

Still Buffering: SNL UK (2026)

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[theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind" by The Nouvellas 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: Tey, you went to a con over the weekend?

Taylor: I did! I went to PAX East in Boston. It was a lot of fun.

Sydnee: What'd you do?

Taylor: Oh, I did a bunch of stuff. You know, sometimes... So, my home convention is New York Comic Con, where it's one of those cons where there can be lots of cool stuff on the schedule. If you're not willing to line up like hours ahead of time, you're not going to get into the cool stuff. So, it ends up just be like wander around, eat an overpriced sandwich, and go home.

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Taylor: PAX is the opposite of that. I feel like pretty much everything I wanted to do, I could do.

Sydnee: That's great.

Taylor: It's just like a really well-planned convention, and like a really big convention space. It's really well-run. I don't know, I like, I went to panels about like hero rankings, about like, you know, I don't know, about therapy use in video games, that was a really interesting one. I thought there was—there were a couple drag shows. I saw a bunch of drag performers play this like one-shot, where they had to control a flock of seagulls. That was it, it was like oops, all seagulls.

Sydnee: Mm-hm!

Taylor: That was great. I saw, they had like a ton of live play. Matt Mercer was there in a live play, there was an amazing musical performance, I cosplayed with my friends... I drank a lot of tiny bottles of Prosecco at the hotel bar.

Sydnee: What did you cosplay as?

Taylor: For the first day—I was only cosplaying for two days. Me and my girlfriend did Wavychu and Windychu, from the upcoming Pokémon game.

Sydnee: Yeah. [titters]

Taylor: Which we don't know anything about, and everybody's got their own pet theories that they shared with us, as we were in cosplay, about what they think these two characters are.

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Taylor: The consensus seems to be, they're an old married couple trying to get the spark back in their marriage by taking a cruise.

Sydnee: Aw. [titters]

Taylor: Because they do give that energy. [chuckles] I don't know if you've seen them, but they're two Pichachus that are dressed in like island gear.

Sydnee: No, I have it.

Taylor: Yeah. And it was—it was a very silly cosplay. My girlfriend doesn't cos—this was her first cosplay. And it was just something that we could do together that, you know, I—when I first looked at it I was like, this will be comfortable and easy, and not a lot of work. And then but it's me, so I'm like, well, but of course I'm gonna like—

Sydnee: You're gonna put a lot of work into it, yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. Like made like wired Pikachu tails and ears and, you know, like tailored all the clothing and painted everything. And it was—it wasn't too mu—I was—I enjoy it, so it doesn't count. And then the second day I was—it was the—there was a meetup for Resident Evil's like 30th anniversary.

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Taylor: And so me and my crew all cosplayed different Resident Evil characters. I did Leon Kennedy, of course, but...

Sydnee: Well, very cool.

Taylor: It was fun.

Sydnee: Well, I have no doubt it was impressive, I know you put so much time and effort into those—into cosplay. I bet it was awesome.

Taylor: Well, usually I do. These were a little rushed because I've been working so much. But you know, I—as I—as I have aged in my cosplay hobby—[chuckles] I'm at the point now where it's like, I'm there with my friends, I'm not trying to win any awards or impress anybody. I'm just there to like do something fun with a group of people I like. And that's fine.

Sydnee: And whe—now, where was this again? Where is PAX East?

Taylor: This was in Boston.

Sydnee: Oh, in Boston, aw, cute.

Taylor: Yeah, at the Boston Convention Center.

Sydnee: So, you're saying that this con in Boston was substantially better than the con in New York. Are you making any statements?

[both chuckle]

Sydnee: Any very controversial statements about the superiority of Boston maybe?

Taylor: No! No.

Sydnee: [guffaws]

Taylor: And you know what? I've been to other cons, I've been to some anime conventions in Boston. And those experiences made me feel like—I think I'm gonna say this. I'm gonna say this because I just talked glowingly about Boston!

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: My first few experiences in Boston, which were around Anime Boston—no offense to that con, it's just, that's the venue that I... entered Boston for the first time. I was like, wow, I think I hate Boston! I think I hate it! [chuckles] I hate everything about it. I think it just depends on—I think it was just, you know, better impression the last couple times I've gone to PAX. It's been nothing but lovely.

So, NYCC needs to get its stuff together. It has been a bit of a mess. It got so big so fast. And it's also, for me, it's about creature comforts. Like, the Javits Center where NYCC is, is just sort of out in the middle—I mean, it's way, way, way over on the west side. You can't stay at a connecting hotel. All the hotels around there are absurdly expensive.

Like, it's not very walkable from the subway, it's massively overcrowded, you wait for like an hour—you have to have like a precognition of when you want to pee, because if you need to pee in like two hours or less, you need to line up now. Whereas this just wasn't any of that. Like, we stayed at the Omni across the street, we could walk in like an underground passageway to the convention itself.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, it was just so comfy and easy and well done.

Sydnee: I've been to—I went to PAX East a very long time ago, and I remember it being a pleasant experience. But it was so long ago. I've been

to New York Comic Con briefly, and I will say, I did it in the worst way. I think it was the—if I remember correctly, it was the day we were gonna leave town, we decided to like, after we checked out of our hotel, stop by before we headed to the airport. So we had like our rollie bags with us.

Taylor: Ugh.

Sydnee: And It was like, I just remember walking in and it was like elbow to elbow, I felt like I couldn't move, I couldn't—and we had, I think we had one of the kids with us at that point. Anyway, I was just like full-on can't handle this, sea of people, too much, just overwhelming. But again, we brought our rollie bags, so—[chuckles]

Taylor: I mean, I think even without a rollie bag, that is usually like—Thursday, NYCC's is not so bad. And every other day, like Friday and Saturday are just so crowded. And then Sunday might be a little less crowded, but it's also kids day.

