

Still Buffering 368: "David the Gnome"

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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: Well, um, I guess it is the spookiest time of the year, and I realize—not that I'm launching directly into our topic, but I'm just prefacing with, I realize I did not pick a very spooky topic. Um, depending on how you look at it, I guess. But I felt like I should at least acknowledge that at the top of the episode.

Taylor: That's alright.

Raleigh: I mean, for some people gnomes are very spooky.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: So.

Sydnee: I don't know. Maybe. It's possible. But it is—it is a spooky time of the year. So are you all going to any parties, or wearing any costumes?

Taylor: Um... I'm workin' a bunch. Uh... I'm having—I'm working a party at my bar that will be a spooky queer cocktail party, so.

Raleigh: Ooh.

Taylor: There will be a bunch of spooky... gays. That's... I'm sure they'll show up in costume.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, I mean, it is gay Christmas, right?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I think I'm gonna be David Bowie. I think that's what I'm gonna do for the party.

Sydnee: That's very appropriate. I think that's a good fit for that—for that party.

Taylor: I had to just ask myself, like, "Who do I think gay people will be most happy to be served a drink by?"

And I feel like that... that's a good answer.

Sydnee: I think so.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Raleigh? Parties, costumes?

Raleigh: Well, I'm going—

Sydnee: Are you gonna dress up and just sit in your living room in a costume?

Raleigh: I mean, I've done that before. I'm going to a concert Friday night, and it's a Renee Rap concert, who we talked about. Um, so my friends and I are all dressing Mean Girls, as the Mean Girls. Because it's Halloweekend, but also it's Renee Rapp.

Um, and Saturday I do have a party I'm going to, but I also do have a moot court competition the entire day of the party, so.

Sydnee: Which mean girl are you?

Raleigh: I am the Mean Girl. The—

Sydnee: Regina George?

Raleigh: Regina, yeah.

Sydnee: Oh. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well, I'm the only one of my—I'm the only—

Sydnee: The Mean Girl.

Raleigh: I'm the only one that's, like, blond at all. And I know that Karen is also usually blond, but it's not like, you know, I don't know. I also just have more pink than anyone else.

Sydnee: Did you have, like, a reaction to—you didn't want to be the dumb one?

Raleigh: No. Honestly, I think I—like, especially the musical. Karen's, like, one of the best characters. She's got one of the best songs, that sexy song about Halloween.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I love that song. Um...

Sydnee: That's Cooper's favorite. Charlie and Cooper listen to the musical all the time, and Cooper likes to be Karen only. Charlie gets to sing every other part.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: As long as Cooper gets to sing Karen.

Raleigh: That makes sense.

Sydnee: I don't know.

Raleigh: But yeah. That's, uh—and Saturday I'm dressing as, um... Barbie in the Princess and the Pauper.

Sydnee: Oh, yes. We also discussed on the show.

Raleigh: Yeah. As Princess.

Sydnee: Well, you all didn't ask me—

Raleigh: What about you?

Sydnee: And I would also like—yeah, no. Nobody asked me. [laughs] I would also like to note that—because our listeners can't see me—that my hair is red.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And no one has noticed so far. [laughs quietly]

[pause]

Sydnee: But it is.

Raleigh: Well—

Taylor: I mean... I noticed, it's just, it's been that before.

Raleigh: Yeah. That's why I didn't say anything.

Sydnee: Well—[scoffs] I just redyed it two days ago!

Taylor: Are you making a statement? Do you—[laughs]

Sydnee: No, it's my Halloween costume. That's why.

Taylor: Okay. Alright. Chucky.

Sydnee: It's temporary. No, Justin and I are—

Taylor: [[Willow?]]

Sydnee: Justin and I are going as, uh, Aziraphale and Crowley.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: So, yes. That is why.

[pause]

So... I thought that suited us.

Raleigh: Wow. I see that your hair is red and I acknowledge that.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I don't—I mean—

Raleigh: You just—you've had, like, the bright pink and then also the bright red before. I just, you know. It didn't shock the conscience.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Fair enough.

Raleigh: It looks good.

Taylor: Also, like, it's not like we're getting, like, a... direct angle of your hair here. You're wearing headphones, we got, like, an upshot going on. Like, it's not—[laughs quietly]

Raleigh: It's also, like, close to the same color as those soundboards behind you.

Taylor: Yeah, and your shirt.

Sydnee: Yeah. Did you just think it—like, I had no hair? It was blending in with everything?

Taylor: It just doesn't stand out. I'm just—you know. Sorry.

Raleigh: Like it would against, like, a white background.

Sydnee: I really like these, um... these hair dyes that—it is what my hairdresser used once, and I looked at the bottle and I was like, "This kind of hair dye works well." And... but I was told it's for professional use only. A-ha, but they let you buy it.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: They don't ask you for a hairdresser card when you buy it. [laughs quietly] Now. Could it go terribly wrong? Yes.

Taylor: No. [laughs] 'Cause you're not bleaching your hair. You're just coloring it, correct?

Sydnee: Oh yeah, I'm just coloring it.

Taylor: That can only... bleach sometimes I think people should have to have some sort of... like, license [through laughter] to purchase. Myself included, for the things I've done to my head with bleach.

But... you can only do so much damage with color.

Sydnee: Well, and the way she explained it to me, the dyes that I was using that, like, you buy off the drugstore counter, um—or not counter, shelf, they don't keep them behind the counter, typically. Those dyes, the way she explained it is that they're like fabric dyes, essentially, that you're using on your hair.

And so this is, like, a safer product to use for your hair.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and box dye often has some sort of—like a chemical component to lift the hair slightly, or something. Like, you'll have something that will do damage. But you probably are just buying color, right? Like, what's the brand?

