

Still Buffering 371: Jimmy Buffett

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[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: Um, so we're doing—this is—we're not doing what we said we're gonna do. I don't know how to—[laughs quietly]

Raleigh: We lied. Unintentionally.

Sydnee: We lied. We're not—yeah.

Taylor: We didn't lie. Things changed.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, life circumstances. We're delaying for one week what we were gonna talk about.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, Raleigh's selection. And we're actually—we're flipping it, 'cause what I was going to talk about next week—this is weird. Um, we had already kind of decided that next week we were gonna talk about Jimmy Buffett. Um, and because we all love Jimmy Buffett in this family, and we all have different music of Jimmy Buffett's that's important to us throughout our lives. And so we were gonna kind of focus on that, and then we decided that in light of the fact that very, very sadly, Jimmy Buffett passed away last night, we would talk about Jimmy Buffett now. Um, 'cause it's all we were wanting to talk about anyway.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um... and then we will revisit, um, Raleigh's selection.

Taylor: [simultaneously] Renee Rapp, yeah.

Sydnee: Renee Rapp.

Taylor: [simultaneously] Snow Angel.

Sydnee: I was sitting there trying to remember her first name. I was like, "Rapp. Snow Angel. Ra—what was the first name?"

Taylor: Yeah. Which is excellent, and we're looking forward to talking about that.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: So we want to do her justice, so we're gonna do that next week.

Raleigh: Get back on schedule next week.

Sydnee: Absolutely. Um... if—you probably already have heard this news. If I just broke to you this news on our podcast, I am really sorry that that was the way you had to—that was not what you were expecting, and I'm sorry if that's how you just found out. And please feel free to pause and take a moment.

We, uh—as we sat down to record today, Raleigh and I broke this news to Taylor, and so... we knew. It's taken—Taylor is fresh, hearing this.

Taylor: You know, I was not ready for that this morning. I—you know. It's... um... yeah. You know, celebrity deaths are inter—I mean, they're always a

tragedy. But it's—you never know the ones that are gonna just hit you really hard and be like, "Oh, no. I don't... I don't know how to—" this is a person—I mean, in our case, we met Jimmy Buffett. Jimmy Buffett, some of us—Sydnee, you and Justin, he was a family friend. But, like, you never know the ones that are just gonna take you out. So it was like, "Oh. Oh, nope." [laughs] Give me a second for this one.

Raleigh: I would like to apologize for laughing at the mention of celebrity deaths. It had nothing to do with the conversation that was happening and everything to do with Sydnee picking up a whole bottle of Prosecco and just drinking straight out of it as you were talking. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, okay. [laughs] I was gonna say, I feel a little insecure now! Like, I think it's okay to be sad about people that, you know, had an impact on your life, even if you've never met them.

Raleigh: Sydnee just flipped that bottle right up.

Taylor: That's fair, never mind.

Raleigh: It was... [unintelligible] [laughs]

Sydnee: It's not a whole—it's just what's left over. I just—well, I get a—

Raleigh: It is the whole bottle, though.

Sydnee: Justin's out of town, and so I'm on my own, and the act of dirtying a glass, the implications of this is that I will also clean the glass while caring for the children. So if I can avoid dirtying a glass, you know.

Taylor: That's okay. I mean, I...

Sydnee: That's why.

Taylor: To be fair, it's after noon.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And it is also 5 o'clock somewhere. So I made myself a margarita. That was the only thing I could do, as a bartender, in response to this news. It was like, I gotta—I need a marg—I gotta make a margarita. I don't... it's like—

Sydnee: It's the only rational thing to do, honestly.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Agreed.

Taylor: So no judgment. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. Do you know, that was what Cooper was singing all morning was It's Five O'Clock Somewhere, which I don't know why that's the Jimmy Buffett song that stuck, and I don't know that she fully understands the implications of that Jimmy Buffett song, but she was singing It's Five O'Clock Somewhere all morning.

Raleigh: She asked us at the beach this summer, 'cause we had that flag that said "It's five o'clock somewhere." She said, "Why... does it—why is it five o'clock somewhere? What's five o'clock?"

And I tried to explain, like, "Well, that's typically the time that grown-ups get off work, and can start, um... having fun." And she said, "That's it?" And I said, "Well, and drink." She said, "Drink booze?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Okay." [laughs] Like, "I understand now."

Sydnee: "Drink booze?" Yeah, we did—we love Jimmy Buffett so much that every day while we were at the beach this year, when we went out to set up our cabana, and our chairs, and our cooler, and our towels, and our beach stuff, um, we flew a flag. [laughs] A Jimmy Buffett flag. We took the time to attach that to the cabana.

Taylor: Well, and credit where credit's due, that was Mom's vision.

Sydnee: That was Mom.

Taylor: She wanted people to know what we were about. Which, on a—on a beach that is technically dry, maybe we don't want [through laughter] people to know what we're about that much! But you know what? No one minded. No one cared.

Sydnee: Is it dry?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Most public beaches are dry.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh, I just thought it was one of those where you can't have glass.

Taylor: No, I mean, I think, like, you know, you don't want to make it... obvious. But yeah, no. It's... that's the normal thing.

Sydnee: Wow. Oh, I didn't know that.

