

Still Buffering 493: Backrooms (2026)

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[theme music plays]

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

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm making a soup.

Taylor: A soup?!

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well, you know, you really offended me when I saw you earlier this summer and you were having soup in the middle of summer, because that just felt... not a cold soup. You were having hot soup. But I think this is the first week that it feels like you can have soup, and it's not evil.

Sydnee: Yep. It was raining this morning, like, and it was cool in the house. Like, it was so cool that, um, our—like, our heating and cooling is set on this, like, conservation thing where, like, it doesn't—it won't click in unless it gets a certain coldness. And that—you know what I mean? Like, the heat won't come on unless it's cold enough. The heat automatically clicked on this morning.

Taylor: Ooh.

Sydnee: We turned it back off, 'cause it's gonna be hot, so we overrode the system. But that's how cold it was.

Taylor: I slept—I—I only have one air conditioner in my apartment. My apartment's kind of like a long—you've seen it. It's like a long hallway design. Like a converted railroad situation. Anyway, I've got one air conditioner, 'cause that's about what I can afford, based on the bills that that

generates, and it's in my office. And then my bedroom just suffers. Uh, so I sleep with the windows open up there, and that's the way that it balances out. Nearly doesn't really work.

And today when I woke up, I had to get back under the covers because it was chilly. And that was such a great feeling to wake up when you're asleep on top of, like, cold covers, and so you've gotta get under the cold covers to get warm.

Sydnee: Yeah. It was really wild. It was chilly and fall-like, and I had planned on making soup anyway. Just, so, the weather just followed suit. But I had—I grew my first butternut squash that I've ever successfully grown.

Taylor: Uh, you sent me—that was what you were holding in the picture you sent me, correct?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm, yes.

Taylor: Yeah. Syd sent me a picture. You said you were holding it up like you caught a fish, 'cause it's very—it's a big squash. To me, it looked like the squash just committed some sort of crime, and you were holding it up, like, to the—the village that was [laughs] begging you to hunt down the evil squash. You were like, "See? I did it."

Sydnee: "Kill the squash!"

Taylor: [laughs] Like you just beheaded the squash. But all it is is a head.

Sydnee: No, it—I was trying to look like a fisherwoman. But no, I don't—the thing is, I don't remember planting butternut squash. I must've, obviously. Um, I thought I'd just planted yellow and delicata, and then zucchinis. But I don't remember planting butternut.

But anyway, I have one that has now been roasted in the oven this morning, is cooling, and I'm going to turn into soup soon. And then I have three more out there that will be ready to harvest within the next week or so.

Taylor: That's so exciting. I love butternut squash.

Sydnee: I'm excited.

Taylor: Top five squash.

Sydnee: I don't know how I did it. Huh?

Taylor: That's great. Top five squash.

Sydnee: Top five squash. I'm excited because it's such a good—I love making soups, and they're so easy. So easy to make something that tastes good, to just, like, throw in the oven on a sheet pan. Like, squash, and then this one I added some onion garlic, and then I have grown too many tomatoes. I have so many tomatoes. So some of the tomatoes that we hadn't eaten yet that were gonna be like, we gotta use these soon or they're gonna go over, I just—I cut in half, tossed in the oven, and roasted with it. I'm just gonna blend it all up.

Taylor: That sounds great. I worked at a restaurant for a long time that had a really good fall salad. We kept it on year-round. It was definitely a fall salad. But it had butternut squash in it. It was, like, kale, butternut squash, dried cranberries, like, candied pecans. It was delicious.

Uh, but I also—we would, like—they would pre-cook the little squares of butternut squash. And the quarts were always labeled buttnut. [through laughter] And I always enjoyed that. I was organizing the walk-in like, "Ha. Buttnut."

Sydnee: "Buttnut." So good.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: But it was nice. I filled the house with the smell of, like, all those roasting vegetables plus, like, I harvested some of my sage, and my thyme, and my rosemary, and tossed it on there.

Now, I will say—and from you, I stole the mushroom powder trick, so there's a little bit of mushroom powder on top. But, uh, I will say, there was also something that must've melted down in the oven earlier. It had nothing to do with my soup.

But I opened the oven for that big, like—and I'm expecting my big waft of, like, yummy, delicious scent. And it was just, like, smoke. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh no!

Sydnee: And I was like, "No!" So Justin comes in. He's like, "What are you doing?"

I'm like, "Um, making soup." [laughs] "Setting the house on fire. It's fine."

Taylor: Danger soup!

Sydnee: I know. For a second I thought I'd burnt it all! And then I looked. I was like, no, it's not even done. Oh, there's something in the oven. [laughs]

Taylor: You need to make a—especially with your herbs, you need to make, like, a nice—a bread that goes with that.

Sydnee: Mmm.

Taylor: I love soup, but I feel like soup is an incomplete meal. You have to have a bread on the side of some kind.

Sydnee: You do, yes, yes. I think that's true. I was planning on for dinner tonight—'cause I'm making a ton of it, and I'm gonna give—I'm gonna gift it. Mom will want some. Rileigh wanted some.

And then the rest I'll serve for dinner tonight, alongside some fancy grilled cheese, is what I thought I would do.

Taylor: Ah. That sounds good. That's a good combo.

Sydnee: Yeah. The kids will eat that. Well, they'll eat regular grilled cheese.
[laughs quietly]

Taylor: What's the difference between a regular and a fancy grilled cheese? Just the type of cheese? Type of bread? All components?

Sydnee: Yeah. I think, like, you upgrade. I will say, our bread is sourdough, which feels like an upgrade.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Naturally. And then the girls'll just want, like, American cheese slices, which is fine. That's a classic grilled cheese. Nothing wrong. I usually like—we have a variety of other cheeses in there, and I like to kind of mix and match. Um, and then I like to put slices of tomato on my grilled cheese.

Taylor: Ooh.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: That sounds great, but very not-kid-friendly.

Sydnee: No, no. They won't want that. But I will eat that. I also, like, have to—I signed some sort of, like, deal with the garden devil. I don't know what entity I have made a pact with that I must eat all these tomatoes, I guess, if I'm going to grow them. I would—in order to honor their sacrifice, I must then eat them.

