

## Still Buffering: Doctor Odyssey

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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:** Well, Tey, I don't know if you've heard, but apparently, I'm supposed to go down South and find a Southern conservative woman who voted for Trump and... beat her up? Get her?

**Taylor:** Yeah, you're gonna get her. Get 'er!

**Sydnee:** Get 'er?

**Taylor:** Well, now, I'm—

**Sydnee:** What am I supposed to have been—what was I—what?

**Taylor:** Are you in the quadrant of people that are—I mean, you're right on the dividing line there of the get and the been gotten, right?

**Sydnee:** Well, okay, this is fair. I am, well, I don't know that liberal is the word I would use to describe myself. [titters] I think I was liberal in college, I've moved far past liberal. But whatever I am, I think that's what they mean.

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Me, right. I don't—

**Taylor:** Well, they seemed to insinuate it like those... Northerners are gonna come down. [chuckles] And like you're right at the—you're right at the gate there.

**Sydnee:** That's true. I'm not a Northerner. I am on the left side of the political spectrum, so I assume... I don't know, I assumed they meant me. But maybe I am the northernmost Southern state, and the southernmost Northern state? It's hard to... it's hard to say.

**Taylor:** Yeah. You're like at the point of aggression. Like you don't even have to travel, you could just find your neighbor that looks...

**Sydnee:** Hey, listen, most of my neighbors—man, can I tell you, this has really gotten in my head now. I mean, I always—listen. You know, Tey, you grew up in West Virginia. I know when I'm in a room, I know I'm in the political minority. I know that. Like I've known that for a long time. I didn't need this election to teach me that lesson. I know that. But specifically white women. [titters]

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I found myself in a room with—there were... one, two, three, four, five. There were five white women in this room. And as we were talking, I found myself looking at all of them and thinking; so, three of you? Not me. I know it wasn't me. I know I'm one of the two. But three of you? So, only one of the remaining people in this room... which three? Like, it's really gotten in my head. And I know that math doesn't work that way. I understand that all five of us may have been blue votes. I understand that. But I keep finding myself in rooms with white women, and then looking around and thinking—what is it, 57%? Was that what it was?

**Taylor:** I think it was more than that, wasn't it?

**Sydnee:** I thought it was... it was at 50—anyway, it doesn't matter.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Over 50, over half.

**Taylor:** Over half.

**Sydnee:** Over half. So like that is—I keep finding myself in rooms with white women and thinking—and then here's the thought I had; were they right about the blue bracelet? [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Well, that's what—I mean, that's—I don't think it was a bad call at least to—it's not saying, "I'm a good person, I deserve a cookie." I feel like as a signal that like 'I'm not trash' is about—I'm—you're not—[titters] you're not in immediate danger with me.

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, because the conversation turned to—we were having this conversation as Dr. Oz was announced as... what is he? He is in charge of Medicaid and Medicare.

**Taylor:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** So like this came over someone's phone and they said it, and they were like, "Oh, no." And I thought, okay, you're on my team.

**Taylor:** Good, good. All right. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Okay, I—you're one of—you're with me. But then I was like, I mean, I don't know, like at this point, it's all so terrible. It's hard to—which I think is the point. It's like shock and awe. Like we're gonna exhaust you with the horrors, and then you can't fight back. I mean, that's—

**Taylor:** And with the clown cars. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** So many clowns.

**Sydnee:** That's the point. Like it—you become numb to it after a while. Like, yes, there's clowns. Yes, I see. Yes, that's—I understand that.

**Taylor:** I didn't think one more could fit. But you know what? Of course. Of course one more could fit.

**Sydnee:** Of course they did. And so—and I mean really with the Matt Gaetz thing, it's like... I don't know how we go—I don't know how we turn up the volume from there. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** No...

**Sydnee:** So, but I—at that moment, I said, well—to the person who was also horrified, I said, you know, here's the thing I keep saying—because she looked as distraught as I felt. And I said, I keep thinking this... This is another person who has lived and worked in West Virginia on issues that I care about. And I thought, hey, look, we have found ways to create these networks of mutual aid and care in this state, in our community, locally, and then across the state, for things like harm reduction and reproductive care.

And we will find ways to continue to care for each other. We have this network of people who anytime anything happens in the state with the state legislature, I can reach out to fellow, I guess, liberal women—[titters] all over the state of West Virginia, a lot of them in health care. And say, this is a new thing we got to tackle. Like I—we have a network. And then, as I said it, I thought, oh, no, there are more white women in this room. And they heard me say it. [titters] And they heard me say this.

**Taylor:** [chuckles] Speaking of parts of your network.

**Sydnee:** They're gonna—and I mean, we're not doing anything illegal. It's just mutual aid. We're just helping. But then I thought they're gonna find us and they're gonna... they're gonna stop us from our work, because I can't—so I—all this to say, maybe the blue bracelets weren't a terrible idea. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Well, I mean, but now it's gonna mark us—mark a part of a gang that's gonna beat up all the gentle Southern—I cannot, I—it's like... it's like... like food that's really, really processed and bad for you, but you just want to eat it anyway. Those videos of just the women with like the bad boob jobs just being like, "Look at these leggings. They can hold a gun!" Like, yeah, most pants can hold a gun, you weirdo. What are you doing? Stop showing me your pants!

