

Still Buffering 488: Below Deck (2013)

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

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Tey, the Fourth of July is over.

Taylor: Yes! We're done.

Sydnee: We're done.

Taylor: That was—happy birthday, America. It's like saying, like—have you ever had, like, a friend that, like, is really difficult and demanding? And you're like, why am I still friends with this person? But then they have their birthday party and you're like, man, you have to go to their birthday party, 'cause it's their birthday, so you have to. But man, I really wanna talk to them about all the stuff they've been doing that's been making—but it's their birthday, so I can't bring it up. That's what this felt like. [laughs]

Sydnee: It really did. It really sucks because, like, the things that are Fourth of July-ish are things that I just enjoy. And I guess if they're connected to America, maybe these are things that I do enjoy about America. I like swimming. I like grilling. Um, I like being with people that I care about. I like watermelon. I like...

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Okay.

Sydnee: I mean, if you go to a cookout in the summer, there's gonna be a watermelon.

Taylor: Mayo-based salads.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, I'm... eh.

Taylor: On the fence? Okay.

Sydnee: Depends, depends. 50-50. But, like, I like those things. And I like—fireworks I'm only so-so on, 'cause of the danger. But, like, why do we have to connect 'em to America?

Taylor: [laughs quietly] I mean, that's... it's her birthday.

Sydnee: I guess.

Taylor: She likes all those things.

Sydnee: Yep. And we do too. And we did it. And that was—and there's a giant Ferris wheel in Charleston, West Virginia... that we spent, like, 2 million dollars on.

Taylor: I'm glad it didn't fall over.

Sydnee: Did you know it cost 150—

Taylor: Or melt.

Sydnee: —thousand dollars a day for that thing?

Taylor: Something tells me that is not going to the workers operating it.
[laughs]

Sydnee: No. No. No. And, uh, you know, we don't have clean water here. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Fourth of July's over. We're not gonna...

Taylor: Ugh. And we're done.

Sydnee: We're not gonna talk about America any more.

Taylor: I—I want to jump on the trend—I don't know if you've seen this on your FYP. But the people that have decided that the day after the Fourth of July is the official start of Halloween. Those are my people.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That is where I'm at.

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: I feel like the weather agreed, 'cause we've been having—I mean, all across the East Coast we've been having a heat wave. Here in New York it's been, like, 100 degrees every day. Today, I woke up, it is a gloomy, rainy day, and it is 70 degrees. The earth itself said "Spooky season!"

Sydnee: We're done. No, I agree. I am fine with that. Now, I'm assuming that you're gonna have a button for each day. Is that kind of what you're... [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yes, a spooky button for each day. You don't need to know what they're about. That's just for me.

Sydnee: What will you do with the buttons? [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Doesn't matter. I don't need to tell you.

Sydnee: There'll be one for each day. It will remind us that time is passing. [laughs]

Taylor: And you could—it could be scary. The time could be scary.

Sydnee: Time can be—it's scary 'cause it's passing.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and also it's scary 'cause it's supposed to be scary, 'cause it's scary season now. And... be scared every day, 'cause you're dying. Halloween!

Sydnee: Did you—okay. Technically that would've started yesterday. We're recording on the 6th, so technically this would've started on July 5th. Did you do anything spooky for July 5th?

Taylor: Well, I did. Um, I read the spooky book that we were supposed to talk about today. But... maybe some of us didn't think we could finish the book in time, so we're gonna talk about it next week. But I think that counts.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And this is, like, I want the next four months—I'm going to be, to use the term from our younger generation, I'm gonna be Halloween-maxxing.

Sydnee: Perfect. Do you have a plan for today? I mean, I know, like, finish spooky book. That's also on my agenda, since it is my fault. I did not finish Bury Your Gays in time. Um, this is totally my fault. We had the Matilda cast party, and... no excuses, though.

Taylor: You got too—too loose at the Matilda cast party. "I can't be bothered to read a book! I'm partying with the cast of Matilda!" [laughs]

Sydnee: And I know what you're thinking. "Aren't there a lot of children in that cast?" Yes, they were. But also there were adults here. There were adults and kids. But either way...

Taylor: Ain't no party like a... Matilda cast party, 'cause the Matilda cast party is full of people that don't follow social cues and know when the party ends! [laughs]

Sydnee: Perhaps. [laughs quietly] Perhaps. But...

Taylor: Hey, who hasn't failed to finish a book reading assignment because they went too hard at the cast party?

Sydnee: I said this and Charlie was like, "I'm sure there's, like, a SparksNotes version, Mom."

And I was like, "No, honey! I don't wanna... I don't wanna, like, cheat! I wanna finish it! I like it! I just don't have time! But I... " [laughs]

Taylor: For as rarely as we read a book on this podcast, I think we have to actually finish the books we read. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. I'm not gonna read the SparksNotes.

Taylor: Well, that was a spooky thing. Today, I don't know. I mean, I got today off, so I gotta find...

Sydnee: Find a spooky thing to do.

Taylor: A spooky thing, yeah. It's rainy enough, and I don't know. Maybe I'll—" [spooky voice] I have two cans of pumpkin in my cabinet. Maybe I'll make a spooky pumpkin... scone, or something." I don't know how to say the word scone in a—scones aren't particularly scary. They're a little difficult. I guess that's a little spooky.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: "[spooky voice] Oh no! Is it going to rise?"

Sydnee: That's a challenge.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Now, if I may suggest, have you seen Obsession?

Taylor: Oh, yes. Yes, I have.

Sydnee: Oh, okay. Well, I was gonna say. I just watched that scary movie the other day, and that was... yeah.

Taylor: We should talk about that.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: On this show, where we talk about things. Not today, though.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: But eventually.

Sydnee: Eventually we should. I really liked that. That was very good.

Taylor: Yeah. That was a great movie.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, I've already watched—I've already started—pre-the Fourth, I was getting geared up. So I've already watched a lot of horror movies in the last couple days.

Sydnee: Well...

Taylor: Nothing really of note. They were all just kind of whatever was new on Shudder, but.

Sydnee: Yeah. Well, I will say, here's a spooky thing I can do today. I got some pumpkin plant starts.

Taylor: Ooh!

Sydnee: Travis brought some. And—well, technically Teresa brought them from Travis. But either way, the point is, I have some, and I have room in my garden because the bunnies and the groundhogs ate all my radishes. [laughs] I feel like a—I feel like I'm in a children's book right now. [laughs]

Taylor: Some sort of—is there a lesson here? Oh, well, if the bunnies eat all your radishes, plant pumpkins.

Sydnee: I'm gonna—yeah. It's kind of late for planting, but who cares? You know what? I don't know what the seasons are anymore, 'cause it's hot all the time. So I'm gonna plant these pumpkins today, and we'll just—we'll

figure it out. 'Cause I've got all this empty garden space now. 'Cause, I mean, it was so sad.