Raleigh: Now we gotta lower that five o'clock somewhere flag to half-mast.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: It's—five o'clock is when we have... milk. And... cookies.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It's five o'clock somewhere.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: The family next to us—

Taylor: [simultaneously] For snacks.

Sydnee: —was drinking, too.

Taylor: Yeah, everybody's drinking on the beach.

Raleigh: [simultaneously] I mean, everybody's drinking.

Taylor: Everybody's drinking on the beach. We—yeah.

Sydnee: They weren't hiding their—'cause I saw—I can spot a White Claw... from quite a distance. And they had White Claws. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I walked—I'm drinking a Celsius currently. I haven't gotten into my drinks, my drinky-drinks yet. But I did walk into school drinking this on the first day of school. And the amount of people that asked me if I was drinking a White Claw at 8:30 in the morning on a Monday on the first day of school was... greater than five. [laughs]

Sydnee: Now, listen. I would never endorse that. That's not—that's not a recipe—

Raleigh: Could you imagine, though? If I just walked in with an open White Claw, just drinking it?

Sydnee: I'm just saying. It's like—okay. It's a double edged sword, 'cause on one hand, you're there to learn, so that's not a good idea. Like, that's not a recipe for a successful law school career. But on the other hand... it's a power move. Nobody knows—like, you walk in carrying a White Claw first thing in the morning on the first day of the new law school semester and people are like, "Whoa. Whoa. I don't know what to expect."

You know? You're a wild card.

Raleigh: The only thing that would've been better is, like, the people who will bring in a Diet Coke or something. It's always a Diet Coke, actually. And crack it open, like, after the class has gone silent and we're listening to the

lecture. If I just pulled it out of my bag after everyone had stopped talking and just [imitates sound of popping drink tab]. Right in the middle of the lecture.

Sydnee: "Oh, this? It's a White Claw. It's fine."

Raleigh: "Don't worry about it."

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] "Don't worry about it."

Raleigh: "I'm cool."

Sydnee: "None of your business."

Raleigh: "I listen to Jimmy Buffett."

Sydnee: "Mind yourself." [laughs]

Raleigh: "It's playing in my headphones right now. I'm not even listening to this lecture. Five o'clock somewhere." [laughs]

Sydnee: "I'm not even enrolled here!"

Raleigh: [laughs] "I don't even go here!"

[all laugh]

Raleigh: "I do this at a different school every week." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Learn a new skill, move on, baby!

[all laugh]

Rileigh: And I absorb none of it, 'cause I'm always drinking a White Claw.
[laughs]

Taylor: Eh... unless it's that Surge, that's, you know. It's—you can be—those Surges, they take you out. But... regular White Claw, I could intake some knowledge and sip on a White Claw. I could.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, so... I don't even know where to begin. As Mom has reminded me several times this morning, we went—I went to my first Jimmy Buffett concert when I was three months old.

Taylor: Well—

Sydnee: And of course I have a crystal clear memory of the entire event.

Taylor: Well, maybe—okay. That seems a little maybe not true. But—

Sydnee: No, that's not true. That was a lie.

Taylor: But maybe that's the best place to start. What is your... what do you remember as far as, like—what's your—obviously this isn't your first—"What's your first Jimmy Buffett memory?"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: But, like, what does Jimmy Buffett mean to you, Syd?

Sydnee: Um... okay. I'm just making sure, um—sorry. The neighbors are—the neighbors are ringing my doorbell. There's no one here but me right now. I'm not going to go to the door. My first memory of—

Rileigh: Tell them this is a period of mourning.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: My first memory... okay. So, as far back as I can remember, we listened to Jimmy Buffett, right? Like, I always remember Mom and Dad playing the music. Our cousin Charles who hung out with us and, like, spent summers with us sometimes, lived at our house in the summers, would, uh—he loved it, and would, like, giggle when there were curse words in the songs, I remember.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Um... like, I can't remember a time where I didn't know the words to Margaritaville.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Uh... where I didn't think that the song was "Why don't we get drunk and spew?"

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Because that's what Mom and Dad told us it was.

Taylor: [quietly] Yeah.

Sydnee: So they didn't have to explain anything else to us.

Taylor: I like that.

Raleigh: [crosstalk] Lyric change.

Taylor: I think that at least you and I, Syd, we took that to heart. That's what that song is—"Why don't we get drunk and spew?" [laughs] A tragic, tragic misunderstanding.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. That's what you're supposed to do, right? When you get drunk.

Taylor: When you want someone to like you, you get drunk and puke... together. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. And you puke together. And then you're in love forever. Right?

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: That's not how it works.

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: This is love. Um, it's hard for me to, like—every summer is wrapped up in listening to Jimmy Buffett music. Of course every beach trip is that. And then we would always go for the concerts to Riverbend in Cincinnati, which is like an outdoor amphitheater right there on the river. And, um, sit on the lawn, because Mom and Dad will always tell you the party is on the lawn.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And when you're bringing small children, you've gotta go where the party is. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Go where the party is.

Taylor: Yeah. We're building, like, a force field of adults around your children. [laughs] [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: 'Cause, I mean, everybody's wearing, like... I don't know. My experience when I was younger, like, what I remember of it, were like, I was aware that the adults—I knew what drinking was. I have memories of, like, being around adults who were drinking and knowing, like, "Oh, they're being silly 'cause they're drinking." And I thought it was all very funny. I never felt, like, in danger. It was always fun. I looked the goofy—people don't just wear, like, beachwear to Jimmy Buffett shows.

