

Still Buffering 444: Cry-Baby (1990)

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[theme music plays]

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

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I gotta be honest. For a second there, I didn't know what I was saying. Didn't know what was about—

Taylor: Oh?

Sydnee: Yeah, didn't know what was about to come out there. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Just, who knows? Whatever comes out, that's what's coming out. Well, I mean, it's not—like, you could always stop and redo it. Versus in a—not a high stakes situation, you know.

Sydnee: That's true. It's not live. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Pause recording, start over. That's fine.

Sydnee: [laughs] I've had people ask me that before. "Do you do it live?"

I'm like, "Well, what do you mean? Like, we record it live. Like, we don't... you know... it's not scripted."

Taylor: No, we—I say a—a say a little sentence, and then I email it to Sydnee, and then Sydnee listens to it and then emails back a response.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And it takes a while, but we get there.

Sydnee: Takes us months to record an episode.

Taylor: [laughs] It's the old-fashioned way.

Sydnee: Tey, I feel like something we need to talk about... and when I say "Everybody's talking about it," what I mean is, on TikTok. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: I don't think we've discussed the antipasto salad.

Taylor: [laughs] Oh, I'm so glad you're aware of this. Because, uh, I... I don't know how I ended up with a group of friends that aren't nearly as chronically online as I am, but I have not been able to discuss the antipasto salad with anybody.

Sydnee: [laughs] I, uh—I feel like it is—it's just my algorithm, because it knows that I'm engaging with it. But I feel like everyone, *everyone* is talking about the antipasto salad. Even Justin was aware of it. So...

Taylor: And even... even if, like, the video that I get fed isn't about the antipasto salad, there will be somebody in the comments. Like, there was a video of some, like, weird people dancing, you know? And somebody underneath said, "I bet these people would've been nice to the antipasto lady." Ah. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] It, uh... there—there are other... okay. What I like about it is it feels like the internet is united on this one.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: There are so many things—like, there's a conversation being had on TikTok about a lady who was trying to pick out a dress to wear to a work retreat, or something. And then people made fun of her for the dress. And that's not the kind of thing, like... I don't wanna engage in. You know? Like, when it gets mean, or there's controversy, like, I might pay attention to it a little. But it always starts to feel a little icky, right? Like, are we bullying

people? Are we giving people a hard time? Is somebody's life gonna be dramatically changed because of this?

This is different. Because a lady showed up to a—a gathering of people who know each other. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Yeah. Not a party.

Sydnee: Not a party.

Taylor: Distinctly not a party.

Sydnee: A lady showed up to not a party with a beautiful, homemade antipasto salad. And they were rude to her. And this just feels like an easy... who was right, who was wrong, kind of conversation.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah, it really—it really is bringing... many cultures together, too. I like all the people from different backgrounds that are like, "Well, my Polish grandma would never allow that." And then someone else is like, "Well, you know, like, my—" I don't know. "My Japanese grandma would never allow that." Like, it's—[laughs]

Sydnee: I've seen all those. My Italian, my southern, yes. All these... [laughs quietly] And I—

Taylor: This offends our culture. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah! It does! Well, I mean... like, Appalachian. I saw one that was like, what if you showed up at an Irish family's house with an antipasto salad and they didn't know who you were? And that was the one that felt most similar to, like—they were like, "Is that one of our cousins? I don't know. Oh, you brought food? Well, come on in!" [laughs] Like, "Oh, you got food?"

Taylor: Well, and you know, you could—there could've been the suspicion of, like, "Oh, we're only getting this one person's side, and maybe there was more at work. Maybe other things happened."

But luckily, the mean lady that was mean came online and was mean.

Sydnee: Yeah!

Taylor: And it was like, "Oh, nope! This is pretty cut and dry." [laughs]

Sydnee: And there were—I mean, there were a lot of other characters in this drama who took to TikTok to comment on it. You know, people involved, or were present. Some to defend, because I mean, like, I do think that these—the homeowners—now, their lives have been dramatically changed for the worse, it sounds like.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Um... I don't—I don't know that anybody—did anybody, like, lose a job or anything?

Taylor: I think the main lady, Stasia, the main mean girl, might have lost a job? Although that could have just been somebody, like, claiming that. Uh, 'cause I think the reason behind it is she posted something about the antipasto lady being schizophrenic.

Sydnee: Oh.

Taylor: And I guess she works in medicine, and that's an ethical no-no. 'Cause it wasn't true. Like, that's not her patient. But, she claimed that she had seen her file and that she's schizophrenic.

Sydnee: Ooh! She claimed she saw her file?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Ohh, yeah. That's a...

Taylor: I don't... that's—

Sydnee: That's a—

Taylor: That would get you...

Sydnee: Yeah, that's a...

Taylor: ... done?

Sydnee: That's a big no. Well, on several levels. So, like, I don't know, but let's—so I'm not saying, like, she did that or not. I have no clue. But in a situation, if you have access to people's medical records, first of all, I can't go look in your medical record just 'cause. I have to have an established relationship with you as a patient, which I'm assuming that she didn't. So, that's already a giant no-no.

If I say, like, "[goofy voice] Hey, I went and looked in your chart." [laughs quietly] "For fun." And then secondly, to share that publicly. Even if I did have a right to look in your chart, even if I was engaging in care, obviously I can't talk about that publicly. That's HIPAA, that's also the Hippocratic Oath. Like...