Sydnee: It's... [quietly] hold on. [crosstalk]

Taylor: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: You asked me too fast. Let me check my order list.

Taylor: You said you—you mentioned how much you like the brand.
[through laughter] I assumed you knew it.

Sydnee: No. I looked, um... [laughs] I knew the color that she used initially was called Cleopatra, so I looked up "professional hair dye called Cleopatra."

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Hm.

Sydnee: And then that's how I found it. Um, Pulp Riot.

Raleigh: Right. So that's just—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] That's the brand.

Taylor: —color.

Sydnee: Yes. And this is Pyro.

Taylor: Color doesn't [crosstalk] your hair.

Sydnee: My hair is now Pyro.

Taylor: Pyro.

Sydnee: Pyro. Yes. I got that and Fireball and debated between the two, and Pyro was a darker, richer red, and Fireball was an orange-ier red. I don't know. It's all on brown hair, so it only does what it can. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah. But that's a good Crowley color. I went through the same debate when I—I did a Crowley cosplay with a wig. And it's like, you can go

a little oranger, you can go a little redder, 'cause his hair changes, but that works.

Sydnee: I like the redder, and I also decided just to do my hair. One 'cause then I got to dye it, and I think it's fun to dye it, and I knew it would wash out. But two, um, I felt like I could go season one and just wear it kind of combed back from my face and down, with just a little bit—not curled, but you know, it's just got a little bit of texture to it, like wave. And then I don't have to do much styling. This was my plan.

Raleigh: Well, I admire the dedication.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: To the costume.

Sydnee: Well, thank you.

Taylor: Don't forget the face tattoo.

Sydnee: Uh, I—so, I looked up, like—I thought for sure there was probably somewhere on, like, Etsy or somewhere I could buy those, 'cause I thought there've gotta be fans who have made these. And I could—

Taylor: You can probably not that quickly.

Sydnee: No, exactly, exactly. Couldn't get 'em here in time. So our friend Rissi makes things like that. She's like a Cricut master, and makes all kinds of cool things all the time. So I texted a picture of it and I was like, "Rissi, can I make this?"

And she, like, an hour later sent me back a photo of her hand with the exact tattoo on it and was like, "Is it this?" [laughs]

And I was like, "Oh my god! Yes!"

She was like, "I got it."

Taylor: I was gonna say, yeah. You just get printable tattoo paper and print it out. It's not—I've done other characters' tattoos that way.

Sydnee: Yeah. I wouldn't have known exactly how to do it. I figured there was a way but Rissi's very crafty and she, like, instant—like, within an hour she had it made. I was like, "You're incredible." So. Um, so yeah. We're all ready.

Raleigh: How exciting.

Sydnee: Yeah. And I tried not to read too much into the fact that it was like, after we watched the last episode of this season we turned it off and Justin went, "Well, I think those should be our Halloween costumes. That seems like us."

I was like... "Okay."

[all laugh quietly]

Sydnee: "Okay. I'm assuming I'm... "

And he was like, "The demon."

And I was like, "Yeah, okay. Mm-hmm. Okay."

Raleigh: Um, I—

Sydnee: "Fair, I guess?"

Taylor: This is the second costume that you guys have done that's just a couple of gay dudes. But, you know, not—that's fine.

Sydnee: Yeah, no, I realize that. I figure we're gonna continue this, like—if you follow the TikTok logic, if we've been Ed and Stede—

Taylor: [simultaneously] Are you gonna do, like, a Sherlock Holmes thing?

Sydnee: That's what I was gonna say.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Next we've got—I've gotta be Sherlock and he's gotta be Watson has to be the next thing. And then, I don't know, are we Dr. House and Wilson after that? And... [laughs quietly] Uh...

Taylor: You've got a lot of Sherlocks to cycle through after that.

Sydnee: We've got—yeah, we've got a lot of Sherlocks to do. But if you believe TikTok then you gotta throw Loki and Mobius in there.

Taylor: But see, that's where I feel like it loses the—like, however much I agree that you have, like, the Blackbeard and the Crowley thing I can see, like, I don't know. Do you see yourself as a Loki?

Sydnee: I do not.

Taylor: Oh.

Sydnee: Mm-mm.

Taylor: Well, that doesn't mean it can't be your Halloween costume.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, I don't—I would not have gravitated towards that—I mean, I love that show. I love that character. I did not feel as... I don't know. Like, that—I didn't see myself as much as I saw myself in a demon. [laughs quietly] So. We'll just all—and then Justin apparently saw himself in an angel.

Raleigh: Well.

Sydnee: So we can just both go to our therapists and discuss what all that means. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Um, on a more fun note—

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: —I should've added that on actual Halloween, even though it's a Tuesday, that the original Magenta and Brad, so Patricia Quinn and Barry Bostwick, are coming to DC to also be there for a shadow cast screening of Rocky.

Sydnee: Oh, that's awesome.

Raleigh: So I'm going to that. On a Tuesday night.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: But... it's Halloween, so.

Sydnee: That's alright. Trick or treating is—in Huntington it's gonna be on Halloween.

Raleigh: Yeah. I mean, my class I have the next morning at 10 got moved to video only, so. I'll be fine. I can do class from bed.

Sydnee: Do you have to have your camera on?

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: Oh, good.

Raleigh: It's like video only, like, the video for the class is actually being recorded at this moment on Zoom, and then we just have to watch it, so.

Sydnee: Ohh, okay.

Raleigh: It's great.

Sydnee: Nice.

Raleigh: Worked out perfectly.

