

## Still Buffering: Y2K

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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.

**Teylor:** And I'm Teylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** So, Tey, I have a whole list of suggestions so far. What are you thinking for renaming the Gulf of Mexico?

**Teylor:** [chuckles] I mean, I thought—I don't know... I guess, controversial opinion, I thought it was fine already. It's pretty descriptive.

**Sydnee:** Well...

**Teylor:** The gulf, mainly. [chuckles] And it's in Mexico.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles] I mean, sure. A lot of us did, right? A lot of us thought it was fine.

**Teylor:** Yeah, yeah. But I don't—now that the question's been posed, I don't know, what are you working with?

**Sydnee:** Well, I think—so, I think Gulf of America is just—I mean, first of all, it's stupid. Secondly, like, you're just—I mean, it's a copycat. Like, you couldn't come up with anything original? Like, it's Gulf of Mexico and the best you can—like you just want to, "Like, well, I don't know, Gulf of America?" Like, surely, we can get more creative than that.

**Teylor:** But have we considered, because if we let Trump spell it out, gulf will be spelled with an O.

**Sydnee:** [titters]

**Taylor:** So, that's a little twist.

**Sydnee:** It's the golf. [chuckles] Like the game of America.

**Taylor:** Exactly. I don't think he knows. That's too many words, just keep one. We only need one word to make that sound.

**Sydnee:** You know what? We might deserve that as a country right now, but I don't think the body of water that is the Gulf of Mexico deserves that, right? [chuckles] It didn't do anything wrong! It does not deserve to be renamed the golf, G-O-L-F, of America.

**Taylor:** I'm not saying what it deserves, I'm saying what will probably happen. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I don't know, what's hot right now? Name it after a Marvel character. That should do well.

**Taylor:** Captain America... water.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Captain America water. Yeah...

**Taylor:** Gulf of... Iron Man. I don't know.

**Sydnee:** The Gulf of Iron Man. I like the Gulf of Iron Man.

**Taylor:** It sounds good.

**Sydnee:** X-Men pool.

**Taylor:** No, no, no, the X-Men are an analogy for gays and people that are undesirable in society. I don't... that's not very American.

**Sydnee:** Oh, okay. Oh, so this is something that—we're trying to propose something that Trump would be okay with. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Yeah, we gotta meet in the middle, because he's going to be the one making the final call, right?

**Sydnee:** [titters] Well, I mean, I feel like if it's, like as—with the lack of creativity there, it's just like water. What's that down there? Water. That's where water is. Salt water. Big salt water.

**Taylor:** Big salt water. I like that. I like big salt water.

**Sydnee:** Big salt water down there.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Oh, that's weird.

[group chuckle]

**Taylor:** Yeah, I don't like the 'down there' part.

**Sydnee:** [titters] Like, it's not down there.

**Taylor:** No, that's too descriptive. Too many words! Less words.

**Sydnee:** Also, let me just go ahead and acknowledge that's my own... there's a name for that, it's like map bias. It has to do with like map making and like ethnocentric whatever. There is no bottom or top. The planet's a big, round ball.

**Taylor:** That's true.

**Sydnee:** I shouldn't say down there. There's no down or up. There's just there. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Is that—I mean, I feel stupid asking this, but does that like—people like down in South America, do they go down there, and what they mean is Canada? No...

**Sydnee:** Well, they probably do say 'up there.' But what that's created is a false impression that there is like some sort of geographical hierarchy, right?

**Taylor:** But like south is down?

**Sydnee:** Well, it doesn't have to—the planet's not oriented that way, you know what I mean? The universe is vast, and what is up and down?  
[chuckles] There is no up and down in space!

**Taylor:** See, you start asking questions about what if we rename the Gulf of Mexico? And it all unravels. It's the first step of just... just entropy of all.

**Sydnee:** This is—[chuckles]

**Taylor:** What it any—why does anything have a name? Why do we have borders? Let's just call it all land.

**Sydnee:** Let's call it a land and water.

**Taylor:** Just throw out your compasses. Those of you that have compasses.

**Sydnee:** [titters] That's my proposal, rename the Gulf of Mexico, there is no up and down in space.

[group chuckle]

**Sydnee:** Of Mexico!

**Taylor:** I like that! I like that. You have to think. It makes you ponder.

**Sydnee:** Can we continue to say of Mexico at the end, just to mess with him?

**Taylor:** Yes, I think that's—

**Sydnee:** Just to mess with him! Yeah, that was... that was one I didn't see coming. Somehow it made—and maybe this is the point. Somehow it made the idea that we were going to try to buy Greenland like less absurd. I don't know. Like, that's still absurd, but—[chuckles]

**Taylor:** He hit us hard and fast with all that, because we got the Gulf of America, we got buying—still on the table.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm.

**Taylor:** Now we're taking Canada back. Making Canada America again, but for the first time.

**Sydnee:** Canada doesn't want to be us, and I don't blame 'em.

**Taylor:** No, but I don't think they're going to get a choice. I think it's gonna be a takeover. I don't know, it feels like—you have small children, so you know like—I mean, well, no, this isn't true, because your kids know how to play board games very well. Generally better than me. But you know like when you have a small kid that you like set up the board game, and there are all the pieces, and you're trying to tell them how to play it. And they're just like picking up little cars and crashing them in and they're like, "Wah!" And then like throwing the—like that's how it feels.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** You're just doing—you're just doing anything. You're not playing the game at all, sir.

