

Still Buffering 384: Romy and Michele's High School Reunion (1997)

Published January 21, 2024

[Listen here at themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[theme music plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I almost forgot my name there at the beginning.

Raleigh: Oh, bad job.

Taylor: Alright. Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, I know. That would've been a weird start to the show. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I was gonna say Sydnee Smirl, and then I thought, "That's not my name... anymore."

Taylor: I mean, it is.

Raleigh: [simultaneously] It is.

Sydnee: That's part of it. It's part of it. That's my middle name.

Taylor: You could say the whole thing if you wanted to.

Sydnee: I guess I could. That feels very formal. I'm Sydnee Smirl McElroy. I had to say that a lot when I was running for office.

"Hi, I'm Sydnee Smirl McElroy. I'm running for the House of Delegates."

I lost. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: It's just got a better cadence. It's got more syllables.

Taylor: It's got a lot of syllables though. I feel like it's a lot of sounds going on in there, you know?

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: It's a lot, it's a lot. And I get it kind of—like, I would say it fast and it would get kind of garbled, and then it would sound like I can't pronounce my own name. And... that's not... confidence.

Taylor: Sydnee Smirl McElroy.

Sydnee: Inspiring.

Taylor: Yeah, it kind of sounds like some sort of Elvish if you say it too fast. I don't know what you're saying exactly. [laughs]

Sydnee: Nobody did... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well, and Smirl in there, like, there's no... there's no nice way of pronouncing our last name. Sorry, Dad. [wheeze-laughs]

Rileigh: No, it's true.

Taylor: There's no delicate way of saying it.

Sydnee: Smirl. Smirl.

Rileigh: And then when you get—when you get gifted not only Dad's last name but his middle name, and you've gotta go from Booth to Smirl when you're giving your full name. It just, like—no one knows what you're saying. "Did you say, like, Boof?" [laughs quietly]

Taylor: "Boof?"

Rileigh: "Booze? Boof? What are you saying?"
"Booth!"

Taylor: Buffet.

Raleigh: Booth. [laughs] Like a seat at a restaurant. Like the John Wilkes. Like the—it's the—Booth.

Taylor: Now, see, I've offered this trade up before, because I like Booth. And I got Julia as my first name, which is a family name. We could just do a switcheroo, Raleigh.

Raleigh: [crosstalk] Switch.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: No insult to the family, then. You take Julia, I'll take Booth, it's all good.

Sydnee: Are you gonna be Julia Raleigh or Raleigh Julia?

Raleigh: I mean, I can't switch my first name now. It's been too long.

Taylor: You're Raleigh for good.

Raleigh: Yeah. 23 years is too long.

Sydnee: You just do what Taylor did. Just don't use it. [laughs quietly] It can be your first name.

Taylor: No, no. We don't mention it.

Sydnee: Just don't use it.

Raleigh: Julia Raleigh, Raleigh Julia. Julia [crosstalk].

Taylor: No, I think Raleigh Julia flows better.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Raleigh Julia flows better, yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. But see, I think—'cause—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] Alright. Well, we've switched.

Taylor: Teylor Julia never worked, but Teylor Booth...

Raleigh: Teylor Booth.

Sydnee: That works.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That sounds fine.

Sydnee: That works.

Raleigh: [sighs] Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: We'll draw up the paperwork elsewhere.

Sydnee: That's fine.

Raleigh: Yeah. The one thing Booth has gotten me is every time someone's like, "Oh, you're a—a girl from West Virginia? I bet your middle name's, like... Ann, or... Grace, or Elizabeth, or Renee," or whatever. "Lauren."

Sydnee: My middle name's Ann. [laughs]

Taylor: Lauren? [laughs]

Sydnee: Lauren?

Raleigh: That's a common one. That's a common one.

Sydnee: Is it?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Is that a West Virginia name?

Raleigh: I know a lot of—well, I don't know if it's West Virginia or just, like, southern, yeah.

Sydnee: It's southern, yeah.

Raleigh: And I'm like, well, you know what?

Sydnee: Ann is southern.

Raleigh: I got you. I got you there. I don't have one of those middle names. [wheeze-laughs] Although my initials are RBS [pronounces it like "Arby's"].

Sydnee: Oh, that's true. See, I had to give up SAS. My middle—my initials were SAS, which I liked. Mom still calls me Sydnee Ann when she's mad at me.

Raleigh: Well, you don't have the Ann anymore. You also have a different middle name now.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: So none of us have the... you know.

Sydnee: Yeah. That's true.

Raleigh: Southern... stereotypical middle name, I suppose.

Sydnee: I still have it in my heart. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Well, not on paper, so it doesn't count.

Taylor: Well.

Raleigh: [snorts] Sorry.

Sydnee: "I'm a lawyer. It doesn't count."

Raleigh: Doesn't count. Sorry.

Sydnee: [laughs] "I don't care what's in your heart. I only care what's on... the letter of the law. On paper." [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Oh, stop.

Taylor: Your birth certificate still says Ann.

Sydnee: Yeah. This is true. I have proof. I have legal documentation. It was there. It was once there.

Rileigh: Um, I had sushi the other night. I've been thinking about this for four and a half minutes now since we started recording this podcast, because Tey, you mentioned going to a vegetarian restaurant. I also went to a vegetarian restaurant Sunday night called Plant—Planta Queen. Planta—Planta Queen.

Taylor: Planta Queen.

Rileigh: Planta Queen.

Taylor: Plant A Queen?

Rileigh: Yes, but Planta is one word.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Rileigh: So like, Planta.

Sydnee: Planta?

Rileigh: Queen. Planta.

Taylor: Planta Queen.

Sydnee: Why isn't it just Plant Queen?

Rileigh: I don't know!

Taylor: It's—[crosstalk]

Rileigh: It's Planta.

