

Still Buffering: Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1992)

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[theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind" by Nouvellas plays]

Sydnee: Hello, and welcome to Still Buffering, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Tey, I keep getting ads for spicy tights on Facebook.

Taylor: [titters] Spicy—oh, I think I know the tights you're talking about.

Sydnee: So, initially I thought it was because I was reading the Acotar books. And I was specifically getting ads for those tights. Like they're themed tights.

Taylor: Okay, okay.

Sydnee: But now, and maybe it's because I engaged with them, like I clicked to see what they had—

Taylor: Yeah, that would be it.

Sydnee: And now I'm getting like non-stop like, "Look at all these tights."
[titters]

Taylor: I think also spicy tights are having a moment, though, aren't they?

Sydnee: Are they? Is that also why?

Taylor: Well, I mean, what, didn't Sabrina Carpenter wear some spicy tights at the VMAs?

Sydnee: Oh, I didn't know that. See, I didn't watch the VMAs.

Taylor: Didn't they have like a cute little kiss print on like a thigh or something?

Sydnee: Well, see, I keep getting—so there's a bunch of different ones. And some of them are like patterned. And I'm kind of like, ah? I mean, I don't... I don't know where I would wear these. I wear pants all the time. I never wear any kind of skirt or dress or... I mean, I guess people wear shorts with tights?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So I could do that? I've never done that, but I could. I could do that. But I don't, like I have no reason to have tights. You know what I mean? Like, I don't have—like why—here would—how would I—do I just put 'em on under my jeans and know they're under there? I mean—[titters]

Taylor: No, I don't think that's the—I think it's definitely to wear with something that shows the tights. Especially if you're investing in spicy tights. Because most of them seem to be rather pricey.

Sydnee: Yes! This is the problem. I saw a pair that I would, they said—they say 'bite me' on the butt.

Taylor: Yeah, I've seen those, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. And I actually think that's kind of cute. And a little like sassy and fun.

Taylor: A little sassy. [snickers]

Sydnee: It is a little sassy. But I don't—like, one, I don't know when I would ever wear those. And two, they're like 40 bucks or something?

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: I've never, I mean, I have not bought any kind of—when I say tights, I mean like hose, pantyhose type. Anything like that. I have not purchased a pair of those in so long, I don't know what you should pay for

them. But I feel like when I bought them before... I mean, heck, was this like plastic egg days?

Taylor: I was gonna say, is that—you remember buying them in the plastic egg at like the Walmart or the Walgreens or something.

Sydnee: Right. I'm thinking they were less than \$1 a pair. And maybe like I bought a multi pack, so it probably did cost more than \$1 for whatever I bought. But like, I feel like I have not purchased any tights for myself in a—I don't know. I feel like they were easily under \$5, let me say that. Easily under \$5. [titters]

Taylor: Yeah... I've seen those. I think they're cute. The ones that got me, I think it's the same wheelhouse. And maybe this is an alternative for you. If you like the aesthetic of the Spicy tights, but you're like, what would I do with these? Obviously, this is not a sponsored ad. But hey, Sock Candy. Do you ever get asked for Sock Candy?

Sydnee: Mm-mm.

Taylor: They have some cool pattern tights with like some dragons on them, but they also just have really cute... it's like a sock-pantyhose hybrid. It's like the same material as like a pantyhose, but it's got like designs woven into 'em.

Sydnee: Yeah?

Taylor: So they're really cute socks! And they're socks, they only, you know, they come up like a crew cut or like a high ankle sock. And they've got these really cute patterns on them. But they're a little flirty because they're made of like the pantyhose material.

Sydnee: Okay, I'll check those out. Because that would make sense—I mean that's all I was trying to think is like, if I'm gonna buy these, what will I wear them under? And I really, I mean, I so rarely wear anything skirt or dress-ish. I do, and I mean, I do wear shorts, but I... and I know shorts and tights can be a cute look. Like I've seen many people pull that off and look

very, very cool. But I've never personally... Oh, I like those. Those are sweet.

Taylor: Sorry, I know you don't show visuals on podcasts, but I'm showing Sydnee a picture of sock candies.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, they're slightly opaque, so they're slightly flirty.

Sydnee: So, Spicy tights are having a moment then?

Taylor: They are. They're definitely having—I mean, unless, I don't—well, I don't know why my algorithm would cater to that unless it's a thing. But...

Sydnee: My algorithm has turned distinctly witchy lately.

Taylor: Oh, sure, yeah.

Sydnee: And so like that sort of like Gothic, sexy, romantic, like the overlap between those things in clothing has infiltrated all of my ads. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: I feel like Pyramid Catalog is going to show up on my feed at some point. Like with the direction that everything's going. [chuckles]

Taylor: I feel like that would be a win? That's the ultimate FYP. They're out there!

Sydnee: This is relevant to our show. I hope there are other people out there who have the same memories of Pyramid Catalog that we do. Which is like, it came to our house when I was—we were both children.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And our mother was getting it. And I would look through it because it had like crystals and like things to use for spells and things. You know what I mean? Like—

Taylor: Like scrying boards. Like scry—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Things that I was like, whoa, this is really cool! And then it also had clothing and jewelry, so like capes and like sometimes tiaras and things, you know? Like all like kind of—

Taylor: Or like an elf-like section. Like this is just if you're an elf.

Sydnee: Yeah. Just get this.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So, but then like if you kept looking through Pyramid Catalog, you would get to like the personal massager. [snickers]

Taylor: Yeah, there was always like that one page. Where they never really said what it was for, but you knew what it was for.

