

Still Buffering 377: 1989 (Taylor's Version)

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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.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Well, we officially got all of the Halloween stuff out of our house. I don't know if you all have done the same, but all of our decorations are down.

Taylor: My... mine stays up year-round, so I don't... I don't know what that life is like.

Sydnee: Well, we... At some point we have to make room for Christmas. So we have to take down the Halloween to make room for the Christmas. I will say it was very painful for a couple reasons. One, Lewis broke.

Taylor: Oh no!

Rileigh: Oh no!

Sydnee: Like he had broken once during the season and I had fixed him. But then he broke in a way that I am not skilled enough to like... Metal bent until it snapped, which I... I don't know. There were just some storms Lewis was not prepared for, I think.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Poor Lewis.

Sydnee: I think in the future Lewis needs to be braced against a house.

Taylor: Maybe you bring him inside when there's inclement weather. Don't leave him out there to face the storm.

Sydnee: He's so tall. [laughs] We have to put him... We should put him in the garage. I didn't really think about it, but his whole stand snapped in half and then his arms came off. [laughs]

Raleigh: Oh no.

Sydnee: It was a gruesome end to the Halloween season.

Taylor: Poor Lewis.

Sydnee: I know, I felt so bad. Lewis was permanently broken. And that... what other carnage was there from our... That was the main, like, sadness of our Halloween display. Everything else I think survived more or less the season and will live to see again. Cooper was very sad about putting everything away and started trying to hoard all of the Halloween buddies in her bedroom.

Raleigh: Oh...

Sydnee: So we had to make her pick. Like, "You can't have all of the Halloween decorations just like sitting in your bedroom." [laughs] So we let her keep the things that like, sit on desks and shelves and... You know, like those kinds of things, that's fine. But like, we couldn't just put a bunch of inflatables piled in the middle of her bedroom.

Raleigh: That's fair.

Sydnee: So she kept baby Lewis. She's actually... She was sleeping with baby Lewis.

Raleigh: That fits well with her other stuffy she's got.

Sydnee: Yeah. But we realized... We took everything down and then I realized we have a projection up in our window, up on the top floor that,

like, looks like there's ghosts up there all the time. And like, spooky things. And we completely forgot about that. So we've just been running that 24/7. So now we're just like a house with no decorations and just like projected ghosts in the attic. [laughs]

Taylor: Just a haunted house now, just...

Sydnee: Yes. Now we're just a haunted house, not seasonal. Just...

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Just all the time, 24/7 haunted house. [laughs] You know.

Taylor: I like that.

Sydnee: Mom was all eager to, like, get Christmas up. She was like, "So you guys are going to put Christmas right up?" And I was like, "I'm not ready. I can't."

Raleigh: Yeah, I have—

Sydnee: It's not- Huh?

Raleigh: Oh, I have my Christmas tree up.

Sydnee: You already put Christmas up?

Raleigh: Well, it's hard when you're not here for half of the Christmas month, because then it's like, if I wait until after Thanksgiving, I'm here for like 10 days before I come back home for Christmas for a month. And then when I come back, it's January. So I feel like I've got to get started early or else there's just no point.

Sydnee: Well, and I mean, I don't know about you all, but we don't really do anything for Thanksgiving. Like decoration-wise.

Raleigh: No. I have some—

Sydnee: No I—

Rileigh: ... fall decorations. Like general fall. But those just kind of stay up from like September to December.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah. I don't have any hay bales or...

Taylor: Corn.

Sydnee: Corn.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Turkeys.

Taylor: Scarecrows. This is the time for the scarecrow.

Sydnee: Scarecrows. Giant cornucopias.

Rileigh: No, I don't have any of that.

Sydnee: I don't know. Yeah, I don't have any of those.

Taylor: Pie. Pie is...

Sydnee: You could put... You could put a big pie in your front yard. Where's that inflatable?

Taylor: Just a big old pie?

Rileigh: I bet it exists somewhere.

Sydnee: If there was a- Okay, imagine like a giant pie with like a piece cut out of it, you know? So it looks really like... like, yummy? I don't know.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That'd be a great inflatable.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Sydnee: I... I would put that... Okay. Okay.

Taylor: I don't know if there's a market for Thanksgiving inflatables.

Sydnee: Well, there is. It's me. If [laughs]... If there [laughs]... If there was a pie inflatable and like a turkey inflatable. And...

Taylor: I'm sure there's a turkey.

Sydnee: Well, but I don't mean a... I don't mean a living... [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, you... You mean a dead, cooked, turkey. You want an inflatable carcass of a once-living bird in your front.

Sydnee: Well, it's... Don't say "carcass" like that, I mean like—

Taylor: It is... It's a carcass.

Sydnee: I mean like the cartoon turkey, you know, that you see... But... Or like a bowl of mashed potatoes.

Taylor: It's just—

Sydnee: Oh!

Taylor: You just didn't just want dinner. And you want just some peas, maybe? Some stuffing?

Sydnee: Yes. And like an inflatable of that canned cranberry stuff.

Taylor: [laughs] You can do it without the can. Can you just have an inflatable tube-shaped mass of... of...

Sydnee: Cranberry.

Taylor: Cranberry. Yeah.

Sydnee: I would put... Okay, I would put those in our front yard. Justin would a hundred percent be on board with this. We would definitely put up Halloween, or I mean, Thanksgiving dinner, inflatables in our front yard if they existed. I don't know if we— We may be the only ones. So then there's no market for it really like, right? You can't make a product for one... one household. But...

Taylor: You just need a... like a custom inflatable guy.

