

Shmanners 373: "Casablanca" (1942)

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[theme music plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Rileigh: That was a long pause we took there. Sorry, my windows are open 'cause I don't have air conditioning, so the sirens are extra loud. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah, there's a lot happening there.

Rileigh: There's always a lot happening here. [laughs]

Sydnee: It's chilly here.

Taylor: It's a little chilly here too.

Sydnee: Yeah. It's like fall over here.

Taylor: It's nice. We got one day of it. That's... it'll probably be, what? 90 degrees [crosstalk] tomorrow?

Sydnee: Yeah, I know. It's back into the 80's tomorrow. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah. It's 70 degrees here, and currently 79 in my apartment, so... woo!

Sydnee: Um, I feel like we would be remiss if we didn't mention that VMAs happened before we get into our topic.

Raleigh: I watched 'em.

Sydnee: Did you watch 'em?

Raleigh: I did.

Sydnee: I watched... well, TikTok showed me a ton of clips from it—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —so I feel like I watched it, even though I didn't actually watch the VMAs. I feel like I know a lot about them.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was just gonna say, I figured Raleigh enjoyed all of the Taylor Swift coverage.

Taylor: That's what I was gonna say. I felt like my—the main things that I saw on TikTok were just people commenting on Taylor Swift partying.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Somebody dared to say that she didn't like the way Taylor was behaving, and then I watched a million people [wheezes] tell her that she was wrong. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah... she also won, like, every award? So. [laughs] By the end of the night when she'd had to stand up that many times and go up there and try to come up with something to say I was like, "I don't blame her for having fun while she's sitting down. She's moving around a lot." [laughs]

Sydnee: I also—whatever—like, whatever... hm. You can feel however you want to feel about whatever celebrity. But I feel like by now, don't we know

that you're gonna get a lot of feedback [laughs quietly] if you go on the internet and say something mean about Taylor Swift. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Don't—don't we all know how the fans of Taylor Swift are gonna react if you say something mean about Taylor Swift? [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: I love all the compilations people have done of, like, adding voiceovers to, like, the things that she was saying, 'cause you couldn't hear her when she was in the audience, but she's on camera, so people were, like, reading her lips to see what she was saying.

And it's just a lot of her, like, singing along to everyone else's songs when they were performing and, like, screaming, like, "Yeah!"

Sydnee: Was she really saying "It's giving movie, it's giving cinematography"?

Rileigh: That's what it looked like she was saying. But... I don't know. She also when NSYNC came out for the first award to present, which she won, she was like, "I have their d—er, I had their dolls!" [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, that was a funny moment, watching NSYNC present an award to Taylor Swift. That was a...

Rileigh: There was a lot going on at the VMAs that I was like, "I bet you half the people watching right now that are my age or younger don't know who most of these people are." Like—

Taylor: Oh yeah?

Rileigh: Diddy was up there for, like, 20 minutes. There was a whole thing for Shakira. NSYNC was up there. Um... [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Wait, do people not know who Shakira is now?

Raleigh: Well, they know who Shakira is. But, like, this isn't, like, her moment, you know? Like, it's not, like, her era. Her era [crosstalk].

Taylor: [through laughter] It always Shakira's moment.

Raleigh: It's always her moment.

Taylor: I'm sorry.

Raleigh: But—

Sydnee: Shakira was body surfing. She made it her moment.

Raleigh: It's always her moment. It's not her—her era of music. Her period of music. Of music coming out, I guess.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I mean, like—

Sydnee: Honestly, I don't know. I am not up to date on when Shakira's last album came out. [laughs]

Raleigh: I just know the same songs that everybody knows, and they were ones that she performed, because she knows what the people want.

Sydnee: Her hips don't lie.

Raleigh: Yeah. Demi Lovato was there. Did rock versions of, like, three of her most popular songs. It was great. Um...

Sydnee: Yeah, I enjoyed—a lot of people on my TikTok were showing different red carpet looks—or pink carpet. It's a pink carpet?

Raleigh: Pink carpet, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Pink carpet looks.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Why is it a pink carpet?

Raleigh: I don't know. MTV?

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: MTV is pink? Their logo?

[pause]

Taylor: Is it?

Raleigh: It has pink in it. Yeah. I think. I have the app on my TV.

Sydnee: Well, I guess it has—nah, no. I guess it has pink on it. I don't know. See, okay. When the MTV logo would appear on the screen back in the day when I watched MTV, because it had music videos on it, um, it would, like—

Taylor: [wheezes]

Sydnee: —be different colors.

Taylor: Yeah. And, like, different animations and stuff.

Sydnee: Yeah, different animations and colors. So I never thought of the MTV logo as a certain color. I thought of it as a—like, it looks a certain way. I can picture it.

Raleigh: Oh, I see what you mean.

Sydnee: You know what I mean? But I wouldn't have thought of it as a certain color because it was an animated presence on the screen in between the music videos I was watching.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I didn't mean that sound like—I'm not trying to be all Gen X, like, "[sarcastically] You know, back in the day when they actually showed music." [laughs quietly] I don't mean it that way. I just mean, like...

Raleigh: I think—

Sydnee: They did used to do that!