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: You don't talk publicly about private medical problems. But even if you just said—I mean, it's not like a legal problem, I would say, for me as a doctor to just casually say, like, "Hey, I'm a doctor, and that lady? I think she's schizophrenic." Or "She's schizophrenic. I can diagnose her."

Maybe it's not a legal problem? I don't know. I'm not a lawyer. Maybe? But it's certainly an ethical issue. To, like, weaponize your medical training that way and say, like, "Hey. I— you know, this must be true, because I'm a doctor and I say so."

Taylor: Well, I don't know what—'cause I couldn't quite figure out what she—I don't know medical terms. She's not a nurse. She's, like—it's like a three letter acronym, like a C-something.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Taylor: C... [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Like a CRNA?

Taylor: No. 'Cause there are a lot of people being like, "Oh, that's not even a nurse," seemed to be the response to... whatever. Just—not to insult any position. 'Cause I don't know it! I don't know. So I don't even—but that's not... that is alleged. That is all, you know, hearsay.

Sydnee: Sure. Well, that's like—well, but I do think something—so for anybody who's not aware of the drama, this really—it—[laughs quietly] it just boils down to some people were having a get-together, and a woman who was new to the neighborhood got an invite from, like, a secondary person. So, like, not the homeowners. Someone else who was invited to the party also invited this lady who was new to the neighborhood.

So she showed up. She had a homemade antipasto salad. It was beautiful. There's pictures of it. You can go look at the pictures. It was gorgeous. She grew her own tomatoes. She made her own mozzarella cheese. That's crazy.

And she brought this to the party. And the homeowners were essentially super rude to her, and were like, "Who are you, and what are you doing in my house?"

And she left in tears, because she was new to the area, and trying to make friends. And so she went to TikTok and was like, "I can't believe this just happened. Like, my heart is broken."

And then everything went downhill from there. Somebody called the police on her? Like, a state police officer showed up at her house?

Taylor: Yeah. And, like, the—the—the mean couple had, I guess, flaunted their relationship with a—a... sheriff?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: I don't—he had two first names as his—as his real name. I don't—it was something Edds. I don't know. It was a very... sounded like the name of

someone that would be involved in this story. [through laughter] That's all I can say.

Sydnee: There are lots of—if you want, like, every detail, there are lots of TikToks breaking down this story. They—

Taylor: There's so much. There's a mother-in-law. Uh, there is...

Sydnee: There's a friend.

Taylor: I really—I like the people that just live there that have—their accounts have blown up because they just know these people. They're like, "Yeah, I can confirm. That lady's mean." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, thank you. Thank you for confirming that.

Sydnee: 'Cause it sounds—what state is it in? I don't remember.

Taylor: I don't—is it Virginia? I think it might be Virginia.

Sydnee: Maybe it's Virginia. It sounds like they live in kind of a smaller community, though, where people probably do know each other.

Taylor: Yeah. That's what they're—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] I mean—

Taylor: Go ahead.

Sydnee: I feel like if something like this happens in Huntington, I would know.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, that's a—it's apparently turned the town upside-down. Because now it's... like, the Sheriff Department had to come out and make a statement basically saying, like, "We're not... we're not up in this." [laughs]

Sydnee: "We have nothing to do with this. We don't care."

Taylor: It's not a crime to—to be rude to somebody with an antipasto salad, but it's also not a crime to post about it on TikTok. [laughs] No crimes were had.

Sydnee: [laughs] You can do things that make you a jerk, but are not crimes.

Taylor: Yeah, it's not a crime to—to—to be mean. It's—it should be, but it's not.

Sydnee: I just—it was—the whole thing was weird to me. Because one, she did bring food. And so, like—and homemade food. She didn't, like... she didn't stop at Walmart and grab some, you know, some of those cupcakes off the table out front. Not that that's a problem either, by the way. If you took the time—

Taylor: [simultaneously] Those are delicious, what are you talking about?

Sydnee: Well, I'm just saying, like, some people get judgy about that. I don't care. I don't care if you made or bought or whatever. If you show up at my house—if you show up at my house with a bag of ice, thank you, 'cause you contributed, you know? Or just, you know, or if you brought yourself, that's cool, too.

But she made homemade food she brought to their house!

Taylor: I bet that was the best thing on that table. And also, this, like... she—they knew her kid was coming. And as somebody new to the neighborhood, like, would you—if you did not know a couple, would you just take your young children over there, drop 'em off, and peace?

Sydnee: No!

Taylor: Right? Like, that's... that's not—it's not just like she was just some random lady who showed up and—it's like, they knew her kids were gonna be there. Her kids were going to play with their kids, I guess.

Sydnee: And there are a couple—like, yes. So, there was a connection. She was invited. Not necessarily by the homeowners, but she was invited. Um, and I have always said, I... I am sad that I am not the sort of person who naturally, like, if I move to a new neighborhood or if there's new people moving into my neighborhood, I wish I was just the kind of person who instinctually thought, "I'm gonna, like, bake something and take it over there, welcome them, make them feel at home."

So if a neighbor showed up new to my neighborhood and, like, took the initiative to come to my house and do that for me, thank you! 'Cause I probably should've done that for you. I probably should've shown up at your house with some sort of food. But I didn't. And then you came to my house, and now I can meet you, and welcome you, and maybe give you something that I have, and then we can become friends.

And I always think, like, wouldn't that be nice? I should do that. That's the kind of community I want. I want communities where we know our neighbors, where we welcome people, where everyone feels known, and seen, and welcome.

And, like, this lady took the initiative to do it! That's a great thing!

