

Still Buffering 108: How to Speak Out

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[theme music plays]

Raleigh:

Hello, and welcome to Still Buffering, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages. I'm Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor:

And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee:

Well, hello, sisters.

Raleigh:

Hello.

Taylor:

Hello.

Sydnee:

We've all had, uh, eventful last weeks... I'd say weekends, but, like...

Taylor:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

Yeah. I'd, I'd say two thirds of us. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Okay. Well, Raleigh... Raleigh hasn't done anything interesting.

Raleigh:

I haven't done much. To be honest.

Sydnee:

No. [laughing]

Raleigh:

I saw Black Panther.

Sydnee:

That's great.

Taylor:

That's amazing!

Sydnee:

Yeah, I heard that was really good.

Raleigh:

That's all I did. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Um, I had a baby.

Raleigh:

You did?

Sydnee:

Yes.

Taylor:

You know, I wish you'd let me go before you Syd. [laughing] Because now no matter what I say, I didn't produce life, so it doesn't matter. I just, I just went to a really fun, uh, like, convention, um...

Sydnee:

You tell us about your convention first, then.

Taylor:

Oh, well, you already dropped the baby bomb, but uh, don't actually drop the baby bomb, 'cause you're holding it right now. [laughing]

Sydnee:

I won't. [laughing] I am holding her.

Taylor:

Don't... don't drop your baby. Since you're, since you're just here with no children who doesn't even really know how to hold a baby. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Well, but you are... that is accurate advice. Do not drop babies—

Raleigh:

That is good advice.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

All right, cool. I got that down. You don't drop 'em.

Sydnee:

Don't drop 'em.

Taylor:

You feed them.

Sydnee:

Uh-huh.

Taylor:

And, uh...

Raleigh:

They poop.

Taylor:

Make sure they poop, yes. [laughing] That's Baby 101.

Sydnee:

And clean it up when they do.

Taylor:

Oh, right. Oh, oh, oh, that's... oh, yeah. Uh, don't give them beer or cigarettes. That's also a good one.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

See? I got this down. Anytime you want me to watch your kid... [laughing]

Sydnee:

Um, we'll, we'll talk about it. [laughing] We'll talk about it off—air.
[laughing]

Taylor:

You, you did a super adult thing and have a baby. I spent the weekend in Cosplay. And hanging out with a bunch of awesome nerds. Uh...

Sydnee:

Well, it, it looked like you had a great time though, from your pictures.

Taylor:

Yeah, I did. It was the best con. It was KatsuCon. Um, and uh, yeah, if, I, I... a couple people approached me that were either listeners or like, fans of the boys. A couple Adventure, you know, huge Adventure Zone meetup that I got to just kind of walk through and be like, "Look. There's 10 Travises and three Justins." [laughing] I always say, there's always like, 50 Justins, because there's always 50 Taakos at every Con.

Sydnee:

Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor:

But yeah, so if, if I bumped into you... hopefully not physically, although that definitely happened a few times, 'cause I'm not good at walking straight lines... uh, it was really lovely to meet you. And thank you for talking to me.

Sydnee:

Uh, Charlie loves those pictures from when, when people do dress up as Taako a lot. And I, I'm assuming all our listeners know what we're talking about, but just in case, we're talking about the Adventure Zone podcast, which is also, of course, on our network, and, uh, is, you know, stars my husband Justin, and his two brothers Travis and Griffin, and their dad Clint. And I'm... you've probably already listened to it.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

But if you haven't, that's what we're talking about. And Justin's... uh, it's a D&D podcast... and Justin's character Taako is a fan favorite for Cosplay.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And Charlie loves to see people dressed as Daddy. It makes her so happy. [laughs] She'll look and go, "Look, Daddy, that's you!" It's a fan.

Raleigh:

It's a fan.

Sydnee:

That's a fan. [laughing]

Taylor:

That, I... usually at conventions we'll, we'll ask Taakos for their pictures. Specifically so I can uh, I can send them to Justin or you guys.

Sydnee:

He likes that. I know you sent him a couple videos over the weekend. He really liked that.

Taylor:

Yeah. That's, this one was overwhelming. There were so many, so many beautiful, amazing, all, all kinds of Cosplayers, but Taakos, specifically. I just love how, [laughing] how creative people get, 'cause you kind of like, you have the umbrella, you have the hat, and then people just kind of go ham with, like, all the other details.

Sydnee:

If you don't—

Raleigh:

It sounds so funny if you don't know— [laughing]

Sydnee:

Yeah, [laughing] if you don't know that the characters names—

Taylor:

Tacos.

Sydnee:

"There were so many beautiful tacos." [laughing]

Taylor:

I mean, in general I—

Raleigh:

People in giant taco suits.

Taylor:

All tacos are beautiful in my book. I, uh, uh, be they uh...

Sydnee:

Soft, hard, [laughing] chicken...

Raleigh:

Flour.

Sydnee:

Corn.

Sydnee:

Fish. [laughing]

Taylor:

It's true. [laughing] Magical. [laughing]

Sydnee:

I uh, like I said, I had a baby. And she's here—

Raleigh:

She is our fourth host, today.

Taylor:

Yes.

Sydnee:

Yeah, she's here in my arms, attached to my boob, yeah.

Raleigh:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

All right.

Sydnee:

So that... that is hopefully where she will stay, for the duration of the podcast. [laughing]

Raleigh:

She might get up and run away?

Sydnee:

No, I mean, like— [laughing]

Taylor:

I don't think there's too many options right now at this age, right? Like...

Sydnee:

Hopefully, she'll be our silent host.

Raleigh:

What if she has something to say?

Sydnee:

I can't guarantee it, I don't know. She... 'cause sometimes she just like, likes to vocalize.

Raleigh:

Yeah, I get that.

Sydnee:

Like, she's not really crying, she just kinda likes to "aahhh."