Sydnee: I still remember looking through that whole catalog and just being fascinated with everything in Pyramid Catalog. Like I don't know who the person is—I mean, I guess our mother is who this is for. But I am fascinated with this collection of items that have been put in this thing and shipped to our house to like—would you like to purchase? Would you like these?

Taylor: The cool aunt supplier catalog of the '90s.

Sydnee: [chuckles] I really miss Pyramid Catalog.

Taylor: Yeah, Pyramid was amazing.

Sydnee: It's probably still extant. I bet it's still there. I bet you could either—you know what? I bet it's even online! [laughs]

Teylor: We should look into that. I would love a follow-up about that.

Sydnee: I can't imagine it's still a physical catalog! Or maybe it is. But not only that.

Teylor: I need the physical catalog. I need the smell of a physical mail-order catalog.

Sydnee: I really like—

Teylor: So sell me crystals.

Sydnee: I really like physical catalogs.

Teylor: Oh, yeah. You just go through and circle things? Such joy.

Sydnee: So we get a catalog for a bakery that makes the... you know the big pastry rings that we get?

Teylor: Oh! Yes, yes.

Sydnee: The name has escaped me... Kringles.

Teylor: Some sort of seasonal pastry.

Sydnee: Our Kringle pastry rings. Our Kringles. So we get a catalog for a bakery that makes these Kringles. And I like it because I like looking through the Kringles. And they have seasonal ones, and they have like special limited-edition ones. And so I get to like look at what the newest Kringles are.

And then they also—[titters] they also have like descriptions next to the Kringles that are like, I don't know who writes them, but I hope I get to meet this person someday. Because I just want to say thank you for the joy these descriptions of your Kringles bring to my life. Because it's not just like

it's got some caramel and nuts in it, or like it's a strawberry-flavored one. It's like, "As autumn winds begin to chill our skin and we start to reach for cozy mugs of something warm and spicy near the fire, it's time to curl up with this apple-flavored, cinnamon-coated, crispy Kringle that is filled—" I mean like it's all like this beautiful, romantic, about a pastry.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydney: And it come—but it all—it comes back to the pastry every time. It's beautiful.

Taylor: Somebody's putting that English lit degree to work.

Sydney: Mm-hm.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydney: I love these Kringle descriptions. And they, I did try though, they have like the page you can like fill out and mail in to order your Kringles.

Taylor: Yeah?

Sydney: And I started to do that one day and Justin came in and said, "What are you doing?" [chuckles] And I said, "I was gonna order us some Kringles." And he said, "Okay, but what are you doing?!" And I was like, "I'm filling out"—'

Taylor: They have a form. Clearly somebody uses the form.

Sydney: "I'm filling out the order form." And he said, "To *mail* it?!" And I said, "Yes."

Taylor: Clearly—

Sydney: To mail. I said, "We'll have to write a check, I think. I don't have cash." And he said, "What are you doing?!" [chuckles]

Taylor: Okay, I'm gonna guess that the market for Kringles might be a little bit skewed towards an older demographic. Perhaps people that still would not trust the internet with their money.

Sydnee: [titters] They have a website.

Taylor: I'm sure they have a website, but I bet they make that mail order bit to cater towards a significant part of their audience.

Sydnee: And me.

Taylor: And you.

Sydnee: And me.

Taylor: I don't, I love—remember those—what were we ever raising money for when we were given that catalog? And it was, I think we did it in, well, probably early fall, because it was a school thing. But it was always Christmas-themed, because you could buy like wrapping paper and tins of popcorn and cookies.

Sydnee: That is still happening.

Taylor: Wait, what was that?

Sydnee: I don't know what the company's called, but it's still happening. Because one of the nurses I work with brought her child's order form to the office a couple weeks ago and was like, "Anybody want any of these things?" And it was actually like two different catalogs full of various goods. And I bought three tins of like chocolate candy things. Like one is like a dark chocolate salted caramel thing. I bought dad this coconut chocolate patty thing. I don't know. But I bought several different chocolate things to have delivered to my house. [chuckles]

Taylor: I mean, that... that was of—

Sydnee: I had to bring a check book and write a check for it. [chuckles]

Taylor: I was like, what—who figured out that racket to just like integrate it into the school system? And get kids to sell your—[chuckles]

Sydnee: I wonder if other—I wonder if outside of the US this happens. That like, okay, in order to—in order for our schools to pay for school supplies, they have to send the children out with catalogs of various edible and... I don't know, like gift type goods.

Taylor: Is it for school supplies, though? Is it not like a charity thing?

Sydnee: No, I think it's just to raise money for the school.

Taylor: Is it? I guess maybe so.

Sydnee: Yeah, I think it's just for the school. Like to get more money for the school.

Taylor: Oh, all right...

Sydnee: I know! That's how they—that's how we support the school. We buy tins of popcorn and things of wrapping paper and... whatnot. There was like a multi tool. Like that was—one of the other people in the office was looking at this like one very particular multi tool that looked really cool. And it had like—I mean, it was—I don't have any multi tools exactly like it. It had like—

Taylor: [chuckles] I don't have any. I have many, but not any like this.

Sydnee: Not like this. It would be like a really good like camping multi tool. It had like things that you would need in that. Anyway, but like so it had all kinds of stuff in it. And this is how we pay for public schooling in America.

Taylor: I just always remember the wrapping paper page that would have the wrapping paper samples.

Sydnee: Mm-hm. Yup.

Taylor: I want to move into the wrapping paper sample page one day.

Sydnee: [titters]

Taylor: And I don't know what that means, but I know that's where I'd be happiest in this world. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I understand that.

Taylor: It smells really nice, and there's lots of colors and shiny things.
[titters]

Sydnee: I understand that. No, I've often thought I want to move into the Great British Bake Off tent when it's raining.