Taylor: Absolutely.

Sydnee: So I have to eat a certain quota of tomatoes every day. [laughs]

Taylor: I mean, I was gonna say, you'll gain some sort of blessing out of that. That might just be, like, a lot of antioxidants, which is probably really good for you, right? I don't know. You're the doctor. You do know, I'm sure. I don't know what lycopene is. At some point, I learned that tomatoes have lycopene, and lycopene is good for you. And to this day, every time I eat a

tomato, my brain goes, "Lycopene." [laughs] I don't know what it does for me, but I know it's there! And it makes me feel better about it.

Sydnee: Uh... I don't know what lycopene does for you.

Taylor: I'm assuming—I mean, maybe—did I make up that word?

Sydnee: [simultaneously] I mean, I know you're right.

Taylor: I think I didn't make up that word, right?

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: That is a thing that's in tomatoes.

Sydnee: Lycopene benefits. It's an antioxidant.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: And it protects, uh... a lot of this sounds like we don't really know if it does much good, but it's probably good for you.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Okay. Well...

Sydnee: It's one of those, like, "supports health in different ways." Whenever you see a supplement that says, like, "It supports heart health." That's very carefully worded. Like, we don't really know. We know it's not bad for you. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Okay. Well...

Sydnee: But yeah, it's an antioxidant. It looks like there maybe was some evidence that it could help protect your skin from UV rays.

Taylor: Oh, great.

Sydnee: So...

Taylor: Wow. Thank you, tomato devil? Is that what you called it? No, garden devil.

Sydnee: It's a good antioxidant. It's got some health benefits. So, yeah. Just another reason to eat veggies.

Taylor: Well, I think that there's so many—I mean, I know you have so many that probably it's not possible to eat them all while they're fresh. But there are so many ways that you can, you know, preserve them. That's so fun. Like, the... I had some—I don't know what the whole deal was. But, uh, I bought a tin—[laughs] it was at the—there's this, like, really nice vegan, like, grocery store that I went to to get some picnic supplies for me and my girlfriend. And they had these cute little tins. So it's like, ooh, it's like tinned fish, but it was tinned vegetables.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Taylor: Why it was in the price range as tinned fish, I don't... I was really paying for a presentation, there. I was not really—the little tin had maybe nine cherry tomatoes in it, and it was, like—it was ten dollars. I paid over a dollar per tomato.

Sydnee: Per tomato.

Taylor: But it was preserved in, like, really nice olive oil. So it was kind of like a confit tomato, I guess. Like, these tomatoes were one of the best things I've ever had, because they'd broken down so much in the oil that they kind of just were like, you just spread them on bread, and they just completely broke down. Oh my god. They were delicious. I don't know how to do that, but you can look into preserving some of your tomatoes in oil. That was... ten outta ten.

Sydnee: I probably should. I've got—so, I've gotten Justin on the tomato train. Initially he wouldn't eat 'em, unless I turned 'em into, like, a sauce or

something. And then I convinced him. I made just—I've been eating just tomato—like, old-fashioned tomato sandwiches. Like, butter the bread, put on some tomato.

Taylor: Oh. That's it?

Sydnee: Yeah. That—okay. So, this is a point of contention, I think, amongst—

Taylor: Well, I thought it was tomato and mayonnaise.

Sydnee: This is a point of contention, I think, amongst Appalachia and the South. It's why Appalachia is not the South. Which you know, I know.

Taylor: Well, yeah.

Sydnee: But sometimes I think people get that, like, conflated. Like, that West Virginia, you're the South. Ehh, ehh, not quite. Because a traditional, in this region, tomato sandwich, is buttered bread, fresh sliced tomato from the garden. That's it.

Taylor: Hmm. Okay.

Sydnee: Well, you can do some salt and pepper, right?

Taylor: I was gonna say, salt and pepper, for sure, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah, salt and pepper. That's it, though. That is a traditional Appalachian tomato sandwich. Now, you go just a little south, and the mayo comes in.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Same thing, it's just—and usually, like, Duke's Mayo, specifically.

Taylor: This makes sense, though. Because I think my concept of this comes from our grandfather, who is from the deeper South.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: You know, he would always slather tomatoes in mayonnaise.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: As, like, a snack. Which, to be fair, is delicious.

Sydnee: Which—and, like, if you think about—I don't know if you ever noticed, but Mom's—our mom's dad, Pawpaw, used to just have slices of tomato. And, like, every meal would come with a piece of just plain white bread and butter, and then some slices of tomato and some cucumber pieces, if it was summer.

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: And that was just, like—and, like, no other condiment with it. But, like, this was just standard with a meal. Like, well, you're sitting down to eat whatever for dinner. Here's your piece of white bread. [laughs quietly] Some butter, and some slices of fresh tomato. That's a very... it's interesting, 'cause I've been looking. There's a lot of people on TikTok who will just show, like, a traditional Southern or Appalachian plate. There's a lot of overlap there where, like, there's just, because it is summer, I'm gonna have some pieces of tomato on my plate. They have nothing to do with the meal. They're just present.

And then sometimes what they call a garden onion. And I don't know exactly what species of onion—like, what variety—but it's like, it's not a white onion, and it looks like a scallion, but it's way bigger than a scallion. So I don't know if it's a scallion, or if it's somewhere between a scallion and a... like, a regular onion. Like, it's got the big green thing like a scallion, but it's huge! Which, I mean, scallions can get huge. But, like, normally they don't. And they're calling 'em garden onions.

Taylor: I know what this is. I see them at the store sometime. I mean, it's not the same—not, like, a—I mean, a shallot is like a small onion. But that, I'm assuming...

Sydnee: Yeah, these are different. 'Cause they look like a giant scallion. Like, that's exactly, like, if you looked at it, it looks like the bulb is huge, the green part is huge. But, I mean, it looks like a scallion. I don't know. I don't know.

But anyway, I see—and that is just tossed on the plate, along with not-cooked, not-prepped, just, like, a raw garden onion tossed on top of whatever else you're eatin'. You know.

