

Still Buffering 467: Tyler Childers - Snipe Hunter (2025)

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[theme music plays]

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

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Uh, Tey, are you—well, okay. I want to talk about something that has been on TikTok and is a little older, but then has been, I think, revitalized by SNL. But I feel like before I mention this, I need to ask you if you're ready for the snowpocalypse.

Taylor: Oh! Uh, hmm. I got a bunch of extra cat food. Not really in preparation for the snow, I guess, though. It was just that they had Jack's favorite flavor, and they don't always have it, so I got all of it. So, Jack's ready. Uh, I have, um... [clicks tongue] some tofu, and a very large onion in my fridge right now.

Sydnee: That's—you're not ready.

Taylor: I guess I should do some—I don't know. Like, I live across the street from, like, a 24-hour corner store. Like, I feel like... they've never closed. Never once. Maybe that's a bad thing to rely on.

Sydnee: I don't know what happened to me, 'cause I'm not usually one of those people who, like, prepares a lot before a storm. Like, I am not at the grocery store buying bread and milk and, you know, bottled water or whatever. But for this—I think 'cause there's been so much buildup. Like, we are supposed to get a foot, here where we live. And so there's been so much talk about it all week. And then I've been really thinking about it, because of the work I do. So, we've been trying to figure out warming centers and all that stuff. So I think because it's been on my mind so much, I went a little... off the rails, when I was, like, preparing, grocery-wise. And I'm, like—I was, like, looking through every closet like, "How are we on paper towels, toilet

paper, napkins, shampoo? Do we have laundry detergent? Do we have dishwasher pods?"

I mean, like, looking through—like, all this stuff. Like, why am I thinking about it for the weekend? I don't know. Like, why do I think I need these things for snow?

And then I was, like, going to the girls, and I'm like, "What's your favorite salty snack? What's your favorite sweet snack? We're gonna need 'em both."

Why? Why do we need those? We have snacks. We already have snacks. And then I bought, like, a giant, like, um, party pack of the little bags of chips. It's like a huge box of, like, 48 small bags of a variety of chips. I don't know why I did that. Like, stuff started arriving at the house, and I'm like, what am I doing? What is this for?

Taylor: You could eat, like, one bag of chips every hour through the length of your—the snowstorm, and you'd still have chips left over.

Sydnee: I really sort of lost it. Um, I don't...

Taylor: You went from preparing to preppin'.

Sydnee: Yes. At some point I crossed a line, and I don't—I don't have an explanation for why. To the extent that, like, I ordered some stuff on Instacart, and the girls really wanted some sugar-free root beer. They like sugar-free root beer. And luckily Justin had the same thought, so he'd already ordered it. So this was—already, we didn't need another thing. But it doesn't go bad. They'll drink it. Whatever.

And the shopper was like, "Hey, we don't have sugar-free root beer here. Can we replace it with cream soda?"

No one in our house has had cream soda, to my knowledge. I don't think I've ever had a cream soda.

Taylor: It's pretty good!

Sydnee: Probably, right? And I'm like—

Taylor: It's, like, root beer adjacent.

Sydnee: So I'm like, "Yeah! Cream soda. Sounds great."

So the cream soda arrives, and Justin's like, "Sydnee, what... what? What? What is thi—what have you done?"

And I'm like, "It's for snow cream soda. We're gonna mix it with snow. It's gonna be great. Snow and some... we've got some, like, sugar syrup. It's gonna be delicious. It's an invention. It's something I made." [laughs quietly] "I saw it on TikTok."

Taylor: [crosstalk] pretty good. There you go.

Sydnee: I have no idea, but now I have a 12 pack of cream soda. I don't know why, but I got it!

Taylor: You'll be set. When everybody else is desperate, frozen in their houses, saying "If only I had thought to buy some cream soda," you will be... a-okay.

Sydnee: I have four romantasy books. Four—and I'm talking, like, the big ones. Like, the giant...

Taylor: That—

Sydnee: Like, they're probably, like, 700 pages of romantasy each. And I got four. I am not gonna have time to read four books!

Taylor: Yeah. Like, even if you just read your books straight through until the roads were open, I don't think you'd get through all those books. And you've got two kids, and a husband to tend to.

Sydnee: And I guarantee you I'm gonna be spending a lot of time, um, getting kids in snow clothes, and then getting kids out of snow clothes, and then drying the snow clothes so that I can put the kids back in the snow

clothes. That's gonna be a big... [laughs quietly] I'm gonna spend a lot of time doing that this weekend.

Taylor: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: And making hot chocolate.

Taylor: Well... I mean, you know. It doesn't hurt that you're prepared, just in case the snow never stops, ever again.

Sydnee: Uh, well, yeah. And I mean, I will say, most of the stuff we got—like, it'll keep. Like, it's not like it's gonna go bad. I didn't, like, load us up on a bunch of, like, fruit and vegetables that are gonna, you know, spoil if I don't eat them in time.

We have fruit and vegetables. I don't mean to say we don't have fruit and vegetables. But, you know.

Taylor: You eat those first.

Sydnee: Yes. No, we made sure we had appropriate fruits and veggies. I made sure I had equal amounts of steak and carrots.

Taylor: Oh, good, yeah. That's necessary.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm, as the FDA recommends. And then varying amounts of fruit, 'cause it's really hard to tell. Like, the fruit is all the way through the pyramid now. The fruit's at the top and bottom of the pyramid. I don't know how much fruit I'm supposed to eat.