**Sydnee:** They're all playing those awful—like the country songs that gave country music a bad name.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** The country songs that destroyed what, I mean, once was a good genre of music. I'm gonna go down as saying that.

**Taylor:** Well, country started out as the music of the rebellion.

**Sydnee:** Yes. And now you've got a bunch of fake, patriotic, nationalistic morons who are writing terrible songs about, you know, sundown towns. And then white women who are like playing them behind them as they stare into the camera on TikTok. Ugh!

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** It's not even well done! [titters]

**Taylor:** I don't—but I—I mean, I think it is, because I can't look away. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I have not found a single video of a Northern liberal woman threatening to come south of the Mason-Dixon.

**Taylor:** Well, no, but like a lot of people—

**Sydnee:** To beat you up. Tit.

**Taylor:** It's the, as a lot of people pointed out, it's a—you know, there has been a very—I think a lot of people did finally cut off their conservative family members.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** I say conservative, I don't know if that's even—it's not—it's conservative—it's people that voted for what is about to be wrought upon us. Like I am sure there are lots of conservative people that did not.

**Sydnee:** I agree.

**Taylor:** So, I don't want to qualify it as that. Lots of people cut off their Maga family members. And there were lots of tears over that, lots of people like, "How could you—how could you stop being friends with someone just because of how they vote?" And it's like, well, because how you voted comes with the implication that you don't think me or my kid or my friends should be alive. So, that's—it's more than just a vote.

But when the white woman tears weren't working—they were so sad that, "We had to cancel Thanksgiving. And nobody came to my wedding." Then they have to start insinuating violence. It's interesting, I think, you know, you should always... I think we should always be trying to question and deconstruct our sort of inner... inner structure that we were raised and born with. And I feel like—

**Sydnee:** Right, right, our implicit biases.

**Taylor:** Yeah, it's been—I think the eye-opening thing to realize this is like, this is what—this is probably how black people have felt about women, white women, for—like this is what we're experiencing. Like, oh, well, the tears didn't work, so now we're going to have a threat of violence. But it's not that they're going to do violence, it's that we're going to do violence. So now we're dangerous, so something needs to be done to protect them from us. Which is, you know, that's the white woman tears playbook. We're just now included in the plays. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Well, and if you think about it, so I, again, I didn't see any TikToks from those of us on the left saying we're gonna go—

**Taylor:** No, [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Because here's the thing—

**Taylor:** We don't even want to talk to you. Why would we want to touch you?

**Sydnee:** No, I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to be near you. I have no intention of inflicting physical harm on anyone... period.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** I was going to say who voted for Trump, but period. I don't—that's not my intention. My concern is, one, I don't want you in my life. And I have no problem—unlike in 2016 when I thought I want to understand you, because you've made this horrible choice. And I feel like maybe those of us on the left just didn't make our argument very well, and maybe we could make it better.

Which still remains true. But I do not have that space for you anymore. You had space. Your space is gone. I do not want you in my life. I don't want you around my family or my friends or people I care about, because you're a direct threat to people that I care about. And so, I want you out of my life. But I'm not going to come harm you. And so, I don't believe those videos exist.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** But the videos of the 'Southern women' claiming that they exist are talking about Northern liberal women. That's usually what they say.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Northern liberal women. And that, when I think northern liberal women, I—in my head, I think I conjure an image of probably a white woman.

**Taylor:** Sure.

**Sydnee:** Like when I hear that, I think a white woman. But if they change that language just a bit, that is a very dangerous thing that they're doing. And I think that's what you're hitting on, Tey. Is that it's one thing for them to try to leverage that against me, a, I guess, liberal white woman. But if you are leveraging that against black women, that comes from a long tradition that is *incredibly dangerous*.

**Taylor:** I mean, that's exactly—that's the thing, they're just expanding the reach. Like, "Well, it always works for us when we use this against people of color." You know? It's not—it's nothing new. It's just... it's just a new inclusion.

**Sydnee:** Well, I—for the record, I've seen those TikToks.

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I still have not seen any. They're not—

**Taylor:** It's just—

**Sydnee:** They're not, because they can't find them, because it's not true!

**Taylor:** I want to be on the—I want to be on the bus of—like, I don't, you know... I'm trans, but can I still just be on the bus of all you liberal women driving down south to—there would be no violence, but it would be—it would be a great bus ride. There would be—there would be mimosas.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** You know?

**Sydnee:** We'd all be, I don't know, what are we—what are we listening to? Probably now would be Chappell Roan.

**Taylor:** Yeah, definitely.

**Sydnee:** But I feel like then somebody would start like the Joni Mitchell, and we'd all be like vibing.

**Taylor:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:** And then somebody would be crocheting.

**Taylor:** Mm-hm.



**Sydnee:** There'd be crocheting. We'd be swapping gardening tips.

**Taylor:** Yeah, those—

**Sydnee:** I don't know. There would be a lot of Acotar talk—

**Taylor:** Those Massachusetts ladies would bring a lot of Dunkie's, so that'd be good. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Yeah, I mean—

**Taylor:** That's the only—that's the only state that I can be like, nah, you know what? Massachusetts might toe up though. [laughs] New York too, I guess, but Massachusetts!

