

Still Buffering 451: Tenacious D

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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: Uh, Tey, I was alone with the kids over the weekend.

Taylor: Oh, no.

Sydnee: Yeah, Justin was out of town on tour. So just, just the three of us. And I tend to, when it comes to like, having to cook, like I don't feel like... I mean, I'm not going to feel any guilt about like, I don't want to cook this weekend. Right. I'm already watching the kids on my own.

Taylor: Yeah, order, order takeout.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: Three times the day.

Sydnee: Exactly. I'm just going to, I'm going to take it easy. So especially in the mornings, because the girls like to get up super early, even on the weekends. And, you know, I'm not much of a morning person, but also I'm the parent. So I have to.

Taylor: Well, so you get like a takeout for breakfast?

Sydnee: Yes. So they love Starbies. They love some Starbucks. So I will hand them, I'll pull it up on DoorDash on my phone and hand them my

phone, because Charlie, as you may have guessed, has a very complicated Starbucks order.

Taylor: I can imagine that.

Sydney: Yes. It is... It's a pink drink sort of, but then not exactly. Like there's a lot of other stuff going on in there. Cooper wants what is essentially a vanilla milkshake, I think, like...

Taylor: That surprised me. I thought you were going to say Cooper wants like, four shots over ice. That's it.

Sydney: No, here's, well, okay. Cooper did start drinking coffee some this summer. It was kind of an accident. I had, she was begging me for coffee, and I had let her try some of mine and I drink black coffee and she was like, no. But I said, you want some coffee? Tell you what, and I had put like just the teeniest little splash of coffee in a cup and then added like a bunch of creamer. It was like flavored creamer and she sat there drinking it and was like, mmm, I'm drinking coffee now. I'm sophisticated.

So I was like, haha, I let her drink coffee. Well, she told Justin that I let her drink coffee. So Justin like, gave her coffee and I was like, no, no, no, no, no, I tricked her. No, don't actually give her coffee. So she does think she can drink coffee. But anyway, so they ordered their stuff and I never get a drink. They're always like, what is, what do you want, mommy? And I never want to drink because all I ever want is black coffee. I'm going to make it at home.

Honestly, like we, I don't want to be bougie about this. I'm not saying we buy fancy coffee, but like we, I will pay to get a decent bag of beans. Like, because I'm not going to put anything in it. I'm not going to put any cream or sugar or any sort of flavoring. I'm just going to drink the coffee. So I tend to get nice coffee, and sorry Starbucks, but what I'm going to make at home, it's going to be better than what Starbucks is going to send me.

Taylor: Well, and I, hey, I, I did my time in the, in the, in the coffee scene. I was a fancy barista for like a decade. So I can speak with authority and

say that like 90% of a good cup of coffee comes from the beans being fresh and grinding it fresh. And the problem is, it's just usually with like a chain coffee shop, you're dealing with pre grounds, like pre measured amounts of coffee grounds that have just set for longer than they should. And if they have like reheating pans, and that's like, that burns the coffee. So it's not, you can even buy like, like cheap beans. And if you've got a coffee grinder and you're brewing them at home, you're probably making a better pot of coffee than most chain coffee shops.

Sydnee: I think that's true. Cause sometimes I mean, we'll get, I'll drink whatever. Listen, I cut my teeth on old hospital coffee. So I can drink whatever coffee, but like we've got a local place called Old Village Roasters. You know, shout out, local place, where you can go buy beans. And like, we'll buy bags of beans. Anyway, the point is, I'm going to grind my own beans and make my own coffee at home. So, I don't get Starbucks because all I would get is a black coffee anyway. I don't want any of the other stuff.

Well, this weekend Cooper and Charlie were sitting there and they put in their little order and they always get me my, what they call my adult Lunchable. It's one of those little boxes with like cheese and crackers and fruit in it. And when it arrived, along with it all, Cooper had decided to surprise me and get me coffee. And she knows I like, she knows I just want black coffee, and she knows I drink a lot of coffee. So what did she get me? The big traveler box.

Taylor: [laughs] Oh no!

Sydnee: That comes with like a bag of like eight to go cups and creamer in a giant cup and a bunch of like sugars and sweeteners and all this stuff. So she got me a giant box of black coffee.

Taylor: Well, hey.

Sydnee: I didn't know what to do, too, because I had also just brewed coffee. So I had my own coffee, which was superior, but I also like, she did this for me and it was very sweet.

Taylor: You got to drink it.

Sydnee: I have to drink it. So I was just sitting there like pouring out of this giant cardboard box, my Starbucks coffee, my, what is it? Pike, Pike's place, Pike's whatever. Pike's place, Pike's peak roast, Pike's place roast. What is it?

Taylor: I don't know. I haven't been to a Starbucks in years. Some combination of those words you said.

Sydnee: Yes. And she also surprised Charlie by getting her, her usual drink order except she got it in a trainty... trenty, Trenti.

Taylor: Oh, the big, big.

Sydnee: Trenti. I don't know. Whatever.

Taylor: Trant.

Sydnee: Trant. Yeah. Extra-large.

Taylor: Give me that trant size.

Sydnee: Let's bring back that humor, where we joke about the sizing at Starbucks. Remember when that was really funny to do for a while?