The radishes all got yanked up and all the leaves were eaten, and they were all... they're weird and deformed, 'cause I—I tried to shove 'em back in the earth to keep growing. But, like, that's not how radishes work.

Taylor: Aww. Well, do you have any sort of, like, protection from the wildlife? I know you don't, like, use—I mean, you can build a little fence around your radishes or something.

Sydnee: So, we have a fence, but they, like, snuck under it. So, Justin has reinforced the bottom of the fence. So I'm hoping that, like, moving forward, the plants—'cause they didn't completely decimate my tomatillos or my watermelons or my okra. Um, what else did they not decimate? And I have tomatoes there. They don't seem to like that. The tomatoes are untouched. What they seem to go for—radishes.

The carrots I didn't even bother. I couldn't keep those. Like, I put those in a pot just to get them a little bigger before I transferred 'em to the ground. And the pot got, like, completely—it looked like a bomb went off in the pot. Like, it was just dirt everywhere.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, it was wild. So, like, that—the carrots I gave up on. But they seem to like radishes and turnips and, um, they like cucumber leaves. They keep eating my fricking cucumber leaves.

Taylor: Have you seen them in action?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: The bunnies?

Sydnee: I've chased 'em off.

Taylor: Oh, okay.

Sydnee: Yeah, no. I've chased off both bunnies and groundhogs from my garden beds multiple times, but they keep coming back.

Taylor: Mm-hmm. I had the vague spooky thought that what if it's not a— what if it's not an animal at all? What if you have the vegetable man that comes and visits and steals your vegetables? [laughs]

Sydnee: Listen. If the vegetable man wants some vegetables, I'll just give him some. He does not need to creep around my garden at night. And also—

Taylor: No, that's what—that's his joy in life. The vegetable man emerges from the forest when you've planted a sufficient garden and goes "[high pitched] I'm the vegetable man! What is for me?"

Sydnee: And he'll just eat the leaves?!

Taylor: And he takes his offering. [laughs]

Sydnee: Off the cucumber plant? [laughs] What is that!

Taylor: "[high pitched] Yes, he loves a leaf of the cucumber plant!"

Sydnee: There were actual cucumbers hanging on the trellis, and they didn't eat the cucumbers. Just the leaves.

Taylor: "[high pitched] Do not question the ways of the vegetable man."

Sydnee: There are so many peas and beans out there. They didn't eat any of the peas and beans.

Taylor: I don't know. That's nice that it—your animals left so much alone.

Sydnee: Yeah, that's true.

Taylor: Look on the bright side. Look at everything you have.

Sydnee: I know. I will not—[laughs quietly] do not wish for the radishes you've lost. [laughs] Do not mourn them.

Taylor: [laughs] Think of the pumpkins you will grow.

Sydnee: Celebrate the pumpkins you will grow. [laughs] So there we go. I'll plant pumpkins.

Taylor: Put it on a little sign. Well, I don't—I don't understand how plants work. How long will it take for you to have pumpkins?

Sydnee: Oh, it'll be... like, what? 90 days, probably? I mean, it'll be months.

Taylor: Oh. That'll be great! You'll have 'em right in time for spooky season. Like, the prime of scary time.

Sydnee: Yeah. And, I mean, the thing is, like, if I accept that I am growing them possibly for decorative purposes, then I don't have to stress so much. 'Cause I think these are supposed to be, like, the little guys. Like, I'm pretty sure these are starts for, like, the little... little pie guys.

Taylor: Oh. Yeah.

Sydnee: But I don't know. I mean, we'll see. I mean, if I just want 'em to get—I mean, if they're just little, that's a, you know. I might be able to get there.

Taylor: You're just worried about the aesthetics of the pumpkin.

Sydnee: Yes. I'm less worried about being able to eat it, just because I know I'm planting it at a weird time. But, I mean, if I can, listen. If we—anything I can eat, I'm gonna eat. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] In general.

Sydnee: In general. [laughs] No, I mean, I forage. So if I can find a plant that is edible, I will eat it. [laughs]

Taylor: [crosstalk] for their longevity. Those pumpkins are gonna try real hard to be as unappealing as possible.

Sydnee: I know. [laughs]

Taylor: I had a pumpkin that I got last Halloween, and I just threw it out, like, a month ago. I don't—it didn't rot. It just, like, dried out inside, or something. I don't know. Have you ever had, like, a decorative pumpkin that just chills? And you're like, "What are you—when are you gonna... "

Sydnee: So, they can.

Taylor: Yeah?

Sydnee: Well, and I mean, the squash family in general. I mean, because, like, that's the thing about when I was growing the delicata. It's also called winter squash. And, like, I had those all winter. Like, I would harvest them in the fall and then, like, we would eat our last one as I was planting my next crop for the spring, or even when we were still—we're already getting new ones in. So, like, squash are meant to, like, if you keep them in a cool, dry place, last a long time.

Taylor: I mean, maybe that was it. It was just whatever temperature regulation—'cause it was only when it got really hot that I started noticing, like, there were some spots on it. And I'm like, I'm just gonna get rid of it before it... I was assuming the insides were just, like, molten nasty. But it didn't smell bad or anything, and it was solid. It just... I don't know.

This, again, goes to my lack of understanding of how vegetables work. It just sat there. I'm like, well, it doesn't seem like a... a vegetable should be able to sit in the corner of my apartment for six months. But it did.

Sydnee: They do.

Taylor: So... okay. [laughs]

Sydnee: You can—I mean, if you know—you know, it's funny. Justin just got me a book on—it's just, like, how to—it's not survivalist as much as, like, sort of if you wanna—maybe more homestead-y kind of book. And some of it's with gardening. That's why he got it for me. And then there's some foraging stuff. And then there's, like, making, like—what was one of the things? Make rope out of some kind of plant that I have out back.

Taylor: Oh, wow.

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, you know, stuff like that. Like, a variety of making kind of things. Um, and you can really, like—there are sustenance crops like that. Like, if you know how to grow your squash, and then your onions and garlic, and preserve them appropriately, you can just stock a cellar with stuff for a very long time before it goes bad, if you know what you're doing.

Taylor: That makes sense.

Sydnee: Yeah. If you know what you're doing. I wouldn't—these are these things where, like, uh, we were talking about this before we started recording. Sometimes you just kind of go for stuff, and then other times, like, you wanna learn how. [laughs quietly] Like, when it comes to food preservation, learn how. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. That's one thing—I will agree with that. Like, I like to experiment in, like, artistic processes where sometimes things don't work out, and you go, oh well. But I agree. Like, it's—it's like any time—when I was younger, I had a roommate that liked to play around with fermenting things. Like, would make—oh, we're gonna make our own apple cider. And I'm like, if you're gonna consume it, then you need to know exactly what you're doing. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes. Yes.

Taylor: 'Cause when I play around with paint, sometimes it's like, oh no, it coagulated weird and doesn't look good. When you play around with food preservation it's like, oh no, botulism.