Taylor: And you did not allow any beans into your house, correct?

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Well... jokes on RFK. We like beans in this house. We've had beans for a long time.

Taylor: See, that's what I... I have a couple cans. I just always have a couple cans of beans in my cabinet. Like, I just have a little place where

they go, and when I get low I stock it back up again. So I feel like it's just me here. Like, three cans of beans? I'll be good!

Sydnee: Yeah, but what if you have a thought like—I had this thought as I was putting stuff in our grocery cart. Uh, do we have stuff to bake bread? What if I want to bake bread? I think we have all the pantry staples, 'cause that's just, you know, stuff we generally have, right? Like flour and, you know, we have butter, we have eggs, we have sugar, we have baking soda and baking powder. Like, we have the things for the various breads I might make. I could bake. I could bake. But am I sure? 'Cause I feel like the snow's gonna make me a person who wants to bake.

Taylor: I... I mean, that's a lot. It's just not—this is not an Ice Age. This is, like, a... a day and a half of snow.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I don't think you're gonna change that drastically.

Sydnee: But what if I become a person who really needs to make bread at that moment? I got stuff for soup. I was like, what if I need to make soup?

Taylor: I mean, I guess it's good to have your options. See, I considered—I always have the stuff in my house to bake bread. But that's—I guess that's always my thought on this kind of stuff is like, I have enough stuff in my house that if I'm desperate—if something happens and I can't get out for food for a week, I can scrounge around. I could make bread. I could—you know, I've got a giant thing of oatmeal—of, like, oats. Like, none of it will be fun, enjoyable food. But if I just need to have sustained, you know, nutrition, I have it. I don't know. I feel like I gotta go through all that before I can start... start buying the fun stuff. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Did you buy your government-mandated piece of chicken, piece of broccoli, and corn tortilla, and something else?

Taylor: And something else.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: The interpretation of "Some other thing" has really... has been great. Like, what... some other thing? [laughs]

Taylor: I just... I, uh... I'm assuming the some other—is it a condiment? Is it a piece of fruit?

Sydnee: I saw somebody interpreted it as a bag of M&Ms. Um, I've seen other people interpret it as a sauce.

Taylor: Yeah. That's just... I—I'm mystified by that. 'Cause those three things don't go together. Corn tortilla, chicken? Okay, yeah, I see. We're on our way to some sort of taco situation. Broccoli? Hm, no. That doesn't go there. There is another vegetable you could've picked that would've made me go, "Okay, maybe."

Sydnee: Also, you said—like, very clearly she says a piece of broccoli.

Taylor: A piece, yes. A piece. And a piece of chicken.

Sydnee: Yes. And okay. So, a piece of chicken I could interpret as a breast of chicken, right?

Taylor: Sure. Yeah.

Sydnee: Which, like, that would be, for most—I think for a lot of us, a chicken breast is plenty of—like, that's—I don't need more chicken than a chicken breast. Like, that's enough. So, that's a serving. Um, now you could interpret it as, like, a drum... or a wing. And that would probably not be enough. But let's be forgiving. Let's say it's a breast. Still. And a corn tortilla. Okay. Maybe one tortilla is enough to satisfy some people. I generally want at least two, maybe three. But maybe somebody out there would be happy with a single tortilla.

A piece of broccoli is what really threw me, because if you're talking a crown of broccoli, that's not a piece. We don't call that a piece. Are you talking a

head of broccoli? You're talking a crown of broccoli? What are you—a piece of broccoli, to me, is one tree. One tiny little... floret. Like, we are talking one little floret of broccoli. And that is not enough for anyone. So, does she not know how broccoli is... composed? Like, is she unaware of broccoli? Has she ever encountered broccoli?

Taylor: This is one of those things where I don't—there's, like, a trifecta of stupid, evil, and greedy. And I don't know where it falls on this. It could be all three. 'Cause it could be you don't—you're just so removed from how people eat food and cook for themselves that you don't know these things. Or you are evil, and you are just, you know, you don't care. There was no thought put into this. Or are you greedy, and there's certain lobbyists that these are the only foods you could say out loud?

Because if you just, you know, there are plenty of meals that are cheap that have proteins and carbs and fats and, like, you know. Anybody that's ever been on a budget knows these meals. We've all made rice and beans. We've all made dinners out of potatoes. Potatoes are cheap. Like, if you're gonna have a carb there, why a—corn tortillas are great, but that's a processed food. Not against processed foods. I mean, like, it just—you're gonna pay more for the fact that it's already made than if you bought cornmeal, grits. Grits are cheaper than a corn tortilla would be. It's like, I don't know what of these three—I just assume that anything that comes from that administration is right in the center of stupid, evil, and greedy.

Sydnee: It really—yeah, no. I don't understand that either. It wasn't the cheapest way to compose a meal. It wasn't a meal. It didn't make sense. It wasn't enough food for a person.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: And it was inaccurate. It's still not three dollars. I mean...

Taylor: Well, we don't know what that other thing is. Maybe that other thing is two more dollars. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: That other thing is a five-dollar bill. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] That other thing is, um, a grande meal from Taco Bell. [laughs]

Taylor: Exactly. Now we're cookin'.

Sydnee: No. I mean, it's really wild. I don't—yeah. I don't know. That's not...

Taylor: It's like an alien came to Earth.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And got, like, 15 minutes to look at human food before composing a meal, and that's what they said. "[stilted] A piece of broccoli."