Taylor: I mean, I still have never like, it was never funny to me. It was just enraging, because you just use different words from different languages and none of the sizes correlate. Like I still don't, I still don't know why that's still... I don't go to Starbucks. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: The most, I don't know. Actually, I'm not sure. Is this Gen X or Millennial?

Taylor: It's a very Millennial humor bit, I think.

Sydnee: This might be the most Millennial thing, although it feels old. So I feel like maybe it's a Gen X thing. The most, whatever that is, thing I do in life still, and I kind of hate myself for it, but I still do it. When I, when I am in a Starbucks, like if I go to have coffee with somebody, I will order a coffee. I'm not going to be all like, I brought my own, like I'll order a coffee, whatever.

Taylor: Yeah, don't do that. That's...

Sydnee: Well, I wouldn't. That's what I'm saying. Like if I am in a Starbucks, I will drink a coffee.

Taylor: That would be really weird.

Sydnee: I brought my own from home, thanks.

Taylor: Okay, you can't drink that here, ma'am. Please go stand outside.

Sydnee: But all I ever say is I just want a big black coffee, please.

Taylor: Yeah, well, that's... Yeah.

Sydnee: But I mean, I don't...

Taylor: That's Gen X. A Millennial would not say that. A Millennial would awkwardly say, "Oh, what? I don't know the size. Uwu! Ooh, what is that? What is the big word? What's the word that means big?"

Sydnee: I'm too... So little, I don't know the word for big.

Taylor: I thought the small looks so big in my hands. I don't know. I'm a small girl. It's a prime Millennial. This is my culture. I'm allowed to make fun of it. Smol.

Sydnee: Smol. Yeah, no, I...

Taylor: Do you have a smol bean for a smol bean? I'm going to take myself out back and do what needs to be done. I'm so sorry.

Sydnee: It's okay. No, that's fine. We'll accept it. We'll accept some Millennial culture humor here. Because I am... I realize I'm being obstinate when I say I want a big black coffee. Like, I understand it. But then I don't know what I... I want a venti. Is that what I want? I want a venti black coffee?

Taylor: I think that's the big... I think Trenti is bigger.

Sydnee: Trenti is bigger, but I don't think I... I don't need that in my life. I guess I could do that. I mean, I would put that in my body.

Taylor: I don't... Yeah, see, I don't... I don't know. And I mean, I... It's... [laughs] I'm trying to remember the sizes and how they correlated to any coffee shop I ever worked at. But we... That's just a Starbucks thing. Like everybody else just a small, medium, large. Extra-large.

Sydnee: Tall, grande, venti, trenti.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: And then there's also a short.

Taylor: Like a tiny cup?

Sydnee: Yeah. Like I ordered that one because I thought it was small, but it's not small. Like it's smaller than small, because it's smaller than tall. I wanted a peppermint mocha. Every once in a while, I will get a peppermint mocha from there. Like it's like a little seasonal treat, right? Because they're yummy. That is not get me going in the morning coffee. Because that doesn't mean business. This is like...

Taylor: This does not mean business.

Sydnee: No. This is a little treat. And I got a small because I was like, oh, that... No, a short. Because I was like, yeah, I just want a little guy. I just want a little... Just a... And it's tiny. It's like a sample cup or something. It's like a shot.

Taylor: Well, you know, so I worked... My time in the coffee shop was the beginning of like, next wave coffee is how we usually talked about it, which is such a pretentious term. But it was the return of like... Like now it's every pretentious coffee house, right? They like, a lot of them roast their own beans. The lattes are all \$6. It's like a proper espresso machine, like, handmade drinks. But we were one of the first to do this in New York. Like I was one of the... Worked with one of the brands that really launched that in the city. Like, I don't know. This is like 15 years ago.

Anyway, we had the eight-ounce cup. The eight-ounce cup, which is a proper size for like a cappuccino. A cappuccino is like an equal parts beverage and it's supposed to be smaller. And the debut of the eight-ounce cup was really funny to be a part of, because people would order a small coffee and we give them eight ounces of coffee. And they'd look at you like, am I a joke? Are you a joke?

Sydnee: What am I supposed to do with this?

Taylor: I'm going to take a whiff of this and it's going to be gone.

Sydnee: Can I have another now?

Taylor: Yeah, like you know, you go to other... I mean, there's lots of places in the world where that's what you get. You get that... that's the size cup you were getting. It's just to the American eye, eight ounces of liquid in a paper cup just does not look like enough liquid no matter what that liquid is. [laughs]

Sydnee: I also feel like ordering something like a peppermint mocha which has a bunch of stuff in it that you've got to mix up, and then ordering it in a tiny, tiny cup feels mean. It feels like...

Taylor: That is... it is. That feels like when people order... I don't know... there is so... Shot culture, like the mixed shots, I know you've experienced that. It still exists to some degree. People will ask me for like a green tea shot and I'm just like, I mean it's... I don't mind to make it. It's that... it's so many things for one little glass.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: It's a lot of work for something that you're going to frown at me if I ask you for more than eight dollars for.

Sydnee: Right. No, I know what you mean. I mean, I... because I used to... I was guilty back in the day when I discovered like, pineapple upside down cake shots and... There was an oatmeal cookie shot.