**Sydnee:** Massachusetts is a blue state.

**Taylor:** It is blue, but it is scary! [titters] And I mean that with utmost respect.

**Sydnee:** Well, but listen, that's the energy we kind of need.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And not because we need to go beat anybody up, because that's—I mean, it doesn't help.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** Do things that help. That doesn't help us.

**Taylor:** Sure. Well, we—and I think we all know no one's actually...

**Sydnee:** No, and I think like the—we need that energy that exists. Like that complete lack of class that you see in those angry Southern women TikToks. We need a little bit of that. Just a little. Right? Without all the hate and the

racism and the homophobia and the internalized misogyny. If we can get rid of that, but keep a little bit of that edge. We need that energy.

**Taylor:** Oh, absolutely. Well, I mean, I think that's why I was—honestly, like the amount of people crying about, "Oh, no, my liberal friends don't want to talk to me anymore." Like it's like the—why weren't we doing this all along?

**Sydnee:** Yes!

**Taylor:** Because that got a decent response. Just people setting a small boundary in their life of like, hey... [chuckles] Like, as a, I don't know, as a gay person, I know you love having a gay bestie, but you absolutely voted against my rights. So, this isn't gonna happen anymore. Like, what? Like, that's all it took. Like, you just—

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Don't listen.

**Taylor:** Don't tolerate it.

**Sydnee:** Everybody—everybody—all—everyone who's listening in the LGBTQ+ community, we do not invite those women to brunch anymore.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** You are not welcome. You cannot come to brunch. I mean, obviously there's more to it than that. But like that's—I mean, that's like the—that's got to be the start.

**Taylor:** I mean, it's sad that that's where we're at. [chuckles] But, yeah, I agree.

**Sydnee:** But yeah, I'm going to keep searching. I'd love to find the one with the—there's just not—

**Taylor:** No, it's not a thing.

**Sydnee:** I do not believe it exists. I don't think so.

**Taylor:** It's just a... it's just the next move from the playbook. They didn't get their way with tears, so now it's an accusation of violence.

**Sydnee:** Taylor, I asked you to engage in something much more joyful.

**Taylor:** Yes. Joyful—yeah, you know what? [chuckles] Well, something that I saw—this is on topic, I promise. But there's this cruise line that threw together this like skip it—skip over it cruise. Where you can just be on a cruise for either two to four years, just to the next presidency. And if this was the cruise, I would be on it.

**Sydnee:** So, Doctor Odyssey.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** I actually think there is something happening on that show where the idea is, what would humans be like if we took them out of the world, put them on a boat, and then—but also, I mean, like I know people go on cruises. But like—

**Taylor:** Yeah. [laughs] In a world where cruises exist.

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean... but like they—

**Taylor:** I've got great news for you, Sydnee. [titters]

**Sydnee:** But everybody exists for that moment on the cruise. I mean, I don't think—most of us, when we go on vacations, whatever they look like, are only kind of there, right?

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like, capitalism has done that to us. We're only kind of there. On this cruise, when the people are on the cruise, the crew, the people, their whole life exists on that cruise. [titters] They're just really in the moment in a way that most of us cannot achieve. I think that's—and what would human relationships look like? I think that's what we're seeing on Doctor Odyssey.

**Teylor:** You've been on—I've never been on a cruise, but you have. Is that from experience? Do you—is that—is there a separation there that allows you to live in the moment? [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** It does—well, it does feel like out of—it does feel like you're kind of—you've been removed from the timeline for a little bit. It does have that sense. Especially if like internet is not easily available, which was true for a big chunk of the cruise I was on. That is weird, because then when the internet shows up in bursts, you find out a bunch of news about the world all at once.

**Teylor:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** And then it goes away again. So like it does have that sort of sense of like drifting out of the timeline briefly. But not like—Doctor Odyssey is a fantasy show. It's not a fantasy, but it is. It is a fantasy! It stars, of course, Joshua Jackson, AKA Pacey. As the doctor—

**Teylor:** [chuckles] He will never not be Pacey to you.

**Sydnee:** He's always Pacey. It's a Pacey show. His name is Max Bankman. Dr. Max Bankman. But he is very quickly called Dr. Odyssey.

**Teylor:** Is every—because there was a previous doctor on the ship, but he's replacing. Like he replaced the older doctor.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Teylor:** Was that—is it like a Doctor Who thing? Do you inherit the title?

**Sydnee:** I don't—they haven't said that, but if there—listen, this is a Ryan Murphy show. If there turns out to be a magical element to it, I would not be shocked.

**Teylor:** I kept—there's—there—it's just dreamy enough that I'm like, eh, are they dead? Is this heaven? [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** So, well, I don't want to—I mean, I don't think this is spoiling because in the first episode. In the first episode, what you find out pretty quickly is that Max Bankman has a lot of—like, he has a very prestigious sort of resume for, I guess, for a cruise ship doctor. I would think you would have to be pretty good, because it's an intimidating environment. It's not like you can get back to land right away. So I would think everybody who is a cruise ship doctor would need a pretty prestigious resume, personally. But they make a big deal out of how he's kind of over qualified for this position. And what you find out is that he was the first case of COVID in Connecticut, is that what it was?

