

Buffering the Vampire Slayer  
Episode 0.33: Invisi-BIPOC with Alba Daza & Mackenzie McDade

[CHIME]

**Alba:** Hi, Scoobies. Alba up at the top here to give you guys a brief content warning on the episode you're about to listen to. Just to tell you that this episode does have spoilers through Season 7, so up to you whether or not you want to listen. And I just wanted to give a brief content warning on some themes that we touch on while discussing this episode. We don't go too deep into these themes in particular, but we do touch upon them so if they are very triggering to you, here is your warning. We talk about alcohol and drug abuse. We also mention white supremacy and police violence, mental health, and we do discuss sex trafficking. So there's your content warning before getting into this episode.

Also, comically, Mack and I forgot to let everybody know where you can find us while we were recording. I think we just got really excited [laughs] and were pretty tired by the end of this. So you can find me @alba.daza on Instagram and at albadaza.com. You can find Mack @mackmactalksback on Instagram and Twitter. That's M-A-C-K-M-A-C-talks-back. And, uh, yeah, if you like this episode, if you like what you hear, you can support the work that we do over there, within Buffering and in our own private lives. So, excited to share this with you and hopefully see you at that Instagram live on Saturday at 2 PM Eastern. Yeah!

[Buffering theme plays]

**Alba:** Hi, Mack!

**Mack:** Hey! [laughs] How's it going?

**Alba:** [simultaneously] How's it going?

**Mack:** Jinx. [laughs]

**Alba:** Personal jinx, lock. [both laugh] Alright, so today, we have a very special episode where Mack and I will be discussing the BIPOC experience—experiences of invisibility, imposed by society. And metaphors where we can find that in Buffy and episodes that we can compare our own personal experiences reflected in the magic, the monsters, the storylines, the narratives of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

**Mack:** Also, it's a deep dive into maybe some of the less obvious bits of invisibility than what is normally talked about.

**Alba:** So we're gonna be talking about the denial of BIPOC reality. So, the denial often of racism that exists. The denial of the society that we have to confront, versus white people. What it feels like to be a person of color, living in a society that was not designed for us to thrive. The denial of our existence, when we move through society and feel like people literally don't look at you, don't acknowledge that you exist. And then we're also gonna talk about denial of—and by denial, I mean, like, society's denial. You know, the system's denial in all of these different areas. So the denial that our work is valid, that we are constructive members of society and that we have anything to contribute. Because white supremacy tells us that people of color don't have anything to contribute, that we don't work hard and that the work that we do is not as valuable as it truly is. Right? Is that a good way of putting it, Mack?

**Mack:** That's actually an excellent way of putting that. A plus. [laughs]

**Alba:** Thank you so much. I'm so flattered. [laughs] I worked really hard on this.

**Mack:** It shows. [laughs]

**Alba:** And I also wanna preface this. I was thinking a lot about, before we were recording and after everything that happened in the States, and you know, everything that's been going on since June. That this episode isn't just to educate white people. Like, this was really an opportunity that Buffering gave us. They were like, have an episode, like, do whatever you want. And it's not just to educate white people. It's also just to share our experiences, to have solidarity between you and I, right, Mack? And like, talk about things that we don't get to talk about. When people talk about Buffy, they don't talk about this. They don't talk about, generally, our experiences. And hopefully, there are other people, BIPOC listeners, who hear this and can relate and feel seen. I apologize—we apologize if we miss anything. Please email us and let us know, super here to listen and learn. And you know—obviously, our experiences are not everyone's experiences and this is all in degrees, depending on what kind of person of color you are.

**Mack:** Yeah. I—yeah, I just wanna add too that, like—like I said previously, it's about talking about the—some of the less spoken-about types of invisibility. But also, too, it's who is framing the narrative. And I think that's what's important about this conversation, is like, two women of color framing the conversation about the invisibility, versus a lot of hoity-toity critics we can all name framing the conversation about *visibility*.

**Alba:** [laughs] So we're gonna talk about different episodes. But all of these topics—you know, denial of reality, denial of existence, denial of value—they're all interchangeable and connected. And it's really kind of impossible to talk about one without talking about the other. And when we do talk about certain episodes, they will... you know, they will reflect different aspects of invisibility. Even if we were, like, focusing on one specific topic.

**Mack:** As we go through these, I actually have the transcript of them. And there's a website, [transcripts.foreverdreaming.org](http://transcripts.foreverdreaming.org), where a lovely, lovely human being has transcribed every single episode of Buffy. So if, like, me, while talking—it's like, really helpful to be able to go back and see the actual exchange.

[Transcripts.foreverdreaming.org](http://Transcripts.foreverdreaming.org), and you can just search by title and it's in order by season, so.

**Alba:** Hell yeah, that's awesome. So what struck me so much was we were actually gonna do, like, a full watch of Season 1 and just talk about Season 1. So it took us, like, a while to get to this topic. Because I thought, like, oh, Season 1, like, there's not that much. There's—well, there's The Pack and there's—well, I was like, that's the main episode that is, like, super problematic in Season 1. But then I was watching it through the lens of, you know, my experience as a person of color. And I was like, whoa, there is so much here that I never noticed before, because I didn't look at it through that lens.

And the thing that stuck out to me the most in, like, Welcome to the Hellmouth and The Harvest is that, like, there's the Scoobies. And they live in this reality where they know that there are monsters and demons and vampires—at first, just vampires. But they know that there's vampires and that there's evil in the world, like, supernatural evil, and nobody else wants to acknowledge that. And that they have this, like, secret little club where they're like, reality is fucked! How do people not know this? And they have to, like, go and live and fight this specific thing while everybody else kind of gets to live in denial. And think that, like, everything is fine, when clearly, obviously, it is very, very much not fine.

**Mack:** Like, zero—like, it's not even not fine. It's like, negative fine. Like... [both laugh] but what I also find interesting about it initially, is A) these kids go for the okey-doke and are like, "yeah, this tracks." Like, Xander and Willow are like, "yep. Okay. This is fine." Like, they have too chill of a reaction? Like, Cordelia. As much as we like to trash-talk Cordelia sometimes for the way she behaves in the first, like, season or so. Cordelia has a really reasonable reaction [laughs] to like, vampires and demons—

**Alba:** She does.

**Mack:** But I think part of it—it speaks to Willow...you know, being somewhat of an outcast. She's very smart, she's very mousy, she's very meek. She's someone that people look over. Xander, in his own head, is just not masculine enough.

**Alba:** He—[laughs] and like, Buffy's like, "you can't come with me, I'm the Slayer and you're not." And he's like, "I knew you were gonna throw that back in my face." And it's like, bro! [laughing] It's literally just a fact. Like, it doesn't say anything about you. Literally, only Buffy is the Slayer. How is this about you now and you, like, being a man? I'm—I'm putting air quotes, for people who can't see me. But like, ridiculous.

**Mack:** Yeah and so, like, I think it's their—already their sense of invisibility that makes them okay with being like, "yeah, sure, vampires, that makes *perfect* sense, [laughs] considering how everyone else in school acts." So I think that's also an interesting—

**Alba:** Yeah—

**Mack:** Type of invisibility.

**Alba:** Yeah, exactly. And I think it's also Cordelia's privilege, like, that she gets to live this kind of charmed life, that allows, like, for the level of shock that she goes through when she's like, "oh, wait, things are not perfect? Like, things are not good?" There's different levels of response according to where they stand in the society of their school. At least in the show.

**Mack:** Yeah. And I think it's also interesting, someone who's as hyper visible in southern California as a fifteen-year-old blonde girl...is our intro into this world of the unseen.

