Raleigh: She's eight, so...

Sydnee: She... Every pop-up ad she wants to buy. Every one of those like, I don't even know if it's a real game. It may just be a virus or like accidentally you're trying to purchase cryptocurrency or something. You know what I mean? Like they look like only sort of games.

Raleigh: So when I wonder who's the target audience for this wild ad I'm looking at it's Charlie?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That's what I was just thinking. How much of their money do you think comes from just kids that hit "purchase" and parents go, "Oh crap. Well, we're not going to get our money back, but we'll just delete it."

Sydnee: I'm worried that it happens a lot. And I hope all parents know about that ability to like, screen it. 'Cause sometimes she'll send things and we'll be like, "Honey, this isn't... This is not fun like you think it is. Like this is basically a video lottery game that you've accidentally..." [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: This is gambling.

Sydnee: "This is not fun. This is... this is gambling. This isn't a game. This is gambling. You won't like this. I know it seems fun." But anyway, I can see this request that she has sent to Justin that he has yet to act on. And she asked to get *Fluvsies: A Fluff to Luv*—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Like—

Sydnee: From the app store.

Raleigh: That request has been there for at least 24 hours now, because she told me she found it yesterday and she was really excited to get it.

Sydnee: What is *Fluvsies: A Fluff to Luv*?

Taylor: It sounds like something designed for a child in charge of an iPad to click on and spend some of the family money. [laughs]

Sydnee: What are Fluvsies?

Taylor: Well, it's a fluff to love, clearly. It's right there.

Sydnee: [laughs] What does that mean? A fluff to love?

Taylor: It's a fluff with the intended purposes of being loved. That's—

Sydnee: What is a fluff?!

Rileigh: It's actually a Fluv, Syd. They're called "Fluvsies", with a "V."

Sydnee: Uh-huh. Fluvsies.

Taylor: Oh, so it's literally right there in the name.

Rileigh: Well, "Welcome to the world of incredibly cuddly and adorably cute pets called Fluvsies. Have fun taking care of these tiny virtual pets, hatch their eggs, gather all Fluvsies, and enjoy playing fun activities with these extremely cute animals. Play *Fluvsies: A Fluff to Luv*, a breathtakingly charming virtual pet management game for kids of all ages."

Sydnee: So it's a Tamagotchi.

Rileigh: It's a Tamagotchi. Except I like that it says, "collect all" or, sorry, "gather all" Fluvsies. Gather them all! [laughs]

Sydnee: I like that it's... What is it? Breathtakingly charming?

Rileigh: Yes, correct. Breathtakingly charming. [laughs]

Sydnee: That's... that's quite a bit of hyperbole for like, you know, this is a digital animal that you can purchase an app of.

Rileigh: You want to hear how in-depth this ad gets?

"In the game there are various types of Fluvsies. Therefore players can freely evolve them into more adorable ones. They can mix and match each species to produce new ones."

Sydnee: Whoa.

Rileigh: "The outcome provides the simulation gaming genre with an additional layer of features. Moreover, you can also look into other fascinating pet developments." [laughs]

Taylor: So there's a... there's a breeding element to the Fluvsies?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: There's—Yes, there's breeding, there's breeding—

Sydnee: Now, if there is... If there is—

Raleigh: There is like genotyping, there's designing custom Fluvies.

Sydnee: Yeah...

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: It's Gregor Mendel and the pea plants—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: ... only it's Fluvies.

Taylor: I don't know...

Sydnee: Imagine if Gregor Mendel had Fluvies.

Raleigh: This description of this game goes on for another like three scrolls down my screen. Who's reading this? [laughs]

Taylor: I—

Sydnee: Not Charlie.

Raleigh: Well, me.

Taylor: I do not think you should let your daughter play *Fluvie Eugenics Game*. [laughs]

Sydnee: I also... I think it... I wonder how the mechanic of the game works where you breed Fluvsies.

Raleigh: Can I just tell you the graphics of this game—

Sydnee: Because that would, like—

Raleigh: ... are absolutely abhorrent. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] We have not... We have not had a conversation yet where Charlie would fully—

Taylor: About the birds and the bees and the Fluvsies and the trees?
[laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: OK, well—

Sydnee: We... Exactly. We have not had that—I mean, I'm... Not because I'm unwilling. I mean, you both know I am totally open—

Raleigh: Oh, I know.

Taylor: You will, yes.

Sydnee: I have offered to talk to—

Taylor: Uncomfortably open.

Sydnee: Because Charlie has bumped right up against that question. Like, we've gotten right up to it. And then she's like, "No, I'm not ready yet. I don't want to know." She knows there's something that she doesn't want to know and she's not ready for it.

And I'm like, "Okay, well, when you're ready, I'm here, you know, and eventually, like, we do have to get ready someday because I want you to,

you know, be able to take care of yourself. And it's important to have information. But, like, this would raise some questions for her.

Raleigh: Okay, But I don't think it really would because I just sent you all a picture that I believe is a graphic from the game depicting how they show breeding and it's like—

Taylor: It looks—

Raleigh: It's like a little... Like a little machine that you put a Fluvsie in each side. And it just kind of does that little electro-Frankenstein thing over their heads and shows you on a little screen in the middle what the combination of those two Fluvsies is gonna look like and then it puts that in an egg.

Taylor: It's like a Cronenbergian fly situation, but with like a Lisa Frank palette over top of it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That's what we're looking at.

Raleigh: Yeah, yeah. I like that there's an arrow pointing from the screen of the projected Fluvsie child to an egg that has eyes peeking through.

Taylor: Yeah, this is...

Raleigh: Like, "Yeah that's where it's gonna go."

Taylor: That is what you have wrought.

Sydney: I... I definitely... I'm glad you said *The Fly* because that was the first thing I thought when I looked at that. The first thing I thought was, "Well, they got this design from *The Fly*."

Taylor: Yeah, I mean I don't—

Sydney: Man, that's a horrifying movie.

Taylor: I guess you might, if she does get this game Syd, you gotta get a jump on that because if you haven't taught her reproduction, this is the primer she's going to get.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: So you know...

Sydnee: This is going to be very confusing.

Raleigh: Now, I will say, I played a game called *Pocket Frogs* that was quite popular back in the day. And that was a game where you had a collection of frogs in your pocket and you hopped them around on little pads.

But you tried to get your frog to [laughs] land on other frogs so that you could create new frogs by combining your frog with the frog you land on. So I guess that was a form of reproduction, really, when you think about it.

Sydnee: That's how babies are made. You just land on someone you like [laughs] That's it.

