

## Still Buffering 429: Battle of the Boy Bands

Published April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025

[Listen here on Maximum Fun](#)

[theme song 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 Teylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** Teylor, before we get started, I would like to celebrate how visible you are today.

**Taylor:** Oh... Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I can see you. You've become visible.

**Taylor:** Unfortunately. [laughs] I am very, very revealed today on this Trans Day of Visibility.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I mean, obviously in the good sense, yes, it is important we have Trans Day of Visibility. But I do like the implication that you have the power of invisibility.

**Taylor:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That you have— [laughs] ... some sort of superpower...

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** ... where the rest of the year—

**Taylor:** We— we all roll a very low stealth check on this particular day.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** You can see us, as we sneak about.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But happy Trans Day of Visibility to you, and to any— to all of our listeners.

**Taylor:** I— with the recognition that saying “happy” followed by anything related to trans right now is a little— seems a little hard. But uh... [laughs] you know, you’re here.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** You keep going. It’s, you know...

**Sydnee:** Well, and that matters. You’re here.

**Taylor:** It’s important, and it’s important that you’re here, yes.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, exactly. We’re happy that you’re here. [to Taylor] I’m happy that *you’re* here. Uh...

**Taylor:** Hey, thanks.

**Sydnee:** I also wanted to tell you that, after we talked two weeks ago about the Millennial burger joint...

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** ... I went to a Millennial burger joint.

**Taylor:** Oh. I thought you said to “the” Millennial burger joint. [laughs] Like, “I found the one!” [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I don’t know if it was *the* one, but it was *a* one.

**Taylor:** A one. Alright.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Are you gonna say its name, or is it... is this gonna be, uh... slanderous, so you [crosstalk]...

**Sydnee:** No, good— it was great.

**Taylor:** ... wanna protect the innocent.

**Sydnee:** I mean, I guess I— it was in Columbus. It was called Hangry City.

**Taylor:** Okay. Ah.

**Sydnee:** And it was *fantastic*. And I— I just felt like when we spent so much time, like, defending Millennial culture, I felt so right...

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Like, as I was reading the menu, I started realizing, like— I found this place, and I was like, "Ooh, let's go here! They have sliders, and craft beers." Which— like, [like a bell ringing] "ding, ding," should've known right away.

**Taylor:** Yup, there it is.

**Sydnee:** But you start reading, like, the names of the different sliders. And they're like... like, I got the Ron Swanson and the Topanga. [laughs softly]

**Taylor:** [laughs] That's— you *are* at the Millennial burger joint.

**Sydnee:** Yes. There was a Tribbiani - I mean, there *have* to be *Friends*-themed ones, right?

**Taylor:** Of course.

**Sydnee:** There was a Samantha Jones salad, you know? [chuckles]

**Taylor:** Oh, love that.

**Sydnee:** But, um, the food was fantastic. There were many craft beers that were delicious. They did flights - that's a Millennial burger joint thing, right? A flight?

**Taylor:** A flight?

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Has that gone away? Yeah, maybe so. We love a flight.

**Sydnee:** We love a flight. There are multiple IPAs on this flight. You know it; there have to be. Um...

**Taylor:** It's right up your alley.

**Sydnee:** There were all kinds of, like— there was a little ALF doll on a shelf...

**Taylor:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** ... there was, like, a Pac-Man painting on the wall.

But what— can I say this, too? The food was delicious. The drinks were delicious. The service was excellent. And everyone there... was as nice and welcoming and warm, and it was the most diverse crowd of people who were at this restaurant. Like, you could not look around the room and predict, like, "Is this for young people, or older people, or families, or biker gangs?" Like, *all* are welcome here.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Well, that sounds... I mean, accurate of— I don't know. *I* think that specifically— the only industry I can talk about is the food industry, 'cause that's what I came up in.

But I remember, like, when I was in my 20s, and I had all these people above me, that it always seemed to be they were trying to educate me on the fact, like, [gruff voice] "It has to be hard, and you've gotta pay your dues, and you've gotta be mean to the little guys. You gotta shout at the

people who get it wrong, and you gotta be... abusive, and, you know, a blowhard."

And having the thought, like, "But what if we didn't?" What if, when I have power, I don't use it to abuse people, but be nice? And what if environments that we worked in were just nice?

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm!

**Taylor:** What if everybody treated each other with respect, and we prioritized *positive* reinforcement, and we... you know, like, had a fun environment that yeah, it's work - we all have to work - but it doesn't have to be torture. And I think a lot of Millennials that went through that same experience, and got the full reigns of control, opened those places.

'Cause those places— I would say I work— I *work* in one, now. And it's like, we're the adults in the room, and everything runs fine. It's just, nobody's a big old jerkface to everybody.

**Sydnee:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** And everybody's, like, paid well. And if you need an off day, they're like, "Yeah, that happens. Be off." [laughs softly]

**Sydnee:** I mean, that's what I— it was... it was exactly what they try to poke fun of in those TikToks, and it was excellent. So... I think, like, you're really just telling on yourself, if you're making fun of these places. 'Cause they're, you know, they're delicious, and... warm.

I don't know. I think we've talked about this before. It's also making the kind of environment that you want... you always wanted to eat in. Which is like, I don't need it to feel, like, fancy. I want it to feel, like... unique. Different, you know— not like the exact same experience you could get anywhere else, but also that like everybody is... should be comfortable sitting in one of these chairs, and eating this food. And that is the vibe.

And... I don't know. I think there's a lot to be said for that. It was a true— it was an excellent—

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** But I just— I realize, like, I found the exact Millennial burger joint, and it was great!

**Taylor:** I love that. Here for the support of Millennial burger joints.

I don't know. I guess— what is the reaction to that, that Gen X is gonna— [correcting themselves] or Gen Z is gonna bring back, or create? Like, austere... [laughs] tiny plates, and...

**Sydnee:** Well—

**Taylor:** ... like, the silent service, where you're not allowed to talk to your fellow waiters, or the "Yes, chef," like, friends system on the line? I guess.