Raleigh:

Sometimes I'll just be lying in bed, and like, it's been a whole day and I'll realize I haven't said anything, and I'll just be like, "Aahhh!"

Sydnee:

There you go. Just makes sure it still works.

Raleigh:

Yeah. [laughing]

Taylor:

Just, just checking. Just making sure you didn't stumble into that Buffy episode, where everybody loses their voices, 'cause the monsters cut out your hearts.

Sydnee:

Exactly.

Taylor:

It's good to check on that. [laughing] Every morning I wake up the first thing I do is just go, "Aahhh."

Raleigh:

Cool. [laughing] No voice—stealing demons. [laughs]

Sydnee:

That's it. You know what's funny, Tey? Is I was... you took the words out of my mouth. I was about to say, "Just to make sure you're not in that Buffy episode." [laughing]

Taylor:

Hey, sisters!

Sydnee:

Have you seen that Buffy episode?

Raleigh:

I have.

Sydnee:

Okay.

Raleigh:

So, I have.

Sydnee:

Good, that's important.

Raleigh:

It's, I think, one of my top three favorite Buffy episodes, I'd say.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Raleigh:

Well, I have a four-day weekend, sisters.

Taylor:

That's—

Sydnee:

Do you wanna explain?

Taylor:

Why is that?

Sydnee:

I think that's kind of interesting to explain why—

Raleigh:

Yeah—

Sydnee:

Why you have a four-day weekend.

Raleigh:

Um.

Sydnee:

I know this is not related necessarily to our topic, but—

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

As a diversion.

Raleigh:

Well, the entirety of West Virginia has no school Thursday and Friday, because the teachers in West Virginia, uh, are declaring a work stoppage.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm—

Raleigh:

Because of current policies that have passed that give them a raise, but not as big of a raise as they deserve. And also, a smaller raise than the raise on their insurance premiums—

Sydnee:

Premiums—

Raleigh:

So—

Sydnee:

Yeah, the, the, the PIA, which is a state insurance program for all the teachers, has, like, doubled, tripled, quadrupled their premiums.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, and then to make up for that—

Raleigh:

They gave them a 1% raise—

Sydnee:

Over the—

Raleigh:

Over the next five years.

Sydnee:

Yeah, which doesn't even come close to balancing out how much more they're gonna have to pay in premiums, and, um, we don't pay them enough to start with.

Raleigh:

And teachers are leaving, because our surrounding states, Ohio and Kentucky, that are very close to where I am right now, um, pay like, \$10,000 more on average for teachers.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm, so—

Taylor:

That's ridiculous—

Sydnee:

The work stoppage. Yeah, it is ridiculous.

Raleigh:

So, I don't have school.

Sydnee:

Our teachers do one of the most important jobs in society. I was gonna say in our country, but in a society.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And they deserve to be paid as such.

Raleigh:

I concur.

Taylor:

And, and I think, you know... and this is not to make light of the current situation... but I that they have, like, a new added stress on their jobs that our country doesn't seem to be wanting to do much about.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Um, I think they should get paid, like, a heck of a lot more, seeing as how their job safety is, seems to be something that is getting more and more dangerous. With... as we continue to have so, so, so many guns in our country.

Sydnee:

I, I think that's a good point and that's a good lead-in to what we wanted to talk about.

Taylor:

Look at that transition though, so smooth.

Sydnee:

That was though, smooth.

Taylor:

I never take the transition, but when I do... out of the park.

Sydnee:

You do a better job. [laughs] Um, you should do it more. Uh, yeah, I, I think that's an excellent point. Especially when we're at a moment in this country where we're debating if the solution to the, the, um, the violence... gun related violence that we're seeing specifically in regards to school shootings... uh, if the solution to that, that I've seen proposed, is to arm and train teachers. Which then makes us... I mean we are explicitly saying that part of your job as a teacher now is to, um...

Taylor:

Combat.

Sydnee:

Combat.

Rileigh:

Combat. [laughs]

Sydnee:

Well, I mean, yeah. That, that that, I mean, certainly I think that would justify higher pay, but I would propose that maybe there is a better solution—

Taylor:

So, so we won't—

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm, yeah—

Sydnee:

Than arming all the teachers.

Taylor:

Fund school supplies, but we will fund guns? The most necessary school supply.

Raleigh:

School supply.

Taylor:

Apparently.

Sydnee:

Right, well...

Taylor:

Wow, this is, this is a sick, sad world lead—in. This is—

Sydnee:

Yeah. Well, the government probably wouldn't, but I bet the NRA would. So, there's that.

Raleigh:

I was gonna say something mean, and I didn't.

Sydnee:

You were gonna say something mean about the NRA? [laughs]

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I think they can... I think they can take it, Raleigh.

Rileigh:

You said I bet the government can't, but the NRA can. I was gonna say, aren't they the same thing?

Sydnee:

[laughs] Whoa. [laughing]

Taylor:

You know, you know Rileigh, your generation gives me hope for [laughing] for how aware you are [laughs] at such a young age. 'Cause I think I was still in a little bit of a la—la land about, well, boy, this, this stuff sure is scary, but surely the adults out there are gonna do something to stop this. [laughs] It's like no, it's all, it's all a lie. It's all connected. It's all, it's all... the system is, is a game, it's like—

Sydnee:

Well—

Taylor:

You know your stuff.

Sydnee:

That's, that's—

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Exactly, and that's what we wanted to kind of talk about. I know that we have, um, done episodes in the past where, where we've talked about how to cope with, when, you know, these kinds of tragedies happen and it, it shakes your sense of security and safety in the world and makes you question, you know, I don't know... Just how, how safe you are.