Taylor: Oh, yeah, yeah, that's a good moment. Yeah.

Sydnee: Tey, we watched a movie.

Taylor: We did!

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: We watched the original Buffy the Vampire Slayer movie. Which I didn't realize was sort of—it was original—it was disowned by Joss Whedon is like, this wasn't done the way it was supposed to be. This is not continuity. But then it was eventually somewhat worked back into continuity of the Buffy series.

Sydnee: Well, so she—so it came out in 1992. When did—the Buffy series started in... I'd have to look at what year. I feel like though that when we started out, there were like scripted references to the events of the movie.

Taylor: Well, she talks about burning down her gym. Which didn't happen in this movie.

Sydnee: No, she doesn't burn it down.

Taylor: But it is inferred that the reason she's at a new school is because she had to transfer from her old one, because of her slayer activity. So whereas in this movie, it's her origin story, in the series, she is already an active slayer.

Sydnee: Yes. So like the, but I—but I think that, I mean, they must have had that in mind. Because otherwise why did— Okay. Why didn't they just... that's interesting too, that it was a whole five-year lag. And they didn't feel the need to like re-originate the character, you know what I mean? Start over.

Taylor: Well, they do have flashbacks that show her like... I mean, they give us that in the series, to how she became a slayer. But...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: It wasn't—I think it was partially because Whedon felt like it wasn't done up to par with what he wanted. There was a lot of studio control. So he just wanted a—

Sydnee: I wonder what—

Taylor: Fresh, fresh restart. That's why like—

Sydnee: I wonder—

Taylor: If it was perfect continuity, you'd have to have answered the question in the series like, what happened to Pike?

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: We're getting ahead of ourselves. But—[chuckles]

Sydnee: So, Kristy Swanson plays Buffy the Vampire Slayer in—and it's Donald Sutherland, her original watcher.

Taylor: Merrick.

Sydnee: Yeah, Merrick. Who is finding her and telling her she's the slayer. So like the moment that is not—you don't exactly see in the beginning of the TV show, this is where that moment is. And it's her coming to grips with that and accepting her role as the slayer, and then killing vampires. I don't know, like the plot's pretty straightforward. [titters]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: There's a jerk boy that she's with in the beginning, and she's with Luke Perry by the end. So that's like great.

Taylor: Yeah. Evil vampire, Lothos.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And his assistant.

Sydnee: Paul Reubens.

Taylor: Pee-wee Herman, yeah. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Pee-wee Herman.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Mm-hm. Paul Reubens is in it.

Taylor: The best part of the movie.

Sydnee: David Arquette is up in there.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah! Very like cool, punky, David Arquette.

Sydnee: Mm-hm. Hillary Swank's in this movie.

Taylor: Yeah, not—yeah. Different role for Hillary Swank.

Sydnee: Yes. I will say, okay, so starting out, the conceit, I think—and I wonder, you can feel the pull of what Buffy the show is. And kind of what we know—and let me just say, I am just talking about Buffy and my understanding of like what that art was, and like the tone of it and the humor of it. And I am not in any way trying to make some statement on Joss Whedon, as I—you know what I'm saying? Like I feel like—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: There's a lot of problematic people associated with all of this, right?

Taylor: Well, and I mean, Joss Whedon, especially in recent years, I think is not everybody's favorite person.

Sydnee: Right. And so I feel like I'm acknowledging that, because I don't want to spend the entire episode talking about it. Same thing with Kristy Swanson.

Taylor: Yeah! Yeah, she fell off hard, huh?

Sydnee: Fell off hard, like Maga Trumper. I think maybe like... like, she did something with Dean Cain that was an anti-Obama thing.

Taylor: Is the earth flat in her world?

Sydnee: Maybe, I don't know.

Taylor: Might as well be.

Sydnee: I don't want to say that, but like I mean she, yes, she went far right, far right. And I think I... I was trying to read about her on her Wikipedia page. Also, it was noted she got Covid and got pretty sick, so...

Taylor: Well, I'm sorry to hear that.

Sydnee: Yeah, I am sorry to hear that. [titters] I don't wish Covid on anyone. But—[chuckles] anyway! So like problematic people all over the

board here, just putting that out there. But what we understand of like Joss Whedon's sort of universe, like the tone and the humor, you see flashes of it in this movie.

Taylor: Well and I do think, even though he has said that about like it's not really, it wasn't—well, I don't know if he's retracted that at some point. But like that it wasn't continuity. I do think it fits in continuity. With like even as much as there's a moment in this movie where she seeks out who she thinks are her friends, her three cool girlfriends, which is really struggling with being a slayer. And they kind of give her the brush off.

And part of the reason she survives is because she has found a friend in sort of an offbeat like outsider person. So then in the series, when her Scooby gang is—it's understood that the reason this Slayer lives so long is because she has friends, is because she has connections. And that that's all of her friend group, are kind of offbeat people. Like that, I think that makes sense in continuity.

Sydney: And they, I mean, they set that contradiction up pretty clearly from the beginning of the series. With Cordelia at first being very much the mean girl.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: That like Buffy thinks she should probably hang out with at first, like because these are the popular cheerleader cool girls. And then you've got Willow and Xander, who are, you know, nerds. And you know, like you see that set up pretty quickly. I will say the Buffy of the movie starts off so much meaner than I feel like—

Taylor: You don't think our Buffy could have ever been mean? [chuckles]

Sydney: I don't know, like—

Taylor: Or SMG. [titters]

Sydney: Well, and I mean part of it is just like—

Taylor: She's our Buffy. [titters]

Sydnee: If you look at the level of... we weren't even thinking—people were not woke yet. So we're not even to that—I don't even think that—like in 1997, you can't even use that word yet. [titters] Because, no, we were not. But just the level of like cultural sensitivity and understanding, and trying not to say things that are like blatantly offensive. That shifted rapidly throughout the '90s and early 2000s, right?