Sydnee: It was a failed campaign strategy, clearly. But it is still true that these people are weird. Beyond everything else about them, they are also just—they're just a bunch of weirdos, on top of being evil and greedy and, you know, all these other things. They're just weird.

Taylor: Yeah. And I hate the smearing of the word weird, 'cause usually weird is good to me. But this is a different weird.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I don't know. Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, it's an uncomfortable weird. It's a... they really do—like, if all—I am not, um, part of the, like, Illuminati, reptile people conspiracy theory, like, group. Like, that's not something that I believe in.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: Like, that's not me.

Taylor: Most of that's just antisemitic, anyway.

Sydnee: Oh. Well, I didn't know that. But anyway—

Taylor: The whole reptile thing.

Sydnee: Yeah. I don't hold to any of that. Um, I will say that if everybody in the Trump administration, all these key players that we're talking about, if they all ripped off their skin suits and were aliens who had invaded us... that would make more sense to me than a lot of what is happening.

Taylor: I agree with that. It's very much the, like... you know the type of humor that hinges on the joke of like, "I'm just saying what everybody else is thinking." And so often my internal thought is, "Well, no. No one's thinking that, and you're a bad person for thinking that. Like, I don't like to have moral black and white judgments, but no, you're a bad person for having those thoughts.

It's all of those people with those thoughts. It's like, no one else is thinking this, but everybody that is somehow got in power. How did that happen?

Sydnee: I don't... it really—it's wild. It's reality distortion. Um, but yeah. No, I do have tortillas, and I do have...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Now, I got flour. I prefer flour tortillas, so I have flour tortillas. And I do have broccoli. More than a piece. And I do have chicken. I wasn't planning on turning that into a meal in that assemblage. And I also have some other things, so. Um, I wanted to ask you if you saw the button conversation. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh. Okay, yes. I do—I saw the SNL—I don't watch SNL, but I saw the clip replayed on TikTok. Uh, and I was curious about it, so I went down the button rabbit hole.

Sydnee: I feel... I feel—first of all, can I say I feel bad for this creator that, like—I mean, that's a lot, to make a TikTok that goes so viral that you are, like, spoofed on SNL. And I don't know, like, I guess in some ways, isn't that

a form of flattery? I'm not sure. [laughs quietly] Um, that's gotta be a lot. That's a lot of attention. Now, granted, nobody was called out. You know, like, on SNL. But everybody did go look to see. If you didn't already know about it, if you weren't already culturally aware, like, what the heck is this? I have to imagine there were a lot of younger people explaining to older people, "Okay. So there was this girl on TikTok." [laughs quietly] "She said this thing about buttons." [laughs] "Here's what happened."

Taylor: Do you think that TikTok is universal enough that that joke would land for most of the—the overlap of the audience of SNL and the type of people that would get that joke I don't feel is the same audience.

Sydnee: I think you are right. I wondered about that too. Like, it landed for me, because I'm on TikTok a lot, and I had absolutely seen that TikTok, and all the comments. And I thought it was funny because of that. But I cannot, like... our parents watch SNL. I cannot imagine that they had seen that TikTok.

Taylor: Well, and it—was it even—'cause I got a chuckle out of it after I followed it. Like, those responses were great.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That was—the whole back and forth was hilarious.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: But I was like—but I think the joke exists in its best form in, like, just looking at the TikTok. So when it becomes, like, "Oh, we're gonna, you know, riff on this on SNL." I'm like, well, it's not funny anymore. That's not funny. Sending you back to look at it, that's where the funny is. This is just... like, I don't know. It's like when somebody reads a comic panel from the newspaper to you. It's like, well, no. It's not funny when you read it out loud. You gotta look at it. Like... [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: I agree with you. I had that thought, like, it was funny that it was being referenced. The fact that it was happening was funny to me. But watching it was not even close to as funny as the original post and reading

the comments in real—well, not in real time. I mean, I didn't read them as they were coming in. But you know what I mean.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Scrolling through them and finding the responses and all that. That was way funnier. If you haven't—by the way, if you have not encountered either the sketch or the TikTok, a creator on TikTok just said, for—she was becoming more aware, what? Of, like, the passing of time this year, in 2026, and she wants to do more fun things, and she wants to do a button every day. And everybody was like, "Well, what are you gonna do? That's a cool idea. What are you gonna do with the buttons? Like, where do the buttons go?"

And what proceeded was a back and forth where basically I don't think she'd thought through what the plan was with the buttons. And then there was—I think she got a little defensive. Like, "I don't have to tell you the plan with the buttons."

And then—I think which led to a lot of people saying like, "Well, then why'd you bring up the buttons?" [laughs] "I mean, why... like, you told—I mean..." [laughs] "I didn't call you and say, 'Hey, you gonna do anything with buttons this year? Hey. Hey, are you becoming more aware of the passing of time?'" [laughs]

Taylor: It was her insistence on not explaining anything that I truly adored.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Like, usually on the internet—

Sydnee: It only has to make sense to her. [laughs]

Taylor: Right? It's like, usually on the internet we are trying to—and I'm very against, like—like a weird—a conversation about something much bigger than TikTok. Like, in, you know, art in general, any time we're putting ourselves out there, we're kind of creating something to interact with. On the internet it's become so normal to tailor whatever you're making for the

best response possible, you want engagement. You want people to like you. You want people to understand you.