If you've never been to one, people wear, like... there's sort of outfits that are amalgams of different references from Jimmy Buffett songs. So, like, they make crazy hats that have a bunch of stuff that you would only know—like, some of 'em deep cuts. Some of 'em are just random references that Jimmy Buffett made one time to something that he might like in a song.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And, like, everything is that. And there are beach balls everywhere, and balloons, and flags, and stuffed things, and people handing out Junior Mints to the crowd. Which we ate, and probably shouldn't have. But... I mean, my memories of it were all very—it's weird, 'cause it was all very, like, family friendly in my—in my head. You know?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know if that's—I mean, it was ra—it didn't feel like a raucous, dangerous, like—you know? It felt like a beach—a family beach vacation concert party. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah. I agree with that.

Sydnee: I don't know, Taylor, if you have those—like, those are my memories of, like, the early days. Before I started engaging with Jimmy Buffett as, like, a teenager, and then young adult and, like, my own sort of,

like... when I would go to concerts as I was older. Those are my early memories.

Taylor: No, I mean, I—I—when I was a kid we went. I thought it was... [laughs] it was like Disney World, it was magical! All these adults, and they're all having a great time, and everybody's dressed in a silly costume and, you know, everybody—there's fireworks, and everybody's singing together.

Like, it was... it was... like, I would never have felt endangered, because even if you're surrounded by, let's be real, a bunch of adults, yes they were drunk, they were also definitely smoking pot. Uh, everybody was just genuinely excited to be there. Nobody felt like a threat. Like... I don't know. It was a very specific vibe.

Sydnee: I remember very clearly the first time I went to a Jimmy Buffett concerts, 'cause we would go mo—not every summer, but many summers. And I was old enough to smell weed and think... "There's been weed here all along."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like—like, I recognize now—

Taylor: There was a h-weed! [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: A h-weed.

Sydnee: Yes. There is a weed here. And it always smells like this here. So there's always been a weed here. [laughs] But I remember, like, getting to the age where you would go and go, "Oh, okay. People are smoking pot too."

Um, which was still a big deal at this point. It wasn't, you know, it wasn't everybody yet. Or it was everybody, but we didn't talk about it yet. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: That's probably true.

Sydnee: The first album—

Taylor: It was definitely Jimmy. We know that. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I—now, Mom and Dad played Bars, Beaches, Boats, and Ballads.

Taylor: Which was like the greatest hits collection.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. It was this big, giant cardboard box full of CDs. Like, you would buy the big—man, physical media used to be so big.

Taylor: It was, like, 20 feet—er, 20 inches long and, like—not feet.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: 20 inches long and, like, a—like, a—like, 6 inches wide. It was a big... object.

Sydnee: Yes. It was a very large object that you purchase so that you would then—and you would carry that in your car. [laughs quietly] Dad had that.

Taylor: Well, no. You would—you would remove the CDs and put them into your ten CD CD changer in the back of your Rodeo. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, you could do that, yes. But I remember, like, going down to the beach and listening to all those CDs, just over and over and over again. Um, the first CD that I purchased—and I had... I had tapes. I—like, I have a distinct memory of having cassette tapes of Jimmy Buffett music that I think were ones that Mom and Dad, and I would listen to in my Walkman.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs] The first CD—or the first Jimmy Buffett album that I remember purchasing was Fruitcakes. That one I bought on CD. I have a very clear memory of, like, what that CD looks—'cause it's really colorful.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And, uh, I have a very clear memory of, like, what that CD looked like, and getting it, and putting it in my Discman, and listening to it over and over and over again while we were hanging out by the pool at Mawmaw and Pawpaw's house in the summer. I have, like, distinct memories of getting the Fruitcakes CD. That was probably my first, like, "I am now old enough to decide if I like this music, and I will purchase it or not," and that was where I started. That was my kind of on ramp with my love for Jimmy Buffett.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I gotta look what year that came out.

Raleigh: I just looked at it. Um, '94. That's when Fruitcakes came out.

Sydnee: There you go. So I was 11. [laughs]

Taylor: That's wild! 'Cause Fruitcakes was also the one that I would say is the first one that I was like, "This is for me." And I was... 8? [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, and that's how—isn't that weird to think about?

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Boats, Beaches, Bars, and Ballads has 72 songs on it.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: That's crazy. Like, I was scrolling through. Like, this is just never ending.

Taylor: Well, each CD was one of those names. There was a Boats, Beaches, Bars, Ballads.

Rileigh: [simultaneously] Ohh, okay.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Okay. That's just—that's crazy.

Sydnee: That was also a great shirt that we used to have. I don't know if it started out as Mom or Dad's. Do you remember the t-shirt? It was—

Taylor: Oh yeah!

Sydnee: This—it was a white t-shirt, and then it had the album cover, the Bars, Beaches, Boats, and Ballads on it. And I don't remember who it started out—it was either Mom or Dad's. But then we would wear it to bed, like, as a nightgown, 'cause it was so long. Probably Dad's

Taylor: It was a big shirt. I was gonna say, it had to be Dad's, 'cause it was a big shirt.