Taylor: I think it's been a hot minute that we understand that looking at somebody who you perceive maybe being dressed not as expensively as you as saying like, "What, homeless much?" [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yes!

Taylor: Like, "A homeless?" Or maybe that was an A—

Sydnee: Like 'so homeless' or something?

Taylor: Capital A homeless. [chuckles]

Sydnee: A homeless? Yeah. Like that... that's so mean. [titters]

Taylor: Also, my man is dressed well. [titters]

Sydnee: He is dressed well! He's not—

Taylor: He's quite dashing. [titters]

Sydnee: Yes. So, I... that, and I mean maybe, so maybe it's that the character Buffy got softened? Or maybe it's just that, culturally, we were just a tiny bit more aware. Not that much. Because there's still plenty you can point to throughout the years of not just Buffy, but lots of TV shows from the '90s. Where you're like, "Uh... oh? What did you say? No!" [titters]

Taylor: Well, and that could be—I mean it's, you know, the character doesn't really get to develop in the same way it does in the series, because it's a movie. There's a shorter time span. But you see that like whoever she

starts out as, there's—right after sort of a backlash where she's like, "I used to not even think at all." Like, "Why did any of this stuff matter? There are vampires in the world." See, that's all we need for these people to have perspective. They need to have the threat of vampirism. [titters]

Sydnee: But see, that didn't work for Kristy Swanson.

Taylor: Yeah, you think!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Patient zero of this understanding.

Sydnee: I know, I know. But yeah, I just, I was a little—it was funny because I know that Buffy the character—and I don't know, I guess this is true in the series. But since I've seen it several times through, it's hard for me to—I mean, you can't re-experience it, right? You can't like clear it out of your brain and start over from scratch. So you know who Buffy becomes. But like in the beginning, she is... I guess they're trying to paint her as kind of like a mall girl. Like, you know, she shops, she's cool. She's mean to... men she doesn't know. I don't know. [titters] She has the cool boyfriend who's a jerk, that everybody knows is a jerk, but...

Taylor: He's a football player.

Sydnee: She's gonna date him because he's the cool boy.

Taylor: Or—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Basketball. I don't what the sport it. He does a sport.

Sydnee: Basketball. I think it's basketball.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: But the beginning of the TV show, I still feel like she wasn't quite to that extent. But I guess that's because she was already the slayer. I mean, I guess that's what we're seeing, is like she had already evolved somewhat.

Teylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So maybe that—maybe that's your—maybe that's the excuse for it. She's not as mean because she's already been through the events of the movie.

Teylor: Yeah. Well, she's also—I mean, they do eventually work back in that she lost her first slayer. Or first watcher. And I think that's also part of her growing up experience at a very young age.

Sydnee: Yeah. It's interesting. I always like the scene where David Arquette gets—so he so he gets turned into a vampire. And then he's floating outside of Luke Perry's apartment.

Teylor: That's a great scene.

Sydnee: I really always enjoyed that scene where he's like trying to let him in, and then he's like, "No. I think there's something wrong." And he's like, "Why?" And he's like, "Because I'm on the second floor."

[group chuckle]

Sydnee: So he's like flying.

Teylor: There's a little bit of a heightened reality in this movie that I think it sort of exists in the series. But like the series takes vampires a little bit more like—they aren't vampires. Like it takes a while for someone to really like understand. Like there's a lot going on in Sunnydale, but there's—people will readily believe the excuses. This is a little bit more fantastical, I think. Like straight up with like the—like with that scene where he's just like, "Ah, something's wrong with my buddy. I guess he's a vampire." [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: It's kind of like he accepts it pretty easily. And then he—

Sydnee: Yeah, he does.

Taylor: Like the vampire basketball player. It's like everyone's like, "Well, there's clearly something wrong with that guy. We gotta get him off the court. We can't have a vampire running around out there."

[group chuckle]

Sydnee: Well, and also the—[titters] I love the conceit so that the vampire would still want to play basketball. This kind of, this is like alluding to like—

Taylor: I mean, if a werewolf would want to play basketball, why wouldn't a vampire? [titters]

Sydnee: This is where when everybody's like, "In Twilight, why do all those vampires want to go to high school?" What we're understanding is that when we are transformed into something supernatural, be it a werewolf or a vampire, we still want to participate in high school! We don't want to give up high school just because we're immortal.

Taylor: I don't know, I think these are the wrong—I think that's a statement on people that peak in high school wanting to live there forever. Because you—he cannot offer me immortality if it came with a caveat of high school forever.

Sydnee: No, no, there is no—if I was immortal, there is no way I would go back to high school. [chuckles]

Taylor: I would have a castle and/or a cave. I would disappear from this world. I would have a pile of jewels. And animal friends. You would never see me again.

[group chuckle]

Sydnee: Where do you get the jewels?

Teylor: I don't know. I have immortality to figure that out! You don't ask me now as a mortal? Mortals don't know such things!

Sydnee: They also, they say several times, both Paul Reubens and David Arquette say to someone who is not a vampire, "Like we're immortal. Like... this is better." But they make a—they make the point like, "We're immortal." Like David Arquette is saying like, don't you want to—like this cool. This is awesome. "I'm gonna live forever. Don't you want this?"

And I, like in that moment I was watching that scene, especially with—David Arquette is saying it to Luke Perry. I think later Paul Reubens says it to Buffy. Like, this is—we are in—"This is so cool for us. Don't you get how cool this is for us?" But when David Arquette is trying to pitch Luke Perry on like, "Let me just make you a vampire. This is awesome." There's a part of me that's like, they are making a really compelling case for being a vampire.