**Sydnee:** That's—yes.

**Taylor:** There are rules. [chuckles] You can learn them.

**Sydnee:** That's exactly—well, I mean, yeah, that's exactly what it—it's like, "I'm president now, I get to—" I mean, like the idea like, "I'm gonna rename the Gulf of Mexico. And then I'm gonna put my face on Mount Rushmore." Like that's the kind of stuff you say when you're like five.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** I don't know how to feel about it. I mean, obviously I'm against it. I don't wanna—[laughs] Okay, this is the trap. Because then all of a sudden, we're having a pro and con conversation and that—like we're giving the other—we're giving the absurd suggestion air by having to be opposed to it, right?

**Taylor:** Yeah... But I mean, it's not just like some like yahoo walking down the street going, "We should rename the Gulf of Mexico." Like, okay, sure. It's the president—it's the guy that's going to be the president.

**Sydney:** That's rough. I mean, that's rough because—[titters]

**Taylor:** That's rough! [laughs] That's the understatement of the year. That's rough, buddy. Yeah, that's not great.

**Sydney:** That's rough of Mexico, is my new—

**Taylor:** [laughs] No, that's my new name for America. That's rough.

**Sydney:** That's rough. Yeah, but you got—see, you gotta be careful, because this is—okay, this—

**Taylor:** The United States of That's Rough, Buddy.

**Sydney:** That's, I mean... yes. But somebody, at some point, early—man, way back in the beginning of vaccines, everybody was like, "Oh my God, these save lives. This is incredible. We have a, you know, this medical breakthrough that's going to be incredible." And then there was one guy who was like, "I think vaccines are bad." And then everybody had to say like, "No, vaccines are good." And we had to create this whole argument for why they're good. And so now there's two sides to an issue that there aren't two sides to. Do you know what I'm saying? That's how it happens. Like, because some moron says this is bad, and so then I have to justify why it's good, when like I shouldn't have to justify it. No, it saves lives. Like, I don't need to explain to you why it's a good idea to save lives. But now I do.

**Taylor:** I don't know why—like, I mean, is—there should just be like a... like some sort of—I don't know. You need a button that you could push that just says you are not educated enough to have an opinion on this matter, so you don't get one, in the science world.

**Sydnee:** How does that not—well, but I mean the problem is like we've elected somebody to president who isn't educated enough to have an opinion on any of this stuff.

**Taylor:** Mm-hm...

**Sydnee:** But he is the president, and—he will be. And so then we have to do—

**Taylor:** Like he has bad opinions about everything.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Toilets, windmills, not a single—

**Sydnee:** Steak.

**Taylor:** Educated opinion—[chuckles] oh, the worst one, steak—well... yeah.

**Sydnee:** Ketchup.

**Taylor:** Doesn't understand how countries work.

**Sydnee:** No. Yeah, windmills, none of it. None of it. And now water, sharks.

**Taylor:** Yeah, yeah... all over the place on sharks, really.

**Sydnee:** Fire. He's not clear—I mean, as he's demonstrated, he's not clear on fire.

**Taylor:** [titters]

**Sydnee:** The elements, he's really yet to master the elements.

**Taylor:** Just put it out. Just put out how the world... physically operates. That's off the table.

**Sydnee:** He missed those early science classes.

**Teylor:** Isn't his whole thing like money? And he's not even good at money.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Teylor:** He's bad at money. Provenly bad at money.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Yes, his whole thing is... hate, I think. That was a bummer. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to take it in a bummer direction, but it's...

**Teylor:** Well, I mean—

**Sydnee:** It's a bummer! [titters]

**Teylor:** That's it. That's what we got. We got four years. Hopefully just four. That's where I'm gonna—I don't know. And it's like, you know, Syd, you have things that tether you to reality. You have like a job where you're helping people that really need you. You have small children that need you. You have things that make you go through the motions. As somebody that kind of lives on my own, and I make my own schedule and—it's a very bad time to not have tethers. Because like you get up, you look at the news and you go, hm, I don't think today is gonna... today. We're gonna just not today.

**Sydnee:** I understand. I think that is valid. And I do think it is important that you make space for that.

**Teylor:** Well, and I'm undermining that the things that tether you to reality are work and labor. I'm just saying that it's—

**Sydnee:** No, no, I get you. No, I get you. No, I totally understand what you're saying. I didn't take it that way. I think it's hard, because I do think that's part of the plan, is like this assault on all that you know to be good or true or right or even logical. If we take it on all at once, then we'll overwhelm you, and you will feel fatigued, and you will give up.

So I do think that's part of the plan. So I think it's important to like let yourself have those days where you just like, it's—I just have to kind of look



inward and remind myself that I am a unique human on Earth with value, and my life matters and my happiness matters. And then you have to have days where you go, and now I fight back. I think it's hard, because we have to have both in order to, you know, keep each other safe.

But it's okay if some days you can't think about it that way and you just think, today... I mean, I'll be honest, this week—my kids have been out of school all week because of the polar vortex. It has been single digit weather. It has been a struggle to get back and forth to work at all. And then, of course, like, you know, we got the kids here, so we gotta balance that. And on top of all that, now they send homework home on snow days.

**Taylor:** That is like... that's evil.

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Taylor:** Just like mail it to you?

**Sydnee:** Yeah, they email us assignments. And some of them are like virtual like, go on this website and do this math thing. And then others are like print out these worksheets. And then some are supposed to be like fun. They're like, go on this snow day scavenger hunt. And it's like, this isn't fun, it's homework. When did that happen?

**Taylor:** That doesn't feel—that's not fair. Because I mean, I know you all are very set up technology wise. But you can't tell me there aren't families that don't have things like printers or even like, who's just—not everybody's gonna necessarily have a family computer.