Rileigh:

And it's awful that we did that almost two years ago and, literally, nothing's changed. [laughing]

Sydnee:

And that's... I think, I think what's really interesting in the wake of what has happened in Florida is that we are seeing... I mean, we always see, like, this

rush to, to activism. Like everybody wants, everybody starts demanding that we do something. But then generally it just fades.

Raleigh:

Within, like, a week. [laughs]

Sydnee:

Yeah. I mean, that's, sadly, that's what you see. Everybody's very angry. Everybody demands things. And then everybody forgets about it because there is no political will to change it. Um, or at least... I shouldn't say there's no political will. There is not enough unified, bi—partisan, political will to change it.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Uh, and so nothing changes and we all accept that and move on and just be more scared. And I don't... that's not quite what we're seeing.

Raleigh:

No. There's, there's a lot going on with the teens.

Sydnee:

Right. That's what... I would credit solely the teenagers, with this.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

The adults throw up their hands and move on, but the teenagers have decided they're not going to this time.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So, so that's what we're going to talk about.

Raleigh:

Yeah, 'cause our show's about those teens.

Sydnee:

Do you... Raleigh, let's address first, I think the biggest issue is that... In case anybody hasn't been following it, which if, if you're not able to follow all the news from this, from these kinds of, you know, horrible events, I don't blame you.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

But, you know, if you haven't been following it, the survivors of this shooting, the teenagers, have been leading the effort to, you know, go to the Florida legislature and demand action on gun violence.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Demand laws pass to actually combat this. And, the rebuttal to that is a lot of, um, more conservative talking—heads and news outlets insinuating that these teenagers are crisis actors. Meaning that they're just being paid by the left, to mock outrage, because it's more powerful coming from a teenager than it would be coming from an adult.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Do you wanna address that idea? That horrendous idea?

Raleigh:

I just think it's ridiculous that there are kids, that are actual kids, that are my age and younger... that are strong enough and brave enough to have, one, survived that, and still somehow are able to function. And two, are able to stand up and stand for what they believe in, even when it's not the popular thing to believe in. And are broken, and hurt, and scared, and have been through more than any of those adults conservatives have ever been through and will ever be through in their entire life. And people think that they're faking. Like, it's just—

Taylor:

What? Like, how?

Raleigh:

Awful.

Taylor:

I'm, I'm trying to process that thought. Like, people think that they're faking? Like, they were, they were there. Their lives will never be what they were gonna be.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Taylor:

For a million different reasons.

Sydnee:

It's a, it's a brand of cynicism that I don't connect with. You know, obviously I don't, I don't fully comprehend because it's not a world-view that I hold. Um, it's not uncommon, a lot of people seem to think that there is like a, a grand conspiracy when it comes to protests, especially, like, liberal protesters, that they're paid off. And so this is not, like, a crazy narrative.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm. It, it never seems to be about conservative protesters.

Sydnee:

No. Um, it, but, you know, so, I mean, it's not like that comes out of nowhere. Um, but I think what's so egregious about it, in this case, is that these are survivors of this horrific event. They were directly impacted by it. And the undermining them seems... I mean, who would do that? But I think the reason that a lot of people who are doing that feel comfortable is because they're teenagers. It's because, the perception is, they're kids. They don't care about anything. It is impossible to conceive that a teenager would care enough to talk about something.

Raleigh:

And, and to me it's hard to think... I mean, I've never had to, thankfully, endure anything like that in my life. But it's hard for me to even imagine going through something like that, and hiding in closets for hours, and hearing gunshots, like, feet away from you, and watching your friends get

shot, and not wanting to talk about it. Like, everyone keeps saying, "Give them time to grieve, give them time to get over it. We don't need to make this a political issue immediately." And I don't even think they're trying to make it a political issue. They're not, they're not campaigning for a political party. They're not campaigning for a politician. They're pleading for change. And that's so different.

Sydnee:

And that's the thing, like, you know, we always align this issue to politics, but I don't understand at this point how it is, how it is a party line issue. Like, kids are dying. If you care about life... They say these are kids, it's completely against their will. Like, I don't understand—

Taylor:

How is it a political... how is it a party issue? Like, it's not about, like, states rights. It's about people are getting gunned down when they're trying to have an education. That should be across the lines. Yeah, this is bad we gotta fix this issue. Like, I think to try to make it like, Oh, it's just a bunch of liberals out there paying off teenagers to do this, like, how can you—

Sydnee:

Right.

Taylor:

Be... who, who is buying that? Who is buying that line of logic?

Raleigh:

Yeah, yeah. And I'm sitting here not going through it and saying, "Just take all the guns. Like, why do we need guns? Someone just get rid of them all. Like, they're awful. They're used to hurt people. Someone just get rid of them." And these kids that have been through it aren't even saying that. These kids that have been through it are just asking for some sort of small regulation and change that doesn't impact people who want to keep their guns and don't want their 2nd Amendment rights violated, and call themselves law-abiding gun collectors and citizens. Like, they're not even saying anything to those people. They're asking for something reasonable that should already be in place.

Sydnee:

Well, I think... I think that that's at the core of it, is that, if we all started from the place, okay... This kind of thing happening in schools, I mean, and you can expand that conversation to churches and—

Raleigh:

Movie theaters.

Sydnee:

Movie theaters—

Taylor:

Yep.

Sydnee:

Movie theaters, and concerts, and malls and, I mean, every, every place you go—

Raleigh:

That you think would be safe.

Sydnee:

Yeah. But let's focus on schools. If you start from how, 'This is unacceptable. How do we change that?', there's a lot of common ground you can find. But I think you're right. That's not where people are starting from. People are starting from, 'You're not taking my guns.' And, you know, if you are someone who is not planning on using your guns in this kind of way. If you're someone who has legally obtained appropriate, you know, like, appropriately permitted, and all those kinds of things guns, uh, then we're not even talking to you.

Raleigh:

No.