Raleigh: I think this is the current one. And, like, the M is yellow and blue and the TV's pink. I don't know if that's why it's a pink carpet. I assumed, but I don't know. I don't know [crosstalk] pink carpet.

Taylor: [simultaneously] It's just fun.

Raleigh: Yeah. Maybe [crosstalk].

Taylor: Ru Paul's Drag Race has a pink carpet.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Hmm. That's nice.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, I mean, that's nice! Like, that's—I like that.

Raleigh: I like a pink carpet.

Sydnee: Pink is having a moment, maybe.

Raleigh: Yeah. A Barbie—

Sydnee: You know?

Raleigh: —a Barbie moment.

Sydnee: It's a Barbie moment.

Raleigh: Yeah. I got a new keyboard. It's all pink. Our listeners at home aren't going to appreciate this, but you all can.

Sydnee: Ohh.

Taylor: That is a very pink keyboard.

Raleigh: It's very pink.

Sydnee: That is a very pink keyboard.

Taylor: Wow.

Raleigh: Yes. And the keys make satisfying noises.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Charlie would like that.

Taylor: It looks like it does.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Um, yeah. I just thought that that was relevant to all of our interests that the VMAs happened. They still hand out spacemen.

Raleigh: Moonmen.

Sydnee: Yes. I thought that was interesting. It felt like—seeing Taylor Swift hold that, like I was looking at it thinking like, "That's still—" that feels like a throwback to me, but it's just always been happening.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well—

Sydnee: Well, it's just neat! Like, it's always been.

Raleigh: You know, it was the VMAs where she had her infamous run-in.

Sydnee: Right. Right.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: And she got her first Moonman. Moonmen. Space [crosstalk].

Taylor: Moonmen.

Raleigh: Moonmen.

Sydnee: My understand is that the outfits she wore to the awards ceremony and then to the after party are, um, color coded to indicate that Reputation is the next album she will be rereleasing.

Raleigh: Well, she already announced 1989. That's coming out in October.

Sydnee: Oh. Well, then—then what—

Raleigh: Um, all she has left after 1989 is Reputation and Debut. And everyone has long thought that she'd end with Debut, because it's actually called Taylor Swift as the name of the album, so it'd be Taylor Swift (Taylor's Version). So... um, but she was wearing a black dress and she had, I think, [laughs quietly]—she had six necklaces on. It was her sixth album. [laughs] So everyone was like, "Oh, it's Reputation."

And Reputation's whole color and thing was like, black and white, snakes, and... you know, Look What You Made Me Do, and all that stuff, so.

Taylor: She doesn't have a stylist. She has a game master. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

[all laugh]

Sydnee: That's what everybody was like—I was watching all these, like, red—er, pink carpet reviews of their outfits. 'Cause, like, I'm not—I'm not into—I don't judge fashion. I have no idea what it suppo—I just like to look at the outfits. 'Cause—especially for awards ceremonies like that where people kind of get daring.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I think it's cool to see the stuff people wear, you know? I don't—I'm not watching it 'cause I'm judgy. Like, I don't care. Like, they all look—they're all gorgeous. They're all amazing looking, you know.

But I saw somebody, and they were like, "And obviously this is a nod to Reputation." And I was like, "[hesitantly] Obviously. Title." I have no idea why. [laughs]

Raleigh: And then... and then, Sabrina Carpenter, who was her opener at her Mexico shows, did her performance, and answered a phone halfway through, which looked like the same phone from the Look What You Made Me Do music video when she says "Sorry, the old Taylor can't come to the phone right now."

Sydnee: Gotcha.

Raleigh: And then Taylor wore the same outfit to the after party that Sabrina was wearing onstage. Like, the exact same outfit. So... is she featured on the album? [pause] Maybe.

Sydnee: Maybe.

Raleigh: Who knows? I don't know. I spend a lot of time thinking about this this weekend. [laughs] She also is maybe dating—

Sydnee: Let's go to the—let's go to the yarn wall and start putting it together.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: She's also maybe dating Travis Kelce, the football player?

Sydnee: I saw that.

Raleigh: Yeah. Like, good for her. He said he went to her show and wanted to meet her after because he made her a friendship bracelet with his number on it, um, but she doesn't meet people after or before her shows, so... he was disappointed. But... now there are reports they've been quietly hanging out.

Sydnee: Apparently my TikTok somehow persuaded, like—I'm getting all these articles surfaced to me about, like, Selena Gomez, and Demi Lovato, and what their songs mean, and interviews.

Apparently Howard Stern is still interviewing people. I didn't know that was happening.

Raleigh: I didn't know that was still happening either.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: So now I know all of this stuff. I don't—why do I have that in my brain? Why did I read them? Why is it in my brain?

Raleigh: I would encourage you all to look at Miley Cyrus's TikTok, 'cause she's been doing a little series called Used To Be Young, or When I Was Young, or something like that, based on her new song, I Used To Be Young. And she's doing, like, throwback little, like, looking at moments from her youth and her career when she was young. It's really funny.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Just little short [crosstalk].

Sydnee: As someone who's 40, I find that a little depressing, personally, but... [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: The best one—

Sydnee: Oh, you used to be young?

Raleigh: The best one was a picture of her—

Taylor: That song is good, though.