**Sydnee:** They do say—

**Taylor:** They could have smartphones, but...

**Sydnee:** They do say at the bottom—you are absolutely right. They do say at the bottom like you don't have to—any of the worksheets, you don't have to print out. You can just—like, they're math problems. So you can like number a page and write the answer with whatever notebook you have at home. So they do that.

And then at the bottom, they do have this little caveat that's like, "We totally understand that you're working—you're trying to figure this out. This is hard. And if you absolutely can't get this work done, just let us know and we'll work something else out." So they do have this little caveat at the bottom of the emails. But it just is a bummer compared to, when we were kids, I don't—I mean, we did not—well, there was no email. So...

**Taylor:** Oh...

**Sydnee:** [chuckles] I guess maybe they would have if there had been email.

**Taylor:** I don't know, I like... I mean, some winters, if it was really bad and we missed a lot of snow—or they do that like tack on where we'd have to like go like—

**Sydnee:** Extra days?

**Taylor:** A few extra days at the end of the year.

**Sydnee:** This is how they avoid that. They call them non-traditional instruction days, NTID.

**Taylor:** I mean, I was gonna say I guess that's good for the teachers, because that means they're getting paid on snow days, but they're salaried, so they should—I don't know how teachers—I'm not going to say anything is good about how teachers are paid, so never mind. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** No, I know, that's a fair... no—

**Taylor:** I was like, I'm sure there's a way that this is being done so someone makes less money. I'm sure.

**Sydnee:** I think that—

**Taylor:** That's what this is.

**Sydnee:** I think this is to avoid the extra days at the end of the year, Tey. I think that's why. Because if it's—because there's different colors. So if it's a code blue, everything's closed. Just like nothing. But if it's a code orange, that's a non-traditional instruction day, which means they're gonna send work home that we are responsible for. And I don't think we have to make those days up. I do think, though, that has different ramifications for like other staff members at the school. Like custodial staff and stuff might have to come in on certain—like when it's a different color, not—code blue means nobody comes. But... I don't know.

**Taylor:** Yeah, I've seen that, where it'll say like certain staff report.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. So there's different—but anyway, through all this, can I—let me just say that as I've been trying to keep it together with Justin, and we've been trying to get the kids through this and like make sure everybody's okay. And then we've had a lot of stuff going on, you know, in the community. Anyway, with all this, I definitely took some time for myself this week to sit and get lost in Fourth Wing. And I do not regret it, and I don't feel guilty about it.

**Taylor:** I don't know what Fourth Wing is.

**Sydnee:** It's a fantasy book about sexy people who ride dragons.

**Taylor:** Oh, okay! So we've moved on from the sexy fairies, now we're on sexy dragon riders.

**Sydnee:** Yes, these are humans who ride dragons. And there is magic, but they are humans.

**Taylor:** Cool.

**Sydnee:** And they are sexy. Yeah. So... So, I think we all have to make space for that.

**Taylor:** That's good for your brain. I just like... I had something I had to do at like 8AM today. So I got up, I did that, and then I came home and I was like, I'm gonna just... you know, I mean, there's so much devastation going

on right now in the country. I doom scrolled for a bit and I was like, I'm gonna go back to bed. That's what I'm gonna do. And just... and just see how long I stay here until something makes me get out of here. And then I had to go record a podcast, that was—[chuckles] I would have stayed in bed. It would have been a... that's it.

**Sydnee:** It's okay.

**Taylor:** I went to an appointment at 8:00. I was home by 8:30. [titters] That was it.

**Sydnee:** I think that the only tough part about that, Tey, is the momentum you can build with that sometimes. Sometimes once you've been in bed long enough, it's hard to get out. [titters] This is just true for me in the mornings.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** [titters] But I—but I don't think—I don't think there's anything wrong with deciding, I am giving myself this time to do nothing. I'm giving myself this time to just exist. That's okay. I think—I do think that it gets detrimental after a point. But I think like giving yourself that time is okay.

**Taylor:** No, I agree. And there's a balance too because I think, you know, it's also—like the guilt makes it worse, you know? Oh, I didn't do anything that day. And I think that part—like I've been doing a lot of unworking, as far as... as somebody that's worked, you know, like full-time in a minimum wage job for most of my adult life, like that, oh, you have to be a productive member of society in order to feel like you're allowed to exist. That sort of capitalist dogma that gets embedded in all of us. I'm trying to kind of let go of that and saying like, what harm did I do today?

**Sydnee:** That's... yeah. That—

**Taylor:** I did the one thing I had to do. I don't know, you know... I don't owe obscene productivity to anybody. And especially not the country that we're about to go—[chuckles]

**Sydnee:** And it's, I mean, I think on a—like on a larger scale, you gotta think about this is the one life you have. That we know of. [titters] I'm not ruling anything out. That we know of. This is it. And you, you know, I don't know—I said this to—I've said this to colleagues in medicine for a long time, because I think the profession of medicine is finally waking up to this realization.

That, first of all, nobody carves on your tombstone like, "She worked the hardest and the most extra shifts, and covered for everybody whenever was asked. And came in on weekends, no matter what." Nobody ever carves that on your tombstone. And even if they did... okay, so? Like, that's—so I don't—that is not—that can't be all. That can't be it. If that's what you're doing it for.

And I think a lot of us, especially I know myself as like a type A, like driven. Like I'm a doctor, I work really hard. My personality is that I work 80-hour weeks and I, you know, I never stop. And this is who I am. I don't need sleep, I don't need to pee, I don't need to eat. [titters] I don't need joy. I only need work! Like I have that in me. It was ground into me. And getting rid of that and opening myself up to something better is, I mean, it's a process. But it's worth it.