**Taylor:** I think somewhere up in that little panhandle. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** He was working as a physician in the hospital, he was the first one to acquire COVID. He almost died. Like should have died, didn't die. Barely got into a trial for remdesivir, I believe, is what he got. And then managed to survive, and then realized like he had never gotten the work-life balance thing right. And he wanted to take a completely different path, something that would be an adventure and new, and enjoy his life more. So that is why he's the cruise ship doctor. I think there is a part of me that wonders if he survived COVID.

**Taylor:** [titters] This is all just... I don't know, that's a... it's a pretty specific afterlife that he's envisioned for himself. But...

**Sydnee:** Can I tell you, Tey, I don't—I mean, listen, I don't really want to be on a cruise ship, but there are a lot of elements of this afterlife that he would have envisioned for himself that would not be too dissimilar from an afterlife I would envision. I would love to be in some sort of—I don't know if I would—I don't really like being on cruise ships. They stress me out. I know they're not gonna tip over, but it feels like they could. And then I'm on The Poseidon Adventure, and that's just terrifying.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like I, when I was on a cruise in the past, I would lay there in bed when it—when we had like rough waters. And chart out the path for like if the cruise ship flips, I will grab my kids and my husband and I will run this

direction, to this room, to this floor, to this whatever. Like I would sit there mapping out the path to get to the bottom, which would be the top of the boat, so that I could survive like in The Poseidon Adventure. Anyway, it's not my dream. [titters]

**Taylor:** I would agree with that. There would be no—there would be no deep water involved in my heaven. You know how I feel about the ocean.

**Sydnee:** The ocean is scary.

**Taylor:** Well, excuse me, not only is the ocean scary, but apparently it's full of some sort of primordial aliens of some kind? We learned that this week.

**Sydnee:** That's true.

**Taylor:** So, you know... I would like to say that my innate fear of the ocean was actually just respecting the alien's domain. So...

**Sydnee:** Well, I thought it was jellyfish primarily.

**Taylor:** No, no.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles]

**Taylor:** I hated the ocean—this is—I hated the ocean before I was stung by jellyfish. You all made me feel bad about not wanting to go in the ocean, so I finally went in the ocean, and then I got stung by a jellyfish. So that was just a reinforcement. But I hated the ocean before the jellyfish.

**Sydnee:** So, my heaven would not be on a cruise ship, but some sort of setting where I am like the doctor there. And I get to like engage in these like weird problem solving—save lives with my not just like what I know as a doctor, but by being creative and innovative and working with my team that I love. And I don't know, there are throuples sometimes. Like that sounds like a pretty great—and every week is themed? That's pretty heavenly. There's a lot of elements here that I would embrace.

**Taylor:** Well, and I have to ask like—I can't imagine it's real medical equipment, but the design of all the medical equipment. Like, I was mystified, I was like the—one character that was like, you know, being a patient, had like—at first I thought it was just a really beautiful gold ring. And then I was like, no, wait, they all wear that. That's the cuff for like taking their vitals.

**Sydnee:** I've never seen that in real life. I don't—if that exists, I don't. I mean, I—so there is a pulse oximeter, which is the little clamp thing we put on your finger to check your oxygen level and your pulse. So, and they come in pretty colors, I have a purple one. But it's not a ring, it's like a little clampy thing with a digital readout on top. I've never seen one that is a gold ring that like Wi-Fi's the... or Bluetooths the—

**Taylor:** That's what I'm saying, it's not even connected to anything.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, well, that's what I'm assuming it's doing, is like remotely sending. And like could you design something that did that? I'm assuming you probably could. Like, it does not seem like technology that would be beyond us. And it may exist somewhere, but I don't know why. And I certainly don't know why you would want to depend on any kind of wireless signal on a cruise ship. [titters]

**Taylor:** Well, it's like, there's that, there's like the—all of the bedding, all the equipment is like, it's all like the right—the same kind of like muted gold that all the other details are in. Like the bags of like whatever kind of liquids that they hang, the IV bags? They're not bags. They're like these little boxes. They have like a structure to them. And they're really stylistic. And then like the—my favorite is the medicine cabinet. Which, at first I was like, what is that weird room with bottles? And then they showed a close up and I'm like, oh, all of the pills are kept in these beautiful like brown glass bottles, backlit.

**Sydnee:** But are not labeled.

**Taylor:** [titters] Yeah, it looks like a bar.

**Sydnee:** That is—that room is what—that was actually, when I—Justin and I have talked about the show a lot, because we've been watching it. Like I started to watch it on my own because I thought, well, Justin will never watch this with me. And then when I realized what it was, I thought, oh, no, okay, actually, he will enjoy this.