Taylor: Well, like, shot bars exist and like shot bars usually pre-mix all those shots so you don't have to feel that bad. It's just, shot bars don't exist to the degree they used to.

Sydnee: I will say, I could never order it because I was too embarrassed, but I did enjoy the buttery nipple shot.

Taylor: Ooh, yeah.

Sydnee: But I didn't want to... I never ordered it because then I had to say that out loud and I couldn't... just couldn't do it. [laughs] Couldn't bring myself to say those words.

Taylor: That's fair. There's one... I think it's still there. I can't even remember the name but there's a shot bar on the west side that we used to always go to after Comic-Con and like... Every... they have... it's only... I mean, you can get regular drinks there, but their big draw is that they have all these weird shots. And every shot that you order will come with like a song, or props, sometimes both. Like you can order like Ninja Turtle shots, and so, you'll get one in each color of the Ninja Turtles, and they'll play the Ninja Turtles themes and they will give you Ninja Turtle bandanas to wear while you take the shots.

Sydnee: Oh.

Taylor: And this is everything on the menu. There's like Game of Thrones shots, there are... I don't know, Dragon Ball Z shots, and there's always props. And every time I go, I'm waiting to see like the absence of light but behind the bartender's eyes. Like you do this every night. This has to be... but they all are really into it. [laughs]

Sydnee: It sounds exhausting.

Taylor: After the fifth round of Ninja Turtle shots, you've had to play the music and dance around with plastic, you know, swords. Like are you not... they seem to be into it.

Sydnee: Yeah, I mean maybe that's your thing. I will say, the closest... you know, I mean everybody's got a thing.

Taylor: Everybody's got a thing.

Sydnee: The closest I ever came to that, there's a bar here that's like one of the arcade bars.

Taylor: Oh yeah, love those.

Sydnee: And they have some novelty shots on the menu and they have Pokémon themed ones, and you can just order a Gotta Catch 'Em All round and you just get all of the Pokémon themed shots. I did notice they were pre-mixed, so they're not quite so much of a pain, I suppose, to make. And they're like neon colored, so like I ordered around a Gotta Catch 'Em All and they come out and there's like bright red, bright green, bright blue. I mean like these very neon-colored shots, and I am 42 years old. I cannot... that's not for me. This is not for me. The amount of sugar that I was ingesting along with...

Taylor: I was gonna say, I know you... I've known you your whole life, Syd Vicious. I think you're fine with the drinks. It's the sugar I get. I get.

Sydnee: It's the sugar. It's the sugar. Listen, over the weekend we went to the Marshall football game, and I had a similar experience because they had things there for sale. At a football game. They have these Marshall themed beers that I usually get. It's just like a lager. Just like a plain old, you know, whatever. It's fine. It's good. It's good football-watching beer.

But then I went up again, and of course, they're overpriced, because you're at a football game. And they also had cans of... it wasn't Cutwater, but it was basically Cutwater.

Taylor: Oh no. Ohh.

Sydnee: So they had these like Mango Margaritas in cans. They were cheaper than the beer, and they were 12.5%.

Taylor: Yeah. How is that not a Cutwater? I mean, off brand, sure.

Sydnee: It was a generic Cutwater. Like it wasn't labeled Cutwater but it was a Cutwater. And oh buddy. Oh. It's the sugar, too. It's not just like, okay, I get it with those now. The alcohol, yes. Because you drink... it tastes delicious. It tastes like candy. You drink it like you're drinking a soda. So you're not really thinking about how fast you're ingesting it. It's 12.5%, which is ridiculous. And then on top of all that, the amount of sugar you've just like poured into your, in my case, old, old stomach. It's just, I can't do that. I can't do that anymore.

Taylor: Well, I've been into like the TikTok trends of people either showing how many Cutwaters they drank before they, I don't know, woke up in another country or something.

Sydnee: Yeah. Some sort of wild experience.

Taylor: I made a video about the trend that is the BeatBox, the Cutwater and the Buzz Ball. Like you mix them together. Which is just all bad things, and they are not better than the sum of their parts. But it's interesting to me. Just, you know, somebody that's worked in liquor for a long time. Like,

they're not that strong. It's just one, you don't really know what kind, like, your hangover will be largely affected by the distillate you're drinking. Like not every distilled spirit acts on your body the same. They all enact with your blood sugar differently. You break them down differently and some things are not as pure as other things. And so, a lot of things are just getting like rough liquor.

Sydnee: Like, what is it? Is it just grain alcohol? Is that what's in there?

Taylor: Cutwaters, they will say like tequila and vodka, I've noticed. So I think vodka is a useful term because vodka can be anything. Tequila has to be a thing. Vodka can be anything.

So I think a lot of times you're just, it doesn't mean it's low quality. It's just like, that will be a harder hangover. Like, you might, like, it's like if you've ever had like a rum hangover. Rum hangovers are hard because rum is made from sugar or molasses or, you know, like, it's a quicker, like, glycemic processing thing that just gives you a rise and crash. Whereas something like agave is like a lower glycemic index sugar. So that's why tequila doesn't mess you up as much.

Sydnee: Well, I don't do, whiskey is fine for me.