Taylor: Don't worry about it, Sydnee Smirl McElroy.

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: You don't get to judge names!

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I was just wondering!

Rileigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: What's a Planta? Is that a word?

Taylor: I don't know, but it flows better than Sydnee Smirl McElroy, so don't worry about it.

Rileigh: Yeah, there you go!

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: But they have—it's a—they have sushi. Their menu is very, like, Asian cuisine influenced. But the sushi, because it is a vegetarian place, is made with watermelon that they season.

Taylor: Wait, what?

Rileigh: It's watermelon that they season and flavor and, like, cut up to taste—and when I tell you I would've had no idea that it was not tuna. I would've had no idea.

Taylor: Oh, I've seen this. Yeah, like, I've seen. Like, you brine the watermelon and add all the fishy flavors.

Rileigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: Sometimes they, like, compress it, right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I mean, I—

Sydnee: Yeah, I've seen that on, like, Top Chef and stuff like that. I've seen people do that to watermelon.

Raleigh: Yeah. They could've given it to me and said "This is a tuna roll" and I would've said "Okay," and I would've believed you. I wouldn't have thought twice about it. It was insane. Crazy.

Taylor: There's some creative—I know—there's this vegan ramen that I order a lot, and it's delicious, but it comes with an egg. And it's definitely—it isn't—I know it's different enough from a real egg to know that it's vegan, but it also... I feel like if you didn't know you were getting a vegan egg, you would not know. Like, the first time I got I'm like, "Oh, god, they sent me the wrong ramen. There's a whole egg on there. There's a—"

It looks like an egg, it feels like an egg, it smells like—"This is an egg."

And I was like, "No... no, it's not—it's not... egg. But it's so close to egg." Almost egg.

Raleigh: It's eg with one G. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] [crosstalk]

Sydnee: I was gonna say, how do they change the spelling? Eg.

Raleigh: Eg.

Taylor: Eg.

[all laugh]

Raleigh: 'Cause it's almost egg.

Taylor: Eg. That's good.

Sydnee: It's more of a sound than a word at that point. Eg!

Taylor: Well. [laughs] So close, though. It's very impressive. It's like the vegan caviar that they with, like—what do they do? Like, the seaweed brine in it?

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: It makes you realize, why do we pay so much for caviar when you really just want a little salty pop? That's it, just make a salty pop, and it's fine.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: A little bead. A little boba, just a salty boba.

Rileigh: Just put salt on your boba. That's caviar.

Taylor: Well, yeah, sure. Yeah. [laughs]

Rileigh: That's it.

Sydnee: I do not enjoy boba, and Charlie is obsessed with boba, but she keeps getting different boba products and then not liking them. And I keep saying "Honey, I just think you don't like boba. I think you like the idea."

Rileigh: She likes the idea of it.

Sydnee: "Of boba." But you're always like, "Can I get this boba thing? Can I get boba? Can I get boba?"

And we're like, "Fine, you can have the boba."

And then she gets it and she's like, "[weakly] I don't like it..." [laughs]

And like, "I know, you never like it! You never like the boba!"

Taylor: Yeah, I...

Sydnee: But she wants to.

Taylor: I mean, it's a—I like the concept of boba. I think it's a very aesthetically pleasing presentation. For me—and I don't wanna insult absolutely preferences.

It's fine if you like boba. But for me it's like, any drink that has the experience of maybe somebody hawked a loogie in this and I didn't know, I don't want to consume. Like, sometimes certain brands of kombucha can taste that way. Boba gives me that vibe. There's, like, a sake jelly drink that you can buy that I love the can, I love sake, and I'm like, "No. No. It's that... it's that snotty thing."

As a—as an asthmatic kid I think I have, like, some sort of—any time—it's like, "Nope, it's snot. Nope. I know this texture. I don't like it." [wheezes]

Sydnee: It's not a consistency you wanna drink, is—I think—well, I mean, some people do. But I feel like it's a more controversial consistency. There's, like... there's liquids that are liquids like water, like, thin. And then there's—I think there's the creamy category of liquids, like eggnog, you know. So, like, I feel like—and milk edges into that, right? Like, it's thick—thicker than water. It's not eggnog. But I feel like there's—

Taylor: We're doing science today. [laughs]

Raleigh: I don't like your—I don't like your contention that milk is thick. Milk is not thick. Milk is as much of a liquid as water.

Sydnee: It has body to it.

Taylor: It has more viscosity.

Raleigh: I just don't like the idea that milk is thick.

Sydnee: Nut milks are a little less. You're thinking of nut milks and oat milks. I'm talking about, like, Vitamin D cow milk.

Raleigh: Beef milk.

Sydnee: Beef milk. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Big, big, beefy milk.

Sydnee: I'm talking about beef milk. But I think that the consistency of, like, mucoid... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh, you [unintelligible]—ugh. Ugh.

Sydnee: I don't know why that's a popular drinking consistency.

Raleigh: No... let's not use that word on this podcast any more.

Sydnee: There are, like, a lot of, like, candies that do that too, now. Like—like... like, slimy candy, oozy stuff that they sell. And I've never understand. Like, even as a kid I was like, "Don't like that. No, no, no."

Raleigh: [crosstalk] I will defend the gummies that have the juice. The gummies with the juice inside. I love those. Like, the little Welch's gummies—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] If it's juice it's one thing, but if it's—

Raleigh: —that, like, you bite and they get a little—well, I mean, it's juice, but it's also like—it's gotta be thicker than juice 'cause it's gotta stay there, right? So, like, it is thicker. It's like a jelly but, like, liquidy.

Sydnee: See, that's mucoid.

Raleigh: I love those. Now, boba on frozen yogurt I think is better than boba in a drink. 'Cause you're eating something.