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** [titters] And so we—and we've talked about it a lot. That room is part of my main theory that this is something other than just a cruise. Like that this is something magical or ethereal or something. I don't know why you would have that room, for so many reasons. It's a bunch of unlabeled brown bottles. They look pretty. No one stores medicine that way, or medical supplies. It's so impractical, you'd have to memorize what's what. You can't—there's no way Phillipa Soo can reach the ones on the top, like they're really high. Maybe Pacey, maybe, but—

**Taylor:** I feel like they're similar heights.

**Sydnee:** Well, either way, I don't know who can reach them. Nobody can reach them. You'd need a ladder! And then, you're on a cruise ship. So then you're like, well, you don't want to be on a ladder on a cruise ship. Well, also, you don't want to have glass bottles just on a shelf?

**Taylor:** Well, that's like, maybe it's like part of the ambience? It's a display. Like, you know? Like something Disney would build in like a line waiting area. But...

**Sydnee:** [titters] But they seem to use it?

**Taylor:** Yeah, that's what I'm saying. I feel like we see people in there getting things.

**Sydnee:** But the—and I mean, some of the other elements, I don't know if it's exaggerated because it's TV, or if we are supposed to sense that something's off. We do not do surgery on cruise ships. That is not... they wouldn't... they wouldn't do—



**Taylor:** Well, they say several times that they don't do surgery. But then they do proceed to do surgery.

**Sydnee:** They wouldn't—[titters] an appendectomy on a cruise ship, when he—when they—when the cruise is like—when the water is so choppy that he has to like stand on the wall, like perpendicular, as he is doing... that would never happen. None of that would ever—that area is so contaminated, that whole sterile field has been destroyed. Like from the jump, this would never happen. Why are we putting her through an open appendectomy? We do those laparoscopically the vast majority of the time these days. Why didn't we Life Flight her off? Why didn't we call a helicopter? [titters]

**Taylor:** Yeah, how far out to sea are they? [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I know. Like, there are so many things this would not—you wouldn't. You don't have a CAT scan on a boat—on a ship. [chuckles] There are so many people getting CAT scans and I'm like, there's no CAT scanner on a cruise ship. They're not doing that.

**Taylor:** Well, I was gonna ask, how legitimate is the medicine on this? But I guess I'm getting my answer. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** So, the—when they talk about like this is the diagnosis and this is the treatment, a lot of that is accurate. A lot of that is true. Like, the, you know, they treat syphilis correctly, right? Like, I mean, those sorts of things are not that outrageous. The way that they like, the threat level like, "How dangerous is this fungal rash we have?" [titters] That kind of thing. I think some of that gets a little exaggerated.

But it's just, I think it's what we would or wouldn't do on a cruise ship. If your appendix is about to rupture, would you do a surgery? Sure, yeah, that's true. Would you do it on a cruise ship? No. Does that person need a CAT scan? Yes. Would you do it on a cruise ship? No. I think it's that kind of thing. It just stretches the bounds of what we would actually do on a cruise ship. I don't know—the scene where two people are having sex and the one gets stuck in the other. I'm not sure that's a thing that happens. And I don't know how to google that in a way that won't—

**Taylor:** I don't—yeah... no...

**Sydnee:** [titters] I'm not gonna. And I'm not asking for input, by the way. This is not—I don't want to know.

**Taylor:** That is this—

**Sydnee:** If I'm wrong, I'll just live with my wrongness. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** As a connoisseur of Ryan Murphy productions, at least the second time that has been a plot point on a Ryan Murphy show.

**Sydnee:** Really?

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** Okay, then that makes me think he knows something I don't.

**Taylor:** Well, there is... I mean, I think it was a... oh, I think it was super glue involved in the other time, but it was specifically that same situation. And it was on the... I think it was on the hotel season of American Horror Story. I just think—

**Sydnee:** Somebody—

**Taylor:** Or Ryan Murphy made it up and he's like, "That's a good bit. I'm gonna keep using that funny, funny bit of people's parts getting stuck together." [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I think I'm gonna go ahead and read into that. I'm gonna get—I'm gonna get—I'm gonna read some psychology into that. I think that's like a vagina dentata kind of fear there that we are seeing.

**Taylor:** Maybe, that could be it. That would make sense.

**Sydnee:** That is what—that's what I think. I think that.

**Taylor:** Mm-hm. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Anyway...

**Taylor:** Ryan Murphy, we're on to you, you weirdo.

**Sydnee:** [titters] Because that's the first weird thing that you've ever put in a show.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** But every—outside of the medical piece of it, I think that it is very earnest. Like, it's silly, it's goofy. Sometimes it's kind of meta. Like they say at the end of the first episode, they tell him like next week is singles week. And he's like, he looks at the camera as he says, "You mean, every week has a theme?"

**Taylor:** [titters]

**Sydnee:** Like, because the show does, you know? And then they bring on that chef, and they're like, "She's agreed to stay with us for the rest of the season." [chuckles] Which I think they meant cruising season, but it does sound like you mean show. I mean, I think they know what they're doing. Like, they know it's silly. They know it's exaggerated. They know it's hyperbole. I don't think anybody's like, "This is a very serious medical drama."

**Taylor:** Well, that's why like with the design elements being so extravagant I'm like, maybe, is there an inner meaning? Or is it just like, we are not trying to represent reality here, we are representing a fantasy. A high fantasy. You know, low-stakes shenanigans. Because that's like, even when they're like maybe there's a serious threat, it's never really taken that—I mean, I don't know.