Sydnee: [wistfully] Oh man...

Taylor: I bet that guy exists.

Sydnee: If you're out there, if you're a custom inflatable person, please reach out to me. [laughs]

Raleigh: The Internet is telling me that you can get this turkey that's holding a pie. So that's a good—

Taylor: That's close.

Raleigh: That's a good guy. Um—

Sydnee: That's pretty good.

Taylor: It's a good start.

Raleigh: This showed up right up top, which is just an inflatable turkey, but like... Like the dinner, but like hand-sized. Like you could hold it.

Taylor: That's—

Sydnee: Oh...

Taylor: ... like a realistic-looking...

Raleigh: Yeah. Which—

Sydnee: Yeah, not like yard-sized.

Raleigh: No, I mean I guess you could just get that and put it in your yard.

Taylor: You get a bunch of `em, string `em together, have like a garland of just turkeys hanging from your roof.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I like this. I like this.

Raleigh: Um... Yeah, that's it.

Sydnee: The other thing I could do is... Remember when we accidentally grew corn in our front yard that one time?

Taylor: No? You? Like at your current house?

Sydnee: No. No. No, Mom and Dad grew corn in our front yard when we were little. It was an accident. It was just like growing in the flower bed. And then Mom was excited about it. And so then we just had corn growing out of the front yard for a little bit.

Taylor: Hm. Sounds... sounds right. [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't... I don't think it ever like, fruited? Is that the right...? [laughs] Bore fruit? I don't think it ever corned.

Taylor: And that's the—

Sydnee: It was just...

Taylor: That's definitely the correct term.

Sydnee: [laughs] It was just the leafy part. Like it was the stalk and the leafy part, but it never corned.

Rileigh: Now, here's an idea. Here's a costume that is an inflatable Turkey costume. Like that you can wear. That's a big inflatable suit. You buy that.

Sydnee: So I could just—

Rileigh: And one of you—

Sydnee: ... stand out front.

Sydnee: Like you rotate, like a schedule.

Sydnee: Mm.

Rileigh: And one of you is just always standing out front. Or laying if you'd like to look like, you know, like a turkey, set for dinner. You could kind of like, lay on the ground.

Taylor: You repurpose the remains of Lewis into the turkey suit.

Sydnee: Oooh.

Taylor: And he lives again.

Sydnee: As a turkey.

Taylor: Turkey Lewis.

Sydnee: Yeah. Either that or we look at the girls and say, "Hey, look, you've never had an allowance before. Here's your chance to earn it." [laughs]

Rileigh: Stand out front in this inflatable turkey. Let's get two of `em. Have one on each side of your door.

Sydnee: These are Thanksgiving decorations I could get on board with.

Raleigh: My issue with Thanksgiving decorations is the season is so short. I feel like Halloween, like all of October feels like Halloween. And if you celebrate Christmas, I feel like all of December feels like Christmas. You know, like as it gets cold. Even, like right after Thanksgiving, you know, end of November, we start into Christmas. But Thanksgiving, it's like, how long am I going to put up these decorations? For like a week? Like Thanksgiving—

Taylor: All of November.

Raleigh: I just feel like—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: I don't know, like, right now I don't feel like I'm in the Thanksgiving season. You know what I mean?

Sydnee: It's also—

Raleigh: We're in a week into November, and it's like, I feel like it's Thanksgiving once I'm like... It's Wednesday before Thanksgiving and Thanksgiving things are happening. There's no like pre-Thanksgiving celebration that anyone does. That we do, at least. Like, it's not like October—

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: ... where, like, you can do general Halloween activities like haunted houses or carve pumpkins or anything like that. Or like same for Christmas. Like, Thanksgiving is just—

Sydnee: I—

Raleigh: ... like, the day.

Sydnee: I think it's also tough that it's a holiday where like... I mean, really, what is the event? You eat.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like that's it, right?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then like... Then whatever else you do is your family specific stuff, right? Like, yeah, you might play football or whatever. That's very specific. Generally speaking, the only unifying thing about it is we eat. And then the history behind it is problematic and sketchy, right?

Like we've deconstructed a lot of that now to say, like, "Do we all feel good about this? Do we all feel good about, you know, the mythos here? Or have we undone a lot of that?" And so then it starts to fall apart. Like if it doesn't have a core, like Halloween, that we can get behind and if the traditions are so disparate other than just eat. Like that's it. That's the one...

I don't know. I feel like it falls apart a little bit. It doesn't get as exciting from a like, shared societal experience perspective, as Halloween or Christmas can be. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Yeah. Well, because every other holiday has "eat" as part of it. It's just also got something else.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like, eat plus spooky: Halloween, eat plus tree... That's... that's Christmas.

Sydnee: [laughs] "Eat plus tree."

Taylor: Yeah. Presents.

Sydnee: Presents too.

Taylor: I guess that would be better. Yeah, that's... that's fine. But, Thanksgiving is just "eat."

Sydnee: That's just it. That's "eat" and like, I don't know, like... Eating is great, I love... I'm not like, knocking eating. I do like eating. And I like... I like several of the Thanksgiving foods. And I like the idea of getting together with family. Like I'm not knocking any of that.

I'm just saying, like, the only thing that everyone is supposed to do is eat. And then anything else is up to you. I... I don't know.

Taylor: Well, I feel like the rest of the country agrees with the dismissal of Thanksgiving because, I don't know, I live across the street from a Five Below, one of those like, discount stores.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And they started... They put out their Christmas merch and they started playing Christmas music November 1st. [laughs] I walked in and I was like, "Oh, no, no, no." [laughs] "No, no, no, no, no."