Raleigh: [laughs] It was always very much obvious like, "Oh, the frog you landed on has vertical stripes and yours is blue. So the new frog you get is going to be blue with vertical stripes." [sarcastic] That's how reproduction works! That's genes.

Taylor: [sarcastic] Yeah, basically.

Raleigh: Congratulations. Yeah. Then I got really into Punnett squares.

Sydnee: Yeah, this would be much more disturbing, "When two people love each other very much they get inside twin machines—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: ... that resemble the machine from *The Fly* starring Jeff Goldblum."

Raleigh: Because Charlie will know what that means.

Sydnee: "And then a bolt of lightning passes between the two of them, and an egg is formed [laughs] outside of both. Just on... Just sort of outside."

Raleigh: Never comes into contact with either of them.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: No.

Taylor: With select genetic traits from each of them.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: [laughing] And they never come into contact with each other.

Sydnee: Honestly, like if you... Because I have thought about this, I'm certain you all haven't thought about this.

But I have thought about like, if I'm having to explain these things to my kid, how would I make it as easy to understand and simple and not get... not like freak Charlie out.

And not get too hung up on like any sort of emotional part of it, just like brass tacks. I've thought through this. Like, how would you describe reproduction and how that works?

I've thought... I've thought about the talk. What would I say?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And when you break it down like that and you really think about it bit by bit it's no less weird than these two creatures [laughs] in their electric machines and the egg that magically appears outside them.

Raleigh: That's true.

Taylor: Well, I... I wouldn't say it's no less weird because that...

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Like human reproduction happens and this doesn't. So that's an important differential to make.

Sydnee: Okay, well, I just mean like when you explain it from outside as if like you're not from this planet and need to—

Raleigh: If you were explaining this to a Flusvie, for example. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. I think a Flusvie might look at you and go, "That sounds weird and a little gross."

Raleigh: Can I say, Charlie will love this game.

Sydnee: So I should let her get *Flusvies: A Fluff to Luv*?

Raleigh: I mean like, just look at... Did you hear what it sounds like? She'd love that.

Sydnee: She would like *Flusvies: A Fluff to Luv*.

Raleigh: A fluff to luv... Gather them all.

Sydnee: Somehow, Cooper got one of those games where it's like you do the makeup and hair, but you also... Like they start out with, like, a bunch of zits.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And like... You know? Have you seen those?

Raleigh: I always see the ads for those.

Sydnee: And they're like... They start off, like, really exaggerated, dirty or like they haven't, I don't know.

Raleigh: Like literally dirty, like covered in dirt.

Sydnee: Like covered in literal dirt.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: I don't know how she got it, but she likes that one. And she's like, "Look, I cleaned all her zits up." And I'm like, "Okay... Why do you like this?" [laughs] Why is this a thing?"

She's always like, "I want to leave her unibrow, but they don't let me." [laughs]

Raleigh: Well, at least she's got diverse tastes.

Sydnee: I know. She likes the unibrow, but they never... They won't let you move on to the next thing until you fix the unibrow.

Raleigh: That's true.

Sydnee: And she likes the unibrow.

Taylor: Syd, why are you letting her play a game that reinforces negative beauty standards?

Sydnee: I didn't get that—I don't know. She probably—

Raleigh: Justin approved it.

Sydnee: Yeah. She probably sent the request to Justin and he was like, "Whatever. Fluvsie away." [laughs]

Raleigh: Except he didn't approve Fluvsie.

Taylor: He looks at it, he's like, "No, not that."

Raleigh: [as Justin] "It's been a full day."

Sydnee: [as Justin] "Fluff to luv? I got to check this out. This does not sound appropriate."

Raleigh: Now Justin been playing it.

Sydnee: Justin's been playing *Fluvsies*. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: We're not talking about *Fluvsies*, guys.

Sydnee: No. I'm sorry. I just... it was too good.

Raleigh: I got distracted by the Fluvsies seeds.

Sydnee: "A fluff to luv."

Raleigh: I got pulled in.

Sydnee: Tey, what are we talking about?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: We are talking about Paramore today. It is... They're a very... I mean, I guess they're having a whole new generation of fans now, but they're a band. They formed in Tennessee in like 2004. The first album that I associate them with is actually their second album, which is *Riot*, which came out in 2007.

But you know, big in the pop-punk, emo, alt-rock kind of power-pop vibes. Lot of hits. Hayley Williams, of course, the very beloved front woman. Is very iconic with her cool hair.

Rileigh: Yeah, a lot of hits to the point where I was listening to this playlist that you put together for us. It has what, about like a dozen songs or so?

Taylor: Yep.

Rileigh: And I knew like 75% of them. Like, didn't just know them like, "Oh, I've heard this before." I was like, "Oh, I know all of the words to this song."

And I... Ones that I knew were Paramore and I guess probably somewhere in the back of my mind, but never would have said like, "Oh yeah, I know this many Paramore songs."

Taylor: Yeah—

Sydnee: I had that weird moment, too, Tey. And I mean, I felt like I should be more familiar because of just when, you know, when Paramore's from.

But I was listening to songs on this and going "Oh, is that who did that song?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like over and over again like, "Oh, that's them too? Like I knew the songs. I'd heard the songs probably on the radio over and over again. But I had no idea this was all the same band. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, usually when I make y'all a playlist I start with the hits. The ones that I know you're going to know. And then I feed in some deeper cuts. And with this I just found like, "Well, I... This is enough to listen to. It's really just a whole lot of hits. But that's okay I guess." [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, they had a lot of hits.

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I don't—It's really weird to me that like, I don't consider them—and again, this is just from my limited perspective and I am not a person who was particularly cool about music or into the...

You know, like I was never that knowledgeable about what kind of music was out there. That was never my sort of thing. I don't think of Paramore as like a huge band of that time period.

Yes, they existed, but I wouldn't have put them up there high as like, "Oh a band everybody was listening to." But obviously I'm wrong. They were 'cause everyone was listening to these songs.

Taylor: Well, and I was surprised when I was looking over the spread of like the years of the albums. Like, in my mind it's like, "Oh yeah, they were a band that was popular back when I was younger. It's wild that all these younger kids are into them now."

And I was like, "Oh, well, that's actually wrong. They have consistently been releasing albums that have done well." Like you know, maybe not every year, but like, you know, they had hit songs in 2017. They've got a new album out in 2023 that's got some, you know, a ton of radio hits on it. Like it's been every couple of years consistently since they started.

So they didn't really have like that... You know, in my mind there was a break. But there really wasn't.