Taylor: I have the very, very scary Tuesday of—of—anybody that works in a bar knows this. The last day of the month is [spooky voice] inventory.

Raleigh: Ooh.

Taylor: Where you have to count every ounce of alcohol in the entire bar.
[laughs]

Raleigh: Oh my god.

Taylor: And usually we do it at, like, midnight. I was like, "Do you want me to do that at midnight on Halloween? I will, it's my job."

And luckily one of the other people that also had to do inventory was like, "I'm not gonna do it."

I was like, "Oh. Okay. So we'll come in bright and early the following day and do it at 8 AM."

Which is a little better than late night. Very spooky, though.

Sydney: Yeah. Won't you be—won't you be crowded at that time, too?

Taylor: Uh, no. We close fairly early. We're like a restaurant bar, so I could do it at, like, midnight. That's when I usually do it and it's fine. But they're gonna let me do it at like—it's gonna be—being up there at, like, 8 AM, but that's better than doing it Halloween night.

Sydney: Yeah. Well, um... now the spookiest thing I can think of... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Gnomes!

Sydney: Gnomes.

Raleigh: Gnomes.

Sydney: So, we're talking about David the Gnome. This was my idea, so you can blame me for it. Or World of David the Gnome was the—I mean, I think it depends on where you watched it initially. I guess the American

version—well, not American. It was Canadian. But what we watched here in the States was *The World of David the Gnome*.

Um, it was apparently originally a Spanish show, and I didn't know that, and it was all dubbed in English. David, el Gnomo.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydney: And, uh... then a Canadian company dubbed it, and—what? [laughs quietly] You guys are laughing at me.

Taylor: [laughs] David, el Gnomo. No, I'm laughing at that! That's great!

Sydney: That's what it was called! David, comma, el Gnomo.

Taylor: El Gnomo.

Sydney: And *The World of David the Gnome* is what it was called when a Canadian company rereleased it with English dubbed. Um, and with the voice of David the Gnome being Tom Bosley, who Justin said, "Do you know who does the voice for David the Gnome?"

And I said, "Tom Bosley."

He was like, "I'm impressed that you knew that."

And I said, "Well, I mean, it was in the credits."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydney: He said, "Yeah, but I just didn't figure you'd know who Tom Bosley is."

And I said, "I do. He's the guy who did the voice of David the Gnome." [laughs quietly] But I guess he was also the dad on *Happy Days*.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Rileigh: Oh, I didn't know that.

Sydnee: So there you go. Yeah. A lot of people know who Tom Bosley is, just not... outside of the context of David the Gnome, just not me. Um, David the Gnome is a cartoon. It played back in the—I mean, at least for those of us in the US, it would've been, what, in the 80's? Yeah. Late 80's, and early 90's. Which it was weird when I started looking at how old it was how little we must've been watching it. Like, I think it started airing before you were born, Teylor.

[pause]

Teylor: I don't remember watching it often. Like, it's one of those, like, hazy—I bet I was five. I don't remember much of it.

Sydnee: And, uh—

Teylor: I did not remember the premise whatsoever. Like, watching it now I'm like, "Oh. He—this was like a doctor thing, was the whole thing." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. He was a—so The World of David the Gnome, like, each episode introduces you to a different sort of facet of gnome life, gnome culture. [laughs quietly] Like, it's kind of like—there's one where he's like, "Here's how we make pottery." And then there's a story that unfolds afterwards.

So, like, each one is kind of teaching you. 'Cause they're talking to you, the kids in the audience, to start off with. I will say, I had forgotten that the entire series started out with David the Gnome in a bathtub, naked in a bathtub talking to you.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Which is weird, 'cause he's a 399 year old...

Teylor: Gnome.

Sydnee: Gnome. [laughs quietly] Who's sitting in a bathtub, naked, talking to you, the child audience.

Taylor: Well... yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] It's a weird energy that it starts with, I feel like.

Raleigh: It is a weird energy, yeah.

Taylor: I mean, it's got that hippie energy that a lot of animation at that time had. Like, there were a lot of shows about, like, wizards and magical people. It's like, everybody was really high when you made this, huh?
[laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I think it definitely—'cause it, like—so David and Lisa are your two main characters. They're an older gnome couple. They're 399, and gnomes, by the way—I don't know how much of it you guys were able to watch. I only watched a couple episodes, so I don't expect a lot. But, like, they only live 400 years.

Taylor: Oh! This is their—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] Last year! There's a countdown happening.

Sydnee: Yes! I don't know if—I certainly didn't realize that as a kid.

Taylor: Is that how the show ended? They died?

Sydnee: Yes!

Taylor: Oh. Oh!

Sydnee: Yes! Not to—spoilers. Uh, yes. That's the—

Taylor: [wheezes] David the Gnome spoilers, sorry, sorry. [laughs]

Sydnee: There's a lot of wild stuff we could talk about. As I was, like—I watched a little bit of it and I was like, "Man, this is weirder than I remember."

And then I started reading more about it. And just to jump into that, so, gnome lore... [laughs quietly] is that gnomes only live 400 years, always. I mean, I guess unless some sort of tragic accident takes their lives earlier.

They, like, reference that there was one gnome who, like, beat the odds and lived to be 550, but that only happened one time ever. And all other gnomes have always died when they turn 400. And the last episode of the series, which I do not remember watching—and I had this moment of like, "Maybe I should watch that then."

And then I thought, "No, that sounds really frickin' sad."

The last episode of the series are your two little—this little older elderly gnome couple, who are adorable, like, hiking up to the top of this tall hill, embracing each other, and then dying and turning into trees.

