

Still Buffering 460: Silent Hill F (2025)

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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: Tey, I—you have introduced me to something on TikTok, and then I had my own obsession on TikTok recently. They're all design-focused.

Taylor: Yeah. It is... it is hard to find the corners of TikTok that aren't upsetting, but when you find one, you just sort of tuck into it for a minute and just turn your brain off.

Sydnee: It's important, right? Like, I mean, we can go ahead and acknowledge that 14-year-old children are children.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah. That doesn't...

Sydnee: That are children.

Taylor: ... need to be said on a podcast, but I guess it does.

Sydnee: No. no. I had my first kiss when I was 14.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: It was a huge deal to me. I wore a—

Taylor: I'm gonna go—

Sydnee: I wore a pop tab, do you remember this? On my necklace.

Taylor: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Sydney: And I kept it. I don't know why I did this. I kept it as, like, a talisman that I was not going to take off my necklace until the day that I finally got my first kiss. And I got my first kiss when I was 14 years old, and I took the pop tab off my necklace. And I kept that pop tab for, I mean, years. It was a long time before I was like, "Why did I—why—what? I don't even know what any of this meant." And I got rid of the pop tab.

Taylor: I thought you were gonna say you gave it to other—I'm assuming that the other—the person on the other side of the kiss was a 14-year-old boy.

Sydney: Yes. He was a 14-year-old boy, and...

Taylor: See, now that's the important detail of this. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: Yeah. And he went to the other high school, and it was all very... I mean, we didn't even really date. I don't know.

Taylor: No. I thought you were gonna say you gave him the pop tab, like some sort of cute ritual. Like, "Here you go."

Sydney: "You can have my pop tab."

Taylor: "You claimed my first kiss. Now you are awarded the pop tab."

Sydney: No. I think, um... I don't—like, I'm 42 years old, so I'm too old to think, like, "Uh, that was kind of a bummer for a first kiss." Um, this is why I'm not gonna say his name, 'cause I feel like I'm putting him on blast. I'm not, really.

Taylor: Wow!

Sydney: It was just like—it was just one of those things where, like, we—like, me and my friends were running with this group of guys, and we were all sort of picking our one that we were gonna kiss. I mean, it was very... that was it. Like, that's the whole salacious story. It was one kiss. It was

unpleasant. And then that was it. And then, I don't know, then we went back to school for the school year, and we didn't date or anything.

My point is this. [laughs quietly] When I was 14, I had a pop tab that meant my first kiss, and I had my first kiss, and I kept the pop tab to remember it. If that's not a mark of immaturity, and the inability to make, like, complex, adult decisions, I don't know what is. Um, so I would just like to put that—I just wanted to share that little... that little anecdote from 14-year-old Sydnee.

Taylor: That's pretty... that's, you know—it's like when we go back and watch, like, Degrassi. The shows that actually cast, like, age-appropriate actors for—and those are older kids. Like, those are kids that are, like, 16-year-olds and stuff. Just, like, this is all just a whole bunch of kids. These are little babies.

Sydnee: I still had my Troll dolls at 14. I was not ready to part with my Troll doll collection yet.

Taylor: Oh, I was—I mean, I was never—I was always sort of a—I was gonna call myself a late bloomer. I was not interested in—I was not a bloomer at all. I think I was some sort of creepy weed. [laughs] Which is fine. I have continued to scale up buildings.

Um, but I was definitely still playing, like, with my Sailor Moon dolls and, like, writing fanfiction.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: For fun, and watching anime. And I proceeded to do that for the next, you know, half a decade. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, I was gonna say, like, I was still reading Archie Comics, but I'm still reading Archie Comics. [laughs]

Taylor: [simultaneously] You still do that.

Sydnee: So I don't—that doesn't really help. Uh, no. But—so, those parts of the internet suck, and I don't wanna... I don't wanna—

Taylor: Yeah, and it's good—you should be aware. You know, being able to turn away is a privilege. We're not advocating that. But also, you do need... it's good to have places to just...

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Hide your brain. [laughs] Turn it off.

Sydnee: Let's all just collectively never listen to Megyn Kelly again.

Taylor: No, that's easy. I never did, so. Done!

Sydnee: We're done with that. But, um, you introduced me to Ralph Lauren Christmas.

Taylor: Which I hate. It is a hate watch, but that's alright. Um...

Sydnee: Where did this—did Ralph Lauren—I saw the ad. Like, I saw—there is an ad that's like, "A Ralph Lauren Christmas." So is this just, like, they put out this idea, this concept, that there is a kind of Christmas aesthetic that you could embrace that is the Ralph Lauren Christmas aesthetic, and all these people are like, "Yes!" Is that what happened?

Taylor: I don't know. And I feel like we get a lot of these waves of, like, aesthetics that people latch on to. Like, the younger generations. Like, "Oh, this is what's in."

Like, I feel like that's happened with last year's Christmas and Halloween. Like, there was some sort of trend that was like... 90s vintage Christmas. But it was also—it was like, tacky. It was supposed to be purposely tacky. And looking at it it's like, no, that's just what it looked like. Like, we didn't think it was tacky. It was just, that's what you got.

Sydnee: A lot of the 90s, we figured out what tacky meant. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah, we defined it. We didn't know we were defining it. Uh, but this feels... I don't know if it's organic. Because there's a brand attached to it I'm like, I feel like some smart advertising person started a viral campaign. But it's all—

Sydnee: It's like astroturfing.

Taylor: Yeah. Like, all of these people now trying to make their Christmas a Ralph Lauren Christmas. Which just... it looks like a plaid iteration of the sad beige Christmas.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: With, like, some plaid over top of it. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yes. It is, um... first of all, the whole... okay. This is just my personal connotation. Like, when I saw—we're talking a lot of plaid and a lot of turtlenecks. Sometimes multiple turtlenecks on one person.

Taylor: Well, there was the—yes, the... [laughs quietly] the representative of Ralph Lauren that was talking about it.

Sydnee: I don't—and I will go ahead and share my bias. I don't like the feeling of a turtleneck. This has nothing to do with how they look. I think they can look fine. I do not personally like to wear them because it makes me feel like I'm suffocating. I just don't like that. I've never liked turtlenecks on me, from a sensory point of view. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I like—I don't like turtleneck sweaters. That's too much material around my neck. Like, a turtleneck that's, like, a thinner—like, a t-shirt material, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah. You can do that?

Taylor: That's okay. It's got a little—but it's also a little lowered. It doesn't sit as high.

Sydney: I tell you, I really, through all my—because I feel like I was breastfeeding my children for, like, a decade or something. I don't know. It feels. Like...