**Taylor:** No, absolutely. I mean, I... for so long in like my industry, I've watched as people would like work. And they're like artists or musicians. And they kind of treat the job—they treat the job as like their second concern, because it is, you know. Like worked with people that would call off when they get a show or, you know, they gotta go out of town for a gig, so it came up last minute, they're gonna call off. And I used to like, oh, how... how disrespectful of this job, that disrespects us all the time. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm.

**Taylor:** Like, you know. I don't know how many times I've heard like managers and owners utter the phrase like, "Everybody's replaceable. Everyone's replaceable." And it took me a long time to understand, yeah, so are you. So are you.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm. Yeah.

**Taylor:** It's a job. There's a million of them. It doesn't have to—like I'm not working in a restaurant right now. And usually that guilt of like not actively having a restaurant job—I know I have to go back to it sooner than later, but like... I ran into a friend at the gym the other day, and we used to work together. And he was like, "Where are you working now?" And I was kind of embarrassed to be like, "Nowhere." He's like, "Oh, that's great. Yeah, I only work when I have to. And then I save up some money and just enjoy life. And then I go back to work. And that's what I've been doing for 20 years." [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Tey, this was ground into us early on when we were told that we are not our effing khakis. [laughs]

**Taylor:** [chuckles] That's...

**Sydnee:** That's Fight Club.

**Taylor:** Huh?

**Sydnee:** That was Fight Club.

**Taylor:** Oh, I know, that's—we should have learned that lesson in that movie.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** We were just so distracted by Brad Pitt's cool hair.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles] Speaking of movies, we are talking about a movie. We should talk about our movie that we watched. Because it was fun!

**Taylor:** It was fun. We watched Y2K, which came out—it just came out, right? It came out like last month.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm. Yeah.

**Taylor:** It's an A24 movie? It is, right?

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It was written or directed, or both, by Kyle Mooney. Written, directed?

**Taylor:** He directed it, and also starred in it.

**Sydnee:** And he was... I forget. Yes, I could—it was funny, because like halfway through as we were watching Kyle Mooney in one of the scenes, Justin said, "I bet he had something to do with the making of this movie." Like it felt like him from SNL, if you see him on SNL. And then at the end it was like, "Directed by Kyle Mooney." I was like, yes! [chuckles] I mean that is a compliment. It has that vibe. I think he's very funny. He wrote it to—yeah, it has his vibe. Yeah, and I think he's a—I think he's a funny guy on SNL. I enjoy his stuff. And I—it came through in this movie. And can I tell you, Tey, I don't know if you realize this, the characters, the main characters in this movie are—like their characters are exactly my age.

**Taylor:** Oh, is that...

**Sydnee:** That is—

**Taylor:** I knew they were a little older than me, but I wasn't sure exactly...

**Sydnee:** Because they put like "Juniors rule, class of '01."

**Taylor:** Oh?

**Sydnee:** I was class of '01. So they are juniors in the year '99 to 2000, which is, I was a junior in the year '99 to 2000. They are exactly that—so, as I realized that early in the movie, I thought, well, then this must hit some cultural references that I am gonna understand. I felt so targeted. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Well, it makes sense, because I just looked up Kyle Mooney, he's your—he's your age exactly.

**Sydnee:** There we go. There we go. I felt so seen. And seen in a good way like, oh, ha-ha, yeah. And then sometimes it'll like, oh, no, don't tell anybody! Like, that's us. That's me. Those are the people I went to high school with.

**Taylor:** It walks a good line though, because that's what I thought—like some of the references, like you couldn't go so obscure that you're gonna not have your like 20-year-olds get jokes. But I think they still had some stuff in there that like I feel like you had to be—you had to be a teenager in those years to get why there's just some ska kids at the house party.  
[laughs]

**Sydnee:** And also that they're ska—so they have the house party break—okay, should we back up and talk about the plot? [chuckles]

**Taylor:** It's a very straightforward plot. It takes place on New Year's Eve, 1999. When there was that concern that computers—

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I mean, the concern was that we didn't program computers with like 2000, we just did like the last two digits.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** So when it rolls over, they're gonna go back to zero and all the computers will crash and—

**Sydnee:** Because they'll think it's the year 1900, which I don't know why that—

**Taylor:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Yes. [titters]



**Taylor:** Computers are dumb! But instead, in this movie, when the stroke of midnight happens, the computers develop sentience. The singularity occurs, and all the computers start attacking the humans. And also rounding up the humans to implant chips in their heads. And you follow a group of teenagers as they try to survive the night and save the world.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Yeah, they basically, if you're a Doctor Who fan, they're trying to turn all the humans into Cybermen by the end. Yes. And it's hilarious because not only like are all the computers doing this, they incorporate like all machines, like all electronics, into this as well. So you have these like... Transformer-esque looking kind of creatures walking around that are amalgams of different like household, you know, appliances and like children's toys. Like the first thing that shows up is like a big wheel. [chuckles] Like a scary big wheel.

**Taylor:** And a little murderous Tamagotchi eyeball thing.

**Sydnee:** Oh my gosh, the murderous Tamagotchi. I think it's really funny and well done. I think, first of all, the central conceit that we thought Y2K was going to be something like this isn't that far off. I mean, not that we envision these, you know, monsters made out of machines. But we did have such a loose understanding of computers and the internet and electronics at that point that we didn't really know what was going to happen.