Taylor: I don't—I mean... I feel like, [laughs quietly] from some of the side characters that have spoken up that know these people, it's just, like, a—like, I always wonder, like, what happens to those really mean kids you go to high school with? Like, what—where—do they stay mean? Is there ever a point where they learn, like, "Hey. Being really unnecessarily mean isn't a good thing in this world."

And I guess it's just like, no, sometimes they just stay mean. [laughs] They just stay mean.

'Cause, like, I don't know! Like, have you ever had any party ever? There's always people that just show up and you're nice to.

Sydnee: Yeah!

Taylor: Like, that's normal. That's... I don't know.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: I mean, you know, not, like—like, proper raising. Like when we would have, like, punk shows. Like, there would be a bunch of people that would just, like, show up empty-handed, and you're like, "Whatever." Like, that's... that's fine. Like, that's...

Sydnee: Well, I mean—and I think—I think, too... first of all, you're right. It shouldn't have to do with, like, a cultural or a proper raising thing. It's just—it should just be normal. Like, I don't know, someone showed up. I don't know them. Well, I'll meet them.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: They're obviously not here to scam me. They brought an antipasto salad. But, like, I—I also—I think about [laughs quietly] our family gatherings as kids.

Taylor: Oh yeah. There was always—

Sydnee: There were always people there we didn't know. There was always, like, a new character. Like a—a guest cameo.

Taylor: And we would—we would—like, it was so consistent that we would joke about it. Like, who's gonna be the surprise? Who's gonna be the bonus, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah. And we would—inevitably it would be a family gathering—which, like, I'm talking not—not a get-together of people who know each other. I'm saying, like, Thanksgiving.

Taylor: Everybody here is a blood relation.

Sydnee: Yeah. And, I mean, like, I remember one year we—'cause we play football on Thanksgiving—we were playing football, and it was at the park. It was when we moved our football celebration to the park. And we—I—there

was someone playing football with us. And I was thinking like, "I wonder who brought that guy. I don't know that guy. I wonder... whose friend that is, or whose—" I don't know, like, sometimes you find somebody's related to you that you didn't know. I don't know, whatever.

You never know. And nobody—and then when the football game was over, he ran away, 'cause he just joined the football game. So, I don't know. But we played football with him, and we were all nice to him, and I assumed he was somebody's friend.

Taylor: I mean, there was—that was one of the excuses they used, is that they were worried that maybe she was trying to steal something, or something. Like, oh—which is a wild—it's a wild, uh, play to run, right? Like, "Okay. I'm gonna show up at their house with an antipasto salad. Have to have the antipasto salad."

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "Have my kid there. I'll—I'll—I'll lull them to a sense of safety with the antipasto salad, and then I'll rob them."

Like, that is—how do you think that's gonna work? [laughs]

Sydnee: I always bring—when I go on a heist, I bring my child and an antipasto salad.

Taylor: Yeah, the child's a distraction, and those not distracted by the child will be distracted by the salad. I mean, it's a pretty concrete plan! But, you know, there are some gaps.

Sydnee: What sort of Ocean's 11 style situation do these people think...

Taylor: [laughs] There's a tiny contortionist hidden inside the antipasto salad who's going to rob you while you're not there.

Uh, I—as somebody that lives alone in New York City, in Brooklyn, if somebody came to my door that I did not know and they had food, and said, "Hey, can I hang?"

I would be like, "You know what? Yeah. Sure. Yeah, why not?" [laughs] Like, it's...

Sydnee: Yeah! She brought food! [laughs quietly]

Taylor: That just... I don't know what that—that just—that—that—that's it. That's all I need to know.

Sydnee: I mean, that's really it. Like, she brought food. I don't know. I mean... [sighs] yeah, I guess—I guess, like, the only—the only situations—I was trying to think, like, is there—would there be details that would change my mind about this?

I feel like if I was having a get-together of people I know—people who know each other, excuse me—and someone showed up at the door, antipasto salad or not. And they were, like, wearing a MAGA hat.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Then I might be like, "Now, wait a second. Who are you?" Like, I might have, like, some defensiveness. Like, "Wait. What's happening here? Why—what—"

But, like, I mean, outside of that...

Taylor: Yeah. [crosstalk]

Sydnee: You know?

Taylor: I think this is just one of those instances where, like, it's just a kind of cut and dried, that's what happened. Now, I think it is—it is funny that in the initial video, the lady did not—did not reveal who was rude to her. I think she said, like, one name of, like, the husband.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But it was a very generic name. So these people did not have to out themselves. They chose to come on the internet and not really defend themselves. I mean, they tried to, but it wasn't a very good defense. The defense was just like, "We're not mean people."

It's like, well, I mean, the evidence suggests otherwise.

Sydnee: Yeah! [laughs quietly] We know one thing about you, and it was mean.

Taylor: Yeah. That's it! Uh, but, you know, on the plus side, I think a lot of people have discovered the initial lady. The antipasto lady, who has, like, a—I keep calling her that but, like, she's got, like, a cool, like—a whole internet presence where she does her gardening, and she cooks things, and she does a lot of, like, homesteading stuff. She seems chill. So...

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. So, I mean, that's—that's good. That's probably been a benefit to her, and I think she, I hope, feels validated that she was not wrong to show up at this house with her antipasto salad. She did nothing wrong. I don't—the sad thing is, like, when you're the internet's main character like that, like this couple was, um, you—I would doubt they've learned a lesson.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: I would doubt that they have, like—and, I mean, I could be wrong. Like, maybe I shouldn't be cynical. Maybe they have. But, in a perfect world, you would take that opportunity to dig deep into your soul, search yourself, search your, you know... [laughs quietly] your impulses, your instinctual responses to other humans, and maybe second-guess, and maybe move through the world with more kindness and openness in the future. But I somehow doubt that's happened.