Sydnee: Mm-hm...

Taylor: And so it's just, there's a—nothing wrong with having a day specifically to like advertise to bring your kids on this day. But it just, it's, that—there's a whole other element, so it's not—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I don't know, I like, I was shocked that we—there was one panel that we wanted to go to, and it was right before the big live play thing, that like I was like, oh, that line is gonna be impossible. But one, they had this like app where you could watch the line, so you could see the line in real time, like the percentage of it that was full.

So you could—we were sitting in one panel looking and going like, well, I mean, you know, the show starts in like 15 minutes, the line's not even at 50% capacity, so I think we'll get in. And we literally left that one panel at the end of it, walked upstairs to the ballroom, and it's just such a big enough space that we could sit down. The big—the biggest event the whole

weekend, and we just walked in and sat down. We were in the back, but that's fine. You just want to be part of it.

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah.

Taylor: And I mean, those—that same level of like the big, headlining events at NYCC, you have to like sign up ahead of time and get on a list. And even then, you still have to line up for hours. Like, it's just really, really wonderful to feel like you get your money's worth. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, I'm glad you had such a good experience. It's a bit weird, too, you think about you go to a city that you've never been to, and you have—that experience can kind of color like your whole perception of that city. Like, I—my first trip to Chicago was really fantastic for just a variety of like what we were doing and everything there. And so, I like now have this deep love for Chicago. I will always defend Chicago, it's one of my favorite places to go.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: I don't know why! Like, I never lived there, I don't—but I love Chicago. I'm a real Stan. My first trip to LA, I spent an inordinate amount of time in a car trying to get places, waiting in traffic to get places. And so, now I don't ever really want to go to LA. [chuckles] Because my concept in my head of LA is sitting in a car, waiting in traffic. I know that's unfair—

Taylor: I don't think that's an incorrect idea, though. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Well, I mean, I'm recognizing, because I'm sure there are people listening like, "Hey, I live in LA." And I'm sure that's unfair, but like in my head, LA means sitting in a car. So, that's not—I don't know, you just get like this sort of like burned in on your brain kind of concept of a place. And again, I live in a place where, you know, I can be anywhere I want to be in 10 minutes, and I never have to wait in traffic essentially, so I'm biased, you know.

Taylor: That's fair.

Sydnee: I have low tolerance.

Taylor: I had a similar experience and I, again, also only been to LA once, and I felt the same way. But you know, that's—I have friends that live there and love it, so, you know. I will—I will say, I will make one complaint against Boston.

Sydnee: Okay?

Taylor: Just one. And it's a small one.

Sydnee: Okay?

Taylor: But so, I'm vegan, my girlfriend's vegan, but we're both like low-key, like we don't need—give us that veggie burger that's in the back of your freezer, that's fine. And we looked at probably the menus of every—every like 20 restaurants in like the circumference of the Convention Center, and all the ones at our hotel, and I—there must be like a same restaurant chain that owns a bunch, or like a restaurant group that owns a bunch of these places. Because there was one vegan option, and it was always the same, and it was always a quinoa power bowl.

Sydnee: [titters]

Taylor: And that was the only thing we could eat. Everything else wasn't even like close to being able to be veganified. That was it! Like, it was like, it was a vegan power bowl, or nothing.

Sydnee: Well...

Taylor: I mean, like it's—it was—they were all very—like and they were all slightly different, like this one has chickpeas, this one has pepitas. Like, it's cute.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But like I—when I go to a con, I don't want to be healthy. I don't want to run on quinoa. I want—like give me like a sloppy, gross veggie burger, and I'll be fine. Like...

Sydnee: It does sound like somebody up there was like, "Oh, man, there are vegans now. What do they eat?"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "Quinoa?" [chuckles]

Taylor: Yup! [chuckles] That was Bonston's answer to the vegans was, "Quinoa Power Bowl."

Sydnee: "I don't know who eat—somebody eats quinoa, because I keep hearing about it. And the first time I looked at it I was like, quinoa?"

[both chuckle]

Sydnee: "And then somebody was like, 'No, no, that's quinoa.' And I was like, 'Oh, who eats that? Vegans?'"

Taylor: It felt like—it felt like a—like someone was doing a funny on us, because like we sat down at the sports bar thinking like well, maybe we can get like—maybe there's a veggie burger, we can get some French fries. It's like, oh, there's a quinoa power bowl. Okay, that's not bad. And then we went to the Irish pub. Oh, look, there's a quinoa power bowl. [chuckles] And then he went to like the French influenced restaurant. Oh, look on the menu, what could we—ah, the quinoa power bowl. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Eh... [chuckles] It's kind of like, have you ever—like, I remember there was a point in my life where I was thinking about like, I—there were mice and we were trying to figure out how to get rid of mice in a place. And I started to think like, my concept of what mice eat is cheese, and that's not right. Like I know that that's not all mice eat, is cheese. But at—but like that never got—nobody ever told me what the other thing—with the other things that mice eat are. [chuckles]

And so it was just this like deficit in my adult knowledge. So like, as—what a—what do mice eat? Cheese? I know this is wrong. I know—like I—as I'm saying it, I know it's wrong, but I don't know what the right answer is. And all that media told me is cheese. And so maybe that's like, that's the idea about vegans? [chuckles]

Taylor: Well, I mean, it was—the first time we encountered it I was like, yeah, I'll eat this, that's nice, I could have something healthy. That's good for me. I just did not realize that that was all I'd be encountering. So yeah, I don't know, I mean—and again, I'm not—it's not really a complaint, like we—I'm not picky, there was food to eat, that's fine.