**Sydnee:** I guess. I guess those are the two options, right? Like, if you don't like that, I guess you could return to sort of that... That's like the 80s, right? Like... in order to be upscale...

**Taylor:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** ... it has to be uncomfortable, and intimidating, and everybody has to be kind of looking down their nose at everybody else? Like, you could do that, I guess. I don't know why. Or, I guess, the other thing would be like, just Applebee's.

**Taylor:** You know, what's funny about that...

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** ... just Applebee's, uh, I do not keep up with the trendy dining scene in New York. Uh, it just— I don't know... Some of these places, I've been to, and I'm just like... or I know the people that work there, and I'm like, "It's not... it's not good. Why is everyone going there?"

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** They've devoted enough of their budget to paying influencers to post TikToks. It's not...

**Sydnee:** Mm.

**Taylor:** It's not science; it's pretty straightforward.

But anyway, someone made a po— I think it was an article about it, where they were like, "Everything that's popular right now in New York is just an overpriced Applebee's." It is all just, like, bad spinach artichoke dip, and giant mozzarella sticks, but you're paying like \$30 dollars for mozzarella sticks. Like, it's all just... it's not...

**Sydnee:** That's interesting.

**Taylor:** ... *great* food...

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Taylor:** ... but it's incredibly hard to get reservations, and everything is *incredibly* expensive, and the service is incredibly rushed, and it's incredibly crowded. And it's the place you have to be, but none of it's particularly good, or particularly... It's not food that likes you. I think that's the best way to describe it, you know? Like, you know when...

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Taylor:** ... the people that make the food are excited to make the food, and give you the food.

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Taylor:** And it's just, like, soulless food. The drinks are always the same, too. I keep seeing these, like, sour cream and onion martinis. It's like, I don't... I like a weird drink. I don't like those words together in a sentence.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** And I certainly don't like when the price tag is \$25 dollars, or whatever.

**Sydnee:** Well... it also— I think that's silly, too, because here's what I'm gonna say: I mean... a well-run Applebee's is great. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, I love— no, that's a thing. Like, if you wanna... I mean, look, it's New York City; we got the world's biggest Applebee's. And years and years ago, my roommates and I went kind of on a— kind of, like, as a "Oh, we're gonna go to the world's largest Applebee's," on like a roomie date.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Just to be funny. And then we were like, "No, wait. This *rocks*." [laughs] Like, "This is great."

**Sydnee:** Well—

**Taylor:** "It is cheap, things are huge..." [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** Yes! You can eat a lot of food for a very reasonable price; you can feed your whole family. The chicken wonton tacos are... I mean...

**Taylor:** [giggles] Of course. Of course they have chicken wonton tacos!

**Sydnee:** And they're delicious! They're *delicious*. And when they— when you get them to go, they're thoughtful enough that they put the slaw on the side, so that it doesn't get soggy and transit. 'Cause otherwise, the wontons will kind of, like, melt.

So you've got the wontons with the chicken, and then separately, you've got this little container of the slaw, so that you can just, like, "Bloop, bloop, bloop," on at home, on your own. And then, it doesn't get soggy.

But anyway, the point is... [chuckles] Applebee's is great. And I mean, not— probably not every Applebee's all over the *planet*. I mean, you still gotta put the work in.



**Taylor:** [amused] "You gotta put the work in." [laughs] Gotta find the good one. You gotta... gotta search out those gems.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Well, you gotta see where people are still, like, putting their heart into Applebee's.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** But like, an Applebee's is good— there's nothing wrong with, like, one of those family, like... fast casual chain restaurants, if like... You know, there's nothing wrong with them, inher— I'll eat at a Chili's. [chuckles]

**Taylor:** No! No, I agree. Well, I think it— I mean, this goes back to the earnesty that we talked about. I think people getting what they paid for should be the bedrock of your establishment.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** And if people are getting, like, high-grade - I don't know - wagyu beef, and expensive truffles, and all this— sure, it's gonna come with a price point. You know, if you're selling me a... that front line of that bottle of wine is \$200 dollars, I'm gonna pay a lot per glass. Fine. I get where the cost comes from.

And, you know, when I go to an Applebee's, it's very affordable. Is it the best, highest quality everything? No. But I'm also not paying through the nose.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** I don't like when stuff is crap, priced like... insanely high.

**Sydnee:** Right.

**Taylor:** That's what it's— it's like, "We're just seeing what we can get away with." 'Cause what you're paying for is the vibes. And I'm sorry; I will never pay for vibes.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** [laughs] I will never pay for vibes! I can't eat vibes.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** Vibes aren't delicious. Vibes... don't come with a history, and a culture, and an understanding. Vibes are just... you know, "How insecure am I?" versus "How much do I think that sitting at this overpriced table that is making me uncomfortable will add to my social currency?"

**Sydnee:** Which undermines, like— that's the whole— I don't know, the eating-out experience. Like, you're communing with your neighbors in a shared... you know, dining establishment. Which is...

**Taylor:** Well...

**Sydnee:** It's a lovely thing.

**Taylor:** I mean, that's what I always said, that eating out is about the third thing. There's food, and there's drink, and those things have to be good, and they have to be fairly priced, and they have to be... thoughtful.

But the third thing is, being taken care of...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** ... and communing. And that's— we can do the food, we can do the drink at home. We can do those cheaper at home. But the third thing, we can't replicate. And you have to care about the third thing. You have to make space for it.

And I don't know, it's... a bit of an aside, but I just— it hasn't arrived yet, but I ordered this book called *Grand Forks* by Marilyn Hagerty. Which is— she's a small-town, like, food reviewer, and her book got published because she wrote a review of an Olive Garden, and the internet got ahold of it, and just ripped it apart. Because it's just, you know, this older woman who goes

to what she has locally available. And she wrote this loving review of an Olive Garden.

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Taylor:** And so it came across— this hullabaloo reached Anthony Bourdain's ears, and he was very offended by all these people, these people on the internet that were ripping apart this...