Taylor: Yeah. I mean, if nothing else, they might just, like, have the fear of ending up on TikTok again put in them.

Sydnee: There's that.

Taylor: Which, like, look. I don't—[laughs quietly] I do not like that we kind of live in a surveillance state. What's the—what's the theory? The panopticon? What is it? Where everybody polices each other?

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Like, that's... that's not good. On a basic understanding, that's bad. But this is one instance where it kind of does... it has a good end. 'Cause yeah, that's what—anybody can put you on the internet, so you better behave. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Well, I mean, it's tough. Because, like, it's the double-edged sword of it is not—freedom of speech does not guarantee you that you have freedom from consequences. If you say things and do things that people see and that make you a jerk, then people will call you a jerk. And that's just... that's what it is.

Um, but it's hard—I mean, they're adults! I think for me where it all breaks down is for, like, young people. Because I did and said so many stupid things when I was young. I mean, not that I'm completely grown up. I don't know. We all do and say stupid things throughout our entire lives right? We're humans.

But especially as a kid, like, until you're sort of cemented into what you are, until you've gelled fully, who knows what you're gonna do? And so I do bemoan the fact that the internet can destroy your life when you're just a, you know, dumb teenager or whatever.

Um, but these were adults. These were adults, and they should know better.

Taylor: That is true. I agree with that. I—there is that element of the internet that really enjoys, like, a pile-on. I don't love that. But, uh, I don't know. I guess if it's—if it's—it's a nice situation where it's somebody that you're like, "Well, I'm not saying you deserved all of that, but, uh... but it's not like it's happening to the *best* people." [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: No, no. And, I mean, I don't think you deserve to lose your job for being a jerk on TikTok, certainly. And when I say that, I mean just, like, the

idea that you were mean. If you're out there saying racist, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic—you know what I mean. I mean, that's a whole other thing. I'm just saying, like, somebody who's just rude, I don't know that that means you deserve to lose your job.

But if you did violate HIPAA then, I mean, I would get fired. So, like, that can happen. That's just the consequences of your job.

Taylor: Well... I mean, you know, you could—I... you could've just—you could've just reached out and apologized. You could've just said, "Hey. Our bad. We were rude and we're sorry." And it probably would've, you know, gone away.

Sydnee: That could've been it.

Taylor: That was it. You know, now everybody's—everybody's also learning about antipasto salad. I... I really like that. The Italians who came on my timeline to say, "Well, it's really just really a word we use for appetizer, so it's not, like, a set thing." So I learned all about the concept of antipasto.

Sydnee: Um, I just—again, like, as the details were being revealed that she made her own mozzarella, I was so impressed. I was just really...

Taylor: Yeah. The combination of that, and the—the... fresh-grown produce, you know?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It did look very good. I can't anything that's in that, but it looked very good.

Sydnee: It reminded me of a charcuterie.

Taylor: That's basically what it is. It's just a charcuterie that you can just... eat all at once.

Sydnee: See, that's ideal for me. You bring a ch—listen. I think—if you show up at my house with a charcuterie... no, I still think the MAGA hat might put me off.

Taylor: [laughs] Are you weighing, like, what food could someone be carrying that their red hat wouldn't be an instant turnaway?

Sydnee: Could I ask 'em to take it off? Like, "You can come in with a charcuterie, but you have to leave the hat on the doorstep." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Hmm, yeah. See, I don't know. If they're gonna be in the house, I want 'em to leave the hat on, 'cause I wanna know—I want 'em marked.

Sydnee: You wanna know where they are at all times!

Taylor: At all times, yes.

Sydnee: [laughs] Yeah. Well, you know what? It's just, I would have a whole series of questions I would have to ask as a follow-up. And... I don't know. No. You know, I still don't—even with a charcuterie. Even if they've got that peppered salami that I really like, and the...

Taylor: I mean, we're really—

Sydnee: The cheese with the blueberries in it. Oof.

Taylor: Cheese with the blueberries in it. Is that where you draw—is that where your morals start to crumble?

Sydnee: There's a fig chili jam, and if you show up at my house with a jar of fig chili jam, ooh, man. [laughs]

Taylor: That's it. We can... who—pro-life, pro-choice? Pro—pro this fig compote. Pro this salami. That's what I'm pro right now.

Sydnee: That's the—that's the ultimate problem for me. Somebody shows up at my door. They've got on, like, an anti-vax t-shirt, and they're carrying a jar of fig jam. Fig chili jam. I don't know. I don't know!

Taylor: Or do you just maybe, like, fake it long enough to eat your fill, and then be like, "Actually—excuse me, let me wipe my mouth—get out! I hate you!"

Sydnee: "Actually, get out. You could have measles."

Taylor: "Science is real!"

Sydnee: "Go home! Spread your diseases elsewhere."

Taylor: And then—then you'd end up on TikTok!

Sydnee: [laughs] I think TikTok would be on my side on that one.

Taylor: I think that the—the place that it reached that I found the most joy in is somebody told RedNote about it. You remember that app that everybody fled to when they thought that TikTok was leaving?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: The Chinese one?

Sydnee: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Taylor: So, somebody went on RedNote and told all of the people about it. And all of the responses from people in China were just, like, completely, "Oh. That is a delicious-looking salad, and that is completely wrong that they did that." [laughs] It's like, you've got all of China against you, lady.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: You need to rethink your life choices.