Taylor: Well, that's what, like—I like—I like it as, like, a, "Oh, it's little poppy, little juicy thing that I'm gonna chew."

When I know chewing is involved I'm down with boba, but when it's in a drink I don't... I don't wanna chew a drink.

Sydnee: Are you supposed to chew it or are you supposed to just let it slide down?

Taylor: Oh, god! I think you're supposed to chew it? [wheezes]

Raleigh: Sorry?!

Taylor: What?! Have you just been swallowing boba?! [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh, I don't—no, listen.

Taylor: Did you teach—did you teach Charlie to just swallow the bo—is that why she doesn't like it?

Raleigh: [simultaneously] Well, that's why she doesn't like 'em!

Sydnee: I interacted—

Taylor: 'Cause she's choking on boba! [laughs]

Sydnee: I interacted with boba exactly one time and said, "Nope. Not for me." And have never revisited it. I have had one boba—

Raleigh: [simultaneously] I think you did it wrong.

Sydnee: —in my mouth ever, and I thought, "Ugh."

Raleigh: I think you did it wrong.

Taylor: Yeah. You're not—it's—you don't... like, it's—

Raleigh: I mean, you have to taste it, Syd. The flavor's on the inside! It's got a flavor. It's not just, like, jelly pouch.

Taylor: Do you—like, is this—

Sydnee: It's like eating Orbeez. I just don't... [sighs] No, thank you.

Taylor: I mean, there's other things. Like, again, caviar. There's, you know, like, roe. Uh, that combination of, like, a gooshy outside and a—or a gooshy inside and, like, a jelly outside is a thing you've encountered before, right? You have not just been swallowing all of them, have you?

Sydnee: I mean... I don't—I've never had caviar.

Raleigh: Like, when you eat sushi? I mean...

Sydnee: Well, I mean...

Rileigh: When they put roe on it?

Sydnee: Yeah, I've had the sushis that have some roe on 'em. But, I mean, then you're just kind of—it's all go—it all... goes down together. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: How much of your food do you just snake eat?

[all laugh]

Taylor: [through laughter] How much of your food do you just, "Hom." I don't know this—I don't know if I wanna know this about you, actually. If this is a secret, keep it.

Sydnee: There's just—I don't prefer that textural... experience, personally.

Rileigh: It sounds like you just don't like the texture of it because you're swallowing it whole.

Sydnee: [crosstalk]

Taylor: [simultaneously] Sydnee's just swallow—this is a lot of [unintelligible]—more than I wanna know about.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't want it in my mouth for very long.

Rileigh: I gotta pop it. Like, I used to get—when there were fr—man. There was an age where there were frozen yogurt places everywhere, and I think that time of life and how much I didn't appreciate it enough every morning when I wake up.

Sydnee: I miss those days, too.

Rileigh: But you could get boba on there. And like, you were just like, you take a bite with your yogurt with your boba on it, and you just kind of, like, pop it with your tongue. Like a boop. Like a toop. Gotta pop it. [crosstalk]

Taylor: You're absolutely supposed to pop them.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Okay. Well... I'm still gonna stay away. It's just my preference.

Taylor: [simultaneously] just let them slide down your throat like a weird reptile.
[laughs]

Rileigh: Just please make sure that your child knows that you're supposed to pop them. Please make sure Charlie isn't just swallowing whole boba. And she's gonna have to go to the hospital with some, like, weird obstruction.

Taylor: "I learned it from you, mom!" [laughs]

Rileigh: She's just got boba piled up in her—in her intestines.

Taylor: [laughs] Your child has 18 pounds of compacted boba in their digestive tract!

Sydnee: I am certain stomach acid will take care of the outer shell of that boba.

Rileigh: Not if you swallow 'em that quickly. If you swallow 'em that quickly, whole, and they all just start—it's like marbles. They just start stackin' up.

Sydnee: Ugh. Ugh. We have a whole container of, like, little pre-made boba drinks that you can buy in our fridge.

Justin: [distantly] [unintelligible]

Sydnee: That... sorry. You probably just heard announcing there, in the background. Sorry about that. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: What was Justin announcing?

Sydnee: He's trying to get the kids to come back to the living room. It's a snow day here. It's pandemonium. We don't know what we're doing.

Rileigh: Now... now, Sydnee.

Taylor: [crosstalk] the vibe on this show so far, so we're rolling with it. [laughs]

Rileigh: Sydnee, I know they're on one floor of your house. Did he make an announcement from one end of the floor to the other side of the floor for them to come back in the living room?

Sydnee: No, they may—they might've gone upstairs.

Rileigh: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: We cleaned out the playroom so it's actually playable. It's not just a... disaster space. And so they may have been up in the playroom. I don't know. But... whenever you make an announcement it comes through the whole house.

Rileigh: Well, I'm gonna tell Justin personally that he ruined our podcast.

Sydnee: He ruined our show.

Rileigh: We were doing so many great things on this podcast, and having such great, meaningful analysis. [crosstalk]

Taylor: No, no, no. We're gonna roll with it. We have a special guest: Justin McElroy. We can—we can bill that.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh my god. I just got a message... so, for her snow day—

Taylor: [through laughter] What's happening?

Sydnee: —Cooper is supposed to go on a winter walk.

[pause]

Rileigh: No. [laughs] I wouldn't do that.

Sydnee: Oh, okay. Now it says—oh no! No, then she followed it up and said, [holding back laughter] "But since it's so cold, they can just stand outside for a minute and look around. Thanks!"

Oh, this is great! That's what the message actually says.

Raleigh: Kindergarten is so great.

Sydnee: They can just—'cause they're supposed to draw a picture of what they see. And so she's like, "You don't have to go on a walk. You can just stand outside for a second."

Taylor: I mean...

Raleigh: Tell Cooper to just bring a blank piece of white paper to school, and that's what she saw. That's it.