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** And like, dark power and I'm like, very interesting. Somebody who would find it incredibly hard to be on the fringe and the edges and not draw attention to herself.

**Alba:** Yeah, and something else I thought was really interesting about all of this is that she can't even tell people that this is the reality, because people will think she's crazy. Like, no one will believe her, basically. And isn't that such a reflection of racism? Even like, when people will talk about—[laughing] listen, I had this experience—oh my god—on this film set, where we were talking about *Get Out*. And

one guy—I was like, "it's amazing, it's so smart and original." And this one white guy was like, "mm, it's like, been done before." And I was like—

**Mack:** Where?! By who?

**Alba:** "Sorry, what are you talking about?" [both laugh] Yeah, this one dude. And then this other guy was like—to my reaction, 'cause I had a white boyfriend at the time. And I was going to meet his family and I was so freaked out. I was like, please, like, do not touch me. After we watched that movie, I was like, "just, like...no, like, no." [Mack laughs] And he's like, "you know I would never do that to you." And I was like—

**Mack:** No, we don't know that!

**Alba:** [simultaneously] That's exactly what Rose would say! [both laugh] Like, don't—fucking, just—no. And the—this other guy who was there, who was, like, the executive producer of the film shoot that I was working—he was like, "Mm, don't you think that's, like, a little bit extreme?"

**Mack:** No.

**Alba:** And I was like, no? And then he, like, went on—we had, like, a full argument for, like, half an hour, where he was like, "don't—" and I was like, listen, dude. Like, if I told you some of the shit that's, like, happened and, like, the experience that I've—like, experiences I've had. And he's like, "Mm...like, don't you think, like, some of those are, like, imagined though?"

**Mack:** Hashtag...why are men.

**Alba:** [laughs] Yeah, literally. And he was like, "mmm..." And I was like, no. And he was like, "mmm..." And I was like, dude, *no!* But that's—that's it, right? That's like, trying to explain our experience of racism and people just being like, "no, no, that didn't happen. Like, you're fully imagining that." And that's very similar to what Buffy and the gang have to go through. If they were to tell anyone, like—remember when she—in Killed by Death. She is like, "no, we have to go fight the vampires!" And they're like, "oh no, like, it's the fever. She's delusional. It's fine." You know? Or she's gonna be sent to an insane asylum as, you know, we see...in Season 6.

**Mack:** Yeah, I mean, it's also...the principal of the school, the first principal. Like, dude! [Alba laughs] Dude! The number of times your campus has been invaded by something [Alba laughs] trying to kill one or more of your students. And for him to

just be like, "Miss Summers, why are you always causing trouble?" Like...not causing, stopping the trouble! Like...[laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah. Just like—

**Mack:** It's—or even—and also, like, speaking to the fever part. It's like, uh...hysteria used to be how you diagnosed women who were just uncooperative or were like, my husband's awful or I'm upset. Like, I want to be doing more than being stuck at home with kids—depending on what class you were, some women just had to go to work. But like, the diagnosis of hysteria, of like, not seeing the thing that causes pain. Right? The modern equivalent is Borderline Personality Disorder. Uh...so like, there's a whole bunch of trauma there that you don't wanna address and deal with, 'cause you'd have to deconstruct patriarchy. So you just say that they're untreatable.

**Alba:** Yeah, exactly.

**Mack:** So I think it's a pretty...that's a very on-the-nose example of the fever, I like to think.

**Alba:** And on that note. Like, not only does Buffy have to hide her identity as, like, the vampire slayer, but—and like, the denial of everyone around them that the vampires exist, that there are demons, that, you know, shit is weird—also makes everybody way more vulnerable. Like, people are not safe. If they were all prepared—and we talked about this. Like, if they were all prepared and carried stakes and carried crosses and carried holy water, like, how much safer would everybody be? If they just accepted that, like, yes, we—this is a—we live on a Hellmouth. And demons exist, vampires exist. And we're all, like, at risk, you know? If people acknowledged that racism was a thing, it would—and had tools to fight it. I mean, it's not as simple as, I think, you know, carrying holy water. But we would be able to—[laughs] we would be able to dismantle the system a lot easier, I think, if people would just fucking own up.

**Mack:** Yeah. I mean, and I think—somebody on Twitter was saying that it was—it's WASP culture that has sort of brought us to this point—

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** Of you don't talk about, like—was it politics, money or religion? [both laugh] Also racism is, like, the fourth one that we don't talk about. And I think that's very true. It's like, if you have to—breaking the veneer of nice, and I think that's a lot of what Sunnydale wants to do, right? It—judging from it, it's a suburban town, a

college town. We discover they're big enough to have, essentially, UC. So like, it's a pretty nice town, frankly. To have a UC in it, you're either in the boonies with nothing, or you're in a pretty nice town. So you know, the veneer of nice that the town has is what they're trying desperately to hold onto. And I think that's truly what is it, and less that, like, people are like, "I don't see it." It's—if we admit there's a problem. [laughs] You know, we're breaking some sort of weird, silent code of niceness and pretend.

**Alba:** Step one, baby. Admit you have a problem. [laughs]

**Mack:** [simultaneously, laughing] Admitting you have a problem. [both laugh]

**Alba:** Yeah. And that's what happens, right? Like, we talked about how, in Graduation Day, finally it's like, this—the school, at least. At least the seniors with—at prom, they give Buffy the class protector award. And they, like, prepare everyone and everyone has crosses and holy water and—whatever. They have all the tools they need to fight the vampires, fight the mayor. But it's only until then. We've gone through three seasons of Buffy where no one ever participated. And it's, like, a really—it's my favorite finale, actually. Right now, at least. But those two episodes are, like, my favorite finale, because I love that everybody just—it's like a little army. And finally, we see everybody being like, okay, no, enough! You know? We're done!

**Mack:** I like it, with the exception of, I'd also like to point out, that like, while they do form a nice tiny little army to fight back, they literally do not fight until they are sitting in their seats at graduation where they can literally be picked off one by one. [Alba laughs] Which is a phrase that you're probably familiar with if you've seen a later episode. Like, they still wait till the last minute, in hopes of, I don't know what. [laughs] But instead of, like, even being proactive—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** In protecting themselves. They're like, [laughing] we'll wait until the atrocity comes to us.

**Alba:** We'll wait until—yeah, we'll wait until they attack us, before we take action. Or like, until we admit that...I mean, I guess that was it. It was, like, truly a life or death situation.

**Mack:** Which I would like to tie to the current treason happening here in America. So I think, as of today, we're, like—

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Mack:** A week out from treason? And quite literally, there are senators who didn't wanna say anything until there were armed gunmen with zip ties, looking for them and building nooses—or gallows, I'm told. Gallows is the word—you know, on the Capitol. [laughs] Like...you weren't ready to fight back. You couldn't admit that there was racism, that was—and white supremacy and all of these things going on until literally you were pinned down in your office, with people coming from you. [laughs] Like...so, art imitating life. Also ignoring the problem of racism or the problem of vampires—

**Alba:** Terrifying.

**Mack:** However you wanna look at it.

**Alba:** Again, like, it's such a point of privilege to be able to wait, you know?

**Mack:** Seriously.

**Alba:** To be able to wait until you're confronted with it, because there are people who are confronted with it every day. Like...I'm uncomfortable when I'm in a room full of white people. I do not feel safe. I'm like, mm, this just doesn't feel good. And it's also exhausting.