Sydnee: It really—I mean, I do think that... and I don't know, 'cause I am not—obviously the culture I know is the culture I was raised in. I am familiar, somewhat, with other cultures, but I'm only an expert on the one that I was raised in.

Uh, but I do think that... it seemed to be, based on the reactions on TikTok, a very American thing that I guest would show up at your home with a gift, and you would in any way be rude to that guest. That seems to be... I mean, like, there were many other cultural backgrounds saying, "This is absolutely unacceptable."

Taylor: Right. I mean, I just feel like, culture aside, you have to factor in the social awkwardness of being rude to someone that you wouldn't want in your house, and that right there would take me out. 'Cause even if for some reason I was just like, not about it, I could not... [laughs] like, I have to tell someone not to come into my house because they have misunderstood the nature of the gathering? Nope! No, absolutely not.

Sydnee: I just don't—I mean, in Appalachia, I don't think people have a problem—it's not—in southern hospitality, you wouldn't be rude 'cause you wouldn't be rude. In Appalachia, we can be rude if we need to be rude.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: But—but again, if you show up at my house, first of all, I don't know, I might know you. We might be related. Secondly, you brought food. I feel like if you show up in a holler like that, with that food, the only question you might get asked is like, "You're not a cop, right?"

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, it—well, and I feel like there's lots of areas of America that we could knock out as places that you could show up with an antipasto salad and be fine, right?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, I feel like, like you said, down south, you're good. That's manners. I feel like up north, like, you know, like New England, even New York, it's, like, yeah, everybody's mean, but everybody's also nice. You

know? It's that weird, like—they might, like, yell at you while you're there for reasons you don't know. But, like, that's just gonna happen, because everybody's loud and mean. But you're gonna get in the door, and you're gonna be welcome. Like...

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, and I mean, that's—

Taylor: Midwest, Midwest has manners. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Oh, they all have manners. And they love weird salads.

Taylor: Yeah. All of their salads—

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Not that an antipasto salads a...

Taylor: —full of meat, and not vegetables.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. They love those kinds of salads.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So, yeah. No, I feel like there are lots of places. And again, like, you can do that in Appalachia. We talk to each other—we talk to strangers in public here, all the time. Like, you'll just be, like, in a public place, and somebody'll be like, "Look at the—look at the deal they got on... you know, Lays potato chips today. Isn't this a great deal?"

And you'll be like, "It is a great deal. Do you like this flavor? I do too, yeah, man. Yeah, I like these. Have you tried the Mothman chips?"

Like, that's—I don't know.

Taylor: There are Mothman chips?

Sydnee: There are Mothman-flavored chips.

Taylor: You really buried that lede. What? [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: There are Mothman-flavored potato chips. They're, like... they're like kind of a barbecue, basically. There's, I mean—

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: It's a—it's a type of barbecue, I would say. So they're not my favorite, 'cause I don't really like barbecue. But if you like barbecue chips, they're good.

Taylor: If I had to say what flavor I thought a Mothman chip would be, that makes sense. I don't know why. It just does. Red, [crosstalk] little red circles.

Sydnee: It's a little—it's a little spicy, a little sweet, kind of a barbecue-y thing.

Taylor: Alright. Yeah, well, I don't know.

Sydnee: We should talk about the movie, because we've talked about antipasto salad for a long time.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, there was a lot to talk about there, you know.

Sydnee: It was a big thing.

Taylor: It was a really big thing.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: For one—for one week, the world was united.

Sydnee: I know. There—there are other things happening in America that are highly unpleasant, and so it was a relief to just focus on TikTok antipasto salad.

Taylor: That's true. But, uh, no. We're talking about Cry-Baby. Um, which is the 1990s... I don't know... John Waters musical rom-com, sort of... g—not greasers, but kind of a Grease vibe to it.

Sydnee: It did, it had a Grease vibe, it had a Jailhouse Rock.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Vibe. It had—it was definitely, like, a pastiche of that era. Um... they have, instead of the, uh, greasers, they're the drapes.

Taylor: Yeah. And the squares.

Sydnee: The drapes and the squares. I am familiar with the term square. Square is pretty universal. It's like, you know, a nerd. Somebody's who's uptight. I think a preppy person. Preppy in the old sense, not preppy in the new sense.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—was drapes something that John Waters made up? Or is that a—was that ever a term? I've never heard that.

Taylor: I've not heard of it. Um, I don't know. I was just looking to see if there's any sort of historical—'cause I couldn't figure it out from the context of the film if it's a shortened name for something. I don't know.

Sydnee: Yeah, I couldn't—I didn't know why they were called that. That was not something from Grease. It was not something from The Outsiders. [laughs quietly] Like, I don't know.

Taylor: I don't know.

Sydnee: But yeah. And I guess Johnny Depp's character's whole thing is that he cries a single tear, and it makes the girls go wild.

Taylor: Yeah. Um... just—I mean, what—what were your thoughts? Was this your first time seeing this?

Sydnee: This was my first time seeing it. And I have to say, I enjoyed it. I thought it was funny—obviously, like, it's pulling on all those tropes. But it's

also, like, a send-up of them, right? Like, it's intentionally hyperbolic, and a little goofy. Um—but, uh, I thought that the musical performances were really good, and interesting, and fun. I liked the rockabilly stuff. Um, the main girl, um... I can't think of her name. The main—the love interest.

Taylor: Allison.