Taylor: Yeah, there you go. [crosstalk]

Sydnee: That's all there is. It's—I mean, we really got quite a bit of snow here.

Taylor: Does your teacher know that there are windows in your house? You don't have to go out to just look outside. That's fine.

Sydnee: It's 14 degrees outside right now.

Taylor: Yeah, no. That's not... that's not an outside temperature. That's an inside temperature.

Sydnee: Forget that. So, we've gotten—there's over four inches out there. There's five or six probably now.

Raleigh: We didn't get that much, but apparently DC shuts down at the slightest bit of snow. Um, and I like to think it's because all of the politicians see it and they're like, "Eh, I don't wanna go in. That's a lot. But I don't want everyone to make me feel bad about not going in, so no one does anything today. Then I can't feel bad."

Sydnee: I'm sure that they had very important business of the state to attend to, you know? Like... showing naked pictures of the President's son. [laughs quietly]

Yes, that's Marjorie Taylor Green that's actually been doing that.

Raleigh: Oh.

Taylor: Oh no.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: She can stay home.

Sydnee: In congressional hearings.

Raleigh: She can stay home. [laughs]

Taylor: She can have 365 snow days, actually. [laughs] That's just...

Sydnee: She can stay home every day, for the good of all of us.

Taylor: Get one of those snow machines and set it up outside of her residence so she thinks it's always snowing, and just let her stay inside. Oops! Another snow day. What a wild year. That global warming turned out to be fake after all. You were right! Stay inside!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: She can just post on... X, or whatever she does now. Truth Social. Where do the—

Raleigh: What's the Truth one? [crosstalk]

Taylor: I think that's Truth Social.

Raleigh: Truth Social.

Sydnee: I was gonna—yeah. Yes.

Raleigh: Anyways.

Sydnee: I had to—we'll just stop. I'll just swallow all my thoughts. Bury them down deep.

Taylor: With the boba. [laughs]

Sydnee: With the boba.

Raleigh: The boba.

Sydnee: That's what I do. My thoughts about the federal government. I'll just swallow them whole.

Taylor: Just un—unchewed, down your gullet.

Raleigh: Do you swallow gum?

Sydnee: No. I don't chew gum.

Raleigh: But I mean if you were to chew gum.

Sydnee: I have swallowed gum in my life, but I don't... I don't—at some point, back when I was pregnant, I became disgusted by gum. I didn't used to be. Like, I used to chew gum. But something happened, and now I find gum—like, I can't have it in my mouth. It makes me want to gag. I can't.

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: I find gum repulsive.

Raleigh: Interesting. I just wondered if maybe you didn't know the chewing capabilities and qualities and expectations of certain foods.

Taylor: Oh, just this is—I mean... as a doctor, I feel like... [laughs] you should understand chewing. [laughs]

Raleigh: You should understand that something that goes chew [unintelligible] in your mouth and then you chew it. And then it goes down easier.

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: Alright, let's—you know what? You know what? I don't know. Don't...

Raleigh: No, no! I don't feel bad about calling you out for this 'cause that's the wildest thing I've heard in...

Sydnee: You all have all the boba you want.

Rileigh: So long.

Sydnee: I just don't want any boba..

Rileigh: I'm not even defending boba. I'm just saying the, like, there—maybe you weren't doing it right. [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, that's fair. I don't wanna interact with it, so I probably don't do it right. It's mucoid. I hold to the idea that it's mucoid. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: So... Romy and Michele— [unintelligible]

[all laugh]

Sydnee: Uh... [crosstalk]

Rileigh: 18 minutes.

Taylor: Whoops!

Sydnee: Man. These a new record. That's okay. I don't know that we need to do—although I do have thoughts. I don't think we have, like, an in depth analysis we need to perform on this film.

Rileigh: 'Cause that's what we do. [laughs]

Taylor: Are you kidding? I think so! I did not know what I was getting on board with when I started this movie.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Had you seen it before, Tey? I assumed you had.

Taylor: Yes. I know I watched it, like, I don't—back when I was a child, I guess.

Sydnee: Sure.

Taylor: This movie is—

Sydnee: 'Cause it came out in... what'd I say? '97, '98?

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. So I... would've been...

Raleigh: '97.

Taylor: Not quite a teenager yet. This was a weird movie! It's a deeply weird movie!

Sydnee: It is a weird—yes. I had forgotten how weird it was. Like, I had flashes of it, 'cause I'd seen it, but I watched it. Justin had never seen it, so he watched it with me, and he was saying the same thing the whole time. Like, "This is so strange. This is a very strange movie."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Raleigh, did you have this same experience?

Raleigh: Yes. Yes. Because I... I had not seen it. And I thought, like, "Oh, this is like a classic—" I had definitely heard of it. Like, this is a classic, like, '90s, 2000s movie. Lisa Kudrow's in it. I know her. It's gonna be, like, a fun, silly, rom-com of a time.

Um, no. It's weird.

Sydnee: It is definitely... and I had forgotten, like... okay. Plot-wise, pretty straightforward. Just to—if you haven't seen it. Romy and Michele are going back to their ten year high school reunion. They are... I mean, it's weird because, like, they're both objectively, like, beautiful people. Who are... like, they're very happy. They have lives that make them very happy in LA. But they're going back to Tuscon.

Uh, to—and they want to look like they have more, like, financial success, or have more impressive careers than they do. And so they make up a story about how they invented Post-Its.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] And put on suits. And then go back to—and borrow a car, and go back to the reunion to impress everybody, but the ruse falls apart, and they almost... are no longer friends over it. But then everything's fine in the

end, and they get to have a fashion store. Clothing store. I don't think anybody calls it a—[laughs]

Rileigh: A fashion store.

Taylor: I don't know, some people swallow boba. It's a wild world.