Taylor: I... I would be—

Sydnee: It's interesting.

Taylor: I would be curious. Have you found any, like—I would love to have, like, a cookbook or some—or even just a book about, like, Appalachian recipes specifically. 'Cause you're right, they do so often get conflated with Southern recipes. And I feel like, you know, I mean, we—I grew up there, but I don't necessarily think we got a lot, outside of our grandparents, I don't think we got a lot of, like, "This is Appalachian cuisine." You know? Like, that was not really... we weren't growing our own vegetables. We weren't canning things. We weren't kind of living that life. I would be fascinated to know the more nuanced differences. I kind of have the idea in my mind that I think it's a lot more, like, pickly stuff and, like, preserved stuff is a bit more Appalachian than Southern.

Sydnee: There's definitely—I mean, obviously there's overlap. But there's definitely a slight—like, they're variations on a theme, for sure. They're not identical. I do think it's a generational shift. I think, like, our grandparents were fully into that Appalachian cuisine. I think because we live in a more... urban area? [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I mean, not. But, like, it's all rural. But it's more urban than most of the state. I think that our parents raised us with more of, like, the cuisine of the time. Which, you know, it was the 80s. It was, like—and the 90s, so we ate a bunch of frozen stuff. And we ate, you know. We didn't cook anything. We ate a Hot Pocket.

Taylor: There was a lot of, like—a lot of Appalachian food was struggle food, was cooking what you had.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And then when you had, you know, 99 cent cheeseburgers available, it's like, there was a trade off as time became more of a premium, 'cause people had to work more. That shit of, like, where can you—what's the cheapest meal you can get suddenly had to factor in time. And I think that killed a lot of the regularity of cooking, even if it was, like, cheap cooking.

Sydnee: That Appalachian cuisine I do think still exists in the more rural areas. I think you can find it. And I will say—so, we have—I have a couple cookbooks. The best place is when—[laughs quietly] when I was going to check out at—we have the a little gift shop here in Huntington called The Red Caboose. It's in Heritage Station, which used to be an active train station. Now it's like a cute little village of shops and, you know. We've got a great bakery, Nomada Bakery, which is, like, US's best cake bakery two years in a row or something.

Anyway, Red Caboose in there has a bunch of, like, West Virginian, Huntington-specific, like, gift type stuff. And at the counter, there is usually some sort of local book that has been, like, bound locally. You can tell. It's almost like a pamphlet. Into a book of Appalachian recipes, or local music, or something. That's the best place to find that kind of thing.

That, or if you can get a church's compiled recipe book. We have a couple of those.

Taylor: I've seen a few of those.

Sydnee: Yes. And that—if you wanna know what kind of food people really eat somewhere, see if you can find a copy of, like, some church's—like, 'cause all the ladies will send in their recipes. And it's their best. And that—

Taylor: It's gotta have a spiral bound on it. That's how you know it's legit.

Sydnee: Yep. And all the—I love that a lot of the recipe titles'll have, like, something a little cheeky.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: You know? Like, the kind of joke you can make at church. Like, we talk a lot about—there was a cake that Justin always talks about that a lot of the church ladies at his church made. And they would joke that it was the "better than sex" cake. But they couldn't call it that, so sometimes they would call it, like, the Paul Newman cake.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Wink, wink.

Taylor: 'Cause he's so dreamy.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: That's funny.

Sydnee: But, like, that kind of... it's really cute. But I think they're a great snapshot of, like, what are people really eating. This is the food they're really—'cause they're so excited about it that they're sharing it with their church to hear their recipes.

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: We have some. I'd be happy to share 'em with you if you're ever interested. Because, I mean, and some of it is, like, because of the time, if you go—again, it's like the casserole era. So, like, you're gonna find a ton of casseroles.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: So you won't necessarily find, like, the original rustic kind of cooking. But, like, you'll find that there, too.

Taylor: I would be fascinated. 'cause that's, I think, one—one point of contention I have with how we treat our kind of—our culture in America, versus how we kind of idealize other cultures is that, like—like, oh, you know, every other country has, like, this amazing cuisine. It's like, well, we have a culture. 'Cause people live in a place long enough, you cook things.

It's just the people that make that food are often despised by the people that like to have conversations about culture.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: And that's a big problem. Because—like, I think an example, like, a minuscule example is, like, I know that there is an Appalachian concept of, like, kilt lettuce. Have you heard of that?

Sydnee: Mm-mm.

Taylor: Kilt lettuce is, like, killed. Kilt lettuce.

Sydnee: Oh.

Taylor: And it's where you take lettuce and you just cook it in, like, the saved—I remember Mawmaw used to have, like, the saved grease from—like, the bacon grease. You'd save it, you'd cook in it, and then you'd save the leftover and put it in a jar.

Sydnee: We have that.

Taylor: And it would just build up.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, and I mean, look. Even as a—yeah, I'm a vegan in practice. But I can recognize from a culinary standpoint, you are collecting all of the flavor that you cook over and over again. And it's sanitary, 'cause you're bringing it to a high heat. But all you do is you put the lettuce in it and you cook it in that. In your whatever. Your bacon fat, your pan scrapings. And

that was, like, a struggle meal. 'Cause you get some fat, you get some flavor, you get some sort of fiber. It's... but that's not, like... there's so many similar dishes from other cultures around the world. Like, you know, what are they called? There's, like, a Japanese dish where it's cabbage is the base, but it's the same concept. You're just cooking cabbage in a bunch of, like, salt and umami and fat. And it's delicious, and it's prized. And you'll see, like, you know, American chefs making their take on it.

It's like, well, we did some—we have something like that. We just don't really... we don't have the bridges built to, like, connect to, you know, what people in Appalachia were doing or, you know. Like, Southern food gets lifted up, but it's, like, kind of—there are these little pockets that are forgotten. Like... [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I mean, I really think that's true. I think that it's hard. I saw somebody on TikTok talking about doing their dissertation on Appalachia specifically. Like, kind of the collective trauma that is unique to Appalachia. Not that collective trauma is unique to Appalachia. The specific flavor of it that is Appalachian. And the anger that this creator feels sometimes when they start to read about it again and, like, revisit their work.