Sydnee: Yes, Allison. She, uh—her voice was really—well, I don't know if it was her singing. That character's voice was really interesting and fun and, like, a different spin on the whole thing. Um, I don't know. I really enjoyed it. I thought it was funny. I liked the sense of humor. I liked that clearly John Waters likes that sort of style, that sort of aesthetic. Like, you can tell.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: There's an appreciation for—it's like—I guess it's the—it's '50s? Like, '60s? Late—early '60s, late '50s aesthetic. And, uh, and the rockabilly stuff. I think that's kind of fun.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and there's sort of, like, a camp, like, trash overlay that's real—really nice. Especially with, like, the drapes. Like, when you go into their space and, like, all of the fashion. I mean, that's—I feel like that's always true, especially as, like—I think it's in the DNA of, like, the early films of John Waters. But as he progresses, I feel like there's just always—you're never in the real world. You're always in a John Waters world. Like, everything has been thought out from, like, a style angle, and it always has a very specific, like, vibe to it, you know? I appreciate that.

Sydnee: It does—it's interesting, 'cause it's set in Baltimore.

Taylor: Yeah. [through laughter] Everything he does is set in Baltimore.

Sydnee: Which—well, and that's—it's funny to me, because I don't—like, I've been to Baltimore, I guess? This was not my perception of Baltimore.

Taylor: No, yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs] Um, the drapes feel like they live in West Virginia.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: That was the vibe. Like... I don't know. That was—[laughs quietly] that was the—like, that was—that was the vibe that Cry-Baby's family was giving me.

Taylor: Like, Iggy Pop, who plays the—the boyfriend of the grandmother. I don't think they are the—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Uh, bathing himself in, like, a tub out front. Like, that's the introduction to the character.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And, like... [laughs] all these sort of, like, tough, wiry, hillbilly people. Like, I don't know.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: That's just—it felt very familiar to me.

Taylor: Yeah. Now, of course it's worth mentioning, just 'cause it's so—it's so overused in that kind of world, there are a lot of Confederate flags. Which I think, you know, we have to look at the time period. I think it was just like—I mean, I remember growing up, like, you would just see them everywhere, you know. People would have bathing suits and towels and, you know, it was like a normal thing that I think—it's good that we've had a conversation around that, and everybody understands.

Like, that's not—you know, that's not a way to signal you're a rebel. That's a way to signal you're a jerk. But, uh... in the—in this—in this time period, it was not the conversation. So I think that's worth noting, especially if you're a young person and you watch it and you're like, "Ahh! Like, that's a little..."

Sydnee: I think that's a good point, Tey. Because I pointed that out. Um, the girls watched the movie with me, and I had to point that out to them. Like, pause it and have a conversation about it. Because that is not a symbol—first of all, they're not used to seeing it anywhere outside of—I think Charlie has learned a little bit about the Civil War at this point in her schooling. Cooper obviously has not.

Um, and even Charlie has only—like, it's been referenced. But I don't—it's not like they've delved into it. So it is not a symbol that they're used to seeing around. I had to explain what it was. And it was kind of, um—it is jarring, because when—you're right, when we were young, people wore t-shirts with that on it to school!

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Which is—I mean, like, by today's standards, you just wouldn't do, thank goodness. But it is a little jarring. So I think it is important to understand that that was not so weird to see. Like, it was really just a way of kind of denoting, like, "Well, these are more like hillbilly people." You know? And not necessarily saying that they were racist? I mean, I don't think it excludes the idea that they're racist, but it was not such a clear indicator that someone is racist as it would be now.

Like, if you see somebody with the Confederate flag now, you can... you know. I don't know. I think it—I think we assume things about you, and if you don't want that to be assumed about you, I don't know why you're carrying a Confederate flag.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and it—I mean, we didn't even mention it when we watched To Wong Foo, but like, Ru Paul comes down in a Confederate flag bathing suit at the start.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: [laughs] Which... you know.

Sydnee: And so, it was a different—I mean, I'm not saying "It was a different time, so it was okay." We were not having that conversation about the Confederate flag yet.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: We were not.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: And now we have. But yeah, I agree. That is a little jarring at first. Like, "Oh my gosh."

Taylor: Well, at first there was one. I was like, "Oh!" And then they just—there was a giant one. I'm like, "Oh, okay. Alright." [laughs]

Sydnee: 'Cause it—for a second, it does make you—I mean, by today's standards you say, "Are these the good guys? Like, are we supposed to be on their side?"

Taylor: Well, and then they're opposite the squares, who are entirely white, whereas there is a good amount of diversity amount the drapes. So, you know. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah, and the squares are a little more, I think, recognizable as an entity that we know from movies. Like, they're the rich, white, country club, preppy, like, all the boys with trust funds who, I don't know. I mean, well, he even says it at one point to Allison. Like, "Come live with me in suburbia."

Taylor: [laughs quietly] I do—I love the grandma character, who is one of the squares. I do love the kind of, you know, the turn of her character supporting her granddaughter, you know, living—living freely. That was fun to see. It's been a while since I watched and I'm like, "Oh, right. She turns around. She's a good one. She helps out."

Sydnee: The plot is very, like... [laughs quietly] very loosely, like, there's the drapes and the squares and, you know, Johnny Depp as Cry-Baby, sort

of the leader of the drapes, falls in love with one of the squares, Allison. And she falls in love with him, too. And then he gets sent away to prison. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And she, uh, initially thinks that he has hooked up with another woman, and so she's gonna leave him, but then she realizes she was wrong, and he loves her, and she loves him. And so she goes and sings a song to the warden to get him out of jail.