Sydnee: Exactly. Yeah, no. I would not... that's why canning—like, I have a book on canning, but it makes me nervous to... I don't know.

Taylor: Yeah. I was making some peach jam this week because peaches are so perfect and ripe right now, and my corner store had them for a really good price, so I just bought a ton of 'em. Like, I don't know what to do with these. I'll make a jam. And the recipe I followed, half the recipe was going through canning procedures. It was like, hmm, we're gonna make enough that I could put it in a quart container in my fridge for a couple weeks.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: And that's it. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. That really—I'll tell you, the whole jam, jelly—that whole, like—that genre. [laughs] When you realize that you don't have to can it if you just want to have it for a short period of time. Like, if you're just gonna put it in your fridge and eat on it for a couple weeks, you don't have to know how to—that's a very freeing moment. Like, I remember realizing that. Like, oh, I can just make some salsa and just put it in the fridge. I don't have to worry about, like, "I'll have this in six years." Like...

Taylor: Yeah. I live in a small New York apartment. I don't have canning space. I don't have a storage... closet. I don't have a closet-closet.

Sydnee: You don't have a root cellar.

Taylor: No, no. It's being eaten this week, or it's—that's it. That's the only space.

Sydnee: You know, have you dug—have you looked, though? Your building might have a root cellar that nobody knows about.

Taylor: Well, I mean, we do have, like—there is a basement that, like, nobody lives down there. It's just, like—it's where, like, I don't know, like, the power boxes are and stuff. But it also regularly floods and I think it might have a little—a little bit of the old black mold down there. But I'm on the top floor, so that's... that's not my problem, right?

Sydnee: That's fine.

Taylor: It doesn't...

Sydnee: Hey, if it floods, maybe it could be like your own little cranberry bog. [laughs]

Taylor: Or—or an eel pit. Have you seen the man that made the eel pit in his basement?

Sydnee: No! [laughs] Was it like the illegal eel trade?

Taylor: Uh, I don't think he was trading them. I think he just was having them. He made a—what's it called? A cistern, is that what it is when you've got, like, a—yeah. He made—he excavated a cistern in his basement and he had eels down there.

Sydnee: Wow!

Taylor: I mean, I'm sure he's still out there with his cistern and his eels.

Sydnee: Oh my gosh.

Taylor: But he would just, like, go swimming with his eels in his basement.

Sydnee: Go swimming with them?!

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: No! No!

Taylor: Yeah. Like, diving in your own basement.

Sydnee: Ugh. With eels?!

Taylor: Yeah. The water looked really clean, though.

Sydnee: Yeah, but—

Taylor: That would not be the water that would flood in the...

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: ... the basement in Bushwick. We're by a Superfund site. Like, our soil is so toxic in my neighborhood that, like, you are not allowed to plant in it. It's all bad.

Sydnee: Oh my.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well... yeah. Don't—okay. Well, no cranberry bogs in your basement.

Taylor: [laughs] No. It would become—like, you know the vat of chemicals, like, that the Joker falls into and/or perhaps canonically throws Harley Quinn into?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: That's what the basement would become. Like, you would go in and be christened as something anew.

Sydnee: Well, hey! That sounds kinda fun. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] I can emerge as some wacky Bushwick supervillain.

Sydnee: Or maybe a hero, you know?

Taylor: Maybe. That's true.

Sydnee: It's really up to you.

Taylor: Antihero [crosstalk]. Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, that would be very spooky. Which day are you gonna do that on? [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] Which day am I going to... flood the basement so I can make a chemical cesspool, to mutate my friends? I don't know.

Sydnee: That's very Joker-like behavior, can I say?

Taylor: That's gonna take, like, a little bit of planning.

Sydnee: Yeah. Or just wait till it rains a lot.

Taylor: That's true. Maybe today. It is raining today.

Sydnee: It is raining. My crops needed it.

Taylor: Your crops. [laughs] "My crops."

Sydnee: You know I'm growing two stalks of corn, right?

Taylor: Two—just two?

Sydnee: Well, I planted six. And then, um, only... I don't even know that this was animals got into 'em. They just were—I think a really heavy rain beat them down. Because I came out and, like, they were all decimated except two, and these two—I mean, I'm not gonna get corn. But I'm just letting them grow, 'cause why not?

Taylor: How do you know you're not gonna get corn?

Sydnee: My understanding with corn is you have to plant a lot of plants, and they have to be fairly close together for them to pollinate appropriately and you to actually get corn. So it is—with two plants, it is almost certain I will not get corn. But they look cool.

Taylor: It's nice that you're just letting them... [laughs] you can use them for your Halloween decorations.

Sydnee: They're, like, two feet tall, and they look corny. They look... it's kind of cool, 'cause it's like, what's that growing next to your zucchini? It looks like corn. I'm like, yeah, it is. [laughs] It's corn. [laughs]

Taylor: It's corn in essence.

Sydnee: It's the idea of corn. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] The concept. I'm growing the concept of corn.

Sydnee: This is a happening. [laughs]

Taylor: An artistic expression, if you will, of corn.

Sydnee: Yes. [laughs]

Taylor: It's really a statement about how we thrive in community and we cannot produce our best when we're isolated.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I'm gonna put a plaque next to it and name it.

Taylor: I mean, that's all... I've seen a lot of art that that's it. You just explain it on a plaque, and then everyone goes, "Oh."

Sydnee: Hmm. It's also something you can't—like, it's time-limited. You can only come see this work for a very specific amount—and it's in my backyard, so I have to let you come see it. So it's, like, exclusive.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah, so you're not even, like, gonna photograph it to create a piece. It's like, no. The art exists here. This is it. This is where it is.

Sydnee: I'm like the Banksy of corn-based art.

Taylor: [snorts]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Yes. Yes you are. I don't think there's a lot of competition, but you know what? What do I know? I say that and, like, that one dude taped a banana to the wall and, like, made a million dollars. So I don't know, growing two stalks of corn in your backyard isn't that far off from that.

Sydnee: Wait till somebody gives me millions of dollars for it, and then I'm gonna rip it out of the ground and throw it over the fence and say, "And it's gone. See?"

Taylor: That seems to be the high art answer. This was years ago. I had a friend who was working on a series of photographs. I met her when I was couch surfing around Europe, and she let me sleep on her couch, and she was doing this photo series where she was documenting all the people that would sleep on her couch as couch surfers. Really cool series for a photography student. And her professor recommended that at the end of it, what she should do is take the couch out and set it on fire. And she was just like, "Why? Why would I—what is—why?" [laughs] Art.

Sydnee: Or like because so many people have slept on it? [laughs] Like, it's grody?

Taylor: [laughs] Just, like, functionally, you have let a lot of strangers sleep on your couch. Please.

Sydnee: I would take it out and burn it. [laughs] Maybe that's what they meant. Maybe it wasn't art at all. Like, "Ooh. You should take that couch out and burn it."