The episode where there's a person on the ship that takes their life, and then five minutes later, the main characters are in a throuple. And I guess it was like, oh, life is short and worth living, so... let's do it. Like, that was kind of the proper question there. Like, a guy kind of just died, but we're not

playing it too strong here. All right, you know what? That's good. I don't want to meditate on death. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean Tey, quite literally, the ending of that episode is the three of them... like the beginning of their threesome, right? Like that scene. And then it cuts to black because it's still, I guess, network TV.

**Taylor:** Sure.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles] So, it ends on that so that you're like, [gasps] hah, they're gonna have a threesome. And then the next shot is the information about the National Suicide Hotline.

**Taylor:** Yeah, that—[chuckles] that whiplash was like...

**Sydnee:** Why—

**Taylor:** Always good to include that, but this was not—I don't know... that was a...

**Sydnee:** Well, and that's—so, I thought—part of my heaven theory was that at one point they find a refugee stranded out on the ocean on a life raft. And they rescue her. That's great. And they save her life. And then later in the episode, they find her husband and rescue him too. And then they're together and reunited. And the odds of that feel so astronomically high.

**Taylor:** Do they just live on the boat now?

**Sydnee:** That a cruise ship—[chuckles] I don't—I mean... Well, I haven't seen them again, but that doesn't—I mean, it's a big ship, so...

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** So, the themes. Okay, I loved the like Gwyneth Paltrow stand-in Amy Sedaris.

**Taylor:** That was great.

**Sydnee:** Wellness Goop week.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That was fantastic. It was a lot of stuff that I like to see joked about. Although they do—I feel like that's always like a, it's a Hollywood thing. Where like we're gonna kind of poke fun at these wellness people, but then we're gonna have somebody being like, "But maybe they're right?" Because of this thing. Because there's probably somebody who's making the show who's like, "Well, we don't want to be too harsh. I do all these things." [chuckles]

**Taylor:** I thought I was about to be so smart, because when she put those bitter almonds in the smoothie I was like, amygdalin! That's cyanide! I know what that is! [chuckles] I know that from my booze studies! And it wasn't the cyanide.

**Sydnee:** No, but I thought so too. I totally thought that's what it was. I was like, you can't use those. You can't use those! [titters]

**Taylor:** No!

**Sydnee:** No. But see, that's the thing, they don't—or like all the raw food that they're eating and they're like, "Oh, we're getting sick because we ate raw meat." And they're like, "Nope, not the raw meat. You have appendicitis. [titters]

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Please don't eat raw meat though.

**Taylor:** I mean, if it's properly prepared. Sushi is fine.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, but not—they were eating raw...

**Taylor:** Well, I mean, that was raw liver. I mean, that's lots of preparations. Like pate is—

**Sydnee:** I don't know. I don't—listen. [titters] I don't eat raw meat.

**Taylor:** Steak tartare, that's raw.

**Sydnee:** I don't... I don't eat raw. I'm not—hm... I'll be fine. I can cook my meat. How do I like my hamburger? Done. [titters] That's just me. But I mean—

**Taylor:** I just eat plants, so I will bow out of this conversation. [titters]

**Sydnee:** I was gonna say, you're not gonna eat meat raw or otherwise.

**Taylor:** No, that's true. [titters]

**Sydnee:** The plastic surgery week.

**Taylor:** Now that was fun. But also weird.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Because like you have the ridiculousness of one of the person—one of the cruiser's nose falls off after an improperly done rhinoplasty.

**Taylor:** You cannot tell me medically that if your nose fell off, you could just put it in a pretty little box and walk around for the rest of the week without a nose on. And it would just go right back on when you get on shore.

**Sydnee:** No, you're—that's—no. No. That is not—

**Taylor:** Like wouldn't that tissue die?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, you need to—you need to—[titters] again, this is, I mean... you would go to port and have the person flown to a hospital or you—I mean, I assume there is a way to Life Flight a person. We can do it from the ocean, why can't you do it from a cruise ship? Like if it's a true emergency.

**Taylor:** I guess because if they introduced that to the story, that would be—most every episode would be like, "Well, we got a Life Flight. Get a Life Flight."

**Sydney:** [chuckles] I guess that's true.

**Taylor:** It's the right thing to do. It's the correct move here.

**Sydney:** But certainly, if nothing else, when you got to port, you would put that person in a plane and send them somewhere, right? Like, okay, I've been in a situation where somebody broke their leg and we didn't put them back on the cruise ship. They had a stabilizing surgery at port, and then they were flown back to their home town and had finalizing—like final surgery.

**Taylor:** You don't stay and enjoy the cruise when you've had a traumatic injury? [chuckles]

**Sydney:** No, no! [titters] Not typically—I mean, I guess.... no, I don't think—I bet you couldn't. I was gonna say, I guess you could, like if it was your choice and you knew the risk. But I don't think they'd want you on board.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydney:** They do have a morgue on cruise ships. That is—

**Taylor:** See, that's what surprised me, when they did not on this. Because they were like, "Oh, we use it—it's the flower shop, but we use it as the morgue when we have bodies." I'm like, you can't tell me that you have a designated glowing bottle closet for your unlabeled meds, but you couldn't build—maybe you could have built a little freezer room there? Like it's the only place that stays cold enough. Why not have a whole freezer devoted to dead people?