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Taylor:** ... older woman's review of an Olive Garden. So he got a book of her reviews published.

**Sydnee:** That's pretty cool.

**Taylor:** And this is that book. And it's just all these— you know, a lot of them *are*, like, Applebee's, and Olive Gardens, and Chili's. And I think that's great, you know? You go, you have a good time, you feel taken care of, and that's your experience. And it is just as valid as, you know, a stick-up-their-butt food reviewer who is judging the fold of a napkin.

**Sydnee:** I, uh— that reminds me of— there is a Facebook group, locally, that is just for West Virginia area restaurant reviews.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And— yeah. And what's great about it is that, certainly, plenty— most people on there, I would say, are taking time to review local restaurants all over the state. Like, whatever their local places are.

But there are *definitely* plenty of people on there who are like, "Let me tell you about Wendy's." Like, just like...

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** ... or, like, "The Taco Bell over on 5th. Here's what I—" I mean, there are people on there reviewing fast food restaurants, and chain restaurants, and I *love* them.

I read all of it; I love the time and attention to detail people take when they're like, "Now, listen. I had a very excellent Junior Bacon Cheeseburger the other day at this Wendy's, and I just wanna [amused tone] commend them on how—" [laughs] Like...

I don't know! I really like them. But yeah, that reminds me of that. It's just a ton of those sorts of— some, like, local places that just opened, and you're really trying to get in there, and others where you're just like, "I don't know. Tudor's Biscuit World is great." [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, I mean, that's— it's hard to argue that, but [laughs] that's a pretty understood fact.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Well, you know, it's... especially with the rise of foodie culture, we've all been so indoctrinated into the idea that only some people's opinion matters...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** ... only some people's experiences matter. And I mean, no. You only get the one life. You've got the one palate. You've got the one budget. You should... embrace your enjoyment.

**Sydnee:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** You're allowed to enjoy things as you see fit. You don't have to wait for somebody else to tell you... what's good, and what's bad.

**Sydnee:** That's exactly right.

**Taylor:** But I don't know... It's fine. Just keep— keep going to the corner store, and lying to yourself. I don't...

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughing softly] I don't mind.

**Sydnee:** Which is—

**Taylor:** That's one of those restaurants here that...

**Sydnee:** Oh, is it?

**Taylor:** ... I couldn't be *paid* to go to.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Well, I don't— I mean... you don't have to be snooty about food. You just eat it.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** Uh... But things that you are allowed to enjoy that maybe people would throw shade at you for... we're talking about boy bands.

**Taylor:** Yeah! We lived in the... we lived through the great boy band wars, I would say. Although I guess they go on now; we just are completely out of touch.

**Sydnee:** Right. I was gonna say, I'm certain that this is still a thing, but...

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** ... I don't— my children are of an age where they could conceivably listen to boy bands, but they don't.

**Taylor:** Hmm.

**Sydnee:** So... I don't know.

**Taylor:** They're— they like the girls.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Yes. They are much more... like, right now there's a lot of Chappell Roan in our house. Um, Lady Gaga...

Well, and I don't know, there's a lot of Doechii being played. [laughs] Which is a lot...

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah? Okay.

**Sydnee:** It's a little inappropriate for their age. But I don't— but I enjoy it, but I don't know what to do. 'Cause I'm like, should... [unsure, considering] eh, you're ten and seven... that's not... Um, there's a lot.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I can't— I don't even know how to unpack any— uh... [pauses] I don't know.

But no, they're not so much into the boy bands. But I feel like— obviously, there were other boy bands before New Kids on the Block, but... to my thinking, it was sort of the beginning of the great boy band craze.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** I mean, I don't know. 'Cause I don't really— you could go older than that, and say like The Jackson 5, but that's not really the same thing, right?

**Taylor:** Well, I was looking into that. Like, "What is the history of the term 'boy band'?" And that is, like, a term that originated in the 80s alongside of bands like New Kids on the Block and, like, New Edition.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** But the idea of a bunch of young, attractive men singing together, you can trace that all the way back to, like, the barbershop quartet.

**Sydnee:** Right.

**Taylor:** But yeah, I don't know— were The Beach Boys a boy band? There were a bunch of boys in a band, but...

**Sydnee:** [laughing softly]

**Taylor:** ... they weren't a boy band. I think "boy band" is a specific, like, product of... attractive young men that— they are dancing; they are not playing their own instruments.

**Sydnee:** Yes. I think that's a key to it, right? They're dancing, and singing, and they're not... like, nobody's playing an instrument.

Are there *any*... no. I can't think of any where they play instruments.

**Taylor:** Hmm... No.

**Sydnee:** Not that they couldn't. I believe... one of the New Kids on the Block could, indeed, play an instrument.

**Taylor:** One of 'em. [laughs] We don't know which one.

**Sydnee:** Didn't one of them... play, like, keyboard or something?

**Taylor:** This was more your era than mine. I, uh... I would steal your New Kids on the Block dolls to play with my Barbies, but I did not so much consume the...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** ... the music.

**Sydnee:** I don't know. I mean, I primarily remember them dancing and singing. And I was obsessed with Joe McIntyre, who did not... play an in— I mean, all these guys might play instruments; I don't know. [laughs]

**Taylor:** The *design* of a boy band was to not have instruments.

**Sydnee:** Right. 'Cause they're dancing.

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Uh, but that was— that was my first love, were the New Kids on the Block. And they...

I mean, one— God, how old was Joe McIntyre when that band started? They were— like, he was young. They weren't *all* young...

**Taylor:** I mean, looking back— and obviously, you know, kids from these bands are coming out. I remember them all looking so old, which makes sense, but especially with New Kids on the Block. They look *remarkably* young when they started.

**Sydnee:** Yes. So he was born in '72, so we are talking about, like... And when did New Kids on the Block get big? [pauses, thinking] ... Let's see. I'm gonna figure this out.