Taylor: Maybe. Maybe. I don't know.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I guess that was just advice. Like, you don't want that in your house after all that.

Sydnee: I love the idea that it would be misinterpreted as, like, oh, like, as an artistic expression? No, no, no. It's just grody. [laughs]

Taylor: "I've seen the pictures of the people that you've let sleep on your couch. You need to burn your couch."

I was one of those people, so.

Sydnee: How did you not—Taylor, I have to say, if I was staying at somebody's place couch surfing and they were like, "Do you mind if I take your picture? I take a picture of everybody who stays on my couch."

I immediately would assume they're a serial killer, gather my belongings, and run. Like, that would be my first thought is like, "Nuh-uh, that sounds like what a serial killer would do. Bye!" [laughs]

Taylor: You know, Syd, especially when I was younger and I traveled a lot—and I was always traveling very broke and on kind of wherever I could get in. Um, there was a lot of decision making that was just on vibes. Because you're right, and there were lots of situations—I mean, I remember showing up at a dude's house through couch surfing in Florence, and I got a bad vibe immediately. Like, he was explaining to me why even though he told me in messages I could sleep on his couch that really, because his roommate comes home late, it would be better if I slept in his bed. And I said, "Uh-huh."

And then he went in the other room to get us some drinks, and I left. I was like, "Nope."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Bad vibes. Leaving. You just gotta trust the instincts. Whereas when I showed up at the—this was in Dublin, where I was—the lady that was photographing her couch, she had good vibes. She was an art student. She had a nice, you know, partner that lived in the flat with her. She made me a really great Irish breakfast my first day, and I was like, yeah. This just... this feels like just some lady that's doing a photography thing. Alright.

I could be wrong, and if you're wrong about those things the price is pretty steep.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But, you know.

Sydnee: You can only be wrong once.

Taylor: You just got—sometimes you just gotta trust. [laughs] Like, uh, yeah, sure.

Sydnee: You know, I guess I will not be a hypocrite, 'cause I... I spent the Fourth of July many years ago in... 2003... I spent the Fourth of July in a man's bathroom. Like, that he—it was supposed to be, like, our hostel. But it was just, like, this guy's apartment that he had, like, turned all the rooms into bedrooms. So, like, he'd put a mattress on the bathroom floor.

Taylor: Oh. Scary as Hostel.

Sydnee: He called it Fabian's Castle.

Taylor: Oh. Fabian's Castle.

Sydnee: And we showed up there, and he was like, "Here's your room."

And I was like, [through laughter] "Is this the bathroom?"

But I slept on—in Berlin, I slept on the... on the floor of a bathroom. But I will say, um, he—it was called Fabian's Castle, and there were rainbows everywhere. And, like, sparkly things and, like, jeweled things. And it was like, the whole place was, like, decorated. I got—I got the sense that perhaps he was gay, and I felt very safe, is what I'm saying.

Taylor: Hm!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I mean, hey. Gay people could be anything, including serial killers.

Sydnee: That's true. That's true.

Taylor: Don't limit.

Sydnee: I shouldn't have assumed. And I had—I will say, I wasn't alone. I had two friends with me. But, like, that was kind of our read was, like, this place is fabulous. He seems fabulous. He's not gonna kill us. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. You know, it's an interesting understanding that I think—I don't know. I feel like saying "Travel is so important" is, like, a ridiculous, pretentious statement when most of us are struggling to, like, afford groceries right now. So I don't... you know. It's a luxury, at the end of the day, no matter what. It's a luxury. But you get a funny perception of the world, where it's like, oh, no, no, no. Most people are actually good and want to help each other out. It's just that when you meet a bad person, they can be so bad! [laughs]

Sydnee: That that's the one—that's the problem. You only get to make a mistake once. [laughs]

Taylor: No, you're right, you're right. It's like—it is—in one way, it really rejuvenates your faith in mankind. Like, oh, so many people are willing to help you. But when you meet one of the ones that's not, it's just... that's...

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: They're out there too.

Sydnee: Yeah. Now, Taylor, we need to talk about, since we can't talk about the book till next week and that's my fault, we need to talk about something else that we are both very intimately familiar with, so we didn't have to prep, because we've been prepping for this in some ways, spiritually, which is Below Deck. We watch a lot of Below Deck. And you had a very special Below Deck real life immersive experience, so.

Taylor: Uh, I did, I did. I, uh—I just—I had been looking for—it's been a couple weeks now. I have one restaurant job, but it's not—it's not paying the bills, so I needed to find a second job. And so I've been in the Craigslist mines. And I answered an ad. I knew I already had a leg up on my competition because the ad, whereas everybody else usually says like, "Send your resume here." Like, "Give a brief description of yourself in an email."

This one was literally just, "Need cater waiters. Call this number."

No information. Just a phone call. And I'm like, well, nobody from Gen Z is gonna get this job, because they won't use the phone that way. So... [laughs] as an old person competing against a bunch of young people in the service industry field, I already have a leg up here. So, uh, this job resulted in a catering job on a yacht. That's how I spend my Fourth of July. I was, uh—I was, I guess, part of the stewardess crew. [laughs] I heard a few people throw around terms like that, but that was not—no one—it was not quite as explicit as it is in the show.

Sydnee: Did you get stripes?

Taylor: No, no. Nobody got stripes. I was given a bow tie.

Sydnee: Okay. [laughs] Well, that's...

Taylor: Yeah. That's not the same. Now, people were—like, the head—our—I guess she's the head stew—she was wearing stripes. Everybody else on the boat was wearing stripes. But us just, like, walk-on cater waiters were just...

Sydnee: You don't get stripes.

Taylor: Classic—yeah.

Sydnee: That's too bad.

Taylor: White shirt, black pants, black bow tie.

Sydnee: And was it just like Below Deck?

Taylor: There was not as much drama. It was pretty drama-free. It was a lot of hard work, and that is one thing that seems to be consistent on Below Deck, is you wake up and you start working. This was... I had to work my other job in the morning, so I went to my other job from, like, 8 AM to 1 PM, and then I was expected at the boat at 2 PM. Um, and I was on the boat till a little after midnight. So it was a long day.

Sydnee: Were the, um—the clients. Were they, like, obnoxiously demanding with, like, very specific needs, like sometimes they are on Below Deck?

Taylor: Well, it was such a big party, you know? Like, this was, like, a—like, a 70 person party. It was a big yacht.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: It was like a whole dining room in the down—like, the downstairs was just this massive dining room. It had a whole, like—the kitchen was in the basement, but then there was, like, a service station up built on top of the kitchen, so you could just walk food right up and set it out. Like, with a big buffet station. There were two bars on this boat. Like, two fully functional bars. The upstairs had, like, a whole dance floor. It was a massive yacht. But, uh—but there were just so many people that even though the individual clients could be a little demanding, it's just the sheer amount of people meant that, you know, no one was trying to get you to cater to them specifically.

Sydnee: I gotcha.