Sydnee: And I loved that. I hung onto that. It had, like, a hole where, like, the, um, collar of the t-shirt starts to pull away from the shirt, and you get a hole right there. Like, it had a hole in it and I still remember wearing it to bed. I loved that shirt. I have, like, a very clear image of that shirt that I love so much.

Um... I remember, too, like, once I—especially in high school, I decided that, like, Jimmy Buffett t-shirts are very much my style, and that's—that's the statement I'm making to the world in high school is, "Who's Sydnee? Well, she's that girl who wears bell bottoms and Jimmy Buffett t-shirts, obviously."

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: You knew who you were.

Sydnee: "And probably—probably some dolphin jewelry, let's be honest."
[laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Did you have, like, a puka shell necklace, or...?

Sydnee: I didn't do the puka shell.

Taylor: No. Fimo beads.

Raleigh: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: Fimo—that's what I was gonna say! I did the Fimo beads.

Raleigh: Okay.

Sydnee: Hemp. Hemp chokers with Fimo beads and dolphin earrings, and a Jimmy Buffett t-shirt.

Taylor: And just a small ring of irritated skin around your neck.

Raleigh: [laughs] From the hemp.

Taylor: From the hemp, yeah.

Sydnee: From the hemp, yep. Yep, absolutely.

Taylor: And those ear cuffs. You weren't gonna get a piercing, but you would wear a cuff.

Sydnee: I know!

Taylor: Yep.

Sydnee: Yep, the ear cuff. I didn't even have second holes in my ears yet, just my two dangly silver dolphin earrings. Um... but, I mean, that was—it's weird to think about now that, like, I decided in high school it was cool, I guess? Or maybe I—I would love to say "I didn't care what was cool," but, I mean... I probably did think I was cool, wearing a Jimmy Buffett t-shirt... in the '90s. To high—like, to high school. Which was not, like—it would not have been—there's no way my peers were like, "Cool vibe." [laughs]

Raleigh: "Yeah."

Sydnee: "Yeah." [laughs quietly] "We definitely know who that is and listen to that music." 'Cause it was our parents' music.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know. That's my on ramp to Jimmy Buffett. That's where it started. You all can feel free to share yours.

Raleigh: I mean, I feel like I just, you know, you all had it already, obviously, by the time I came along. Had your... collective love for Jimmy Buffett. So it was kind of just, like, what we did on vacations. Like, I don't remember—like you said, I don't remember a time where we weren't listening to Jimmy Buffett. I do remember being in elementary school and we were having to share, like—we were about to go on summer break, and we were like, "What's one thing you love to do in the summer?" Something, I don't know. And we all were sharing, and I said "Listen to Jimmy Buffett with my family."

And everyone in my class looked at me, except for one other girl who was like, "My family loves Jimmy Buffett."

And I was like, "This is—we're friends now. There's one other girl here—" I just assumed without did. I thought it was, like, the beach music. Like, everyone listens to it. You gotta know who that is. And there was just one other girl who was like, "Yes, I got you."

That was... that was it.

Sydnee: Well, and I think what you're hitting on is there was always a divide. Like, Jimmy Buffett music was considered a little risqué.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And it depends on where you grew up. Like, in an area like West Virginia, you're always gonna have some people who are like, "Ooh, he glamorizes drinking. He uses profanity."

I mean, the song is, "Why don't we get drunk and screw?"

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And when he released that, you know, they couldn't even put—they couldn't put the word "screw" on the album.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's funny.

Sydnee: It actually was "Why don't we get drunk and... " and they had a picture of, like, a screw that you use in, you know...

Raleigh: Oh my god.

Sydnee: ... building things.

Taylor: I love that.

Sydnee: Taylor, what about you?

Taylor: Well, you know, I would say album-wise, Sydnee, we had the same entry point, which again is hilarious that we were eight and 11. But Fruitcakes was the one that I always loved. I knew every word to Fruitcakes. I loved Fruitcakes. Um, and even as I got older—and this is something that—you know, it's interesting, because before we started recording we were talking about other famous deaths that have affected us, and I said that the one that hurt me the most was Anthony Bourdain.

But then when I think about that side by side, you know... especially through my 20's, the way that I spent my life just, like, "I know I'm supposed to be doing something 'legitimate,' quotey fingers, with my life. But I kind of just want to travel, and I want to, like, make some mistakes." And I was working in restaurants and just sort of, like, doing whatever.

Like, there was a part of me that was like, hey. As a family raised on Jimmy Buffett, like, I think I was doing exactly what I learned to do. Go out there, see the world, get your heart broken a few times.

And, like, the people that I looked up to told me that was a good thing to do. And that was always a connection point where I could always kind of find a middle ground with the family, even when maybe I wasn't living in a way that anyone approved of. But we could relate on this one thing, and that's that Jimmy Buffett, though. He's got it right. [laughs] Like, for a long time it was the one thing that I felt... as long as I know my family still loves this, I know someday they can understand me.

'Cause all I ever did with my life is do what I was taught to do, by way of Jimmy Buffett. [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, it really was. It's weird when I think about... uh, I had to—I don't even remember what class. Probably an English class. There was some class where they assigned us this, like, "Write a memoir as if you went on a trip and, like, write this about this adventure you had."

And, like—and they wanted you to pull from—like, learn about a place, and then you can, like, incorporate those details that you've learned into your story. I don't know, this whole narrative thing.