**Mack:** Yeah. It is exhausting. Yeah, like, it's actually kind of surprising that it takes Buffy so long to just be like, I'm done. It always surprises me—[Alba laughs] it always surprises me that Willow, of all people, never was like, I'm tapping out. [laughs] But like, we'll get to why that is [laughs] as we go along.

**Alba:** Yeah, fun stuff. Par-ty. Party people. [both laugh] And I think that's part of why I liked Buffy so much as a kid, was that it reflected that kind of part of my reality. Even if I didn't fully understand that, that it—I always felt like there was something, like, justice to be fought for. As a—as a child and, like, growing up. And I just, like—I didn't have the words to articulate racism or systematic oppression the way that I do now. God forbid, like, anybody use the words "white supremacy." But it—I felt it. I felt it constantly and I felt that in the show, somehow. This, like, resistance or this, like, resilience to a reality that is imposed on you. And you just gotta keep fighting, as they say.

**Mack:** And I think it's—part of it is her—their refusal to die.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.



**Mack:** I think is really relatable for people of color. Like, one of my favorite things to tell people—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** It's like, when Ruth Bader Ginsberg died and every woman who'd ever, you know, had a Notorious RBG shirt was like, "oh god, it's the end of the world" and you—like, I remember very clearly being on Twitter and going, look. I come from people who don't die easy. And I think most people of color—

**Alba:** Hell yeah.

**Mack:** Can tell you, like...we came on boats. Whether it was in the bottom of them or to escape persecution.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** You know, whether it was a rowboat from Cuba. [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Yeah.

**Mack:** Or Haiti. Or the bottom of a slave ship. Or getting here and the Chinese Exclusion Act saying, you gotta go back. Like, people here don't die easy. Even, hell, I'm gonna say coal miners. Like, the poorest of poor people do not die easy. And I think that's what a lot of people identify within Buffy.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** It's you're seen, because you recognize, like, that strive to survive, no matter what.

**Alba:** No matter what. No matter what. I remember when Trump was elected in 2017—right? No. He was elected in 2016, but like—

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Went into office in 2017. Is that right? And I remember my boyfriend at the time—the same one that I was, like, "please don't touch me" after we saw Get Out. [laughs] Was like, so devastated. He's—he is white. So devastated that Trump was elected into office. And I was—I was upset, yeah, I was upset. But listen, my parents come from Latin America. I have seen shit, you know? So much shit. And I

exist right now because of things like that. I exist in the world because of coups that, like—that kind of happened and they tried—that they tried to do in the US. My family moved here from Chile because the US put people in power there, and then killed a fuck-ton of people. And the same thing happened in Venezuela and it's—anyway, I'm not gonna get into that right now.

But, like, my existence is that. And so, I know—like, I survived, we survived, we continue. We've continued to make a living, we've continued to thrive. Like, beside all circumstances, like, here I am, you know, on the podcast, talking about this. And my grandfather was disappeared by the fucking state in Venezuela by US, like, militia. So no, like, I'm not gonna die. I'm not gonna die easily. And that's what's so powerful about Buffy, is like, having—well, parts of it. You know, we critique it but we love it for certain reasons. And that's something that Buffy has, like—reminds me to keep fighting. And that there is...I can keep fighting. I have power. Even if I don't look like her.

**Mack:** Yeah. I mean, I fully agree with that. And I also think, a part that—to me, that folds into that survival is that, like, you don't have to be the same person you were at the beginning of whatever the struggle was. And you get to be lots of different people between whatever point and whatever point.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Which is something that doesn't often happen in TV shows. A lot of characters start one way and are that way the whole way through. Or they start one way and the—there isn't a lot of in-between, but they suddenly become, like, the opposite, whether it's good or bad. This was a show—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Where you saw the genesis of every character. And with the exception of a few, it was kind of like, alright, it's a little bumpy, but overall, we're gonna...be fine and accept you and roll with it. And I think that's part of survival.

**Alba:** It is part of survival. It's adaptation.

**Mack:** [simultaneously] Like, you know, you're a doctor in a foreign country. You get here, they won't take your medical license. Great. You open up a store.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Like, here in LA, something that's ubiquitous for us—if you've ever been to Los Angeles—is the pink doughnut boxes. And the proliferation of doughnut shops. And it's actually because it was one of the only things that—usually Vietnamese and Filipino, like, American citizens—it was the only business they were allowed to open. And there was, like, one place in, like, downtown LA, I think, that makes these pink boxes. And so it was representative of people who were doctors and lawyers and whatever, and the only thing they could do was bake doughnuts. Like, that was it, but like—

**Alba:** Mm. And we see those pink boxes in *Buffy*, all the time.

**Mack:** Exactly. And so it's like, they got—they are somebody else. Between point A and point B, they have been many people in order to survive. You know? So.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** I think, you know—

**Alba:** That's it.

**Mack:** That's also part of—part of the invisibility and visibility, if you will.

**Alba:** Yeah. And that kinda ties into the denial of, like, people of color's value, too, right? Is—I mean, we'll get more into it, because there's episodes that, like, really do talk more about that. But the denial that, you know, immigrants come here and they can't have the same jobs that they had, often, right? Like you were just talking about. I have a cousin that just came here and he was a doctor, and he cannot practice here. My grandfather was a teacher in Chile and he worked in a factory here. So what you see is systemic, and a lot of society and white people and media, like, put immigrants down, when they don't understand how much value they bring. And that here, they do the jobs so that we can live in luxury, right? Like, I can live in luxury so, like—and not that I have a cleaning lady, but if I did, that like, who else is gonna come clean my house? You know what I mean?

**Mack:** Yeah. Oh, there's also—so that actually ties into Jesse and Cordelia. So like—

**Alba:** Mm. Yeah!

**Mack:** People don't have value—

**Alba:** I see that too.

**Mack:** Until you have some sort of power.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Which I think ties into, like, the model minority myth too. [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Again, depending on where you are, there are recruitment—not recruitment quotas. But like, there's a lot of head-hunting at prestigious colleges for Asian or Asian-American kids, because they assume that they are going to be STEM geniuses who will bring them research money. They're not viable until there's power, and also, once they get to campus, boy, does the racism jump out.

**Alba:** Mm.

**Mack:** You know, black kids aren't super important unless you can put a ball through a hoop or an end zone. Right?

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Black folks don't have value to colleges until you can do something and make them that NCA money. Right? And so that's, like, the invisibility. As much as I, like...[laughs] don't like using white dudes as an example—

**Alba:** You know what would have been cool? You know what would have been, like, a cool character of color, if Oz had been a person of color.

**Mack:** Oh my god, a weird black boy? Yes. Like, we need those. [laughs]

**Alba:** That would have been so cool, man. Aw. In a band, playing bass.

**Mack:** Being, like, awkward and adorable.

**Alba:** And of course he can notice Willow, you know? Yeah. And of course he would notice Willow, 'cause like, who's that invisible girl who's, like, actually super hot? You know? [laughs]

**Mack:** Yeah, I love how we tried to pretend Alyson Hannigan wasn't attractive for, like, four seasons. Like, excuse me? [both laugh] That ugly sweater, not hiding

anything. [both laugh] But oh my god, that's actually brilliant. Oz as black. That needs to be a fanfiction.

**Alba:** Yeah, man!

**Mack:** Somebody get on that. I know somebody listening can do that for me.  
[laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah, or like, a weird Latino kid or an Afro-Latino kid. Or, like, a...like, any—like, literally—ugh, it'd just be cool.

**Mack:** It would be. And honestly, every time a show has tried, it has been terrible. So like, I don't think Joss Whedon could have messed it up any worse than anything else I've seen, [Alba laughs] to be honest.