Taylor: But it was, uh—

Sydnee: So you didn't have, like—I was really hoping there would be, like, all of the guests' pictures and preferences on a wall somewhere.

Taylor: No. No, it was—that was not—it was not the full Below Deck experience.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: It was just a little—it was funny, though. 'Cause you shared your, what is it? Peacock? Uh, login with me.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: So I could watch something that we watched a few weeks ago. And since I've kept it, I've just been watching nothing but Below Deck. So when I called that person, when I called that number and that's what she told me the job was, I'm like, "[gasps] I'm gonna be on Below Deck."

Sydnee: "It's Below Deck."

Taylor: "This is it. It's the real experience." And it was really cool.

Sydnee: We—I forget. Justin and I stumbled on Below Deck once when we were in a hotel room. And, like, you know, you're just flipping through channels and you kind of watch things you don't generally watch when you're in a hotel room. That was where Below Deck started, and we just became obsessed with it. And so then we started going back and watching everything streaming. If you're not familiar, I will say, by the way, Below Deck is just—it's a very old reality TV show, really. I mean, early days of reality TV.

Taylor: It's on its, like 10th season or something like that, right?

Sydnee: Yeah. Or more, maybe.

Taylor: Yeah, 'Cause there's spin offs, too.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. There's, like, Below Deck Mediterranean, and Below Deck something else. There's several. But, um, the whole premise is just people who work on these, like, super yachts. And they cater to very, very wealthy people who go on usually, like, three day excursions. And the crew is obviously below deck while the clients are above deck.

Taylor: Well, and it seems like—'cause I started watching right in the middle of the main show. I think I started at, like, season six randomly, 'cause I

was just—I think it was the season that you all had been watching, so that's what it was keyed up to, so that's where I started.

Sydnee: That's probably right, yeah.

Taylor: And then I went back last night and watched some of the first season. And it was interesting how much they've amped up the drama over the years. I think maybe they hire people specifically less for their ability to do their job and more for their ability to bring drama onto the crew.

Sydnee: Yes. Especially—we just—we're about to finish up season five, I think. Is that where we are? Yeah. And it is, like—they say from the beginning, "Most of these people have never worked on a boat."

And it's like, well, why? [laughs] Why'd you hire them? [laughs]

Taylor: Why'd they get the job?

Sydnee: Why'd you hire them? Like, you should get people who have. [laughs] I think it's because it's like, 'cause they cause a lot of drama, and they're fighting.

Taylor: And they have abs.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: That seems like a bigger—bigger emphasis on having really pretty people in later seasons.

Sydnee: Yeah. In early seasons it's not... I mean, and that's true, I think, across the board. Like, if you look back at Survivor season one, it just looked like regular people. Like, kind of a mix of, you know, a smattering of you look across the United States and get a handful of people together and this is what they might look like. Not that anybody was bad-looking, but you know what I mean? It wasn't that—like, it started to morph into "We need the hottest possible people."

And, I mean, there's plenty of reality shows like that, where it's like, we're just gonna try to find the most, you know, like, whatever, symmetrical people. [laughs]

Taylor: I was gonna say, I get it when it's, like, a dating-based show. But even then, I think I would prefer it more if it was like a bunch of regular—like, the—I don't know. Whatever the ones where—Love Island, where everybody's just absurdly hot.

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: And I say absurdly hot in that, like, I don't find them attractive. When people are that, like, I don't know. That's just like, I understand why you are—you have achieved what the concept of attraction—of being attractive is. I do not find you personally attractive because that's, like... I don't know.

Sydney: Well, I think what you're talking about, too, there's a difference between just, like, naturally somebody—I mean, I was joking about it being symmetrical, but that is usually what we are drawn to. People with very symmetrical features. I mean, there is just what naturally occurs in people's faces. And then there's also the amount of time and effort that has clearly gone in to it. 'Cause it's not—I mean, they're not just pretty.

They have spent lots of time, and energy, and maybe money. Not always, but sometimes money. To perfect a certain look. And I think at that point, for me, I feel like we wouldn't get along. [laughs] Like, it's not so much about whether or not I'm attracted to you. It's like, I do not think we share values. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, it's kind of selecting for really—that's just one type of person in the world that puts that much effort and energy into, like, looking like what society has deemed attractive.

Sydney: Exactly.

Taylor: That, like, I don't know. I don't think I'm gonna—I don't think I'm gonna see myself in any of these people.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: [laughs] And at least on a dating show I can get it, 'cause I guess a certain amount of the audience is watching it purely just to see hot people make out with other hot people.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Uh, I don't know why we need Survivors to be hot people.

Sydnee: We don't. And I will say, Survivor—it kind of did the whole thing. Like, it was people who look like people, and then for a while it was like, a lot of hot singles. And then I feel like they went back. And now, like, when you watch Survivor, it's a much better mix of humanity, you know.

Taylor: That... for Below Deck, I really enjoy watching—I don't know what it—like, watching people that work in the industry that I work in, that work in service, be good at their jobs, but also complain about the same things that I complain about, I like that. That's what I got—when they go off and they, like, have their nights out where they go out and drink and have drama, I don't really like that part of the episode. I'm like, eh. Then they just become the customers. And I'm like, oh, yeah. I know what—dramatic drunk people. Yeah. That's not...

Sydnee: Oh my gosh. And then—but they're dramatic drunk people that then I have to, like—first of all, I'm watching them thinking like, "Oh, don't do that. This is not gonna go the way you think it's gonna." And then the next morning they're up at 6 AM. Out, like, wiping down the side of a yacht in the sun. [laughs] And it's like, god, don't you feel like crap, man? Like, ugh. I'm too old. [laughs]

Taylor: Especially with the way that some of the seasons it shows them drinking. Like, they'll be doing, like, shots of Jägermeister. And just, like, every manner—like, Fireball. Like, just gnarly stuff. It almost made—I guess that goes to, like, hiring non-professionals. 'Cause I'm like, I cannot believe gnarly old yacht people that have been doing this for a long time—they are not drinking like college freshman. You cannot tell me that. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, it's really interesting, because the ones—like, Kate is one of our favorites.

Taylor: I love Kate.

Sydnee: She's on multiple seasons. I don't even remember. Lots of seasons. As chief stew. And she's wonderful, because she's a really good—first of all, she—there are some people that understood reality TV before other people did. Kate's one of 'em. She gets what this is. She's, like, smart enough to—she never gets sloppy.

She has dramatic storylines, but it's because she has really high expectations for things, and she holds everybody accountable, and so she gets on people's nerves, and she doesn't care. [laughs] And like, but that's her drama. She is not typically getting sloppy drunk. Like, I can't... I can't think of an episode where that's her storyline. You know?

Taylor: No. No, she's usually dealing with the other ones being sloppy drunk. And, like, I don't know. There's one—I think it might not be—I don't think you've watched it yet, 'cause I think it might be the seventh one. I think that's her last season. 'Cause at some point she does leave.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Um, but her last season, there's a point where it's like, the bosun is super drunk, and he's already been really mean to her, like, since the beginning. And he kisses her forcibly.