How old... was Joe McIntyre when I was, like, obsessed with him?

Mm... I mean, he would've been, like... Okay, so they started in the year 1984, when he would've been... 12.

**Taylor:** *Wow.*

**Sydnee:** Now, I don't— I don't know if he was in it from the very beginning...? He was in— from 1985, so he was 13.

**Taylor:** That is... *so* young. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It felt, um— I think that was part of the appeal, right? Is that you have... guys that don't— I mean, these are not— I mean, some of them were grown men, but some of them clearly were not, and so if you were like, a teenager, it's like, "Oh, my gosh! I can crush on these people; this is a harmless crush," right? 'Cause this is a fellow 13-year-old, or whatever.

So I certainly think that was part of it. Uh, also, like, they sang a lot of songs about, you know, being in love...



**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** ... and girls, and all that. And then the merchandising. Like, that was the big thing for me with New Kids on the Block. I never went to a concert, 'cause I was too little to go to concerts. I had their tapes... [chuckles] their cassettes.

**Taylor:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And then I had the nightgown, I had the lunchbox. I had the dolls...

**Taylor:** [laughs softly]

**Sydnee:** ... I had the comic books. I mean, the posters. It goes on and on. If there was merch, I had— like, a tote bag... I had all the merch.

**Taylor:** You know, I still have your New Kids on the Block lunchbox. The orange one?

**Sydnee:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** It's— you can't see it, but it is over my shoulder, holding some cosplay supplies. But uh, I don't know how I ended up with it. But... [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** That's incredible.

**Taylor:** ... maybe it could get some money now. I won't sell it, 'cause I think it's a funny thing to have, but...

**Sydnee:** I bet you it could. 'Cause we are talking, that thing is probably from... 1986, or 1987.

**Taylor:** Might be older than me.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I mean, that is an *old* lunchbox.

**Taylor:** If you're in the market for one. I don't know...

**Sydnee:** Is it in good shape?

**Taylor:** [crosstalk] Uh, I— yeah! Oh, yeah, absolutely. I think it might have evidence that a child drew on it, at some point. That child could've been me.

**Sydnee:** It could've been. I doubt I would've drawn on it, myself - I mean, it's possible, but... But like the sticker on the front is still... still intact?

[sounds of Taylor fumbling with the lunchbox]

**Sydnee:** It's in *excellent* shape!

**Taylor:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. See, there's a little bit of crayon...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** That's definitely crayon from the 80s. It is very old. That is— that could be wiped off. But uh, yeah! It's...

**Sydnee:** So this is, like—

**Taylor:** It's still got the sticker on the bottom! It still has the barcode.

**Sydnee:** Oh, my gosh. This is, like, a bright orange, plastic... you know, the old-school, big, boxy, plastic lunchboxes with a sticker on the front. And are all the New Kids on there? We got all the New Kids?

**Taylor:** Yeah. Yeah, they're all on there. Yeah. The sticker is slightly peeling up, but it's all there; it's not damaged.

**Sydnee:** Ah... And they're looking at you. "Please don't go, girl." They're looking *right* at you.

**Taylor:** It's very, very cool.

**Sydnee:** Oh, man, it is very cool.

**Taylor:** If only it had the little— like, I'm sure it came with a thermos, but uh...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** ... that is long-gone.

**Sydnee:** I remember the nightgown being one of the most comfortable things I wore.

**Taylor:** I remember you wearing that nightgown.

**Sydnee:** It was, like, white, with a picture— probably that same picture you'd have on a lunchbox...

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** ... of the whole band, but it was kind of like the ringer tee thing, with the neck and the sleeves. Like a baseball tee, you know what I'm talking about?

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And it was like the three-quarters sleeves, and it was *so soft*, man.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I miss that nightgown. [chuckles]

But I think that was the— and I don't know if that was the thing that broke through. It wasn't just the music; it wasn't just the cute boys. It was that also, for people like... like me, who were really— I mean, too young to be going to concerts, or... I mean, really engaging with this in any real way, you sold me dolls. You know?

Is that the revolutionary thing here? Is that what made the boy bands something wholly other?

**Taylor:** Well, the ability to market them... I mean, you're basically— they were a designed product. Which, you know, I don't know how exactly the New Kids on the Block were formed, but I know with a lot of these in the 90s— like, the Backstreet Boys, they were like, put together...

**Sydnee:** Right.

**Taylor:** ... by their vocal coach. He— the same coach for a couple of them kind of put them together. Not something that formed organically, like when you think of, you know, like a garage band.

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Taylor:** Like a bunch of... high school buddies that get together, and start trying to bang out music. Like, that's not the origin story to a lot of these. It was music executives, saying, "Let's make this type of product. And let's cast the roles for this type of product."

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** And it's a lot more controlled, and it is with that merchandising in mind.

**Sydnee:** And you definitely had archetypes. Like, if you look at New Kids sort of as the beginning - which I think was for most of us - Jordan and Jonathan were brothers, and they were like the musical ones. The ones who, like— I don't know why my perception was that they wrote all the songs; I don't know if that's true.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** But, like, they were the ones who I assumed knew— maybe that's why I think, like— didn't one of them play keyboards? I feel like they knew... [laughs] I feel like those are the ones that knew music, right?

And then you had Donnie, who was like the bad boy.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Taylor:** Always have to have a bad boy.

**Sydnee:** You have to have a bad boy. And then you had Danny, who's like the sporty one. He, like, lifted weights, and probably played some sports. Like, I don't know why we know that about him, but that's what... And then you have the baby. [pauses] Joe.

And I feel like that— I mean, that wasn't just for the boy bands. I mean, I feel like—

**Taylor:** [laughs] You just described the Spice Girls.

**Sydnee:** That's what I was gonna say! Like, "I just drew a direct line to the Spice Girls." [laughs]

But like, even individual pop stars would sort of grow to find, like, "What's my persona gonna be?" Like, "Am I going to be... the—"

I don't know. "Am I Mandy Moore, and I'm the sweet, innocent little pop star? Or am I Avril Lavigne, and I'm like, counterculture bad girl? Or am I like Christina Aguilera, like sexy songstress?" Like, you know... Even in the individual pop stars that grew out of that era, they each had sort of their persona.