Anyway, my whole thing was basically just like, if I was like Jimmy Buffett and I traveled around the Caribbean playing guitar, and that's how I paid my way, and I was on a boat.

And, like, I wrote this whole fake story where I was just—I mean, like, basically just Jimmy Buffett.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydney: Like, in my mind, this is who Jimmy Buffett is, and I wrote a story about me being him. And I never said that's what it was but, like, that was entirely inspired by, "I imagine this is what his life is like."

I mean, it wasn't—you know, which is not exactly true. Like, he did not just wander the Caribbean aimlessly playing guitar. [laughs] Maybe he did that sometimes, but that was not his whole life. He was also an incredibly successful businessman and, you know, entrepreneur, and musician, and everything.

Taylor: Well, and I think that the idea of, like, a person as a person and a person as an idea, that's two different things, right? The idea you put out in the world of yourself is usually more powerful than who you actually are as a person.

And I think that when those are completely disparate, like if you put a great idea out in the world but you're a terrible person, yeah, no. Like, that's garbage.

But sometimes the idea can matter more than the person as far as to people's lives, you know? Like, the idea of Jimmy Buffett, specifically because he appeals to maybe, like, lower class, middle class people, but he still puts the idea out there that, like, you should see the world, you should travel, you should meet other people, you should learn other cultures.

Like, again, like, that's... there's n—it doesn't—it makes total sense to me that I latched on to Anthony Bourdain the way I did, 'cause he did the same

thing. He did it through cooking, and Jimmy did it through music. But it was the idea that, like, everybody's purpose is to understand the world they were born into.

Sydnee: Yeah. He also did it, and I think that's a really key point you hit on, Tey. I remember there was an article written about him five or six years ago that I thought was really telling. 'Cause what he was saying was two people who don't necessarily have the kind of wealth and power and freedom and comes with wealth to just go whenever they want, to just explore and travel whenever they want, he was saying, like, you deserve this too. This is something that should be, like—you can long for this and want it and seek it, and get it. Because you deserve it. And it's not just for people who own the beach houses.

Like, you know? And I think for a lot of people, how is that realized? Well, it's realized as, like, what it was for our family. That one week every summer. [laughs] When we would get up at six AM and get in the car unrestrained. [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Lay—laying down. [laughs]

Raleigh: Sitting on the floor.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Sitting on the floor in the back of the car unrestrained.

Taylor: The roll around space. [laughs]

Raleigh: The roll around space.

Sydnee: The roll around space. With Dramamine in our systems.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Oh, the roll around.

Taylor: Just lay down the whole backseat and put sleeping bag down, and we would just—yeah, just roll around for the whole drive.

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: Eat fast food. Drink soda. 'Cause back then we let kids drink soda. And—and listened to Jimmy Buffett all the way down to the beach, because we knew that once we got there it was gonna be the week where, like... we weren't—we weren't rich, but it felt like "This is what it's like to live a life of leisure." You lay around, and you, you know, you wait for the shrimp to finish boiling that you've been cooking all day, and you relax on the beach, and your dad makes you virgin piña coladas, because all the adults are drinking mixed drinks, so you get fancy mixed drinks too.

And it feels very, like, luxurious and, like, self—it's like self-care early days. Like, this is how you take care of yourself. This is all for us. We are—we are, you know, really rejuvenating and reviving ourselves. And that was the week. It was, like, all that.

And it was just a week. 'Cause then everybody had to go back to work, and we had to go back to school, and life continued, and you could only afford a week.

But for a week, you'd get to be that and do that. And I think for a lot of people they hung on to, like, "I do deserve this too. And maybe I can't have it all the time, like the rich people do, but I deserve it."

Which I think is a really important lesson, that everyone deserves to be happy and feel relaxed and feel good, and seek things that bring them joy. Which is a very anti-capitalist message too, by the way.

Taylor: Yeah. Which again, like, that's hard to grapple as far as, like—like, he was a brilliant businessman, you know. Like, he...

Sydnee: Yes, he was.

Taylor: He trademarked Margaritaville. Like—like—[laughs] He—he was a smart businessman. But I don't know. I don't... I don't—I guess I don't care that much about that side of it, because I see the impact he had on our family, and the good, you know, the dreams, the enjoyment, the parties, the ideas that he put out there. I think that those matter... just as much as the man did. And that was his work. That's what he did.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Because, I mean, it seemed like even though when he started with the Margaritaville restaurants and hotels and, like, the whole brand and retirement communities and everything, it was never like—it's not like he shifted what he did and made it like, "Now I'm gonna be an entrepreneur. Like, now I'm gonna be a businessman."

Like, he still was doing the same concerts, with the same songs, and the same backup singers, and the same band. And, you know, all that, for all that time. It was just kind of like a bonus.

Sydnee: Well, and he really—I mean, he said that—I remember it was on one of his live albums, because I used to know—I used to listen to his live albums so much that I knew all the stuff he said in between, you know? Like, I had memorized whatever he happened to say at that concert that night as well.

And I remember that he says in one of his live albums before he starts playing I think Come Monday, um, that he's never won an award for any music that he's written, but he doesn't really care, as long as he has fans like parrotheads. And that sounds like, well, of course that's what you say. That's what any musical artist says.