And to me, in sort of an esoteric thought, I think it downgrades the creation. Because I'm not creating for me, I'm creating for you to like what I'm doing. And that kind of inhibits the process. So I'm saying this lady was a beautiful example of creating for one's self, one's true intent. I don't—you don't have to get it. Only I have to get it. What am I gonna do with the buttons? I'm not gonna tell you. [laughs] Where do the buttons come from? I'm not gonna tell you! [laughs]

Sydnee: It's just something I wanna do.

Taylor: Love that.

Sydnee: And, I mean, I—yes. I celebrate that. And I don't think—I mean, I don't know. Like, we all say things sometimes, and people are like, "Well, what does that mean?"

And we're like, "I don't really know. I was just kind of talking. I'm not really clear on that."

We all do that sometimes. I just, um... I do think we should normalize texting people and being like, "What are you gonna do with buttons this year?"

Taylor: [laughs] What's your button plan?

Sydnee: What's your plan with button? Do you have a button plan? I mean, have you noticed that time is passing, and do you have a plan... with buttons?

Taylor: Well, and you know, before anybody doubts this woman, have you tried to recognize the passage of time involving buttons? Not saying how, just in general.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Don't knock it till you try it.

Sydnee: I'm not sure—I saw—and I don't even know if it was the original creator, now that I think about it, 'cause I was scrolling quickly. But I saw somebody saying, like... it was just, like, a TikTok, and they were like, "Another day." And they put a button in a jar. And I didn't know if that was the original creator. If that's, like, the thing, is just like... we'll just put a button in a jar each day. Which, that's fine. I mean, I don't know.

Taylor: Where do the buttons... 'cause I can only assume that you would go out and buy a bunch of buttons. See, now I'm picking it apart, and that's not what you're supposed to do. But you go out and buy a bunch of buttons, and then you have 'em, what, in a different jar? And you're moving one button from that jar into the other jar? Maybe that's it. It's like a very slow-moving, like, uh, sand timer. You know, an hourglass.

Sydnee: Like an hourglass, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, you could do that, yeah. And, I mean, I guess you could—like, somebody was like, "Are you gonna sew the buttons on something?"

And you could. But I don't know what that... I mean, well, I'm not artistic. You could probably use 365 buttons and sew them on something and make it look really cool. That's probably something you could do.

Taylor: Yeah, no, absolutely.

Sydnee: Do you wanna do that with buttons this year, Taylor? [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I mean, I'm too late now. I missed 23 buttons.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, you're gonna have to do 23 in one day, and then it's just one a day.

Taylor: I mean, that doesn't sound so bad. I guess that's the thing. Like, that wouldn't be a lot of work. You know, usually when people do those, like, year-long projects, it's because it's so much work that if you break it down into tiny bits, then you have something really impressive. I think sewing 365 buttons onto, like, a cardigan... you just make a heavy cardigan. You could do it in less than a year. I don't know. You know what?

Sydnee: [crosstalk] little buttons. Little teeny buttons.

Taylor: Little buttons. But I feel like the joy would be in having a whole bunch of different buttons.

Sydnee: I think that would be bet—now, I mean, I like the idea. I don't know how you do this. I like the idea of every day you have to venture out into the world and find a different button. And you can get those buttons either through, like, traditional means, purchasing...

Taylor: [laughs] Theft.

Sydnee: [laughs] You could—

Taylor: Get a small pair of scissors, and every time you see somebody who is not paying attention, you [crosstalk].

Sydnee: This is what I'm envisioning! You could—[laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: If somebody—if I caught somebody sneakily trying to cut a button off of me, for this project, I would let them do it. Because I would find that—

Taylor: No!

Sydnee: Why?!

Taylor: 'Cause I would assume, as anyone would, that it's a witch.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] As anyone would?

Taylor: As anyone would!

Sydnee: Okay. That wouldn't have been my first thought. Now, granted, my first thought—

Taylor: That would be my first thought. Only thought.

Sydnee: My first thought also wouldn't be, um, it's for a project I'm doing where I steal a button every day. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, any time somebody is trying to harvest a small bit of your belonging, I'm just, "Oh, witchcraft. That's a witch. That's a witch."

Sydnee: Okay. I can see where that would be—but I like—maybe you have to ask for the button. Maybe you have to be gifted the button. "Hi, I admire your buttons, and I am doing a project where to note the passing of time, I'm collecting 365 buttons, one button each day, and I would like one of your buttons, please, for my project."

Taylor: I don't... I don't know a lot of people that, like, have a button to spare on their general personage, most days.

Sydnee: No. I mean, well, you'd be losing a button. You'd have to "I'm gonna have to replace this button later." And what you'd have to hope is—you know how some shirts come with an extra little baggie of buttons inside the sleeve? You'd have to hope it was one of those shirts.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: And that you saved that baggie of buttons. I have never once saved that baggie of buttons. Never.

Taylor: Well, sometimes the extra button's sewn onto the inside of the shirt, like down at the bottom of the, you know, the hem? Maybe you could buy 365 standard buttons and initiate some sort of button trade.

Sydnee: Ooh. Like carry it with you?

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And then when you see a button you like...

Taylor: Like, I'm going to give you—yeah. I feel like that could be very time consuming. I'm looking at the end of this person's year as, like, man, what happened to you? You lost your job, 'cause you were always late. You didn't show up some days. Uh, you—you—you know? Like, you had to surrender your pet. You were never around to feed them.

Sydnee: You got arrested for harassing somebody for a button? [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Garnishing scissors as a weapon. Your life really fell apart!

Sydnee: Uh, yeah. That's probably—that does seem like a huge, like—I mean, you would note time passing as you rushed each day to try to find a new button. And, like, you're nearing midnight, and what if you haven't found a button, yet?