Taylor: Well, like everybody, also everybody's designed differently. Everybody has different reactions to different things. But you just don't always know what's in the, like, the lower, if it's cheap and it's got a high percentage, you might be getting a little bit of something that's a little rot, rot-gutty, right?

Sydnee: That makes sense. Yeah, that makes sense. That totally makes sense. No, I, yeah, I, in the future, I will return to my herd lager, my go herd lager. 4.5% but it's a perfectly decent logger and it goes well with nachos.

Taylor: Well, that's, I feel like that's, that's the thing, like for a game where you're going to be there for like, like six hours, you want something five or below.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah, no, I, I learned my lesson.

Taylor: I mean, that's even true for, I find it dangerous when venues sell the 12-ounce cans of like wine. I love a can of wine, but in a restaurant, when you're served wine, you're not served 12 ounces of wine. You're served four to six, maybe six if you're lucky. Like when you drink a can of wine to the face and say, why did this mess me up so much? It's because, because you just drink two and a half glasses of wine. Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't, well, we have really, this is a thing humans, we have a really hard time when you put it in a different receptacle. You can no longer identify it.

Taylor: I drink a can, a can is fine. A can doesn't make me drunk. Oh no, this can made me drunk. Yeah. 'Cause that can is full of 12 to 15% alcohol.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. You can't drink that can. Don't drink that can. Drink the other can. It's real.

Taylor: It's, it's, it's hard. I know. So many options these days. So many can cocktails, so many ways to get drunk and so many reasons to get drunk.

Sydnee: Hey, I can, can I tell you a positive thing that I did that I found on TikTok?

Taylor: Yes. I love positive things.

Sydnee: This is a positive thing. I, you know, I, I grew, I have a garden and I grow vegetables and I had a bunch of zucchinis left. But like my last harvest of zucchinis, and I had like six of them, and I was like, what am I going to do with these last ones? I want to do something really good with them because it's the end of my gardening, the end of my year, you know, into my harvest. And I kept getting these TikToks of Stanley Tucci's favorite pasta.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: Stanley Tucci's favorite pasta is spaghetti alla Nerano. And it's like just zucchini and pasta.

Taylor: So, so you made Stanley Tucci's...

Sydnee: I made Stanley Tucci's favorite pasta with the last of my zucchini and it was delicious. I would highly recommend, if you stumble on this recipe, it does involve— you have to like, deep fry the slices of zucchini and then refrigerate them overnight, and then assemble the rest of the pasta. But there's really not that many ingredients past that. Like, other than the zucchini and spaghetti, there's like olive oil and salt and little parmesan. Basil. I mean, that's pretty much it. Like it was a very, you know, very few ingredients, very simple, very delicious, loved by my whole family.

Taylor: That sounds delicious. And I would definitely want to eat that. You could perhaps pair that with the Tucci Negroni, which, so, Stanley Tucci made a mark in the in the bar world by posting a video where he made a Negroni, but he shook it. And everyone was outraged, because you don't shake a Negroni, you stir it. But I think Stanley Tucci is cool enough that there was a certain agreement of like, maybe if you shake a Negroni, it's just a Tucci Negroni. I don't know why he wanted it shaken. But yeah, he's cool enough that maybe that's just what that's called.

Sydnee: He is cool. I like that he starts so many of his videos with, "Are you recording?" And doesn't edit that out.

Taylor: That's not even the millennial pause. That's something else entirely. No, but he's not a millennial. He's older than us, but...

Sydnee: I admire that that he's like, yes, I just asked if they were filming and then I began my thing, totally breaking the illusion. But I did it and I'm not going to edit it out, because I'm Stanley Tucci.

Taylor: No, I like bartenders that call themselves mixologist are some of the most pretentious people in the world. And the fact that there was like an we will acquiesce to Stanley Tucci did it this way. We're just going to call it

something else and say, yep, that's the Tucci way. Yeah, shakin' the Negroni. It's the Tucci way. Negroni, Tucci style. Oh, you want it shaken? Okay.

Sydnee: Well, Tey...

Taylor: Speaking of really cool old men.

Sydnee: Yes, I know, I was sitting there trying. How are you going to get there? Cool old men. Oh, no. Is Jack Black an old man?

Taylor: Have you seen him? He looks like a wizard that would live in a cave and give you a quest. And I think he's going for that.

Sydnee: I was going to say, that feels intentional.

Taylor: Yeah, no, no, he has grown a wizard beard. For a reason.

Sydnee: He's still attractive, though.

Taylor: Yeah, no, no, no one... We've discussed this in the past. The people that are like, am I wild for thinking Jack Black is hot? Like, no, you just have internalized biases against people with different body types. Go away.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, he is like he's hot.

Taylor: He's always been hot, like conventionally hot.

Sydnee: We're talking about Tenacious D. And I will say, it has been a long time since I just sat down and listened to Tenacious D. It was funny like revisiting it, because especially like, their first album... it's so dirty. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, yeah, I like in my head I knew it was like, it's a lot of like, sort of elevated that sort of like, storytelling metal kind of thing. I forgot how much of it is sexual. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. I did too. I did too. I like, as I started listening, I was like, whoa, whoa. Okay. I mean, I guess I saw them in concert back in the day. I suppose I knew this. You know what doesn't— it's weird. I saw them in concert, and what stands out to me from that show is not—

Taylor: I know exactly what you're going to say, but I want you to say it. Go ahead.