[pause]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That's heavy!

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: That's the last episode of this children's show. [laughs quietly] I know!

Taylor: I mean, you know, kids are gonna learn about death one way or the other. I guess that's one of the—the better ways you could learn. [wheezes]

Sydnee: [crosstalk] All gnomes turn into trees. So part of the rationale for gnomes being so protective of the forest... [pause] Like, that's their frickin' family. Like, the trees were people. They were gnomes. They weren't people, they were gnomes. And so... they are very protective of the forest in part because those are their ancestors.

Taylor: Yeah. I noticed too there was a little bit of a—when they were talking about the food that they eat, that they were very specific to say, like, "Oh, we—we eat eggs, but only the eggs that the birds aren't gonna hatch."

So a little bit of a vegetarian situation going on there. [laughs] Some indoctrination.

Sydnee: Okay. I think there's—even just watching the first episode, it struck me that first of all, it introduces you to the world of David the Gnome by contrasting what they call city life, and then what it's like out in the forest. And the pictures of city life are, like, actual, like, real footage. Not car—not animated. Not—you know, this isn't cartoon. They're just, like, stock photos, stock video of cities.

And they're, like, crowded and noisy and there's lots of, like, smoke and pollution, and cars honking. You know. And they're like, "This is what it's like in the city."

And then they show these, like, beautiful, peaceful forests and they're like, "But come with us to the better world, where the forest is. Where there's no humans. [laughs quietly] There's just animals. Isn't this so much better?"

And then they introduce you to David the Gnome. And he's like, "Hey... humans. Welcome. You must be really sensitive, 'cause you can see us and, like, most humans can't. But we know all about you guys. We know everything about humans. Um, because you come into our forests and shoot all our animals."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. The mention of guns right away kind of threw me.

Sydnee: Yes!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, that's—right off the bat he's like, "Yeah, we know who you are." And then he's like, "And you cut down our trees, and you pollute our land. [pause] But anyway, we wouldn't hurt a fly."

He says that, that they're harmless, right after referencing all the damage that humans do. Which to me I read that as like, "Is that a bit of a threat?"

Raleigh: [laughs] They're gonna take over.

Sydnee: Well, to me it read a little bit like... "I mean, it sounds like we should, like, beat the crap out of you guys, doesn't it? We wouldn't. But it sounds like it should, doesn't it?"

Taylor: I didn't take it like that. I took it as... "While you all are very harmful, we are not. That's why we're different."

But Sydnee the human took it as a threat. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Later, later they make the point—they give you the weight—

Taylor: Sydnee was ready to punch a gnome! [laughs]

Sydnee: They give you the weight and height of gnomes, which that part is weird too. They're like, "Here's how much—here's how many grams a gnome weighs," which it's like... I'm sure when I was five I was like, "Oh, good. I needed that info."

Um, they're six inches tall and they weight 250 grams or whatever.

And then they're like, "But also, they're seven times as strong as humans."

[pause]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Just compact.

Sydnee: That's horrifying.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: A gnome could throw you if they wanted to.

Sydnee: Yes. It's six inches tall, but it could pick you up and throw you across the room.

Taylor: [simultaneously] I love that for them.

Raleigh: Six inches is too small. Gnomes—like, garden gnomes are not six inches. They're, like, at least like a foot. A foot and a half.

Sydnee: Yeah, but this is canon. It is in the first episode. They are shown to be six inches tall.

Taylor: Yeah, I don't think garden gnomes are, like, body casts. I don't think they're... they're, uh... [crosstalk]

Sydnee: They're—they shed—see, gnomes shed their skin like locusts, and so garden gnomes are just like the shed skins that then we display in our gardens.

Raleigh: Well, I didn't think that. I just thought, like, when you hear gnome that's what you think.

Taylor: Yeah, that's just an—that's just an effigy. When they were going through the different types of gnomes and they mention the garden gnome and the garden gnome is kind of fussy, like "Excuse me."

Like, oh, that one's gay. [laughs]

Sydnee: Their depiction of the gnomes is not okay. Like, yeah, that gnome is kind of gay. And then they're like, they have the Siberian gnome.

Taylor: Who's just... scary?

Sydnee: Who's just scary and whose eyes glow inexplicably. And that's like, eh, that's kind of racist. Eesh! What are we trying to say here?

Taylor: [crosstalk] Well, it's like a scary Russian gnome. But this was made in, what, like, the 70's I'm guessing?

Sydnee: Yeah, 80's, but yeah.

Taylor: Alright. I as—okay.

Sydnee: Still, Cold War days, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I mean, that is. It was supposed to look like a scary Russian gnome. Um... and then there's a—there's something. Later they talk about the nomadic gnomes who travel, and that's pretty rough, too. 'Cause they're very, like—they look down on them, like they're lesser gnomes. And it's like, uh, okay. We see where—like, they're like travelers, they're Romani. They're—yeah, okay. You know.

Raleigh: Okay.

Sydnee: So, like, some of that's in there. I don't know. That's—man, that's—and that's so, like, that hippie era of progressive.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Where it's like, "We really love the Earth. We're against pollution now. [laughs] We've progressed to the point that we're anti-pollution. But we're still just sort of openly hostile to different racial backgrounds and we don't understand why that's a problem."

That's a very distinct era of, like, the progressive movement. [laughs] It was a very hippie thing.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I'm not saying that's what hippies are like now. But there was a moment where hippies were like, "Love the Earth. Not all the people on it."

[pause]

Sydnee: But... so—I don't know. I think I took at as, like, they were just reminding us for a moment, like, gnomes could mess you up. We wouldn't. We wouldn't. But we could.