Taylor: [laughs] You were.

Sydney: It was a long time. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Are you done? I haven't checked in in a while. Is that over?

Sydney: Yes!

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydney: Yes! I did. I let—I did baby-led weaning, like, for food, and then also for breastfeeding weaning. And, like, my babies—it took 'em a long time. Anyway. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Hm.

Sydney: Yeah, no, neither of my children breastfeed anymore. That part of my life is over. It was wonderful. I do miss it sometimes. It was very sweet. However, I did become—because out of practicality, wearing any sort of high-necked shirt, even a crew neck, was a pain. Because, like, as my kids got older, they would just sort of grab at the neck of my shirt and pull on it, so I was stretching out all my t-shirts.

I became really... I developed a strong preference for, like, a deep V or a scoop neck. Something that I can pull down quickly, it does not destroy the shirt. And I am just—that is my bias, to this day. Even in the dead of winter, it's hard for me to... even just put on, like, a t-shirt is tough for me.

Taylor: Well, I don't think the Ralph Lauren Christmas makes considerations for breastfeeding mothers. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: No, no, no.

Taylor: 'Cause there's part of it that's like, "If someone brings a present to your house in a gift bag, you have to take it out of that bag and wrap it if it goes under your tree."

Sydney: Are you serious?

Taylor: And the wrapping has to all match, so you can't have people just give—someone shows up. It's like, "Here is your present," and it's, [gasps], like, a—like, a turquoise wrapping paper. You've gotta unwrap that baby, rewrap it in plaid.

Sydney: No. It is very much—like, the aesthetic seems to be definitely plaid, lots of plaid. The color palette is... which, like, what is revolutionary about this? It's all red and green!

Taylor: Well, but it's specific tones. Like, it's... it's, uh, like—it's not red. It's oxblood. It's not—you know.

Sydney: Ooh.

Taylor: It's—the green is like a forest green. It's like a deep green.

Sydney: But that's, like, the—

Taylor: The blue—the blue is a Prussian blue.

Sydney: That the most boring, like... "[mocking] Okay, yeah, Christmas. Red and green plaid." I mean, like, you didn't revolutionize—they were tying red velvet ribbons onto a green tree, and then there were, like, some red balls. And it's like, yes, this is—these are... I don't know. Again...

Taylor: I feels...

Sydney: ... the most obvious.

Taylor: I mean, a lot of those videos, though, are somebody attempting the, quote-unquote, "Ralph Lauren Christmas." And then all the comments

are going, "No, that's not right. That doesn't look right. This is why it's not right."

It reminds me very much of the black-tie videos.

Sydney: Hmm, yeah.

Taylor: You know, there are so many videos of young women wearing lovely dresses, and all the comments are like, "That's nice, but it's not black tie."

And I'm just like, well, I am never going to a black-tie event, because I... the only thing that seems to get the pass is if you wear incredibly expensive clothes. And I think that's the same thing with the Ralph Lauren Christmas. If you live in a very—if you live in a mansion and you can afford incredibly expensive stuff, then you'll get the pass. Which is to say, it's just rich people stuff.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: It's—this is not my business.

Sydney: That's what it looks like. No, that's what I was gonna say. Like, I don't—and I'm not trying to be judgmental. But when I see, like, all the creamy turtlenecks, and the plaid decorations, and the velvet ribbons, it looks... I mean, like rich people. It looks like country club aesthetic. It looks like you're gonna ride a horse, probably, later. I don't know. It also looks like a room where the most boring conversations about, like, finances are gonna happen or something.

Taylor: Say, stock portfolios?

Sydney: Yes! [laughs] Like...

Taylor: 401(k)s. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: It is not—there is nothing about that that I find appealing, or attractive, or, like, I desire to be a part of that kind of wealth. Because it's also, let's be really honest, it's a definition of wealth that is also very white.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: And I don't... I don't want to aspire to that. I don't think it's been healthy as a society to aspire to that.

Taylor: No. Well, there's a lot that it—on surface, it feels innocuous. There's a lot of these style trends that happen on TikTok, and it kind of bleeds over into, like, when people talk about, I mean, they'll get into, like, the ratios of their facial features. Or, you know, is this outfit looking like this aesthetic, or something? There's a lot that's, like, leaning towards a homogeny that is no longer innocuous.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: It is sort of a... I don't—wow. We said we were gonna go in the no bummers. I'm like, yeah, but all roads lead back to white supremacy somehow. 'Cause it doesn't kind of get to that, that there is a correct way to look and a bad way to look. There is good taste and there's bad taste. And isn't it weird that the right way to look and the good taste and the right way to dress all seems to line up with a very specific set of people's ideals?

Sydnee: Yes. Well, it's the same—and, I mean, like, you can apply this to, like, okay. What do we think is funny in this country? For the longest time, that's been dictated by what white men think is funny, right? White men of a certain age demographic, even. I mean, and so, like, our concept of comedy has had to change to, you know, accept the fact that, like, sometimes women laugh, too. I don't know. Like, you know, it's...

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I mean, like, really! We've had to adapt to that. And I also recognize that my personal idea about especially Christmas—any holiday, actually. Any holiday I think this is true, but especially Christmas. I have always rebelled against an aesthetic that is necessary for your Christmas decor. Like, that you have to pick an aesthetic.

I really don't—I reject that. Our tree has no theme. Our decorations have no theme. It's stuff that brings us joy, that brings our kids joy. Our ornaments are all the ornaments we've ever collected, made, you know, inherited from family members, that our children have created. It's a hodge podge. There is no color scheme. There is no underlying—I mean, there's just no—and to me, that's a holiday. Like, that's how the holidays should look. I understand that's a bias. I understand that's my personal bias.

Taylor: Well, and I think that—I mean, I feel like especially Christmas is a very nostalgia-laced holiday. Like, it becomes collaborative, not just over years but over generations. You know, you inherit stuff. "Oh, this is the set of ornaments that our great-great-grandmother passed down that have to put on the tree, because that's one of the things we have left."

Like, I see that from a—in a family setting, that makes sense. And even me, who is, you know, the—the Todd and Margo of the Christmas world, I have an aesthetic Christmas. It's based on my taste, not on what the world tells me taste should be.

Sydnee: Sure.

Taylor: You know. I have a pink Christmas tree that I cover with, you know, like, ornaments made of different drag queens I like, and, you know, leopard print, and it's very tacky, I guess. And that's my theme, is I want a—I want a bright, gaudy, gay Christmas.

Sydnee: Yes. Yeah.