Teylor: Yeah, but then he ruins it by saying, "We could start a band."

Sydnee: Well, he does say—

[group chuckle]

Sydnee: Well, maybe Luke Perry wants to start a band! I don't know, but like when he says it, I—there's always a part of me watching any sort of vampire thing where I'm thinking like, why don't you want to be a vampire?

Teylor: All right. Well, Syd, this is—I mean, this gets into what specific lore of vampire you're working under. And in the Buffy verse specifically, we do know that the caveat of vampirism is you lose your soul. So, it's less that you're—I mean, and that's, it's arguable because I think that the case would be, you become a monster. You're gone, you're dead. You die when they bite you. Some sort of horrible, you know, came-back-wrong, Pet Cemetery, demon version of yourself is what comes back. But then, I don't know, then you see people like Spike in the series—

Sydnee: Who gets his soul back.

Taylor: Well, before he gets his soul back, he still—

Sydnee: That's true.

Taylor: Finds his way to being a good man. And in the comics, which continue after, there is actually a part where he loses his soul again. And everyone's like, "Oh no, Spike lost his soul again." And he's still a good dude because he's like, "Yeah, I've been doing this." [chuckles] Like...

Sydnee: Well, it's interesting. That's a whole other conversation, I guess. But like, the way that they tame Spike is they, like they use negative reinforcement, right? They put the chip in his head.

Taylor: Yes, that's how the... what is the operation called? What are the—

Sydnee: Oh, god, with Adam and—

Taylor: Yeah, with Adam.

Sydnee: I don't remember. I hated that plot line.

Taylor: The military people.

Sydnee: That—ugh... worst season. But the chip in his head uses negative reinforcement to stop the bad behavior. And then it's almost like a psychological experiment. Because what happens is that when he can no longer hurt people, he has to start considering if people have any other value, other than to eat them. And then he finds that obviously he falls in love with Buffy and he, you know, starts to develop relationships with other people around him, friendships and whatnot. But he can only do that once he is forced to stop seeing people as food. [titters] I don't know, it's a fascinating like commentary on... I don't know.

Taylor: What is the weight of a soul? Well because even, I mean even before. Like at the end of his—like season two, where him and Drusilla are the, you know, part of the big bad. He teams up with Buffy, even then.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And it's part of—he just wants Drusilla back. So he is prioritizing love.

Sydnee: A relationship.

Taylor: A relationship, over world domination or whatever. So, I don't know. I don't know if the Buffy versus—because I think if the argument is; do you want a mortality? In exchange, you won't be you anymore. You'll be an evil monster. I think it's easy to say no to that.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: But there are examples in the Buffy-verse that contradict that. Now, if you're looking at like the Twilight universe, I don't get the downside.

Sydnee: No, you get to be eternally like gorgeous and fast.

Taylor: You can walk in the sun! Sunlight's not a problem. You're just shiny?

Sydnee: You're just shiny and you—

Taylor: You're just extra pretty?

Sydnee: You can run super-fast. You can see really far and hear really—things that are really quiet. Like your senses are all wildly heightened. And you're so, you become so gorgeous that like you're like a trap. You're like a walking trap. Because people like want to be with you because you're so gorgeous. Like everyone falls in love with you. Like that's what the—that's the fate you're doomed to.

Taylor: I'm trying to think of any other—well, like True Blood. That's not a... I don't—I mean, that's... I mean that, especially with the existence of the actual substance, True Blood, that seems like an okay universe to be a vampire? Like there's no—

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean—

Taylor: There's no demon entity taking over your existence. You're just you. You're just eternal and moody.

Sydnee: In *Twilight*, they make the point that... because like Bella is supposed to be like special in this sense. When you are first made a vampire, the thirst you feel for blood is so overwhelming that you end up killing people because you can't control yourself.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: So like they make it sound like the downside is there will be this animal thing in you that you have to learn how to tame and control. And when you first turn, you won't be able to. So you're probably going to murder some people. Are you cool with that? And then like Bella is super special because she's able to resist it. But then like there's a whole—like they act like that's—see? That's another thing. They act like that's really super rare. But Rosalie, when she got turned into a vampire, all she did was go murder her ex-fiancé and his friends for like the—I mean, they brutalized her. So like she revenge murdered them and then never killed anyone else. So obviously you can control it.

Taylor: So we're making a case for vampirism here, I guess.

Sydnee: I guess that's what I'm saying. In that moment, I was watching David Arquette with Luke Perry tossed over that table in the gym at the prom. And I was thinking, I'm kind of with David Arquette on this.

Taylor: Well, because he's also saying like why with these people? These people are sheep. And to be fair, it is a cast of characters that have been stereotypically awful—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: During the movie. It's like, yeah, these people do suck. I would definitely rather hang out with the type of people that Luke Perry and David Arquette are in this movie than any of the people in that gym.

Sydnee: Well, they're still awful—like, it is—this movie is '92. But they, all the like high schoolers are awful in the way that people were awful in '80s movies. You know how in the '80s, teenagers were somehow also 30 year old like jerk guys with popped collars who obviously did coke? And would say just like terrible things to women.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: But like also those were the high schoolers.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That is still—[chuckles] that's still the vibe in this movie. Like the '80s have not disappeared in this movie.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: I mean, they're hanging out at the mall. The fashion is still very much reminiscent of the '80s. Like, this is before 90210 has changed everything, I think. [chuckles]

Taylor: Joss Whedon maybe had this idea cooking for a while.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: As somebody that lived through the '80s, and this is when it was applicable to make.