Raleigh: —and Taylor Swift and Emily Osment. And I think Demi Lovato after an awards show. But Miley's wearing, like, baggy pants and tennis shoes and they're all wearing, like, their awards show dresses. And she said "We were going to the Cheesecake Factory." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um, yeah, that's very good. That's...

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, it was, um—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] But we're not—

Sydnee: No, we're not talking about that, no.

Raleigh: [simultaneously] We're not talking about any of those things.

[pause]

Sydnee: No. Our topic of conversation this week is much classier, I think, than the VMAs. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well...

Raleigh: It's classic-er?

Taylor: It's just to say it's old. [laughs] There's that.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah. Um, yeah. This was my week, and I asked you to watch Casablanca, which is a very, very old movie. And I don't know. I feel like it's incredibly pretentious to say this is my favorite movie. Like, that's one of those things you're not supposed to say in life. But it's definitely one of my favorites.

Sydnee: You're allowed to say that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: No. I don't—

Sydnee: You're allowed to say that.

Taylor: I don't know who I'm exactly afraid of judging me. Like, I'm sorry I enjoy this thing a lot? [laughs quietly] Sorry.

Raleigh: It's not like that scene in Barbie where, like, the Kens are talking about, like, you know, The Godfather. And it's not because, like, it's really their favorite. They just want to be pretentious and, like, tell you all about it.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: You're not doing that.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Yeah, 'cause I feel like the friends I have that are film nerds or, you know, judgmental film guys, when I say that I like this movie it's always like, "Actually, can I tell you why it's a bad movie? Actually, can I tell you why that movie's incredibly boring?"

And I'm like, "No, because I enjoy it. And I don't... you can't sway me away from enjoying something." [laughs] It's not—

Raleigh: You can't tell me, actually. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: "With reason and logic, here's why you shouldn't enjoy Casablanca, actually."

Sydnee: Right. And then what they'll tell you is that there is a definitive answer to, what is the best movie? And that everyone agrees on that. And so, like, everybody's... you're supposed to—everybody is supposed to like the same thing. It's just they choose what it is now.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I call BS on all of that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: My favorite movie is the Princess Bride, so, I mean, there it is. Like... I don't know that that's on the lists of greatest films ever. Probably someone's.

Taylor: It should be. It should be.

Raleigh: It should be.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's probably on someone's. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Um, no. This came out in 1942, and of course stars Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. And, um, it's... romantic... action, drama. It's—it's set during World War II.

Sydnee: Cool

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's cool.

Raleigh: It's cool.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's got that appeal. I don't know what you call that other than cool, which sounds, like, very simplistic. But, like... there are a lot of movies like that where you just—you feel like the vibe of it is like, "Oh, man. These people are so cool." [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I feel like that's the general vibe of Humphrey Bogart. [laughs] If he's in something, he's probably really cool.

Sydnee: Well, he's very charismatic.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was thinking about that as I was watching, because I wouldn't say that he is, like, the most handsome actor that has ever been on screen, you know. But he has this charm and charisma that is, I mean—there are actors who I would say are probably objectively what society would deem more handsome who don't have a tenth of the charisma he has.

Taylor: Well, and that was—in his time period, like, he started off playing a lot of, uh—a lot of gangster roles. Like, that was how he was sort of typecast.

And that bothered him, 'cause he wanted to be more of a heroic character. But you know, he—again, like, he wasn't that traditionally what people would think of as handsome. He was a little on the shorter side. And, uh, I don't know. He made the jump at some point, started getting, you know, good guy parts instead of bad guy parts. But it was very non-traditional.

Sydnee: I was thinking about... and I don't—I—Justin was watching it with me when I was rewatching it. And, um, he speaks, like, theater language better than me, because he has a degree in that, so. [laughs quietly] So there are things that I notice that I don't really have the language for, you know?

And I said, "It feels like a lot of people in the movie still sound kind of like from the stage acting tradition. And, like, he's different in some way."

And he said that it is. Like, there was a distinct period in the 60's where actors started more, like, naturalistic acting. This sounds like I'm just talking. Like you just happen—the camera just happened to start filming an actual conversation that organically happened.

That was a whole new style of acting. 'Cause prior to that, you're supposed to sound, like, hyper-realistic. It's supposed to be this like, "I am acting. This is what is happening."

Like, that was very much—'cause that was the stage, and then that translated into film. And I feel like Humphrey Bogart is doing, like, that early naturalistic—like, it feels like he just—spontaneous, you know? He has this, like, he is just reacting to the situation naturally, that you didn't see as often back then.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Hm.

Sydnee: I don't know. I don't know if that made him more, like, relatable and charismatic, and as an audience you're like, "Oh my gosh. That guy." [laughs]

Taylor: That's true, 'cause he's surrounded by more, like, characters, and he's the real person in it. That's...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: The first thing I ever saw him in was, uh—I randomly got—this was in my—many apartments ago, where we had a VCR in the apartment. And I found, like, a copy of Petrified Forest, which was one of—he's a gangster in that movie. And it started out as a stage play, and then it was adapted to film.

Um, it's a very... dark, sad movie. But, uh, I just found a copy at the thrift store. I was like, "This looks weird. Let's watch this tonight."