Taylor: Yeah. That's not, like—you know. Those yearly things where it's like, I'm gonna take a picture of myself smiling every day. Or, I don't know. I'm gonna—you could, like, collect a leaf every day. Those are pretty easy to come by. That doesn't take too much time. A button you'd have to go out a way for. I don't know.

Sydnee: [laughs] Now, you know what you—no, still. I was gonna say, you could commit to—I'm thinking buttons, like, on clothes. Now, if we're talking about, like, buttons like decorative, like buttons—you know what I mean. Like, you buy a button of a thing you—with a picture on it, or a band, or—you know, those kind of buttons.

Taylor: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Sydnee: I don't know how to describe them other than those kind of buttons. With the pin on the back that you pin to yourself. You could go out

and try to find a button every day. But, I mean, then you'd just have to buy—I mean, that is an investment of funds, though. Because even though, I mean, you can get them pretty cheap, and sometimes they're free at some places. But still.

Taylor: Again, I just feel like there are so many days where I have, like, one thing I need to do that's really important, and I don't manage to get it done. If I had a button quest every day of my life, I don't know what else I'd get done!

Sydnee: [laughs] I'm taking a sabbatical this year to go on a button quest.

Taylor: [laughs] "Why?"

"I don't have to tell you."

Sydnee: [laughs] It only has to make sense to me!

Taylor: [crosstalk] No, you somebody do! [laughs] That does not work as a written request for time off!

Sydnee: I'm gonna start doing that when I'm sick or I need to take a day off. Like, "I won't be at work tomorrow."

"Why?"

"I don't have to tell you that."

Taylor: [laughs] It only has to make sense to me!

Sydnee: [laughs] We'll see how that goes over.

Taylor: Ahh...

Sydnee: "Ah, I won't be at work three days this summer."

"Why?"

"I don't have to tell you."

Taylor: I love that, actually.

Sydnee: Yeah. Uh, and all that being said, I do—again, I have to say, one, I thought it was, um... you're right. She doesn't have to tell anybody. Who cares? It's her business. I think it was funny. I don't think she was being, like, mean or rude. I think it was just like, "I don't know what I'm gonna do with the buttons and I'm not gonna tell you."

"Okay. That's fair."

And I do feel bad that—I imagine that brought her a lot of attention. And the internet can be so mean. And so even something harmless like that, which is not in any way deserving of vitriol, I have to guess probably she got some, right? Like, probably somebody was a jerk.

Taylor: Oh, always.

Sydnee: And that just sucks. 'Cause, like, if you use a big platform to call attention to anything, that thing is going to get love and hate, I feel like. You know? So you gotta be really careful, if you have a big platform, to call attention to literally anything.

Taylor: Yeah. I don't—I'm not—that ending up on SNL really confounded me. 'Cause it's like, you're not doing it funnier than she did it.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: She did it funnier. And yeah, all you're gonna do is just lead a bunch of people that don't get the humor of TikTok to comment on this. Like, I don't know. But you know what? She seems pretty confident. She seems pretty self-assured. I think, you know, she'll be alright. She'll weather it.

Sydnee: She'll be okay? Yeah.

Taylor: She's got her buttons.

Sydnee: I mean, I think the play is this. Never tell us what you did with the buttons.

Taylor: Absolutely not!

Sydnee: If I were her, I would confirm at the end of the year, "I did do the thing with the buttons."

And when everybody was like, "Well, what did you end up doing?"

I would be like, "I don't have to tell you."

Taylor: Yeah. "Show us proof."

"No."

Sydnee: No. No. It was for me.

Taylor: I feel that we can all take that phrase, "It only has to make sense to me," and, like, put that in your Rolodex of responses. 'Cause sometimes when people are trying to ask you something pointedly, 'cause they're mocking you, or they think you're being weird, whatever, you just whip that out. It only has to make sense to me. Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I like that.

Sydnee: No, I love that. Yeah. I think it's a really good motto. And, um, I don't know. I will say, like, if you are trying to—that is an experience that she, through that process, created for herself. How many of us can say that we've ever been featured on SNL? Like, a character.

Taylor: Not me.

Sydnee: You know? And that's—I mean, honestly, even if it was, like, in a little bit of a mocking way, I would call that a life achievement. Like, if it were me.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So... so, there you go. There's the... I am not doing anything with buttons. I don't—it's too late. I don't have the time. I do think you could do a cool thing with buttons, but I don't know what I would do. I can't even sew, really.

Taylor: Yeah. I have a lot of buttons. I probably have enough bu—I'm done, I'm good for the year. I already have 365 buttons.

Sydnee: So you're done. You're ahead of the game.

Taylor: I'm done. Time has passed.

Sydnee: Um, that's why you gotta do something with the buttons.

Taylor: Yeah. Speaking of time has passed, we're 30 minutes into the show and we haven't talked about our...

Sydnee: About Tyler Childers.

Taylor: ... our thing we're supposed to talk—yeah. Oops!

Sydnee: So, what'd you think of the album, Tey? You listened the Snipe Hunt.

Taylor: I did. I liked it a lot. I mean, you know, I mentioned this last week. Like, I know—I don't know. People have a derogatory association with country. But, um, I feel that's people that don't under—that have not taken the time to investigate the roots of country. I like the roots of country.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I like the old school country stars. And I feel like this kind of picks that up. You know, I listened to some of his older music too, and I think that this album might be a little bit maybe different than some of his other stuff.