Sydnee: They have a fashion store where you purchase fashion. You know.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know! Like, you know how humans put clothes on their bodies?

Taylor: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: Like that. A store like that.

Taylor: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: [laughs] I—I found it, uh—I don't know. I thought there was something about the humor that was more subversive than I remember it being.

Taylor: Yeah? Um... I mean, I kinda... I don't know. I don't wanna be the gay that says everything's gay, but I was surprised at how gay this movie was.
[laughs]

Sydnee: It's a very gay movie.

Rileigh: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Like, it's for—even if it's not, like, a gay story line, it's definitely for the gays. I think we can agree with that.

Sydnee: Oh yeah.

Taylor: From the fashion, to the way some of the characters are written. Even, like, the jokes that Romy and Michele make kind of at the beginning about, like—oh, no, I could—like, they live together and, like, "Oh, what if we were just lesbians?"

"Oh, no, that's gross. But ask me again when we're 30, and maybe." [laughs]

And it's like, they kind of, like, have a happy life as two women living together. It's... I don't know. Like, I was surprised to see that and not... like, it's definitely played as a joke, but in a way that feels like a wink and a nod. Like, this was...

Sydnee: Was it—it was written by a woman.

Taylor: I would believe that.

Sydnee: I believe. Um, 'cause it feels like—and, I mean, it was dire—yeah, it was by Robin Schiff. based on a play she wrote. That's right, we talked about this last night. Based on Ladies Room.

Rileigh: That Lisa Kudrow was also in, I read.

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

Rileigh: Yeah. That's what Wikipedia told me, so it must be right.

Sydnee: It's interesting because it is written by a woman, but it was directed by a man. But I feel like there was a surprising amount of female gaze in this movie. I think that was one of the things that—I started thinking, like, why aren't they—like, they're both—like, the actresses are beautiful. They have, especially for the time period—like, that 90's, like, they're blonde, they're thin, they're very much what the zeitgeist said was attractive at that moment in America popular culture, right? Like, that was—and they were very popular actresses at the time, too.

And so they're these gorgeous women, but somehow they're not... bombshells. They're not sexualized the way that I feel like women typically—do you know what I mean? There's something very unsexy about the way they're—and I mean unsexy in, like, the stereotypical, like... I don't know. There's just something about it that allows them to be kind of, um... unattractive in a way that usually only male characters are allowed to be. They're kind of awful in some ways. [laughs quietly]

You know what I mean? They're kind of annoying in some ways. They're not... they're a little bit selfish. They're a little bit, like, navel gazey. They're not really paying attention to the world around them. They're not giving or considering other people constantly, which is what women are supposed to be doing, right?

We're—I'm saying that with air quotes. We're "supposed" to be constantly thinking about everybody else, and sacrificing of ourselves, and giving to others, and they're not.

Taylor: You mean they're written like people and not sexy lamps.

Sydnee: Yes!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yes!

Taylor: Well, I love, like, the affectations. Like, the fact that it—wait, now I'm... Romy is the one—Lisa Kudrow is Michele, right? Romy is the other—

Sydnee: Yes, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, okay. The weird voice that she uses throughout it? Like, a kinda, like, weird stoner voice?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, I love that. And it's kind of—like, it's kind of—it's like a bit, but you know, we've talked about in the movie *Bridesmaids*, like, all the grossout humor that felt like, "Oh, we're gonna make a girls' movie but we can be funny, so we're gonna... make a bunch of... fart jokes and poop jokes."

And it was like, that's not... like, women are funny, but in different ways, or different things appeal. You don't have to copy the same thing. This felt like humor for women. Like, the whole, like—that opening scene with, like, *Pretty Woman* playing? I love that scene.

Like, it's just—there's a lot of little details. It's just like—I don't—it's just—it's a funny—two women being allowed to be authentically funny, but also being, like, characters. Like...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: It also, like, because of that—and again, I think we've talked about this on the show before. Because it's told from a woman's voice, they can make jokes that feel a little edgy and push the envelope, but it's not really that it's edgy. It's just women joking about the experience of being a woman is funny. When men try to make jokes about the experience of what they think women are like, that's not very funny. Because, like... it doesn't land. You don't know. It just sounds like your stereotype; like, what you think.

In this realm it really works. And some of the jokes are really—I don't know. I just found it a little edgier for the time than I remembered it being.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I thought it was just silly and fluffy, and it's not. I mean, it is that. But it's—there's something else going on there.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, the moments that made me think, "Oh no. They're gonna make that joke." Didn't happen.

Like the whole back—the reason that they were quote, unquote "losers" in high school, which I think the movie makes a big point of saying they weren't—like, other people looked at them as not losers. There's just sort of a natural pecking order in high school, right?

But, like, Lisa Kudrow's character had scoliosis, so she had a back brace on. And then we're supposed to believe that—like, Romy is—oh, she was chubby. But it's not really played as a joke. Like, they don't... it's just, like—that's just—they had a good time. They were enjoying their lives. They were fine. These weren't things that made their life bad. They were just things that they were judged for by worse characters. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: No. And they—like, they finally realize that in the movie. Like, why do we want to rewrite our lives? We like our lives. And if we like our lives, who cares? Like, why are we—why are we concerned?

Which is a—I mean, that's your classic, like, high school reunion movie message.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but I don't know. Janeane Garofalo is hilarious in this. I mean, she's always funny but, like, man. She makes me laugh out loud so many times in this movie.