**Alba:** Did you watch Runaways?

**Mack:** Runaway—oh wait, like, the comic book one?

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Yeah, I was obsessed. I was so upset when they cancelled that.

**Alba:** Yeah. That's—

**Mack:** That was great.

**Alba:** That's—that was good. See Runaways for a good example of children—treatment of people of color. Please.

**Mack:** Just a quick...the Runaways is currently-running Marvel comic book series. You can get the [INAUDIBLE], it's actually pretty great. It's set in Los Angeles. But before Disney bought Marvel and everything Marvel created, there was a run—a TV run—I think it was three seasons.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** And most of the kids are kids of color.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** One of them who actually is white in the comics, they made Latina. And it's super good. It's teenage superheroes, but like, in a realistic, like, this is what would actually happen if you had super powers and were a teenager—

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Kind of thing, so. Go read it. It's still running and definitely check out the show on Hulu.

**Alba:** Yeah. It's super good. And it's on Disney Plus now too.

**Mack:** Oh. Great. It's on Disney Plus, there you go.

**Alba:** Let's see. Is there anything else to talk about in denial of—

**Mack:** Killed by Death?

**Alba:** Our reality. Killed by Death. We talked a little bit about it. Like, they just gaslight her. So Killed by Death is the one where Buffy's in the hospital in Season 2 and it's—it's the Freddy Krueger episode.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** It's the Nightmare on Elm Street episode. That Kristin loved so much. [both laugh] Like, they don't wanna believe her. They just legit don't wanna believe her.

**Mack:** And like, it makes no sense.

**Alba:** Until there's proof.

**Mack:** And I think that's what, like, ties it into invisibility. Like, you could—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Like, if all of your previous experience with someone, [laughs] points to something. But you, like, magically don't believe them. I tie this to, you know, police violence.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** So...if we can, like, not count on our hands the number of, you know, black and brown people shot by cops, um, flagrantly?

**Alba:** [sighs] No.

**Mack:** Please explain to me why, every time it happens, we go, "that can't *possibly* be what happened," despite having video evidence. Right? It's that kind of thing. [laughs] So this is that very specific moment where it's like, if you just stop ignoring history and contextualize this very specific thing—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** It would actually—makes quite a bit of sense.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** So it's like that invisibility of lived experience.

**Alba:** It's just so...blatantly embedded in society, if you just look, you know? All you have to do is just look. And it's there. And I think that the gaslighting is, like, ridiculous. And Willow's always the only one who ever believes Buffy. You know, she's always like, "mmm..."

**Mack:** Because Willow's the best one out of all of them, let's be clear.

**Alba:** She is. [both laugh]

**Mack:** Like...

**Alba:** That episode of Doppelgangland when Xander's like, "She was truly the best of us." Or, like, Giles says, like, "She was truly the best of us" and Giles—and Xander's like, "Much better than me" and Giles is like, "Much, much better than you." [both laugh] When they think she's dead.

**Mack:** [simultaneously] No lies detected.

**Alba:** And yeah, like, again. Like, the fever—you can only see the monster if you have the fever and just like how racism is often only seen by the people who experience it. That's...the truth.

**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** You know? It's easier to see if you feel it. And sometimes it's even hard to see when you feel it, because microaggressions are hard to decipher. You know?

It's...and it's a lot. Because they happen all the time. Microaggressions happen all of the time. And I think in June, for me personally, at least—I don't know how it was for you, Mack. Maybe you were, like, more in tune with your own experiences. But I was, like, having all of these flashbacks to experiences that I'd had. And I was like, oh! That thing that felt off, that person was racist. You know? Over and over and over again.

**Mack:** Yeah, I definitely...I've definitely, like, had—so I've, like, learned to be very heavily, like, self-reflective. And so I often, like—okay, so if I've done all the thinking about it on my end, that means there's something else happening. And it is, like, one of, like, four things. Right? [laughs] And I sort of assume I'll figure out—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Which one it is eventually. [laughs]

**Alba:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Mack:** It's like, someone's being homophobic, someone's being racist, someone's being sexist. [laughs] Like...

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Someone's being ableist.

**Alba:** Exactly. And usually—

**Mack:** Those are the four. [laughs]

**Alba:** Like, for you and I...yeah. And for you and I, it's both, right? It's like, sexist and racist. So the sexism that we experience is always gonna be combined with racism, if it's coming from a white dude.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Like, always. Or a white woman, even. It's like, they're together. And it's very rare that, I think, that I experience one isolated from the other one, frankly. Because there's so much internalized racism, too. So. And I've acted shittily, too, to people of color. You know, I'm not gonna say that I haven't.



**Mack:** Yeah, I think we all do until, like, we—you know, you can't do better till you know better. That is not that quote—

**Alba:** Yeah, exactly.

**Mack:** But like, y'all know what I mean.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Yeah, and I think until a lot of us—honestly, I think a lot of us, until we get to college, which I think is unfortunate—like, that gatekeeping of that in-depth analysis—

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Thankfully, the internet's spreading that out. But I think for a lot of us millennials, until we got to college...[laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Sort of deciphering the ways in which internalized racism affected how we interacted with people was, like...it was impossible until we got to college.

**Alba:** Yeah, it was. It was—and it was hard to articulate. And I remember even talking about it with family members and saying, like, well, I wasn't given this opportunity. Like, my blonde, white friend was, like, cast as the lead in the play and not me, even though, like, I'm just as qualified and just as talented, because I'm not white. And family members were like, no, it's not that. Like, it's not that. And it's like, what do you mean? Of course it's that. But there's such a refusal also...of, I think, our older gener—I don't know. At least my family—to like, admit that. To just confront that issue of, like, we don't have control over everything. The system does impact us.

**Mack:** Yeah, I think it—I think it also sort of comes up partially in Buffy, too. Like, if you work hard enough...it'll be fine.

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

**Mack:** [laughs] And like, that's categorically false.

**Alba:** [simultaneously] No! [laughs]

**Mack:** Categorically false, right? [Alba laughs] And it's very much like you're saying, you know, in your family. Well, like, the Watchers' Council. Well, if you follow these rules, it'll be fine. *Clearly* not fine. [both laugh] You know?

**Alba:** If you follow these rules, you will surely die before the age of 21.

**Mack:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. It's that, right? It's the invisible...

**Alba:** And it is that. It is that.

**Mack:** Hand.

**Alba:** Because I think society also tells us, like, if you follow these rules, you will—it's almost like...I feel like...I've been asked to give away my life. You know? My work, my value. I've been asked to believe that the things that I do are not significant or worthy of whatever, acknowledgement, payment, anything. And only now, you know, at 27, am I like, whoa, whoa, hold up.

**Mack:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Alba:** Hooold up. [laughs] That person is not gonna look nearly as good without my support. That person is not gonna have those ideas without my support. My experience—my lived experience provides information that is so invaluable. And I was, like, being scammed into believing that it wasn't valuable.

**Mack:** Oh yeah, we're taught to be self-sacrificing. Like...

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Just like Buffy is, right? Like, you're gonna fight—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Until you *die*, alone, bleeding out somewhere.