Sydnee: Do you know what I'm going to say?

Taylor: I don't know. I think I know what you're going to say. Go ahead, because I was at that concert.

Sydnee: They shot Nerf rockets at us from stage.

Taylor: Oh. I mean, that's— okay. That's not that they also played a Sax-A-Boom.

Sydnee: The Sax-A-Boom. Yes.

Taylor: That's what stands out to me from that concert.

Sydnee: I forgot about the Sax-A-Boom.

Taylor: He did a whole number while playing the Sax-A-Boom.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Which is a child's toy.

Sydnee: It was incredible. No, and I that but I don't remember. I mean, these clearly were the sexy songs and I don't remember that.

Taylor: I mean, I don't I think at that point that we were seeing them though, because that was what, maybe... It was sub-2010, somewhere in the early 2000 single digits.

Sydnee: I probably would have been in college.

Taylor: I think that there were still lots of numbers that were not as, I mean...

Sydnee: It was before med school. I would have been in college at the time, so it would have been between 2001 and 2005.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That long ago.

Taylor: I was in high school. I was underage.

Sydnee: You were underage.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Watching a grown man play a Sax-A-Boom.

Taylor: I think that's fine. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I don't know what the age limit on that is.

Taylor: That's like a 14-and-up situation. You got to be 14 years old to view the Sax-A-Boom.

Sydnee: I forgot the Sax-A-Boom. That was, that was it.

Taylor: I was sure that's where you were going with that, because that is my one memory is when that came out on stage, I thought it was going to be a joke, and I'm like, no, he's playing it.

Sydnee: No, for some reason, I remember when he started shooting Nerf rockets at us.

Taylor: Yeah, I remember that. That was a great. Great entertainers. Great entertainers. I don't think they were ever trying to be anything more than that. I mean, they're still active.

Sydnee: I mean, I think that it's a really cool vibe to play with the idea of like, this is cool. We're saying it's cool. This kind of music is so cool, and like, people who play it are cool and these songs are cool. And to say it in a way that you can get away with it because we know you're joking, but it is cool. But we also know you're joking, you know, and it's not irony. It's not irony. But you know what I mean? Like that was always their vibe. Like listen to our super cool battle. Yeah! But like also it was, it was super cool. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, it was it was definitely an exaggeration of like, I do love the kind of the metal bands that it's like, it's not just like sex, drugs, and rock and roll. It's like there was a... there was a wizard who fought a dragon and died by fire and he rose again and he was a skeleton and then he fought another dragon and he was a double skeleton! Like, I love that stuff. Like, there's a lot of that that's played very straight in the metal scene. And they're definitely still doing that. They're just really having fun with it. Like, I don't, you're right. It's not irony. It's fans.

Sydnee: It is. Well, like, if you really think about the stuff that they're singing about, and the thing that they're, I don't want to say it's a— it's not a parody. Parody isn't the right thing. They're playing with it. They're not just playing metal, right? Like so it's not just the music. So it is in the parody-adjacent space.

But parody also kind of insinuates that you're, like it's a send up of it, like that you you're not taking it— and they're taking it seriously, because they're really talented. The music is good. The lyrics are smart. It's enjoyable to listen to. But if you think about the stuff that they're singing about, it's kind of nerdy. Oh, well, that part of metal is kind of it's kind of dorky.

Taylor: I mean, metal is kind of nerdy. Like good metal... I've known a lot of musicians that play metal, and they're always like, they're also giant nerds

who love D&D and computers and comic books. And like, that all feeds in. It's people that are in the community that are just really aware of what they're doing. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, and it's, I mean, and it is very much like the illusion that like, you don't— like, there is no like apathy or don't care because especially if you're talking about like, the performance from some of these bands and like, what Tenacious D was doing, like, there's like costuming and makeup and hair and special effects.

And you know, like, it's a lot of thought has gone into this. Like a lot of time and effort has gone into everything that's happening here. This isn't just like, whatever, we're just playing guitars. It's like, no, no, you know exactly what you're doing. Like this is very thoughtful. You've put a lot of time and energy into it.

Taylor: Well, I mean, just the level of talent. It's like, when you're being ironic and sort of, you know, like insulting something in a funny ironic way, you're never that good. Like, I hate irony. I don't know. Maybe it's the generation I grew up in. Like, I kind of despise it. Like I don't think it's interesting. I think it's denying passion while still trying to create content and you can't create content that's interesting without passion. And that is the circus mirror of what Tenacious D does. It's completely aware, and completely passionate.

Sydnee: Yeah. And like there is there is something very, I mean, that's what cool is underneath it all. If you can pull that off, that is what you, like, people connect to and read as cool. Because this is someone who genuinely doesn't care what you think of them, but not in that way where they're like, whatever, I'm in your face, I don't care if you like me! It's not aggressive or confrontational. It's just like, I just love this and I hope you do too. And that's it. And there is a very cool thing about that.

Taylor: And I think that even extends to the fact that so much of the music is way more sexual than I remember. Like, you know, the we can't say the full the real name, the F Her Gently song, which made rounds on TikTok.