Taylor: I think that—they've got a lot of friends that could, though.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: They've got foxes, and geese, and—they've got a whole army at their disposal.

Sydnee: They do. Well, I mean, he's doctor to all the animals.

Taylor: That's what I—that whole plot I forgot completely. And is that what you like about this, Syd? Is this one of your—is this one of the doctors that inspired you to be a doctor? [laughs] Like, "I wanna be like David the Gnome."

Sydnee: I do think that was part of it. Which again, it's funny because the show had left this deep impression on me that was very, like, um, amorphous. This nebulous impression on my soul that I couldn't, like, pinpoint. 'Cause if you had asked me to describe plots from David the Gnome prior to rewatching it, I wouldn't have been able to. Like, I don't know, there are those cute little gnome guys, and he was so kind. The—David the Gnome was so kind.

And I don't remember, like, much of what happened. But as I was rewatching, it hit me. Like, okay, this is part of it. Like, I loved the scenes

when he would, like, pull a thorn out of an animal's paw or something. Um, there's one where some deer—like, a deer gets a pine cone stuck in its throat. I remember that. Like, "Oh! This is so vivid!" Like, "Okay, I remember this. This—getting this pine cone out of this deer throat."

So I do think that that was probably part of it for me was like, he takes care of animals. He takes care of others.

Taylor: And he's, like, doing surgery. Like, I was surprised. Like, oh, he's gonna—he's gonna cut this animal open. [laughs] Like, oh! That's gonna happen! Like, there's no blood, but there's an incision.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. He does whole surgery on things.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's pretty wild.

Taylor: But I was—but there was a little bit of holistic medicine in there, though. Like, you know, some like, "Oh, I'm gonna numb you with acupuncture first." [laughs]

Sydnee: So I think—it's funny. I hadn't remembered that either, but you're right. I think that was part of the kind of hippie crunchy thing is that, like, they're telling you all about, like, how beautiful the forest is and the environment and, like, isn't it awful that humans destroy it? And so, like, we're trying to get the kids to rebel against that.

But then also they do throw in stuff like that. Like, all we need is some acupuncture. This is, um... what does he say? Like, a practice that dates back centuries and has been shown to do something. And it's like, are you just kind of, like, sneaking in there a little endorsement for acupuncture?

And then he's like, "And then, when we're all done, some lavender oil." And that's what—or something. And I'm like, now we're using essential oils?!

[pause]

So, yeah. I do think some of that, like, hippie... thing—I think that was part of it.

Taylor: There's a fine line between, like, magical forest medicine and just, oh no, that's just... [laughs] that's just... pseudoscience.

Sydnee: Yeah. That's just stuff you made up. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I think that that's part of it now. I mean, later on, like... they do get more magic powers. Or, like, they talk about their magic. Like, they have, like, telepathy.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I don't like that.

Sydnee: They also—they say a lot of the—in a lot of episodes that they'll always be watching you.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like, the gnomes make that pretty clear.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That even if you don't see them, they always see you. [pause] Am I the only one who finds that upsetting? [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: And they can pick you up, and, you know, read your mind.

Taylor: I don't know, Syd. What are you doing that you're worried about it?

Sydnee: I just don't like the idea of being surveilled... by tiny but—by, like, tiny Hulks, basically.

Taylor: That makes me feel safe.

Sydnee: Well, but they're also kind of mad at you 'cause you're a human, and humans destroy the world. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah, but like... I don't eat meat, so I got that working in my favor, to not get busted up by a gnome. Um... I take care of—I feed my birds. I take care of my cat. I think me and the gnomes, we got an understanding. They might keep an eye on me, and that's alright. If I get out of line, I know what's coming. But I think we're okay.

I'm not worried. I don't know why you are. What are you doing that you're worried about? Are you dumping toxins in a creek? What are you doing?

Sydnee: Well, I just don't know how intense they're gonna get. Like, obviously I'm not, like, openly polluting. [laughs quietly] I'm not—I'm not out there, like, I don't have, like, a smokestack.

Taylor: Some, like, 80's era what pollution is. [laughs] Just, like, dumping toxic bins into a creek. [laughs]

Sydnee: Exactly, exactly. Like, I'm not doing that.

Taylor: "Come at me, gnomes!"

Sydnee: I don't throw trash on the ground. Um, so like, I'm not doing that. But, like, I mean, I compost. I recycle. We have solar panels. Like, I'm trying. But on the flip side, I don't know what my carbon footprint is, and it probably could be smaller. I do drive a car. Like, maybe David the Gnome by today's standards would be like, "That's not electric, Sydnee."

Taylor: I mean... I guess that's something that, you know, you have to—it would be—actually, maybe at this day and age, like, we could use a gnome uprising. Just to get the planet a little bit better, better positioned. I think that would be okay. A bunch of gnomes come out of the woods, start throwing us around. Nothing else, they just throw us. Like, that's their whole defense mechanism is, "We can do this whenever we want. Stop polluting."

Sydnee: Pick you up and throw you.

Taylor: "Global warming is real. I'm gonna throw you across your yard."
[laughs]

Raleigh: How—how did this air on American TV?

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: 'Cause, like, it's very clear based on all of this that it is not American made. There's no way that there would've been an American cartoon that focused on, like, how humans are killing the planet and, like—right? Like, I know it's like—

Taylor: I mean, Captain Planet.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah, but like... [sighs] yeah.

Taylor: No, there was a time period in the 80's where it was okay to be like, "Hey, we're killing the world."

And then when we got past the point of no return everyone just decided, "Never mind. Don't bring that up. We can't talk about it."