Taylor: But it makes me happy. It's my unique style, and I don't care if anybody likes it, and it certainly won't get approval on TikTok.

Sydnee: Well, but I think what we've just both connected on is that we decorate in a way that makes us happy.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: And makes those around us—like, I share a space with three other people. It makes all of us happy. I bought a terrible rug off the internet a couple years ago.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: It's a truly tasteless... [laughs quietly] rug.

Taylor: Do you still put that rug out?

Sydnee: Yes, I put it out! 'Cause it's funny, because I thought—

Taylor: It is funny.

Sydnee: I was tricked by AI, and I thought it was a nice rug, and I thought I was getting a good deal on a nice Christmas rug, and it's hideous. And it's got—

Taylor: It's a—it's a towel you put on your floor. [laughs]

Sydnee: It is. And it's got hearts on it, inexplicably. Um, alongside the snow—there are snowflakes, but then there's also, like... it looks like a suit of cards. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. And it's slightly pixelated, if you look too close. [laughs]

Sydnee: It is! It's terrible! It's a terrible rug. Um, and it matches nothing. Not that anything matches anyway. But, like, it doesn't even look Christmassy. But we put it out every Christmas, because then we get to laugh about how Sydnee bought this terrible AI-generated rug, and now it's become part of our Christmas.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: All of this brings us joy. I really question—and I'm not saying these people don't exist, 'cause every kind of person on Earth exists, so someone does. But generally speaking, is a Ralph Lauren Christmas aesthetic bringing joy to everyone who feels compelled to embrace it?

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: It cannot be. It cannot be!

Taylor: I think that they are allowing the fear of not fitting in to win out over the joy of self-expression.

Sydney: Hmm.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: It's a powerful lesson for kids out there. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yes. [laughs]

Sydney: Don't let it happen. [through laughter] Don't let Ralph Lauren ruin your Christmas.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydney: I'm sorry. I didn't mean this to be, like, an a... an attack, specifically.

Taylor: I like the inference that he's, like, gonna be the Grinch, but instead of coming down the chimney and stealing all your decorations, he's just gonna replace it all [laughs] with aesthetic plaid, and cool-toned colors.

Sydney: You're gonna walk down—I know, you're gonna walk in on Christmas morning and it's like, "[screams] Ahh! Plaid! Plaid! Everything's plaid!"

Taylor: Your whole family has been replaced by people that look like they're from a Sears catalog.

Sydney: [laughs] You look down at your body and you're wearing four turtlenecks and you don't know where they came from.

Taylor: Oh no!

Sydney: "[screams] Ahh! Why is there a horse outside?"

Taylor: Swallowed down the—[laughs] there's gotta be a horse.

Sydney: They just look—I mean, doesn't it look like you're gonna ride a horse after you're in that living room?

Taylor: It does. I mean, you definitely have the money. You have that horse money. That's what that implies.

Sydney: You have horse money.

Taylor: [laughs] I mean, only so many people have horse money.

Sydney: [laughs] It's the same people who have boat money, I think.

Taylor: That's true.

Sydney: You've got boat money or horse money.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: I like to contrast that with... there is a, uh—there's an old design show that keeps popping up on my TikTok called Designing Cents, as in, like, C-E-N-T-S, because it's... the idea is these two women are gonna redecorate a room in your house on a budget. They're gonna do it for cheap, and it's gonna look like it. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I don't even think—'cause it's not—honestly, they'll list what they spent on it and I'm like, that's, like... you could've... like, "Oh, we only spent a thousand dollars on this."

It's like, yeah, I think I could've done more. Probably for less!

Sydney: I know. Well, okay. I'm not sure—and it's very 90s. Like, it's very much of a time. Because there's a lot of, um... a lot of, like, bright color,

patterned, like, wallpapers, or big, like, flouncy—what are the things over the curtains? The, uh—you know what I'm talking about. The... the thing at the top. The big flouncy thing at the top. You know what I mean. Anyway.

Taylor: The panel. I forget what that's called.

Sydney: There's a lot of those things that just aren't really in fashion anymore. Like, they're not quite what people lean towards. They paint rugs on hardwood floors.

Taylor: That's my favorite thing. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: The one I watched they were like, "This family was complaining, because when the dogs come running in, they crumple up the rug, and they just can't keep the rug straight on the floor 'cause the dogs run over it and crumple it up, so we had a clever idea. We painted a giant area rug on their beautiful hardwood floors." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: So, the first time I saw them do that, they did it in a laundry room that had, like, a stone floor. Like, an unfinished floor. And they kind of painted it—it looks like a Rugrats room. Like, it's very graphic.

Sydney: [laughs]

Taylor: They did all sorts of weird, cartoony design in it. It's weirdly one of the few that I'm like, you know, it's bad, but I think it's bad enough that it comes back around to good. And it kind of made sense, 'cause it's a gross unfinished floor. You painted a weird cartoony rug on it, but then you painted weird cartoony stuff everywhere. Alright, alright, I'll give you that one.

Sydney: Sure, sure.

Taylor: I'll give you that one. But now you're painting it on just anywhere. And that's not...

Sydney: No, no. And I mean, like, they had a kitchen where they hung, like, watering cans above the sink. Um, what were some other... there was one

room that they set up for, like, a tea party? It was like a beautiful little sitting room, but then they, like, made it all a big tea party room. And I don't know that these people wanted to have a tea party, but that's about all you could do in this room now.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydney: Is have a tea party.

Taylor: Well, now it's a tea party room.

Sydney: Um, they—uh, there was one tablescape they created with live moss. Did you see that one?

Taylor: Oh, yeah! Yeah, that's gonna... be fun in, what, three days?

Sydney: And they said something—they were like, they put down the tablecloth and then they were like, "And then we put a beautiful strip of..." they called it—it was Saran wrap, but they called it... [laughs] like, cling film, or something. It's like, you just put Saran wrap on the table!

Taylor: Well, you gotta have somewhere to put the live moss.

Sydney: Yeah. Then you dump dirty moss all over the table. I mean, like, there's dirt there!

Taylor: Like, that's—you know, I've seen that done for, like, a single day event, you know? Like a wedding or something, where you build a tablescape with live moss. But that's knowing that you're going to put that in the trash at the very, very end of the day. [laughs]

Sydney: Well, I also think that there's, like, a distance of dirt from food that you should try to maintain.

Taylor: Yeah, I agree with that.

Sydney: like, a centerpiece at the middle of a table that has some live elements in it? Cool. But, like, this was down the middle of a big, long dining

room table. And it's like—they were, like, trying to shove the plates in among the moss. And it was like, I don't wanna eat with dirt right there. Well, I probably would. I don't care. But still, I would not take the time to put the dirt on my table. I will say that.