Because it is—we are in a part of the country where a lot of the, um... a lot of where we are today stems from the oppression and abuse and extortion of the past. And, uh, the people where I live are largely hated by the country as a whole, or looked down upon, even if not despised, looked down upon. Thought of as less. And, um, certainly people who are politically aligned with me generally have nothing but distaste for the people that are my neighbors. And so that's a—I mean, it's tough. It's tough to reconcile that. So our culture is not then deemed important enough to remember, or consider, or preserve.

Taylor: Well, that's a... that's a loss, 'cause that should be a connection point, you know? That's...

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, I... I don't know. I've witnessed that, I feel like, from the other side, you know. Like, having grown up there, but then moved away and just

only kind of getting the perception of what other people think of where I come from. It's like, you never really grew behind, like, the same three—beyond the same three jokes. [laughs] Like, your perception is no teeth, no shoes, no—no, uh, no education. You probably kiss a cousin. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, that's one of those things where, like, I'm... I try to always be open minded and, like, give people the benefit of the doubt and, like, whatever—like, not—first impression is not important. Let's see who this person really is.

But if you tell—if you find out I'm from West Virginia and you say anything about teeth, shoes, or incest, I'm done. I really—I'm not interested in you as a person anymore. If that is what you want to lead with about West Virginia, I think I'm kind of good. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's—that's all I need to know. [laughs] So, I'll put that out there. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Well—

Sydnee: But you know who—you know who's gonna save us is Brenda Kay. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Brenda Kay. [laughs]

Sydnee: I just discovered her on TikTok. I know I'm late to that party, but oh, man.

Taylor: I mean, I think she—she just crossed my feed this week, so I guess maybe we're late to the same party, but...

Sydnee: Her music really brings me joy.

Taylor: It feels almost in a similar vein of, like, we talked about Victor last week, where my first thought was, "Aww. I kind of love this."

And then like, "Oh, people better not be liking this ironically. People better not be hating on this."

And it's really refreshing to see that people are, in fact, not. [laughs] Like, everybody seems to dig what she's throwing down.

Sydnee: And how many people have said kind of what you said earlier? Which is, like, at first you're like, what is this? And then you start listening, and the lyrics kind of get in your head. [laughs] And then you find yourself sort of, like, humming it later.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And singing. The lyrics are clever. I had a moment where I was like "Aw, man. Is this AI, and I'm being tricked?"

So Justin ran it through one of those AI things. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh. Thank you.

Sydnee: I know. And it said no. It said it couldn't—like, as far as that—as far as that—as far as that AI knew. [laughs] This wasn't AI. [laughs]

Taylor: My—

Sydnee: So I hope—man, I hope that's right. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, my confirmation I guess for me, 'cause I had the same thought—and, I mean, I like to think I have discernment to know when it's AI. But I also just—I'm so weary of it now. However, it's the way she responds to people in the comments that I'm like, mmm. AI is driven to promote, like, engagement. And she's kind of... she's very sweet, but there's become a trend where in response to her music, people will say, "Brenda, this effs."

Like, you know. Like, which is current, like, slang for, like, this rules, this is awesome.

Sydnee: Yeah. I like this.

Taylor: And she understands that, but she doesn't like the use of that word.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: To a high degree. And the way—and it's not, like, un-nuanced, like, "Don't do that." She's like, "I get it. But also, it's the same joke. It's a little inappropriate after a point." [laughs] Like, I don't think an AI could have that nuanced take of, like, "I'm glad y'all are supporting me. But I really don't like seeing that word this much." [laughs]

Sydnee: I will also say, her songs—like, okay. If you have not listened to Brenda Kay, just check her out on TikTok. She's working on her first album. It's not out yet. But I think it's coming soon.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: But she's just, like, writing her songs. She said "I—I loved music, and I loved writing, and so one day I bought a guitar and I started writing songs, and now here they are on TikTok." And it's just that simple.

And they're mostly about, like, drinking. [laughs quietly] And having a good time, and chillin', and hangin' out. But they also often will have a theme where it's like, "I was having a rough day, and then I went down to the bar."

But then at some point there's a turn where she's like, "But then I remembered, like, my troubles really starting when my drinking did," or something like that. Where it's like, don't drink your problems away. It won't fix anything. So... [laughs] it's like—it's got this final, like, morality lesson at the end. Like, "Listen. I know we're all having fun, here. But seriously, seriously. This—"

Taylor: She's telling us a story. She's taking us on a journey.

Sydnee: Yeah. This isn't gonna fix anything. I'm not saying don't do it. I'm just reminding you that you're not gonna feel any better at the end of that night. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I like it!

Taylor: Brenda's a storyteller. She's telling us stories.

Sydnee: She is! And she's lyrically clever. I really... I think... there is something in it that is the same thing that the first time I listened to Jimmy Buffett music made me go, "Oh." I kind of... I like not just this music, but I like this person. I feel this person coming through the music, and it's somebody I would wanna know.

I feel Brenda Kay coming through her music, and she seems chill.

Taylor: And I hope she is. And I also don't—

Sydnee: God, God, I hope she is! [laughs]

Taylor: Ugh! That's one of—I don't know! Like, what is the cultural responsibility to deep dive on every, like, passing meme? 'Cause it's like, I'm enjoying this right now. I don't know.

Sydnee: Can't. Can't.

Taylor: I just... it's like Victor. Like, I don't wanna—I don't wanna even—I really don't wanna know where he's from.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: I think every time he passes—sometimes I skip past his videos. Sometimes I'm in the mood to watch the light in the sky, and that's fine. That's enough. I don't need to know more than that.

Sydnee: No. I'm not googling her. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I can't. [laughs] I can't! Don't! So many things have been ruined for us. [laughs]

Taylor: I'll make that decision when ethics come in. If I'm, like, donating to a campaign to raise money for her first album.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Then I will be concerned. But if it's just watching a two minute video, I don't know.

Sydnee: No. I have watched her videos enough that they now pop up on my feed, and I will watch them. And I'm...