It was a popular sound. Element of that. I think it's like, it's kind of punk rock that like two dudes that might not be like, you know, so much of rock and like, and like metal spaces. It's like, the people that get worshipped or like, the hot metal gods. Like, these dudes are making aggressively like, sexual music while like not being what most mainstream people for whatever stupid reason look at as hot. I think it's cool. And they're also good songs. That's a good song.

Sydnee: They're good songs, and they are. And there is something like, I mean, again, if we want to get back into like, everyone's sort of universally agrees, Jack Black is very attractive. It's because part of that is that confidence. You know, part of it is not anything to do with his physical appearance. It's, to sing songs like that and be that uber confident, like, someone listening is like, oh, what does he must? What must he have going on there?

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like, oh, like, okay. All right. Like, I'm intrigued. Tell me more. I, you know, I didn't I didn't necessarily see this coming. And now I have, I have, I'm interested. I'm curious. I have more questions.

Taylor: I see your game. [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't know where this came from. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I don't think there's anything more attractive than someone that is doing what they want to do authentically, and like, with the dedication and practice it takes to do that thing well. I think that's the most attractive thing.

Sydnee: I have to say, I also realized that as I was really listening to these songs, I was thinking like, this is why... So I, when I first started dating Justin the second time around, not back in middle school, but, you know, in college, when we, when we met up again, he used to do open mic night at Calamity Cafe all the time, local place here in Huntington. And he would play

songs that he wrote. Were you ever there with me at any of these? I think you were.

Taylor: I can remember a one. This was, because this would have had to be in the cross section of where I was still at home, but like, old enough to go to Calamity Cafe open mic night.

Sydnee: 'Cause it wasn't, so it was a restaurant, and it would, and it was a bar too. But like in the evenings, there was like that gray zone where like it hadn't quite become a bar yet. And so, if you were underage, you could still be in there. I mean, they weren't going to give you alcohol, but like, you know? It was a bar atmosphere without being a bar. I don't know. It's Huntington. There are kids in these bars. Like people take their kids to bars. Welcome to Appalachia. Sorry.

Taylor: It's true in New York City too. Honestly.

Sydnee: I don't know.

Taylor: We can shake hands over that. Sometimes there's a kid and I'm like, okay, that's fine.

Sydnee: Yeah. Whatever. I mean, like, don't give the kid booze.

Taylor: No, sure. Yeah.

Sydnee: But Justin would sing songs that he wrote. He played his guitar and sing songs that some of them were also aggressively sexual in nature. And Justin, his whole like thing was not like, I'm the cool hot guitar guy. Like that was not the way he would like, that was not how he came on to me in the bar when we saw each other again. That was not the way he tried to woo me. He was very much like, the funny guy. That was always his thing. Like, I'm a funny guy. I tell jokes and I'm funny and he had like a self-deprecating kind of thing he would do at times. That was his whole personality.

But then he would get up in a bar and play guitar and sing these very sexual songs right there in the bar in front of everybody. And I just found it really attractive. Like really, like, I don't know that the confidence that went with that was just, I mean, it was, it's very much an aphrodisiac. So, I realized that that if, if I specifically am finding that hot, I get why. I have a type.

Taylor: Well, but I think that that's a, that's a common type. I mean, I feel like that's, that's what attraction is. Like it's hot to see somebody doing their thing and having fun. And like, 'cause I don't know, like again, like I, I, I spent my time and sort of the 'too cool for you,' like the, the... when we talk about like the hipster scene that was just like everything was ironic of the early 2000s. Like, I was in like ground zero for that. I was in New York City art school during that.

And nothing, you could not be passionate or serious about anything. Everything was posturing. Everything was just like, layers of subtext and layers of like, oh, if you don't get the reference, you're not cool. Like it was so exhausting, and it's so cool to see somebody be like, this is what I like and I'm going to do it loud. Like that's so, like that is so good. And that's, I mean, I, I don't know if there's... I'm trying to think of current bands that they're like other like, I don't know, like there's like skits on SNL that kind of do that, like the, the musical numbers, but Tenacious D is sort of the epitome of that.

Sydnee: It was a nice counterpoint to when I think about like, so I wasn't exactly in the hipster culture. I mean, I certainly was adjacent to that with my like, I don't know, skinny jeans and ironic T-shirts. But, but I also, I really loved like, you know, at the time, Weezer was like my favorite band. I still love Weezer. That's the, you know, that hasn't changed that I still love Weezer, but the some of the culture around that was hard. It was that, it's that thing where like, if you wear a Weezer T-shirt, a Weezer fan was going to challenge you on like, what's your favorite album and how many songs can you name and how many times have you seen them and really are you a fan if Pinkerton isn't the best and...

Taylor: It better be Pinkerton, but actually it better be the unreleased B side demos.

Sydnee: Right. And so, like, it was all that and it wasn't just Weezer, but like, I think that's a good example. There was a lot of that in music and a lot of it was very also like gendered. It was very dudes kind of gatekeeping that, you know. And so like, as a woman into that kind of music, I always felt very like self-aware and like, you know, uncomfortable and like, can I be in this space? Is there room for me? What if I can't name enough songs about this band?