Sydnee: Yeah, it is.

Taylor: But I still—I like the combination of—there were some heavy songs, there were some really—I liked the kind of just goofy, lighthearted songs that really just had one point. That was it. "If I get rabies I'm gonna bite you." [laughs] Like, there are some songs like that that made me chuckle. I enjoyed it.

Sydnee: The bitin' list thing has become a really popular phrase. Like, especially around people I hang out with here. That they'll say when they're mad at somebody, like, "I'm putting them on my bitin' list." That's become a turn of phrase around here.

I have to say—so, Tyler Childers. I had to research this, because I know he had performed a lot in the early days here in Huntington. He is not from West Virginia. He is from Louisa, Kentucky, which is close. Similar—there's a—okay. For those who aren't familiar with geography, which I include myself. I suck at geography. But I know this geography 'cause I live here, so I got this one down.

We live in a place in West Virginia—well, I do. You used to. Which is right on the border of Kentucky and Ohio. We've got a little tristate area right here. We're all—I can be in either of those states in less than ten minutes. Um, and all of it is culturally pretty similar. You know? I mean, like, when you think about it, there's not that much of a difference between Eastern Kentucky, Southern Ohio, and this part of West Virginia. And, uh, Huntington is kind of the big city for this area. So, like, bands come from this area and play here a lot, and this is thought of as the city. We are not a big city. We are just barely a city. But, um, but I claimed Tyler Childers 'cause I thought erroneously that he was from here. But he's—I mean, he's basically—he's from here in the grander sense of here as a cultural place.

Taylor: [laughs] That very specific brand of Appalachian.

Sydnee: Yes. And it's a—like, it's a brand of Appalachian... and this is not necessarily true, I will say, for, like, Southern Ohio. Um, like, directly adjacent to us. But here, because Huntington is a little more citified, because we have a university, um, at least this is my assumption. You've

got, like, a little pocket of progressive here. We are an area—actually, there's a map of West Virginia that is popular just among people who are from West Virginia. Nobody else would care about this. But there's a map. And it's like, they name each—you know. Have you seen those? They name each city, like, a funny thing.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know what I'm saying? Um, Huntington is always called, uh, the San Francisco of West Virginia.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: On the map.

Taylor: Alright.

Sydnee: Huntington is—we are West Virginia's San Francisco, in part because we do have a large LGBTQ population here. And in part because we are supposed to be, like, the progressive, hippie, liberal part of the state. Which is... I mean, in comparison, I guess. [laughs quietly] I don't know. I don't know. Like, not San Francisco. But in comparison to a lot of other parts of the state, for sure, yeah. But that is this pocket we live in.

And so you do get a lot of this sort of Appalachian heritage that really calls back to, like, the early days, when we were a reliably blue state because of unions, because of labor rights, because a lot of people here live in poverty and they know that conservatives have never cared about people who live in poverty. And you still have a lot of that spirit, and that cultural attitude in this part of Appalachia.

Taylor: Well, that's interesting how the parallel of country music itself, from blue to red, kind of coincides with West Virginia's turn. Because that is, like, the foundation of country music, was the outsider's music. It was the—for the unions. It was pro-union, pro, you know, the working man. It was anti-government. It was anti-conformity. Like, that was—it was rebellious music at its origin point.

Sydnee: And it's weird, because it... I mean, okay. I would say, even among conservatives here, that anti-government stuff, anti-conformity stuff, it's still all there. Like, "Don't take my gun. Don't get on my property. Leave me alone. And you do your thing and I'll do my thing, and don't you try to tell me what to do." is still ingrained, even among the most conservative people here. And so I don't know... well, I mean, that's a whole other conversation. Where did we go wrong?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Tyler Childers speaks to that spirit, I think. And that is why he's become—I mean, people like his music. But also, because of that, he's become really beloved among Appalachian progressives, because that's the Appalachia that they know and love and stayed here for, and continue to fight for, is that. And not this sort of, like, current vision of us, which is a bunch of dumb, racist, you know... I don't know. Hatemongers who... wanna lock up everybody who's not white. I mean, that's... I'm not saying those people don't exist. But I'm saying that is not—that is not the Appalachia that I know and love, or the people that I know and love, or the place that I keep fighting for.

Taylor: Right. Well, I mean, I... not on this album that we specifically talked about, but I know he got a lot of push back for the music video with the two gay coal miners.

Sydnee: Yep.

Taylor: Um, what was the song on that? It was really beautiful and now I can't think of the name of it.

Sydnee: Uh, In Your Love?

Taylor: That's it, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Uh, but you know. I thought it was—it was really poignant. Because it's not just, "Oh, it's two coal miners that fall in love with each other and they happen to be gay." It's one of them is suffering from black lung.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Which is—it's marrying together, like, those two causes in the same video. And I think that that was... you know. It didn't feel what people might think it's pandering. It's like, no. It's, you know, it's... you shouldn't be offended by the two men kissing. You should be offended by the fact that this is a real situation that happens, you know, to people today. It's not some outdated disease. People still die from horrible conditions that they encounter in the mining industry.

Sydnee: Well, and I think it's—like, it's good to highlight that, because, um, that's been part of the shift politically in this area, is you have a lot of people who have this family heritage of working in the mines. And there was a time where, you know, West Virginia, and broader, the mining region, not just our state, you know, all the coal mining region, was credited with powering the nation. Like, you are doing the work that is so vital to the health of our country.