Sydnee:

You know, the problem is that it is too easy to buy weapons, I mean, not to be, not to be dramatic, but of mass destruction.

Raleigh:

Yeah. Yeah, I mean, go back to Columbine, where two men were also arrested for helping the two shooters in Columbine, who were 17 years old and 18 years old, obtain weapons. Because they're just there. There's no process to go through. It was basically a yard sale situation, where they were just giving these kids guns.

Sydnee:

And, and the thing is, you know, as, for me, as like, as a doctor, as a scientist, my interest is, what can... what will reduce this as a cause of death? Um, to me an unacceptably high cause of death for Americans in general, and for American teenagers. Which is—

Raleigh:

And children.

Sydnee:

And children. Um, it, so, you know, from a medical perspective, how can we reduce it? How can we reduce the risk of dying from gun violence? Well, first of all, that's hard to answer because there's been a gag order on the CDC passed at the pressure of lawmakers who were being paid by the NRA. Um, to... we can't study it. I mean, heck. They don't... there's pressure on medical organizations to not even ask people if they have guns in the home. And that's one of the, like, if I'm assessing someone for domestic violence risk, if I'm assessing someone for suicidality, one of the biggest questions I need to ask is, 'Do you have access to guns?'

If you have kids in, I mean, that's part of a standard pediatric exam. If I'm just seeing a kid, I need to ask their parents or their caregivers, if they have guns, because then I can get into a conversation about, 'Do you keep them all locked away? Appropriately, so the kids can't access them?', and all that stuff. And, we're not, I mean, there's pressure to not even ask those questions because it's a violation of your rights for me to ask those basic questions, let alone, let's study how can we actually reduce the rate of gun violence. We can't do that in this country.

Raleigh:

I watched a really interesting interview President Obama did, um, before he was out of office, where someone asked him what his stance was on gun control, and he mentioned that exact same thing and said, you know, medical organizations study what caused automobile accidents. And what caused people dying because of cars, so, when they found out what was causing it, they installed air bags in cars, and they put in seat belts, and they cracked down on, you know, driving under the influence, and texting while driving.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Raleigh:

And that reduced the number of auto deaths. But we can't do the same thing when it comes to guns for some reason.

Taylor:

But you know, and a big part of that, too, was a grass roots organization that was, a lot of that was MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. That helped get a lot of those policies pushed through. So, I do think that that's a great parallel. Because it is something like, you know, if the same regulations that were applied to driving a car were applied to purchasing and owning a gun, that would all... that would be a massive change. And if we agree like, well, cars are fine, but they can be very dangerous, so we should regulate them.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Taylor:

We should make sure that people have to pass certain tests to have them, that they have to be inspected regularly, that they have to be, you know, that you have to be licensed.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Taylor:

There's all sorts of check points to make sure that we operate them as safely as possible.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Taylor:

How can we not look at something that is specifically designed to kill and not have at least the same regulations as a car?

Sydnee:

Right.

Rileigh:

I couldn't get my license for a week longer because I couldn't parallel park without scraping against a barrel. [laughing] But I could probably get a gun somehow. [laughing]

Taylor:

Well, that's like—

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

I let my license expire, because I haven't driven a car in 10 years since I've been in New York. But you know what, well, I'm like, I shouldn't actually, I shouldn't drive a car, because it's been that long. I wouldn't be safe to drive a car now, but yeah. I think I could get all the guns I want.

Sydnee:

Well, I saw somebody tweet a parallel that they... a bartender who said somebody came in and they asked for their ID, and their license was expired. So, they couldn't serve them a drink because the license they had was expired.

Taylor:

True.

Sydnee:

But this person could buy a gun. [laughs]

Raleigh:

Yeah. [laughing]

Taylor:

Oh, that's an excellent point.

Sydnee:

But they can't, they can't buy, you know, gin and tonics, so...

Raleigh:

Which again, I mean, you can buy a gun when you're 18 and you can't even get alcohol until you're 21.

Taylor:

Well, and you know—

Sydnee:

Right.

Raleigh:

There's three years and they... [laughs]

Taylor:

And that's interesting, because alcohol can also be a very destructive force.

Sydnee:

Yeah, yeah.

Taylor:

Like, there are a ton of laws that specifically exist not just to punish drunk drivers, but, if I as bartender over—serve someone, or serve someone that is not of age, it can come back, not just on my establishment, on me. Like, there are laws put in place to prevent me from being irresponsible with a substance that can cause harm. Like, alcohol is heavily regulated. It can be a substance that, I'm sure it's, just like guns, lots of people have fun with it. Sure, whatever, have your fun.

But, it can be incredibly, incredibly dangerous in the wrong hands or under the wrong conditions. And there laws in place that me, as the proprietor, will be held be responsible, if I give it to somebody that I shouldn't. Like, can there just be that? Can that come back on people that sell guns if there's gun death associated with the things that they sell? There should be. There should be penalties.

Sydnee:

I think that's fair. I mean, as someone who has the... has a license to prescribe controlled substances and is therefore held accountable for what happens to those controlled substances that I prescribe. So if I tell someone how to use it appropriately and all that, but I don't do my due diligence in making sure they're actually taking it, and making sure that they're not selling it, and making sure that they're taking it as they should, and that I'm screening for signs of addiction, and doing pill counts and drug screens and all the things that I do. If I prescribe that medicine and don't do all that and something bad happens I can be punished for that. That can come back on me.

Taylor:

Well, I'm really—

Sydnee:

So, that's fair.

Taylor:

You have to pull back from all these examples and go, what makes guns different? Is it just because, oh, well, you know, the right to bear arms? Like, cool. And that was when we all had muskets. Things were different. Like, can we apply intellect to all this? Like, if we're recognizing that it's important in a civilized culture to regulate substances, machines... anything that can be dangerous it's important to have regulations in place... why are guns the least regulated thing of all these things we're talking about? When they are the most directly designed to kill you? You know, tequila's not designed to kill you. It can. A car's not designed to kill you. It can. Prescriptions aren't designed to kill you. It can. Guns are designed to kill you.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Or something.