Raleigh: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: No, it was very—it was—I will say, like, even for kids, there was a trendy thing about being environmentally conscious for, like—I mean, a very short—and I would say into the early 90's in this country there was this, like—

Taylor: Like the Peace Frog stuff.

Sydnee: Yes. Like, but it was all very surface. And I do think it was that kind of, like, corporate thing where they're like, "Yeah, the probably is you're

not cutting the rings from your soda cans. Fixed—the problem is you need to recycle your cans, and then it's better."

Because that sort of, like, MO of like, thrust the responsibility onto individuals... and distract from where the real problem is, I think that's when it started, right? And so you send a bunch of these environmental messages to kids. Like, "You can change the world."

When the truth is, like, you as an individual—that's great. Do everything you can. I'm not—I mean, obviously I do. I'm not anti-that stuff. But, like, that's not going to change the trajectory of climate change the way that regulating corporations would change the trajectory of climate change, right? Like, forcing us all to buy electric cars through price measures and, you know, by regulating the companies that make the cars. Like, that's how you fix it.

But it was very fashionable, I think, to be like, "No, kids. You can fix it."
[laughs]

Taylor: Well...

Sydnee: "Steal your mom's Aqua Net and you'll fix it!" [laughs]

Taylor: I mean, I think—yeah. Like, I don't think there's anything wrong with promoting individual responsibility. And I wish—like, I agree, like, as ineffective as it is, it's better than nothing, which is I guess where we are now.

But it was a time period—I literally got clocked on this the other day, 'cause I had just filled up the soda fridge at work, and I pulled all the rings off and I was standing there cutting them. And a customer looked at me and said, "You were born before 1990."

And I said, "Excuse me?"

He said, "You were born before 1990. You're cutting the rings." [laughs]

I was like, "Oh. Yeah! I thought—is that, like, a generational thing?" [laughs]

Sydnee: That campaign to cut the rings of your soda cans have to have been one of the most effective. Because I have never thrown away rings without cutting them. Never—not—

Taylor: Gotta look out for the sea turtles. [laughs] [unintelligible]

Sydnee: Never. Now, it didn't stop me from throwing away plastic! [laughs]

Taylor: [simultaneously] Or buying it in the first place.

Sydnee: But I do cut those rings!

Raleigh: I also have always done that, but my friends never did, and I guess that makes sense that I learned to do it from, you know, our shared household. But everyone else born when I was, that was not a campaign for us.

Taylor: Well, it's like now you—

Sydnee: We scared the crap out of you. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I mean, I guess the new generation's version of that is paper straws, but...

Raleigh: Yeah, that's a good point.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. Or you all, like, those—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] The trendy metal straws.

Sydnee: —metal straws, or glass straws. That's—see, now...

Raleigh: I do have glass straws.

Sydnee: That's—see, I felt like when they introduced metal straws and glass straws, I felt like it was a way of pushing people to stop using straws

unless they had to. Like, for everybody who doesn't have to use a straw. 'Cause some people have to for different reasons, you know, for accessibility.

But, like, for all of us who don't have to use straws, I felt—like, for me, a metal straw is scary. I was worried that, like, what if I trip and fall?

Taylor: [wheezes]

Sydnee: So metal straws scare me. And glass straws similarly are slightly less scary, except what if I, like, I don't know... I jerk suddenly and bite it and it shatters? I don't know. I find those straws scary.

Taylor: Paper—paper straws are fine. They—they're fine.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I will—that's the first time I've ever heard—no, this is the second time I've heard of somebody being afraid of a metal straw, 'cause the other day I had somebody trying to pitch me on their, like, they have, like, retractable straws that they sell.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And they were trying to pitch me on, and they're incredibly expensive and they don't make sense in a bar. But I had ser—he ordered a drink from me first and he was like, "You know what I could do? I could bring this drink to my table, fall over and trip, and it would go right into my trachea."

And I was like, "Don't... don't do that. Don't... don't do that. Please."

He's like, "No, that's why you need to buy my straws."

I'm like, "You just threatened me. [through laughter] With your life."

Sydnee: There was a case—well, and now, you know, as I say this, this might be one of those apocryphal things that you hear about just to scare and it isn't real. But I'm pretty sure there was, like, one documented case of a kid falling while having a metal straw and it, like, puncturing their palate.

Taylor: I—I mean, I absolutely believe that could happen.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. So, like, I don't know. I know. I know this is silly. I know that that's very unlikely. And I know that the glass straws are safe too. If I'm gonna use a straw, I'll use a paper straw. Although I will admit that they do start to get a little... [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: They just disintegrate so fast.

Sydnee: I know!

Taylor: I mean, there—

Sydnee: This is why I don't like straws. I just don't like straws.

Taylor: I'm like—there are a lot of straws now, and I mean, they are a little bit more expensive than your cheap—I mean, plastic is—it's like the Shien of straws. Like, it's too cheap. It shouldn't be that cheap. But it's hard to convince the people that work, like, in the industry, like, there are straws made literally from waste products.

Like, they're made from the processes of, like, processing corn, processing agave, processing, like, just different things. So it's like, that's great. It's a sturdy product, it's like a fiber product, so it stands up better than a paper straw, but it's completely biodegradable, and it's made from a byproduct. That seems like the way forward.

But, um, instead people are trying to make their money on weird, overpriced retractable straws. [wheezes] Like, Inspector Gadget straws. Like, no, just—just—just give me something affordable that I can throw away that won't kill the Earth, please, or a turtle. [laughs]

Sydnee: Right? 'Cause I don't—I got that as a gift somewhere, for something. Like, it was in a bag of stuff. Like, a retractable straw in its own little case.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And it had, like, a—a thing to put on your key chain on it, like a ring on it. And I was thinking, like, I feel like that's a choice you make if you are the kind of person to put your own personal straw on your keys and carry it with you at all times. Like, you must really prioritize having a straw at that point, and I am not a person who prioritizes having a straw, so I don't think this makes sense for my lifestyle, personally.