Taylor: [laughs] The whole, like—whatever the weird—the cowboy plot line. That felt like—I don't understand, like, how this got in. Like, writers checked off on this. 'Cause it doesn't really make sense, but I love it. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Someone snuck it in there to see if it would stick and expected someone to be like, "Oh, we gotta get rid of that," and then it just ended up in the final cut of the movie. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: And nobody knew why.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, like, when—her whole thing being obsessed with Sandy. And, like, she always loved him in high school, and he followed around Michele. And so, then he shows up at the reunion, and she looks at him and is like, "That's what I was obsessed with? Heh." And then leaves! [laughs]

Taylor: It's—

Sydnee: It's just hilarious!

Taylor: Well, and it's Alan Cummings who, like... I find incredibly attractive. [laughs]

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I love him in everything he does and is. I love him. I always get—I was thinking about, like, he's in this, and he's in Josie and the Pussycats, which I feel like similar kind of vibes, similar time period, you know? Like... subversive.

Taylor: He plays the guy that's not supposed to be hot by Hollywood standards, which is wild to me, because he's an incredibly attractive individual. Like, the scene where they dance? Whatever—the three of them, Romy, Michele, and Alan Cummings. [through laughter] What is that?

Raleigh: Or that interpretive dance? [laughs]

Sydnee: That whole scene. I mean, again, like, that was weird. That—I feel like—I always hate when people say this 'cause, like, you can use this to mean anything. I feel like there are aspects of this movie that are kind of ahead of its time. Like, it's getting into a little bit of the sort of absurdist, like—you know what I mean? Like, comedy would go there next. Where it was just weird—there's just weird stuff that you don't expect that are sort of, like, exaggerated versions of what life is like.

Like, the, uh—I think a good example of that is if you look at Anchorman, when they go to, like, the fight scene.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: When it escalates to an all-out war. I feel like that's where comedy was headed, and this movie is kind of already talking about that a little bit earlier than a lot of movies were.

Taylor: Well, they do—and I didn't realize how much of a parallel it was until I was rewatching this. There's an episode of It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia that absolutely pulls a lot from this, where the gang goes to their reunion. And they do, like, a whole choreographed dance.

But then there's, like, a cutaway to where you realize that in their heads, this is how it looks, and they're all doing this great dance. But in reality they're all just, like, drunk and, like, looking like idiots. But it doesn't matter, 'cause in their reality, they did a fantastic choreographed dance at their reunion. And, you know, that was it. [through laughter] Rode off into the sunset.

Like, you know, maybe that's... like, whatever reality is going on in this movie, like, maybe that's not what really happened. But it doesn't matter, 'cause that's what happened for Romy and Michele. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Well, and I mean, it very much—like, the general plot and arc of the movie you think, like, "Oh, they're gonna end back up—or one of 'ems gonna end up with the guy that never noticed her, and now sees that she's amazing."

Like, I feel like if this was stereotypical, like, about a woman going back to her high school reunion—or women—um, movie, like, that would be the whole arc, right? Would be, like, getting back the guy that never noticed her, and now he realizes how great she always was, and he was secretly also always in love with her.

Um, and it would be, like, a final dance with the two of them that they never got to have at their prom or something. And the way that this is—that's how it ends here, like, that's the big final scene you get with this, just shows, like, it is not following the traditional... you know, woman needs to end up with somebody to make her story complete.

Sydnee: Well, they also kind of leave it open ended. Like, I don't... Lisa Kudrow's character, Michele, she—I don't know that she's in love with him, or even really likes him. She kind of does, but it does definitely say, like, when he's listing all of the things he's bought, how much money he has, how much financial success he has, that definitely seems to be the moment where she's like, "Oh, okay."

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like, it's very clear, "I'm not in it for you as much as, like, I'd like money." [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and they—so it's—they got a loan from him, I'm guessing, so they can open their fashion store. Uh, and then, you know, it ends with them just saying, like, you know, basically "You're my favorite person."
"You're my favorite person, too!"
And that's it. "Let's fold scarves."

Like, there's this weird kind of awkward moment, and then they're like, "Let's fold scarves." And, like, oh. You are each other's person, and that's what this movie is

about. You found each other in high school. You went through your life together. And you don't need to justify your happiness to anybody. And that's a great message. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It is.

Raleigh: It is a great message.

Taylor: And it's a little gay. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: It's very gay. Well, and tell me that that, uh—the one friend from the popular group who worked for Vogue now?

Taylor: Oh, yeah. And now she's got short hair and she's wearing a suit. [laughs]

Sydnee: I was gonna say, like, well... this was before we were allowed to say there were lesbians in movies, but... [laughs] this is the most lesbian-coded character I've ever seen.

Taylor: Oh, absolutely. Well, and then, like, when Lisa Kudrow gives that little speech to Romy. You know, to like, stop being such a baby. And she says, "Oh, this is—I've never seen this side of your personality. I like it. Like, being assertive." It's like, oh, okay. We're flirting.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I love when she's like, "And I knew the recipe for glue." [laughs]

Taylor: God.

Sydnee: I don't—it's—okay. This was weird. So, Justin and I watched the movie. And I really—like, I enjoyed it a lot more than I remembered enjoying it when I was younger. I remember, like, being obsessed with their clothes. 'Cause I thought it was very cool, and I loved—and especially the accessories. I love accessories, and I love all their earrings that are thing.

Taylor: Yeah. The cherry earrings, the... yeah.

Sydnee: I love when earrings are things. I always thought their shoes were so—
[laughs] [crosstalk]

Raleigh: [crosstalk] Love when earrings are things.

Sydnee: Yeah. I love when earrings are things. There was a made-for-TV movie that came out after this in 2005. That was, like, the—it was supposed to be the prequel. So it's from graduation from high school to them moving—like, and then they move to LA and what happens.

Raleigh: Oh.

Sydnee: It's that period of their life.

Taylor: I didn't need lore, but alright. [laughs]

Sydnee: It's very—we watched—like, we found some of it. It was on, like, ABC or something. Um, so we found very grainy, bad video of it. Uh, and Catherine Heigl is in it as Romy.