If anything it's like, instead of doing my normal thing when there's nothing I can eat, I'm like, well, I guess I'm just eating French fries! That's it. And there's a part of my brain that's like, "Tee-hee-hee, I get to eat French fries for dinner." Like I didn't get to do that because it was like, oh, there's a healthy thing, I'll eat the—I'll eat the healthy thing. Okay, great, thanks.

Sydnee: It's weird that they—

Taylor: Thanks, Boston! [chuckles] I'm so powerful now!

Sydnee: It's weird that if you don't know what vegans eat, you don't just default to vegetables.

Taylor: Well, I just would have thought—like so many places are like, "Yeah, we do burgers. And then we just buy a pack of Boca Burgers and we stick 'em in the back of the freezer."

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: And if you want one of those, there you go! I mean, that's fine. It's a unit of food.

Sydnee: I hear—I feel like a lot of place—like the black bean burger has been around for a while. Like that wasn't even—like even before everybody kind of understood like vegan food was a thing. I feel like even from like my teenage years, I could order a black—because I always liked it. I was liked

black bean burgers. And so I feel like that's an old—that's an oldie.
[chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah, I don't—given, I mean, my preference is—and I know that there—a lot of people have strong opinions about the Beyond and the Impossible products. If I want a burger, I'm not—I mean, again, like if I want to be healthy, the power bowl was right there.

I didn't want to be healthy, so give me the Beyond. Give me the processed, weird, lab-grown heme iron meat products. Like, I want that! That's fine. It'll keep forever, you just have to buy it the once. I only come to town once a year, Boston, just once a year. You can—you can save that pack. [chuckles]

Sydnee: "Can you just save one veggie burger for me, please?"

Taylor: On our way—I mean, and I should say, this is directly around the seaport, I—there are definitely nice vegan restaurants all around Boston. It's just in the area we're in, there was nothing that was walkable in the immediate vicinity that wasn't a power bowl.

Sydnee: I would—[chuckles] I'm going back and watching all of the early seasons of Below Deck right now, and I always love in those early years when they would tell the chef—and especially if it was like... like when they have a French chef for a while, like they have different—you know. But they'll tell the chef like these people don't eat seafood, and there's always this moment where the chef just like dead pans them like, "What?"

[both chuckle]

Sydnee: Like, you're on a boat. [chuckles] What? And I always love the—because like now, you know, when you watch more recent seasons, they're like, "So these people don't eat seafood, these people are gluten-free, these people are vegan, these people don't—no wheat, no eggs, no dairy, no this, no that."

Like everybody's got—and they have to have this supplement, and they need these smoothies, and they need green drinks, and they need whatever. And they've got all this stuff and the chef's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, we get

it, we get it, this is like normal." But in those early seasons it's still like a, "I'm sorry, what? They don't eat what now? You want me to not use eggs? Excuse me? What do you mean?!" [chuckles]

Taylor: It is—I'm grateful—I mean, I guess, living in New York City, I'm grateful to have the options that I have. Because I feel like most restaurants just like have the caveat of like, put something on there for the vegans. Put some—make sure that we know what's gluten-free and what's not.

Having worked in restaurants, like that's just the general understanding of like, even if you don't cater towards this particular diet, you should have an answer when someone sits down and says, "I'm this."
"Okay, this is what you can eat."

Also with that, I feel like there are places that I know I am only gonna cause a problem, and I'm gonna pay for something that I don't want to pay for it, so it's better that I just don't go. And that's okay. I don't—I'm not gonna walk into like Dinosaur Bar-B-Que and be like, what's here for me? What's for this guy? [chuckles]

Sydnee: "Where are the vegan options?"

Taylor: Yeah, "Can you direct me to—there's a lot of that heavy meat smell in this restaurant. Can you direct me to something that smells less like meat?"

Sydnee: "There's usually like a little leaf next to those offerings on the menu?"

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: Something like that.

Taylor: I like the places that code the menu, but that's like—like there was one French rest front—French menu we looked at, which, to be fair, it was a French seafood restaurant. Nothing is the gonna be there for us. It was close by so I was like, I'll at least look. And they had the little—the little key

where they're like, oh, there's a little vegan leaf, that's great! It was like the breadsticks with an asterisk—

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: That was like take off the butter. [chuckles] It's like, well, okay, thanks!

Sydnee: I have seen those, where there's like, what—it's like, it's—I don't know, the soda. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah. Side salad! Hold cheese. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yeah. Hold cheese. None of the dressings.

Taylor: I feel like that's a—

Sydnee: "We put butter in all of 'em."

[both chuckle]

Taylor: It's the kindest most gentlest way to say, "There's nothing for you! Sorry about that." And that's okay, I don't—I don't need to go everywhere. I don't mind. I'm not one of those vegans.

Sydnee: Well, still, I—it was funny, this weekend, Charlie came up to me and she said, "Mom, I have a question for you. I just thought about something." And I said, "What?" And she said, "Is honey vegan?" And I said, "Charlie, you've hit upon such an interesting question."

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: "You have all on your own come up on a controversial issue."

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: I know. I said, "It depends on who you ask."

Taylor: Yeah, the vegans still can't see—well, I mean, I guess like the hardcore vegans, they've had an agreement that vegan—honey is definitely not vegan.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: I had one very dismissively say, "Well, then you're not a vegan, are you? You're a beegan." Which is cute, and I was like, "Okay, I love that. Fine!"