And just, like, absolutely fell in love with him. Thought he was just... just so cool, same.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But, like, so interesting. And, uh, which eventually led me to wanting to watch this.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I, um—I will be honest, I have seen this movie before, but only as of last Christmas when you were home, Tey.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Um, that was the first time I'd ever seen it.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: And, um, I am not super familiar with a lot of movies from this era. I feel like I kind of missed that. Not that, like, they were current when you all were growing up, but I feel like it at least was more common for people to go back and watch those movies. I feel like as we move further and further away from that time period, my generation looking at back at movies we watch means, like, the 70's and 80's. You know what I mean? Like, it

doesn't have that same appeal of going back, 'cause there's no sort of, like, cultural touchstone that seems, like, at all relatable to, like, I don't know, people in our lives. Like, parents, grandparents or, like—that's so far removed. 80 years is a long time. I didn't realize it came out 80 years ago. But, I mean... that's a long time.

Sydnee: That's an interesting point. Because what I think is so—like, rewatching the movie, there are so many things in it that have permeated our culture so completely that when you watch it, like, this is where that came from. This is where these lines come from. You know?

Like, it's weird to think about. Like, this was the first time somebody said this stuff and then, you know, we saw it, like, on *Animaniacs* how many years later.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: You know what I'm saying? Like, these were the beginning of this. It is interesting to—I mean, there's gotta be a ti—like, a shelf life on some of that, where new stuff replaces it. I mean, I don't know. That would be my guess. And so I wonder if we're seeing a break where, *Raleigh*, I don't know. Maybe your generation doesn't have—maybe it hasn't permeated your sort of, like, you know, cultural... gestalt, the same way it did ours. I don't know.

Raleigh: I mean, I had that sort of a-ha moment watching it the first time of like, oh, that's where that line that I've heard referenced in, like, a dozen movies [crosstalk].

Sydnee: [simultaneously] "Here's looking at you, kid, or—" yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um, but it is weird to think about that, like, I guess in theory I knew that it came from a movie from that era and, you know, wasn't sure which one. But, like, knew it was probably a black and white movie from, like, the 40's that was about, I don't know, something like gangsters or... war. I don't know.

Um, but—

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] About gangsters or war.

Raleigh: Gangsters or war, I don't know. That's what I—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's I assumed. Um, but, like, there are probably people—I mean, I guess I was, that know that line, or other, like, popular moments from this movie and similar movies, and have no idea. Like, it just exists in, like, a vacuum for them. They have no idea where it came very much it just is a cultural reference they are aware of. And that is it.

Sydnee: Like Shakespeare.

Raleigh: Yeah. Which, I mean, there are probably things—yeah.

Sydnee: How much stuff do we say that is Shakespeare and no one knows? Like, nobody really thinks about, like, "What I'm doing is quoting Shakespeare right now." But that—but the origins of that turn of phrase are Shakespearean. Like, that is—yeah.

Raleigh: Because it's been used, then, in so many future pieces of media. And, like, not taken but, like, utilized in other ways. That people probably hear "Here's looking at you, kid," and are like, "Oh. That came from..." I don't know, name any list of movies that line has probably been used in over the last 80 years. They don't know that it didn't actually originate there. That was a reference to something.

And I wonder how long that list can go of, like, "Actually, no, that was a reference to this, which was a reference to this, which was a reference to this." Like, before generations start losing touch with, like, the origination—

Sydnee: The context.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Hm. I mean, I... I would hope—'cause I feel like—I don't know. I think that there are some things—you brought up Shakespeare. Like, there

are some things that manage to get—that stand the test of time because they—somebody—enough people in each generation get past it, you know? You know, whether parent to child or, you know, brother to sister or whatever. Like, "I need you to watch this 'cause it's good. I need you listen to this 'cause it's good."

Like, it keeps getting... you know, made part of the—the current culture. And I think that has to be elements in the work itself, and also how people respond to it.

Because I would say I'm not like some—I'm not some movie buff. I mean, horror movies, this, definitely. But this is not my normal genre. Um, and I don't watch a lot of old movies. And a lot of times when I do try to watch an old movie, I get a little bored. You know, I get a little, like—I can't—I don't—my brain's been destroyed by modern media. I need immediate action all the time.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: They're exposition heavy. They're very—older films are—they told more than they showed.

Taylor: But this is not—I don't know. Like, I think that the... the story within this movie and the story around this movie I think is so gripping to me that I... you know. It stands out. I think it doesn't... it doesn't get lost to its time period. I feel like it has ideas in it that are relevant today, and it shockingly holds up well, considering how long ago it came out.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, I mean, I think there—when you get right down to it, there are only so many types of stories we tell, right? There are only... [laughs quietly] there's, like, a finite number of the types of stories that you can tell. It's how well did you decide to tell that type of story this time? How well was it constructed? How well was it acted? How did you convey that story to the audience? And if you do it well enough, people will keep going back to... "Well, I want to hear a story of love and sacrifice, and it's this one. This is the one that I like."

'Cause there's lots of stories of love and sacrifice. But this one is the one that connects with people.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know. It's also—I mean, I think it also has to do with, like, the era that it's set in, against the backdrop of World War II and, like...