Which, you know, is interesting - speaking of archetypes, I was just sort of reading through some of the New Kids on the Block. They actually were looking for— like, they needed the Joey. Joe was the last one to join the group. And they were very much looking for, like, a Michael Jackson for the group. Like, the youngest...

**Taylor:** Ah!

**Sydnee:** Yeah. That was very intentional.

**Taylor:** So were they— so was the design for the— 'Cause you mentioned The Jackson 5. I guess that sort of happened more organically, but uh...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** ... was the design based on that? [laughs] It's like, "Hey, this worked; let's manufacture it."

**Sydnee:** I don't know that necessarily, other than like, once they got— okay. So here's the order. So they got Donnie first, because of his rapping skills.

**Taylor:** Ah, yes.

**Sydnee:** Yes. [chuckles] And Maurice Starr put all this together, who had done New Edition.

So like, Donnie Wahlberg, and then his brother joined for a little bit, Mark, but then left. And then Donnie recruited some school friends. So he got Jordan and Danny at that point, and then another guy named Jamie, who then left the band. And Jordan was like, "Well, I'll bring my brother, Jonathan, along."

So then they had Jordan, Jonathan, Danny, and Donnie, but they still felt like they needed one more. And the "one more" that they needed was to fill that role of, like, the youngest baby-faced... higher-voiced sweet, you know, Michael Jackson type of the Jackson 5 era. You know.

So I don't know if they necessarily— they had the rapper, and they knew they needed the young... the baby one, but I don't know if they knew all the other archetypes there in the beginning. I feel like they had to find their places. You know?

**Taylor:** Right. 'Cause I was trying to think, like, it's obvious— well, I guess, in the Backstreet Boys, you kind of have a similar vibe. 'Cause you had the baby; that was... Nick Carter.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** And you had the bad boy; that was AJ. Kevin was the sensitive one.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Right? [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** [amused] "Sensitive one."

**Taylor:** Yeah, he was— or it was Howie! I don't know, they were both— they were both, like, sweet boys. But then I'm like, "Well, AJ also rapped. He's a bad boy rapper." Man, I don't know. Like, Brian was the good ol' boy.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Um...

**Sydnee:** I guess that's what Danny was, originally - the good ol' boy. Except then, it was the sports boy, is— became the good ol' boy.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And I didn't know NSYNC, as well. I mean, other than Justin Timberlake, of course.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Well, that's— I wonder if anybody has made, like, a comparison chart of who had the same— played the same roles.

But yeah, I was not— even though I was absolutely the age range to be all about NSYNC, I mean... it was very serious stuff. 'Cause I would've been, like, middle school to early high school. Really, middle school, when these bands were really big. And you were choosing, like, your political alignment...

**Sydnee:** Oh, yeah.

**Taylor:** ... if— between, uh, NSYNC and Backstreet Boys. And I remember my friends getting in fights, like, “We are *Backstreet Boy* people.”

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** “*Why* are you listening to NSYNC?” Like, it was like a... a big secret, if someone was listening to NSYNC, and, you know...

I don’t know. For some reason, 98 Degrees was like Switzerland. Like, this was neutral territory. Like, “That’s fine... It’s weird if you’re all about it, but, you know...”

**Sydnee:** It was. It was, like— yes. You were not in trouble for— you weren’t starting a *war* by saying, “I like 98 Degrees.” But it was a very weird— it’s like, “What do you want on your pizza?” And somebody is like, “I want ice cream for dessert.”

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And you’re like, “Okay, but...”

**Taylor:** “That’s... okay.”

**Sydnee:** “But we’re talking about pizza. Like, what are you talking about?”  
[chuckles]

Um... No, I remember that. And for some reason, at the time, my perception was that Backstreet Boys was, like, *the band*.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** They were the *big ones*, and NSYNC was just this knockoff.

In retrospect, I don’t feel that way, like... especially if you look at some of, like, the vocal talent, and stuff that NSYNC brought to the party. I don’t necessarily think that’s a fair thing. But back then, that was the perception.

And probably because you were a Backstreet Boys fan.



**Taylor:** Well... I think the Backstreet Boys, they— I'm not— I mean, I'm sure that they both formed at very similar time periods, but Backstreet Boys got *bigger* first.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** That probably plays into that.

[amused] I was looking up what sort of personality types are aligned with them, and I was correct that, like, AJ was the bad boy... But the question of Howie and Kevin: Howie was the *fun-loving* one. That's how they described him.

**Sydnee:** [amused] "The fun-loving one."

**Taylor:** The fun-loving one. So...

**Sydnee:** It's funny. I'm looking at slightly different, but... This one has the "interesting" one, is where they put AJ... and Chris from NSYNC. The interesting one. I think they mean, like, they're kinda weird.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** There's the goofball.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Which would've been Joey from NSYNC, or Brian from Backstreet Boys. The "meet the parents" one... [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughing quietly]

**Sydnee:** Nick Lachey.

**Taylor:** Yeah, okay.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Obviously, the baby-faced... The bad boy. I don't know if this is— the "Rico Suave"? ... That's who they have Howie as.

**Taylor:** Okay... That feels like it could be tinged with some sort of...

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Something.

**Taylor:** I don't know, [chuckling] assumptions related to the... the race.

**Sydnee:** I don't think that's a good way of...

**Taylor:** No...

**Sydnee:** Are you trying to say, like, the one that's like... sexy, or seductive? Or, like, smooth?

**Taylor:** [clicks tongue] It's odd... I mean, I guess it's— specifically with Howie, he was one of the older ones in the group. He was 19 when they started. But, you know, I was thinking they were all older when they started. Like, at least somewhat of a normal age range.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Nick was 13, as well.