Sydnee: That is a very cute—yeah. Beegan.

Taylor: I don't know, it's—

Sydnee: Was that an insult?

Taylor: I think it was kind of like, "Well, then don't call yourself a vegan. At best, you're a beegan. That's a vegan, but you abuse bees." Like, well, I don't—I don't... It's a—it's a complex issue about like in our current like world system, the environment we've created, it's better—the husbandry of bees is better for bees to survive as a whole.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like we need beekeepers to keep bees around. And when we create ideal situations for them to live, they make a lot of honey, and they overproduce honey, then they become honey-locked, and then they all like drown in their own honey, so it's good that we're harvesting the honey. But you know, I guess we're just supposed to dump it somewhere, I don't know. I...

Sydnee: They don't mind. They don't mind when we take the honey.

Taylor: You asked? [chuckles]

Sydnee: I asked. They told me.

Taylor: [chuckles]

Sydnee: I spend so much time outside tending to my greenhouse and such these days, and I asked the bees, "Do you mind—"

Taylor: I bet—

Sydnee: "When we take your honey?"

Taylor: I bet a bee has just the cutest little voice.

Sydnee: And it said, [in a high-pitched voice] "No, I don't mind."

Taylor: [chuckles] "I made it for you."

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: "It's special. I produced it from my butt." Is that where it comes from? I don't know. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I don't know, I don't want to think—no, I think—is it...

Taylor: Spit, it's spit.

Sydnee: It's spit, right? Like—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: They regurgitate it? Ugh, okay, let's not—no, never mind. Let's not think about that. I've been working on—I saw this TikTok about medieval plants, vegetables that we don't grow anymore.

Taylor: Oh?

Sydnee: Because I mean the argument is like, big ag shoved these plants out of existence. They don't want you to know about these. And really it's just like stuff that doesn't produce as fast or as much, or is harder to harvest with machines. You know what I mean?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: So like, I don't know that it was a conspiracy as much as just like the, you know, kind of what made sense. But anyway, it did make me interested in trying to grow these plants, because a lot of 'em I could grow here. They like, this zone they are good for, and they're very hardy, and you don't have to do anything to them. So, I've now ordered some bulbs and seeds to grow skirret and Good-king-Henry. And rampion.

Taylor: What are the...

Sydnee: These are vegetables.

Taylor: What is Good-king-Henry?

Sydnee: Good-king-Henry is a plant that used to grow wild, and you can harvest like all parts of it. The leaves are sort of spinachey, the flower parts are kind of broccoli-ish, and then you can use the roots like you would like a radish or something.

Taylor: Oh?

Sydnee: And it was very popular, and it was used in a lot of recipes, and everybody had tons of it, and then—but the only problem is it takes like two years to fully germinate if you grow from seed. So—

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: But all these—

Taylor: It's gonna be a labor of love.

Sydnee: All these things are perennials, so once you establish a patch of them, they're there forever. So, you can just keep harvesting. Skirrets are the same way. You pull out—there all these long finger-like root vegetables. They come in like a cluster of like tons of long, thin roots. But you can pull a clump of 'em out, take what you want, tuck the rest back in there, and they just keep on growing.

Taylor: Are they like carrots? I say that only because it sounds like it.
[chuckles]

Sydnee: It does. It's skirret. It is—they said it's a cross between like a sweet potato or parsnip, somewhere in there. And you can cook 'em like that, like you can roast 'em like any root vegetable. They said they are sweet enough that you could eat 'em raw.

Taylor: Wow? That's exciting.

Sydnee: Yeah. I know! I'm very excited. And then rampion is of course the—that's where Rapunzel, that's the original myth, or the original story about Rapunzel was about rampion.

Taylor: Wait, I don't know this?

Sydnee: Yes, that's where the name Rapunzel comes from, it's the word for rampion, which was an old vegetable that we used to grow, that the witch had growing in her garden and the pregnant woman was like, "Oh, I'm really craving some rampion." So her husband snuck over the fence and stole rampion for his pregnant wife, and in exchange the witch took their baby.

Taylor: I did not realize that. I just—

Sydnee: And I'm gonna try to grow it!

Taylor: I assumed when you said rampion, that it was some sort of derivative of like a ramp, but not related?

Sydnee: No, but the leaves do look rampish.

Taylor: Hm.

Sydnee: But they're not—my understanding is this doesn't taste like that.

Taylor: Wow. How fun!

Sydnee: It's more of a—yeah.

Taylor: You're going to taste history!

Sydnee: I know!

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: There were several of them—there was one that they were like... viper root. And what did they say this tasted like—whatever this was I was like, this is not—oh, it tastes like oysters. It's a vegetable, but when you cook it, it tastes like oysters. And I was like, yeah, I think I'll pass on that one. [chuckles]

Taylor: Oh, why aren't the vegans descending on that?

Sydnee: I mean, I could try to grow some and see?

Taylor: I'd try it.

Sydnee: I don't know, it just, it's this long, black root vegetable.

Taylor: Creepy.

Sydnee: Some of these I wonder if people were just like, "This is creepy-looking. I'm gonna grow something else that's less creepy-looking."

Taylor: It looks like a snake! The long, black root? Oh, creepy.

Sydnee: The viper root, yeah. It does, it looks like a snake, but it's a long, black root. And they say that it—that's what they say. If you cook it, it tastes like an oyster.