Like everybody's going to think I'm a poser. Like, it was a really difficult space to be in. And Tenacious D was none of that. Tenacious D was like, we can all be there. We can all listen to the music. You don't have to be able to name all their songs. You don't have to be a super fan. You can just be part of it. And it felt very comfortable compared to some of those other bands that I liked.

Taylor: Well, that was that lack of like, we're not taking ourselves that seriously. Like we're going to reference things that are like, so my... I love Wonder Boy and I love Tribute. I think those are my two favorite Tenacious D songs. They both tell great stories. And they both are kind of like, there's this there's this wink and a nod to it where it's like, musically, they are well written, like enjoyable songs to hear. But I mean, especially I mean, Tribute's fantastic, because the copy of like, no, no, no, we made a great song that like, can change the world. And we can't play for you, but we did it. Yeah, it's so funny that like, you know...

Sydnee: It's really smart, too. It's a very smart joke.

Taylor: Yeah. And on top of it being a song that you could like, I don't know, like, like, I mean, I've expressed my love for Andrew WK many times on this show. But it's like Andrew WK kind of has the same vibe, but it's like a self-awareness of like, yeah, we're this big and we're this giant. And like, you don't even know what we're capable of. Like, I don't know. Like that that is absolutely a more open door than a lot of rock and roll, a lot of metal, especially in our time coming up.

Sydnee: And it really like, to say we're going to play this kind of music that sometimes I mean, that's a lot of it that's sexual. And then some of it's just kind of goofy. Like we're talking about things. It's a little silly or whatever.

We're making up these sort of pseudo-metal kind of stories and then some of them, whatever.

And some of them are based on them. Like there's the, what is it? The ballad of Hollywood Jack and Cage. What is it? Something Cade. Anyway, like, you know, they're based on our lives or whatever. But also, every once in a while, we're going to remind you in the music, like how fricking talented we are and how well we can play these instruments and how like, our song construction is really well done and complex. And like we're just going to throw that in there just like, casually. Like, also we're classically trained. And then that, you know, it's really, I don't know, it's very cool.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I think there's a level in any form of artistry where the only way I know how to like explain it is like, oh, that person's just dancing. Like, that's not what they're doing. But that that's what it like when you see somebody, it's like, you're just... you're just showing off. You're just dancing. You're doing your thing, and it's so it's so cool to see that. And I don't know. Like that's as much of like, yeah, they have jokey songs. Yeah, they're silly. Just so talented and they have so much fun with it. And I think that's the high point of creativity.

Sydnee: Yeah. It's and I mean, I think there's a little bit like their novelty adjacent. It's not novelty music, but it is somewhat, some of it is, with a little more like focus on genre.

I mean, that would be the only difference. Like it's not just like parody, because it is... I mean, it is within the genre that it is also kind of lightly joking about.

Taylor: Yeah, but like, never like— I don't— because it's like, I love Weird Al. You know, I love Andrew WK. I love like, I don't know, Motley Crew. But I still wouldn't say that if you put all those together, you get Tenacious D. Tenacious D is its own thing. [laughs]

Sydnee: It is its own thing. It is. I mean, like if you— what music is exactly like that?

Taylor: Well, even with some of because I noticed like some of their bigger hits recently are covers, like they've done a lot of like soundtrack music. But they're still really good. Like, I don't... know. I don't I'm a big defender of like, I think Hit Me, Baby, One More Time is actually just a great— sonically, it's a great song.

Sydnee: It's a very good song.

Taylor: Their cover of it brings that to light. Like, hey, yeah, all of you that have ever hated on Britney, she was always making good music. But like, that brings it to a point like this is a good song with like a high point and good lyrics.

Sydnee: It really does, which I, you know, I think that's such a good thing to point out to because it is a good song. A lot of Britney songs are good songs, frankly. It's just the truth.

Taylor: I think Toxic is... it's my favorite. [laughs]

Sydnee: I love Toxic. That's a great song. But like, I think that all that got so dismissed as all these like plastic girl pop music, just all of it got trashed at that era. And it is very revealing that like, there probably are people listening to dude sing Hit Me, Baby, One More Time and going, oh, it's actually a good song. And it's like, yeah, I know it was when the girl sang it, too.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, there's such a history of like punk and metal bands covering pop songs. And I think you always know when someone's singing it, like this was always a good song and I love it, versus, I'm showing you that it could be a good song. [laughs] I always think of like, if you change the gender of the subject, like if you switch the pronouns in the song, then I know you're not real. I know you don't appreciate this song. That drives me crazy.

Sydnee: Yeah. I hate that. I hate that. Like, come on. Of all the, you know what? It's homophobic.

Taylor: It is, honestly. If you can't sing—

Sydnee: Don't change the genders!

Taylor: If you can't sing a metal version of Natalie Imbruglia Torn, which is actually a cover from another song, and not change the gender, then I don't want to hear it.

Sydnee: I don't want to hear it.

Taylor: Yeah. Don't change the gender.

Sydnee: There's no need to. It's fine.

Taylor: But no, but I don't— I and maybe I'm projecting, but I feel like the cover, which was big, was like, it was respectful. It was good. It was so amazing.

Sydnee: No, I think you can tell. That was my take on when Weezer did the Teal album. Hmm. I felt that way.