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I feel comfortable with that level of engagement. [laughs] And I don't have to know more! [laughs]

Taylor: What's the difference between that or, like, I don't know, a beauty influencer that I know has all the same politics as me, and I get a minute into their video, I'm like, "Wait. This is an ad! Ugh! It's an ad." And I realize it, and I'm like, okay. Like, I don't know the difference there. I'm not putting one above the other. I'm just saying it's all... probably if you're looking at something on your phone, you're engaging in a capitalism.

Sydnee: I know we need to talk about Backrooms, but I will tell you very quickly, the other day I went down this Facebook story. Like, this Facebook story popped up, and it looked real to me. And it was about, like, a woman who had fired her housekeeper 'cause she was stealing her pillowcases. No, her towels. She was stealing her towels, and she hired a new housekeeper, and the housekeeper was trying to figure out, like, why would this woman have been stealing towels? Like, what a wild thing.

And I'm reading this whole story, 'cause I'm like, "What is this story? What am I supposed to learn from this? What is the—this terrible woman who fired a housekeeper for stealing towels. And, like, why did she steal the towels, and what is happening?!"

And at the end of it I realized it was an ad for towels! It was an ad for really nice, hotel-quality towels! Like, spa, hotel-quality towels. And I read the whole freakin' thing before I realized! Like, agh!

Taylor: Oh, I'd be so mad.

Sydnee: Agh! It's an ad!

Taylor: That's so maddening.

Sydnee: But it almost worked on me! 'Cause then I had a moment of, like, "Well, I wonder if they're really good towels." [laughs]

Taylor: No!

Sydnee: I did not buy the towels. I did not buy the towels! I don't remember the name, even, now. So it was clearly not that effective, 'cause I didn't buy the towels, and I've forgotten the name of the towels.

Taylor: That's good. 'Cause I was gonna say, my animosity at ads that hide as things that are not ads makes—it's to the point where I will never engage with that product simply out of the fact that you tried to fool me!

Sydnee: You tried to trick me, and I hate that! [laughs]

Taylor: You wasted my time! [laughs]

Sydnee: Just tell me it's an ad, and tell me how good your towels are, and I might buy 'em. But now I'm not.

Taylor: No. Absolutely not.

Sydnee: No. Um, we need to talk about Backrooms, 'cause there's a lot to talk about, and we haven't left ourselves much time. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Alright. So, The Backrooms.

Sydnee: Okay. It's funny, 'cause I had recommended Mom and Dad should watch it before I watched it. Um, because I knew it was streaming. I was like, "Hey. You guys like scary movies. You'll probably dig this. You should watch Backrooms."

And so then the next day, Dad was like, "Well, we watched that movie. Have you watched it yet?"

And I said, "No, I haven't watched it yet. We're going to tonight."

And he was like, "Well, if you can figure out what it means, let me." [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I said, "Really?"

And he said, "I don't know what I watched." [laughs]

Taylor: You know... I like the honesty in that. 'Cause I won't say—I mean, it is—it's not the most straightforward horror movie that one could watch.

Sydnee: No. And it does—I will warn people up front, 'cause I didn't know this. It has some, like, shaky cam stuff.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That I had to just, like—I was looking down and Justin was describing to me what was happening, because that makes me so motion sick. It's like The Blair Witch Project. Like, I had to leave the theater 'cause I thought I was gonna throw up. So, just putting that out there. If you're like me, it has those moments.

Taylor: Well, and I... I will say, I think that the shaky cam bits were the only parts that had actual, like, traditional horror in it. Like, what you expect from a horror movie. Those kind of, like, odd, like—odd things being seen out of the corner of the screen. The sort of jump scare adjacent—they didn't really have any pure jump scares in this. But those kind of happened on the shaky cam.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: The movie part of it was a little bit more—there was disturbing stuff, but none of it was really, like, uh, classic horror movie setups.

Sydnee: If you haven't—we are gonna ruin it, if you haven't—well, not ruin it. Spoil it. [laughs] We're gonna ruin it.

Taylor: Ruin it for you! Hopefully not.

Sydnee: [laughs] Putting that out there. If you haven't, like, the basic premise is this kind of lone—well, he's not lonely, he's alone. He's very clear on that. He's not lonely. He's an alone guy. He's, like, lost his—his wife left him, or she left—whatever. He lives in the furniture store where he works, and he discovers a wall that you can walk through into a sort of, like, other dimension, different space, magical world, whatever your interpretation of it is, um, called the backrooms. Which is just sort of this seemingly endless maze of odd spaces, some of them with identifiable things like furniture in them, and then others with just sort of weird melting walls, and holes, and curves, and oddness in them. And then he's just, like—he keeps exploring deeper and deeper. He brings [laughs quietly] two of his poor employees to help him and gets them killed.

Taylor: Minimum wage employees doing the most.

Sydnee: I know. [laughs]

Taylor: Tale as old as time.

Sydnee: I felt like that was kind of a bummer.

Taylor: It was definitely a bummer. I mean, as soon as they were introduced I'm like, oh, these are gonna be the index kills. We're gonna watch these people die just to make the—establish the fact that this place can kill.

Sydnee: Yes. And you know there's a big monster lurking around it. Like, you get that sense, but you don't know what the big monster is. Um, until his therapist follows him into the backrooms, looking—his therapist is worried about him, comes looking for him, follows him into the backrooms. And eventually you see the big monster, which is, like, a distorted version of him.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: But he definitely, like, kills and eats people.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or bites them.

Taylor: Including himself?

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yes, I suppose. Yes. Um, and I would say the only part that gets real weird is there at the end, the therapist escapes. But she's now in this other place where there are a bunch of scientists who say that initially they made MRI machines, but then they found this space, or made this space, or opened this space. And then we kind of just leave it there. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and I guess it's like a question mark that maybe is meant to lead to a sequel where—are they gonna—it sounds like they're gonna kill her. Like, you've seen this, so now we have to dispose of you.

Sydnee: Right.