**Taylor:** Honestly, I'm not like mad surprised by that though. Because, one, I mean, that's just like—have you ever met somebody that does computer programming? Like, I think—well, you met my old, my room—old roommate that did all that stuff. And like—

**Sydnee:** That did math?

**Taylor:** Yeah. Did math sometimes. [titters] Knowing some of these dudes, it's like, it totally makes sense that you would get decades into software and go, huh, it could all break when that happens. Yeah, it might. Hope it doesn't. Probably won't, but it could. Let's just see. That actually, that tracks with every person I know that works in that field. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Is that by design? Because then you get continued employment to fix it?

**Taylor:** No, I just think you do something and you go, "Huh... well, maybe. Let's see if it holds together."

**Sydnee:** Okay?

**Taylor:** Like I don't know why that personality seems to work in that world, but it does.

**Sydnee:** I mean, it's got to be a little bit of that like creative thing, right? Like, it's logic, but also, you're able to think like lateral thinking. Which sometimes take you places that don't work. But it's too late, you already built it. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Right, well—

**Sydnee:** It's too late, you already coded it!

**Taylor:** You know, you're always following the simplest solution. And if you're too nervous, you know, if you're constantly worried about, well, is the simplest solution the correct one? It's like, that's not, you know... just go with the simple one first. Oops, it didn't work. We have to make it slightly more complex so it doesn't explode. All right, sure. We'll do that next. [titters]

**Sydnee:** It really is, from the jump, if you are somebody of our generation, the movie tells you exactly like, this is for you and you're gonna like it. Because it opens with like an AOL sign in screen, with the sound that it made when you used to sign in to your dial up modem. With the pop ups of like...

**Taylor:** Anything about the history of that sound—but I was convinced that was an actual sound that something in the computer was making in order to connect. It was not. That's definitely just like a... a bit file that plays.

**Sydnee:** Just a file.

**Taylor:** What a horrible sound to just construct. To like, this is what it must sound like to connect to the net. [titters]

**Sydnee:** I don't... now, that would be a—I'm certain somebody has written this history. What is the history of deciding on that sound?

**Taylor:** I would love to know. Sorry.

**Sydnee:** I would—yeah, no, no, no, it is—it is interesting. Because it's a bad sound, but it also is a sound that I guess if I were like, what would it— [titters] what would it sound like if you were connecting through your phone lines to an invisible internet? A web that connects all computers on Earth. What would that sound be like when you hear it on your computer at home? I guess that's what—the sound I'd make.

**Taylor:** I mean, it's like the only—

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** The only part of the imagined future that I feel like delivered is that sound.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** That was the beginning of what I thought the entire future was supposed to be.

**Sydnee:** And they definitely, like they hit into some of that with like, there's a little bit of hacker stuff.

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Throughout the movie, that's referential. Where it's like, we have people fast typing. [chuckles] Fast typing. And like—

**Taylor:** Well, and like the hot girl is also the hacker. Like...

**Sydnee:** Yes, the hot girl is the hacker. She's like breaking down firewalls, like you do. She's got her hair in the classic style of that era. It's like that late '90s, early 2000s with all the little butterfly clips, and pulled back into like a little spiky kind of sprout in the back. Classic. And I enjoyed that. Like from the beginning I was like, oh, this is for me. There is a moment where they're trying to—[chuckles] they're trying to download a pornographic image. [titters] On the computer. And it takes—it used to take a really long time to download pictures.

**Taylor:** I was trying to remember this, because like I did not—I was not downloading porn, I was downloading like single JPEGs of like Sailor Moon characters. And I remember it being like, it was an all day event to like download a couple pictures.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Like that's what you would do at a sleepover. [chuckles] We're going to download pictures of the Sailor stars, and print them out and glue them in a notebook.

**Sydnee:** Yes, yes, and that's—so they—same. I didn't download porn, but like I guess this was what it would have been like if you download porn. I have to say, Justin's reaction was a lot stronger when they were both so excited when it finally—because it was like coming from the top of the image down. When it finally downloaded long enough, far enough down that you could see boobs, Justin cracked up.

**Taylor:** [titters]

**Sydnee:** So I feel like there was probably something relatable there that maybe I missed out on as an adolescent. [chuckles] But perhaps other people would be like, that was the moment!

[group chuckle]

**Sydnee:** I enjoyed that. I thought that the characters were all pretty like... likable and it was—again, they had like the group. So they went to a party, so—you were about to reference. Like they went to a New Year's Eve party.

And they had like all the groups of teenagers that existed at this point in American history. And you're right, they have a group of ska kids who are like swing dancing.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And I like that because I was like, oh, that was the theater kids.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** There they are.

**Taylor:** That's—yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. There we were. There was me. There was me. I was over there swing dancing. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Well, and it was like—I mean, I do think—that's always like a cliché of like, you know, teen movies. Where you've got the different groups, but they all end up at the same party. Like, I do feel like that kind of... especially with like the, I don't know, the popular crowd. Like you had popular people that existed in all groups, but also hung out together.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm. No, I think that was true. I think the... there's a lot of bad attempts at rapping in this movie.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That's a very—like that moment, again, in music history, you've got a lot of people who think like, "I'm cool and I listen to rap music, so I bet I could probably." [chuckles]

**Taylor:** I know rhyming words.

**Sydnee:** And so I thought that was—I thought that was very reflective. I do think—the only argument I had is—and, I mean, I guess we're gonna kind of spoil the movie.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Is that—

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Fair to say?

**Taylor:** Here's your spoiler warning. We're gonna spoil it right now.

**Sydnee:** So, the movie kind of starts off with two best friends. And Taylor, as I'm saying this, I realize I don't remember either character's name. I just watched it, whatever, two, three nights ago, and—[titters] Their names—I really enjoyed the movie. I don't remember anybody's name, so it's that kind of movie. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Oh, gosh...