Sydnee: Target was the same way.

Taylor: And then I bought some cute ornaments. Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean Target had, while I was there looking for Halloween decorations, they already had a- like a section of the Halloween area was being filled with Christmas stuff.

It was like it was... [laughs] I don't know. It felt like some sort of like thing that was just, like magically happening. Like Halloween decorations are slowly just turning into Christmas decorat— like every time you turn around, it's like, "Oh crap! Where did that come from? I know that was a pumpkin a second ago."

Raleigh: 'Tis the season.

Sydnee: Yeah, 'tis the darn season!

Raleigh: Well, wrong...

Sydnee: I was trying to help you transition to your—

Raleigh: Wrong album, but I appreciate the effort.

Sydnee: I know, but I—

Raleigh: That's... that was a good... that was a good call back. That was a good... That was a good reference. Good job!

Sydnee: I was trying.

Raleigh: It was good. It was good. It was a good job.

Sydnee: Okay. Okay.

Raleigh: Even though, to the dismay of one person I saw on Spotify that said "I love this podcast. But I'm so tired of Taylor Swift." We're talking about Taylor Swift. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: Well, sorry.

Raleigh: [laughs] I don't know what to tell people anymore. Like, it's been the one consistent in my life for like 15 years now, so it's all I've got, really, in terms of things I consume and enjoy. So, sorry. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: But yeah, Taylor Swift re-released another album, a Taylor's Version. So...

Sydnee: Yes. You had given us this assignment and then a couple days later, I looked at Charlie and I said, "Hey, I'm supposed to listen to Taylor Swift for our next episode." And Charlie said, "Oh yeah, which one?" And I

was like, "Well, whatever the... the new one, you know, the new one that just came out." And she looked at me and said, "You don't know?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And I said, "Well, baby sis told me, but I just don't... It's whatever the new one.. The new one. You know? The new one that.. that she just came out with." And she was like, "Oh my god, mother. [exasperated sigh]"

And was so disappointed that I was like, "It's the new... it's the new one. I figured if I looked like... new one."

Raleigh: I mean, yeah, but like. I didn't just say, "Listen to the new Taylor Swift, you know what I mean?"

Sydnee: I know.

Raleigh: Like, there was a—

Sydnee: [quietly] I know.

Raleigh: ... there was a name there.

Sydnee: I know. *1989*.

Raleigh: It's *1989*, which is the year she was born. So that's why it's called that.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: But yeah, this album originally came out almost a decade ago, in 2014. It was a big deal because I think it's still like the most awarded pop album of all-time, or female pop album, but it was her first pop album. Before this, she was still doing... It was pop, but it was still listed as country and it was a lot of, you know, country feeling stuff.

The album that has "All Too Well", "Red" that has all that stuff, that was right before this one. So, she was still in country—

Sydnee: Is this the one—

Raleigh: ... realm.

Sydnee: Is this the one she won the infamous award for?

Raleigh: No. That was her...

Sydnee: Ah.

Raleigh: That was, uh... *Fearless*, I think.

Sydnee: Oh, okay.

Raleigh: That was like her second album.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: That was her first real like, big win. Um—

Sydnee: I didn't know... I don't rec- I connect that... I don't connect that to a... You know what I mean?

Raleigh: You say—

Sydnee: Like I know- I've—

Raleigh: You say... you mean the one where Kanye came up and said "I'ma let you finish," right?

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Okay, yeah. She was like, still in high school when that happened.

Sydnee: Ah.

Raleigh: But, yeah, this... this—

Sydnee: That's a... That's a terrible moment that I, anytime it comes up like in a compilation of videos, I have to like fast forward because it's too hard. I'm like, "No!"

Raleigh: Yeah, definitely one of those cultural... cultural reset moments.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: But yeah, this was a bit later, 2014. She was in her New York Era.

Sydnee: Her New York Era?

Raleigh: Her New York Era. She had just moved to New York. That's why the—

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: Yeah, she had moved to New York from doing all you know, the Nashville scene. She was in country mode. Then she wrote a pop album, moved to New York. And thus *1989* was born.

Sydnee: And started it off with the song, "Welcome to New York."

Raleigh: Exactly.

Sydnee: There you go.

Raleigh: She... the big thing about this whole era was she was in her, quote unquote. "Girl Squad." Was when she had like, all these pictures of her out hanging out with like, Gigi Hadid and Karlie Kloss and Selena Gomez and...

Sydnee: I know that one.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm. The other two are models.

Sydnee: Oh.

Rileigh: But she said, actually, in the... in like the opening little memo letter she wrote before the release, she said that, you know, so much of the conversation around her in the media had been sexualizing her. Talking about her relationships, or who she was dating and all this stuff.

And she said she thought if she would just be seen in public with like, her female friends that, you know, no one could talk about that with her. And obviously that is not the case. Still were.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: There were a lot of rumors about her like, you know, dating some of her female friends and all that.

Sydnee: Well, are there... Are there songs on this album that are about... Like, are there more... Is there... Is a new guy going to be in trouble now that this album is out? [laughs]

Rileigh: Well, it's interesting because—

Sydnee: As each album comes out, I notice that some famous guy has like a bad couple months, is— Who's going to have a bad couple months?

Rileigh: It's interesting you say that, because there are a couple songs on this album that, the first time it came out, everyone was like, "Mm. This is about Harry Styles."

But, everyone was also kind of under the impression, like- Well, the general media, I shouldn't say everyone like I know everybody. Just the general consensus was like, that was maybe a PR relationship.

Sydnee: Oh.