Taylor: And then the last scene is you see her copy, because the way the backrooms work is it kind of makes poorly rendered copies of the real world that degrade with each new repetition. So you see a version of her that's been copied into the backrooms, sort of sitting alone, helplessly.

Sydnee: My—my interpretation—and I don't know if it's more—I mean, like, 'cause this seems kind of straightforward. Especially since, like, the scientists said they made MRI machines. Which MRI machines take pictures of inside the human body, and specifically are very useful for looking at the brain. Other parts of the body too, but I think we often kind of connect, like, the MRI can show us a lot more about the brain than other imaging maybe can.

And so from that, it kind of feels to me like we're entering the psyche, the mind, the brain, the cognitive space somehow. And that these duplicates of people and places, the reason that they're poorly rendered is because our memory is imperfect, and the longer, the further away we are from an event or a person, the more fuzzy that gets in our mind. We lose the details. That was my interpretation of that, but I don't know.

Taylor: I mean, I think that there is... there is definitely that interpretation, as far as is being, like, this sort of heightened representation of the mind. Specifically because I guess we're to assume that the thing—because the opening sequence is someone being hunted by the—the scary pirate guy. And this is, I mean, presumably before our main character goes into the backrooms.

Sydnee: I guess.

Taylor: And so, is it because he is—his furniture store is built above this, or in connection to it, it's replicating him because he's in proximity? And that in that space, he can be some sort of, I don't know, like, an id or, like, a situation where he is... because you see a lot of other creatures that are not violent. It's not like everything that gets replicated in here becomes some sort of predator. It's just him that becomes—sort of violently isolated himself in this space.

Sydnee: And he—I mean, it's kind of echoing what he's saying in therapy.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: 'Cause he's going to therapy and he's talking about how—I mean, that's what he says, very specifically. "I'm not lonely. I am alone, and I'm choosing to be alone."

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: Mainly because he recognizes that he hurts people, that his actions hurt people. There's a lot tied to his drinking, but then even beyond his drinking—I mean, he references not being a very nice person.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And he hurts people, and he is—he has decided he would rather not change. He's decided he would like to stay that way. Which is then sort of echoed by "I've decided to stay in the backrooms."

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: "I'm just going to be this forever. I am comfortable never challenging or changing."

Taylor: Well, and there's a—I think that makes the way—the fact that he dies by his—his sort of warped self's hands is kind of a—it's a good metaphor for, you know, when you lean into your self-destructive tendencies like that. You decide that that's who you are. That part of you will eventually kill... kill you off. Like, he—it's not like he finds camaraderie in even his distorted self. He is destroyed by that.

Sydnee: And I wonder—I don't know. I had this thought. I don't know how much The Backrooms is just his psyche, or is it a collection of psyches? Like, is it a cumulative space? Because I interpreted—the first time he enters the backrooms, he is met with a giant pile of, like, kind of distorted furniture. And it's, like, a mess.

And it's interesting, 'cause when the therapist enters the backrooms the first time, it's an empty room. And I wondered if we're supposed to take away, like, she—like, you kind of get flashbacks that she went through trauma as a kid. Her mother had mental illness. She was locked in the house for a long time. Like, she went through traumatic stuff. But also, presumably, she's done work on herself. She's a therapist, so she's probably engaged in her own therapy, and she has worked to try to clear her mental space and deal with her trauma and find coping mechanisms, and move forward from that, in a way where he is saying, "No, no, no. I'm just gonna live in this forever."

Taylor: Mm-hmm. Well, I mean, in that sense, like—'cause I think it's not purely a—the fact that there's, like, some sort of mysterious scientific body studying this space makes me think that there is a reality to it, right? It's not just all, like, in your head. But is it some sort of, like, metaphysical organism that creates spaces from your brain, and it attempts to hold you there to sort of digest you?

'Cause I noticed, like, the further down—like, when they went down, all the sudden there was, like, where all the rot was, and they made the point of saying it was smelly. Like, it felt like, you know, this is—it's not that there's something hunting you that's trying to eat you. It's that you've already been consumed when you walk through that doorway. You're in the stomach. It's digesting you.

Sydnee: Hmm.

Taylor: And sort of making you part of it, but it's an imperfect replication of you.

Sydnee: I didn't know how to interpret the fact that he could eat the people that were in it.

Taylor: [laughs quietly] But it looked like—it looked like stuffing from, like, a cushion.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That was strange. I didn't know what to—

Taylor: [simultaneously] That's just maybe something—

Sydnee: ...do with that.

Taylor: I don't know. You know, I think that there is... and I don't think this is even purposeful. Maybe this is just partially "Taylor thinks too much about horror movies" thing. But also, I would like to think it's at least partially purposeful. Because the bad copies, as we live in this world where AI is fighting against every artistic form, the bad copies, they had too many fingers, eyes were in the wrong place. It felt like this is sort of like a non-human machine's interpretation of a human.

Sydnee: Yeah. That makes sense.

Taylor: And that kind of led to the thought of—maybe you've heard the concept, when we talk about horror, about how where we base our horror, the settings that we put our horror, is often where we lose—as a culture, where we lose our humanity.

That's the reason why you get a lot of, like, classic, like, British horror is in, like, the industrialized city, you know. It's like, this is where we—people were living in rot and filth and dying in horrible conditions and, you know. Like, that is why we get monsters from the city, there.

But in America, we have this fear of—where is our horror based, usually? It's out in the unknown. It's out in the woods.

Sydnee: Out in the woods.

Taylor: It's—and it's kind of recognizing that as we—

Sydnee: Often around where I live.

Taylor: Well, that's true.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and I think it's this subconscious awareness of, like, that's where we lost our humanity. That's where we were, as the colonizers, invaders, like, you know, kind of... chasing what was already here off into the darkness. And our safety was in our civilization, and as soon as we leave that, we're subject to the forces that were here before us.