Sydnee: Ugh!

Taylor: Like, drunkenly. And, you know, like, somehow the story comes around to her. Like, everybody's mad at her for being "[mocking] So mean," and, you know, like, whatever. But it's like, you just assaulted her. And she didn't react. She had every right to. I don't know. I think sometimes she's almost—for as chill as she is, she's not given credit by her crew for everything she has to put up with.

Sydnee: I think you're right.

Taylor: Which seems to be a consistent thing. Like, 'Cause going back to the first season, Adrienne is the chief stew.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And the amount of hate that she gets for just asking people to do her job. Whereas the male counterpart, like, the head deckhand, the bosun, will ask his crew to do their jobs, and they do not give him crap.

Sydnee: Never.

Taylor: But when the woman asks people to do their jobs. Like, Adrienne was getting on one of her girls for, like, taking a nap in the middle of the day. And was like, "You can't—"

Sydnee: Yeah, you can't.

Taylor: And she kept saying, "I accidentally took a nap! I accidentally took a nap!"

It's like, you can't accidentally take a nap at work! [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, you went and laid down in your bed.

Taylor: Yeah! Like, a nap didn't sneak up on you.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: You took all of the steps that involved taking a nap, and then you took a nap. [laughs]

Sydnee: No. I know—the early seasons of Below Deck, I mean, again, early days reality TV, people are really not thinking about how they are gonna be represented. There is no—like, usually by now producers do a little better if, like, ooh, this is gonna come off really misogynistic or, like, this is a bad look for people, they'll sort of massage that out of it so that you don't see. Like,

there was one—I forget exactly who. But—oh, the blond girl from New England who got really drunk a lot. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh.

Sydnee: I forget her name. But she—one of the guests is wildly inappropriate with her, sexually harasses her. And the crew really doesn't take her side. And nobody, like, addresses it. They're all kind of like, "Like, this is what it is, working in yachting."

And I was thinking, man. If that episode played today, I mean, there would be such a clear villain. It would be so obvious, like, "We hate this guy." And, like, Captain Lee would come out and be like, "We will not accept this on our boat. We have to ask you to leave immediately." I mean, it would be a huge deal. We would not just let that fly. The way they're all like, "Oh, that's just yachting. Sometimes they ask you—"

Taylor: Was this season one?

Sydnee: It might be season one. When they asked her if her boobs were real.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah. I just watched that episode last night, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Just—I mean, like, even if we say, like, well, people are just as gross as they always were, sure. And, like, definitely there are people who are so wealthy they think they can do whatever they want. And so I'm sure those people still exist. The difference is, producers of a reality TV show now would not just let that play out the way it—you know what I mean?

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: The storyline would be directed a lot more than when it was—I mean, they really sort of, like, shamed her, as if it was her fault.

Taylor: Well, that—it was all very strange. Because—and I do feel like in later seasons they're a lot more open about kind of talking smack about the guests.

Sydnee: Yes. Oh, they do.

Teylor: Like, if guests are bad, or obnoxious, you hear that in the testimonials. The earlier seasons I don't think focus on that as much. Maybe 'cause it's also a lot of friends of the company. But, uh, that—

Sydnee: Kat, Kat is her name.

Teylor: Yeah. That whole scenario—I mean, and also, like, I don't—the camera shows her taking a drink of something. But then her defense is, "No, I actually took too much medication."

Either way, it's not good.

Sydnee: No. That whole—there were things—and again, I think that this is probably true of a lot of reality TV shows, early days. Stuff just is not handled the way we would expect it to be now. You don't feel that there is anybody behind the scenes going, "Uh-oh, uh-oh, uh-oh. This is about to break bad. Like, you know, there are certain things you don't want to film, that people don't want to watch, and we could prevent it from happening if we step in right here." You don't feel that in those early reality TV show days.

Teylor: It's interesting, though, how that kind of interaction takes it away, or that kind of intervention, rather, takes it away from what reality is. Because the sad truth, having worked lots and lots of service jobs—there is actually an under—like, an accept... I'm using quote-y fingers. An "acceptable" amount of harassment that the customers are allowed to do, that a lot of—I've worked for a lot of people that just kind of roll their eyes. And they're like, "Yeah, if dudes sit at your bar and they flirt with you and they make comments on your body, that's just gonna—that's part of the job, sweetheart. Like, you either take it or you leave it."

So it's—it's one of those things where of course no one would react to it on the staff, because that's par for the course. It's just now that there are cameras on, now suddenly we go, "Oh. Maybe that looks bad."

But the only reason we're questioning it is because there are cameras on it.

Sydnee: I just don't know how the people who are—like, the clients, the people who have been on this show and then have watched themselves on this show, and then other people who decide in the future to go on the show, and then see... no one ever learns. Like, I feel like they still will be—I mean, there are words I can't say on this show. D-bags is what I'm trying to say.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, just the worst—like, some of the tech bro people, or just—they're just so gross. They're gross about the staff. They're gross about—and it's not gendered. There are just as many rich women who get on that boat and make the young deckhand—like, male deckhands take their shirts off. Which is—I mean, and it's all treated as like, "Well, this is just yachting."

It's like, do you not know—even if the staff is expected to do it, how do people not have more self-reflection that they would watch that and go, "I look gross. I look like a terrible person. I look cruel, and I look mean, and I—you know, I look, like, ignorant, and... everything about this looks bad. I don't wanna look this way." Nobody ever learns.

Taylor: Well, I don't think it's about learning. I think it's something that's—it's a cold hard truth that just—I've served a lot of very rich people, and one thing you learn about the very rich is that they don't look at us as all that different from, like, a... anything else they might purchase. Be it a very nice couch, a very expensive steak, a 35 dollar cocktail. You are just part of the experience. You're not a person unto yourself. So they won't regret what they say to you or what they do to you, because... who cares? You're something they paid for. You're part of the experience.

Sydnee: But even if they don't care about your feelings or, like, the staff's feelings in this case, I... when they see themselves on TV...

Taylor: Other rich people aren't gonna judge them.

Sydnee: I just—I don't understand how... I don't know. It is wild to me. And they see the way the crew is talking about them. You know, you would think people would go, "I don't want this to be how I am seen." That at least selfishly they would want to be different. Even if it's not "I don't want people to be treated that way." Like, "Man, I look really bad." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: I don't know. I think there's almost like a weird power play in it. Of, like, being overly demanding and rude to staff. I can't—I couldn't count how many times I've witnessed it in restaurant settings. Where it's just like, oh, this is just—this is part of the experience for you, is specifically being really demanding and being nasty to all of us. Like, that is your way of establishing that you are the most powerful person at this table.

Sydnee: It's so gross. I will say, those are the only things—Justin and I typically will fast forward if, like, they're making the staff dress up in some way that's really, like, insulting or—or, like, making people go shirtless. Or they had one of the—there was, like, the sushi person—the human sushi table.