Taylor: I have to ask, because I know you're obviously, your wealth of knowledge around medical history and then like how it plays into like ancient medicine, like herbs and stuff, are you tempted—and you don't have to affirm this on a documented source. But are you tempted to grow like a poison garden? Like maybe—

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: Maybe in a little secret patch—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: In a little—behind like a padlocked door greenhouse.

Sydnee: Yes. So, let me say that I had thought about it because I bought some fox glove, and was growing it out in my garden, or out in my flower bed, just because it's really pretty, and the flowers are beautiful. And like if you just eat that, you know, that's bad. That's where we get digitalis from. But then I went—one of our local greenhouses, who unfortunately, they're shutting down, it was one of my favorite local—it was just a local greenhouse place. They had their own section. I went there to get some herbs starts, and they had like a poison garden section of the shop.

And like it was like behind a little gate, and they were like, "Don't let your kids come in here." In case they're, you know, little enough that they would just eat things—but like come look. And they had a bunch of starts of different poisonous plants. And I had the thought like, ah, I don't know, like my kids are old enough that they wouldn't just eat things.

But I need to do more research on, one, I tend to grow on my back deck, and the cats come out with me sometimes, and so I need to research that. Like, are they poisonous to cats? And if so, will my cats just eat them? Like will they know better? I don't know. So I'm nervous about that. And if I grow them out, sometimes like the deer and the bunnies and the groundhogs—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And the raccoons get into my garden, and I don't want to accidentally kill any of 'em, you know?

Taylor: Well, that's—you all have enough space back there. I know you have your one greenhouse, but you could have a smaller, evil greenhouse.

Sydnee: Mm-hm, the evil greenhouse.

Taylor: That's just for evil plants. Because—

Sydnee: I could, like—

Taylor: With the way the world's heading, I think having a small poison garden might not be the worst idea.

Sydnee: I will say that, among my birthday presents, I got a book on taking your herbs and things, and turning them into medicinal preparations, if you so choose.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: Like what, you know, what kind of base to use for all the different ones, and how to make like a tincture verse a lozenge, or a gummy, or a... what a salve... like, the process. And while I am obviously a practitioner of evidence-based medicine, I don't recommend—I'm not an herbalist. This is not something that I tend to do. It is kind of a fun thing to learn how—like, how that process goes—I don't know. I'm kind of interested in it, even though I'm still going to prescribe actual medicine to people.

Taylor: Oh, sure, yeah, no.

Sydnee: It's just interesting.

Taylor: Yeah, it's just curious. It seems like it would be a combination of your interests.

Sydnee: It is. Oh, it definitely is. No, I'm interested in it. I've read about it. I've gotten into that and then foraging, I got two books on foraging, so I'm very excited to keep—Charlie and I have started foraging, but we don't know what we're looking for. [chuckles] So, now that I have books, I think we're gonna be better at it.

Taylor: Yeah, it's very—

Sydnee: I know enough not to eat anything.

Taylor: That's good. There's a forger that I follow, and it seems to be the biggest thing is like, lots of things that look like things that won't kill you, can also look like things that will kill you.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: So, it's good you have the books. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yes. And I just, like, I don't foresee myself ever feeling comfortable foraging mushrooms.

Taylor: Yeah. That seems like a big one.

Sydnee: Yeah, I just don't—I mean, the margin for error there is so slim.

[both chuckle]

Taylor: It's like—

Sydnee: So, I don't know, I'd have to do it for years before I would feel comfortable with that.

Taylor: I think that's... I think that's fair.

Sydnee: Tey, we really need to talk about SNL UK. We've left ourself very little time. [chuckles] Which is okay. I will talk about gardening and foraging and plants forever.

Taylor: Oh, yeah. Well, so, you brought this to the table, why did you...

Sydnee: [chuckles]

Taylor: What did you love about it?

Sydnee: Did you not enjoy it?

Taylor: Oh, no! I enjoyed it. I thought it was fun.

Sydnee: Okay, so I feel like SNL is this self-perpetuating thing at this point. It has been around so long and is so sort of like—like its history is so important to the show itself. And then it's become, in my mind, sort of linked with the popular concept of New York City. Maybe not the real New York, but like kind of what people outside of New York think about New York.

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: SNL is kind of part of it. And I think that even through years when it has not been particularly funny, you know, people haven't really enjoyed what they're doing, it still continues to exist and it's hard for me to see it ever going away, just because of the institution it's become. So, it was weird, my initial thought was, why would we try to replicate that somewhere else when it's not—it's not like it's on its rise, you know what I mean?

That's usually when you try to do that. Like when something is new and everybody's excited about it, and it's kind of going viral, then you try to replicate it other places. It feels weird to me that we're taking it after all these years and now we're gonna try it in another country. That felt, I don't know, like risky?

Taylor: Yeah. But don't you think—because what I will say, I felt like the infusion of British humor, like SNL with that kind of downturn—that's not maybe fair, but yeah, it's not like at a high point. Like, I feel like it makes sense to give it a life injection somewhere else.

Because I found it more enjoyable. I'm not a big fan of SNL these days, I—and maybe—we were talking the other day about it and you were like, "No, it's gotten better." Like, there was a period where I was like, every time I turn it on, I'm just... nothing is funny. Everything is the same.

And so, the first two episodes that I watched of the UK, like I thought it was genuinely funny. There were some bits that didn't land for me, but most of them did. And some of them were so weird that they were like, oh, this is great. [chuckles] And this is great because it's weird British humor.

Sydnee: Yes. No, I agree with you. I think... I do think it was, like first episode, out of the gate, better than a lot of what SNL has been doing in recent years. Again, I will—I will make a case for, I do think SNL is turning a corner into a better era at the moment.