Taylor: [crosstalk] It's against the backdrop of World War II, but it literally came out in the middle of World War II. When it didn't look like the Allied Forces were gonna win. And this was kind of, you know... like [laughs quietly]. We're putting out this anti-Nazi movie in an era where—well, I was gonna say "In an era where Nazis were a real threat to the world."

Um, I guess we're still there. [through laughter] I guess, I guess that's...

Sydnee: Yeah, maybe we need to reissue this. Like, "Remember? We don't like Nazis." [crosstalk]

Taylor: We learned a whole lesson from this movie about how bad Nazis were. Yeah, like, a lot of the cast in this movie were people that had fled Europe. They were people that had been impacted directly, had lost family members already to the concentration camps.

Like, you know, when that scene... I think one of the most iconic scenes in the movie, where the Nazis all start singing their... their stupid little Nazi song. And then all of the—they all start singing the song, La Marseillaise.

Sydnee: The French, yeah.

Taylor: And, uh—and everybody's getting very emotional. A lot of those people were French citizens that had had to leave France because of the occupation, so.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I was thinking [crosstalk]—

Sydnee: No, I think that—

Raleigh: Yeah, I was thinking about that as I was watching. 'Cause I had a thought of like, one, I feel like you don't get as many movies that have the same sort of, like, really nice balance of commentary and politics and, like, social issues and real world events going on, and also, like, good romance stories and personal stories. And, like, you know, relationships happening.

Like, I feel like it's usually one or the other. Like, you either have a movie that's like, "Oh, this is a war movie," or whatever, and that's what this is about. But you also—I didn't think about it until you just said that. I feel like it's very uncommon to have movies that are making statements like that while still in the midst of things that are happening. You know what I mean? Like, we have movie about other issues that happened in the past where, like, wars or conflicts or historical moments.

But I don't—unless I'm unaware—I don't know of a lot that are coming out with things to say about everything that's happening now, if that makes sense.

Taylor: Hm.

Sydnee: I think documentaries, but I don't know about—

Raleigh: Well, documentaries.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: But I mean, like, a film. Like, you know, a fictional... a film that is taking place in the current world and highlighting all the bad things happening, but also just focuses on, like, you know, people existing there.

Sydnee: Well, and I don't know—and again, I'm not a movie buff either, so I feel like there are probably people who would point to films that are current that do that. Um, but I would wonder if it's not that the films that

are made by the big studios, the films that rise to the top in terms of, like, you know, eyeballs seeing them, um, are gonna be funded by companies that don't necessarily want a strong stance. You know? That don't necessarily want to ruffle feathers.

Because in order to have a broad appeal, they don't want to offend anybody. If that's your goal, is to make movie and—or to make money and not... send a message, like, use the art of film to tell a story that also changes the way people think and feel; if your main goal is "I just want to make a pile of money," you'd rather make something inoffensive.

I don't think that's all movies. I'm not saying, like, every movie does that. But I wonder if it was easier then—and I don't know. You're also talking about World War II. Like, Nazis are bad. I feel like that's a very clear moral...

Raleigh: Well...

Taylor: I feel—

Sydnee: ... line.

Raleigh: You'd think so.

Taylor: Well, I was gonna say—

Sydnee: Well, that's true. That's true. That's true! I mean, I—yeah.

Taylor: But this was—I mean, this was before the war was over. The full horrors of what was going on.

Sydnee: That's true.

Taylor: Like, the Allied Force—like, the US had just entered. Like, it was not, um... it was not as cut and dried... to your average citizen. You know, people were still debating if, you know, America should even help at that point. And it's like... this film, I don't think the intention behind it was to operate almost like—I don't want to call it propaganda because that has a negative connotation, but it's kind of like a, you know, a rallying cry for, like, why this

war matters. Because it is—like, in the movie you get a lot of characters that are not just one way. They're not just good or not bad. Like your two main characters, you know. Like, Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart. Both play morally ambiguous characters. They're both good people who are willing to do bad things for good ends.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But the—

Sydnee: There's some noir elements there.

Taylor: Yeah. But the Nazis are bad. There is no question about it. We are not—there's no angle on the way they're portrayed. Um...

Sydnee: Well, it's interesting that you say it's almost like propaganda. 'Cause when I was reading about the movie, the reason Frank Capra didn't help with this film, because he was originally going to or was asked to or whatever, is because they were working on a series of propaganda—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —he was directing a series of propaganda films for the US to, like, get people—called *Why We Fight*. And it was specifically to get people on board with the US entering the war at that moment.

And a lot of people thought, like, *Casablanca* would just get lost in the noise of the time. But, I mean, maybe it is—it isn't propaganda, but maybe in the sense that it functioned that way for people, maybe it was a more effective piece. I don't know.

Taylor: Well, because it's a... I mean, I could believe that. 'Cause I—one of the things that I think I love about this movie, and I really don't know how to explain this other than to say I feel like Rick represents what I wish America was.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, there's that kind of lost sense of American heroicism that now we're very cynical about, and for good reason. Um, for very good reason. But idea that it's like, he's not some "I want glory and I want power and I want to be, you know—like, I don't—" he doesn't care if he gets the girl. He just wants to be—you know, and he says that about "We're just small parts of a much bigger thing."