Raleigh: Yeah, I mean they had a song... [laughs] They had a song that I loved that I knew from the *Twilight* soundtrack.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Because that... Like they were of that time, that was like the mid, I don't know, late 2000s, early 2010s. I forget when those movies came out.

Sydnee: Do I know that song?

Raleigh: It's called "Decode."

Taylor: Hm.

Raleigh: I believe it was in the first *Twilight* movie. I could be wrong, but...

Sydnee: I bet I like that too.

Raleigh: You probably did.

Sydnee: And I just didn't realize that it was by Paramore.

Raleigh: Yeah. Again, it was one that I was listening.... It's not on this playlist you made, but I continued past and just kept listening to more and then I heard it and I was like, "Well, wait a minute..."

Sydnee: Because yes, I do like *Twilight*.

Raleigh: Oh... Yeah, you do.

Taylor: [laughs softly]

Raleigh: But I mean, the only exception, I will just say, has always been one of my favorite songs—

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: ... because they did—you all are going to roll your eyes at me for saying this—they did it on *Glee* and I liked the *Glee* version. And then I was inspired after hearing it on *Glee*, I mean, at least over a decade ago, to go then look up the real one.

And it was one of the only songs that I hadn't heard before on *Glee* that then I liked the OG version more than whatever Rachel Berry was singing.

Sydnee: Who did... Is that who sang it?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't remember her doing it.

Raleigh: She sang it to Finn.

Sydnee: Wow. I didn't... Okay, here's another one. That song came on and I was like, "Oh, I love this song!"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: "That's Paramore?!"

Raleigh: I know! Well—

Sydnee: No idea.

Raleigh: It's a... It's a really good example of how they very much diversified the genre they fit into. I mean, it still isn't... I mean, it's not like a slow indie acoustic vibe, but it is more of that than a lot of their other punk-y stuff. But it still has the same flavors of Paramore.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: That you're like, "Oh, well, this is Hayley Williams."

Taylor: Hm.

Raleigh: I love that song.

Sydnee: Why do you think—Tey, like in my mind, if you asked me—prior to you sending us this playlist and us doing this episode—if you had asked me, like, "What do you know about the band Paramore?" I would have said, "Well, they did that one hit song, 'Misery Business.'"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And that is what I would have—And I don't mean... I'm not trying to throw shade.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's just all I knew.

Obviously they have tons of popular songs that I totally knew and had heard, but I did not associate with them except for "Misery Business," which I a hundred percent always did, even before the Olivia Rodrigo thing, where everybody was talking about it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Even before that I still would have told you that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like why is that the song that... Because a lot of these are huge hits.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I think because "Misery Business" was still... Like it was such an anthem for a very specific scene. You know? Like...

Sydnee: Was it? See I don't... I didn't know that.

Taylor: That was just such like the peak... Like it wasn't really even emo. It was like, literally, like scene kids. That's what I associated it with. That like, Myspace days, you know? Like that...

That was just such an emblematic song of that era that it's not that their other hits aren't hits. It's just their other hits have, like, more wide radio appeal. 'Misery Business' was sort of an icon of an era.

And it was also one of the first big songs of theirs. You know? It's one of the first songs that really landed them. It's... I mean, I don't know.

Like, why do we associate Green Day with 'Basket Case' even though they've had a hundred radio hits since then? Because it's one of the first songs that we went, "Oh, that's Green Day."

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: That is true. That is true. And it is still the one, like if I were to pick one song that I associate with Green Day above all others, even knowing tons of Green Day songs, that is the song I would pick.

Taylor: Yep. Which is... it's funny because they didn't play 'Misery Business' for something like four years. They recently started playing it at their shows, but they stopped playing it because of...

I mean, I think fair backlash to some of the lyrics. And then it's sort of like two women vying for the same guy and the singer's perspective is describing the other woman as, you know... the... I don't want to....

I don't know what language we can use on this [laughing] podcast.

Sydnee: But derogatory—

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: ... sort of anti-feminist language?

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And kind of like also I think sort of now associated with what we think of as a "pick me girl", you know? Like, "I'm not like other girls. I'm edgy and different."

Sydnee: Yeah...

Taylor: You know, that kind of 'Sk8er Boi' vibe of Avril Lavigne.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And I mean—

Sydnee: [laughing] The 'Sk8er Boi' vibe.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I think Hayley Williams has smart perspective on it because she's talked about it since then of just being like, "I was young. I feel differently now. But people love the song, so we'll play it. But I can recognize that those lyrics were kind of... that those lyrics were inappropriate, looking back."

Sydnee: Yeah, but that's an evolution we all had to make.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I have to say... Not that—I mean as a... As... I don't ever think I was like a "pick me girl", but I definitely bought into a lot of that, like, "Oh, I'm more laid back. I'm not... I'm not a girly girl. You know? A lot of my best friends are guys." Like I definitely felt the pressure to be that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And to like see women around me as competition for the same thing and to see like opportunities in life as, "Well, there'll be one girl spot, so I better make sure I'm... I get the girl spot." I was conditioned that way. I was socialized that way.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. Well, and I mean, that wasn't even just confined to this era. When, like, *Riot* was coming out, I know songs from Miley Cyrus, Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez, Demi Lovato that came out in like, you know, my era of being young, that say the same thing.

You know, maybe in different ways, but... I mean, "You Belong With Me" is one of Taylor Swift's most popular songs ever.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And it's all about how, "She wears short skirts and high heels. And I wear sneakers and I'm in the band."

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Like, "I'm more... I'm cooler. I'm better for you."

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: "She's too snotty or whatever." Like—

Sydnee: "She's a cheerleader!"

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: "She's a cheerleader." Like, it's a very popular... trope, I think in a lot of female music throughout time. And I'm not gonna lie... I'm not gonna lie. I still like those songs. I have multiple playlists on Spotify that are like, you know... it's a little bit misogynistic, but it's still slaps.[laughs]

Taylor: I hope that's the name of your playlist, 'It's a Little Bit Misogynistic, But It Still Slaps.' [laughs]

Raleigh: I do... I'm not gonna lie. I think I do have one. I don't know if I'm—I don't think I made, I can't take credit for it, but I do have one I saved from someone that's called, 'Misogyny But it Slaps.'

Taylor: [giggles]

Sydnee: If... if we're gonna—I mean—

Raleigh: And I'm allowed to.

Sydnee: [laughing] You're allowed to?

Raleigh: I'm allowed to.

Sydnee: Well, I think... I think here's the thing is, like, you start bumping up against and this is not just true for music, it's true for a lot of art.

If we want to start throwing stuff away because of the way... Like whatever group you want to talk about, in this case, we're talking about women, the way that it treats, you know, feminine-presenting people.