Taylor: No. I don't—they also would also, which is funny for a show that focuses so much on budget, they inexplicably always find a very suitable piece of furniture for what they're looking for, but it's always, like, "Oh, it was in the basement. It was in the attic collecting dust."

And it's like, no, you bought that. You bought that credenza! I know you did! It's just above your budget!

Sydnee: You've gotta find—they make a footstool out of, like—it's like a piece of pi—like a giant metal, like, round piece of pipe is what it looks like.

Taylor: Nice.

Sydnee: And then they, like, create, like, a little, like, upholstered top for it. And it's just this tiny, weird footstool that they then just set in front of a chair. And it's got, like—like, the fabric that they upholster the top with is very 90s. It's very, like, primary colors, geometric shape kind of looking fabric. And then just this, like, silver metal pipe. It is the weirdest thing I've ever seen, and I don't know how you look at it and go, "That's exactly what I was going for." [laughs] "This—yes! Yes, this was in my dreams!"

Taylor: What were the qualifications of these women, I wonder, going in to this?

Sydnee: I don't know. I love them, because they're these two very pleasant ladies wearing overalls. Like, they never start off in overalls—

Taylor: Hmm. I know why you love them. [laughs]

Sydnee: They never start off—like, for the opening when they're, like, looking at the room and planning, they're in their, like—I guess their street clothes. Like, they're in their "what they wore for the day" clothes. But then when it comes to, like, "Now we get down to business," they both change

into overalls. [laughs quietly] And so they're both—they're just these very nice women who mean—they mean so well. And they're just destroying these rooms, very pleasantly, in their matching overalls. I don't even know what to think about it.

Taylor: Well... that's why—that's why the gay men do the decorating, and not the lesbians. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs] I have thought that many times! Like, the work is fine. They know what they're doing. They know how to paint. They know their way around a power tool. They know how to do this work. But the design aesthetic... there's a missing element.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: But oh, it's so pleasant. I would highly recommend, if you can come—we were—man. Justin and I looked forever to try to find a way to watch this show. It's not easy to find. It's not, like, out there easily accessible on YouTube. But somebody has uploaded clips and clips and clips of it onto TikTok. [laughs]

Taylor: I feel like that's the thing followed on the heels of where I got a lot of clips of—was it called Trading Spaces?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Now, that was... I think these two ladies are doing their—they're doing their best, and they... they try really hard. Those designers on Trading Spaces I think sometimes were just doing stuff out of pure evil. [laughs]

Sydnee: I do think at times it was for shock value. Like, I believe that. Looking back and seeing some of those episodes now—and then especially watching, like, the interaction of—'cause, like, you're doing it to your friend, right? 'Cause, like, you switch with a couple that you're friends with. And the couples would be like, "I'm not sure if they'll like this."

And designer is like, "No, no, no. Trust me."

And I'm thinking, hmm.

Taylor: They definitely want five inches of sand dumped on their living room floor. They're gonna love it.

Sydney: [laughs] There are so many times when they—the reveal. And, like, some of 'em will be honest, which those always make it on TikTok. The people who are like, "I hate this. Nope. Nope. This isn't it. I hate it." Or, like, they start crying.

Taylor: Uh-huh.

Sydney: [laughs] "I'm gonna have to redo all this."

Taylor: "I'm gonna have to tear down 2000 pieces of hay from this wall."

Sydney: [laughs] Like, I like when they're honest. Occasionally, though, you can just see it in their eyes. "[sighs]" But they're trying so hard. Like, "I'm on TV. I'm gonna try to be nice. [weakly] Great. Yeah."

Taylor: Just gone. Pulled themselves deep into their mind palace and like, "I have to just get through this."

Sydney: They find, like, the one throw pillow where they're like, "I like this. I do like this." [laughs]

Taylor: "Well, that is a color that I mentioned. So there's that."

Sydney: [laughs] That's when the design team says, "Oh, actually, you're not gonna keep the throw pillow. That's not—we take all that with us. You're just left with the hay on your wall."

Taylor: Yeah, that's set dec, yeah. Yeah. Woof.

Sydney: Oh, and the poor kids, man. They would do that to kids' rooms too, and it would be like...

Taylor: Oh.

Sydney: "We heard you like horses. Well, guess what?" [laughs]

Taylor: "Your room's a stable now!"

Sydney: Yeah. "There's a horse there!"

Taylor: "You sleep on the floor!"

Sydney: "We bought you a horse!"

Taylor: It's just a horse. Just an empty room and a horse.

Sydney: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, the whole budget actually went into the horse, so...

Sydney: Horses are expensive!

Taylor: We've learned that. [laughs]

Sydney: Just ask Ralph Lauren.

Taylor: Yes. [laughs] But necessary for a good Christmas.

Sydney: Mm-hmm. "This Christmas, when you're nestled among your plaid... don't you need a horse?"

Taylor: You always need a horse.

Sydney: Uh, well... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: We're not talking about interior design.

Sydney: No. Although I would—both of those things should bring you joy, if you are also lost in the other quagmire of the internet, right now.

Taylor: Yeah. You need a little breaky-break.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Um... not nearly as relaxing, or funny, uh... very stressful. We're talking about Silent Hill f.

Sydney: Yes.

Taylor: The new Silent Hill game. Well, it's new-ish. It's been out for a couple months, now.

Sydney: Um, I had not played a Silent Hill... no, I was gonna say it had been since, like, I was a teenager. Like, I thought it was, like, way back. But there was one that Justin had me play at a little bit with him. Whatever the last one a few years back or something.

Taylor: The last one I played was Downpour, but there have been more since that, I think. I think there was one or two more. There was one... what, there was a demo that made the rounds that Justin might have been playing, where you're just kind of, like, locked in a house.

Sydney: No—did they, um—did they, like, revamp the original story?

Taylor: Oh. They remade 2.

Sydney: I saw that.

Taylor: That makes sense.

Sydney: Justin played some of that. I have to be honest. The controlling of Silent Hill games—I don't know what's wrong with my brain. I don't know what it is. I'm not very good at controlling characters. And this probably goes back to, like, old school PlayStation controllers is what I'm thinking of, right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: And I was always bad at that. I always ended up just, like, staring at the sky and running. [laughs quietly] Running in a direction while staring at the sky. And then getting attacked by something I can't see, 'cause I'm still looking at the sky.

Taylor: That happened a lot.