He just decides to do his little part to do some good in the world as best as he can. And that that's, you know, that kind of altruism. Of like, it's not about the glory. It's not about the success. It's not about the money or the fame. I just want to do some good with what I can do.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: There is something very attractive about that. And it's hard because, like, that sentiment has been weaponized against people today in a lot of ways. Um, and I would say that we have sort of this inter-generational conflict between this, like... this message of, like, "Just, you know, suck it up. Grin and bear it. You're supposed to struggle and work hard forever. And that's, like, you know—why are you all whining? Why do you all want vacations? Why do you all want sick days?"

You know. There's, like, that sentiment that has been so weaponized. But then the alternative to that is, like, never do anything for anyone but yourself, and I don't think we all agree with that either, right? And it is. Like, there's a balance there. There is something at the end about sacrificing something you so selfishly want for yourself. And selling out someone who at the end of the day, like... yes, this was important fighter in the resistance movement. But, I mean, if he had died, like, it's not like he would've—it's not like you let the Nazis win, you know? I mean, the whole war didn't turn on this—Victor Laszlo.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: But he still did the right thing. He still did the self-sacrificing thing, and he deprived himself of something for a greater good. I don't know.

There is something really beautiful that I connect to there that... I don't know. We don't talk about as much.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I wonder if there's a difference between that sort of feeling, like, of unity and, like, working towards a greater good and a common goal for, like, everybody other than yourself. Uh, when the threat that everyone's facing is coming from outside. Like, it's an external force that we all can, like, unite and get behind, like, "Yeah, let's work towards this thing."

Um, and today I feel like a lot of the, you know, the reason you can't have that sense of, like, American heroicism and unity and, like, working towards a common good or a common goal is because the threat isn't external. It's internal, other people here causing a lot of the problems that we're having. Not something far away that we all can kind of try to band together and work against. It's other people here.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Well—

Sydnee: It's tough. I don't know if that says something about, like, Americans are better at working against something than we are at working for something. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well.

Taylor: I mean, I think it's that—you know, we recognize that there's a lot of power in having a rallying cry. There's a lot of power in, "There's your enemy! Let's unite together."

That specific idea I think has been weaponized against our own society, so that everybody's constantly, like, feels very justified fighting against the people they're fighting against, because those have been made to—those people have been pointed out to be the enemy. And it's not, you know—instead of all of us recognizing, like, no, the enemy is actually the person that's telling us all to fight with each other. [laughs] Up top. That's a far

more complex—I don't—I would never use the phrase "a good war," but I've heard that used to describe World War II. Like, 'cause we knew who the bad guys were, and, you know, we killed 'em. Great. Good job. I don't believe in a good war.

Sydnee: Yeah, Nazis are bad.

Taylor: Yeah. But it was, you know, morally clear cut.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it's hard because, I mean... well, I think the issue of Nazis is morally clear cut. [laughs quietly] Yes. Um, there were a lot of individual pieces you could pull out of, I mean, any war and say, "Well, but that wasn't." You know.

Taylor: Well, I mean, sure. Not to—not to talk about a different movie. [laughs] But uh—

Sydnee: Right, right.

Taylor: [crosstalk] With Oppenheimer coming out, like, I'm very uncomfortable with the idea of that. Not—not taking into account of the human element of what happened in Japan with the dropping of the atomic bombs.

Sydnee: Exactly.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, that's... that's one of those—like, I don't... I would never comfortably say "Yep, that was the answer." No, I don't think it was. But what was? I don't know.

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: No, no. And so I think—but I do think, like—that's why it is—we're at a time where everything—people want things to be so black and white, you get a perversion of both ends of the sort of spectrum. Like, you get this idea that there's this older generation that is saying, you know, "Sacrifice everything and work yourself to death for your—" I mean, really for, like, a corporation? For your company, for whatever. And you get a younger generation who's seen as saying, like, "Screw everyone, I'm only in it for myself. I'm only in it for what I can get."

And, like, none of things are true, and none of those things are really conducive to happiness or the way that we want life to be. But this is how everybody's viewed. And I don't—but nothing has ever been morally... simple.

Taylor: Well, and maybe that's why I think—I mean, Rick—however—this is definitely one of my favorite movies but I will say, Rick, the character that Humphrey Bogart plays, is probably one of my all-time favorite movie characters. Because he's such a... like, his choices are his. Like, I don't think it's like, "Oh, I'm gonna, you know... "

He self-sacrifices when he feels like it's worth it. Like, "This is something that's worth it to me. Like, this is... " You know. He's made his decisions in life. He's gone his own direction. But this is what will change his direction, based on his morals. Not based on what anyone's telling him to do. Or what's convenient. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, and you know, it's funny, because if you think about—and again, I'm not applying intention here. But if you as an American in 1942 are watching this movie, you want to see—especially if you're a guy, you want to see yourself as Humphrey Bogart. Like, he's awesome. Like, the other guy in the movie says, "If I were a woman and I were not here, this is the man I'd fall in love with." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: There are so many lines that are just like—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: —the idea is, "Rick is so hot. Rick is so cool. Rick is amazing."
[laughs]

Sydnee: Rick is so cool.

Taylor: It's like the whole cast is saying that!