Taylor: Yeah. Like, I think—I agree with you that, like, we could just do without it. But, I mean, I don't think—like, you know. I'm saying this from the bartender perspective. Like, I serve a lot of drinks that I don't want—I don't think anyone would want to stick their face in. Like, if you've got crushed ice in a drink, you can't stick your face in that. You need a straw. Like, it's just—you know. If there's a way we can do it that's environmentally friendly—and there are a million ways, is the thing. [wheezes] It's like, lots of ways.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Also, like, what about, like, milkshakes? You can't just—you can't just—

Taylor: Well, yeah.

Raleigh: I mean, I guess you could, like, spoo—spoon them. But...

Taylor: But then you're—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] [sighs] That's just not—

Taylor: Then you're admitting to yourself that in fact the milkshake is just slightly liquidy ice cream.

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: Yeah. [crosstalk]

Taylor: And nobody wants to admit that to themselves. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yep.

Taylor: "Oh, it's a drink! It's just a beverage."

No, you're just drinking ice cream. That's what you're doing there. No one—don't make people admit that.

Raleigh: Yeah. I was only thinking about that because I did go to a restaurant that had paper straws for their milkshakes, and it was just the worst—[through laughter] the worst experience! 'Cause it disintegrated, like, 100 times faster than it does in, like, a regular beverage.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: We had these silicone straws for a while that we got for the girls. And they were, like, flexible, but like, sturdy enough that you could stick 'em in a drink and they worked, you know. Um, and I guess that's very easy to clean. I guess. I don't know. They seemed to—but I just, after a while, I'd rinse 'em out, but they would use 'em for things like milkshakes, so like, all kinds of... I don't know.

I feel like after a while, is that still good to—we still have them. But it makes me nervous to have something like that that my kids put in their [through laughter] grubby little mouths and all of their drinks and—I reuse, and I'm rinsing it with hot water, I don't know, do I need to—I—it just makes me nervous after a while. Surely this is getting gross. Surely at some point this is a gross thing.

Taylor: Yeah. I mean, we do metal straws at my job and we've gotta, like, get up in there. And it's a bit of a beast to have them be our straws. [laughs] Uh, you should get the kinds—there are the silicone ones that you can literally open up.

Sydnee: Ohhh.

Taylor: Like, they twist tight like air—like, they're watertight when they twist up, but you can peel them open and clean them out. And—

Sydnee: Now, that I would get. Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. They're not cost effective for us to use at the bar, but for you at your house, that... that is a reusable, easy to clean, [wheezes] like, thing.

Sydnee: Although... I will say, we kind of went the route of—we bought a box of paper straws and we said, "Girls, this is what you're gonna use if you need a straw."

They almost never use a straw now. [laughs] They just, like, we weaned them off of straws. [laughs]

Taylor: I do feel like that's—we had—at my last bar we did paper straws and that was kind of the—like, people that really need a straw—and sometimes they'll go through, like, three. Like, "Oh, this is mushy. Can I get another one?"

Yeah, that's fine. Have as many as you want. They're paper! They are biodegrading in front of us. It's fine. [laughs]

Sydnee: It's fine. It's fine. We are not hurting Earth with this one.

Taylor: Yeah. No—a turtle will just sniff this and it'll disappear.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: What—what kind of straw do we think David the Gnome uses?

Taylor: Biodegradable.

Raleigh: Hmm, yeah.

Taylor: He uses a reed.

Raleigh: That's—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And this is actually a thing out there in the industry. Like, you can literally buy, like, reeds that are cut into straws. But that's what he uses.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That—yeah. Definitely something natural from the forest.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And he's gonna give you a lecture on it. You know he is.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Have you—I was reading through... where was this one synopsis? So I was reading through some of the other episodes, 'cause obviously I didn't have time to go back and watch... what was there, like, 20-some episodes total?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That was it?

Sydnee: Of the—of the show.

Taylor: His life is so short.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I know, right? It's very sad! 26 episodes.

Raleigh: That makes sense why they called it a miniseries. Everywhere I kept seeing it as, like, "It's a miniseries." And I'm like, "I thought it was just a TV series."

Well, it was mini, because it was just the last year of David the Gnome's life.
[laughs quietly]

Taylor: Can you imagine—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] That's what it was, the last—

Taylor: —pitching that to, like, Cartoon Network today?
"We're gonna make a show. It's about a gnome in the last year of his li—" well, actually I think that would fly at certain boards at Cartoon Network.
[laughs] [crosstalk]

Sydnee: He dies at the end. He definitely—but it's—but it's—

Taylor: Gonna die.

Sydnee: —it's heartbreaking and beautiful 'cause he embraces his little wife and they die together in each other's arms.

Taylor: I mean, that's like—that—actually no, that sounds like a plot line from Adventure Time, so they would—that—certain people would be down for. [laughs]

Raleigh: Like an Over the Garden Wall style just, like, little gnomes that die together. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: There was a spinoff—

Taylor: This is the launchpad for the David the Gnome reboot.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] There was a spinoff called The Wisdom of the Gnomes, which I don't ever remember watching. Um... but where is the

one... I think when you talked about, like, how there was a time where, like, people were very into magic, I think that these—some of these sound like almost like D&D inspired kind of adventures that they would send these... like, here. There's this one... The Magic Knife, which I'm gonna go watch this one. But, okay. So, Lisa, that's David's wife. Her sister Julie comes to visit and she brings along a copy of a scalpel, and when I say "scalpel" I mean a knife. I'm talking about, like, a surgical knife.