Rileigh: Like it wasn't clear how actually they were together. If that makes sense? Like it was like they were seen in public together a couple times. But it wasn't like... I don't know. No one was sure if they were actually together or if it was a PR thing, because that was when One Direction was just becoming like a big deal.

Sydnee: Right.

Rileigh: But now that it's been re-released, several of the vault tracks on this, actually, maybe all of them... Or at least, like three out of the five of them are also very clearly about Harry Styles, but are a lot more... Um... [sigh] I don't wanna say angry. They're not angry.

But just like have more digs at the relationship than the ones that were on the album when it first came out.

Sydnee: Mm.

Rileigh: Make it seem like it was actually maybe more of a real thing than the public was under the impression...

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: ... that it was.

Sydnee: So maybe Harry Styles is going to have a bad couple months.

Rileigh: Well, Harry Styles is already so popular with all the people who also like Taylor Swift that it seems less like he's having a bad couple months and moreso people are like, "This has changed my whole perception of what I thought happened between Taylor Swift and Harry Styles."

Because they've been seeing like, you know, talking in the past couple of years at award shows and, you know, they seem friendly.

Sydnee: Plus, and you know, something that's probably working in Harry Styles favor is Britney Spears has made sure that Justin Timberlake is going to have—

Taylor: That's just not going to be a—

Sydnee: ... whole series...

Taylor: ... couple of months.

Sydnee: [laughs] No. No. So that's, I think sucking a lot of that oxygen right now in terms of who's going to have a bad time, so...

Raleigh: That's very fair.

Sydnee: Thank you, Britney Spears.

Raleigh: Yeah. I'm sure Harry is thankful for Britney for many reasons, but maybe most of it is that right now.

Sydnee: I... You know, I'm personally thankful for Britney Spears. A lot of the time. [laughs] That's just me.

Raleigh: That's what I'm thankful for this year, for Thanksgiving.

Sydnee: I... I just hope she's doing okay, that's... I... [laughs] There's my little... I'm thinking about you, Britney.

Raleigh: I'm thinking about her and seeing clips from her book all over my Internet.

Sydnee: Yes! Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I did- I have not read it, but TikTok has read a lot of it to me.

Raleigh: Yeah, me too.

Sydnee: Um... Yeah. No, I was curious because there was a song, when I looked at the track list, there was a song called "Wonderland."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And I was like, "Well, now is this about John Mayer? [laughs] Didn't we already do him?"

Raleigh: No, they already did him. And he was two albums ago.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: "Wonderland" as in like, the *Alice in Wonderland*.

Sydnee: Yeah, I getcha now.

Raleigh: Wonderland.

Raleigh: Which a lot of people speculated was about Dianna Agron, AKA Quinn, from Glee, because they were very good friends at the time.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And she had an *Alice in Wonderland* tattoo.

Sydnee: Oh.

Sydnee: That now she has gotten removed. Um...

Sydnee: [curiously] Mm?

Raleigh: Yeah. And they like, also kind of stopped hanging out suddenly. But I don't know.

Sydnee: I had no idea, because to me, since I didn't like, get albums as they came out with Taylor Swift... A lot of the songs just became like the songs I knew and the songs I wasn't as familiar... You know?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like they weren't album-specific in my head. It was just like, "Oh yeah, I've heard that song" and "Oh, that's a new one to me." There were a lot of songs that I... This apparently was one that was everywhere, because I knew a lot of the songs off this.

Rileigh: Yeah, this was... I mean, this was like... It was very controversial for all the people that supported her as a country artist because they thought she was like, you know, giving up on country music and selling out, almost, to make pop music. But it also was like a big deal for her career because it was...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: It put her solidly in the mainstream of, like, pop music and music in general.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Not just like, "Oh, I've heard of Taylor Swift. She's that country singer." It's like, "Oh, that's that 'Shake it Off' girl."

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Like that—

Sydnee: "That's that 'Shake it Off' girl."

Rileigh: I mean, yeah, everyone friggin' knows Shake it Off, I think. I don't know.

Sydnee: Yeah, that was the... No, that was the song that, as we were listening to the album, when we got to Shake It Off, Charlie was like, "Ah, this is the first Taylor Swift song that I loved."

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And I was like, "Really? This is the first one you loved?" And she was like, "Yeah, because of that Disney version."

Raleigh: I remember that.

Sydnee: Did you all ever see the Disney Shake It Off?

Taylor: There's a Disney version?

Sydnee: Okay...

Raleigh: I did because of Charlie.

Sydnee: There is a video that... I mean, I think it was pretty viral on YouTube like among kids, I will say. This was not... You are not the target demo for this, Tey. This is definitely aimed at little kids.

Taylor: I did not think so. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No. [laughs]

But it is a lot of people dressed up as every Disney character you can think of out in a field somewhere performing Shake It Off but subtly changing the lyrics here and there to make it about Disney princesses.

Taylor: Oh. Okay...

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: But not very much. Like it's still very much "Shake It Off." But then there's little changes here and there. Like, I don't know, Ariel's line is, instead of "I never miss a beat." It's, "I don't have any feet." [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughing] Because, you know, mermaid.

Raleigh: Do you want to guess how many views that video has, by the way? I just looked it up because I was curious.

Sydnee: Lots. Millions.

Taylor: Fourteen million.

Raleigh: A hundred and three million.

Taylor: [in awe] Oh...

Raleigh: That's crazy.

Sydnee: I would say we are about 100,000 of those just because of how often Charlie and Cooper... Especially Charlie, and then eventually Cooper too, were obsessed with that for a while.