But I actually think there's an—he's pretty earnest about that. I genuinely—and having met him, I felt that, too. I genuinely got the sense that he felt so much joy at this sort of, like, world he had created for people and, like,

inspiring people to embrace that kind of... oh, wild, unregulated part of themselves, and celebrate that, and be okay with that. I do—I think there was a real earnesty there. Maybe that's what we connect to, is somebody who isn't cynical about it.

Like, it's fun to make margaritas, and so I'm going to make a Margaritaville blender [laughs] where you can make Margaritaville margaritas. I mean, it's—you know? I mean, it's—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: God, do you remember when Dad got that?

Sydnee: Yes! He loved that!

Taylor: [simultaneously] Oh, yeah.

Raleigh: For the first time, and he loved that thing. Like, he used that, like, every weekend.

Sydnee: He used it right up until it broke. I mean, he wore it out. Like, he wore that machine out. Used it until it fell apart.

Taylor: Well, and that's where I, like—I don't, especially in reference to Jimmy Buffett, I would never want to be cynical. I think that recognizing that if you think there's a thing that people need to know and feel comfortable with, and maybe you have to be a smart businessman to get that idea out there, like, that's just... you know. That's the best you can ask for.

He accomplished his task.

Sydnee: He did. I mean, like, there were articles written about how he—so he was not related to Warren Buffett. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: In any way. But he did, like, meet Warren Buffett and, like, specifically reached out to him to say, like... "So, I know—" you know, his music—which, I mean, I will always defend and say is incredible. I think he's an amazing lyricist. I think it's fun. I think he says things that are really smart and thoughtful, wrapped in music that is, like, fun at a party.

Which, I'm not saying he's the only artist who's ever done that, but I think his music doesn't always get enough credit for being as good as it is. But I think he realized early on, like, I am not—because it is what it is and it appeals to everybody, it's not ever going to win the biggest awards, and I might not make the most money off of my music, necessarily.

But this idea, and what happens when I go on tour—which he never stopped touring. I mean, he toured to the end. Like, that was such an important thing to him.

This—this, I could make a living off of. I mean, and he went and specifically sought to, like, "Let's celebrate that. Let's celebrate the people who like this music, and make a whole world for them."

Raleigh: I just gotta share, I was inspired when you mentioned that margarita maker to look it up 'cause I was like, "I wonder if they even make that anymore. Like, that was a long time ago."

They do still make that one. But more importantly, they also make one that has three...

Taylor: Oh, wow!

Raleigh: ... blenders in one. Um, so you can make three different kinds of mixed drinks at the same time. [laughs]

Taylor: So, who's gonna rush to figure out the perfect gift for Dad for Christmas?

Sydnee: [simultaneously] I was gonna say.

Raleigh: Who's buying that for Dad? [laughs]

Sydnee: Christmas for Dad. [laughs]

Taylor: Figured out.

Raleigh: They have it in stock at Target.

Taylor: Somebody's got it.

Sydnee: We gotta get that for Dad for Christmas.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh, he would love that.

Raleigh: Imagine. He would just—the problem would be, though, he would feel like he had to be making three drinks every time. You know what I mean? He could just be making something in one of the blenders. He'd have to be using all three of the blenders.

Sydnee: [crosstalk] Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Don't worry. I'll be home for the holidays too.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I can... that's my job. [laughs]

Raleigh: We'll make [crosstalk].

Taylor: My Ken job is drink. It's what I do. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I thought my job was drink.

Taylor: No, you drink. I make drink. That's the—

Sydnee: Oh, okay. Uh-huh.

Raleigh: [laughs] Make drinks.

Taylor: Mix. Maybe mix is better.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Um... and I will say, like, on that note, we were lucky enough to have gotten to meet Jimmy Buffett. Which is like—it's one of those things where... there are moments in my life that really my—like, my 12-year-old self shows up in my brain for a second and goes, "How—" well, I'm not gonna use profanity. "How the heck—[laughs quietly]—did you end up here? How did this ever happen? Like, how—how could this be real?"

And meeting Jimmy Buffett was definitely one of those moments. And he was—and again, I know this is all clichéd, people say this kind of stuff about meeting celebrities a lot. Well, until they don't.

But he was nice, and easy to talk to, and interested in who I was. Like, asked—and I always find that kind of shocking when somebody who's like, famous and then also creates things—so, like, they're not just famous randomly. They make really great stuff and put it into the world.

When they show interest in their fans I think is pretty cool. Because Jimmy Buffett is probably always the most interesting person in a room. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: You know? And so the idea that he has interest in other people still is a really great quality in a human. And he was. He was interested. He had nice things to say about West Virginia, which I always fall for. I'm always a sucker for that. Um, and he... gosh. We sat next to him watching Hamilton and he sang every word and cried. [laughs quietly] Even though he's seen it—he had seen a bajillion times.

We went and saw Margaritaville, his musical, Escape to Margaritaville, with him. And watching people, like, realize Jimmy Buffett was in the audience and then lose their minds and try to, like... [laughs quietly] run to him. Um, it was incredible. I mean, and the whole time he was just nice. And what he said at the end was like, "This has been such a fun time. But I'm so tired I want to go back to my hotel and have some soup and tea."