If we want to start throwing anything away that isn't respectful in the way it approaches womanhood, femininity, that concept, that says things we'd rather them not say anymore, uses words we'd rather—

I mean like, how many decades of music do we have to toss? How many books? How many movies? Like we have to throw so much stuff away because that has permeated our culture for so long, that I think it's okay.

I mean I really like... I like a lot of hair band rock ballad kind of music. I have a lot of those on my playlist.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like some of those really cheesy ballad kind of songs like you— There's some Chicago on there, I'm always happy. And a lot of the ways that those bands talk about women is not... good.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like and then if you start looking at their music videos it's like, "Ugh." But they're still on my playlist. I mean—

Raleigh: Well, I mean even—

Sydnee: I still think like, the tune is good, the melody's catchy, the chorus rocks. I don't know.

Raleigh: Even just looking at this 'Misogyny But it Slaps' playlist I didn't make, I can't take credit for that. It is on Spotify if you just look up that name.

'Misery Business' is on here, but there are lots of bands and individual artists that are featured on here like many, many times. Like Avril Lavigne is on here like five times.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Other, I mean, Taylor Swift is on here multiple times. Ariana Grande. Even Doja Cat with a song that came out like two years ago. I mean it's not... I don't know. It's not an... It's not a... Not an outdated thing. We're still doing it. Still doing it. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah... Well, and I don't know. I think it's worth noting that I think Hayley Williams, I think, was 17 when she wrote the lyrics to 'Misery Business.'

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Taylor: And she was writing it about someone like... I think sometimes we tend to think of lyrics as being produced by some, like, machine meant for consumption.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, "Why was this not made with me in mind and my sensibilities?"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: And when you're a unknown 17-year-old writing angry pop-punk songs, you know, about people that you think have hurt you, I don't think you're thinking, "How is this going to play out..."

Raleigh: No.

Taylor: "... in the long run." So I don't know. Like I don't... I think it's—

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: I think you can, you know, if you're of the mindset like, "Yeah, but I never want to hear that song again," I think that's fine.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You absolutely don't ever have to listen to that song again. Do I think that there are absolutely... Are there still a lot of men out there who have done, I mean, not even much worse things, like actually horrendous things, who have their entire catalog celebrated and promoted and beloved?

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I think that, you know, it's a little... It's a little silly how much heat she's gotten for that compared to, I don't know, people that have never even had that conversation with themselves over not just their lyrics, their actual actions.[laughs]

Sydnee: Because even—

Raleigh: Well, that's what—Yeah.

Sydnee: 'Cause we'll give women a harder time about misogyny even—

Taylor: Yeah, exactly.

Sydnee: ... than we will about... Then we will give men.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rleigh: That's what I was thinking. Like it is a little bit different at least. Like, not that I'm saying like, "Misogyny is cool if you're a woman doing it."

But like there is a difference between men having perspectives on women that are inherently patriarchal, misogynistic, and women writing about female experiences that aren't necessarily not misogynistic, but they're not the same thing as like men feeding into a culture that's like harmful and damaging.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rleigh: And like actually harmful.

Sydnee: I want to talk more about that, because I think that that complexity is really interesting. But before we do that...

Rleigh: Let's check the group message.

[group message starts]

Sydnee: Taylor, we got a Jumbotron this week for you!

Taylor: Uh, yeah, we do.

Sydnee: Well, not for you.

Taylor: That's—

Sydnee: For you to... For you to perform.

Taylor: Doesn't need to be for me.

Sydnee: For you to read.

Taylor: That's OK.

Sydnee: You know what I mean.

Taylor: No. This is from Anime Feminist. And this is, "We want you to come join the AniFem at animefeminist.com. If you want to know about that, well, do you like anime, manga, and video games, but are you put off by the endless fan service and sidelined female characters?"

Or maybe you've tried a few shows but aren't sure where to go next. Check out Anime Feminist. We have recommendations, reviews of the latest anime premieres, critical essays and podcasts that discuss Japanese pop culture new and old through an intersectional feminist lens.

All brought to you by our community of queer, gender diverse geeks. Come join the anime fan at animefeminist.com."

Sydnee: All right. Thank you, AniFem. That sounds awesome.

Taylor: That sounds very cool.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Right up my alley.

Sydnee: Yeah, right up our alley. Exactly.

[group message ends]

Raleigh: I want to say, someone's going to listen to that and tweet at me and say, "Raleigh Smirl just said 'misogyny is okay if you're a woman.'"

Taylor: You know someone is gonna do that, though.

Raleigh: No. It's not what I said.

Taylor: Gonna say, "You can't think that."

Raleigh: Someone's gonna do it.

Sydnee: Yeah, well...

Raleigh: Someone's gonna do it. It's not what I said. I don't... I don't know how to say exactly what I'm saying. I hope you all...

Sydnee: It's—

Raleigh: I hope you all understand what I'm trying to say.

Sydnee: You're—

Raleigh: It's that there's a difference when you... I think— [sighs] You're—

Sydnee: Well, I don't want to speak for you. I think I know what you're hitting on.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I... So I... Things obviously are different if you're growing up now, but I mean, it's not like everything's all equal in the way we treat all genders. So we haven't gotten anywhere yet, right?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like that's not... We're not there. Things are better, but we're not there. In some ways, some things are worse. I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But I grew up definitely with an internalized misogyny. I mean, I know that's there. I know that there are parts of myself that are feminine that I have rejected and that I am...

Like to this day I try to hide or suppress or squash because I was taught to believe that those were less desirable. They were weak. They were...

You can't be in charge. You don't get the... You don't get chosen if this is what you are. And dealing with the complexity of that is very much something an artist should be able to talk about, right?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like that is part of that experience. And to say, "I have learned the—I feel these ways and see these things." And like, "Yes, as I've grown up I see where that was a dysfunction of society." I mean, like you should be able to talk about all that out loud.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I think the difference is that if you are not part of, you know, a marginalized group. If you're in fact part of a group that often is an oppressor and you decide that it's your job to set the boundaries for what's okay. It's your job to say, "No. It's fine for me to talk about, you know, women in this case, this way. That's totally fine."

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: That's when it becomes a problem. And it's the same thing if we were talking about like white artists trying to talk about and define the experiences of black creators.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like that's not okay.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You don't get to do that. You're in... You know, in that case, we are the oppressors. And that is not a story we get to tell.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I don't believe that in this case, somebody who is masculine presenting gets to tell the story of someone who is feminine presenting, who hasn't necessarily lived that life.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: Does that make sense?