Sydnee: Because it—I mean, it feels—and I mean I guess like—I didn't realize this as I was researching. Like, what was the bad stuff Christy Swanson did? As I was trying to figure that out. I guess she was in like some of your classic—like she was in *Pretty in Pink*, I think.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: She was in something. She was in a couple of the like classic '80s... *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, I want to say.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Yeah, I'm pretty sure. So like I think we're still dealing with like... we're leaving the '80s behind—

Taylor: We're not *that* far out from the '80s.

Sydnee: Yeah. But anyway... I think it was before Luke Perry was like... *Luke Perry*.

Taylor: Well, on the subject of Luke Perry, because he's such a dreamboat in this movie. But okay, so he's Pike.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: He's a sensitive, but slightly outsider punky guy, who aids Buffy and he sees her as power—he respects how powerful she is. And is clearly in love with her. And he wears a long black coat. The Pike to Spike—[chuckles] That's clearly like [what began at??] Pike. Spike. [titters] Right? Like we're the—we're all—he even kind of, like the way they style him even kind of looks the same.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah, I think that is very intentional. I think the whole vibe is. I think, I don't know if Spike is an homage... Or if—

Taylor: At least I think that like maybe from a writer's perspective, sometimes you cannibalize things that you liked before. And like reform it in different ways. I think that he's a, you know, tore it apart, ripped back up, put back together, that's where Spike comes from.

Sydnee: Well, I think—no, I think you're right. And I wonder too, like sometimes if you're conceiving of a story, you have like your main character. And you know what they're like. And then you create another character that you want to see them play off of, who has very—like you've collected

attributes that you need for that like foil or the conflict. Or whatever it is, right? Like there's—you've created this other entity that needs to exist for this main character to do certain things. So maybe just Pike needed—we needed a Pike. And it is Spike.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because definitely Angel was not... the same. I mean, you know?

Taylor: No, because... no. And I mean, Angel... you know, I think Angel, especially if you, like me, run in—I don't run in these circles anymore, but definitely my fandom days. Ran in circles that were very pro Spuffy, would be the ship.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Angel was, you know, not given a lot of love. I liked Angel as a character. I think he was a good character. I liked Angel the show, when he had his own spot. But I think that, you know, the thing that I like about Pike and Spike, that they have in common, is that kind of admiration of Buffy. As just, "I know you are eons better than me, and I'm not even going to play around about that. You are so much stronger and so much more powerful. And that's why I love you. You don't even have to love me back." You know, Spike, there's that beautiful speech that Spike gives. It's like, "I love what you are. It has nothing to do with me."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, and I think that's the same vibe. That's like, that's who somebody is powerful as Buffy needs. Like someone's who's like, "Yup, you're the one. I'm just the other one." [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, and I think like it is very... I mean, especially knowing—seeing the whole history of like the movie, and then later the show being born. The moment where the character Pike looks at her in that torn prom dress and tosses her his leather jacket.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: That is like, we have codified like the character, the cultural thing that Buffy is.

Taylor: Yup.

Sydnee: Happens in that moment, like that is when. When she puts on that leather jacket and walks out that door in that combination with her bag of spikes? I mean, there you go. Steaks, not spikes. [titters] There you go. There's Buffy. Like, that is the character that will be in the TV show, has just been born there.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was thinking about that in that moment, like that's pretty cool. Because I know—I mean, in the movie, it's just kind of a neat moment. But like in the whole Buffy verse, like, ah! That's when it happened, that's when it started.

Taylor: Well, and it just leaves him looking there like a silly little boy in his silk vest. And like, yeah, that's—yes, that's your role. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah. Luke Perry is still very cool, though.

Taylor: He's very, he's amazing in this movie. He's amazing in everything. But in this movie, he's—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like you could see the archetype of what was to come. And I don't know.

Sydnee: Mm-hm. You can see that. I don't know that the Paul Reubens vibe, I don't know that we—

Taylor: No one could ever be Paul Reubens in this movie. [chuckles]

Sydnee: No. That look as a vampire, which I think you see in... oh, what's the other—what's the other movie with the cool... David Tennant plays the hot vampire. Oh...

Taylor: David Tennant as a hot vampire?

Sydnee: David Tennant plays a hot vampire in another vampire movie. And he... he has like a similar look. Like this like rocker kind of... you know what I mean?

Taylor: Well, it's all—I mean, I'm thinking—it's not that movie, but I'm thinking of Lost Boys. Like that's also similar, very cool.

Sydnee: Well, did he do the... was that in the—wasn't there like a remake of Lost Boys or something?

Taylor: There was a remake of...

Sydnee: I'm probably making all of this up.

Taylor: You wrote some fan fiction about Tennant in The Lost Boys.
[chuckles]

Sydnee: He was definitely a hot vampire in something. I can see it in my head—

Taylor: I could believe it, just not—

Sydnee: I can see him sitting behind a desk.

Taylor: I'm thinking of the Blade universe. Was he ever—

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Was he ever a hot—there's some hot vampires in that?

Sydnee: He has done—I'm trying to—

Taylor: Now those are definitely evil vampires. I think when vampires merge—I'm going to talk about vampires because I know you're googling something. When vampires merge with closer to zombies, that's when they get less enticing to become. Just as the case against vampirism. Like—

Sydnee: Mm-hm, yeah.

Taylor: Like when you become like that mindless horde that just once blood, like the 30 Days of Night vampire, I don't want to be one of those.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: And I think Blade vampires are a little closer to that. They're very hot and they're cognizant of themselves, but they are definitely evil, and they definitely don't like have emotional complexity.

Sydnee: No, I don't think—

Taylor: I think that's the end to where you want to be a vampire.