Like, you know, it's just sometimes they hit on that just right mixture of cast, and they get—I do think when they let themselves be a little more bizarre, a little, you know, more surreal, I think those are better seasons and eras of SNL. I think that's when it hits better. And I think British humor definitely lends itself to that a little more. They're edgier. They'll make jokes that I don't think you would see us make right now on SNL in the US, which is maybe a little sad and scary.

I had this moment where I thought, ooh, I guess you can say that there, and then I thought, oh, man, what am I saying? Like, in the US, the government would get mad at you if you said that. But in the UK, you're allowed to make jokes about your leaders like that. And then I thought, oh, no. [chuckles]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Oh, no. [chuckles] You know what I mean? And when I say that, let me be really clear, because I don't want to be misconstrued, I don't mean like, ooh, we're too woke to say that. They can—I don't mean it like that. I mean like, I feel like SNL falls short of being too critical of power structures.

You know what I mean? I feel like it always pulls its punches when it's punching up, because it doesn't want to go too far, because of corporate overlords and who they answer to. And in the UK, they didn't seem to have that fear. That is what I mean.

Taylor: No, I agree with that, and I would even go a step further and say, I think one of my initial problems with the US SNL was during the last two election cycles. There's a very delicate balance of like bringing on a facsimile of a leader, and I mean, if you're trying to make a point like, hey, this is a terrible person, then you have to go hard or—

You can't make them likable, you can't kind of make like a funny goof, you know? It's like, there was a lot of like the Trump impersonations that I felt like, I think this is good PR for him. This is making who he is just sort of like a silly, goofy guy, versus like the monster that we're all dealing with.

And I... that was part of my sort of breakup with the original SNL, is like, I think a—I think you need to go harder, or don't bring him on at all. Like, don't have this character be something that softens who he is to us as a, you know, nation.

Sydnee: I think you're exactly right. So, I will say that even as I do watch the US SNL now, quite often, if the cold open is a Trump impression, which it often is—I mean, that's—there's a long history of that on SNL, that the opening part is something political, and is somebody pretending to be the current president or whatever. That's not uncommon. And they did the same thing in the UK one, right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Their opening sketch was about British politics. That, to me, is easier to watch, though, because I don't have as much context, and I don't—you know, my freedom and my future is not resting on these individuals' choices. But I don't watch the Trump ones, I just can't. I don't think anything about him is funny.

I don't think any—anything you could do to make fun of him, I don't know how it's funny, because he really does and says those things, so it's not funny. Like, he—I mean, you know what I mean? Like, he really is that ridiculous, and that evil, and that stupid, and all those things. And so like, how do you make a joke out of it?

Taylor: Well, exactly. Well, and it's—and I get that, you know, there's a lot of like philosophy around like making a mockery of people in power is important to depowering them. I agree with that. But you have to make them look ridiculous, and small, and weak. And that's not the same as—sometimes I feel like the Trump impressions are like exaggerated forms of like Ronald Reagan's jelly beans, you know?

Like, "Look, he's got a cute little habit. Oh, he likes to eat jelly beans." Which was totally something manufactured to make him not as scary as he was. Like, I don't—I don't think that—you know, the point of mockery, of like comedy, should be to take leaders down a peg, not just soften their image so you can laugh at them and not think too hard about what they're doing.

Sydnee: Yes. I think that... I think that it's a well-founded fear, after we all saw what Will Ferrell did to George W. Bush. Which is, I mean, I think that some of those characteristics were truly there. I do think he came across as like... like the mischievous little boy who accidentally got to be president, and, aw, shucks, he's doing his best, but boy, he just doesn't know what he's doing, does he?

And I feel like that was kind of part of who he was from the jump, but definitely Will Ferrell's impressions of him solidified that as our image of who W was, and softened him to a great degree.

I mean, I don't know that they garnered him any respect, but it definitely made him seem harmless, and like, well, he would never do anything too bad, he's just—he's just not very bright, right? Like, aw, he means well, he's just not very bright. And that's not true, but that was definitely the perception I had, because of the SNL impressions.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and by that same token, there's a lot of people that would see that Bush impression and be like, "Oh, that reminds me of my dad. That reminds me of my grandpa." And so, having Trump portrayed as sort of a bullish, larger-than-life, arrogant businessman, and ignoring all the truly heinous stuff, it's like, there's lots of people that are like, "Well, yeah, well, I'm kind of like that. I ask for what I want, I demand what I want, I get what I want, yeah!" Like, I don't know.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like...

Sydnee: Well, and I mean, I think—and I know you just watched the first episode. We watched the second episode of SNL UK when it came out this weekend. And their opening sketch was about Prince Andrew.

Taylor: I saw that.

Sydnee: Yes. And I think to—I mean, good, go hard. Like, you should, they should go hard on him. And I think that that kind of thing is—that's the treatment I would expect for somebody like Trump here, right?

Taylor: Yeah. Well, that's what—I appreciated that, even like the weekend update segment in the first episode.

Sydnee: Yeah!

Taylor: It's just—it just—[chuckles] it was very blunt! Just called them pedophiles.

Sydnee: Yes!

Taylor: And then kind of moved on. And I was like, all right, yeah, great. [chuckles]

Sydnee: It is, it's very blunt. It's much more biting, in a good way. In a way that—not much catches me off guard anymore, you know?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I feel like things—that things are softened, and that like—and again, when I say that, I do not mean—this is not me saying like you can't be funny anymore. Please, let me be clear, I am saying that we have stopped using comedy to be like a critical view of those in power in the way that we used to. And I don't mean everybody, of course, there are people who are still doing it. But I see a blunting of that, out of fear, in this country. And they clearly do not feel that in SNL UK.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I... outside of the political stuff, which I do appreciate, the absurdity you mentioned, I loved. I think my favorite sketch, and I think it was 45 seconds of... what was the—what was the...