Taylor: I know you love... [laughs] I pulled out, I needed a water bottle for work, because I was brewing tea in my fridge and I wanted to take it to work and I pulled out my Super Hella Mega Tour water bottle. Like, that we went to that show together years ago and I was thinking about how happy I was for you that they played— that Weezer played their cover of Africa.

Sydnee: It was so good. And it's like, it's this... It's just the, it's just Toto's. I mean, it's just like, it's not changed significantly in any way.

Taylor: It's just like, yeah, this song is good. We're going to sing it very well.

Sydnee: Yeah, we're just going to cover it for you. No, I mean, I felt like the whole album was like that. But yes, I think that you can tell that. And I think that that is so, so much cooler and so much more interesting.

And again, if we're getting into like the world of metal, I think has a very masculine energy on the outside. And so, I think being like somebody who plays music like that, and then singing a Britney Spears song with absolutely no irony, just like, this is a good song. That is so cool. That is like, you're so confident and comfortable in who you are and how the world perceives you. That is cool.

Taylor: Well, I will even go as far as to say, because I've known a lot of metalheads. I've lived with a lot in my life and like, you know, we use the buzzword like toxic masculinity a lot. And that's something to be unpacked. Absolutely.

But if you want to talk about positive masculinity, I think the metalheads often are that. Because again, like we mentioned, they often are the dudes that exist in also nerd spaces. But there's a there's an authenticity there that I don't know. Like, this is not what we're talking about this week. But even like with the inclusion of so much metal music with Peacemaker, like the show, which that's a whole other topic. But like, I think there's an understanding that like, there is a way you can be a dude that rocks. There's a way to be a man that rules.

Sydnee: I think it's a really good point that like masculinity is not inherently toxic. That, you know, there is nothing wrong with the idea that there is masculinity and there is femininity and then all the shades of gray in between those things and the extremes and all that is fine. But specifically in our society and culture, their masculinity has been taken in a direction that is dangerous. It's oppressive and that is harmful to the people who experience it as well as everyone around them.

Taylor: Absolutely. No argument there. I think that in certain applications, metal is an example of positive masculinity and Jack Black is that as well. And Kyle and Tenacious D as a whole. Dudes doing dude stuff having a great time doing dude stuff.

Sydnee: That's okay. That can be there's a way for that to be okay, and in the society we all want, let's get there. That's fine.

Taylor: Well, I struggled with that as a trans dude. Like sometimes, like, I'm not ashamed of being... like, my whole life was to build up to try to be a man. And now a lot of my society, a lot of my community says I should feel bad for it. And I want to meet those concerns head on. Of course, I don't want to be a bad guy, but there's got to be a way to be a good guy.

Sydnee: Oh, I mean, there has to. That's the only way forward for all of us. Right? Like that's I mean, I think hopefully more and more people are realizing that. But that is that is the only way forward.

Taylor: And through Tenacious D you'll get there? No, I don't know.
[laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. So, if you haven't listened to Tenacious D, I think you should. It's really enjoyable music. It's really great. It is very sexual.

Taylor: Not all of it. Like, I don't know, a lot... A lot more than I remember.
[laughs]

Sydnee: Yes, a lot more than I remember. And I just wasn't... A lot of it also, like the way they talk about sex feels like little boys sometimes.

Taylor: Like that is... it's not disrespectful. It's just aggressive.

Sydnee: There's some like, I don't know. It feels like a teenage boy sometimes.

Taylor: Yeah. That's fair.

Sydnee: Like we don't use those terms in an adult world.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: I don't even want to say them on the podcast.

Taylor: No, we don't need to. We can't also legally. We can't.

Sydnee: No. But no, I really enjoyed it. It was fun. It was fun to listen to again. Oh, thank goodness the girls were not around when I was listening, because I probably, had I not really been thinking, I would have turned on Tenacious D right in front of them because they love Jack Black. You know, so they...

Taylor: I think you could cobble together a playlist that they could listen to.

Sydnee: Yeah, for sure. You just can't. Yeah, you just can't turn on an album and go. So what should we talk about next week, Tey?

Taylor: Well, it's happening right now. The episodes are coming out. I thought we could talk about Peacemaker.

Sydnee: I would love to talk about Peacemaker.

Taylor: I mean, I mentioned it a minute ago. It's a good continuation on a topic about positive masculinity, I think, for whatever reason.

Sydnee: No, I think we should. I'm really enjoying it. Justin convinced me to watch it and I was glad he did. So yeah, let's talk about that next week.

Taylor: All right.

Sydnee: All right. Well, Tay, thank you. Thank you for revisiting Tenacious D with me.

Taylor: Thank you.

Sydnee: Listeners, if you have not listened to Tenacious D, please do.

Taylor: Don't play with your kids. Unless you make a playlist.

Sydnee: There's an E next to the explicit ones. So that, you know, it helps. Thank you to Maximum Fun. You should go to MaximumFun.org and check

out all the great shows there that you can listen to. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby, You Change Your Mind.

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Still Buffering.

Taylor: And I am, too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: It worries me, though, if this attraction with Jack Black is universal. And I was tying it to my attraction to my husband. What if my husband becomes a sex symbol as well? Should I worry about this?

Taylor: I don't know how to tell you this, Sydnee. I think in certain circles, he already is.

Sydnee: I don't need that kind of competition.

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