**Sydnee:** They— well...

**Taylor:** AJ was 15. AJ was 15, and he was the bad boy! I don't know if I love that. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** It's really weird. It's a weird— 'Cause I'm trying to figure out, like, why do you need... Because you're pulling in somebody younger, so maybe you're looking for the vocal difference...? Are you looking for, like... pre-voice changing? But then, that's gonna... that's not gonna stick, so I don't know what you're— [laughs]

Like, what are we looking for here? Why do we need to have such a young child in these groups? [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, I mean— I guess this when you're trying to market towards children, right?

**Sydnee:** Well, yeah. You're—

**Taylor:** It's the same thing that works with, like, a superhero team. Or, you know, a fantasy series.

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Taylor:** You want all of the different colors... Like, you know, the blue one, and the pink one, and the yellow one, and the green one. Like, we want... like, either there's a bunch of different ones to collect, and they all have their unique identity, *and* you can see yourself in one particular one.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** That's just... how we sell groups of things.

**Sydnee:** And I really wonder if that's not— if part of it wasn't that... I mean, there are a lot of people my age who, like, fondly remember being obsessed with New Kids on the Block. And if you really break that down, we were obsessed with New Kids on the Block when we were *little*.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Like, people my age. I mean, granted, I have the generation just slightly older than me who also liked New Kids on the Block who would've been mid- to late-teens, could've gone to concerts certainly, and all that kind of thing. Could drive.

But there are quite a big chunk of us who would've been a lot closer to Joey's age than anybody else.

**Taylor:** Well, yeah. Well, I mean, the fact that some of the Backstreet Boys were - you know, I think Kevin was 21? When I was listening to their music

being, yeah, 13, 14, 15... fine. Me at 21 wouldn't have been caught dead listening to the Backstreet Boys.

**Sydnee:** Mm-mm.

**Taylor:** Just never in a million years. That is absolutely music being made for people a decade younger than the musicians.

**Sydnee:** Which I think is probably why, like, when you think about longevity, I don't— I mean, obviously some of them went on to have solo careers, and they've done revival tours, and fun things. I think that New Kids did like a cruise, at some point.

**Taylor:** [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** So, like, you know... [laughs] they've come back. But I think they're still... kind of just talking to us. Like, the same audience; you know what I mean? I don't...

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** It's like... you capture the hearts of this one little segment, and it's really hard, 'cause as that audience ages, they're going to kind of turn on you, and go, like, "Oh, no, that's not cool anymore. I've—" you know, like you go to that... you get to 16, and you're like, "[scoffs] I would never." Whatever.

And then you kind of come back around, and you're like, "Aw, it was great. I love that stuff, I miss it." You're nostalgic, but I bet it's hard to grow and keep that audience fresh.

**Taylor:** Well, I think you have to make that choice in your artistic direction. Or, rather, what we're talking about, the companies behind these bands make that choice.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** And it makes sense. Like, we've learned from experience now that if you can get into somebody's sort of DNA when they're young, when you can become that thing that you love— 'cause, you know, as you get older, you just love things less passionately. Let's be real; it's just true.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Like, I will never love anything as much as I loved *Sailor Moon* when I was 10 years old. That was— to this day, if something is *Sailor Moon*-adjacent, I'm probably gonna buy it, or wanna go see it, or whatever.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** 'Cause it's just part of what made me, and I love it dearly. So if you can make a product that connects to kids at that age range, you have a life-long product, there.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Like, that is— there is always gonna— you might lose them for a little while, but yeah, they're gonna come right back to you when they're older, and they have money to spend. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

No, and I definitely think, like... I imagine that any of those bands can go on tour, and you'd have a bunch of adults... [laughs] showing up...

**Taylor:** They still do! I think the—

**Sydnee:** ... at those concerts.

**Taylor:** The Backstreet Boys are currently touring, or they're gearing up for a tour. They did one, like, last year, or the year before.

**Sydnee:** Oh... 'Cause they did a performance at... something.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** What did they perform at?

**Taylor:** Some sort of a workshop.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Anyway, as like a way of showing, like, "We're back out there." Yeah.

**Taylor:** Which is, you know, there's been a lot of that kind of wraparound just in any music from our time period. I've seen, like, revivals become very popular, you know?

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Uh, reunion tours. But, um, I think that that is... part of the design for the targeting— it sounds creepy to say "targeting" a "young" demographic, but that is the goal, I think.

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, I really think part of what their fate was, unfortunately, was just we had that shift where... I think we kind of returned to the bands, again. Like, music got super plastic, and poppy. And I don't mean that in a mean way; I know that sounds dismissive, but you know what I mean.

**Taylor:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** I'm thinking of the whole look of it. Everything was, like, shiny, and bright colors, and super pop for, like, I don't even know.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It feels so short-lived. It feels like it was this tiny moment in time, in the beginning of the 2000s.

**Taylor:** But it really was, because you have the... like, 90s stayed sort of grungy and plaid...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** ... up until, really, the mid-'90s. And then by the mid... like, 2005 up, we were kind of moving past that. And then that tiny, little microgeneration where everything was inflatable, and silver, and shiny, and it's like we were, "Oh, it's about to be the 2000s. The future is here, so we have to start dressing like the future, and I think that means everything is silver spandex."

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** "I think that's what that means. That's what we were told." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Right. And like, we're—

**Taylor:** We're like, "Oh, that's not it."

**Sydnee:** We're putting glitter on ourselves every day, and wearing blue mascara, for some reason.

**Taylor:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Like, everything was really colorful, and... the idea that something— I don't think... The concept of something being too manufactured, or too processed, or too packaged, was not there.

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** Like, that's *part* of it. It's the future; we're the Jetsons, now. It's supposed to be this way. [laughs] It's fine.

And then, I feel like then you go into the 2000s, and all of a sudden, we're like... emo is there, and sort of the pop-punk thing is there. And all of a sudden, people are playing instruments again, and things aren't so shiny, and then we're returning to something where we're like, "We don't want it to sound manufactured! Make it sound more raw!"