Sydnee: What's his name? Four Acres?

Taylor: Yeah, Four Acres, I think you're right. That clip, where he's just singing with increasing aggression about what was your Irish granddad like! [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That was—that was gr—I was dying! [laughs]

Sydnee: I thought that was hilarious. I thought that was excellent. That's the kind of stuff which, I mean, they—like, that is—that's calling to sort of the best sketches of SNL history are like—you know, that is—which, I mean, you've got to imagine, they were pulling ideas from British comedy to use on SNL as—you know what I mean? So like we're probably—

Taylor: Oh, absolutely!

Sydnee: It's probably a cyclical thing, it's not like they took it from SNL. But I thought that was excellent. I actually thought the sketch where they were doing the ultrasound and the woman was about to have the baby—

Taylor: Yeah. [chuckles]

Sydnee: And he's just pretending to be shy, but he's not actually shy. [titters]

Taylor: That was—it was so silly!

Sydnee: But it was very well observed and funny! [chuckles]

Taylor: Well, and like, it didn't really like come to a point, it's—which I liked even better. Like it was like, well, just... here's the baby. [chuckles] And

that—whoever that one actor is that was playing the baby, like he's the one that kind of looks like Tom Holland.

Sydnee: Yes, yes. And he—yes. Yes, I thought that was very funny. I thought the... all the historical figures having dinner together, and all they did was argue over who was paying for appetizers. Oh, the Princess Di. [chuckles]

Taylor: That was one where it's—there was one where it was like, oh, is that—I don't—like, let's not lampoon Princess Di. But it was... it was a very sweet and yet hilarious portrayal. [chuckles] Like, I don't know! I was like, yeah, this is fine.

Sydnee: Well, it made me wonder too like, I don't—I don't think you would see that done here in the US, because I feel like there's so much reverence for Princess Di. Do you know what I mean? And like—

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It made me wonder if that's a perception we have here, that they have more of a nuanced view of? You know what I mean? Like, because I can't see that. I can't see people making fun of Princess Di like that in the US. I feel like—

Taylor: It would also...

Sydnee: I feel like everybody would be like, "Oh, don't do that."

Taylor: It would also require that skit, if done in the US, would require the average viewer to know that many historical figures. And I don't know if that... I don't know if that would happen.

Sydnee: Yeah...

Taylor: I don't know if we could get a table of the Last Supper of famous—of historical people that people would recognize.

Sydnee: That's a sad statement. It reminds me—

[meow]

Sydnee: Of, in college, we had a—

[meow]

Sydnee: Is Jack okay?

Taylor: Jack just came in—he just woke up from his nap, and he just came in like an old man, just screaming. Sorry.

Sydnee: Oh, that's okay. [chuckles] It reminds me, in college, we had to do this for a final assignment, for one of my honor seminars. We had to be in character as different historical figures from a certain era, interacting with each other, and having like a—like a roundtable discussion about issues of the time period.

Taylor: Ah, cool.

Sydnee: So like... like I was Gloria Steinem, and one of my classmates was Richard Nixon, and somebody else was Andy Warhol, and I don't—I don't remember who everybody was. But anyway, we had to sit there, dressed like the person, in character, and then have this whole conversation, while showing our professors that we had this understanding of the events of the time, right? And like—

Taylor: Ah?

Sydnee: Talk about the events of that time period, I think it was supposed to be like 1969 or something. Talk about the events of that time period, in character, knowing how each of our historical figures would feel about that. I don't know, I feel like we need to do that exercise for everybody. It was a lot of fun.

Taylor: That would be good. That would be important.

Sydnee: And I got to be Gloria Steinem. That was fun.

Taylor: I was—I thought—I thought I remember that, I was like, you were Gloria Steinem in that. I bet you had a lot of fun with that.

Sydnee: I did! I did.

Taylor: Everyone with a—with a minor in theater was living for that.
[chuckles]

Sydnee: Oh, yes. No, they—I mean, we were all big nerds, so like we were all very excited.

Taylor: I love, like again with the absurdity, like that Freddie Mercury just responded in like sounds and lyrics.

[both chuckle]

Taylor: And everybody understood what he was saying.

Sydnee: Yes, exactly. No, I think—I think that those risks, leaning into that, taking risks, both in like making political commentary and not being afraid, and just in doing things, that's always—Justin and I always talk about our favorite SNL sketch is typically the 11-55 sketch.

Taylor: I don't know that sketch?

Sydnee: It's the sketch that comes on—or not 11-55, the... 12-55 sketch. It's the—it's the sketch that comes on five minutes before it ends.

Taylor: Hm.

Sydnee: Whatever sketch is the very last one of the episode, five minutes before it ends, is usually something absurdist and strange. And it feels like somebody was given the chance like, "All right, okay, we'll do your weird thing, but we're not going to do it until the very end of the show." Because a lot of people are already asleep. [chuckles]

Taylor: So, in that, did you—did you love the weird bra measurement lady sketch?

Sydnee: I have to say, I thought that was kind of funny. [chuckles]

Taylor: I think that was the 11-55 sketch, I think that was the last one.

Sydnee: It was—I mean, I thought it was odd, but I thought like it landed.