Taylor:

Yeah, something, sure. Because you're definitely shooting squirrels with that assault rifle. That's definitely what you're doing with that.

Sydnee:

I was thinking about that, for like, people say well, hunting. And I was thinking, yeah, I know... we, we're from West Virginia. I know a lot of hunters. Um, you don't, like, use a bump stock when you go hunting.

Raleigh:

Yeah, why do you need like, like a drum attached to your gun? Are you just like—

Sydnee:

Yeah, that would be ridiculous.

Raleigh:

Showering a bunch of trees?

Sydnee:

Uh-huh. Yeah, that would be... well I mean also, like, a lot of people, a lot of hunters like to actually eat the animals—

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

That they hunt, and that seems like that would—

Raleigh:

It seems counterproductive.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, I wanna get into the way teens are responding to this to—

Raleigh:

Me too.

Sydnee:

Um, but before we do that—

Raleigh:

Let's check the group message.

Sydnee:

We got a lot going on this week.

Raleigh:

We do.

Taylor:

Yeah, we do.

Sydnee:

[baby gurgles] [laughing] Um, first of all...

Taylor:

Sorry, the baby's—

Raleigh:

There's our little intro noise. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Sorry. Cooper got really excited about—

Raleigh:

The group message. [laughing]

Sydnee:

About the group message.

Taylor:

I usually do the beeps and boops, but that was so much better. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Cooper got excited, 'cause she wanted me to tell you about Squarespace. [laughs]

Taylor:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

She's already a big fan. Um, if you're not familiar, we've told you about Squarespace before but we're gonna do it again, because maybe you would like to know how to create a website. Um, I would, because I don't. [laughs] But Squarespace can help me out. They can help you create a beautiful website to showcase your work, sell products, announce an upcoming event. Um, and they do this by giving you basically everything you're gonna need. Beautiful customizable templates, analytics and built-in search engine optimization, free and secure hosting.

Um, I mean, it's, it's great. It's a new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 extensions. So if you are needing to start up a website for any of

the things we talked about, um, Squarespace is a great tool for you to use. And if you want to do that you can go to Squarespace.com for a free trial. And when you're ready to launch you use the offer code BUFFERING. And that will save you 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain. So please check this out, Squarespace.com, enter code BUFFERING.

Raleigh:

So, I have another sponsor to tell you about, sisters. It's a teen one, so only I know about it. [laughing] Um, this episode is sponsored by Tor Teen, the proud publisher of *Prettyboy Must Die*, by Kimberly Reid. "When Jake Morrow's classmate posts a photo of him running, along with the caption 'see the prettyboy run', Jake knows he's in trouble. He's an undercover CIA agent..." .. oh, man... "and his cover has been blown."

Sydnee:

I did not see that coming.

Raleigh:

"But when hostiles drop through the ceiling of his chem class..." Oh, man... "Jake's pretty sure his trouble just became a national emergency. Don't miss *Prettyboy Must Die*, available wherever books are sold. For more information on *Prettyboy Must Die* and other great Tor Teen titles, visit us at TorTeen.com." That's very fun to say.

Taylor:

That sounds great. It's like, *Never Been Kissed* crossed with, like, *James Bond*? Er—

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Or *Bourne Identity*? I'm into that. [laughing]

Sydnee:

That's pretty cool. I did not... as you were reading it, I was getting excited.

Taylor:

Like, oh, man, oh, man.

Sydnee:

What's gonna happen next?

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, we also have a couple jumbotrons this week. Hey, Tey. Do you want to tell us about this first one?

Taylor:

All right, yeah. [laughs] I... every time. All right. This message is for Blake and it's from Tessa.

Raleigh:

Oh, I didn't even see that— [laughing]

Taylor:

"Hello, sister. I'm sorry you broke your leg rollerskating last week." Oh, I'm sorry too. Oh, that's a bummer.

Raleigh:

Me too.

Sydnee:

Aw.

Taylor:

Aw. "And that that lady wrecked your car last month." Geez.

Raleigh:

Oh, man.

Sydnee:

Oh, I'm sorry Blake.

Taylor:

"2018 will pick up and hopefully getting a shout out from these good, good sisters helps out with that. Maybe they'll even sing you a song." They'll definitely sing you a song. "Also, Danny wants you to know he still likes you, even though your crutches are scary." [laughing]

Sydnee:

Oh, oh, I'm sorry Blake.

Taylor:

Wow, oh no.

Sydnee:

Well, Tey, sing Blake a song, 'cause things have been rough.

Taylor:

All right. Uh, all right, all right. Hey... let's see... [sings] Blake, now you've had it kinda rough. But Blake, hang in there and stay tough. You got a friend in Tessa. And she's gonna stand by you. You gotta friend in Tessa. Yeah, she's your buddy. She'll stay true. And sister, so... uh... this is your song. [laughing]

Sydnee:

That was great.

Raleigh:

That was great.

Taylor:

I panicked there at the end, oh, no.

Sydnee:

I like that. I like that ending.

Raleigh:

Good.

Taylor:

Cool. All right.

Sydnee:

That was... that was simplicity. I like that.

Taylor:

No, but, but really, that's some bumner stuff. But hang in there, buddy. You're gonna get through it. It's gonna be okay, um, and you've got someone looking out for you, so...

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

That's all that matters.

Sydnee:

We have one more message to tell you about. There's no song. So feel free to read this one. [laughing]

Taylor:

I should just know when you throw it out to me. [laughs]

Sydnee:

I know, I know.