**Sydney:** They definitely have a morgue on cruise ships. Because it does happen that people unfortunately expire on cruises. That does happen. It is usually not in the dramatic fashion that it is happening on Doctor Odyssey. I will say there have been some shots of CPR that look pretty good.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Like they're doing it properly. Sometimes it's still unrealistic, but they're doing it properly. The most recent episode, I really enjoyed the gay cruise.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Especially like we had this like throuple that had started the previous episode, and they introduced another throuple, with John Stamos.

**Taylor:** Double throuples.

**Sydnee:** Double throuples. And I—it's just—I think that there is something—like normally if you pitched like, in this episode of TV, we've got John Stamos—excellent. Who's brother of Don Johnson—excellent. He's in a throuple—excellent. Also, he has auto-brewery syndrome.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And this is a big deal because he's a recovering alcoholic, and everybody thinks he's relapsed. But he hasn't. And Don Johnson is going to be the only one who believes him and is gonna stick by him, and then prove everybody wrong. And stand by his brother. And that's the episode. That feels a little like... I mean, that's probably too much, right? Like we don't need all that.

**Taylor:** No, you needed exactly that much.

**Sydnee:** Exactly—

**Taylor:** And—

**Sydnee:** It works!

**Taylor:** And you know what? That's not enough. Let's throw in Bob the Drag Queen.



**Sydnee:** Yes. With a head injury. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** I was so confused because I didn't—I guess I didn't pay attention to her when she first got on the ship that—because Bob is famously a bald queen. So when the whole story arc was her wig caught on fire, so she had burns on her head. So then she presented herself as a new bald drag queen. I'm like, oh, the back story of Bob's baldness! [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I also, I think it was interesting that we introduced the confused pregnant couple.

**Taylor:** Oh, that was sweet, yes.

**Sydnee:** Yes, but just so that we could deliver a baby. That was the whole—they were just there because of course she's gonna go into labor, and of course we're gonna see a baby by the end of the episode.

**Taylor:** Well, I was really glad though that you know, the pregnant couple, they end up on the ship by accident. They think that they're getting on a cruise week that's dedicated to expecting couples/

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** And it's not, it's a gay week. I thought that the way the story was gonna go is, oh, no, they're gonna be like conservative and hate the gays, and we're gonna go through all that again. And I'm really glad it was just like, no, they're just a little awkward because they know it's not for them. But they're fine. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. No, I mean, I think it... it's kind of that world where like they're kind of handling like the Schitt's Creek approach to LGBTQ. Like the—we don't—we pretend like everything's fine. [titters] We pretend like the world has always been fine with this, and we've embraced this. And it's all—everyone's fine.

**Taylor:** On the Odyssey, it is.

**Sydnee:** Well, again—

**Taylor:** You can have a throuple, you can be gay, you can be... bald.  
[chuckles]

**Sydnee:** We also play around with—I feel like if we are to believe, as the other two members of the throuple insisted, that Max Bankman was the most enthusiastic member. [titters] If we are to believe that he is a bisexual character on the show, I think that they are just introducing it—one, it makes a lot of sense. Because the relationship between the two main male characters was this sort of weird like brothers in arms, but also rivals, but also, "We care about each other deeply." Like, there was a tension there that I couldn't figure out, but if it was somewhat romantic, that actually—okay, now it kind of makes sense.

**Taylor:** See, that's—because I felt like there was better tension written between the two male leads than of either them with Phillipa... Soo?

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Which is no insult to her, it's just—[chuckles] it seems that way.

**Sydnee:** Well, I don't—she does not seem to—she's fine like—I feel like her character is kind of like, "I like these guys. They're great. I don't—I am a whole... I'm like a whole person."

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** "And I don't necessarily need what either of these guys has to offer," right?

**Taylor:** Yeah, she's just having a good time.

**Sydnee:** Right. I think they kind of need each other. [titters]

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And it's just interesting because like, one, you almost never see that on television. Two, it's just sort of introduced matter-of-factly.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It also I think makes the whole episode with the plastic surgery, where he has so much admiration for the guy who became a living Ken doll—

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** All of that starts to make a little more sense.

**Taylor:** I was just so like, why did they—did they need to kill him in that episode?

**Sydnee:** I know.

**Taylor:** It was very strange. [titters]

**Sydnee:** It was—I—that was a weird death. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** It just felt like it wasn't in service to the plot, it was just like, and then all of his friends showed up. And that scene where he's just sitting there on the ground talking to the other Barbie people. Like, "You are all my friends, I would talk to you. Is that weird to say?" And they're like, "No, it's not." Like, it is, though!

**Sydnee:** "That's what dolls are for." Oh, okay.

**Taylor:** And then they're like, "Oh, can we see the body now?" [laughs] They're just waiting to identify their dead friend and you're like, "Hold on, I gotta sit you down first. I gotta sit down like a little boy on the ground and tell you my story about the hospital first."