And we watched it over and over and— So much so that when I hear the song *Shake it Off*, there's a part at the end where all the Disney princesses do runs over it.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like you have, I mean, it's hard to explain without hearing, but there's a part of the end where, as they're just doing the "Shake it off, shake it off," there's like Disney Princesses over top going, [to the tune of Ariel's song] "Ah ah ah, ah ah ah."

And like, [to the tune of "Reflection" from *Mulan*] "Who is that girl I see?" and all this. And I know all the things they do [laughs] and they're in my head.

So we're listening to shake it off. And I'm doing it with that and Charlie's like "Shut up! No! You're ruining Taylor Swift!" And I'm like, "This is what you did to me!" Anyway.

Raleigh: So many copyright violations in one video.

Taylor: Oh, so it—

Sydnee: There's no way that—

Taylor: It's not an— It's not an officially Disney thing? It's just a...?

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: No.

Taylor: Oh...

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: It's just like people in... And I mean, it's like one of those quote-unquote "weird videos" where it's like, who is the audience for this except like young children who are having free reign on their parents' YouTube.

Taylor: Mm. Unsupervised children. [laughs]

Raleigh: Let's check the group message!

--

Sydnee: We've got something in the group message this week and it is just in time for the holidays. I want to talk to you about Storyworth. Because it can be hard to know what kind of gifts to get your loved ones sometimes.

Like, even people you know super well and you know a lot about their life, sometimes you feel like, "Ah, I'm not sure what they'd want. And I don't, you know, like maybe they're just not a person who asks for a lot of stuff.

And so Storyworth is there to help you with something that your loved one would really enjoy that can kind of bring you closer to somebody that you're already close to and gives you some great gift ideas if you're looking for them.

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Sydnee: There are so many... There are so many weird videos where it's like, here are two... Usually, a lot of the ones— and this is just the time frame. A lot of the ones that I was familiar with, there were two adult women dressed as Anna and Elsa, who are like... I don't know, like cooking dinner or like, playing in the backyard or something?

Like they're just like, in a house. And then like Spider-Man shows up with pizzas for some reason? I don't know. These were the... I'm not sure what the... other than that people are dressed as characters, they're never doing anything exciting really. Sometimes there's slime. [laughs]

Raleigh: That makes sense.

Sydnee: So...

Raleigh: Probably the kids see the characters in the thumbnail and they're like, "Mm. Yes. Spider-Man."

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean I... I... Like for some reason, there was a whole lot of videos that were mainly like princess stories, like it was about a Disney Princess. But then at some point, Spider-Man would show up. [laughs] I don't know.

Raleigh: Just, crossover events.

Sydnee: Lots of them. But anyway, so the Disney version of Shake it Off is the only version that's in my head. So anytime I hear Taylor Swift singing Shake it Off all I can think of is, [sings] "Tale as old as time..." [laughs]

Raleigh: It's so funny to me that Charlie is having, like, nostalgic throwback listening experiences to Taylor Swift. Because, I mean, one, she's 9. It's funny. Just the idea of a nine-year-old having like nostalgic throwback listening experiences to anything. You're so little. But also like that album literally came out the year she was born.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: It's like, "You are the same age. This is... This... You are the same age as this album. This is your whole life."

Sydnee: [nostalgically] Aww...

Raleigh: That's pretty crazy, but...

Sydnee: That's funny to think about. Well, and she definitely... Like, as she went back and was kind of discovering Taylor Swift like, as she was old enough to... You know, she's at that age where you start finding the music you like.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: When you start to like, realize... I mean, she's still kind of young for that, but she's starting to realize, like, "I can pick things. I don't have to listen to what Mommy and Daddy listen to. And I also want to pick things that aren't necessarily like, Disney music."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, nothing wrong with Disney music. I still listen to Disney music. But I want to pick like, my own pop music. But I think like, especially some of the music videos that go along with this album, she really like... I cannot tell you how many times I've seen the music video for "Bad Blood."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. That was a big deal.

Taylor: Mm. That was—

Sydnee: It had a lot of fame-os.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: She was declaring... war? On... Katy Perry? Is that what... That's what that was—

Sydnee: Oh, is that who—

Taylor: ... about?

Raleigh: That is—

Sydnee: Is it?

Raleigh: That is who that song is about, yeah.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Oh!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh, I didn't know that.

Taylor: She's gathering her troops.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Taylor: And making an aggression in the direction of Katy Perry.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um...

Sydnee: What beef did Lena Dunham have with Katy Perry?

Raleigh: Well, I don't... I mean...

Taylor: If Taylor's got beef with Katy Perry, Lena Dunham has beef with Katy Perry. It's just... That's how the Squad works.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's her Girl Squad.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: That she had in real life during this era. But now they are fighting a war. Against Katy Perry. Represented by Selena Gomez in the music video.

Sydnee: All those people hung out?

Taylor: You had to—

Sydnee: I'm feeling like there's—

Taylor: ... pick a side and...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Okay. Who all is in that?

Raleigh: Um... Well, Okay. She hung out with a lot of them. Like Zendaya, Selena Gomez.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: Karly Kloss.

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: Cara Delevingne.

Sydnee: Okay. Uh-huh.

Raleigh: Um... Hadid, Gigi Hadid, Bella Hadid, I forget which one. Models. But like Mariska Hargitay, from *SVU*.

Sydnee: Yeah!

Raleigh: And Ellen Pompeo from *Grey's Anatomy*. They're in it.

Sydnee: I was about to ask, "Wasn't Meredith Grey in that?"

Raleigh: Yeah. So she didn't hang out with them, but—

Sydnee: Okay.