**Sydnee:** I remember the one's AOL handle was like Roxy Girl. [chuckles] But you've got like your romantic lead main character. Like the kind of like... good guy, nerdy boy.

**Taylor:** Eli.

**Sydnee:** Eli.

**Taylor:** Best friend is Danny. I just pulled up—

**Sydnee:** Danny.

**Taylor:** A list of names.

**Sydnee:** Danny. There you go.

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** This is the only—this is the only complaint that I have with the movie is I feel like, while I get that like the—and I think it is a trope from

that era of movies. You've got your main boy there, Eli, who's kind of like, I don't know, he's dressed like Dawson. I mean, he is. Like, that's probably, honestly, an outfit that Dawson probably wore on Dawson's Creek. Like he's dressed like Dawson. He means well. He's nice. He's kind of quiet. And he's the love interest, eventually. And then he's got Danny, the best friend, who I think is way more fun and interesting as a character. And I'm kind of bummed, again, this is spoilers, that he dies so early in the film. Because I think he's fun!

**Taylor:** I was really surprised by that too. I would have thought—like I think having him sacrifice himself and, you know...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hm.

**Taylor:** Was a cool move for the character. But it would have been cool if it happened like in the last act of the movie.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** I don't know—but I don't know if it was just to like maybe establish the tone that, hey, none of this is serious. Because the deaths come fast. Like you get characters—like your main cast gets whittled down to three people.

**Sydnee:** Okay. Okay. So, there—

**Taylor:** I was like, ah, this movie's just doing whatever it wants! [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** There are two—there are two things in this movie that make it so, other than the soundtrack, the music to the movie is also like exactly of that moment. First, the inclusion of devil sticks. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Oh, right?

**Sydnee:** It was so important. It is so important.

**Taylor:** How did he even fit them in his JNCO jeans? Because you know you could.

**Sydnee:** You could.

**Taylor:** Those pockets were deep enough.

**Sydnee:** And his Baja, the—this is Kyle Moody's character. The inclusion of Kyle moody trying to do devil sticks is really essential to understanding this film, I think, thematically. The other thing is Fred Durst. I had no idea—so they go into the old movie—the old video store. Which isn't a Blockbuster, it's like a local video store. Which I love.

**Taylor:** Like a Cumming's Rent-A-Center.

**Sydnee:** Exactly, just like Cumming's Rent-A-Center. Which, in our neighborhood, we had a local video store, Cumming's Rent-A-Center. And it wasn't just renting—like it was a renter center, not just for videos.

**Taylor:** And a lot of—

**Sydnee:** You could rent—

**Taylor:** I saw chainsaws. [titters]

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** You could rent like heavy equipment. Like lawn equipment, chainsaws, like things like that. You could also rent equipment in addition to VHS tapes. [laughs]

**Taylor:** And if that's not enough, we got tanning beds upstairs. [titters]

**Sydnee:** Yes, they built an upstairs where they had tanning beds. So you could go there, pick out some vids for the weekend, rent yourself a weed whacker, hit a quick 15 in the... what was the one where you stand? They called it like the X something?

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.



**Sydnee:** There was—it had a special name, because you stand and you have to hold bars at the top of it so your body makes an X.

**Taylor:** 360 radiation.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, 360. Bad for you. You could do that and you could get one of those little stickers. Oh, man, this is of a time. They would sell, when you go, when you—don't tan, by the way, don't use tanning beds. There's my disclaimer. Don't. Yeah, don't do this. We didn't know as much back then. Or we did, but we... I don't—well, I'm not gonna say I didn't dabble when I was young. I know better, I would never now, I would never advise it to anyone, and I regret that I did it. But they used to sell these little stickers that were either like hearts or Playboy Bunnies that you could put on yourself when you were in the tanning bed, so that when we take it off, you got a cute little not tanned area.

**Taylor:** Ooh-la-la.

**Sydnee:** Shaped like something.

**Taylor:** Sun tattoo.

**Sydnee:** Anyway, man, there just aren't enough stores, I will say—like nix the tanning beds, obviously, that's bad. But like a store that sells—or that rents videos and heavy lawn equipment, that, I miss things like that.

**Taylor:** I mean, I'm just trying to think of like—talk about a good backdrop for a horror movie survival setup.

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Taylor:** You're stuck in the video store, but this video store has chainsaws.

**Sydnee:** Well, and that's like, there also was in town for a while, do you remember the dragon store?

**Taylor:** What was the dragon store?

**Sydnee:** At the dragon store, you could buy—I'm surprised you never visited, Tey. At the dragon store—

**Teylor:** This feels like there's a door in my memory that you are now jiggling the handle, and I don't know what's behind it. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It was like an... an Asian supermarket. And you could buy washers and dryers there.

**Teylor:** Oh? Oh, yes! I remember that.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, you could—

**Teylor:** It's at the big sign before the viaduct.

**Sydnee:** And they had like refrigerators, washers and dryers, like big pieces of like household appliances. Plus you could go there for like... I mean, at the time, there were a lot of like ingredients that, in a place like Huntington, West Virginia, it was really hard to get. Like Kroger did not have an international foods aisle at this time. So, it was very exciting to find the dragon store and be like, we can buy Pocky at the dragon store... and peruse dishwashers. [chuckles] I miss those kinds of stores.