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: Those kinds of—I just—we fast forward. I just can't handle—it's so... I wanna see them making fun of all the rich people who come on these boats and act like they're so cool, and then say, like "I don't eat seafood." [laughs] That's what I wanna see! I wanna see a chef getting really angry because, like, why did you come on this boat, out in the ocean, and you don't want seafood? [laughs]

Taylor: The one guy that's like—he makes, like, beautiful, like, I don't know, like, lobster tacos. And he's like, "No, I don't want all that stuff. I like plain, simple, clean food."

And so he just makes him, like, tortillas with lobster on it. And he proceeds to take the lobster out in hunks and dip in ketchup. And he's like, "That's it. That's the stuff. That's how it's good."

It's like, oh, you just dipped... like, incredibly expensive, beautiful lobster in ketchup.

Sydnee: Yes. Or how many times they have, like—like, older rich guys who have brought much younger women with them, and then the younger women are like, "Can we just have quesadillas?"

And it's like, oh my god! [laughs]

Taylor: "Do you have chicken nuggies?" [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, "Do you have the ones shaped like dinosaurs?"

And it's like, what is happening?! Like, I just—again, I guess if you have that much money and that's how you want to spend it, do it. But, like, people are watching you. And we all see how awful you are. And we're all laughing at how awful you are! [laughs]

Taylor: I just—I guess to them it would be no different than, like, a bunch of, like, mice finding humor at their actions. Like, who cares? There was a catering gig that I did where there was a fruit tray. And there was this one lady. She'd kind of been weird the whole party. She was a little older, seemed a little eccentric. Kept kind of grabbing different waiters to have, like, really intense conversations with.

But, uh, at some point, I watched her fill up her plate with fruit. She sat down and she looked right at me, and just tipped the whole thing onto the floor. And then I looked at her and I looked at all the fruit on the floor, and then she reached out and motioned to me, like, "Come over here."

And so I walked over. And she said, "I dropped all my fruit. Could you pick it up for me?"

And I'm like, "You looked right at me as you dropped it on—like, purposely, like, slow tipped the plate onto the floor, so it all fell on the floor."

And so I said, "Okay, sure, no problem! I'm getting paid! I'm getting what I need out of this." Got down on all fours and picked up all the fruit.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And she said, "Thank you for doing that. I'm sorry to make you do that."

And I'm like, "Nah, you're not. This was something that... you're enjoying this. I don't know why, but."

Sydnee: How gross.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's just gross! The whole thing is gross. I will never—I mean, do I think it would be fun to spend a weekend on a boat with my friends, you know, eating great food and riding on jet skis? Of course. Like, that sounds fun. Is there any part of me that gets enjoyment from the idea of, like, "And then I could tell people what to do and they'd have to serve me."

No. No. There is no part of me that would—I mean, if anything, that makes something less enjoyable. The idea that I'm, like, inconveniencing somebody or putting them out for me to have a good time. [laughs] That makes it less enjoyable for me! I'll be there like, "Can I help? Could I clear the table? Let me do that." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "I'll get my own—you don't need to make me a drink. I'll get—just—just pour whatever in a cup and I'll drink it." [laughs]

Taylor: There's one season where one of the clients is like—she's a chef. She's, like, a chef from Boston.

Sydnee: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Taylor: And she's got all of her crew on. And, like, there's obviously some drama, because the boat chef that season is kind of a—kind of a butthead. And she tries to give him pointers. Like, "Hey, this food was too salty. Like, maybe knock it back."

And he gets real offended. But at the end of it, like, her one wish is like, "Can I go out and party with you all? Can I go out and drink with you all?"

Like, I feel like that's me. I will never find myself as a client on a superyacht. But if I was the one, I'd be like, "Yeah, what are you guys doing tonight? Where you going? Where do you go to drink after this?" [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I definitely—[loud clunk] I think it sucks, because... [sighs] in part, you don't want to fall into that trap of thinking, like, "Well, maybe the rich people, like, get to boss them around and treat them like crap and tell them what to do. But, like, they're the ones who are really experiencing life and having fun." 'Cause they do go out and have a fun time and, you know, they seem like the cooler people to hang out with always. But on the flip side, like, you don't wanna—I don't know. That's, like, a tool of the wealthy, right? Like, "See, but you have heart. You have love. You have passion. We may have money and power." [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I think it's something that those of us—

Sydnee: It's like The Titanic, right? [laughs]

Taylor: Those of us in the servile positions can say that to ourselves to comfort us, but I agree. Like, that doesn't—we don't want to reinforce that's good.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: I've had that thought. Like, this was one of my first jobs. I was working at this place called Delicatessen, which is no longer open, but it was a sister restaurant to Cafeteria, which was—it got very famous because it was featured on Sex and the City a few times.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Taylor: Anyway, uh, we had this—this was before I went vegan. We had this meatloaf. It was, like, a 30 dollar meatloaf on the menu. And they would have to pre-make it, because it would cook for so long. So we would get all these little pre-made meatloaves that we would serve throughout the night.

And then any that were left, they would throw out. So I remember standing there over a trash can with, like, two of my fellow servers, eating these 30 dollar meatloaves with, like, a quart container of, like, you know, like, tequila soda, and thinking, like, "Man. Other people work their whole lives to eat this meatloaf."

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "And I'm just some little piece of crap eating it over a trash can."
[laughs]

Sydnee: This 30 dollar meatloaf.

Taylor: It did kind of feel like—like, I cracked the system! [laughs]

Sydnee: I know. It sucks, though. Because, like, there are versions of that everywhere. And I think they are sort of like, I don't know, ways to, like, tame the masses. Um, we get—and I'm very lucky, and we're very grateful. But there are certain—and I won't even name them. There are certain places in town that will donate stuff to Harmony House that's about to, like, go bad. And it's not bad. Nothing is expired.

But it's like, I know that at the end of the day, if it's gonna expire within X-whatever, you have to throw it away. So we get things, like, in the package that I know, like, each one of these individually costs four dollars, and here's a pack of, like, eight of them, and I'm just handing them out by the pack to people. You know?

And it's a weird experience. 'Cause I know how much money this all is. But it's also, like, but wouldn't it be better if everybody just had food and everybody just had—like, wouldn't that be better? I mean, like, this is a wonderful gesture, and thank god we have it. But wouldn't it be better?
[laughs]

Taylor: I had that thought during COVID when I was going stir crazy. So, I started serving at the Bowery Mission, just to have a reason to leave the house. And Cuomo, this was when he was in office. He'd had some big party, and he donated the leftovers from the party to the Mission. And there was

some incredibly expensive electrolyte drink. Like, we got all these bottles. They didn't have—like, they had vitamins. They had, like, no calories.