Rileigh: That's the thesis of the movie.

Taylor: It is! It really is!

Sydnee: The thesis of the movie is "Rick is so cool." Like, and so if you're watching and you're like—you're gonna want to identify with Rick, 'cause you want to see yourself as cool. And then you see that even though he is apolitical, he is not into that—you know, he's just there to have his club, and everybody comes in, and maybe he's not as nice to some or others, but like, at the same—at the end of the day, he wants money, and he wants, like, to stay out of everybody's business.

But this was big enough for him to sort of break out of that. That is a really great... propaganda. [laughs] You know? Like, 'cause now you've captured the whole audience to be on board with Rick, and then when Rick says, "I am willing to sacrifice for this cause because it is so important," you are moved to also say, "Well, maybe it is—maybe it is important."

Taylor: Well, and you see, like, throughout the film, like, both the references to the work he did before, um, and like—like, he was running guns for, I don't know, some smaller force that was—you know, he was on the right side in the past, even though it wasn't the monetarily successful side.

And even, like, he helps the young couple out that are trying to buy their passage. And it's implied that the young wife will have to sleep with the one scummy guy if they want passage, unless they win big at the table, so Rick...

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: He rigs the table so they can win. Like, it's clearly that he's a good guy that has become very cynical because of this whole romance that failed. Um, but I think that's—so it's like he's a good guy, he just needs his hope restored. And this movie did that. And maybe that's also part of that kind of like, "No, you're a good person. You want to do good things. You just need to believe in something."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: "Fight Nazis." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, and it's nice that, like—usually in a love triangle there's gonna be—like, you've got your hero and you've got the guy who's like—you're supposed to hate. And, like, how can you hate the resistance fighter who escaped a concentration camp, right? Like, you're not gonna hate Victor Laszlo. Maybe you want Ingrid Bergman to be with Humphrey Bogart, but you're not gonna—you know?

Taylor: Well, but you really can't—I think all three of them are really strong characters, you know? I think in a time period where a lot of women were sort of just written as, you know, sexy lampshades, like, she... I—and the movie leaves it kind of ambiguous, but at least when I watch it I feel like she does actually love Rick. But she knows how important Victor is.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] She does, I think.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And that Victor needs her. And she's willing to do whatever she has to do to make sure that happens. So she's sacrificing too.

Sydnee: Yeah. She is definitely sacrificing. I do think, like, you remake the movie today, you give her a little bit more—I think you remove the part where she asks him to think for both of them.

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs] That's fair.

Sydnee: That's the only thing I think you change. Is, like, you give her just a little agency to, like, make the sacrifice. As opposed to—you kind of get the impression that, like, he's telling her this is—"Look. This is what you're gonna do." You know. "And I'm gonna make it okay for you, and I'm gonna smooth it over with your husband, even." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: "I'm gonna make your husband see that it's all okay. I'm gonna be, like, the best guy ever. But this is what you need to do." And, I mean, she goes along with it. She sacrifices. She gets on the plane. Although, I mean, again, they make the stakes very clear. The alternative is she—I mean, they're all gonna get arrested.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: By the Nazis, so it's pretty bad.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly] Um, Tey, we've kind of touched around and kind of talked around it, but why is this movie specifically so important for you and, like, one of your favorites?

Taylor: I mean, it—on a surface level I think it's a—[laughs quietly]—it's just an aesthetically pleasing movie. It's—you know? Like, it's set in a lush bar, like this beautiful place, you know. Like, when I—in my dream of dreams where I have my own establishment, if I can be, like, the cool dude walking around in the white sports coat signing checks. [laughs] Like, that's ideal. Like, you know, a beautiful bar, fancy bartenders.

I love the setting. I love the visuals of the movie. The contrast with the high black and white, the way they use shadows. Like, there's just so many nice, artistic, beautiful choices in this film.

Um, but then I think it's just that the story is—I—you know, I'm not really wooed by stories about, you know... the concept of the hero is always something that I think is a little... specifically in the context of American culture, very toxic. The idea that one person needs to stand up and, you know, like... like, save the day.

It's like, no. You know, it's like when you want to work towards something, it's a lot of people making little sacrifices and, you know, making choices in favor of the good. And that that's kind of the message of this, is it's not really—yeah, Rick is definitely centered as, like, the hero. But everybody in this movie is... is just a small piece in it. And that's—if all of those little pieces choose to do good, or all those little pieces choose to do evil, that's the different between an Allied Force and, you know... the Axis Powers.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. I think that's—and it's also very powerful. They make comments multiple times, different characters throughout the movie that, like, we have to keep doing this because the alternative is, like, the world just is consumed by darkness. We basically lose the civilization that we have. And to kind of make it that clear, like, if those are the stakes, then you just have to do it. That's it.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: No matter what you're giving up, no matter how hard it is.

Taylor: And the whole history, like the backstory when they were in Paris and everything, it's like they're constantly losing ground, quite literally losing ground to the enemy. And the whole idea, like, Rick's whole fantasy is taking that plane and flying away, you know? Fleeing further. And at the end of the movie his choice is to stay there and fight it.

You know, we don't know what happens to Rick. Like, he, you know... but he—that's the last time he's gonna run. And I think that's really, you know... I think that's beautiful.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I'm really glad you brought it up, 'cause I enjoyed rewatching it.