Taylor:

Why don't I prepare for these things? [laughs]

Sydnee:

That's why we don't tell you. Uh, this message is for Mandy. It's from Maria. And Maria says, "Happy birthday, Mandy. I am so glad we became best friends after you let me pee in your dorm bathroom the first time we met. [laughing] I'm happy we can share the joy of podcast together since we live far apart now. I love you very much and I'm sending kisses to you and sweet Kevin. Have an awesome birthday, but also remember, nobody likes you when you're 23." [laughing]

Taylor:

Well see, that... I could have sung that. [sings] Nobody likes you when you're 23. And you still act like you're in freshman year.

Sydnee:

Hey, you got a bonus song, Mandy.

Taylor:

Some, some Blink-182 thrown in there. Good, good job, Maria. I appreciate that.

Sydnee:

I don't know exactly when Mandy's birthday is, but this was supposed to be read as close to February 21st as possible, which is our Mom's birthday.

Raleigh:

Which is today.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Which is today. So that's even better Mandy. If you share a birthday with our Mom, you're in good company.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So happy birthday.

Raleigh:

Happy birthday.

Taylor:

Cooper raised her arms in celebration.

Sydnee:

Yay. [laughing]

Raleigh:

Tiny baby arms.

Taylor:

Yay.

Sydnee:

Okay. She raised her arms in a Moro reflex for everyone.

Raleigh:

Oh, well now...

Taylor:

You know, hey, come on. Don't, don't ruin the moment. [laughing]

Sydnee:

Sorry. Sorry, I'm sure she was excited too.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, so.

Raleigh:

Let's talk about teens.

Sydnee:

Let's talk about teens. Because what we've... we've, there's been a lot of, of... we've kind of been dwelling on the sadder part of this. Like, the history of this being that Tey and I remember, um, we were both teens in the wake of Columbine. The shooting in Columbine. And I think as kinda sad, and hopeless, and scared as we all felt, I don't feel like our generation, necessarily, turned that into some kind of forward momentum.

Taylor:

No.

Sydnee:

Um, I don't remember, at least personally, activism growing from that.

Taylor:

Right.

Sydnee:

Um, but we have seen something very different. So what are teens doing?

Raleigh:

Um, I mean, now teens are... especially the survivors of the Parkland shooting... um, are speaking out and saying they're the ones that are going to be the leaders of a change in gun regulation and, and gun laws in our country because they pretty much think... and I mean, I agree, I am a fellow teen agreeing with them... saying that it seems like adults that are in positions of power to make changes aren't doing so. And if, if they're not going to listen to parents and teachers and other policy makers and professionals then maybe they'll listen to teenagers, who are going through it. And who are having to think about that every time they walk into school.

Taylor:

Right.

Sydnee:

I mean, I would liken it to, you know, we, we used to live in a time where we would, um, draft people to serve in our armed forces but not allow them to vote.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And then we realized that seemed ridiculous. That if you are old enough to fight and die for our country, you're old to vote. Um, and I would... I would say there's a corollary here. You are, um, you are among those at risk.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Right.

Sydnee:

So why should you not be part of the conversation?

Raleigh:

Yeah. I completely agree. And I think it's different now than it was when you all were teenagers just because I feel like when something like Columbine happened there was no wave for change because it was seen almost as like, a once in a lifetime thing.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Raleigh:

This is something very rare that doesn't happen all the time. This was just something awful that no one could have prevented that was just an unfortunate set of circumstances that led to something awful. But now it is something that has happened 18 times so far this year. And I know people use that number and people say there haven't been 18 school shootings so far this year. That number was given by an organization that included any time a gun had been discharged on a school campus.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Raleigh:

Including accidentally, even if no one was hurt. Including suicides. Including only one person being injured, even though no one should be injured. And my argument is, like, there should never be a gun on a school campus. There shouldn't be any firing of any gun on a school property whatsoever.

Sydnee:

Exactly. I think you make a great point. And I think I would add to that, is one okay then? Even if that number was one—

Raleigh:

Right.

Sydnee:

Is that acceptable?

Taylor:

Well, and, and—

Sydnee:

How many shootings in a school are you okay with?

Raleigh:

Right.

Taylor:

It's also February. Like—

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Taylor:

We're not that far along guys. Like, if this is what we're averaging per month, that's some dark stuff.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And I... I feel like this is really needed, because I've seen a lot of... um, every time something, every time one of these events happens, um, people... especially since Sandy Hook... I think a lot of people felt like if that didn't make, like, every lawmaker no matter what side of the political spectrum they were on just dig down deep inside and say, 'We have got to do something.' Like, 'I can't, I won't take money from anybody who stops me from doing whatever I can to stop this.' Um, if that didn't do it, what possibly could?

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And I think there's been some sort of hopelessness since that. Um, and uh, yeah, I think... I think we needed this wake—up call of, you know, I mean... thank goodness for your generation for doing it... of saying, 'No, that's not good enough. We're not just gonna say, well, it's like a natural disaster.'

Taylor:

Just can't help it.

Raleigh:

What can be done? Yeah.

Sydnee:

Yeah, 'Some hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and mass shootings just happen.'

Raleigh:

I think it's unfortunate, and also necessary, that it seems like my generation has kind of had to develop a thicker skin, um, and a brave face when it comes to facing these kinds of issues, because it's so common. That after this happened I was talking with our parents, and Mom said, you know, 'Have you ever thought about what if this happened at your school?' And I was like, well, we've done the drill that is supposed to protect us.

Um, but in every classroom that I am in during the day and in every part of the school that I walk through, I've thought about, on more than one occasion, if something happened, what would I do? Like, there's a window in one of my classrooms that is on the ground floor that I could jump out of if I needed. One of my classrooms is on the top floor, but it is connected to the

green room, so I could hide in there. And it's through two sets of locked doors and hopefully that would protect me.