And that's a... that's not an original thought. That's a thought that's been proposed in, like, horror theory before. But it made me think of this. With the setting of it being in, like, the 90s, and even, like, in the furniture store, where we've all been in that furniture where nothing is particularly nicely designed. Everything is just kind of there, you know?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Taylor: You can kind of smell that space. [laughs] Like, you know what it smells like.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: That—is this a modern horror setting about where we lose our humanity? Because we're kind of moving into this time—I don't know. I think I get a lot of videos these days about, like, the—I'm using the way we can say it on this show—the crappification of American production. Where everything is made of plastic. It costs too much. It's poorly made. It's meant to break.

Like, things used to be nicely made. Things used to be made by artisans. Things used to be made with personality. They used to be made with people that were paid enough to make things well. And that's just all kind of been destroyed by capitalism, big box stores. Like, everything that could have an identity is no longer capable of being made, and all we're left with is stuff that kind of feels completely inhuman, completely impersonal, but that's all we can afford.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And it kind of felt like this setting of this, like, endless... you know... office space. This endless work space. It kind of feels like you're at a job, but you can't get out of it. Is this a horror setting that... is this—the modern setting for horror is you're stuck in capitalism and you can't get out?
[laughs]

Sydney: Well, I mean, if you look at it, especially, like, the consumerist part of that... furniture stores do set up, like, little bedroom areas and little kitchen areas and little living room areas so that you can go interact with it as if you're at home. You know?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydney: Sit on this couch, and you've got chairs around and a coffee table, and we put some plants here. Doesn't it feel like you're at home?

Sit at this dining room table with your family. Isn't it almost like you're at home with a family, eating dinner? You know?

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: You're not. But we could sell you that experience. We could sell you the comfort of a warm bed. We can sell you the, you know, warmth of a kitchen table. We can sell you this beautiful living room set where you'll sit with the family and friends maybe you don't have. We can sell you all that. It's not real. It won't give you any of the things that we're trying to evoke when we set it up like this. So it's all artifice. But we could sell it to you.

Taylor: Well, and that—

Sydney: And we will buy it, 'cause it's as close as we can get to connection.

Taylor: That even feels similar to, like, the—I think it's a big part of, like, these, like, big tech companies. Part of the package when they make the pitch to you to come work for them, it's always showing you the third spaces that they've artificially created in the building, because they want you to be there for 10 to 12 hours a day.

It's like, look, there's a ping pong table. There's a lounge. There's a snack fridge. Like, it's all these things that feel like humanity. But it's created to keep you there.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that stems from that idea. Like, I think having, you know—like, some of those big tech companies have, like, cafeterias where you can go get free lunch or whatever. That's a good idea. People are working hard. Give them free lunch. I support that.

But then what stems from that is this—'cause "We're a family, so—we're a family here. We feed you, and we provide places for you to sleep. [laughs quietly] And we provide places for you to whatever."

Taylor: Exactly. There are bunk beds!

Sydnee: And it's like, I don't know.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Maybe that wouldn't work so well here, because in West Virginia what we would say is like, "Oh, and you can pay us in scrip next? Where's the company store?" We know where this ends. We know where this ends! [laughs]

Taylor: I mean, that's kind of the thing. It's like people—I've heard the joke made that it's like America's becoming just one big company store. Where, you know, just to have access to the means to survive, you have to be giving all of your times—all of your time and all of your energy to the machine.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And you don't get back a meaningful life. You just get back the ability to stay alive? And that... I think that, you know, horror is meant to confront our modern fears in sort of metaphoric ways. I mean, it's like when—this ties directly to, like, George Romero doing, you know, the zombie movie in the mall.

Like, he was specific about "I'm using zombies as a metaphor for capitalism and consumerism. And, like, that's what I'm talking about. But I'm not saying—" No character stands back and goes, "Boy, these zombies in this mall sure make me think of capitalism!"

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: No. It's a metaphoric representation of it. And I think that this felt very much like that. That we're seeing this—you know, that—I don't know. That little old man that loved to make beautiful chairs, and his shop made beautiful chairs. That's a thing of the past. Like, that man can no longer stay in business. That was—that competition was destroyed when the big box store moved in, and they made beautiful chairs, but their beautiful chairs were way cheaper.

But what happened isn't that that little old man went out of business and that big box store kept making beautiful chairs. Then they started making crappier and crappier chairs because they know that there's no competition.

That's the end goal of those things. It's not to make a better product at a better price. It's to drive out the better product so your only option is a crappier product. A product that has less identity. And the end stage of that I think is AI. It's that we've been... specificity and humanity has been removed so greatly from what we engage with, as far as products, that now we can accept something that was generated with no humanity at all.

Sydnee: It's tough, 'cause setting it in the 90s, too, like, you're also, I think, in part talking about globalization.

Taylor: Mm.

Sydnee: And that's that double-edged sword of, like—and I'm not—this is not my cry against globalization. But especially, like, with no guardrails, you know, unfettered capitalism on a global scale, this is what you get.

Taylor: Well, that's what you get if you don't understand the importance of specificity and humanity. I mean, in a funny way it ties back to what we

were talking about. How, you know, like, hey, there's this little pocket of culture that gets kind of forgotten.

And, like, I think that's... our humanity lives in little places, specific recipes, specific ideas, you know. Like, that's where we find ourselves. And that's what we risk losing when we only look at the big picture. It's kind of that tech bro, Elon Musk, like, "I'm just looking at the big picture. I'm looking at the big ideas."

It's like, well, no. No good idea actually is big. Most good ideas are comprised of a thousand tiny ideas that are lovingly made.

Sydnee: Yeah. I'll be interested to see if they do make sequels. I mean, I would—there was so much buzz about it. I assume it's done well. Like, I would have to assume it's done well. Um, I will say, I think I maybe—my, like—how much I liked it, one, I think was a little affected by the shaky cam stuff. That's just really hard for me. I'll be honest. If I had known ahead of time, I probably wouldn't have proposed we do it, just because I generally avoid movies with that.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Um, because it makes me so sick.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I will say that if you just, like—if you have somebody who can sit next to you and tell you what you're missing, it's not so much of the movie that it's unwatchable.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know? It's not—those aren't... it is more not shaky cam than shaky cam. But, um—but that for me was a little bit of... like, I don't like that as much. Uh, and I think my expectations were so high that maybe it couldn't quite meet them. I think that was part of my problem, too, is I had heard so much buzz about it. I went in thinking this movie's gonna, like, change my whole way of thinking. And it was really good. I don't know that I

found it groundbreaking. But I do think it was a really solid movie. I enjoyed it. I thought that it executed on themes better than, like, if we compare it to Weapons.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I feel like where Weapons was sort of talking about a lot of stuff but wasn't quite sure what it wanted to say at the end of it, I felt very clear on what they were saying with this movie.