Raleigh: ... her cats' names...

Sydnee: Well the age difference is what I—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I'm trying to picture, like- a very young Taylor Swift who has just like arrived in New York to, like, start her big pop career and hang out with like, people her age and models and look cool on the scene... Hanging out with Meredith Gray, who at that point was... I mean, I believe Ellen Pompeo is older than me.

Raleigh: Yeah, I think you're right. Her two... Her two cats' names, Taylor Swift's cats' names, that she got around this time, I believe are Meredith and Olivia.

After Meredith Grey and Olivia Benson, they're her two favorite shows, so she got them on there to also be in her squad.

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: They represent her cats.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: As part of that...

Sydnee: Ah.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: [incredulous] They represent her cats?

Raleigh: Well, it's Meredith and Olivia. Those were her two cats. That was before she had Benjamin. She just had the two.

Taylor: I... I... Can you imagine going to those actresses and being like, "Well, here's... here's the deal..."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "You're going to symbolically represent one of Taylor Swift's cats [laughs] in a music video."

Raleigh: Now...

Sydnee: That's so rough.

Raleigh: ... to be fair, I don't—

Sydnee: That's so rough.

Raleigh: I don't—

Sydnee: Because Ellen Pompeo has been star of...

Raleigh: Now, I don't—

Sydnee: I mean, I don't really watch *Grey's Anatomy* anymore, but like I did and it's a... it's still a huge, like long-running, culturally significant TV show, right?

Raleigh: I don't know if it's canon they represent her cats.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: I think that is why—

Taylor: It is now.

Raleigh: ... they are- I mean now it is, but I think that's why that she... like, she invited them. Like those were her two favorite shows. And like, you know, recognizable actresses that she was like, "Oh, imagine, you know, getting a cameo of them in there."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: But, I mean now, you know, they're just—

Sydnee: Well—

Raleigh: They're her cats.

Sydnee: And you had to imagine that their people were saying like, “You... It's a Taylor... Like this is... This is a demographic, the Taylor Swift music video. Like, you need to be in this if you can...” I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah, well I mean—

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: It's... It was right before—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: ... all, like, streaming blew up, you know? So like *Grey's Anatomy* and *SVU* both are wildly popular among my generation now, but not because we were of age to be watching them when they were airing. But because we've gone back and rewatched them on like Netflix and Hulu. So...

Sydnee: Why...

Raleigh: ... you know, they wouldn't have necessarily been—

Sydnee: Why *SVU*?

Raleigh: ... like, our actresses. Why? What do you mean, “Why *SVU*?”

Sydnee: I guess I just mean that. Why? [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] I think that's a fair question.

Sydnee: I get— Okay. *Grey's Anatomy*—

Taylor: Why *SVU*?

Sydnee: ... is easier for me to understand in part because it's medical and I like medical stuff too.

But like, it's also like so much about the relationships and the drama and like, it's got a very soapy-ness to it, right? Like that... In like all of the flings with the different couples.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And they recouple and people have like, secret affairs. I don't know. It's like... It's way more dramatic than like, your typical hospital show.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So I guess I get that. Why *SVU*?

Raleigh: Do you mean like, societally or like...

Sydnee: Yeah, 'cause isn't it just more—

Raleigh: ... why does Taylor Swift like it?

Sydnee: ... like—

Raleigh: 'Cause I can't answer that.

Sydnee: Is it—

Raleigh: I don't... I don't know her personally.

Taylor: I like the idea that everybody's got like that thing that made them want to move to New York. And is Taylor Swift's *SVU*?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Like... [laughs] There are—

Sydnee: That's... You're fine.

Taylor: [As Taylor Swift deciding to move to New York] "There are constantly dead people in the East River. I gotta be there." [laughs]

Sydnee: [snorts] That... I mean, 'cause like... it's like pretty... It's like a procedural, more, right?

Raleigh: Yeah, I mean, it's a *CSI*.

Sydnee: It's like a crime procedural.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And there are a bunch of them too, aren't there? Like...

Sydnee: Yeah. I thought they were like a bunch of different—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Cities.

Sydnee: ... brands of *SVU*.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Well, *SV*- There's the one *SVU*. That's the one with Mariska Hargitay.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: It's all *Law and Order*. That's what it is.

Raleigh: It's all *Law and Order*. Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: But *SVU* is like the... It's in New York. It's not... you know.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: There are no branches—

Sydnee: But it's not—

Raleigh: ... of *SVU*, but there are branches of *Law and Order*.

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I wish—

Sydnee: Okay, so there's no—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: ... *SVU: Miami* or something?

Raleigh: No, just *SVU*.

Taylor: No, there's *Law and Order: Miami*, probably.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I wish she had brought some of that into the lyrics of "Welcome to New York" because "Welcome to New York" sounds like a song that was written by someone- not even someone- like an AI trying to process what New York is like.

Which, I love it for that, but it's like "People live in apartments and wear coats, and some of them are gay." [laughs] That's...

Raleigh: That's it.

Sydnee: There you go.

Taylor: And so that's it. That's what I hear about New York.

Sydnee: What else you got there, Tey? Is that it?

Taylor: That's it. That's... That's what we... We live in apartments, we wear coats and some of us, in fact, are gay. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughing] That's what it says under the "Welcome to New York" sign. Apartments. Period. Coats. Period. Gay. Period.

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] That's it.

Taylor: Gay, parentheses, some of us.

Sydnee: [laughs harder]

Taylor: That's it. Welcome to New York.

Sydnee: It's a very different energy. if you contrast this, to like when Miley Cyrus left Nashville. And I mean, 'cause if you think about like, her song "Party in the USA."