Like, over the past weekend since this has happened, in our state alone there have been nine threats to various schools in our state of something like that happening. Not all of them were credible, but still. Like, it's something that, if it happened to me... and I hope more than anything that it never does and never happens to anyone ever again... but if it did I wouldn't be shocked. And I, I wouldn't say I'm prepared because I don't know how you can be.

Sydnee:

Well, I think that's... when we talk about ways to prepare the schools and lock down the schools I think that, um, first of all, this school, from the sounds of it, was very well—equipped.

Raleigh:

They had teachers saying they did the same drills that, I mean, my school does.

Sydnee:

They did the same drills. They had very clear, like, limited point of access, you know, ways to access the school.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, locked doors through most of the day. A guard, I mean, they had a police officer. I mean, they, they had a lot of the things that people argue, 'Well, if schools just had this, this, this and this', um...

Raleigh:

And it seems like some people are saying, because of things they had practiced some people were safer than they would have been. And some people got out and more people knew what to do, but, I mean, look at it and 17 people still died.

Sydnee:

Yeah. And, I mean, again, I would say, how many is acceptable to you?

Raleigh:

Right.

Sydnee:

Is one? Because one is unacceptable. So, you know, and I mean, a lot of the stuff too we were dealing with a situation where if you're talking about a student who is coming to the school who knows when the doors are locked. Knows where these points of access are.

Raleigh:

Right.

Sydnee:

It doesn't matter how much you limit this stuff.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

You know, that's not gonna change the situation. And what I've also heard, coupled with that, is, 'Well, we need to change the way we're raising children. We need to change our morals. We need to fix our... ', I don't know. Somehow we're going to, like, by banning, I don't know, violent video games, and movies, and TV shows, and music, and raising kids more strictly and making them have jobs or something... I don't know, that that's going to fix the problem.

And I would say, one, where is your evidence for any of that? And two, is that a... is that your solution? Is that your practical, like, we can apply that broadly across the country solution? Because, I mean, if want to give everybody, like, a higher standard of living and allow parents to be home with their kids more, and pay them a living wage, I mean, I'm on board.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

If you want to give everyone medical care and access to good education and a lot of community support and social support, I mean, granted, that would be great. But you're not interested in that. You're just interested in lecturing people.

Taylor:

Yeah. You're interested in taking the focus off the argument against guns. Because that's the thing, it's like, are the reason that these people are picking up guns and shooting up theaters and schools and whatever is it just 'cause they found a gun? No. Obviously, I think there's a lot more culturally that's at the heart of that. I think it is, that, I mean, there's so many elements. I think it's toxic masculinity in some cases.

I think it's an inability to properly recognize and treat mental health in some cases. I think there is, uh, you know, just like, there are so many elements that play into it, that will take generations to fix. But you know what we could fix right now? That ability for those people that need so much other stuff to go right in their life, that we as a country could fix. We could get those guns out of their hands, like, now. So—

Sydnee:

Well. Right.

Taylor:

That's not a couple generations to get that stuff fixed.

Raleigh:

And, and I mean, we're talking about my generation becoming desensitized to it almost. And accepting the fact that it is common. But look at, I mean, police and officials that were warned about the person that did this in Florida and didn't take it seriously.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Raleigh:

I mean, if they had, maybe this never would have happened. Maybe it would have, but maybe it wouldn't have. Maybe when he posted online that he wanted to be a professional school shooter, instead of seeing that as a joke that some teenager is playing, maybe something would have been done.

Taylor:

Right.

Raleigh:

But we as a nation have just gotten used to this idea and see it as a joke people can make.

Sydnee:

And that's why I think, what is very powerful so far about the teenagers' response to this is they are asking for things that are clearcut. This isn't about, um, idealism.

Raleigh:

Right.

Sydnee:

This isn't about, uh, I want to see the world change. There's nothing vague about this. There are... there is data that has been collected from other countries where they can study gun violence. Um, gosh, that's a crazy thing to have to say.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Other countries where they're allowed to study something. This is the United States of America, and we can't study something? That's atrocious. But from other countries where they do, and they definitely see correlations between certain gun regulations being passed and a decrease in gun violence. And definitely fewer mass shootings. Which is a uniquely American phenomenon.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, at least at the rate that it happens. So, there are concrete things that can be done that have been shown to work in other countries that we could do here. This isn't about my belief in whether or not you should have guns or how much I like them. It's just, there's evidence for it. And that's what the teenagers are asking for.

Raleigh:

Right, yeah.

Sydnee:

Common sense solutions to this.

Raleigh:

What I—

Sydnee:

And telling everybody that they need a better upbringing? I'm sorry. Write down on paper how you make that happen and then go do it.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And then come back to me and we'll talk about that law. That law that you want to pass about better upbringings.

Taylor:

And what about all the, you know, generations... generations of people that are already out there who have been... they've been raised? There's no going back on how these people have been brought up. Like, that's, that's not gonna fix the problem tomorrow. That's not gonna fix the problem in a week or a month or a year. Like, how many more years are gonna go through and we're just like, well, we're trying to focus on how we raise kids. It's like, no, the problem is now.

Sydnee:

Well, and again, just like, that's not like a law you can pass.

Taylor:

No.

Sydnee:

There's no, I mean, that doesn't even make sense. And what... and I think, like, the teenagers are the ones who are speaking like reasonable, rational adults right now.

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Sydnee:

And that is scary for adults who realize that, um, you're on the way out, and they're on the way in.

Raleigh:

Yep.

Sydnee:

And your old... your old laws and your old excuses don't hold water anymore.

Taylor:

And I feel like we've talked a lot about on this show about how Rileigh's generation in some ways is sort of, like, skipping steps of childhood that we had, you know? They seem just a lot more mature earlier on?