Sydney: Yeah. But—so, like, I have some—I think I have some trauma from that, maybe. Maybe that's why I'm bad at it. But the other thing is, I feel like they're always so dark. I feel like there's always these moments where I'm like, "I can't see anything!" [laughs]

Taylor: Well, that was a lot of—I mean, that era of specifically survivor horror, which was largely on the PlayStation, I feel like the janky controls were just part of the fear.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: It's like, you'd be running from a horrible zombie and, you know, as scary as the zombie was in, like, you know, early games, which was, you know... it still had some good effects.

Sydney: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: But you would just, like, turn a corner, and the combination of the controls, and also the weird camera angles that would pop on, because they'd have those kind of eccentric camera angles to make them scarier, and you'd just, like... I can see one of my arms, and then I can just see, like, the thing that's eating me, like, in the foreground, and I don't...

Sydney: Yes. [laughs]

Taylor: I'm just gonna keep hitting the attack button. Oh, I'm dead. Alright.

Sydney: I know. I know. That's what I would do, too. Like, if I can see the whatever, pipe or whatever happens to be in my arm, waving around, I think I'm waving it. I think I must be—do I hear a noise that sounds like I'm hitting it? [laughs]

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And, I mean, definitely that's improved. And I will say, you know, you talk about how the graphics weren't as good so, like, the scary monsters aren't as scary. I will say, I think there's a tradeoff. 'Cause, like, the monsters in this one, definitely scary.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: 100%. They way the first one you encounter moves—not the fog monster, but the woman-like figure with the... weird mechanical pieces.

Taylor: [simultaneously] All the joints.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That one, the way it moves is incredibly scary. Like, right? Like, that sort of, like, spider-like crawling, flipping around of the body. But there is something that you lo—like, you can see the detail in these so much clearer. Like the thing you encounter later with no face and no stomach and whatnot. Like, and they have the, like, very graphic shot of all that.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Seeing it like that, there's something about that that scares me slightly less than those old school sort of, like, amorphous, bloody, meat monster-looking things that would come at you in the old games that you weren't quite sure what the heck that thing is supposed to be, but you get the vague idea of it. There was something about those bad graphics that scared me more.

Taylor: I think for Silent Hill 1... I mean, just specifically in the Silent Hill series, like, the first one, the graphics are... they're not—I mean, they're a little bit rougher, so I feel like it's not as effective. But I do think that what you're talking about—'cause we were big fans of the original two. 2 and 3

have just enough definition in the monsters that you can absolutely be scared, but there is that quality where it's like, I don't really know what's going on, and that makes it so much scarier.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: 'Cause it is just, like... like, you're seeing a form, and you're trying to understand it, and it's almost—'cause I played some of the remake. And there's some monsters that you get better delineations on in the remake. But it does kind of take the terror out. The one I'm thinking of in Silent Hill 2 is, uh... there's, like, a—God, it's awful. It's like, um, a bed monster. It looks like a man on top of a woman, but it's, like, built onto a bed frame.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: And in the new game you can really tell that's exactly what it's supposed to be, which is very disturbing, given the context of the game. But the old one, you could kind of get that, but I think because you were like, "Oh, God, what am I looking at? Like, am I looking at two figures strapped together on a bed frame? What is this?"

Like, there was just enough of a question mark that it made it more awful.

Sydnee: I think that's true, when I think of some of the old games. That really, like, why is the face distorted? Is it, like—what am I looking at? Are there features there? Is it scar tissue? Is it—no, is it just not a human? What is this thing?

All those elements I think made it a little scarier. There was a moment in this one where, like, you get the close up look at the monster, and it almost sort of, like, turned the tension down a little bit for me. I don't know. I know that's a weird thing.

Now, the way that they move... all that, like, broken doll, flipping-around body stuff, that always freaks me out. That'll get me every time, so... very scary.

Taylor: I feel like this game is—it's, uh... the dynamics of the fear are very different, because there's less... I mean, I've been playing on story mode, and I'm gonna be completely honest, I have no shame in saying I always play on story mode. I am there for the spooky story. I am there to see the scary things. I don't wanna die a million times trying to, you know, get there.

Sydney: Right.

Taylor: I don't wanna worry about my weapon degrading 10 times over the course of one fight. And they have taken that away in this game. I mean, I'm still playing on story mode, and it is still... it is still a lot, like, to... it's hard. [laughs]

Sydney: It seems very hard. I mean, Justin was doing most of the fighting part, 'cause like I said, I'm very bad at it. I like watching it. I like the story. I like the puzzles. But the—I've never... that's just never been my—you know, in video games, like, the fighting. I like, um—I like more like RPG kinda things. Where you're, like, casting—you're sitting there deciding what spell or what attack you want to do, and then waiting for the effect. As opposed to just the, like... I don't know. "Stab, stab, stab, stab." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well, and I—you know, most of those games, like, you never—you kinda had to have a plan for, like, the big boss fights. You know, it would telegraph some moves and you'd be like, "Oh, okay. I need to back up when it does this thing, and then go in when it does this thing."

These are, like, way more complex. Like, usually you could get through it by just bludgeoning something. Like, if you have high enough health and you have enough, you know, enough equipment, you could just get through any boss battle just by... just by button mashing.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: This is not the case in this game. You have to know exactly what you're doing. You have to have a very specific plan, very specific equipment. And that is... that's a challenge. Like, and there's a lot of running. Which was a feature in some of the Silent Hill games, where you kind of—there

were spaces where the best way to deal with this is just to run by all of this stuff that wants to kill you. You don't benefit from killing everything you come across. But there was at least always the option. In this game, like, there were areas that were completely impassable if I stopped and tried to fight everything that you could fight.

Sydney: I think they try to condition you for that with the way it starts. 'Cause, like, the first time you start encountering monsters, you don't have any weapon.

Taylor: Yeah. You just run.

Sydney: So all you can do is run. And that was very frustrating to me. I was like, "Well, no, I don't want to run. I want to fight it." But you... that's not an option. And I think they're trying to teach you, like, sometimes you're just running. Don't fight everything that you come across, 'cause you can't.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: But that was a frustrating dynamic for me. It's like, "No, just kill the thing. I don't wanna worry about it chasing me."

Taylor: Well, how do you feel about the story? 'Cause there was a lot of discussion about this game being the first Silent Hill game that doesn't... I think up till now, all of the Silent Hill games have taken place around the Silent Hill that is arguably—I mean, it's in a fictional place somewhere in America, but is based on that—what is that mining town? Is it in Pennsylvania? Where it's still on fire, underground.

Sydney: Oh, is that where it is? Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Taylor: Where this very specific cult has formed in the game. Not in actual Pennsylvania. [laughs] I'm sure there are cults there, but I don't know any. Um, there are cults everywhere. That's not a...