Raleigh: Me too.

Sydnee: Justin and I had never watched it together, so that was kind of fun.

Taylor: Well, I don't know why—you know, the first Christmas I ever spent alone up here in New York, I had just started a very, like... a minimum wage coffee shop job, but they would not give me off for Christmas, and I needed that job, I was paycheck to paycheck, so I had to stay here for Christmas. And I had just gotten into bartending. I mean, this was right after college. I was like a home bartender, you know? And I had gotten myself, like, a bottle of cheap vermouth and cheap gin and I was gonna make martinis for Christmas when I was all by myself.

And Syd, you sent me for Christmas—I told you I was into Humphrey Bogart movies. You sent me a box set of Humphrey Bogart movies, and Casablanca was in it. And so I watched it alone in my apartment, drinking martinis on Christmas Eve. And that's become my weird tradition that I—[laughs] I don't make anybody watch it with me. I'm just like, at some point today I have to watch Casablanca. You're welcome to join me. You don't have to. Christmas Day, actually.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I think that's nice.

Raleigh: That's nice, yeah. It's a good tradition.

Taylor: Yeah, you know.

Sydnee: It is.

Taylor: It's one of those movies if you watch it enough it's like, uh, what's the movie that people actually watch on Christmas? A Wonderful Life?

Raleigh: [simultaneously] Christmas Story?

Sydnee: Christmas Story?

Taylor: Oh, I was [crosstalk].

Sydnee: Oh, It's A Wonderful Life.

Raleigh: [crosstalk]

Taylor: Where you know it well enough that you can have it on in the background, but you can still do other things. [laughs quietly] This is my version of that.

Sydnee: Yeah. See—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Right, no, I get that. I'm gonna—and now that you've said that, I'm gonna make you all watch It's A Wonderful Life at some point.

Taylor: Alright.

Raleigh: Oh... okay. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Well, thank you, Tey.

Sydnee: It's one of my favorite movies.

Taylor: Thank you.

Raleigh: I'm glad I got a chance to rewatch it.

Sydnee: Yes, thank you.

Taylor: Thank you very much for watching.

Sydnee: No, I enjoyed it too. Um, and I got—where did I watch it? I don't know. I just searched it on my Apple TV.

Raleigh: Hmm, I think I did the same. I think I rented it.

Sydnee: I don't remember where I watched it. I'm sure you can all find Casablanca. I'm sure our listeners are clever enough to find it. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, it's out there. I've got it on DVD. I also have bought it on a streaming service at some point. I don't know.

Sydnee: It's out there. I was gonna say, I was trying to remember, like, where did—I don't know. I just... I, like—even Justin I think just said into the Apple Remote, like, "Casablanca," and then it turned it on.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It's ubiquitous enough that the TV just goes, "Yeah, okay. Yeah, sure." [crosstalk]

Sydnee: "Yeah, we know. Here it is. Yeah. You got this. Yeah." Um, Raleigh, what's next?

Raleigh: Uh, yeah. So next I wanted to talk about an album, a musical album that just came out, like, a week ago. It is called Guts by Olivia Rodrigo, who we have talked about before—

Taylor: [simultaneously] I figured that was coming.

Raleigh: —when she came out with Sour, yeah. And she also just announced her Guts world tour that is coming to Washington, DC. So.

Taylor: Ooh.

Sydnee: Excellent.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, we will, uh—we will listen to that. She was also on the VMAs.

Raleigh: She was. She had a fake stage malfunction. It's all the rage.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, we will check that out for next week. In the meantime, if you haven't seen Casablanca, I would highly recommend it. Um, or if you have, just watch it again. I hadn't watched it in, like, I mean, literally, like, two decades. So it was nice to watch again.

Um, thank you, siblings. Thank you, listeners. Thank you, Maximum Fun. You should to Maximumfun.org and check out all the great shows you can enjoy there. 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 am 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]

Sydnee: You know, they don't say—she doesn't say "Play it again." She says, "Play it, Sam." doesn't she?

Taylor: Yeah, "Play it for me."

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, nobody says "Play it again, Sam."

Sydnee: Yeah, I noticed that again this time around.

Taylor: Yeah. That's one of those—what do they call it? The Mandela Effect things? [crosstalk]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, it is, yeah.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-O-D-C-A-S-T-I—

[music stops]

Speaker 1: Ugh. Hmm.

Speaker 2: Oh, you're trying to put the name of the podcast there?

Speaker 1: Yeah, I'm trying to spell it. But it's tricky.

Speaker 2: Let me give it a try.

Speaker 1: Okay.

[music plays]

Speaker 2: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, call S-T-O-P-P-P-A-D...

[music stops]

Speaker 2: Ahh, it'll never fit.

Speaker 1: No, it will! Let me try.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: If you need a laugh and you're on the go, try S-T-O-P-P-P-D-C-O-O.

[music stops]

Speaker 1: Ugh! We are so close.

[music plays]

Speaker 2: Stop Podcasting Yourself.

Speaker 1: A Podcast from Maximumfun.org.

Speaker 2: If you need a laugh and you're on the go.

[music and ad end]

[chord]

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