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's her arriving in LA, right?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: Like, isn't that her departure and welcome to the Big City? Only hers is "Welcome to LA."

Taylor: Yeah, but their trajectories make a lot of sense in the New York versus LA debate, I feel like. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like Miley went to LA and then like, I don't know what, ate glitter and hung out with giant teddy bears and danced around poles for a while.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: You know, kind of found herself and I don't... I don't know, Taylor Swift [laughing] wore a coat.

Sydnee: Well, and Taylor Swift went to New York and became a billionaire. So there you go.

Taylor: Yeah, that. That, yeah.

Sydnee: [laughing] I mean... I mean, I do... I do think that kind of makes sense and like, if the coasts have personalities...

Taylor: Mm-hmm, it's... absolutely.

Sydnee: Taylor Swift went to New York and said, "I'm going to write the most successful records in pop music history and become a billionaire. "And then I'm going to make an already-famous football player more famous." [laughs]

Taylor: Gotta have your priorities.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Now, the Katy Perry-Taylor Swift beef is no longer, correct?

Raleigh: Yeah. Well, they were in the "You Need to Calm Down" music video together.

Taylor: Okay.

Raleigh: Katy Perry came—

Sydnee: Burger and fries.

Raleigh: ... dressed as— Yeah. I forget which one was which. Was Katy Perry a burger and Taylor Swift was fries? Or was it the other way around? I forget, but yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: She was a burger at the Met Gala. I'm assuming she was a burger in the video, right?

Raleigh: I bet you're right.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: I think she was a burger.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: She was a burger at the Met Gala?

Raleigh: And they hugged.

Taylor: [laughing] Wasn't she?

Sydnee: I like that if true, I don't know.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: A, she was a chandelier, but I thought she was a burger, too. I don't know. Pop culture.

Raleigh: Yeah. They're... they're fine now, I guess.

Sydnee: They're fine.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I um... I didn't realize that I liked the song Wildest Dreams.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: I didn't... I don't know if I had connected in my head that that was a Taylor Swift song even. [laughs] I don't know. But I heard it, and I was like—

Raleigh: Where did you hear that song?

Sydnee: ... “Oh, I like that song. Oh.”

Taylor: [laughing] Do the Disney Princesses do a version of that—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: ... as well that you're familiar with?

Sydnee: I don't know. I don't know. but... I really like that song. That was probably my favorite one off the album.

Raleigh: Really good one.

Sydnee: I mean, when you remove the fact that, like, I don't know how to rank songs that I've heard so many times. You know, there are songs in this album that I've heard so many times.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And that my children adore. And so it's weird to think, like, “What song do I... I mean, I'll always dance to Shake it Off. Like I'm never gonna not think that's a fun song. You know what I mean?”

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I... I like Blank—

Sydnee: And Blank Space.

Taylor: I was going to say, I like Blank Space because it's like a horror movie.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: As a song. Like the first time you hear it, it's like, "Oh, it's romantic." And then you listen to lyrics and like, "No, this is terrifying." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "This woman is scary."

Raleigh: Yeah. And then you watch the music video and you're like, "Oh, no." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: She'll murder me. Yeah.

Sydnee: Um... yeah, I like... I like Blank Space a lot. Charlie really loves that one. That's another one. We watch that music video a lot.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I feel like one important piece of lore to add to the canon here, to understand, I guess several of the... I guess it's mentioned in some of the vault tracks.

But from the original album, *Out of the Woods*, which I really like. Taylor Swift and Harry Styles were in a snowmobile accident when they were dating.

Like he was driving it and she was on the back and they crashed. So that is why there is a part in *Out of the Woods* about, "Remember when you hit the brakes too soon? Twenty stitches in a hospital room."

Sydnee: Oh...

Raleigh: That is them in their accident. And then also in, I think it's, *Now That We Don't Talk* the vault track, when she says...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: "Red blood, white snow. You lost control." Yeah.

Taylor: She was really mad about that snowmobile accident.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. That was a big deal.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Well, it was one of those things that she brought up several times to make sure, like, "I'm not going to specifically say who I'm singing about. But you know who I'm singing about."

Sydnee: Is *Style* about him?

Raleigh: I mean, his name is Harry Styles, so... [laughs]

Sydnee: Well that— [laughs]

Raleigh: Do with that what you will. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, I... it didn't really click when we were listening. I think that was the one... I can't remember. It was Style or... I think it was that. Where Justin said he had a new favorite Taylor Swift song.

Raleigh: [laughs] That's really funny.

Sydnee: I'm pretty sure that's what the one... That was the one he said that during.

Raleigh: Um—

Sydnee: We were listening as a family until Cooper started yelling at us that she couldn't hear the TV and then we had to leave the room. [laughs]

Raleigh: Sure. Yeah, that one, I mean, again, she never says who her songs are about, but...

Sydnee: It is called Style.

Raleigh: It's called Style. Like... yeah. I—

Sydnee: What's your favorite song off this album?

Raleigh: My personal favorite is Clean.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Raleigh: I think it's very underrated because it didn't, you know, blow up the same as like, Blank Space and Shake it Off and all those.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: But I really like Clean. And I really like Is it Over Now?, which is the new last song on the album in the *Taylor's Version*.

Sydnee: Yeah, those are good. Tey, was Blank Space your favorite?

Taylor: Um, yeah, I like... Some of the new ones, the vault tracks.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I like, Stay, Don't Go.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And Now That We Don't Talk, I thought those were fun.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But I, classically yes, I do love Blank Space.