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: ... drag on Pennsylvania. Anyway, uh, this game is in a separate place, but it still has the same dynamic.

Sydnee: I don't—well, here's part of it. So, I didn't finish it. We played for quite a bit, but I did not finish the game, so I don't know the whole—do you know the whole story now?

Taylor: I do, yes.

Sydnee: Okay. Are we spoiling it? Should we decide that? It's okay if you do.

Taylor: I think that's...

Sydnee: I will not be upset.

Taylor: Okay. Well, I won't spoil it too much, but in any context that it comes up, yes.

Sydnee: I mean, the con—like, as far as I can tell in the story is that, you know... our, um, hero... what's her name?

Taylor: Hinako.

Sydnee: Hinako. She has disappointed her father and her family in some way, and he's yelling at her, and her older sister is, like, the golden child, because she did something good. I think my take on it, it seems to be, like, followed more traditional values and what the family wanted for her, and Hinako wants to do—break away, and maybe do something more modern. Or—at this point in the game, it is not clear to me how exactly she has disappointed her parents, just that she has. And I feel like there's some, like, being dragged back into the traditions of the town and, like, into the life she doesn't want is the essence of some of this fog monster stuff.

I don't know. I feel like when her first friend dies... uh, the first friend who—

Taylor: Sakuko.

Sydney: When she dies, and she's talking about how you didn't want to run your friend's—or your family's shrine, you wanted to be a family that owned a candy store, and you couldn't. I feel like she got dragged back. I don't know. To me, it feels like "I'm trying to break free from familial expectations and do the thing in life that would bring me joy, but everything is dragging me back. Like, literally trying to kill me, but also dragging me into this life. That's sort of the vibe I'm getting so far, but I'm not far enough to really know. I saw, like, the fox temple guy.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: [laughs quietly] Fox face. Um, I know that Shu is—I'm not sure. He keeps appearing, and we keep following him, and then he disappears again, so I'm not really sure what's going on with Shu right now. He seems to love us, but I don't know. That's as far as I got.

Taylor: Well, I'm gonna... okay, I will say, spoiler warning if you don't want to know anything about the game. I will be giving away some plot points. 'Cause that's—

Sydney: Yeah, go ahead.

Taylor: I mean, it's set in 60s in Japan. And, you know, the mechanic of Silent Hill is always that it's sort of this dark otherworld that you slip into. It's sort of a personal hell. Like, the monsters are very much designed to psychologically target you. There are things that are created from your mind, but they're also attacking you.

And so obviously we're getting—this monster world is created from Hinako's fears.

Sydney: Right.

Taylor: It is interesting that I think in every other game—I mean, there's the time with the cult. You know, there's, I mean... there's a reason they're being punished in this hell dimension. I don't think Hinako quite deserves, as just a young girl who maybe doesn't want to be in an arranged marriage—

'cause that's the argument. Is, you know, that her parents expect her to... get married.

Sydney: Okay. That was the vibe, but it had not been confirmed at this point.

Taylor: Yeah. And, well, and it's also—you know, you've got the parents, which you do have to fight their monster form at one point. So, the dad is, like, an angry alcoholic. The mother is just sort of, like, invisible. Like, she has completely lost herself in subservience to her husband.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Which is part of Hinako's fear, is that that's what waits for her.

Sydney: Sure.

Taylor: Um, and even the sister. Like, when you do meet—the reason the sister is the golden child was she did the right—she got married and is a respectable woman. Um, and that fox guy is sort of who—I mean, you are to be wed to him. He is your arranged marriage.

Sydney: Hmm.

Taylor: And depending on how you play the game, um, obviously determines your outcome. Uh, and, you know, like, you end up fighting all of your old friends. Like, you have to fight your two girlfriends that, you know, transform into horrible monsters. But the whole idea behind it, it's definitely a feminist sort of exploration on, like, her choosing her own future for herself, or submitting to having her future decided for her and becoming just a subservient extension of her husband.

Sydney: Fox face.

Taylor: Yeah. And now, why her husband exists in this nightmare world and not like—it's not like—a lot of the other—I mean, I'd say all of the other games have an introduction based very strongly in reality. This one kind of lacks that. Like, stuff is going crazy from the very beginning. Nothing seems

normal. There's no normal world that feels very comfortable and a nightmare world. There's, like, the weird, creepy fog world, and then the nightmare world. [laughs]

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: Which I guess does happen once you enter Silent Hill. But there is an assumption that, like, you know... like, your protags are driving in from a normal outside world.

Sydney: That's true. She's—I mean, her normal world really ends as soon as she leaves her parents' house.

Taylor: Yeah. Like, everything feels nightmarish.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: Um, but—

Sydney: Well, and it's tied into, like, there's the whole little—like, the warning about how the foxes are invading the town. I didn't know what that was supposed to tell me about. I was like, "Oh, no. They all have *Echinococcus*."

Taylor: [laughs] That's what it is.

Sydney: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I mean, and I don't—I'm gonna spoil some—I have not played all the way to the end yet, but I have spoiled all the endings for myself, 'cause that's... that's what I do. Uh, but to spoil a couple of the endings, just to show you how varied it can be based on your gameplay, like, in one ending—I mean, that lady with—the faceless lady that's in all white, that's you. That is the eventual version of you.

Sydney: Ohh, okay.

Taylor: Which the symbolism of, like—at one point you go through a—oh, it's awful. You go through, like, a... a ceremony where they cut off your arm and half your face, and you get, like, a fox mask put where your upper face used to be. And you get this weird fox arm grafted on that you can fight with, but you're also losing your humanity. You're losing yourself as you go through these marriage rituals to this fox man. And that's the end result of you, is you're just this faceless... thing that is married.

You can end that way. There's another ending where, like, you meet your sort of shadow self, and the two of you leave together. You know, sort of choosing your own direction in life. Um, there's one... you mentioned a fox-related disease. There is one ending that's just—'cause, you know, Shu gives you some red pills at the beginning and then you find those red pills all along that heal you. There is one ending where it's just "This young girl went crazy and, like, murdered her family, and was high on drugs, and how she's fled." [laughs] So... there's a lot of up for interpretation [crosstalk].

Sydney: I wondered about the red pills. I wondered if this was taking us in a—it is a weird... it's a weird addition to it, that there are just these random pills everywhere that I take sometimes.

Taylor: Well, and I guess it kinda ties into, I don't know, maybe, like, the... you know, that era of housewife. Would you have been on a lot of pills to distract yourself from reality?