Sydnee: Fright Night.

Taylor: Fright Night! Oh! So there was a—is it the original Fright Night or the remake? Because there was a remake and there was an original.

Sydnee: I believe it was the—there was the remake of Fright Night in 2011.

Taylor: Okay. I would say David Tennant is so immortal that I could believe he was in either one.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Because he's been hot for like 30 years.

Sydnee: Yeah. And he just continues to be. Like just doesn't change. No, he was—yeah, he was a hot vampire in—

Taylor: Oh. That makes you want to watch that. I've never watched the remake.

Sydnee: Fright Night. Mm-hm. Colin Farrell's in that too. Speaking of hot people. [titters] Anyway... yeah, and I don't know that there's like that model of vampire that we see in the Buffy-verse. Like the TV shows.

Taylor: The cool punk like—

Sydnee: Yeah. I was just thinking like when you talk about this heightened reality, when he does his death scene?

Taylor: Oh, and he keeps dying? [chuckles]

Sydnee: It's just great.

Taylor: Do you think that was scripted? Or do you think that was just him, just he kept going and at some point someone said, "Just leave it in. Just leave it in."

Sydnee: I like to think... I like to think he did it. I like to think that was him. Because, I mean, that feels like... I don't know. I have read a lot about the Pee-wee Herman show. Because like I was always... I don't know. I'm kind of obsessed with that thing that existed. And like why and how and... Anyway, I would think that sounds like something he would do. But who knows? I mean, it's got that kind of quirky silliness that sometimes Buffy has, right?

So like, you can see Joss Whedon thinking of something like that too. When he's not taking himself too seriously, I mean, I think you can see that. But I don't know, I also just wonder if that scene didn't lead them to have a conversation about like, "Should we make something happen to the vampires after they get staked? Should we come up with a thing?" Because they just sort of—

Taylor: And the bodies are just there, yeah.

Sydnee: They just get stabbed in the heart, and then they fall over. And like do—like even like the master, when he falls over, he pulls his cape over

his head. Like classic Dracula style, like whoop. And dies. Like that's—
[chuckles] it's kind of goofy.

Taylor: I mean, it—the master and—well, the master in the series and this movie are both very kind of goofy classic Dracula characters, which I love.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: I guess the master in the series is more of a Nosferatu character. But I do love... oh, and it's... the amazing actor in this movie that plays...

Sydnee: Oh...

Taylor: The master.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Taylor: I can believe that he was absolutely trying to channel like proper Dracula performances.

Sydnee: Yeah, no, I think he definitely is trying to. Hold on, I gotta go back through all my... through all my various Wikipedia—[titters]

Taylor: But I do think—

Sydnee: What was I—

Taylor: I do, I—

Sydnee: What was I looking for?

Taylor: That question is always in mind of like, when the bodies just drop and then, you know, you just stake them and you leave them there. Like, what do the coroners think the next day? It was like, "Well, we have two graves that were unearthed. And the bodies are nearby their graves, they just have had a wooden stake driven through their heart."

Sydnee: But they're just like—

Taylor: They were broken out from the outside in. What...

Sydnee: I mean, I guess Rutger Hauer is who it is.

Taylor: Rutger Hauer.

Sydnee: But I guess it's—

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Yeah, I guess it's also very like—[titters] That must be a vampire, look at the way he's dressed. [chuckles] Like he's got the cape and that red vest, and...

Taylor: When the principal is dropping detention slips on everybody, like it's a funny moment. But it's like, then we did go back the next day and be like, well, all of these students are dead now.

[group chuckle]

Taylor: It's way better when they turn to dust. Absolutely, way better.

Sydnee: It's also way better when we've moved past. And like this—what this movie feeds into, which again is why it feels so '80s to me I think, is like... the—Buffy's friends are jerks. Like, that's clear, right? They're mean, they're petty, they're elitist, you know? I mean like they're not nice people. Her boyfriend is clearly a jerk—

Taylor: Who also cheated on her.

Sydnee: Who then is really mean. Yeah. And then he's mean to the new girl that he's dating. Like they're every—they're all mean. But then like the vampires are all like, they all have this punk Goth thing going on. They like show up to like crash the prom. And they look way cooler. They look like, well, I'd rather hang out with those kids.

Taylor: Oh, for sure.

Sydnee: Right. Like those look like the kids you want to spend the evening with, not the kids in the gym. And I think we were still just seeing like very much these codified high school cliques. That, again, that's a very '80s movie thing. We moved—by the time we got to Buffy the Vampire Slayer, the show, we had I think elevated past that.

Taylor: That's true.

Sydnee: You don't put somebody in black leather and chains to communicate they're quote/unquote 'bad.'

Taylor: Well, we still did have evil Willow being the Willow that just wore a cat suit.

[group chuckle]

Taylor: Just to be fair.

Sydnee: Listen...

Taylor: Don't get me wrong, I very much appreciate evil Willow, but that was the design.

[group chuckle]

Sydnee: Well, okay, this is what—see, I don't want to—I'm trying to avoid those conversations about Buffy. [titters]

Taylor: Same. [titters]

Sydnee: Listen, once we start unearthing this, there's a lot we could go, "Oh, well... huh..."

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: Let's just accept it for what it was. The idea of the movie is cool. Yes, I could nitpick lots of things about it, and Kristy Swanson's political

views are very unfortunate. But it gave birth to the TV show, which I think meant a lot to you and me, and lots of other people. So...

Taylor: Well, and I, I still, I genuinely do still like the movie as the sort of... the proto Buffy. Like...

Sydney: Yes.