Taylor: It's a very good song, too.

Sydnee: Yeah. I do—and I like the idea that he gets let out of jail because her song is so powerful.

Taylor: Well... and they—they do that little—the sexy dance to the, uh... you know. In the jail. That's...

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: It is also the grandma. The grandma uses her—her sexual wiles to, uh, to woo the jailer. So that's—that's part of it.

Sydnee: They all do, yeah. There's a whole group of 'em.

Taylor: Um... yeah. I mean, the characters in this movie I think are my favorite part. Are just, like, all of the... especially the gang, like Ricki Lake as the, like—[laughs] just... very pregnant and has, like, two kids. Just, like, the little sister, I guess, of Cry-Baby.

Sydnee: She is. And I do like—like, the state takes her kids, and so they go steal 'em back.

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I like that.

Taylor: I love the kids. The kids themselves, the way that they're just dressed like little adults. Like, they're just dressed like little greasers the whole time.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: The one, the little girl reminds me of Cooper. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes, Cooper was in love with that look.

Taylor: [through laughter] I thought so.

Sydnee: She wanted that whole look.

Taylor: I figured.

Sydnee: Yeah. um... no, I thought that was a lot of fun. It is—like, if you look at the cast, I thought it was really interesting. Ricki Lake is involved. Um... who else was I gonna say? Did you realize Patty Hearst is in the movie?

Taylor: Who's Patty Hearst? I mean, I know who Patty Hearst is-

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Patricia Hurst?

Taylor: —but, who is she—

Sydnee: Who was... oh, you know who she is.

Taylor: I know who she is, but what—

Sydnee: I thought you meant—

Taylor: —role did she play?

Sydnee: Uh, hold on. I had it all up.

Taylor: Um...

Sydnee: Whoops.

Taylor: Yeah, and it's got a lot of surprise, uh, big names in it.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Like you said, Iggy Pop is in it. Patricia Hearst played one of the parents.

Taylor: Well, I mean, Willem Dafoe's in it.

Sydnee: Yeah, Willem Dafoe shows up.

Taylor: I thought he was gonna have a big role! He's just a mean guard in, like, one scene.

Sydnee: Patri—Patty Hearst is one of Wanda's parents.

Taylor: Oh, okay, alright.

Sydnee: Who is played by Traci Lords, by the way.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Traci Lords is in it. Um...

Sydnee: Troy Donahue's in it, who I only recognize from the song from Grease where he's name-dropped.

Taylor: Mmm.

Sydnee: That I think was a big star back in the day. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: Um... yeah. But it, uh—I thought was a lot of fun. I had a moment where I was looking at the character that they call Hatchet Face.

Taylor: Oh, I love Hatchet Face.

Sydnee: And I thought—who, by the way, she was also a lawyer. Did you know that?

Taylor: Is she?

Sydnee: That actress.

Taylor: Oh, that's awesome.

Sydnee: She was a lawyer too, yeah. Um, I thought—I looked at her and I thought, it's weird that that's not Divine. 'Cause I feel like that's supposed to be Divine.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And that—and as I was reading about the movie, that is—that has been—I don't know that John Waters has ever said that, but that was assumed that that role was probably supposed to be Divine, but I think Divine passed away before this movie was filmed.

Taylor: Well, and he has famously said that he would never work with another—out of respect for Divine, he would never work with another drag queen again. Just, you know, that's... that was his drag queen. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, I think that probably was meant to be Divine, but then...

Taylor: I can see that.

Sydnee: Um... I don't know. Just felt similar.

Taylor: I love that the sort of ahead of its time... I don't know, like, body positivity of Hatchet Face.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Where she's got, like, such stellar confidence in herself. Like, she knows she's beautiful, and all of the people around her are constantly affirming her. [laughs] Like, the actress is an attractive actress, out of all

the makeup. It's just the way that she kind of makes her faces, and has her makeup, she looks, you know, like... [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Well, they've made her, like, lipstick and eyebrows and stuff crooked. Like, they've drawn them on so it's all, like, yeah, asymmetrical and stuff. But... but yeah. I mean, I thought it was all—I really enjoyed it. I think it's funny. I think it is, um... it's silly in a way that I appreciate. It's not so... you know what? It has a vibe to me of Pee-wee's Playhouse.

Taylor: Oh, I could definitely see that, yeah.

Sydnee: I feel like it's in conversation with that sort of aesthetic. Um, like the moment that they reveal the motorcycle and stuff. It was all a very Pee-wee's Playhouse kind of...

Taylor: Oh, that—the house, the setup of that. Like, the [crosstalk] Turkey Point.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, that—I loved the design on that. And it was, like, so unnecessary. Like, that was just... [laughs]

Sydnee: It was just—yeah, lowering the weird crib the way they do. And, like, it all felt like that same—like, Pee-wee's Playhouse, which was, like, silly, goofy, kid, but not too childish. Also, a little—you know, like, there's an edge to it, that—it all felt like that.

Taylor: Well, and there's a lot of, like, you know—I'm thinking of, like, the late 90s, early 2000s. The, like, Not Another Teen Movie, or Scary Movie. Those movies that were send-ups of other movies.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Uh, I never really enjoyed those, 'cause they always just felt kind of like, "Okay, I get it. These movies are dumb, and you're making fun of how dumb they are."