**Sydnee:** It's wild. I mean, it—well, that's a Ryan Murphy show, right? Like we had the dance off at one point. Like in the first episode, we have a dance

off. And then later we have a woman trapped in a cave, that's filling with water. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Yeah, I don't—again, would that be—I don't think it would be one of the doctors or nurse practitioners that is tasked with freeing the woman from the cave. [chuckles]

**Sydney:** This is an element I love of the show, is that there are so many times—you have one—okay, you have one doctor on board. You have one doctor. But there are multiple times where you're like, who should we have dive into the ocean, straight into danger and rescue that—the doctor.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** Obviously the most qualified. No! No, we're not! [chuckles] No! Why is that the one—he's the only one you have. Why is he the one doing that?

**Taylor:** Well, you kind of—on occasion, he's sort of ordering around the captain too. Is that kind of the undercurrent? It's like the real captain of this ship is Dr. Odyssey. [chuckles]

**Sydney:** Dr. Odyssey.

**Taylor:** Like, I'm sure there's a lot of medical emergencies on a massive cruise ship. Like, I would imagine that medical bay gets a lot of play. But are they—I don't know if they—are they to this level? Like, if it was real, wouldn't it just be like, "This person drank too much. This person also drank too much. This person got a sunburn, and drank too much."

**Sydney:** I have gotten emails from people who actually work in the medical field on cruise ships about the show, and that is what they say. Like, typically, obviously, that's not what it's like. A lot of the things I've said, they've said like, "We don't do surgeries. We do have a morgue." They are trained in like CPR and they've got a crash cart, but they said most of the time, by the time—like if someone does pass away, it's like an in their sleep kind of deal.

**Taylor:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** You have to think too, there are a lot of cruises that are sort of targeted at like the older population.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** You know. But then the things they say that they manage, like they handle a lot of like if you run out of your meds or you didn't bring your blood pressure med stuff, sunburns; yes, a lot of like drunk people or people under the influence of something. Gastrointestinal stuff. The things you would—you know, minor injuries. They can do—like, they can stitch something up. Stuff like that. So, but yes, that is the vast majority of cruise ship medicine, is that kind of stuff. And it does not sound like it is generally as intense as Doctor Odyssey would have you to believe.

**Taylor:** It's too bad.

**Sydnee:** But I think it's a ton of fun. I like that they're just—I mean, again, I guess if you're Ryan Murphy, that's your whole thing. You just go for it.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like, "We're just gonna do it all. We're gonna put a hat on a hat on a hat on a hat, and we're gonna love it." It's a nice escape, I will say.

**Taylor:** I enjoyed it. You told me to just watch one episode, and then I just ended up watching them all to get caught up. But yeah, it's very... And you know me, for my—for what I like in a show, like if a show—and that's something that Ryan Murphy does really well too. Is if it's well designed, if it's just fun to look at, then I'm gonna enjoy it. Even if I—even if the plot's not necessarily my thing. Like just seeing what the—the weird little tunnel that they enter on the ship. What the theme is gonna be and how they're gonna light up the tunnel. Like the Halloween episode, oh, love that.

**Sydnee:** Oh, yeah, we didn't even get into that, when they thought somebody was becoming a zombie.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Man, it was great.

**Taylor:** Or the person that was definitely Wolverine, but we're gonna call him a werewolf—

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Started sweating blood. That was good, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, I would highly recommend, it's—I think it's streaming on Hulu.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It's on ABC. But I think it's—I think it's a lot of fun. And if you need something to like take your brain out of reality, for whatever it is, 45 minutes.

**Taylor:** Yeah. A little cruise for the awareness. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Thank you. Thank you, Tey. Thank you for watching it. I'm glad you enjoyed it.

**Taylor:** Thank you. Thank you for—it was good break. I needed that.

**Sydnee:** Well, I'm sure we'll find some more—hopefully there will be some more interesting social media trends to follow for next week that have nothing to do with imagined threats from scary liberal women on TikTok. [titters] But thank you, listeners. Thank you, Maxim Fun. You should go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) and check out all the great shows you can enjoy there. And thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

**Taylor:** This has been Still Buffering, your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us.

**Sydnee:** 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:** And then also, it's a Pacey show. So that's like just...

**Taylor:** [chuckles] Pacey. He's got a name?

**Sydnee:** I know, I know. But it'll always be Pacey to me. [titters]

[break]

**Narrator:** Somewhere in an alternate universe, where Hollywood is smarter...

**Presenter 1:** And the Emmy nominees for Outstanding Comedy Series are...

**Presenter 2:** Jetpackula.

**Presenter 1:** Airport Marriott.

**Presenter 2:** Thrapple.

**Presenter 1:** Dear America, We've Seen You Naked.

**Presenter 2:** And Allah in the Family.

**Narrator:** In our stupid universe, you can't see any of these shows. But you can listen to them on Dead Pilots Society. The podcast that brings you hilarious comedy pilots that the networks and streamers bought, but never made. Journey to the ultimate television universe of Dead Pilots Society on [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org).

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