Now, obviously this is before we understand the damage that fossil fuels do. You know, I mean—you know. But it was like, you're doing a heroic, dangerous, difficult job. And initially you were paid in scrip. You weren't even paid for it. You were treated like garbage by the mining industry until you fought for your own rights to get, you know, a living wage and all that.

And at some point, when we realized that coal is not the future, right? When we talk about energy, coal isn't the future. It just isn't. That got all—like, I think people's self-image got wrapped up in that. If you hate coal, you hate me, and you hate my family and the sacrifice we made, and all the lungs that were damaged in these mines, and all the people that have died in these mines.

And so I think that's part of it, is there was this anger and hatred towards anybody who was pushing for different forms of energy. Because it was like, "Oh, so you hate me and all that I've done." Not—you know? It's just—all

the messaging got convoluted, and that was easy for the conservatives to do.

Taylor: Which is such a shame, because, you know, you would think that—which again, I think it's the beauty of pairing those two causes together. It's like, wouldn't... would you sacrifice your children, knowing your past struggles, if it means they can live without them? Wouldn't—isn't that what we should want?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: You know, if it... coal mining dies because we move on to cleaner sources of energy and your children never have to know that life, they're not forgetting you. They're forgetting your trauma, which is good.

Sydnee: And I think—I think, like, on the surface, yes, what gets... what's underneath all that is that we live in such a socioeconomically, like, depressed area, is that in these communities that were mining communities, when the mines left, when there was nothing left to dig out of the earth, when they'd leveled the mountains and destroyed the earth, there were no jobs. And that is what—that is the crux of the issue. If my kid doesn't go down into the mines, I don't know what they're gonna do with their life. Because in some of these places, there's just not much else. There's just nothing. I mean, you know, the biggest employer in our state is the state, and the second biggest is Walmart, I think?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And, you know. And if Walmart paid enough for you to live off of, that's fine. But it doesn't. And most of the other jobs people can get don't either. And so you want your kid to be a coal miner, 'cause at least you know they're gonna be able to, you know, have a home to live in, and food to eat, and they can have a family, and they'll get benefits, and all that stuff.

And again, I'm not saying this is the best solution. But, like, this is why the cycle gets perpetuated.

Taylor: Right. Well, and I—you know. Going against the known is—always seems wrong and unnatural. But a lot of times the known isn't necessarily good, which makes—again, like, pairing it with a queer couple I think is very much the same thought. Like, this isn't natural, this isn't normal, this isn't what we do. It's like, well, maybe what you do is ruining your lives, so maybe we should do something else.

Sydnee: And I think—you know, hopefully it reminds people, too. Like, we do—we have a large LGBTQ population in this area, and we do—I always think this is interesting. West Virginia, at least as of a couple years ago, had the highest percentage of trans youth in the country. Not the highest number, the highest percentage. And there's been a lot of talk about, like, what is that overlap? Why? What is that—and I do think, like, some of that has to be rooted in the fact that for a long time, there was a "You do your thing, I'll do my thing. We're neighbors. If your car breaks down, I'm gonna come help you fix it. I might not understand everything you're doing, but that's fine, because you don't understand my stuff either, and also, I don't have to tell you if I don't want to."

And that was the spirit. And it still is, in a lot of rural places, you know? People just live their lives and do whatever makes them happy, and nobody messes with each other. Um, but I don't know. I think it's good to remind, like, the image of Appalachia has to change for us to survive in the future. And I like that Tyler Childers is one voice that's changing that image, that is speaking out about that in his music overtly, and then in the imagery he uses, and just in the way he, you know, lives his life and conducts himself.

Taylor: I was gonna say, off this album, two things stood out to me. One, I mean, the opening song, Eatin' Big Time which I think it's about... I think it's about eating the rich, right? I'm not wrong on that?

Sydnee: Uh-huh, yeah.

Taylor: Love that. You know, that's very anti-bootlicking, which modern country has... loves the taste of the boot. But the other thing that I thought was interesting was there are two songs—there's the Down Under, and then Tirtha Yatra. Down Under is about Australia, Tirtha Yatra is about, like, an Indian pilgrimage.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Um, and so often in the more generic conservative country, there is this, like, you know, no place like home mentality, where it's just "Oh, you know, nothing's better than a front porch, a nice girl, a cold beer." Like, that's life. That's all there is. You don't need to look for anything else.

And even though the song about Australia seems like he didn't really enjoy being in Australia, that there's lots of dangerous creatures there, it's still, like, just having songs that make you think about the rest of the world feels very purposely antithetical to what country has become. Like...

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: He's not singing about just... he has songs that are clearly, you know, showing love to where he comes from. But having these songs that also show love to where he's been, I think that's really cool and that's really important.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah, and I do—I think chipping away at the image of Appalachia as one thing, and of country music as one thing, is really important. Not just for how we're seeing it by the rest of the world, but for our own self-image, here. We are more than one thing. And, like, we can grow beyond our roots.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's a good—that's the only way—I mean, really, it's the only way forward for us.

Taylor: Well, and even—there were several songs that touched on it. But, like, I think Getting To The Bottom was the one that really stood out to me. That is talking about addiction, and it's talking about, you know, like... drinking, drugs. He mentions meth directly. Like, he's also just as comfortable engaging with that. Again, that sort of fictional idea that, "Oh, you know, hang out, get drunk, party." Like, that's good ol' boy behavior.

It's like... hey, these things can ruin your life, and they will, and it's ruined mine in the past, and I'm gonna write country songs about it. That's...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: All deconstruction of the modern country man, which I appreciate.