**Teylor:** That's what big business is taking away from us, all the little mom and pop dishwasher Pocky stores.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Anyway, they go in the video store, and they're—like, and it's apocalyptic, right? Like the machines have taken over. You've just got a handful of teenagers who are somehow surviving. They go for a while to hang out with all the kids who are high... But they want to do something, so they leave the kids who are high. [chuckles] That's kind of that whole plot. Like, "You could just come live here with us in utopia where we're all high." And for like 20 minutes they're like, "This could be good." And they're like, "Maybe not." [chuckles]

**Teylor:** "Maybe we should try to do something. Like we're not giving up on the world after... four hours." [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Which, in all honesty, if I was like, ooh, this is a good refuge. The Apocalypse is happening and we're safe here. And then somebody pulled out devil sticks? I would probably say, "Maybe I'm gonna go fight. Maybe I'm gonna go try to save humanity." [chuckles]

**Taylor:** No, I—like their one stronghold is a bunch of dudes that love playing hacky sack. I'd be like, "Hm, interesting. I'll see what the robots are up to." [titters]

**Sydnee:** Yeah, "I'm gonna go check out the robots." But they figure out a plan to stop the robots. And then in the meantime at the old video store, they run into Fred Durst. And he kind of emerges from the shadows. And in that moment like both Justin and I are looking at each other, because we know it's gonna be somebody who is like that late '90s, early 2000s, like is gonna mean something. Like you know it's gonna be somebody. Fred Durst was not on my mind. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** But he was the perfect choice.

**Sydnee:** *Perfect.* Perfect.

**Taylor:** They just kind of offhand say like, "Wow, you look rough." It's like, it's Fred Durst now. Like, it is old Fred Durst. [chuckles] He clearly looks like—he looks good for his age, but he's old.

**Sydnee:** Yes. And he's still—and like the big moment is when he puts on like the iconic backwards red baseball cap.

**Taylor:** Which is covered in poop. [chuckles] This is after, oh my God, they get knocked down the hill in the—

**Sydnee:** In the porta potty.

**Taylor:** To... what is it, a Boys to Men song?

**Sydnee:** I think so. It's to one of those slow... slow dance songs from that era.

**Taylor:** It's such a good scene. Yeah, I mean, I didn't—I was not expecting a major plot point to just be Fred Durst is here.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Fred Durst is here, and he helps us defeat the—well, he's got to distract the robots while—

**Taylor:** With music. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** With music? He distracts the robots with music, while Roxy girl, the hacker, hacks into the system. And the final bit where like the two guys—gosh, this is a great referential to that era of movies too. Like the two guys, the two best friends in the beginning have like one condom that they found in a copy of *The Giver* at the library. And they've held on to it in hopes that one of them ever gets to use it. And this is the moment where they're trying to reach into the computer to like put the like virus in it, to kill the computer. And it's like shocking them. And so she puts her hand in the condom—[chuckles] It's so stupid! And I love it. It's great.

**Taylor:** That the computer just had this giant entry port like just ready to go, it was like, yeah, all right. This is—[titters]

**Sydnee:** It's, I mean, I think—

**Taylor:** It's not taking itself too seriously. [titters]

**Sydnee:** No, no. It knows exactly what it is. And I think like... I don't know, I think it's well done. I think it's funny. I think it's clever. It tells you this is like, this is silly without like constantly hitting those—you know what I mean? Like, it hits it enough so that you're laughing, but it's not like, get it? Get it? Get it? I mean, the parents are played by Alicia Silverstone, which is great. Again, referential to that area. And then—to the era. And then Tim Heidecker, which—from Tim and Eric.

**Taylor:** That's—okay.

**Sydnee:** Do you remember? Yeah.

**Taylor:** I thought that's who that was.

**Sydnee:** And it has a little bit of that. If you enjoyed the Tim and Eric show, that kind of like absurdist, surrealist kind of comedy, it's got a little bit of that.

**Taylor:** Especially the parts that deal with like the AI, when they interact with like the AI personality. Like it's great because like the... the AI world is rendered in all of those like bad graphics from that—

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** You know? Very Tim and Eric.

**Sydnee:** It is, it is. It definitely has a Tim and Eric feel to it. I was surprised, its rating on Rotten Tomatoes was pretty bad. And that kind of shocked me.

**Taylor:** I'm surprised, but then I don't know. I feel like horror comedies, like to me, that's the sweet spot of... I mean, I love... that's my favorite type of horror, is let me like laugh and be freaked out at the same time. But I feel like it's a hard sell, you know? Like... it's... if you're on for the ride, then you'll enjoy it. But if you're expecting something that's going to deliver like emotional stakes or like big scares, it's not going to do that.

**Sydnee:** No, no, it definitely doesn't do that. And it, I mean, I would... I think it's even hard, like I wouldn't want to let my kids watch it, of course, because I do think the big robots would scare small children.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** But generally speaking, it's barely a horror movie, you know? I mean, I don't think any—I don't think any adult would find it scary, per se. There's violence in it, like the robots kill people. So, there's that. And so if you don't want to watch that, fine. But like, it's not scary. I think it's—I think it's very clever, I think it's very funny. I don't know if it is because, like you said, Tey, maybe younger people weren't as—like they didn't think it was as funny because they didn't get all of the... Like it wasn't like for you and me and we're watching like, "Ah! Ah!" Like, you get every single reference. Maybe they didn't know who Fred Durst was?

**Taylor:** Maybe, because I think that's a huge—[chuckles] that's a huge part. You cannot diminish what an important part of the plot just Fred Durst as Fred Durst is.