Taylor: Oh.

Raleigh: Oh, wow.

Sydnee: Yeah. Which is also weird, because she's totally doing a Lisa Kudrow thing, so it's very—she should be Michele but she's not. I don't know who the other actor is who's playing Michele, but, um... anyway, they moved to—it's fascinating. I would recommend checking it out. 'Cause they move to LA and they don't have money, and they play off the Pretty Woman thing by, like, "Oh, well I guess that's a good way to make money when we first get to LA."

So they go buy wigs like she wore in Pretty Woman with the plan of, like... we'll just—we'll do this to, like—I mean, that's, like, the opening thing in the movie. Which is, like, a big swing for an ABC made-for-TV movie.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They get scared and don't, and don't do that. But then they get, like—they hook up with, um... a woman that they don't realize is a drag queen. And then go live with her. And, like, I don't know what's gonna happen next. I don't know. But that's, like, the opening sort of sequence of the film. It's wild. It's just, like—it's like Romy and Michele. It's written by the same woman. It's funny. It's totally, like, edgy. Again, this is 2005.

Rileigh: It's crazy that's what Catherine Heigl was doing right before she got Grey's Anatomy. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. It's funny. There's a lot of really good jokes in it. It's really—again, like, it's... it's way more controversial than most of the stuff that was happening or being talked about or being joked about, especially on television at the time.

I don't know. There's something about it that, like—obviously, like, the—it was low budget, and so everything around it looks kinda cheap. But the writing in it is genuinely really funny.

Rileigh: Interesting.

Taylor: Well, I mean, definitely for the movie, and it sounds like what you're describing this is. I mean, is it not—it was bimbo-core before bimbo-core was a thing. 'Cause that's a concept now that we have this—that, you know, women don't have to... sacrifice their femininity or their softness or their aesthetic to be taken seriously. 'Cause that was the way of the world, right? You can either be a girl or you can be taken seriously. You don't get both.

But that's a—that's a trend now that we talk about. That, you know, women are actively like, "I can have hyper-feminine clothing and do my nails and my makeup, and I can be taken seriously, and I can be powerful, and I can be smart. I can be whatever I want. I don't have to choose."

But this is kind of ahead of its time in that sense, in that that is—that's very much a thing now. I don't think we were having those conversations back in 1997. [laughs]

Sydnee: No.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, I think that's what's so interesting about it is that it really—it's so... I don't know. And a movie like that, because it is written by a woman, about women, and really I think especially to—I mean, I don't know who the director is. I know it was a guy.

But, like, to have that kind of very strong female voice in the fiber of the whole movie and, like, to let that show through, to not let it be blunted by the... oh, I mean, like, if you think about that era of movies and the way women were presented, like, it is shocking that they get to be humans like they are. Even being so—I mean, 'cause they are.

They're just, like, objectively pretty people. Like, there aren't gratuitous scenes of wind blowing in their hair and their—you know, and their low-cut dresses and all that. Like, all that stuff that you would expect out of a movie of the time, it doesn't do that.

I mean, it should've—I feel like this movie should've been a bigger deal, but because it was women, it wasn't. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Maybe it will have its moment. It's all over TikTok, right? Maybe it'll come back. [laughs] [crosstalk]

Sydnee: I mean—

Taylor: It's funny to—just the whole setup of the movie, which is very self-aware. But, like—so you live with your best friend in a really nice apartment in a super fun city, and you wear beautiful clothes and you go out dancing every night, and you have constant emotional support from somebody that you—that has known you your entire life... that is your life. Who cares what your careers are? That's your life.

Does that sound like a bad thing? No, that sounds great. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That's the premise of the movie is women can actually do different things than, you know, be just a wife and mom or sacrifice everything and be career woman. Like, here's a whole other way of being, and it's fine. That's great. It is very ahead of its time.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I really think it is, and I had a lot more fun rewatching it. At first I was like, "I'm gonna subject Justin to this."

Like, this weird—you know. Like, in my mind it was like this weird girlie movie.

Raleigh: It's really weird.

Sydnee: It is weird. Like, the jokes are weird. It's weird.

Raleigh: I don't have a better word for describing it. I really have been sitting here thinking, like, I've gotta dig deeper. No, it's just a weird movie. And it's especially weird considering when it was made, 'cause I feel like if you made it now, it wouldn't be considered as—it would still be like, "Oh, that's kind of a funky movie."

But it's, like, weird for the time it was made.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, it's very strange. Um... but I don't know. I think it holds up in a weird way. Like, I do think people should watch it now. It's not one, too, that—you know, we often have to sort of couch any movies from, like, the 90's in, like, "There is... some stuff that—" you know? Like, "Ehh, this wasn't great, and be aware that this is in it."

And I don't really feel like you have to do that. I mean... I don't know. When they do talk about, like... I don't really—like, when they—you know, I'm not into women, kind of when they make the joke about, like, "Ask me again when I'm 30" and all that, I don't know if there's, like, a little bit of, like... because she's kind of grossed out by the idea. I don't know if you could throw, like, "Well, that's a little homophobic."

Or of it's them just kind of joke—I don't know. Like, that's the closest it came to being insulting, I think.

Taylor: Yeah. I don't—I... I took that more as a bit of—again, like, a wink and a nod to like, no, these two women are—they're each other's person, and they are both aware of that. 'Cause even how Lisa Kudrow is like, "We could try having sex together."

Like, she's just like, "Oh, what if that? Okay, yeah, sure. I'll ask you again later. No problem." [laughs] Like...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: There is a—if there's a prequel then I want the sequel where they're just two happy lesbians that run a fashion store together. [laughs] Like...

Raleigh: Well, I mean, that's how it ends, which is the best part.