So we're handing out these, like, eight-dollars-a-bottle electrolyte beverages that were donated graciously from the Cuomo party leftovers. I'm like, they have no nutritional value, so this isn't even really good for the people that are getting them. And why—why did the city spend hundreds of dollars on these overpriced beverages that—this is a metaphor for something. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, it's hard. I mean, it's the GoFundMe you see at the gas station checkout for local person with, you know, terminal illness. It's the same thing, right? Like, oh, that's—what a beautiful act of charity. What a wonderful thing to do.

Don't pay attention to the man behind the curtain. [laughs] Which is the giant broken system that led us there. You know? I mean, it's... it's hard. Both can be true. I am very grateful for these donations. Sometimes it's the only thing that the people I take care of get to eat every day. And so I'm very grateful for them. Um, however... we also—also, what is the system that relies on this?

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I mean, I guess if you know there's no way out of it, if you can find ways to live within it, have your joy where you can, given the option, I guess I—you know, everyone's like, "Well I'd rather be the client on the yacht."

It's like, well, if that comes with being one of those buttheads, [laughs] like, or being friends with those buttheads, I guess I'd rather be on the crew.

Sydnee: How often are the—this is the last thing. I know we need to end this, but I could talk about Below Deck all day.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: How often, though, do we see the people who are supposed to be enjoying this incredible, once in a lifetime experience, miserable, dissatisfied, complaining, wanting more, fighting with each other, irritated

because of little things and then missing the whole picture of what they're getting to do? Like, these are not happy people.

Taylor: Oh, absolutely.

Sydnee: These people are not fundamentally happy people. So I don't know how you ever watch this show and think, man, I'd love to be those clients.
[laughs quietly]

Taylor: No. I think it's something that, I don't know. I think there's a certain type of, like, black hole that you have to have to become uber wealthy.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Like, there has to be some giant gravitational absence inside of you. And that's the flip side, is yeah, you're gonna have—you're gonna suck in so much—so many resources that the rest of us could use, but you'll never be full.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: The rest of us will be, on so much less. And that ultimately will mean we live better lives.

Sydnee: Yup. It is still a really great show, though. I would highly recommend it, if you haven't watched it. I got a, um—Captain Lee's motto is "Don't embarrass yourself. Don't embarrass the boat." And I have a tank top that I wear.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That says "Don't embarrass yourself. Don't embarrass the boat."
[laughs]

Taylor: I like that he's the constant on it.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And yet—like, he's never—there's never any drama with him. He's just always, you know, just sort of bookends each episode. He's there at the beginning. He's there at the end. Like, while everyone else is going out and getting drunk, he's just alone on the boat, drinking some nice scotch. Like, that's—that's what I would want to do. [laughs]

Sydnee: He is—he is very—yes. He's a good figure. And he—I like how annoyed he gets with the guests. I like—especially if they're really drunk or obnoxious, or if any of the women are hitting on him, he is so annoyed by that. He has absolutely—he's got his little wife. What's her name? Mary Anne, or something. And she comes sometimes to visit, and they're just adorable together. And he's like, "I have no—I have no interest in all these women." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "[gruffly] Grr. 'Cause he talks like this."

Taylor: No, that's great.

Sydnee: Yeah. Oh well. Alright, well, we will have finished Bury Your Gays by next week. Absolutely.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: And we will talk about it.

Taylor: Alright. I'm excited.

Sydnee: 'Cause it's great. I'm loving it. I'm just not done. And I don't wanna—as Charlie suggested, I could SparksNotes it. I don't wanna do that. I want to actually read the whole book.

Taylor: [laughs] I do wanna know if there's SparksNotes for Bury Your Gays.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Teylor: Like, right next to Beowulf? [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I hope so.

Teylor: Oh no, I gotta—a classic piece of literature.

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, probably, right?

Teylor: Sure. Hey, it's great, so far.

Sydnee: Yeah. I would never ask AI to summarize it for me, but I'm sure I could.

Teylor: No, don't do that. I think the book is, at least as far as I am, seems to be against that, so.

Sydnee: Yes, the book is against that, I think, yes. I am against that, so.

Teylor: Yeah, so are we. [laughs]

Sydnee: We are also against that. I would never do that. Never, no, no.

Teylor: No. That's your spooky—but also, hey, Syd and anybody that wants to join along. It's spooky season, so find your spooky—one spooky thing a day.

Sydnee: One spooky thing a day.

Teylor: Report back.

Sydnee: Report back. And with your button. One button.

Teylor: One button. [crosstalk] button.

Sydnee: But you don't have to tell us what you do with that. That's your business.

Teylor: That's right. I don't even wanna know, honestly.

Sydnee: Don't even—yeah. Stop talking about the buttons.

Taylor: Don't—don't tell me what you did with your button!

Sydnee: [laughs] Alright. Well, thank you, Tey. Thank you, listeners. You should watch Below Deck. There's tons of seasons of it. The early seasons, I will say, just as a—not any specific kind of warning. It is definitely of a time. Like, those early seasons. We were not handling a lot of things with the kind of, like, nuance and sensitivity that we do now. I feel like there's lots of moments on the show where I'm like, "Wagh!" [laughs] And it's like, well, it's 2026 now. We don't say those things.

Taylor: Yeah. I think if I'd started with season one, I don't think I would've stuck with it. I started with—I think I started with five or six, and that seemed like a good—'cause you can watch any season. It's all self-contained.

Sydnee: If you want a really bizarre one, watch the COVID season.

Taylor: Oh, yeah?

Sydnee: Oh, you haven't gotten there?

Taylor: No, no. I guess I've been watching out of order, but...

Sydnee: It is—watching that now, knowing how this is—like, because they have dates. They don't usually do that. So, usually on Below Deck you have no idea, like, what time of year or what, you know, what the day—like, why would you need to? Like, they're, you know, they're in the Caribbean, it's beautiful, whatever. Um, but in the COVID season, they date each episode. Like, they'll tell you, like, it's February whatever, 2020. It's, you know, moving closer.

Taylor: Oh, so it's, like, happening.

Sydnee: It's happening. And they're talking about it in real time. They're, like, getting updates from family members and looking up things on their phones and being like, "Look at this. Can you believe this?"

Taylor: That's wild. [crosstalk]

Sydnee: It is a wild time capsule of a—so, there's my pitch for that. It's a lot. It's a lot. But it is wild to watch in real time unfold, on a yacht.

Taylor: Well.

Sydnee: But. But in the meantime, do your spooky thing. Go to Maximumfun.org. That's not your spooky thing. That's a separate thing. Listen to all the great podcasts there. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind.

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I am still buffering...

Taylor: And I am too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: Watching that COVID season will be a spooky thing, I will say.

Taylor: That's a different kind of spooky. I don't wanna—I don't wanna go that spooky.

Sydnee: It's intense.

Taylor: [unintelligible] Ghosts and zombies. Not, like, cultural anxiety.
[laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, yeah. No pandemics. Let's not talk about those for a while.

Taylor: No.

[chord]

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