Taylor: Sure. Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. And all of this to say, I love "Misery Business" and I'm still going to scream it in my car and I'm still a feminist and that's okay.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Well, and I mean I think one thing that I like about Paramore—and it took me a while to admit to myself how much I like their music—because I very much, like even when I would listen to like women-fronted bands, I felt like they needed to have this sort of like edge to make them valid.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And there isn't... There are elements, of I don't want to say, like femininity, to Paramore but I think that's fair.

Like there are love songs. You know, you're talking about "The Only Exception" or I mean like, "Still Into You", some of their big hits that I really enjoy, they're very upbeat, like joyous love songs. They're about crushes and infatuations and butterflies.

And I think that there was a lot of that, that sort of... it didn't turn me off, I liked it, but I thought, "Well, I'm not supposed to like this because, like, valid, like, punk music isn't about that kind of stuff."

Which is very silly because a lot of quote-unquote "valid punk music" it's about girls that broke boys' hearts. It's not any different kind of conversation.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: You know, we're still just yelling about our relationships, good or bad. It's, you know, like, "Oh, but it's about male pain! That's a valid punk song! This is about female joy. That's not a valid punk song!" [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. "The Only Exception" is such a good example of that.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: I mean, it really is, by any other artist, there wouldn't even be a question of like, "Oh, this is a love song."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: But for some reason, I feel like you're right. There is like, this idea that Paramore shouldn't be doing that. "And look, it's got acoustic guitar as the main featured sound.

"And she's singing about how she loves a guy, even though there's not love there. But he's an exception to, you know, not feeling emotions. Because he's him and she's in love."

And like... That's okay. [laughing] People are allowed to have multiple emotions and multiple ways of expressing themselves.

Sydnee: Well—

Raleigh: And I honestly prefer listening to an artist who can change up the sound like that.

Taylor: Mm. Yeah.

Raleigh: Doesn't confine themselves—I mean, not that all artists aren't allowed to pick a genre they like, or a sound they like, and stick to it.

But I do appreciate the complexities and like different sounds you get listening to an album from someone like Paramore straight through.

Sydnee: Yeah. And it—and I mean, I don't think that it's your job necessarily as an artist to, like, if you get to a level of success, I don't think that your job is to constantly speak for the entire community that you might represent, right?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like you... No one... No one can do that. No one person can do that. And so—

Raleigh: Well, no one signs up to be that person speaking for everybody.

Sydnee: Right? Like your job as, like her job as a woman, is not “Okay, now you made it. Speak for the way every woman feels forever. And do it in a way that everybody feels happy with.”

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like no, she's working through her own things. Like, that's... And that's what an artist does. They work through that stuff, sometimes very publicly.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And the big problem there is we have an understanding... I mean I don't know this is like... great... What's that great book about, like I mean it's all about pop culture, but what... *Sex, Drugs and Cocoa Puffs?*

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It's about like... There's a whole... Like, what makes things appealing to like a like a pop culture sensibility.

And we understand that it's specificity, which is something you can only get by interacting with your personal experiences. Right?

Raleigh: Mm.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Like the things that make us relate to a song, it's that people have very specific experiences that relate to our very specific experiences, even if they aren't exactly the same.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And when you force—which is so often the case with underrepresented voices in media, where they're made to represent everybody's experiences—they lose the ability to talk in terms of specificity.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Because they have to be the stand-in for their entire community.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And that kind of robs them from the tool to actually—well, the tool is to connect to people, which is... it's a little unfair. [laughs] We do it to ourselves, but...

Sydnee: No it's—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: You're completely right. Because if you think about how many things we've talked about on this show that have been created by cis, straight, white, men that are incredibly different.

And each one is from a very particular perspective, you know? I mean there... there are things that we love that cast you know, the protagonist in a way that is totally dif—

You know? I mean, like, they can be totally different and still be valid expressions of that creator, that artist, that whatever, because we have accepted as a society that cis, straight, white, men can be a million different things.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: They can be complex and nuanced and have sides and sometimes be bad and sometimes be good and be both at the same time.

And we embrace all of that, but that standard doesn't necessarily get applied to anybody else.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I also have to share, I just... I was thinking about this while I was listening and it made me laugh.

"That's What You Get" is a song that I also knew every word of and I couldn't figure out... I was listening to it and I just automatically knew the words. And I was like, "What part of my brain is this coming from?"

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: "I haven't listened to this song in a very long time." And I don't know if it was featured on like a teen Nick show, like a *Degrassi* of some kind at some point or something like that.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Or in, like, a commercial. Or like one of those, like, little snippets they would do in between shows on like Teen Nick or Disney or something.

But I remember being way too young to know and want to sing those words with all my heart like I did. But I did and all my friends did, and we loved that song.

And I was listening to it again, I was like, "Why did I sing every word of this song when I was like, ten like I had lived it?" [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, you know, but—

Sydnee: I'm just—I'm looking right now.

Taylor: That's one of the thing—And this is something consistent with artists that I love. I love a musical artist that can sing something incredibly dark in an incredibly catchy way.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I don't know why that's the vibe that does it for me. Because like, it's the—For me, I almost need these songs for survival because when you're in like a bad headspace and you just need like, "I just need to get out of bed." You don't want to listen to a happy song. No, that's lies.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But I need to listen to something that's upbeat but also like, "Yeah, life sucks but you got to keep going." I need that. And they have a lot of songs like that. Like one of my favorites is "Hard Times."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Which is just like... That is an absolute bop, but it's also hea—I mean, it's a... It's just about how hard life is.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And how do you survive sometimes? That's one of my like, “I gotta get out of bed. I don't want to, but I have two songs. [singing] Hard times! [talking] I'm up. Okay. I'm going.” [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I was looking. “Misery Business” was definitely featured on *Degrassi*.

Taylor: Okay.

Raleigh: Okay.

Taylor: Alright.

Raleigh: Well, then maybe that's where I heard “That's What You Get” also.

Sydnee: I was trying to—

Raleigh: “Ain't It Fun” was another one of those. “Ain't It Fun” I think was probably on like Radio Disney or something.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Because it's one that's not... It's not explicit.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: No. And it's just like... It's one of those Paramore songs that is appealing to a mass demographic. It is just... It is fun. It is indeed fun.

Sydnee: I looked to see if they were ever on *Buffy*. That was the other thing I thought was like, this feels like—

Raleigh: Mm.

Taylor: They do feel like they should have been.

Sydnee: ... feel like they should have performed at the Bronze.

Taylor: Did they not?

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: No? Aw.