[laughs quietly] And he was just—he was a sweetheart! He was just nice, and sweet, and having fun, and just really you could tell, like, "I cannot believe my life got me here. I'm along for the ride. This is incredible."

That was his whole... it was just gratitude and amazement, and that's a really great way to go through life, I think. I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I mean, his legacy is... ridiculous, right? Like... how many—how many generations of kids and adults are there, like, out there that grew up with the same thing we grew up with? That, like, you know, gave you space to think about, what's the rest of the world? Like, what else can you find? Like... I don't know. I mean...

[pause]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: I know. It's tough to... it's hard to imagine. I mean, 'cause we always used to say, like... "We gotta go out and see Jimmy on tour," like, because, you know, you assume that as artists get older eventually they'll stop touring. That's what we thought. Like, eventually he's gonna say, like, "Phew. This is—" I mean, 'cause his tour schedules were always—like, they were intense, and he played lots of cities all over the world, and would keep traveling, and he was also, like—

Taylor: And long shows!

Raleigh: Long shows.

Sydnee: Oh my gosh. Long shows, and he never... it was like every time he played the songs he knew people wanted to hear. Every time. Never stopped that. And didn't seem to, like, I don't know—he didn't complain about it. [laughs quietly] But, uh... but I remember I was thinking, like, we gotta get to his show, because what if this is the last summer he decides to tour? And he just never stopped.

I mean, he kept doing it 'cause, I mean, he loved it. I mean, that's what he said in every interview anybody asked. He loved it. He loved playing the songs people liked. You know, you play Margaritaville for the how-many-millionth time, and the entire audience sings along, and that's amazing, and he got that.

[pause]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's hard to think about a summer where he's not out there playing somewhere, you know?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Our Dad is gonna really have a rough time with this.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah. [sniffs]

[pause]

Sydnee: Um...

Taylor: It's—it's a sad day. But, like, also... I think it's really important when you just look at somebody's life like that, how much he gave us. It's unfair to ask for more.

Sydnee: Um, I would recommend, if somebody hasn't read his books—like, Jimmy Buffett wrote books, fiction, and they're great. Like, if you look up—Jimmy Buffett's written a lot of books about his life, but then also, like, fiction, and I've read some of 'em, and they're a ton of fun.

They're not—they don't take themselves too seriously, which was always a nice thing about Jimmy Buffett, right? He never took himself too seriously, you know? He knew it was for fun. "This is for fun."

Taylor: He had some kid's books too.

Sydnee: He had kid's books, exactly, yeah. We have those. Um... he wrote songs about his kids that always make Dad cry.

Taylor: Well, that's one—I think that's one of the hardest things for me, at least, is that Dad picked songs for us, Jimmy Buffett songs. And mine was Delaney Talks to Statues, [laughs] which I don't have to say anything more than the title. It's like, "Yeah. That's my song." [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It's for the weirdos, a weirdo. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: That's the whole point of that song!

Raleigh: I didn't get a Jimmy Buffett song. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well...

Raleigh: I got—[through laughter]—I got [unintelligible].

Taylor: Dad—

Sydnee: What?

Taylor: Dad gave you a song that meant something in the moment. Don't— you know. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: You got a Creed song.

[all laugh]

Taylor: I'm so sorry!

Sydnee: That does seem unfair, in retrospect.

Taylor: Yeah...

Raleigh: [laughs] It's already.

Sydnee: But he just wrote the two, so it's not Dad's fault, really.

Raleigh: Well, he had two kids and then he was like, "Well. Sorry. Ran out." [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, I guess we could've asked him. Like, "Could you write a song? [laughs] For Raleigh?"

Taylor: Yeah. She needs one. [laughs]

Raleigh: Oh...

Sydnee: Um... I imagine there are gonna be a lot of people feeling this way, though. 'Cause he was definitely, you know. I mean, there are a lot of great

musical artists that people love, but you don't necessarily feel that, like, connection to as, like, they helped shape who I was. Um, and then genuinely seemed to care about that fact, you know? Not every musical artist also demonstrates that. Like, "I care about you, my fan who likes what I do. That's meaningful to me and I want you to know that back."

And I feel like he did a very good job with that. I imagine there are gonna be a lot of people feeling the intensity of this loss today.

[pause]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, and a lot of people drinking margaritas today. [crosstalk]

Taylor: Yeah, please make some margaritas today.

Raleigh: It's a three day weekend, so.

Taylor: Yeah. He—he blessed us with that. And again, like, you know, he was—he was, what, his late 70s?

Sydnee and Raleigh: 76.

Taylor: It's not—it's never—no—there's never a good age to pass at, but he...

Sydnee: No, mortality sucks.

Taylor: Yeah. [sighs] But god, he gave us so much. Enjoy how much he gave us. Music, musicals, everything out there that he contributed to this world. You know, you—sometimes as one person you feel like you can't make an impact. And it's like, oh, what did Jimmy Buffett—he impacted a genera—several generations. What, three, four generations of people to think of the world differently, and I think that's good.

Sydnee: And it won't stop. I mean, like, that's the thing. Today, as I was talking about it, Cooper was sitting there listening to me singing It's Five O'Clock Somewhere.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: God, that's so funny.

Taylor: I know.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean, I have taught them other songs, by the way, I don't know why that's the one that stuck, but it is.