**Alba:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Mack:** And you know—

**Alba:** And it's really weird that she's not alone and that she has friends helping her. That's *weird*.

**Mack:** Right?

**Alba:** That's *wrong*.

**Mack:** And like, they disapprove. And like, you know, the patriarchy—which is the, you know, Council. You know, is like, no, no, no, no. This is unacceptable. Right? And it's why people find it super uncomfortable—like, when we took it to the streets this past summer—that you had people of all races and colors going, let me tell you what we're not gonna do. Right? That challenged the patriarchy in an extremely uncomfortable way, because it wasn't people being self-sacrificing, going, "oh, that's just another dead black man." It was a whole bunch of people coming together, saying, heh, you thought. And like, people really hate it when I say this, and I say it all the time. You know, I was raised with the confidence of a mediocre white man. So like, whenever I hear people go, like—[Alba laughs] I was taught, to like—

**Alba:** Hell! Yes!

**Mack:** Not—

**Alba:** Yes!

**Mack:** When other people are always like, you know, I don't raise my hand and I don't say things. And I feel like, you know, imposter syndrome. And I'm like, yo. This is *not* how I was raised. [laughs] Like...

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** If I wanna say, I'm gonna say it.

**Alba:** I agree.

**Mack:** If I wanna do it, I'm gonna do it.

**Alba:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Mack:** I take up space when I walk in a room, because I was not taught any differently.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** [laughs] And that's just the most basic of white man.

**Alba:** Yes.

**Mack:** [laughs] Like, get taught that. So. [laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah. And that's how I was raised also. I was raised to take up space, I was raised to say my opinion. I was raised to raise my hand, you know? And I think a lot of that, you know, is me being myself in spaces and then feeling the backlash for that. It's not—it's not like walking into a space and not—feeling like I can't do it. It's like, I do it and then it's like, oh, shit. I guess I shouldn't have really done that. You know? Because then people are like, who the fuck is this girl, coming in here and, like, having an opinion? [laughs] Being smarter than me, you know? Articulating herself better, with a better vocabulary, or whatever. And—I don't know. I just have, like, a big fuck you to that right now, in this moment. Fuck you! [laughs]

**Mack:** I feel you on that. Like, I always tell people, like, honestly. I was a really nice little girl until the world made sure I wasn't. And so I just function with a lot of spite.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** So like, you wanna have feelings about me coming in a space? By all means.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** You feel froggy, leap. And we will work it out. [laughs] Like...

**Alba:** Yeah, man—

**Mack:** I will also say that I am also six feet tall. So I am very intimidating, so most people generally don't wanna try me after I've said my piece and been like, you got a problem? [both laugh] So like...

**Alba:** You—let's go! [laughs]

**Mack:** Yeah. So like, I'm not gonna pretend, like, you know, I'm five foot two and—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** It could be problems. Like, I am fairly intimidating. [laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah. Um, love that. Love that. I'm five foot six, but I can scrap.

**Mack:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Alba:** And I will scrap. [laughs]

**Mack:** The little ones are always scrappy, too. [both laugh]

**Alba:** I'm not that little. I'm super—I'm above average. Hey!

**Mack:** [laughs] I feel like we have this conversation on a regular basis about how you're, like, average sized. [both laugh]

**Alba:** I'm above average! I'm tall! [both laugh] I'm five foot six point five. [Mack laughs] I was just—my mom measured me over the break. [both laugh]

**Mack:** I'm sorry, you're how old and your mother measured how tall you were? [both laugh] Oh my god. [both laugh]

**Alba:** Alright. [laughs] Yeah. Let's move onto denial of existence. Ahh...and we've talked—we were just talking a bit about this, right?

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** So, like we said, it's all—it's all interchangeable. The thing that really stuck out to me when I was doing my rewatch of Season 1, and what sparked this entire conversation, was Marcy becoming invisible. And I was like, holy shit, this is the most race-relevant episode, actually.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Maybe in the series.

**Mack:** Because, like—because it's nothing about her that should make her less important than anybody else.

**Alba:** It's nothing about her.

**Mack:** It's literally the universe—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** In high school, like, that is your universe—that she's in that so devalues everything about her. And if that ain't being a person of color—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** Then I don't know what is.

**Alba:** It actually, like, physic—yeah. [laughs] I'm laughing, but literally, my body physically hurts.

**Mack:** Aw!

**Alba:** Like, I'm like...ugh. It just—it's like—the experience is so real, you know? The amount of times that, I think—I've walked into a room or been introduced to a friend of a friend. Or like, so many rich white dudes who have literally—will literally just, like, look over me. Like, just over me, you know? Or like, look at me, realize I'm not white, and then look away—is so—it's so—so many times. Or like, won't include me in conversation or just speak over me. It's so exhausting. You know? It's so exhausting, and it makes you believe that it's your fault. And I think that's, you know, why Marcy went crazy in *Out of Mind*, *Out of Sight*, because she thought it was something that she did. She thought it was something that she was doing, and she tried and she tried to be seen and tried to participate and was denied, over and over and over again, that participation in society. And that is just such a real experience.

**Mack:** And I always wonder if people truly understand. [laughs] Like, what it's like.

**Alba:** They don't. They don't. They really don't.

**Mack:** 'Cause I think some people are like, well, you know, I got passed over for someone who's better-looking. Okay, great. Guess what? You can get plastic surgery and straighten your hair or whatever. Black don't wash off. Like...[laughs]

**Alba:** No, your physical features—

**Mack:** Entrenched stereotypes about, like, Asian men being emascule [sic]. Those don't just go away.

**Alba:** Mmhmm. No, they don't go away.

**Mack:** But those are reasons why we're overlooked. Like...okay, this is my favorite weird thing that I know about. Feel free to judge me, everyone. It's fine. [both laugh]

**Alba:** 'Kay, I'm ready. I'm gonna judge you.

**Mack:** [laughs] So there's this very interesting dating community, slash book community. AMBW, Asian men, black women. It's a whole hot mess.

**Alba:** [laughing] Oh...

**Mack:** Do a deep dive on Tumblr one day if you just wanna lose your mind. But! [laughs] One of the interesting things that came from me doing a very deep and disturbing dive is an actual study that somebody did. First, it was just a dating site that did it and then actual researchers did it. [laughs] And the two groups of people who are least valued and least, like, picked and messaged on dating sites and are voted least desirable are Asian men, because of the stereotype that they're emascule [sic], and black women, because of the stereotype that they're aggressive. And I was like...so literally, scientifically—[laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah, that's it.

**Mack:** We are literally overlooked. Cool, cool, cool, cool, cool. [laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah. And also, just like, it's such an invalidation of our reality, right? Like, again. It's like, how are you not gonna be angry when things are unjust?

**Mack:** And it's—you know, it's interesting. There's always a conversation about the angry black woman and it being a terrible stereotype and one that we need to move away from, which, like, fine, fair and true. But also, like, we are angry. And we have good reason to be angry.

**Alba:** There's a lot of fucking reason to be angry, that's it. And it's like, just let people be angry about the things that have been done to them and the things that continue to be done to them, you know?

**Mack:** Look, we have entire franchises about white men being angry. Like...

**Alba:** Yeah! Yeah!

**Mack:** Like, how many Joker movies do we have, at this point?

**Alba:** [laughing] Oh my god.

**Mack:** [laughing] Like...

**Alba:** Because they didn't get laid. We will accept a man's anger for not getting laid more than a black woman for all of the racism that she has to go through.