Sydnee: I didn't—no. But it feels right. Like, why was Paramore not invited to the Bronze? [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] They were smart enough to stay out of the vampire town, I guess.

Sydnee: [laughing] Maybe that's—they knew that. They were like, "No, the are... There are vampires there, y'all."

Taylor: Or maybe one of them is a vampire. I don't know. I don't... It's... I could... We could build some lore there.

Raleigh: You know what's interesting—

Sydnee: Ooh! And so they didn't want to go where the Slayer was.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That makes sense. That makes total sense.

Taylor: Hayley Williams has vampire vibes.

Rileigh: They're in *Twilight*.

Taylor: Ohh wait!

Sydnee: Mm. They are in *Twilight* though.

Taylor: Mm. [laughs]

Rileigh: Ooh.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Lots... lots of layers. You know what's interesting, as I was looking through, I said it wasn't explicit and I don't know why I had this assumption that lots of Paramore songs would be.

I don't know if it's just my like misplaced association with punk music, but they don't have many songs that are.

Taylor: No, I mean, I feel like they did... And I don't... I think this is like, I mentioned Green Day earlier. I mean Green Day does have a lot of explicit songs.

But I think that that sort of radio sensibility is something that they have in mind with their songs, even to the point of like...

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Even if they're singing about some sort of heavy, like being really depressed or really sad, or how hard life can be, they keep it clean.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm!

Taylor: They make sure that thing can play on [laughs] on the radio.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Misery business one thousand percent sounds like a song that should have like an F-word in there somewhere.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's... There—

Rileigh: And it does not.

Sydnee: I tell ya—

Taylor: It has a W. [laughs]

Sydnee: To know—

Rileigh: It does have a W.

Sydnee: To know that she was 17 when she wrote some of this music...

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, not all of it when she was 17, but still, that young. It's incredibly savvy from a broad appeal standpoint.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like that it's just the kind of music...

It almost surprises me a little bit that there wasn't like some producer in the room saying like, "Oh, you know what'll make it hookier? You know what'll make it catchier? You know what'll..." You know? Because it feels that way.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: It feels like somebody was going, "I know what'll grab the most ears." It has that... I mean, it's just naturally that.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I don't know. I feel like if there—Because that's one thing that like they do a fair bit of genre jumping. Like you know, some of their hits do not sound...

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, you know, call it, like, kind of loosely calling them punk. But it's pop-rock. It's pop. Sometimes it's acoustic.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, you know all... That kind of makes me feel like there is... like she is leading the ship a bit more because there isn't that like, "Oh, this is what sells so you have to keep doing it."

Like they didn't really keep replicating the same thing over and over. And every new album, I think that you can kind of tell that it's not overproduced.

Because as much as their early hits were a little bit harder, a little bit more of that sort of punk end of the pop-punk that there is a lot of experimentation.

They bring in synths, they do like, acoustic stuff. I think that... I mean kind of like, you know, we've talked about Taylor Swift, how she kind of comfortably changes up her sound because she's leading the ship, clearly.

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: I feel like that same experience is happening here, you know?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Which is cool.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: I do want to ask—

Sydnee: It's in the grand tradition of Madonna, I would say.

Rileigh: Sure.

Taylor: [laughing] The grand tradition...

Sydnee: Right?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Just keep changing it up, you know.

Rileigh: I do want to ask everyone's opinion, now that we have officially discussed the Olivia Rodrigo album that has "Good For You" on it, and now the Paramore album that has "Misery Business" on it.

I hear the similarities. I do. I know how they sound very similar. I've heard the compilations where people play one over top of another. But. But.

Do we really think that that part of "Misery Business" like that chord progression or whatever, that is the same in "good 4 u" is that novel that it should have been like, "Oh, you have to give half of the money you make off "good 4 u" to Paramore.

Because that's what ended up happening.

Taylor: Wow.

Rileigh: And I... See, I'm coming from the perspective of someone who was familiar with "good 4 u", saw that it was similar to "Misery Business" listened to "Misery Business."

Thought, "Oh, I've heard this before." But I didn't go into listening to "good 4 you" thinking about that song.

So I'm coming from the perspective of someone who looked at them both after the fact of all of this happening. Not someone who would have known "Misery Business" and then was, you know introduced to Olivia Rodrigo.

I shouldn't say half of the royalties, but like a good amount of them.

Sydnee: I... I don't know. I think they're two separate issues. I think like in my head, those two parts are kind of mush now.

Raleigh: Yeah?

Sydnee: I find myself singing along and then flipping to the other song.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because they're so—

Raleigh: They are very similar.

Sydnee: They're incredibly similar. Now, but that's a separate question, I think from like... I don't know. That's a tough thing.

We're all... All of us who create things are building on other creators. Like, that's what we do. We're all reading and listening and looking at and thinking about things that inspire us.

And then sometimes that stuff sort of gets digested, and then we spit something out and we don't realize how deeply influenced we were by something.

I mean like, all of that can be totally true. But I don't... Does intent matter if it was an accidental...?

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: You know? I don't... I don't know.

Raleigh: I mean, she said it—

Sydnee: That's such a hard question.

Raleigh: ... inspired her. In that same album she also then had to give a lot of royalties from another song to Taylor Swift.

And she's... I mean, she's only a couple years younger than me. So, like, we had the same musical influences. I just didn't write music.

So I could obviously see a world in which, if I was writing music, probably a lot of what I wrote would sound like something that Taylor Swift had also written. [laughing] Like that's just where my music taste comes from.

Taylor: You know, I feel like it was just a strategic move on her camp's part, on Olivia Rodrigo's part.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: To head that off, so it doesn't become bigger. To say like, "Yeah—"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: "I was inspired by that and I'm paying royalties to it." You know?

Raleigh: Sure. They didn't want it to become a big court thing.

Taylor: Right?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Or just like, even mar her image as like stealing from other artists.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, I was amazed like that... I didn't know about it when it happened, but the whole back and forth with like Gaga and Madonna with "Express Yourself" versus "Born This Way."

Like Madonna went as far as to sing the lyrics to "Born This Way" over her track of "Express Yourself" at a concert, just to kind of say like, "Yeah, that's right Lady Gaga."

Sydnee: I didn't know that.

Taylor: "This line, this like music line, is lifted from 'Express yourself.'"

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And there was apparently a lot of back and forth about that. And obviously someone like Lady Gaga can weather that.

Raleigh: Sure.

Taylor: But I don't know if you were the new kid on the scene, if you would really want to start...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I mean, she already had, like, Courtney Love calling her off by making clearly what was an inspired album cover.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. That's true.