**Sydnee:** And I think it's hard to—I will say that. That is a good point. If you don't know who Fred Durst is, he was the lead singer of Limp Bizkit. And if you don't know anything about Limp Bizkit, it's almost impossible for me to explain to you why like they were very popular at this time in history. But also, there was a lot about them, like around them, the kind of culture of like weird, breaking stuff, violence, that kind of sucked. And then you get into like Woodstock '99 crap, when you start—right? Like with Fred Durst and Limp Bizkit. And then... I don't know, like it's a weird thing. And so, if you don't get that whole cultural milieu around Fred Durst, maybe it doesn't hit when he walks out of the shadows, maybe? I don't know.

**Taylor:** I just, I feel like it's the perfect just turn your brain off and have fun. Because... I don't know. The outfits are perfect. The violence is, it's not... it's not graphic enough to be like—like, they're all practical effects. And they're good, but not great, which I actually think is the best. [titters]

**Sydnee:** Yes. Yeah.

**Taylor:** They all kind of feel a little silly. Like, you know, maybe that's why it was important to—like, if they knew they were going to take out the best friend, to do it early on. Because then there are no emotional stakes left, then it's just a roller coaster ride. The dude—

**Sydnee:** Which is true.

**Taylor:** Who dies with the CDs in the face, like—

**Sydnee:** [chuckles]

**Taylor:** It's epic that he spews out his last few white boy rap bars and passes. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Take CDs to the face. No, it really is. I mean, I—and I think that you're right. That's probably why they eliminated that character. And I think that maybe that character leaving so early makes sense. I think that it was just unfortunate that that actor also was very likable and fun to watch, and charismatic and like brought a lot of energy to it. That I think, yeah, that would be my only, if I had—I think it was great. I think it was so much fun. I would highly recommend it. I think that the rating is not right. I think that were I to change anything about it, I would keep that character alive longer, because he was a lot of fun. But that'd be it.

**Teylor:** Yeah. Well, he's just—I mean, he's been in a lot of good things recently. I just like that actor a lot.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, yeah. He was really good. He really, he had a lot of rizz, as the kids would say.

**Teylor:** Oh, no.

**Sydnee:** He was the rizzler.

**Teylor:** Oh, Syd, stop.

**Sydnee:** No? The Rizard of Oz?

**Teylor:** Your kids aren't here to tell you to stop, so I've gotta. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** You gotta stop me?

**Teylor:** Please, we can't come back from that.

**Sydnee:** Well, I do apologize for my rizz related humor. But thank you for suggesting it. I hadn't heard of it. And I don't know why not, because like it felt made not just for me, but for like people of my age. It felt like, here, here's a little present for you.

**Teylor:** It was, it was literally made for people exactly your age, by people exactly your age. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I loved it.

**Taylor:** I was so appreciative of like, of course, every teen movie in the '90s had someone—clearly very old person in the cast that, for some reason, was still there. And I did not realize it was like the writer, director, everything. I loved the conclusion of like, yeah, yeah, of course, that's correct. That's one actor that's obviously 40.

**Sydnee:** This must be what it felt like—Tey, you know all the things that our parents would tell us to watch when we were younger?

**Taylor:** Porky's and like, I don't know—

**Sydnee:** Meatballs and... and then like they were watching like Thirtysomething, and I was watching it. And I was like, "I don't understand why you guys like this." And it's because it was about them. It was for them and it was about them. And I understand now what that feels like, because this movie felt like it was for me.

**Taylor:** Well, hey, that's all right, some things can be for you, Syd.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But thank you for suggesting it. I super enjoyed it.

**Taylor:** I'm glad.

**Sydnee:** What was it on? What did we watch it on? I don't remember.

**Taylor:** I rented it on Prime. I'm sure there's got to be some platform that has it, but—

**Sydnee:** That's probably where we watched it too, now that you say that. I was gonna say, it was—it is worth—it is worth a watch. Tey, I have a movie I would like to ask you to watch.

**Taylor:** Okay?

**Sydnee:** You may have already watched. I want—oh, it's got a bad word. Can I say the title?



**Teylor:** I was thinking, because I know—yeah, I don't—hm... Are you gonna have to say—

**Sydnee:** Night bee.

**Teylor:** [chuckles] You're gonna have to refer to it in another episode.

**Sydnee:** Night bee.

**Teylor:** Ol' night be.

**Sydnee:** Night bee. You know, it rhymes with witch. You—get it?

**Teylor:** Night witch.

**Sydnee:** It's a—I would—I would like you—you've already watched it. I would like to talk to this—talk to you about this movie. Yeah, it's—I... I have not read the book, but I watched the movie. And I super enjoyed it. And again, movies that are relatable. So, we can talk about that next.

**Teylor:** We're just gonna get through this January with exclusively watching horror movies like—[chuckles] that's fine.

**Sydnee:** I like this. These kind of like sort of horror movies.

**Teylor:** It's true, yeah. Like horror adjacent.

**Sydnee:** Horror adjacent, this is good. This is—we're exploring the human psyche. But thank you, Tey. And thank you, listeners. And you should go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) and check out a lot of great podcasts there that you would enjoy. And thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

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

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydney McElroy.

**Taylor:** And I'm Teylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** I'm Still Buffering.

**Taylor:** I am too.

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

**Sydnee:** Just really, I was thinking like I knew the soundtrack to that. But that's probably just like Now That's What I Call Music 1999.

**Taylor:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:** You know?

**Taylor:** Still though. Oh, man, it's A24 and they put out such good merch. They should really drop a mix, like a CD. What would you play it on? Who knows?

**Sydnee:** It makes me want to go get a CD player. The kids are getting the digital cameras again. It's time to bring back a Discman.

**Taylor:** Honestly, I still have my binder of CDs. And actually, I bought a record player that has a CD player, so I can play CDs still.

**Sydnee:** All right. Give us that CD, A24. Come on.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

[break]

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[break]

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