Sydnee: That's another reason I think there's a big overlap, especially around here, with love for Tyler Childers, is he always performs at Hope for Appalachia, which is a big folk, country music festival that benefits recovery programming in not just here, but in Appalachia in general. And it's—like, this past year it was in Ashland, Kentucky, which is, you know, 20 minutes from where I'm sitting. And they—it was a huge, outdoor, multi-day festival. And they hand out a ton of Narcan, and talk about recovery programming and all that, and then play a bunch of music, and he's always there.

Taylor: That's excellent.

Sydnee: Yeah. Did, uh—do you feel like the song about the Snipe Hunt does enough to—like, if people are not familiar with what snipe hunting is, should I explain that?

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't know if from the song lyrics if you would necessarily understand.

Taylor: I think you'd have to know. I think it's—I think you'd have to have the explanation. I think the song is purposely elusive to that. And...

Sydnee: I don't know how much of Appalachia is in on snipe hunting. I know that this joke has been played on me in my life, and I know that then especially in college, because we have people come from out of this area to come to college here, I played this joke on a lot of people in college. Um, you tell people about the animal called the snipe that's unique to this area. For us it was unique to Huntington, but it can be anywhere in Appalachia. And you can describe the snipe however you want. I think that's, like—it just depends on your own imagination. We all have our own version of the snipe

in our head. And you tell people it's in this area, and if you go looking you might hear its call. You can make up what it sounds like. And you send people out snipe hunting.

This is best done after maybe a couple of beers around a campfire. [laughs quietly] When people are a little more likely to believe you. But we have also sent our kids snipe hunting before. But the joke is that there's no snipe. The snipe is a made-up thing. But sending people—newcomers, outsiders, on a snipe hunt, is a common, uh, Appalachian tradition, and that is what he is referencing.

Taylor: Well, I love that reference, 'cause it's so local. And also, like, the song itself functioning as a metaphor for sort of someone who's lived their life searching for things that can't be found.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That's really beautiful. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: It is. It is. It's... yeah. And I like it too, 'cause it speaks to another thing about Appalachia, which is, like, there has always been a fear and a distrust of outsiders. And, like, a need to draw that line. If you know, you know. [laughs] And if you don't... you know, then... like, I know something about you.

And I think it's a well-founded distrust, because of outsiders who've come in and, you know, taken advantage of our state in so many ways for so many years.

But anyway, that is what a snipe hunt is. That is what a snipe is. Now I've ruined it for any of—anybody who might ever have this joke played on 'em.

Taylor: The council of Appalachians are gonna show up at your door later today. [laughs quietly] Revoke your license.

Sydnee: "You've disclosed the secret of the snipe."

Taylor: That's like magicians. They, you know, go after the people that expose their secrets.

Sydnee: Oh no. No, I don't know. I mean, some people think it's mean. I don't think it's mean. I think it's fun—I mean, you know, don't let 'em wander too long. I think it's funny.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: When I was sent on a snipe hunt and found out about it, I thought it was funny.

Taylor: I think it's funny. It never happened to me.

Sydnee: No?

Taylor: I found my snipe. I don't know what the rest of you are looking for.

Sydnee: [laughs] Taylor's like, "There is a snipe! I found it!"

Taylor: Yeah, I found it! It lives in my house now. We've been friends for a long time.

Sydnee: [laughs] Um, well, thank you for listening to it, Tey. 'Cause I know—I didn't know if it would be your vibe. It's played a lot at, like, my friends' houses around here and stuff. I hadn't listened to a lot of Tyler Childers myself. Um, the song Oneida I really like, and it's everywhere.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. No, I really—I enjoyed it a lot. I realized, you know, my taste in music when I just like the sonic sound of it, like, I've always been drawn to folk punk and, like, you know, like garage rock, like old school rock and roll. There's a lot of notes there that I need—I need the lyrics to be progressive. But there's—it's really just a little half step away from country, a lot of the stuff I listen to. And it's nice to have—it's nice to have territory in that world that I can tread on. 'Cause that's hard to find.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah, I think so. And again, I really—I appreciate anybody who's from around here who's doing the good work of changing people's,

like, perspective on what the truth is about Appalachia. I really appreciate that.

Taylor: Well, and especially that it's not new. It's going back to the roots of what country is, and what Appalachia is, and I think that's important.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I hope it all goes back there one day.

Sydnee: Yeah. Me too. Uh, so, Tey. I think we need to do something old next.

Taylor: Alright.

Sydnee: Um, I was thinking—

Taylor: We're gonna do something as old as me!

Sydnee: As old as—we're gonna do something exactly as old as Teylor. We're gonna talk about Labyrinth.

Taylor: Yep. 'Cause it came out in '86, and so did I.

Sydnee: Alright. I'm excited. We're gonna watch it again. Coop loves it, so that won't be a problem.

Taylor: Excellent.

Sydnee: Alright. We'll, thank you, Tey. Listeners, if you haven't checked out Tyler Childers, I would highly recommend it, wherever you listen to music. Um, the newest album is Snipe Hunter, but there's lots of albums you can listen to. And really, it's enjoyable music.

Um, and you should also go to Maximumfun.org and check out a lot of great podcasts there that you would enjoy. And 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 Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm still buffering...

Taylor: And I am too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: Still have time to go get a sled [unintelligible].

Taylor: I don't [unintelligible] a dog sled? I don't have any dogs.
[unintelligible] a sled.

Sydnee: For sledding. For sledding fun.

[chord]

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