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Taylor:

And I think in some ways we've talked about that as, like, sort of a weird... not a detriment... but it's definitely different. But I think this is one of the ways in which it's really, really beneficial because you guys are... you're not reacting the way that we reacted, which is like, well, what are the adults gonna do about this? Like, it's inspirational to see.

That like, and like Sydnee said, that after Sandy Hook, I think we all kind of went like, well, if that isn't gonna anything, nothing's going to change anything. And like, just the fact that, you know, that you guys can take it upon yourself to go, like, 'No, no, no. We're the ones that are getting shot. We're the ones that are gonna change this.'

Rileigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

'And we're the incoming, voting group.' I can't imagine what you guys are gonna have... I feel like you're going to make improvements once you all get that voter registration card that are gonna help all of the rest of us that haven't... that haven't done right by you.

Rileigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Yeah, that's what I would say to every lawmaker who is resistant to this or is refusing to listen because they're teenagers. Um, Rileigh is 17, and—

Raleigh:

I just got my voter registration card in the mail.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

I'll be voting in November.

Sydnee:

So, and she is not alone. And there are a lot of 17-years-olds who will be voting very soon. There are a lot of these students who are probably already 18 who are going to be voting. Um, there are a lot of 16-year-olds who are going to be voting by the next presidential election.

Raleigh:

Yep.

Sydnee:

So, uh, if that's all you care about, uh, you should still care. [laughs]

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

But what concretely... there's something you're doing specifically, before we finish this up, Raleigh.

Raleigh:

Yeah. So, March 24th, the survivors of the shooting are marching on the nation's capitol. And the March for Our Lives is what they're calling it, in hopes that it will show how many people are desperate for this change. And because we are kind of far away from that, um, I'm organizing the Huntington tristate area of the March for Our Lives on March 24th, the same day as the national one.

Because, I mean, I'm a student too, and while... I'm a teenager. And while I haven't been through what these kids have had to go through, um, I... it is happening to people just like me. Who are my same age and who are just trying to go to high school, and care about things like prom, and AP classes. And um, it's something that if adults aren't going to start doing something

then maybe they'll listen to people who have had to watch their friends die because of it. So...

Sydnee:

Yeah, 'cause if it doesn't speak to you that your kids... or if you don't have kids, your friends' kids, or your family's kids, or kids that you may know or see... are going to school and wondering if they're coming home alive at the end of the day. If that doesn't wake you up to what they're saying and make you realize that they have a voice in this conversation, uh, I... you're not paying attention. So, March 24th, March for Our Lives.

Raleigh:

Yeah. If you're in this area and want to come, I will be there and I will have signs.

Sydnee:

I'm thinking Cooper will be big enough I can strap her to me in March by then. [laughing] I think that'll be okay.

Raleigh:

Well, and if you raised her hands. [laughing]

Taylor:

If you're a teen, I mean, maybe, you know, it's not too late. Maybe look at doing something similar in your own community.

Raleigh:

In your area.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Raleigh:

They have a whole thread on the national March for Our Lives page about adding your own splinter event in your area. So...

Sydnee:

So, I think that's a great thing to do, take part. If you haven't registered to vote—

Raleigh:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

If you can, if you're old enough, or—

Raleigh:

I didn't think I was old enough but turns out I am. Can't vote in the primary, but I can vote in the general.

Sydnee:

So, so I would definitely do that because that is the most powerful weapon you have at the end of the day. I mean, yes, organizing and protesting and speaking out and marching are all vitally important, but your vote is what makes the change at the end of the day, so... so do that.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And um, everybody take care of yourselves.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And hug each other a lot.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Taylor:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I mean, if you wanna hug, if you wanna—

Raleigh:

If you don't like to hug, I mean, that's okay—

Sydnee:

If you don't like to hug that's okay too. [laughs]

Taylor:

I can't hug you guys because I'm in New York, but I will tell you that I love you both very much. All three of you, I love all three of you very much.

Raleigh:

And we love you.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Aw. I love you all too. Everybody in this little—

Raleigh:

Including the little peanut. [laughing]

Sydnee:

This little sweaty thing in my arms. [laughing]

Taylor:

She's a little sweaty nugget. [laughing]

Sydnee:

She is. I keep unwrapping her because she's getting sweaty. [laughing]
Well, thank you all for listening. Um, thank you, uh, sisters. For joining me again this week.

Raleigh:

You're welcome.

Sydnee:

And Cooper, thank you, for being here.

Raleigh:

Thank you, Cooper.

Sydnee:

She's asleep, but she... she hears it. [laughs]

Raleigh:

Little bean. [laughing]

Sydnee:

If you want to check out other shows on our network, go to MaximumFun.org for a lot of other wonderful podcasts. Um, you can check out, uh, or you can tweet at us @Stillbuff. You can send us emails at stillbuffering@maximumfun... Should I say dot org?

Raleigh:

Dot org.

Sydnee:

That's right.

Raleigh:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Whew. I haven't slept a lot. [laughing] I haven't slept a lot in the last week, or so. Uh, and uh, thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

Raleigh:

This has been Still Buffering, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages. I am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor:

I'm Taylor Smirl.

Raleigh:

I am a teenager.

Taylor:

And I was too.

Sydnee:

And I was too.

[theme music plays]

Griffin:

Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

And we've got a new podcast on Maximum Fun called Wonderful.

Rachel:

Wonderful.

Griffin:

It's an enthusiast podcast, where we talk about things that we're excited about and things that you're excited about.

Rachel:

Things like overalls.

Griffin:

24-hour Sudafed.

Rachel:

The Grand Prize Game.

Griffin:

The fact that wombats use their butts to kill predators.

Rachel:

The soundtrack to the movie Dick Tracy.

Griffin:

The beach potion we call Bud Light Lime.

Rachel:

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Griffin:

You can find us on MaximumFun.org, or iTunes, or wherever. I don't know. Just search Wonderful. Google it? You'll probably get there.

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