And, like, it all just went away.

**Taylor:** Well, with that same group that would've been the people that loved the 90s boy bands, became the early-2000s kind of... the *Girls*, that we were talking about last week. You know, that era of hipster, which was all about pared-down garage rock. Like...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** You know, "I want to hear the reverb, and the mess, and the fuzz."

**Sydnee:** Yes!

**Taylor:** Which is a logical reaction to everything being so processed.

**Sydnee:** I bet you could follow, like, vinyl sales... as, like, a marker of when that happened.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You know what I mean? With all this— and I was one of them, so I'm not gonna pretend. All of a sudden, it was like, "I just really like the sound of vinyl. It's, like, scratchy, and real, and you can feel it being recorded..."

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like, I was one of those people, so I'm not gonna... pretend. But yeah, in all that... for just a moment, when everything was plastic, everything just sort of went away, and I don't really think...

I mean, even now, when you can— you can watch a performance, or hear a song, and I logically know that this is incredibly, like, produced. Right? Like, this is very put-together. Every piece of this is put together. This isn't just, like, somebody in a studio with a guitar, going for it.

**Taylor:** Right.



**Sydnee:** Like, this is a whole... you know, this has been composed very specifically. I still don't feel like we've returned to that early-2000s... thing, whatever that— you know what I mean?

**Taylor:** Well, there's a... there's a concept in— and we've talked about it a lot when we talked about art history. But I think it goes for any art form. I mean, I think it can also be applied to just society, as a whole.

But we always have thesis, which is like an idea that gets presented, and then antithesis, is usually the response to it.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** So a bunch of people go, "Ah, screw that! I'm gonna do the exact opposite."

And then from that, we get synthesis, which becomes a new thesis. And synthesis is, some elements of both of the thesis and the antithesis go forward into the next generation, and become the new thesis. And then you react to that. And then you synthesize that.

And I think that's sort of what we're talking about. Because you can trace this back to "Where did punk rock in the 70s come from?" that sort of grew into, like, post-punk and grunge. That was a response to, like, the super-produced, super-shiny, operatic rock...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** ... like, hair metal, and overproduced rock music that came before that. So you always have this sort of, like, "Oh, we don't like that; let's do something that's directly opposite to that." And then the next generation looks at both as influences, and kind of does something...?

'Cause I think we do see that with, like— like, I don't know... a lot of the bands that we've talked— well, not bands. *Artists* that we've talked about, like current popular artist Olivia Rodrigo, or Chappell Roan, or, you know...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. Sabrina Carpenter.

**Taylor:** ... Sabrina Carpenter. They have elements of... Some of it feels like it's pulled from more of an edgy— you know, what would've been the alt scene that we grew up with. And then some of it comes from the very produced, like, diva...

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm!

**Taylor:** ... you know, the pop divas. And there's a synthesis there.

**Sydnee:** You know who's a great— I mean, I was just watching— yesterday, the girls and I were watching Lady Gaga's performance on *Saturday Night Live* from a couple weeks ago.

**Taylor:** Mm!

**Sydnee:** And she did "Abracadabra," and...

**Taylor:** Ohh, I love it.

**Sydnee:** I mean, this is not just raw, playing the music, right? This is a very specific— like, the costuming, the choreography, the set... everything. I mean, this is all... like, talk about a diva moment. This is very specific, you know what I mean?

But there also is this— obviously, there's a counterculture in the music. I mean, she's kind of— she's not dressed like the Devil, but there's definitely some...

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You know what I mean? Like, there's a little bit of that. So this isn't like— this isn't to make everybody comfortable. And also, the music - because it's Lady Gaga - is always unique, and different, and there's a rawness to that. There's something about it that feels a little untested, yet. Like, not everybody is gonna know if they're gonna like this right away or not, which is a risk that you can take, and it's not just pop music.

I don't know— but that is all there. But at the same time, nobody's gonna say, like, "She just wandered on stage, and did her thing." No, no, no. This was planned. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Right. Well, and I feel like she's one of those artists that almost operates outside of the system. Or, rather, she is putting up her *own*— like, she is responding to her own art that she's made previously, you know? Like, sometimes that falls into favor; sometimes, it falls out of favor. She's just doing her own thing. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Like— so she has longevity, because you're not... you know, the whims of whatever society's into at the moment don't affect you...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** ... but right now, she's hit the pulse.

**Sydnee:** Which is— yeah. And I mean, I think that's the risk. Now, a really talented artist - I think she's a good example. I don't feel like she has a lot of, like, swing-and-a-miss. It's... is it gonna be— like you said, is it gonna hit the pulse, or is it gonna be like, "Oh, this is good"?

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** And I think she— this is one of those times where she just struck— like, yup, that's just right where... She's predicting the next thing.

That's the harder thing, right? You can join the zeitgeist, but to set the next... whatever - signpost - that's tougher.

**Taylor:** Well, and sometimes, even some of the stuff that quote, unquote... you know, supposedly flopped years ago... now, people are pulling back up, like, "Wait, this was amazing."

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** "It's just that *now*, it fits." Like *Artpop*, famously one of her less successful albums. And now, everyone's, like, obsessed with it.

Like, well, yeah - it was good then, too. It just... fits more comfortably into the zeitgeist, now.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** But like you said, she's not concerned with that, necessarily, 'cause she's just on her own trajectory. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. Which, uh... yeah, I don't know. It's fun to see stuff come back around, though - certainly, with like the boy bands, and... And to appreciate, like, that all of it can be... I mean, having beautiful vocals, and harmonies, and cool dance moves, and stuff like that - like, that's important, too.

We kind of belittle that part of music, sometimes. Like, "Well, but you're not writing the songs, and you're not playing the instruments." All that other stuff is part of the art and the performance, and the... you know, I really—there were times where - especially NSYNC - some of their harmonies were just... *gorgeous*. And that's hard to achieve. That's something to be celebrated.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

Well, nowadays, the torch carriers for that - *I* would say - and I'm a little out of my depth, because I'm not *up* on the K-pop boy bands, but I know that the younger generations very much are.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Like, I'm not sure if we have quite the presence here in America of, like... I don't think I could name a popular boy band, right now.