**Mack:** Yup! [laughs]

**Alba:** The fuck? The Joker—I think somebody posted this. The Joker should be a black woman.

**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** I saw a meme—

**Mack:** That would make infinitely more sense.

**Alba:** I saw a meme. And that, like, she fucking kills people who tell her that she should smile more.

**Mack:** [whispers] God.

**Alba:** [laughing] And that's why she's the Joker.

**Mack:** Okay. On another sidebar, honestly, one of the best scenes ever. It's in, I think, the animated cartoon—though it might have been in a comic run—[laughing] Ivy and Harley are in a car together. And these dudes tell them to smile. And just both of them—

**Alba:** Oof!

**Mack:** Go off and it is one of the hilar—it's hilarious.

**Alba:** I love that.

**Mack:** Just—there should be—more villains should be women, frankly. [laughs] More villains should be women.

**Alba:** Yeah. I saw a really funny Tiktok too the other day of a woman who was like...made her, like, bitch face. Which was just like, not smiling, right? It's just not smiling. And then it's like, when a man is—has, like, a serious look on his face, he's,



like, thinking about something really important. He's having a really important thought. And when a woman has—is having a really important thought, she's a bitch.

**Mack:** Which, like, I'm fine with. Bitches get shit done. Like...[laughs]

**Alba:** Super fine with. Yeah, man, bitches do get shit done. And if you're intimidated by me being a bitch, like, you can just show yourself out.

**Mack:** Right? [laughs] It's like, you're telling on yourself. [laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** So like, back to the episode. I love our tangents. [laughs]

**Alba:** Back to the episode. Yeah. So great. Yeah, like, they—like, Marcy—and that's what we were just talking about. Like, Marcy's anger towards, like—you know, she can become a homicidal maniac because she's invisible. I don't know that I would do the same thing or that people of color would go the same route. But like, it's the same thing of her anger being justified. Of course she—she's so angry. Why would she not be?

**Mack:** Yeah, like, one of the base things that you need as a human is, like, acknowledgement and human contact. [laughing] Like...[both laugh] They do studies on babies about this.

**Alba:** [simultaneously] To survive, yeah.

**Mack:** And she's not getting it from anywhere.

**Alba:** Ugh, no, babies.

**Mack:** And I think the interesting parallel isn't necessarily Buffy, but I would say Willow, who also—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Not getting a lot of attention from all the places you would think she would, but she has the Scoobies.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** And yes, are they bonded in...you know...

**Alba:** Blood.

**Mack:** Grave soil and blood, but...[both laugh] you know. They are giving her that and Marcy doesn't have that.

**Alba:** Yeah, she has nothing. I think it would be really interesting if we had known more about Marcy's home life. Like, was she a foster kid? 'Cause that would add up.

**Mack:** I mean, I also think, just because it is Clea DuVall in the middle of, like, the 90s and 2000s, that she was also probably gay. Just because...

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** It's a Clea DuVall character. [laughs] Like...I think casting Clea DuVall might have been a very unsubtle, coded Joss message.

**Alba:** Mmm. Yeah, maybe.

**Mack:** As we discover with lots of shows from this era, as people are doing retrospectives and they're rebooting shows. They're going, oh yeah, we couldn't do it very explicitly, so we did this instead. But then, she also—she found her community with other people like her. Again...[laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Hell yeah. [both laugh] And that's the thing too, of like, people of color are not recruited by the fucking FBI to be spies.

**Mack:** I mean, COINTELPRO tells us otherwise. The American Indian Movement tells us otherwise. So in fact, there is a precedent—in fact. [laughs] For people of color being recruited. [laughs]

**Alba:** Okay, fair enough. You know what? I take that back. Because like you said, Nikki—like, people who have to survive will survive—will fucking survive.

**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** And they'll blend in. And, like, we had this conversation when we were talking about Anne, about how Buffy has never been good at undercover, because she's never had to be. But a person of color would be fucking great at undercover.

**Mack:** Yup!

**Alba:** Because you have to blend in. You have to be able to speak in the way that people around you are speaking, wherever you are. And dress accordingly, act accordingly, stand accordingly. So we're moving basically into denial of existence.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Oh, we—no, no. We are there. So Anne.

**Mack:** Anne is such a—it's such an episode! [laughs]

**Alba:** Ugh, yeah! [laughs]

**Mack:** I feel like we need to take a break and get a cocktail, but we're not gonna do that. [laughs]

**Alba:** Would be nice.

[AD BREAK]

**Mack:** Okay, first things first, is...she can cut and run.

**Alba:** Mm, she can.

**Mack:** Like, find me a person of color who can just cut and run.

**Alba:** No.

**Mack:** [laughing] Like...

**Alba:** I mean, people do it. They find a way to do it. Right? They do.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** But it's hard.

**Mack:** [simultaneously] But there's usually grave consequences.

**Alba:** Yeah. I was thinking about the episode and—like, in my rewatch. And the fact that Buffy—you were just saying this. Like, that she had enough money to leave. And enough information and background to be able to find an apartment, have a credit check, maybe, or like, get a job and be stable, in LA—like, wherever she was,

on her own, at sixteen, is a lot of privilege. And like, they make this comparison in this episode between her and Lily. And that she's just strong, you know? She's just stronger than Lily, like, emotionally and mentally. And it's like, yo, Lily has been surviving out here, for a minute. And Buffy, like, comes from a place and a background and a support system where she could thrive, even on her own. Because she knows A) she can always go back.

**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** And because she had enough information to do so, where Lily has been, like, on her own. And I just—I don't know. I have a hard time buying that she would have been so reliant on other people taking care of her. In order to survive.

**Mack:** It's unrealistic. So, like, that's...that is a, like, disadvantaged character being written by somebody who's never been disadvantaged.

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Yeah.

**Mack:** I think—were you the one who was telling me—like, when Gaby Dunn recently was talking about how, like, if Faith had been in Buffy's shoes—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, yeah.

**Mack:** And Buffy's mom had died, like, she would have had a plan.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** It's that sort of thing, where it's...Faith isn't written that way. But like, [laughs] notice. Faith is always fine. She lands on her feet, by herself.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Buffy gets caught by other people. And so this character—in writing another disadvantaged character, likes to pretend that, like, these characters need to be taken care of. And Buffy is, you know, the one taking care of them. It's very interesting. I think Gunn is written similarly.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Even though he's clearly in charge, he's still written as, like, needing Angel Investigations to, like, make him legit. Again, it's—

**Alba:** To validate him.

**Mack:** Yeah, his validation.

**Alba:** Fucking bull—it's that—it's exactly what we were just talking about. It's like, all of the work and planning and organization that Gunn did before he came to Angel Organizations—Angel Investigations, excuse me—is not valid until he is surrounded by a bunch of white people and doing it for a bunch of white people. And, like—

**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** Like, kinda quote-unquote, like, for the right reasons. You know? Which is, like, literal bullshit. It's not real. It's false. It's a very thin...fabrication. So then, like, this episode continues and continues. And, like, Ken says, kids come here and they have nothing to go home to. And there's no—again, like, there's no—I think in this episode, what's really missing is there's no, like, context of the system. It's just like...kids just show up here and they, like, die—they, like, go missing and die. And it's not—like, they go there to become invisible because the system allows it to happen that way.

**Mack:** Yeah. So...okay, I know we don't like copaganda shows. Whatever. I watched a lot of Law and Order: SVU, okay? And so, the—that wording, of they have nowhere else to go, they're invisible. That's used by sex traffickers, all of the time.

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** Usually when applied to kids of color, from any social class, or white kids in foster care or kids in foster care in general. Right? But we don't bring that context into the world of Buffy. And like, I live in LA. All of those things exist in Los Angeles, but we never bring it into real context. Because then we would actually have to be like, who is actually being sex trafficked? Because then it really would be a bunch of kids of color—

**Alba:** Mmm. Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Who are the throwaway kids. It would be kids—

**Alba:** [sighs]

**Mack:** You know, with drug problems. Why do they have drug problems? Because abuse. Why are a lot of them abused? Because they come from either direct family trauma or, yo, it's traumatic being a kid of color. You gotta cross through four gang territories to get to school when you're, like, eleven. The cops have roughed up your brother or you. [laughs] Like...