Taylor: Yeah. Or, like, a weird throuple with billionaire Alan Cummings who just floats in every now and then and finances their escapades and disappears. Like, fine. No problems. Love it. [laughs]

Sydnee: Are you seeing, by the way, his outfits on the new season of Traitors?

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: No.

Sydnee: Have you seen the show Traitors?

Taylor: I have not.

Raleigh: No.

Taylor: I don't...

Sydnee: Oh... okay. I know reality TV is not always your all's thing. But Traitors is a bunch of reality TV stars from other shows that they gather in a Scottish castle that we are supposed to believe—I mean, it may be. Maybe it is Alan Cummings. I mean, like, it might be his personal castle. Either way, the idea is that he owns this castle. One to three of them, some number of them will be assigned as traitors who get to murder the others, and then everyone else has to figure out who it is before they're all murdered.

Taylor: That's amazing.

Raleigh: Oh my god, I gotta watch that.

Sydnee: And he is the host. And that... he is a very involved host. He's constantly there. He's constantly making little snide, like, comments about them, and little jokes and, like, he is always dressed gorgeously. Um, I mean, just beautifully. Just, like, sitting there while they're going through these arduous tasks, like swimming around the loch and stuff. Just, like, drinking something that looks delicious in an armchair out in the Scottish countryside, dressed beautifully. Just, like, "Ha, ha, ha."

Like, it's great. [laughs]

Taylor: I love that for him.

Sydnee: It's great. I would highly recommend it.

Raleigh: I gotta watch it. How have I never heard of this?

Sydnee: Just, like, look up a picture of him from this show and you'll wanna watch it.

Taylor: I love that.

Raleigh: Oh my god. This is my snow day.

Sydnee: I love him so much. I watch it just for him. But yeah, there was a whole first season of it, and now they're into the second season, so.

Taylor: Well.

Raleigh: Wow.

Sydnee: And there are a bunch of reality TV show people. I don't know most of 'em. Some of 'em I know, like the Survivor ones I know. There's some Big Brother ones. You'd probably know, Raleigh.

Raleigh: Oh, Cerie is from Survivor and Big Brother. Cody's from Big Brother. I don't know the rest of these people. Oh, Rachel's from Big Brother.

Sydnee: A bunch of shows that I didn't really know about.

Taylor: Well, I trust him. I don't... I feel like everything he's done with his career, I would trust a show— [crosstalk]

Sydnee: [laughs] Well, and he owns this one—it very much is like, you get the idea that, like, he made this stuff up. I mean, he probably didn't, right? But, like, he kind of, like... "These are my traps. These are my tests. These are my, like... I came up with all this."

It's like, I don't know. Anyway, thank you all for watching Romy and Michele's High School Reunion.

Raleigh: Of course, it was a fun time.

Taylor: Yeah, no. I did not—I don't think I appreciated this movie enough until now. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I feel the same way. And I think—I meant to—I was trying to find the soundtrack last night and I couldn't.

Taylor: I was gonna say, what a good soundtrack. Just the song that it opens on, like, No Doubt's I'm Just A Girl, I was like, "Oh. Where are we going? Okay." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I think it's a really—it's really good. And, I mean, better—better than a lot of the movies in terms of, like, the kind of humor and the way that they—especially the way they talk about and show women. Um... I think it's really impressive, especially for that time.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Alright, Tey, what's next?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, uh, I know this is not—I mean, I guess it is our generation, because it's so ubiquitous, but it's a more recent thing that's excited. On the heels, here, of Romy and Michele, I thought we should talk about the Barbie Movie, finally.

Rileigh: Yes.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Rileigh: I'm so excited.

Sydnee: About time we do.

Taylor: Yeah, you know? It came out and we were respecting the—the...

Sydnee: The strike.

Taylor: The strike, there you go. But yeah. I think that's the perfect followup to this conversation we started today. [laughs]

Sydnee: No, I think so. Alright, well, I'm excited. I'll watch it again.

Rileigh: Yeah, I'm very excited. I haven't gotten a chance to rewatch it since seeing it in the theaters, so.

Taylor: Same.

Sydnee: Yeah, same. You know, it's a snow day. I think that's a good way to spend it.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, um, I don't remember where we saw Romy and Michele. I remember I had to rent it.

Taylor: Yeah, I rented it. [crosstalk]

Rileigh: I was gonna say, I think I rented it, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I couldn't find it anywhere on any of our free streaming... yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah. Yeah, I rented it.

Sydnee: Or you could just keep watching TikTok long enough and you'll probably see all of the movie.

Taylor: It'll show you the whole thing, that's true.

Sydnee: [crosstalk]

Raleigh: There's an account somewhere that has the whole thing on it, I'm sure.

Sydnee: I am certain. Um, well, thank you all. Uh... listeners, thank you for joining us. You should go to Maximumfun.org and check out a lot 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...

Sydnee and Taylor: And I... am... too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: I just couldn't find the soundtrack on Apple Music, though.

Taylor: Oh, that's why. You're looking on Apple Music.

Raleigh: Yeah. There's an answer in your question.

Sydnee: Oh...

[music plays]

Speaker 1: Most of the plants humans eat are technically grass.

Speaker 2: Most of the asphalt we drive on is almost a liquid.

Speaker 1: The formula of WD40 is San Diego's greatest secret.

Speaker 2: Zippers were invented by a Swedish immigrant love story.

Speaker 1: On the podcast Secretly Incredibly Fascinating, we explore this type of amazing stuff.

Speaker 2: Stuff about ordinary topics like cabbage and batteries and socks!

Speaker 1: Topics you'd never expect to be... the title of the podcast. Secretly Incredibly Fascinating.

Speaker 2: Find us by searching for the word "secretly" in your podcast app.

Speaker 1: And at Maximumfun.org.

[chord]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and Culture.

Artist Owned.

Audience Supported.