Like... John Waters just does his own thing. 'Cause this feels like—it's loving. It's got its own personality. It's doing its own thing. Like, yes, it's clearly playing off all of those tropes and all of those, you know, that genre. But it's not—it's so much more than just a parody.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I thought so too. I thought it was—it is not—yes, there is a goofy aspect to, like—I mean, I never saw Elvis get sent to jail, but I imagine it's kind of goofy. And there is a goofy aspect to that. But he's not making fun of the whole thing. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's not mean-spirited.

Taylor: Yeah.

[pause]

Taylor: I was just trying to—I mean, I think sometimes the humor is, like—it's goofy all the time, but sometimes there were jokes that were so deadpan that, like, just—I was laughing out loud. Like when Johnny Depp is explaining his father was the alphabet bomber. And he's listing off the places in alphabetic order. [laughs]

Sydnee: And then his mom also got electrocuted, even though she couldn't even read.

Taylor: [laughs] It's like, that must've just been such a fun role to just—for everybody. Just, like—just chew up. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. It was—I really think it was a lot of fun. I think it—and I think, like I said, the music is good.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: The music is, like, I mean, legit good. Not just, like, silly, goofy. It's fun. It is a fun—and there is a musical.

Taylor: Oh, is there? That makes sense.

Sydnee: Yeah, I've never seen it. I just was—as I was reading more about the movie, I saw that they made a music out of it in 2008.

Taylor: That makes sense.

Sydnee: Yeah. So that made me want to check that out next.

Taylor: I was trying to think if there was ever—if there's any other movie in Johnny Depp's catalog where he sings, 'cause I did know he could sing like that. But I don't think it's actually him singing. I think it's actually somebody else's voice.

Sydnee: It—it's not. That was one of the things I looked up, 'cause, uh... uh, Charlie and Cooper only know him as Captain Jack Sparrow. And so they wanted to know if he could really sing, could Captain Jack really sing? And so I looked it up, and it was not him. It was a rockabilly artist.

Taylor: Oh yeah, James Intveld.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yes. Yes, and Rachel Sweet is the singing voice for Amy Locane, Allison.

Sydnee: Which makes sense. I will say, that was the one, like—Johnny Depp I can believe. I mean, I know it's not him. But, like, I could buy that voice coming out of him. As she was singing, it felt kind of otherworldly. Like, looking at her and hearing that voice, there was a—although it kind of—I like that element to the movie, it feels like that voice shouldn't be coming out of her.

Taylor: Very—a very impressive voice. The most impressive voice, I think, in the film.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: 'Cause that switch-up from her, like—

Sydnee: Oh, beautiful.

Taylor: —baby voice to a rock and roll voice was... awesome. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. Very cool. And a cool effect, since it isn't her singing. I think it all works really well.

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Her flying through the air into Cry-Baby's arms at the end was just so silly.

Sydnee: Oh, I know.

Taylor: [laughs] It reminded me of—I don't know why this clip started resurfacing again, but it's such a good clip. We've never talked about Xena, but there's an insane clip where Xena, like, Xena-flips from, like, a cliff onto a boat. And it is just... it is, like, three seconds longer than it should be. Where it—

Sydnee: [muffled laugh]

Taylor: —breaks into the realm of, like, "What is happening?" She's just been "[yelling]" and then it cuts. "[yelling]" And then it cuts again, and she's still flipping. [through laughter] And, like, it's good. It's completely ridiculous.

Sydnee: Um, well, Tey, I appreciate that you picked this, 'cause I had fun watching it. Like I said, the kids liked it. They really enjoyed it, and it made me want to check out the musical, so.

Taylor: Well, I felt like after—after you, you know, you bit the bullet and you watched Pink Flamingos, um, this was a little bit more your speed. I know you love Grease 2, so figured this is up your alley.

Sydnee: Very similar, very similar. What are we gonna do next?

Taylor: Well, uh, we're gonna—you know, we won't watch all of Waters' movies, but I think another one that is a good watch that I think you'll enjoy is Serial Mom. So.

Sydnee: Alright. And I don't think I should watch that with the kids, right?

Taylor: Uh, there's some—I mean, it's, you know. It's not like cereal like, um—like, uh... Cheerios. It's like serial as in murder. So, maybe not. Maybe not.

Sydnee: Right. Yeah. That was my assumption. [laughs quietly] If it was a movie about cereal, I'm married to Justin McElroy. I would have already seen it.

Taylor: He's seen it. He's in it. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, thank you—

Taylor: That's Cereal Dad and Serial Mom.

Sydnee: Exactly. Cereal Dad is just Justin and cereal. The food. The breakfast food. Well, thank you. I really appreciate that you picked it, 'cause it was a lot of fun. We enjoyed watching it. Um, and we will check out Serial Mom for next week.

Taylor: Alright.

Sydnee: And thank you, listeners. Um, thank you for listening to our show, and you should go to Maximumfun.org and listen to a lot of great shows that you would enjoy. You should watch Cry-Baby if you haven't. It was a lot of fun, and it is not as challenging as Pink Flamingos. Don't worry.

Taylor: It's also not as hard to find. It is—it is streaming many places.

Sydnee: Yeah. Much more mainstream. 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 Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm still buffering...

Taylor: And I am too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: I'm gonna go make an antipasto salad.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Just gonna go door to door and see who turns me away.

Taylor: It's like some sort of test that Jesus would do to people. "You have refused my antipasto salad, and you did not know it was I, so. You're not a good person." That's what Jesus does, right? [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] It's what he does. He comes with an antipasto salad.

Taylor: Maybe it was Jesus. What if God was one of us and he had an antipasto salad?

[chord]

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