**Alba:** There's just not that many options.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** The system is—it's—you know, we use the word oppression, I think, so often and so casually. But we think about oppression, it's a feeling of claustrophobia. It's a feeling of, like, feeling so tight. And you have—you don't have that many places to go. You don't have that many places to turn or paths that you can take.

**Mack:** Exactly.

**Alba:** Literally. And you feel that. You, like, can physically feel it in your body, you know? And...I think that's why it's so important that we take up space. And we're taking up space, here in this conversation. Like, hey, we're here, we have opinions, we have a truth. And we're gonna talk about it.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** And people are gonna listen. You know?

**Mack:** Yeah, 'cause I mean, if we...if we wanna look at—not just Buffering. But I think if you look at any podcast—and there's several—about Buffy or The Vampire Diaries or any sort of pop culture, like, 99% of them are entirely white. And even the ones that people of color—almost all of them will say, it's quite literally because white people are not having these conversations or inviting folks to have these conversations. Or even have multi-ethnic or multi-racial hosts. Right? So, like—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Even, like, level of oppressions—like, even when we just wanna talk about some shit, we have to talk about it in the frame of...being the opposite of white people.

**Alba:** Yeah. It's still just non-norm...

**Mack:** [simultaneously] 'Cause, like, I would love to just talk about fucking Bonnie on The Vampire Diaries, but we also have to talk about, like, why Damon as the bad guy is, like, [laughs] super hot and worthy. [Alba laughs] And I can't name a single black guy who's the bad guy on a TV show that we are all obsessed with.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Same with Spike.

**Alba:** [simultaneously] Ain't. That. The. Truth.

**Mack:** We love him, but like, can't think of a single black guy. [laughs] That has the same...

**Alba:** No. That's a great—you know, I'm gonna think about that for the next few days. I'm gonna think about if I've ever seen...oh. I mean...okay, not on a TV show. The Black Panther, but that was on purpose.

**Mack:** Oh, but that's also just Michael B. Jordan. Like...[laughs]

**Alba:** I know, but he's so hot! Ah! [both laugh]

**Mack:** [laughing] Like...like, nobody—he could never speak a word. [laughing] And we would all be like, yep! [laughs]

**Alba:** He literally doesn't need to speak a word. Does not need to speak any words, none. But, like, it's great when he does, though.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** But like, also just doesn't. But—anyway.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** That was great. That was fucking great. That was wonderful. [both laugh]

**Mack:** But yeah, it's just—it's one of those things. Yeah, where you just—you go, okay. Everything we do is in opposition, 'cause, like, you know, we talk about Willow. On this show.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** I don't think anyone ever talks about Bonnie from The Vampire Diaries, in the same way we talk about Willow.

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** Even though their power levels are analogous, to be quite honest. [laughs] And note—you know, spoiler—

**Alba:** Mmm. I haven't seen it, so—

**Mack:** Bonnie doesn't go super evil—

**Alba:** Yeah, don't—

**Mack:** And try to end the world. [both laugh] Like...

**Alba:** I think about that too, like, Willow goes and is like, I'm gonna end all the pain for everyone. Because I can.

**Mack:** It's the school shooter theory.

**Alba:** Yeah, it—

**Mack:** So white men—and some women, but mostly men. They are raised to believe that their problems are the world's problems. Whereas people of color are taught that when things are wrong, it's something inherent about themselves, which is why they drink themselves to death. They do drugs, et cetera. Same thing with women, they destroy themselves. [laughs]

**Alba:** That's it. That's literally it. That is—that's it. That's the biggest difference, is that you are taught that it is—when you're a person of color, you're taught that it is you. You are the problem. And you're not the problem. You're not the problem. They're the problem! [laughs] You know? And it's a lot—it takes a lot to truly believe that. And I'm still working on it, personally. I think about, like, so many times in my life where I've come out and been like, oh, I did something wrong. I was inappropriate, I'm not likable, or whatever. And, like, only more recent, I'm like, nah. [laughing] They're just racist.

**Mack:** [laughs] Hashtag they are racist. And I think that's, like, a very universal experience. Where, like, people will tell you that, like, you are wrong, you are too aggressive. You are not ladylike enough, you are, you know, too sexy, which is what a lot of my Latina friends get.



**Alba:** Mm.

**Mack:** And even a lot of my Asian friends get.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** [laughs] Like, I'm like, I'm sorry? [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Are you telling an adult woman, uh, with a job wearing business clothes that is she too sexy? Excuse you? Like, so that's very accurate. And even—

**Alba:** It's a problem.

**Mack:** In-world, there is something inherently wrong with Kendra. No, there isn't.

**Alba:** There's nothing wrong with her.

**Mack:** There's something inherently wrong with Kennedy and everyone hates her. No, there isn't. She's just not—

**Alba:** No.

**Mack:** The white girl, Tara, that we all want.

**Alba:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Mack:** And my favorite, Faith—who is our stand-in for a black woman.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** There's nothing inherently wrong with her. She's, what?

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Sixteen when she shows up? There's nothing wrong with her. She just is a survivor. But she's taught that she is wrong and she is bad. Kennedy—

**Alba:** She's had to survive.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** She's been in circumstances where she was forced to survive. And she's shamed for having been in those circumstances, and that's it. It's like, being shamed for the places where society puts you and you doing what you have to do to get through it.

**Mack:** Yeah. Same thing with Kendra. Kendra did her job. She was alone—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Had a Watcher, was taught how to be a Slayer.

**Alba:** Why did her Watcher come to Sunnydale?

**Mack:** Because she's black. Like, I swear to god, no fucking supervision. [Alba laughs] Like, no fucking supervision. Same thing with, like, Kennedy. It's like, I'm sorry, she is a Potential. She showed up. She did her job. She was the queer one. She connected with Willow—like, she was put in a situation she didn't ask for.

**Alba:** And she's super hot.

**Mack:** She really is. She's just literally not Tara. [laughs] Like, that is literally what it is.

**Alba:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Mack:** And she's made to be unlikable. Just like Kendra is. Just like Faith is.

**Alba:** Mmhmm, just like Rona.

**Mack:** Exactly.

**Alba:** Yeah. Just like Forrest. Just like—

**Mack:** [sighs] Oh! Forrest. [laughs] Forrest.

**Alba:** We'll save the conversation—we'll talk about this—we'll, you know, we'll talk about this another time. To get back to Anne—let's come back.

**Mack:** [laughs] Bring it back.

**Alba:** [laughs] Let's bring it back, let's reel it in. You know, all these kids are taken off the street. And we kinda—you know. We talked about this a bit, but to kinda just, like, tie it into the point, is that these kids are taken off the street, because they are invisible to society. And they are forced to work, as slaves—like, brainwashed into believing that they are no one, to benefit we don't even know who, until they literally shrivel up and die. And then they are spit back out, because they're no longer wanted and because they can't work anymore. I'm sorry. Please...just like, do I even need to say it? Clearly. Like—

**Mack:** I mean, I will say it. That is the school to prison pipeline. That is sex trafficking. That is every way in which we take kids of color—or I will even say working-class kids—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** And tell them that they are nothing and that there is nowhere that they can go. And then when they end up in jail—usually on some trumped up charge, I'd like to point out...[laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** We get really surprised when they come back out and they commit crime. Well, you didn't really give them a lot of options.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Like, you know, as someone who taught at middle schools in mostly underserved communities, and I look at what those middle schoolers were learning versus what I learned? I was like, you're setting these kids up for failure. One hundred percent.