Julie says the copy came from the Himalayas. David decides to journey there to find the original knife. When he is in the high mountains, he goes to see his human friend, Pondent do Rey.

Pondent is a wizard, and with the help of his magic mirror he tells David that the original knife is in the temple of Meykong. an abandoned structure in India.

David and Swift—that's his fox—leave the Himalayas and go to the deep jungles of India, and once he enters the temple [holding back laughter] he finds out it's built on an active volcano. I mean, like, how do you—like, this is just one episode of this cartoon.

It's guarded by a troll and an army of spiders. Holler the Troll has the knife, and taunts David while the spiders chase him, and then he throws the scalpel into a spider's web. David gets it and sprays him with sneezing powder, and while he's sneezing uncontrollably, the volcano erupts.

David escapes, but Holler the Troll is burned terribly. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Oh my god.

Taylor: That's a whole campaign.

Sydnee: This is an episode of a children's show! Right?

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: To retrieve a magic scalpel?

Taylor: I was gonna say, is it—what's the point? 'Cause I know he knows what scalpels are. I watched him use one on a deer.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: What was the thing with this one? [laughs]

Sydnee: It was a magic one.

Taylor: What did it do?

Sydnee: I—you know, I don't even know. See, I need to watch the whole episode to get some more context. All I know is he needed this magic scalpel and he went through a lot to get it.

Yeah. They—I mean... it got intense at times. Uh, and I mean, like, a lot of the episodes were like that. Like, really big adventures.

Most of the time it was David and Swift. Sometimes Lisa went. Sometimes Lisa saved him, which is kind of cool. Like, 'cause a lot of the time she was kind of depicted as, like, the homemaker, and David got to have adventures while he was out doctoring all the animals.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I feel like there's two types of ways to make a kid's show. And I don't wanna make it, like, a generational thing, 'cause I think that both types still exist today. But maybe the balance is swayed.

Where it's like, I'm making a show the I wish I could've watched when I was a kid, versus I'm making a show that is made based on what I think kids need to see. Like, to educate them properly. And they're very different vibes. And this is definitely the first kind. Where it's like, this is the thing that I'm like, what would I like to see as a kid? I want to see gnomes battling snakes and dragons and going on magical quests, and doing weird stuff.

Versus, like, this is how we teach kids how to share. This is how we teach kids that, you know, you have boundaries. And that's all good too. Like, both things are fine. But it's—[through laughter] it's a very strong differentiation.

Sydnee: I think you could take this kind of format and, like, leaning into the magic and the fantasy and the adventure, um, they also talk—the gnomes talk directly to the audience, which is good for kid's programming. But they talk to kids not like they're little kids. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: They're talking to them on a higher level, which is good. Like, these are all good elements. And I think if you just make the environmental message a little more nuanced, um, a little more fitting for today's—I mean, I think—I really think there's some good stuff there... for kid's programming. I don't know.

Watching it, I was like, well, I mean, I can't see Charlie and Cooper really loving it. Because the elements—the elements that aren't there for kids—kids like to see somebody that they can kind of put themselves in their shoes. And I would imagine for most little kids it's hard to see yourself as a 399 year old... [laughs quietly] elderly man-dwarf in the last year of his life.

Taylor: No way. I've felt that way since I was five. Absolutely. [laughs] That's absolutely true.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] But, like, you know. I—I can see, like, ehh, I don't know. But there's a lot of other stuff that—I mean, it's beautiful to look at. I think there were books too. I think a lot of the—like, the art is based on the illustrations from the books that these were—the TV series was based on. I don't know. Cooper would really dig the animals getting surgery.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Makes sense.

Sydnee: But anyway, thank you all for watching David the Gnome.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Or David, el Gnomo.

Taylor: El Gnomo!

Sydnee: El Gnomo!

Raleigh: [simultaneously] El Gnomo.

Sydnee: I, uh—I have to say I enjoyed it. I was a little, uh, shocked that I loved it as much as I did when I was, like, five. Um... but I know I did. I know it left an impression on me. So, anyway, what is next, Tey?

Taylor: Well, uh, I do want to get a spooky thing. Not that we haven't discussed the terror that gnomes in reality could be.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Uh, but a spooky movie in before we close out spooky season. So I wanted to talk about Ginger Snaps.

Sydnee: Perfect.

Raleigh: Alright.

Sydnee: I meant to watch that all last year and I didn't, so.

Taylor: Lady werewolf movie. It's very good.

Raleigh: Excited.

Sydnee: So I'll watch it this year. Alright, well, thank you both. Um, listeners, I found David the Gnome on YouTube. I don't know if it's anywhere.

Taylor: [simultaneously] Yeah, that's where I watched it.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, but all of it's there.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, everything. If you want to watch it—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] You can watch the entire last year of his life.

Sydnee: To the conclusion of his existence.

Taylor: [laughs] Jesus Christ.

Sydnee: It's all there!

Taylor: If you want to watch a gnome die...

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: It's on YouTube!

Taylor: Slowly, but not slowly enough.

Sydnee: Um... but thank you all. Um, go to Maximum Fun. Check out Maximumfun.org. There are lots of great shows there you'd enjoy. 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]

Sydnee: I didn't even get into the song. [humming]

Taylor: [singing] Many things to see...

[all laugh]

Sydnee: See? That's in there.

Taylor: It's a great song.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

[music plays]

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