Sydnee: It's hard because like, it also... There's also a whole element there too, where if you are a creator who has, like, maybe passed what you think is going to be the peak of your popularity?

I mean, and who knows, you never know, the life of an artist is long. And so like, maybe you have a resurgence.

But if somebody comes in new, who is now on the upswing and they're clearly cribbing from you in some way, that's gotta... That's gotta hurt. That's gotta sting. I mean...

Raleigh: Which I would say is probably why someone like Courtney Love was quick to publicly—

Sydnee: Yes, yes.

Raleigh: ... jump at Olivia Rodrigo and say, "You stole from me." But you didn't see Hayley Williams or Taylor Swift publicly saying anything.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Right.

Raleigh: Because they both still have very successful, current, like progressive careers.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: But if you're Courtney Love, you got to feel like, "That's fine if I inspired you, but you should say it."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: "You should say it on the front end. 'This is an homage to..'"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: You know. But... I don't know. I have to imagine that that's part of it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know. But I... We make things and I think like, personally, if all the sudden a new podcast about medical history that was called like *Bone Sawin'* got super big—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Okay, well now that's—

Sydnee: You know what I mean?

Raleigh: That's different.

Taylor: *Sawin' the Bones*. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, like and it was a similar vibe...

Taylor: A newlyweds' guide to—

Raleigh: You're getting into a—

Taylor: ... history of physicians. [laughs]

Raleigh: You're getting into a trademark issue there. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, I'm just saying, like, I... Well, and I don't even know if I have that trademark for—I don't know.

Raleigh: Oh no, you put—

Sydnee: I don't know the legality of it, but—

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean I guess I could claim—

Raleigh: I won't get into that. You've been using it publicly for a pretty long time.

Sydnee: But I think that there would be part of me that would react very emotionally to that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, "I've made this. This was in my head and I made it a thing." And so it's not so much about money or fame or... It's just that it was mine and it—

Raleigh: I will say—

Sydnee: You know, and it meant a lot to me it and you took it. I can see an emotional response to that.

Raleigh: Yeah. I think maybe the difference there is that—and I mean I don't want to talk about trademark law because that's boring—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: But you do look at like, does it take away from the market of the original thing.

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: And you could argue that someone making a new medical history podcast called *Bone Sawin'* —

Sydnee: [laughs hard]

Raleigh: ... could detract from your market, because you probably have a—

Taylor: *Bone Sawin'*!

Raleigh: ... niche market of people that like *Sawbones* and they'd look at something like that.

Sydnee: Yes, that would. Yes.

Raleigh: But if you're Hayley Williams, do you think that a 19-year-old girl writing this song that's mainly listened to by other 19-year-old and younger girls is going to take away from your key market? Probably not.

Like I don't think people that are really big Paramore fans are going to keep listening to Paramore—are going to stop listening to Paramore—because they like an Olivia Rodrigo song.

Sydnee: Well—

Raleigh: You know what I mean?

Sydnee: It did—I—

Raleigh: It is a different... It's a different niche.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: It's a different era of music.

Sydnee: It raised the popularity of Paramore in that moment, I think.

Raleigh: Oh yeah, I'm sure. I mean, people—There are probably lots of people like me who knew “Misery Business” in theory, but they were like, “Oh, well, if everyone's saying it's that similar, I gotta go listen to it.”

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Well, and I think that's why I believe that sort of making a public burying of the hatchet between the two... It helped both of them out.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: I agree.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: You're right.

Taylor: Yeah. Paramore is cool with the kids. And the kids are cool with Paramore. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yup.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I think we've talked a lot about granting a 17-year-old, you know, Hayley Williams—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: ... like some grace for creating a song that now we would go, "Oof, we, you know, we'd rather not see women represented that way."

I think we should also be granting a 19-year-old Olivia Rodrigo a little bit of grace—

Raleigh: Yeah, who may have been 17 when she wrote it.

Sydnee: Who—yeah.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: For like, making something that... it was clearly inspired by something else and not really copping to it immediately. Because not realizing what a big deal that would be.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, I think we're all allowed to be young and make mistakes and learn from them and do better.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Can I ask, finally, Taylor, do you have a favorite Paramore song?

Taylor: Um... [laughs] I do. Oh gosh, they've gone on so long. I don't... I don't... I do. It's probably 'Ain't it Fun.'

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And it's for kind of a weird reason, a little dark. You know, let me ask your two favorites first, before I... Before I explain mine.

Raleigh: Mine's 'The Only Exception.'

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Well, that was mine, so...

Taylor: Oh, alright.

Sydnee: Okay, there you go.

Raleigh: You're copying me!

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Oh, you softies.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] All right, I'm going to kind of keep... try to keep this brief. But sometimes, you know, you tell difficult stories because somebody needs to hear them.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And I didn't realize this when I picked the topic. It was only when I was relistening to it and I was like, "Oh man, I almost left this song off the playlist."

It was like, "I don't want to talk about that, because that's a weird kind of dark association." But it is why it's my favorite song, so I'm just going to tell it.

So, "Ain't It Fun" is my favorite Paramore song because it's a song that I listened to a few years ago when I was in a mental ward. [laughs]

Great advertisement for Paramore here. Went over well in the mental ward.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I... I was there because I tried to force quit myself. And you know the number one thing, because it was a state mental ward, so it was not a very...

Any idea you have of like, what, a mental ward is for someone who's tried to relieve themselves from existence... Like, you know, the circles where you all talk about your feelings, the like doctors that really care about you, want to see—That.. None of that was there.

It was just, "Be in this room. You're..." It's like prison for people who committed the crime of being crazy, which is not a thing you should go to prison for. Most things you should go to prison for.

That's a whole other conversation.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Fair.

Taylor: But so it was very bad. So obviously my goal was, as much as I knew I needed help, I was very aware help was not here.

So as somebody that was put in crazy jail for trying to off myself, I had to convince these people that that was not... That was an accident. I was so happy and so fine.

And I just, I don't know, you know, tripped and fell on a bottle of aspirin. I don't know. Definitely, totally well-adjusted and don't need to be here anymore.

So one of the few, like, actually useful sort of recuperative things there was there was this art teacher. That would come in like every third day and bring us like pencils and paper to draw on.

And she'd also let us pick songs to listen to while we were making art. And everybody got one song to listen to.

And that scared the heck out of me because being asked, "Hey, do you want to listen to a song? You get one song." And me trying to like, pick a song that would not say, "I'm very sad. [laughing] I definitely tried to kill myself."

That's impossible. That's just on my taste alone. Like I say, "Elliot Smith" they're never letting me out.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Like I won't get out of here.