Taylor: Well, it was weird enough and short enough that like I thought that there was going to be a bigger joke, and then it was like no, this is just a funny character who's—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: This is it. And that's... that's it.

Sydnee: That's it! Well, and there was something—I always think when they like, women supporting women, like leaning hard into like, "Sister, I'm going to pump you up. I'm going to make your day, and I'm going to make everybody see how great you are." I always think those are fun. That's a fun energy to play off of.

Taylor: I also like when you can tell that a character has been fully-formed, at least in the person performing its head. Because it wasn't just like, oh, this is kind of a funny idea that women would do this for each other. It's like that lady walked in in that costume with that haircut and that lipstick color, and this is just a whole... I have to believe that she has met that lady before in her life. Like that is someone that lives out there in the world. [chuckles]

Sydnee: I would bet you are right. I would bet, yes, that somewhere she has had an experience with a woman who has—yes, I would bet you anything that that character is inspired by some sort of real-life interaction.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I really, I was—I was impressed with it. I thought Tina Fey was a really good choice to like sort of be that crossover. Like, "We're

bringing this from US to UK, and we've brought Tina Fey to deliver it to you." [chuckles] As like a goodwill ambassador. You know, she's like, she was a writer, so she's not just famous for acting, but like also she could help craft some of this—you know, you know she was contributing in a really good way in that way too. And I don't know, she's also, I don't—it felt like handing over the institution. It really felt like she had delivered it.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: The ambassador for SNL US.

Taylor: Here's our baby. Please be—please be better to it than we were. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yes. And maybe we'll see like a sort of like a competition developing, you know?

Taylor: Mm-hm.

Sydnee: Like both SNLs trying to up the ante with what they'll say and try to get away with, and that'd be good.

Taylor: I think even if it's just, you know, the different—the different perspective, the different cultural touch points, like it makes it feel fresh. I don't know, I would be curious to see how the audience in the UK is receiving it.

Sydnee: Mm-hm.

Taylor: But I appreciate that.

Sydnee: Yeah, I don't know, I—yeah. I would be interested to know what the UK thinks of it. Because yeah, I really enjoyed it, I will keep watching it. And I mean, really, I can—I can watch the whole thing, whereas as soon as anybody comes on screen impersonating Trump in the US one, I tend to just sort of fast forward, 'cause... ah... it's just not funny.

Taylor: Yeah, I don't know what to do with that. 'Cause I was thinking like, you know, South Park is, the newest season, they've been taking on Trump. And they've kind of made him as ridiculous and disgusting as possible, which I guess is maybe the only—

Sydnee: That's what you need to do.

Taylor: Yeah! Like and it's a full, just ridiculous mockery with no redeeming qualities, and they, you know, don't even... like it's the same voice they did for when they had—it's the same exact characterization they had when they had Hitler.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And you know, he's portrayed in the exact same way, and I think like that's maybe the only way you can do it. Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I think—I think that there—I think we should make fun of fascists. We just have to be smart about how we do it so that it lands. Right?

Taylor: Well, exactly. Like, your punches have to connect. You've got to be mean.

Sydnee: Yes. But I appreciate you watching it, though, 'cause I know, like I said, I know you weren't an SNL watcher to begin with, so...

Taylor: No, thank you, I really enjoyed it. I just, I didn't even realize there was a second episode out 'til this morning when I was getting up and I was like, oh, I—maybe I should like rewatch a little bit. And I watched the first half. I got to the Paddington bear sketch, and I loved that. [chuckles]

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That was great.

[both chuckle]

Sydnee: That was really good!

Taylor: I thought the joke was just going to be, oh, it's a bear. And I'm like, that's funny enough. And then like the interviews where people were still trying to make it sound like a positive thing, I'm like, oh, this is great. [chuckles]

Sydnee: That was very good. It's good, it's well done. What should we do next, Tey?

Taylor: What should we do next? Well, it's going to be Easter?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: So, we should celebrate... the Bible.

Sydnee: [chuckles] So, we're doing the Bible! No. No, we're not going to do—no.

Taylor: I'm not going to read all that. [chuckles]

Sydnee: No. [chuckles]

Taylor: TLDR! We're doing Jesus Christ Superstar!

Sydnee: There we go! That's basically the same. I was raised to believe it's the—it's the important stuff anyway.

Taylor: I would presume.

Sydnee: All right, we're—yes, I think we should talk about Jesus Christ Superstar. It felt very... revolutionary to me as a teenager. So...

Taylor: All right.

Sydnee: All right. But thank you, thank you for watching SNL UK. It's on—it's streaming on Peacock, if anybody's interested in that. That's where you can—that's where you can find it. Although, I don't know, maybe you have some illegal way of obtaining it. I'm not endorsing that... I'm just saying usually people do.

[both chuckle]

Sydnee: I don't know how to do any of that, but I'm aware that other people do.

Taylor: Watch it, if you want, however you choose.

Sydnee: There you go. [chuckles] Thank you, listeners. You should go to maximumfun.org and check out a lot of great podcasts there that you would enjoy. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to The Novellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm still buffering.

Taylor: And I am too.

[theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind" by The Novellas plays]

Sydnee: I will say too, the episode with Jamie Dornan. There was a sketch with his mom, and it was so fun. [chuckles] The mom can't stop trying to make out with him because he's Jamie Dornan, even though it was supposed to be her son.

Taylor: That was the—that was the sketch I was watching when I realized what time it was that I needed to get on the call. [chuckles]

Sydnee: It's very funny though, right?! Edgy.

Taylor: Like, I see where this is going.

Sydnee: Edgy and funny.

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