Taylor: I think also, I don't know, did you know—did you pick up on this? That the voice, that the voice of Kristy Swanson compared to, I mean—I mean, that's just Sarah Michelle Gellar's voice. They're so similar. Like, look-wise, they, you know, they're obviously—they're both like pretty blondes. But they look very different. But the voice was so similar, and the mannerisms. I don't know if maybe it was just because it's the valley girl thing, or Sarah Michelle Gellar, I mean, clearly she's a very talented actress. She just kind of picked up certain cues from that performance? But that really freaked me out rewatching, it's like, oh, wow. Like, I could close my eyes and this would sound like series Buffy.

Sydney: It does. It does very much. I think that probably they're playing with, well, I mean two things. One, like they wanted that dichotomy of mall pretty blonde valley girl, and then wearing a leather jacket and killing vampires. So like they wanted that, you know, contrast. But the other thing is, I think we had a cultural concept of what a quote/unquote 'Buffy' was. Like when you said Buffy, I think there was—there's a cultural image that was already sort of conjured at that point in 1992. That hadn't changed dramatically by 1997.

Taylor: That's true.

Sydney: What would a Buffy look like? What would a Buffy sound like? What does she do? I don't know, that—I think that's kind of what they're playing with.

Taylor: Was there—and this is my last question, which is weird for this episode. But was there a rise in people naming children Buffy? Because we've got like how many Daenerys and Khaleesis? But like, I don't—I've

never met a Buffy. And I don't know, for a character that actually aged well, you'd think there would have been a rise in young Buffys. Or does—

Sydnee: I wonder.

Taylor: Is the fact that the name was chosen because of the cultural association with it maybe the deterrent to naming a child that?

Sydnee: You know, I have no idea. I will say I only know in real life one Buffy.

Taylor: You know a Buffy?

Sydnee: I know one.

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: And she is older than me, so I... so she would have obviously been named for these things.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: Buffy is currently, the name Buffy on The Bump website, where they do like baby naming popularity data, Buffy is currently... oh no, now I'm getting an ad for formula.

Taylor: [titters] I shouldn't have sprung that on you. I didn't expect you to know, but I was just curious. Like it's like, usually when we have a fantasy series that's popular, you get a bunch of Bellas. You get a bunch of, you know, like fancy names.

Sydnee: Yeah, it's true. Buffy is currently number 4080 on The Bump ranking of popular names.

Taylor: I don't think that's very popular.

Sydnee: No, it's not very popular. It looks like it is up from last year, like it is more popular last year. Here would be the question, though, what year do

you think, like 19? No, there's big gap in The Bump. They don't have any data from 1990 to 2002. So I don't know. [chuckles]

Taylor: All right.

Sydney: So, way down from 2002 though.

Taylor: So that's Millennials doing that.

Sydney: So there you go. So, it was more popular in the early 2000s, and now it looks like it's way less.

Taylor: It just seems like a good name. Because obviously there's Buffy, but her nickname is Buff.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: That's a great nickname.

Sydney: It is? I don't know. We didn't think about it. I won't have any more kids, but if I did, I'd name them Buffy.

Taylor: Your kids have pretty good names, so don't worry about it. But...

Sydney: No, I'm pleased with ours.

[group chuckle]

Taylor: All right.

Sydney: Well, Tey, thank you for watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Taylor: Anytime.

Sydney: Yeah. It was fun. I guess next week we'll be doing another... current trend?

Taylor: Get back up on whatever's happening on the—

Sydnee: Unless... unless you just want to watch the first episode of Agatha All Along, and then we can check back in about it next week?

Taylor: I mean, it's—are you proposing that to me live on the podcast? Sure, yeah!

Sydnee: I am—here's what I will say, every TikTok—TikTok is like, "Sydnee, Sydnee, this is for you. Sydnee, you're gonna love it." And then keep showing me TikToks of Aubrey Plaza. And they're all saying that it's so gay. Like, it's so gay. That's what everybody says. It's like witches and Kathryn Hahn—

Taylor: I don't trust them after the 'so gay' of Love and Thunder. But you know—

Sydnee: I know, well, this is—

Taylor: I'll give them a second chance.

Sydnee: People are saying this is the actual... this is actual. I don't know, but that's... TikTok's like, "Sydnee, you would love this! Sydnee!"

Taylor: I—

Sydnee: This is so your thing!

Taylor: I haven't even—I'm not even like, this is—I don't think this is my thing. But I've been given TikToks about it. Probably because, well, I guess the 'so gay' thing. So... yeah, fine. Yeah, let's do that. It's spooky season still, basically, almost. By next week it will be.

Sydnee: We'll talk about what we think. Is it—Agatha All Along, is it really gay?

Taylor: [laughs] That's all that we're gonna answer, we're not gonna tell you about it.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: We're gonna—

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Answer the—it will be—

Sydnee: We're just gonna tell you—

Taylor: Yes or no. The episode will be five minutes.

Sydnee: We can do some—we can do some updates on current trends. But like—

Taylor: All right.

Sydnee: We can also say—we can answer the burning question, is it gay?

Taylor: I would love to know.

Sydnee: Okay. Well, thank you, listeners. You should go to maximumfun.org and check out all the 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. This has been Still Buffering, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I am still buffering,

Taylor: And I am too!

[theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind" by Nouvellas plays]

Sydnee: I feel like I talked so much. I'm gonna start making you say some of the stuff at the end.

Taylor: As you said that, I thought I should really pick up some of the outro, because Sydnee just has to say a bunch of stuff all on her own.

Sydnee: And I have to change my inflection so that it sounds different, so—
[titters]

Taylor: I think you could maybe say it all at once. But you don't have to, I could do it.

Sydnee: We're gonna divvy it up.

Taylor: We'll workshop it.

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: All right.

[break]

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