So the first time I just froze up and I was like "I don't... You know what? I don't even care that much about music. I just like listening to everybody else's songs."

And so this girl that I had made friends with very quickly asked, "Well, if you're not going to use your song, can I use your song under your name? Because we each only get one."

I was like, "Yeah, yeah. You can have my song."

So, you know, she goes and puts a song up under my name and then you know, the lady, the teacher announces it.

It's like, "Okay, the next song is for Taylor and it's "If the World Were Ending."

You know that incredibly sad song? Like, "If the world was ending, you'd come over right?" Like—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh, no...

Taylor: And I'm just like, instant panic attack like, "Oh God, I'm not... She picked this song under my name. I'm never getting out of here. Everyone's giving me these sad faces." I'm like, "This is it. [laughing] I'm screwed."

So for the next time I was back in that little session, I was like, "Okay, I have to find a song that is upbeat and happy and everyone will be fine with and it will not be disagreeable.

"But also like I got a lot of tattoos, it's got to be believable. I also only have so much music knowledge so I gotta... So the song I chose was, "Ain't It Fun" by Paramore. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] How did that go over?

Taylor: Well, by then I'd made a few more friends in the ward. I made a lot of friends in the ward, honestly. I've talked to them since then, everybody's out and doing fine.

But uh, I was dancing with this one dude to my song choice and uh—And yeah, I should explain, part of the reason that I was in such a dark place that led me there was it was before I had actually started my transition.

But I had received hormones. And that was a really hard time for me because I had this sort of bag on my shelf that I was like, "If this isn't the answer, I don't know what is."

"But also if it's not the answer and I go down this road and I even become a bigger freak, like... And it's... What if it's wrong? What if it... Nothing. It

doesn't fix anything and it just makes everything harder because everything is already so hard."

And that kind of led me to the place where I was just like, "I don't... I don't have the courage to go through with this, but I can't keep going without it."

And as I was dancing to that song with my friend in the mental ward, there's that lyric towards the end that's like, "Ain't it fun, ain't it fun? Baby now you're one of us," which to me, immediately makes me think of that old movie *Freaks*.

Have you all seen that movie? It's like it's, I dunno—

Sydnee: Yeah, I know what you're talking about.

Taylor: It's from, like, the '40s, something like that.

Raleigh: I think so, yeah.

Taylor: And they have that chant, like "One of us, one of us!"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Where they're welcoming the—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: ... new person to the freak show.

And it kind of struck me in that moment that like... I never had a choice. Like I could either keep denying what I was and literally be driven insane. And this is where I end up.

Or I could accept what I was and accept that because of that, most of the—a large percentage of the world—will look at me like I'm crazy. There was never a non-crazy option for me.

Either be perceived as that but take a chance on myself and maybe be okay. Or be literally driven insane for good. And that line that, you know, "Baby, now you're one of us/Ain't it fun? Ain't it fun?"

Like it kind of was that moment where it's like it's... I... There's the, you know, it's not... There's nothing to lose, if I take this chance because I don't have anything. I'm literally at rock bottom. This is it. So what's the worst thing that happens?

And after I got out of that ward, you know, I reached out to my doctor the next day, got on a, you know, like proper dose of testosterone. Started taking my hormones regularly.

And I don't... I haven't had those feelings since then, but that song will always be really important to me because of that. Because it was, again, like a super upbeat song. But that was a very dark moment, but it was just, you know... It was... It was the song I needed. And it found me when I needed it.

Sydnee: Taylor, I really appreciate you sharing that with us.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, with everybody.

Taylor: Well, I don't have to think about everybody out there, I just have to share it with you two. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: The other thing happens when I'm not in the room.

Sydnee: Well, we appreciate you.

Raleigh: Yeah, thank you Tey,

Sydnee: And we love you and I'm very grateful that you're still here with us.

Taylor: Well, I am too. And I'm sorry if that was a little... a little heavy for generally an upbeat podcast. But I don't know. I don't... I don't know when I would have told that story otherwise.

Sydnee: I think it fits very well.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: We were talking about Paramore's ability to do different things and I think we—

Raleigh: We can too!

Sydnee: We can do different things too.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Gosh dang it! If Paramore can, so can *Still Buffering*.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, thank you.

Raleigh: Well, thank you Taylor, for sharing that story and for sharing Paramore with us.

Sydnee: Yes. And we love—

Taylor: Well, I appreciate you for listening, I love you both.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: [bursts out laughing] Sorry, I just thought about me having to say, "What's next?"

Taylor: [laughing] I'm so sorry.

Sydnee: Well, I know what—

Taylor: I think this is the—

Sydnee: I know what's next.

Taylor: ... the only good transition that could be actually.

Raleigh: [still laughing]

Sydnee: I know... I know what Raleigh's about to say is next ahead of time. So go ahead, Raleigh.

Raleigh: [cry-laughing] Um, anyways, I want to talk about Barbie because—

Sydnee: Perfect.

Raleigh: ... the new Barbie movie's coming out. And there were lots of Barbie movies that came out when I was very young that were very, very popular and had great music in them that I love and were silly little animated movies.

And my favorite was *Barbie: The Princess and the Pauper*. So I would like to watch a silly little animated movie before we all watch—which I'm sure we all will watch—the live action one that comes out—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: ... this summer.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: I have two kids who are going to be very excited about this, so...

Raleigh: It's honestly... I mean it's been a while, but I think it'll still hold up.

Sydnee: I'm sure.

Raleigh: I don't know. I'm hoping so.

Taylor: I'm excited.

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: It's Barbie.

Taylor: And I'm really excited for the Barbie movie, so this will be a good—

Raleigh: Oh, me too.

Sydnee: Yeah, me too.

Taylor: ... good primer.

Raleigh: Yeah, this'll be a good prep.

Sydnee: All right. Well, that sounds good. We'll check that out for next week. In the meantime, Tey, is your Paramore playlist on Spotify? Like, can people listen to... ? I don't know how that works.

Taylor: I think I might have my things set on private right now, but I think I can make it public.

Sydnee: Well, it was a good playlist. I think it was good... If you're unfamiliar with Paramore, it's a good compilation.

Taylor: Yeah, it's short. It's really just the hits plus like a small smattering of some personal favorites.

Sydnee: Well, thank you.

Thank you listeners. You should go to maximumfun.org and check out a lot of great shows that 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."

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 Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering.

Sydnee and Taylor: [sort of in unison] And... I... am... too.

[outro, theme song plays]

Sydnee: So Fluvies, then?

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I downloaded it while we were doing the podcast.

Taylor: No!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: All right, a fluff to luv.

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