Sydney: Yes. I mean, that's exactly what they did. If you were unhappy with your lot in life as a housewife, they just gave you Valium.

Taylor: Well. [unintelligible] I don't know. But I think that that's where some of the discussion—I would say some—controversy is a strong word. I think that there was probably some gamer bros that were butthurt. Like, "[mocking] Uh, it's not in Silent Hill, and it's about girl stuff." Like, okay. Like... it's—I mean, Silent Hill's had a female protagonist before. That's not new.

Sydney: Sure.

Taylor: There is a lot of feminist discourse around Heather and the whole cult and the, you know, self-rebirning babies of it all. Like, there's a lot that's already been there. They've gone down these roads before. This is just in a different part of the world.

Sydnee: And, I mean... first of all, like, the setting is really beautiful.

Taylor: Oh, it's stunning.

Sydnee: Which is cool. Like, it's so well done. I mean, it's really gorgeous just to look around. I just wanted to look at—there were—in the very first part of the game, as you're working your way down into town, there are, like, gardens. Like, people have little, like, porch gardens and stuff. And I just wanted to, like, stare at all the plants. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I'm like, "Justin, wait, go back! Look at those plants."

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "I wanna see those plants."

Taylor: Very nice plants. Were you trying to figure out what the plants were? You know that stuff.

Sydnee: I know. Well, yes. But also, I assume they're different plants than I have here. [laughs] I'm like, looking. I'm like, "Are these similar to... " I've probably grown herbs that I would recognize, you know.

Taylor: I was gonna say, I'm sure they're all real.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: There's one—whatever the one flower that's very symbolic in the game is a flower that only grows... not actually, but, you know, the myth is that it grows where dead bodies, are, so that's a... that's a cool detail.

Sydnee: Okay. I didn't know that. I wondered. I was looking. I was like, "That red flower has to be important. Those have to be important flowers." [laughs quietly] Um, no. I think—I mean... I think that, uh, it's beautiful to look at. It's really well done. I obviously—we haven't finished it yet. But, um, I never liked the fighting part of a game, just because, like, I want to move on to the next story part. I'm more interested in that. Um, I do think that the—especially the way those monsters move is so smart, and scary, and I can imagine playing this game by yourself in a dark room, you'd be really freaked out. So it accomplishes—'cause I think Silent Hill should do that too, right?

I think it's cool that it has an interesting story and kind of narrative behind it, and stuff that can evoke interesting conversation and, like, you know, about women and women's roles and what that means to break out of your family's expectations and all that stuff. I think that's a really cool conversation. But also, it should scare you. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh yeah. Well, and maybe... maybe the thing is it's scary in different ways than the old games were. Almost when you think about, like, different types of—different ways that horror movies go about scaring you. Some lean on the creepy factor, some do a lot of jump scares, some just put the tension high and keep the tension high.

And I think that's the unique element in this game is that it seems to lean a lot heavier into... the old games, once you'd get back to sort of the light world, other than a few of those weird meandering monsters, you weren't gonna be hit with anything. You kinda had a safety net there. You could kind of relax. This one never really lets the tension drop, because you're always... you're always at—something's always out to get you.

Sydnee: Well, that's—welcome to what it's like to be a woman, I guess I would say to all the people complaining.

Taylor: That's also true. [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, well, you know, and I don't know if that's intentional. But, like, that would be a good interpretation of that. Like, because even if you are not in imminent danger from another person around you, like, the...

your—especially with this character, your role in society and who you are supposed to be at all times, how you are supposed to present yourself, what you're supposed to say, how you're supposed to feel, what you're supposed to want and think and do, is all so carefully monitored, and there's so clearly stuff to be punished for and stuff to be praised for.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: And that's all the time. That's at every moment, all the time.

Taylor: Well, and I think that plays into it being all of your—or a lot of your big—well, I guess all of your big boss battles, I mean, your girlfriends you have to fight.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: 'Cause, you know, you're always pitted against each other. You know, you have to fight your parents. Like, it's... fight yourself. Like, but that specifically I think having to battle your girlfriends is... that's not a staple of all the other games, where you're always battling your... your, you know, cohorts.

Sydney: Well, and I mean, they kind of hinted. I wondered if that was coming, because they're calling you a traitor there at the very beginning.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: And I was like, I wonder where... that's going.

Taylor: Yeah, which [crosstalk] over 500 yen. That's... you know, I guess that was more money back then.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: It's, like, 10 dollars. Maybe 20.

Sydney: What, um... what becomes of Shu?

Taylor: Uh, I think there is—I think there is a version where you have to fight some version of him, but that's not... I don't know if that's always the ending. Because on some endings—there is one ending where, like, him and Fox—the fox guy have, like, a... a discussion about how they're both sort of in control of you now. They both love you, and they'll, you know, decide your future for you. And you're just sort of in the background like, "Hey. [laughs quietly] Excuse me." Uh... I don't think there is an ending where you just leave with him happily. Like, "Oh, we got through and we're partners now."

Sydney: Well, I didn't know if he—I didn't know if you liked him back. I could tell if, like, that's the desired outcome. Like, if you could, you would run away with him, but your parents want you to marry somebody else. Or if, like, your desired outcome is, "I don't wanna get married. I wanna go live a life."

Taylor: Well, and I think that that's kind of—especially with, I don't know... maybe it's just my projecting onto it. But he is not—as much as you call each other partner, he is not a very good partner. 'Cause there are a lot of sections of the game where he is just leaving you behind. [laughs]

Sydney: Yes, he does! Well, you turn around and he's gone again. And he's like, "If you don't keep up with me, I'll leave you behind." He says that, very clearly.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. Well, and I think that's—you know, they're kind of buddies more than they're, you know, romantically entangled. But... I do—which, I mean, it makes sense. It's a Silent Hill game. There's never really a good ending.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: But he doesn't seem any less... sketchy than the fox guy. And I don't think he's supposed to be.

Sydney: He's the nice guy.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydney: Hmm. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: So there's really no—there's no good answer.

Sydney: Watch out for the nice guy.

Taylor: Well, which is probably back to the theme that...

Sydney: [laughs] Who's also really into red pills.

Taylor: Yeah. He's keeping you drugged up. You know.

Sydney: There's a whole internet culture around that there.

Taylor: Oh!

Sydney: 'Cause red—oh, no! [laughs]

Taylor: A red pill nice guy. Oh, no!

Sydney: Oh, no! Not the red pill nice guy!

Taylor: This game is far more aware than we thought it was. [laughs]

Sydney: Yes. That just hit me. They're red pills.