Taylor: Hmm. Well, I—

Sydnee: I felt it was more effective in that way.

Taylor: I mean, and the fact that, what, the director of this was 19? 20?

Sydnee: That's impressive.

Taylor: It's a very young guy that directed this movie. And I really hope—because I think nowadays movies have become so—they're run through so many approval filters. Like, we want this to make—we don't care what this movie's saying. We want to make a movie that will make a billion dollars. Like, that is the goal.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And I feel like we've had a few examples recently of the horror genre kind of—Obsession was another one. The horror genre doing what it does best, which is kind of punch back and be like, "Hey, here's a low budget movie made with practical effects that is trying to say—like, the point is what we're trying to say. The point it is, like, the story we're trying to tell. And we don't—we're not trying to make the most, like, widely appealing thing. We're trying to follow through on a vision."

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I—I definitely think it executed that well. And, I mean, I enjoyed it. I would recommend it to other people. If I was gonna watch it again I'd take a Dramamine. That's the one thing I will say.

Taylor: [wheeze-laughs] That's fair. Well, and again, I think it's—it's good that, like—I don't know. I think we've lost—and probably because it's so expensive to make a movie, to put a movie up. I get the part that's like, we have to guarantee it will sell. But when that starts infringing on the artistic integrity, so it's like, you know, we have to know that everyone will like this. It's... art is better when not everybody has to like it. It can find its specific audience. I think there's a specific audience for this. And that's okay if it's not everybody.

Sydnee: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that—yes. There's lots of movies out there. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. There's no need to dilute every one down until it's, you know, broadly applicable and flavorless.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but yeah. I'm glad I watched it. I really—I enjoyed it. I had been looking forward to it. I had heard so much buzz about it. And I don't mean to say, like, "And it didn't live up to it." I just think I went in, you know, hearing all the buzz, and then I got a little nauseous. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And maybe that... that's just me. That's just my problem.

Taylor: Is that like—there should be—just as much as there's that website that's dedicated to telling you if a dog dies, is there one that, like, "There's shaky cam," even at any point, just let me know? [laughs]

Sydnee: If I had googled at all about this movie ahead of time...

Taylor: That's fair.

Sydnee: There are multiple articles there about, like, "Just a warning: if this makes you sick... " There are lots of things. And I didn't—I just didn't google it. I didn't bother to think about it.

Taylor: No.

Sydnee: So that's on me. That's on me. [laughs quietly] Um, but good, yeah. I'm glad we watched it. I would recommend it to anybody. And I will explain to Dad what it meant later today.

Taylor: [wheeze-laughs] What explanation are you gonna give him? It's an exploration of a mindscape and/or a dissertation on capitalism? [laughs]

Sydnee: I'll tell him just to listen to this episode.

Taylor: Oh, great. There you go.

Sydnee: There we go. I'll say, "There. You can get Tey and I's thoughts on it."

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's the best I got for you. I don't know. If you google it there's probably somebody out there who's written the definitive, like, "This is what they meant."

Taylor: Well, and to be fair, neither of us are fully indoctrinated on the background history of the backrooms.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: So I'm aware there's probably explanations for literally everything. But I kind of like to treat a movie as, this is the piece. This is—if I have to go to three outside sources to understand it, I don't know if I want to do that. And it was fine as a piece by itself.

Sydnee: Yeah. And, I mean, I also think that it's great when art can lead to different interpretations, you know? I like when it's more than—it's

multifaceted. It makes you think of multiple things. That's clever. That's well done.

Yeah, 'cause I've seen some things that, like, talk about it in the same context as, like, Mall World. And so I don't know if there's some other thing there that the internet talks about. I didn't look into any of that. I don't know. But just watch it. You don't have to—you don't need to go back to creepypasta to figure out what this is. You don't need to watch any of the YouTube videos. I mean, you can, but you don't need to. You can just watch the movie.

Taylor: For sure.

Sydnee: Yeah. I'm not letting the kids watch it. They begged to, because the internet is all talking about it, and there's a Roblox game of it. And so...

Taylor: Oh no. No.

Sydnee: No. I said, "Absolutely not. No, no, no, no, no."

Taylor: Yeah. 'Cause if...

Sydnee: They would have nightmares about that pirate forever.

Taylor: That pirate was really—and that was all practical!

Sydnee: That was really well done.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Yeah. But no, they would have nightmares forever, so no, no, no.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, Tey, what are we gonna do next? Oh, it was my idea.

Taylor: Uh, it was your idea. I know what we're doing, but maybe you want to introduce it. [laughs]

Sydnee: I want to—I was watching some of the footage of Ben Folds testifying about the Kennedy Center before Congress, and it made me think we should talk about Ben Folds, because I love Ben Folds. And, um, Rockin' the Suburbs was probably the album most people, like, loved the most. I really like Songs for Silverman but there's, you know. He's great. I've seen him in concert a bunch of times, so I want to talk about him.

Taylor: Alright. Well, I will definitely listen to those two, and then also any other hits that surround that.

Sydnee: Sounds good. Well, thank you.

Taylor: Cool. Thank you.

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

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm still buffering...

Taylor: And I am too.

[theme music plays]

Sydnee: Yeah, I've seen some of those Roblox things. They're freaky enough.

Taylor: I don't—I have seen a lot of Backrooms videos, but they're always just, like, a bunch of guys in, like, those big suits, those, like, level four virus suits, you know?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, going down water slides. And they're interesting and funny and kind of creepy, but I don't know the lore. I don't know if that's the lore.

Sydnee: I don't know the lore.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Maybe we need to go find out the lore.

Taylor: I guess so.

[chord]

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