Raleigh: It's a great song.

Taylor: [laughing] Love the horror movie of Taylor Swift.

Raleigh: Love Blank Space. Sydnee?

Sydnee: Like I said, I really enjoy the song, Wildest Dreams, which I didn't realize was a Taylor Swift song.

But yeah, I like the newer ones too. I liked... I liked the... Now That We Don't Talk, I like that one a lot.

And then, I mean, I... Like I said, I will always, if I'm flipping through songs on the radio for the girls in the car, especially. But I mean, even just me alone, if Blank Space is on, I'm always going to stop there.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Shake it Off, most of the time.

I would say... You know what, it's funny, I know Bad Blood was a huge thing, probably as much from the music video. You'd—

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, with all those celebrities in it and stuff. I would say it's not one of my favorite songs off the album though.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: It's good. I mean, I'm not saying it's not a good song, but it wouldn't have been one of my favorites, I don't think.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It was just like, I knew it right away.

Raleigh: It definitely... It has the vibes of... A lot of people think it's off of *Reputation*, which I don't—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: ... I don't think we've talked about, but it's the album that came after this one. Yeah.

Sydnee: Is that what she's doing next?

Raleigh: Yes. Well, there's only two left, and I'm pretty sure that one would be next. Because the only other one after that is her debut album called *Taylor Swift*. So a lot of people thought she would end with *Taylor Swift: Taylor's Version*. So yeah.

Sydnee: Are there... are there clues you need to share with us to the next album before we finish here?

Raleigh: [sighs] I mean...

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: I think... Well, the only one that I really know of, like for sure, we talked about, I think, before this one came out, actually.

Because it was a clue about this one and the next one. It was in the Karma music video when she came out with *Midnights* and released the Karma music video.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: She's holding a coffee cup that has like a latte art clock in the top of the coffee. And she's got a nail that's painted black for *Reputation*, a nail that's painted light blue for *1989*.

Sydnee: Mm.

Rileigh: And next to the clock, when she's holding the cup, the blue is next to the eight and the black was next to the two. And she announced *1989* in August, in the eighth month.

Sydnee: Oh, okay.

Rileigh: So that's when people think she'll announce *Reputation* in February.

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: But when she released *Reputation* the first time she didn't announce it. She said "There will be no explanation. There's just reputation." And just like, was there. So... I don't know.

Sydnee: Oh my God. So it could just like, happen.

Rileigh: It could just happen, who knows. No warning. But yeah, this one has long been my personal favorite Taylor Swift album.

Sydnee: Mm.

Raleigh: I think because I was, probably like you were saying about Charlie having her own taste in music, I was like 13 or 14 when this came out. So it felt like I was just hitting that age where I thought I was old enough to be like, "This is what I like."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And this came out and it, you know...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: ... Blew up and I listened to it on repeat. I was able to listen to it on like an iPod instead of having to have someone go drive me to buy the CD. So yeah.

Thanks for... thanks for listening to it. I've been... I've been looking forward to this rerecord more than all the others, so I'm excited we finally got to talk about it.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, thank you. We had fun.

Raleigh: Good.

Sydnee: All four of us.

Raleigh: Um, what's next, Sydnee?

Sydnee: Well, I wanted to do something completely different. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No, I thought it would be fun to watch the old animated *Robin Hood*.

Raleigh: Mm...

Sydnee: The one with the cute fox, you know.

Taylor: The... launched a thousand furies. Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes, yes.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That one. I thought that would be a fun movie that we could go back and watch that would follow our rules, but also I genuinely loved. So... And the girls haven't seen it. So I'm going to make 'em.

Raleigh: Well good.

Sydnee: Um, but—

Raleigh: It's been a while since I've gotten to watch it.

Sydnee: Anyway, thank you. Thank you, Raleigh, for sharing *1989* with us.

Raleigh: Of course. Thank you.

Sydnee: This morning we couldn't get Alexa to play any of... to... We... The girls wanted to listen to it again before they left for school and Justin was trying to play it. And we couldn't get Spotify to work and we couldn't get Amazon Music to work. And I heard him say, "Play *1989: Taylor's Version* on Apple Music." [laughs]

Raleigh: [gasps]

Sydnee: And I was like, [triumphantly] "Yes!"

Taylor: Finally.

Raleigh: You've been vindicated.

Sydnee: I win! [laughs] This is how I listen to music! But then that wouldn't work either. So never mind.

Taylor: [let down] Oh...

Sydnee: There was just [inaudible] was broken.

Taylor: Your Internet was down. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, the Internet. It was the Internet all along! [laughs]

Taylor: Alright. [laughs]

Sydnee: So, alright, well... But those are probably all places that you might be able to listen to this album. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Just make sure you say "Taylor's Version."

Raleigh: Yes, exactly.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, thank you all. Thank you listeners. You should go to maximumfun.org and check out lots of great podcasts that you would 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 am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I am still buffering.

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

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: Don't worry, I was able to just get Apple Music on my phone, so, it was fine. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. Sydnee to the music rescue. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] You can also just Google, "YouTube video of—"

Raleigh: Oh my god.

[theme music ends]

Sydnee: ... "Taylor Swift song." And then type in the song. And if you Google that sometimes it'll come up.

Raleigh: I can't believe you're Googling "YouTube video."

Sydnee: It works. [laughs]

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Speaker 1: What is up, people of the world? Do you have an argument that you keep having with your friends, and you just can't seem to settle it, and you're sitting there arguing about whether it's Star Trek or Star Wars? Or you can't decide, what is the best nut? Or can't agree on what is the best cheese?

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