Taylor: Well, but it does make sense. 'Cause if you look at it more as the whole game is a metaphor that she is—it's just a, you know, her own mind constructing this, where there is—there is not path where she doesn't have to submit to a man.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: And that would've been the reality at the time.

Sydney: Yeah. I think it's—I mean, we were really enjoying it. I finally got too creeped out and we had to stop playing it, 'cause it was getting very late, and...

Taylor: Yeah. There are some good puzzles.

Sydney: [crosstalk] nightmares.

Taylor: I don't know if you got—

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: They took—took me a minute to get to the puzzles, but once they start, there's a lot of fun...

Sydney: There were a couple that we'd done in the shrines, in the early—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, I enjoy those.

Sydney: [crosstalk] those puzzles.

Taylor: That's always—

Sydney: Yeah, I like the puzzles.

Taylor: Yeah. I like that, you know, the puzzles—I mean, you can separate, like, the difficulty of the puzzles out. I like a hard puzzle. I just don't want a hard battle. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: Yes. Yeah, I feel the same. Like, I want the shock of the scary thing, and then let's hit it with a pipe and move on.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Well, and I mean, you know, that's the... weapons have always degraded in Silent Hill games, but not as quickly. I mean, these degrade fast. And there's also... the sanity meter, which...

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: That is a difficult overly that is—I don't know if any more recent Silent Hill games have had that. That's a staple in a lot of other survival horror games, but the early Silent Hill games, you did not have to worry if you were going insane by seeing all this creepy stuff. [laughs]

Sydney: Well, and, like, the more violent you are, like if you really, like, start, you know, attacking something, it decreases your sanity.

Taylor: Yeah. Or even if you dodge too much. Like, you really...

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: Trying to figure out, like, "I can dodge twice, and then I can hit once, and then I've gotta run away. [laughs] Or take a pill."

Sydney: Or drink some Ramune.

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Drink some Ramune. Eat the...

Sydney: I like that that's a way to get your sanity back! [laughs]

Taylor: Honestly... [laughs] I get it.

Sydney: I think that's a really funny mechanic. I saw that and I was like, "What does the Ramune do?"

"It restores your sanity."

"Okay."

Taylor: Yeah. That makes sense.

Sydney: Sure! Sure. Uh, well, I really enjoyed it. I'm glad that you were getting to play it, 'cause Justin had mentioned it before. Like, "Oh, you all should talk about Silent Hill, if Tey's gonna play it."

And I was like, "I don't know." But...

Taylor: I hadn't been able to, 'cause I don't have a PS5, but the lovely individual that I'm seeing currently has a PS5. And so it's, you know.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: A nice—nice, uh... nice bonus.

Sydney: [laughs] Nice bonus.

Taylor: The relationship is good on its own, even without Silent Hill. But, you know, it's a nice add-on. [laughs quietly]

Sydney: It's just a—yeah. Yeah, just some icing. Yeah. That's—yeah, it was a lot of fun. We're gonna play more of it, even though we've already talked about it. We still want to play more, 'cause Justin was really—he was really enjoying it. And he had said, like, "Man, I think you would like it."

And I was like, "Ehh, I don't know. I don't know."

We don't play a lot of video games together, but this one was really fun.

Taylor: Well, that's—I'm excited to finish it. I definitely—I mean, I spoiled it all for myself, 'cause I thought there's no way I'm going to be able to play it, so it's nice to actually get to.

Sydney: Well, you'll have to let us know which ending you get.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, same. I hope you make it all the way through. It's not a long game. I mean, it's long if you keep dying, which... I'll do the puzzles and the meandering, and then I'll throw the controller to her for the boss battles, [through laughter] 'cause she's better at fighting things.

Sydney: Same. I generally just let Justin do all the controlling, and I just tell him. I'll just point and go, "Do that! No, that one!" [laughs quietly]

Taylor: That works. They're good games for that. You know, they're very cinematic.

Sydney: "Go there!" Yeah. Uh, well, Tey, what are we gonna do next?

Taylor: Uh, well, you know, we haven't dug back into the music of our past in a while. And I think it was a pretty big band for its time period, that not—hasn't had quite the revival of some of the ones we've talked about. But I want to talk about Jawbreaker, 'cause it was very important to me.

[pause]

Sydney: Sorry, you cut out for just a second there.

[pause]

Taylor: Uh, I want to talk about Jawbreaker, because it was very important to me.

Sydney: Okay. Yeah. I think that would be excellent. 'Cause you know what, Tey? I can't, off the top of my head, name a Jawbreaker song.

Taylor: I feel like they're—I'll make you a mix like I've done in the past, and send you all the hits, and then my personal favs. And I feel like there might be a song or two that you're like, "Oh, that was that song!" But I—

Sydney: I bet it—yeah. I bet I will.

Taylor: Yeah. I do think it's a little off the radar from what we usually hit, but...

Sydney: Well, good. Well, we'll talk about Jawbreaker next time. And, um, in the meantime, if you, like really scary video games... that—I mean, they're pretty scary. It's kind of gory.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: But it's really good. Then Silent Hill f is very good.

Taylor: Set up the—

Sydney: What does the f stand for?

Taylor: Oh, you know what? I don't know! I'm sure... is it female? [laughs]
Is that it?

Sydney: I was wondering. I was wondering if it was feminist? Female?
[crosstalk]

Taylor: Feminist. Silent Hill Feminist. [laughs]

Sydney: Silent Hill Feminist.

Taylor: It's probably not that, but we'll go with that.

Sydney: They're like, "What were you all complaining about? We put it right there in the title."

Taylor: Yeah, you knew what you were gonna get. [laughs]

Sydney: Justin said "Is it for the f-word?"

And I said, "I don't think so."

Taylor: [laughs] I think it is. I think it is.

Sydney: They don't—I said, "They don't normally have that kind of content in these games."

And he said, "No, no, no. Not like that. More like exclaiming it out of fear.
Like, agh!"

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: I have said that a lot in this game, so it might be that. Should've looked that up. Who knows?

Sydney: Uh, well, thank you, Tey. That was a lot of fun. And thank you, listeners. You should go to Maximumfun.org and check a lot of other podcasts out there that you would enjoy. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, and thank you to The Nouvelles 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.

Sydney: I'm Sydney McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydney: I'm still buffering...

Taylor: And I am, too.

[theme music plays]

Sydney: [unintelligible]

Taylor: Freaky!

Sydney: [unintelligible] [laughs]

[music ends]

Sydney: Silent Hill Fist bump.

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Uh, Friend. Silent Hill Friends.

Sydney: Silent Hill Friends!

Taylor: That's what it is.

[chord]

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