Taylor: And I know it's easy to reduce it down to like, "Oh, it's just, like, drinking at the beach?" No. Because, I mean, I don't know. My—when I think of my favorite songs I think of, um... Last Mango in Paris. I think of Captain and the Kid.

You know, it was about—like, I actually remember when I was—and still, like, deep in loan debt—I mean, I'm still deep in loan debt. But, like, fresh from college and in, like, \$100,000 in loan debt and I decided, "I'm gonna take the last \$8,000 I have in my student loans and go abroad, because I may never have this much money again."

And I went to Paris, and I remember holding up a mango [through laughter] in front of a map of Paris and taking a picture, be like, "I'm here! Jimmy!" [laughs]

Sydnee: "I'm eating a mango!"

Taylor: "I am having a mango in Paris!" Like, I don't know if I would've done that without the thought that, like, the world matters, and that's something that was ingrained in me from Jimmy Buffett.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. No, I know what you mean. It is more than that. Like, my favorite songs, I love Tin Cup Chalice. I love Distantly in Love. Love in the Library was a big song that I loved

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: There was a song that inspired a whole talk I had to give at one point called Quietly Making Noise off of Fruitcakes.

Taylor: Yep.

Sydnee: And I always thought that was a really important concept, that there is a way to change the world around you and draw attention to something that matters and make noise without yelling and screaming. It can just be something that you... if you're tenacious enough, and your message is true, you can get it out there to people, and I always felt like that was a really important concept that shaped a lot of what I've done.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, there's an album called Songs You Know By Heart. If you for some reason have no familiarity with Jimmy Buffett—I don't know how that's possible. But... [laughs] Songs You Know By Heart are the songs that everyone knows by heart who is a parrothead, who is within the fandom, and are probably the most popular, and the ones that you may have heard on the radio or that your parents know. [laughs quietly] Maybe.

Raleigh: That's actually the only album I had myself was that one.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I remember the bright yellow cover with the red letters.

Sydnee: Yeah. And there's Escape to Margaritaville, the musical, which we'll be doing in Huntington next summer, if you're in Huntington next summer. Um, Mom and Dad will be there. They're directing it, and they will be crying every night, I assume.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. As if they weren't already going to be, now they definitely are.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. But... thank you all for talking about Jimmy Buffett.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Of course.

Taylor: Of course. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to. It felt right.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sydnee: I, uh—I explained to Charlie. I had told Charlie this morning. We were gonna talk about Jimmy Buffett on the podcast next week, and I said "That's gonna be, um... harder now, isn't it?"

And she said, "Yeah, you can't—it won't be funny."

And I said, "No, that's true. It won't be funny." I said, "It'll be—" and I was explaining to her the word "cathartic," and where the concept of catharsis comes from, and why the expurgation of pity and fear is an important thing, so. I know this wasn't particularly funny, but perhaps it was cathartic, I guess is what I'm saying.

Raleigh: Yeah.

[pause]

Taylor: And, I mean, what a... what a... what an amazing life that you will be mourned—not just like, "Oh, that's sad." But deeply, like, soul-deep, by... millions of people around the world. You did that much, that you changed

them as a person, and that you mattered that much. That's the best I think a person can ask for.

Sydnee: Yeah. [sighs] Whew. Alright. That's enough crying.

Taylor: [laughs] Alright.

Sydnee: We all have to go drink margaritas.

Taylor: Yeah! [laughs]

Raleigh: I really do.

Sydnee: Taylor got a head start on us.

Taylor: I had one, alright? [laughs]

Raleigh: And Sydnee, you've got your bottle [crosstalk].

Taylor: Yeah, come on.

Sydnee: I do. I do have Prosecco.

Taylor: Jimmy Buffett would not approve shaming whatever you're drinking.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: No. I just didn't have tequila. Um... I am hopeful that Mom and Dad have obtained tequila by now. Justin is all the way across the country. Um, I'm looking forward to him returning so that we can mourn together tomorrow.

Taylor: Well, please, you're in Huntington and none of the rest of us are. [[Two three quarter, three quarter?]], please keep our parents in margaritas.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I will make sure, and I will get real limes.

Taylor: Real limes, or don't bother.

Sydnee: Not the lime juice.

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: Yeah, make sure our dad's okay. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I will. I sent my kids to them right now while we were recording so that they could at least distract them.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But you all hang in there. And listeners, we will be back, Raleigh, next week with your—

Raleigh: We'll talk about Renee Rapp next week.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Exactly. Which was wonderful, and I had already listened to, but now I'll listen to it again.

Raleigh: Well, it'll—I think it'll be better to talk about it once we've—you know. It would've been hard today, I think.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I think so too.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, um, listeners, hang in there. If you're a fellow parrothead, I know this is a—at least we've got a three day weekend to celebrate the life of Jimmy Buffett.

Taylor: There's something powerful about a man that enters the world on Christmas and leaves the world on a three day weekend.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I know. [laughs quietly] Right at the end of summer. Whew, I'm gonna cry again if I think about that too much. Alright. Uh, go to Maximumfun.org. Listen to all the great shows that are there, um, that won't make you cry. And, um, 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: And I... am... too.

[theme music plays]

[all laugh quietly]

Sydnee: I don't know what to say.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: Somewhere in an alternate universe where Hollywood is smarter...

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