**Sydnee:** ... I don't know if there is— I mean... not in America. I mean, in the UK...

**Taylor:** And it's like, One Direction, but that's a little...

**Sydnee:** ... there's One Direction. Yeah.

**Taylor:** That's... passed, though.

**Sydnee:** That's passed. Yeah.

**Taylor:** That happened.

**Sydnee:** Um... but I don't— I mean, is there anything like that... state-side, right now?

**Taylor:** Well, I mean, I guess it's just that those bands have reached— like, they are popular in America; they just didn't originate here.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But like, yeah, I think K-pop is where a lot of that exists now, for both the boy bands and the girl bands. ... I know we don't ever use the term "girl bands," but you know what I mean.

**Taylor:** Yeah. Girl groups.

**Sydnee:** Like, the same— "girl groups," same concept.

**Taylor:** Boy bands, girl groups. Yeah. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But, like, definitely, that's where a lot of that music is alive and well. I really don't... I can't think of a lot of that happening, in the US. I feel like it's so many more solo artists...

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** ... right now. So much more of that.

**Taylor:** Along with, like— I mean, in Korea and in Japan, they have sort of similar things. Like, it is... everything that they've kind of figured out, with what worked and what sold, it's been perfected into, like... a complete industry, in that you kind of fill the role you're assigned, as far as what

archetype you get assigned. And some of these groups, it's like, you rotate people in and out, and they're massive. You've got, like, 20 people...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** ... in a group. 40 people in a group. And you can— there's playing cards that you can collect to go along with it.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles]

**Taylor:** They have their own cafes that you can go to. Just a massive, massive operation. Massive merchandising thing.

**Sydnee:** I remember learning some about it sort of peripherally, because one of the idols was on, uh, *Terrace House* at one point.

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** And her talking about what that's like, and also the way that she had to present herself on the show... you know what I mean? Because she was this role. It was very interesting.

**Taylor:** Well, the bad part— I mean, the fact that it's so produced, it's almost like theater, right?

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Like, you have your certain characters that you like, and you follow their careers, is what presented to you, and you buy their merchandise. And, like, that's... that's fine. [chuckles]

**Sydnee:** I think the honesty about it makes it oka— you know what I—

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, it doesn't matter if it's "okay" or not, in my book. I'm not making a moral judgment, but I think the honesty is what allows it to continue. I think before, when it was sort of— and maybe that was the

backlash against some of these boy bands from the beginning. Once everybody realized how produced it was, I think there *was* some, like... "Oh, well, now I feel manipulated."

You know? And I think if we're just being honest the whole time, like, "Yeah, we're making this stuff, and we're making these archetypes, and we're making these products, because don't you enjoy it? We enjoy doing it; don't you enjoy—" yeah, I do.

I mean, there's an honesty there that— I don't know.

**Taylor:** That kind of loops back around to our Millennial burger conversation. Because, again...

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** ... you want to get what you paid for. You want to know what you're getting, and you want to decide if you want it, or not.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** And there's nothing wrong with that, you know.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** It can be highly processed; it can be rough, and raw. I just wanna know that what I see is what I get.

**Sydnee:** Exactly. Yeah.

Well, Tey, I enjoyed digging back through boy bands, and seeing my lunchbox again.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That was— that was— [crosstalk]

**Taylor:** Did you want it back? I really don't know how I ended up with it; I literally think Mom was sending me something, and she needed, like, a container for it, and she just shipped it in that lunchbox. And I was just like, "Cool, alright!"

**Sydnee:** I mean, I don't mind. I certainly don't think it's something my children would want passed onto them, or anything, you know? [laughs]

**Taylor:** For some reason, they did. I don't have the connection that you had to it. I just thought it was a funny object...

**Sydnee:** It is.

**Taylor:** ... to have in my house. But...

**Sydnee:** I would hold onto it; you never know if that thing's gonna be worth anything.

**Taylor:** Are you sure you don't wanna go to your job with your [laughs] kid's lunchbox, at your big age? Might be fun.

**Sydnee:** I don't— [laughs] I probably—

**Taylor:** A little whoopsie.

**Sydnee:** I know. I bring my lunch to work every day.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Um... What we doing next, Tey?

**Taylor:** Um... Oh! [laughs] A second— we'd talked about it; I'd forgotten.

**Sydnee:** [chuckles]

**Taylor:** No, I thought we could talk about *The White Lotus*, because I finally started watching it. And by the time we will record the next episode, I



*believe* the most recent season will have wrapped. So we can talk about all of it.

**Sydnee:** Perfect. I would love to. I have... I have kept up with it, all three seasons, and I would *love* to talk about it.

**Taylor:** Alright.

**Sydnee:** Excellent. Well, good. We'll do that for next week. And in the meantime, we can... break out your cassettes...

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** ... and listen to your— whether you were an NKOTB, or a Backstreet Boy fan, or an NSYNC, or One Direction, or 98 Degrees, or... who else are we forgetting? I guess New Edition, although I wasn't— that was before I got into it. Whatever. You enjoy that. With no shame - embrace it.

And thank you, listeners. Thank you, to everybody who became a member during the MaxFunDrive, who upgraded, who boosted, who shared the show, who listened, who participated; thank you, thank you, thank you, again.

Um, thank you, Maximum Fun. You should go there, and listen to all the great podcasts that you would enjoy. You can email us at [stillbuffering@maximumfun.org](mailto:stillbuffering@maximumfun.org). And thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

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

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

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

**Sydnee:** I'm still buffering...

**Taylor:** ... and I am, too.

[theme song plays, talking continues quietly]

**Sydnee:** This would be... [crosstalk, unclear under music]

[theme song ends]

[acoustic guitar sting]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.