**Alba:** Yeah, one hundred percent.

**Mack:** Anyway. Buffy goes, "something's wrong here." [Alba laughs] And then she white-woman's her way to the front. [Alba laughs] She tries to quite literally white-savior the situation. She tries going super stealth, but she is *terrible* at going undercover. So she quite literally kicks her way in, gets herself captured because, per usual, she doesn't have a plan other than to kick her way in. She is the only one who remembers who she is and her name. And she is the one that has the strength to remember and to quite literally white-savior all of the other people who have been stripped of their identity and disappeared.

**Alba:** Mm.

**Mack:** The problem with that being, there has not been a single revolution in which it is a sole, deeply empowered, stronger-than-everyone-else white woman who has saved the day. [Alba laughs] The implication that any of these—[laughs] like, honestly. Like, Buffy doesn't have the resiliency to do that, because she's never had to survive. While Lily, who's had to survive, realistically would in fact be the one to remember who she is, to be able to survive—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** And hold onto her identity, because that's what you have to do in order to survive.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Again, it's my Faith argument. Faith never stopped being Faith, because Faith knows who she is, at her core, and has had to maintain that in order to survive. This entire bit is Buffy saving people who, in reality, would save themselves. [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Yeah.

**Mack:** That is—that is it. [laughs]

**Alba:** And also, like, Buffy has had to survive. You know, obviously, like, we've seen her fight to survive and we've seen her die and come back, at this point, once. She has had to fight to survive, under a very different circumstance.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Under a circumstance of a lot of support, a lot of privilege, a lot of safety. I mean, you know, in—obviously, she's been unsafe because, you know, demons, vampires, the Hellmouth. But not the kind of un—like, instability, I guess, that these street kids have had to come from.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** The type of unsafe that they have experienced.

**Mack:** Yeah, exactly.

**Alba:** Cool. So our last point of—denial of value. Which we have talked about a lot. But the episodes that are—I think really tackle this are Checkpoint and Helpless—

**Mack:** Yes.

**Alba:** The Replacement and Lies My Parents Told Me. You know, you said it earlier and I just completely agree with you that the Watchers' Council is just the perfect example for white supremacy. And like, why—they—two times, in two episodes—come in and say, we're gonna test whether or not your value is accurate. [laughs] Not only that, we're gonna strip you of everything that you have to make you powerful and see if you can still succeed. What the actual fuck? [laughs]

**Mack:** That's quite literally what Angel does. Like, Angelus. [laughs] Like, when you're doing what the evil vampire does, I think we should think about our choices. [both laugh]

**Alba:** But that—they're the same! Angel is an evil white dude. That's how evil white people act.

**Mack:** Yup. I mean, it's kind of like...almost any, like, workplace that you've ever been to, especially like, big ones—

**Alba:** Mm. [laughs]

**Mack:** Somehow, it's always, like, someone who got hired 'cause they knew a manager—somehow becomes a manager and gets to, like, question—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** The, like, five people of color and/or women who work there. [laughs] And they're like, "I expect you to achieve what I have achieved in the exact way I have achieved it. And like, if you can't, you need to go." And it's like, buddy. [laughs]

**Alba:** Context! Yeah, that's not how it works.

**Mack:** I mean, it's also the college experience for a lot of people of color. So like, you're taken from, often, communal—so like, not to cast wide nets. But like, most cultures that are not WASP-y—White Anglo-Saxon Protestant—are very communal. It's, like, you know, multiple generations living in houses. You know, your babysitter is your cousin or your auntie or whatever. Like, there's a lot of community care within the family and the wider community. And then you get to college and it is designed for and by white people, who really are, like, independent.

You are in college, the most important thing is you studying. The most important thing is you doing research. The most important thing is that you will get through this by yourself, and then find a person and the two of you will spawn a human and you will take care of that human. [Alba laughs] Just saying. And it's very hard. Like, that's impossible when you come from a communal place.

**Alba:** Mm.

**Mack:** Because, like, you know that—you know, my favorite example is you know that, like, that Uber ride to, like, that unnecessary class field trip is somebody else back home's, like, bus fare for a month. Buffy and the Scoobies are a communal thing that keep each other alive. And the Watchers' Council is like, nope. We designed this so you must die. [laughs] And you're not dying. [laughs]

**Alba:** What the fuck. [both laugh]

**Mack:** Right?

**Alba:** Like, in Checkpoint, they—I mean, it was such an infuriating episode to watch. And I remember when Kristin and Jenny did the—did the episode for it, they were also infuriated. If there was ever a place for the White Supremacy jingle, it is here. Now. Like, the whole episode should have just been the fucking White Supremacy jingle. They come in. They shut down Giles's store to like, verify that it's up to snuff or whatever. They tell Buffy that they wanna make sure that her methods are good enough to handle the information that they're gonna give her. Because if they don't verify it, then, like, she can't be capable of handling the information. Which, what are they gonna do with that information anyway? I mean, luck—like, luckily she figures it out and she's like, oh, y'all are just fucking sad and alone and have nothing to do. And so you're blackmailing me into, like—you're gaslighting me into thinking that I don't have power in this situation, which is literally false. And that's exactly what I was talking about earlier.

**Mack:** I think it actually ties all the way back to what you were saying of, like, people of color constantly being told that they are, like, not enough and that there's something wrong with them. And like—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Not learning from experience.

**Alba:** Yeah, and that also, like, ties into Xander's, like, understanding of himself in The Replacement. Like, the Xander that we follow, that we think is the real Xander.

And his insecurity that the other Xander is better than him and should have his life and can live it better. Like, isn't—that's such a real feeling, that I'll never be good enough.

**Mack:** Yeah, and I think it's—and, you know, again, like, I always—I have to remind people that, like, Xander is the Joss Whedon insert. But like, Xander handles it—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** In the same way that, like, most people of color would handle it. His friends go, I'ma smack you upside the head and be like, get your life together. [laughs] Like...which I think is quite interesting. Right? [Alba laughs] Which just tells that Joss has none of those people in his life—

**Alba:** Mm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** Considering his behavior. But his stand-in...[both laugh] has the right people, who are like—

**Alba:** Ooh-eee...

**Mack:** Buddy. Get it together. [laughs]

**Alba:** Yeah. And it makes me sad to see—like, watching it through this lens this time. Like, knowing that it was gonna be an issue, knowing that this was gonna be the topic. But watching Buffy think that wasn't valuable and watching her doubt herself and watching her think that she had to work harder, that she had to prove something. It was just so relatable, as a person of color, in so many situations where I, like—I'm trying to fight the impulse to prove myself. Constantly. [laughs]

**Mack:** Yeah, I, like...again, like, vastly different upbringings, different places. I have definitely been, like, the cut off your nose to spite your face girl, most of my life. [laughs]

**Alba:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Mack:** So actually, it was another friend who watched it who, like, had that experience of—

**Alba:** Mm.

**Mack:** Perpetually trying to prove themselves. 'Cause I've always been like, I am here. I did the thing. If you would like more, well then, you should have asked for that.

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** So for me, it was actually really eye-opening. And I think it's partially class as well. It's like, an intersection of race and class.

**Alba:** Mmhmm, for sure.

**Mack:** 'Cause I...you know, was—you know, still live in and was raised in, like, a nicer part of Los Angeles. Well, a more affluent part of Los Angeles. And so, like, the concept of proving oneself, like...[laughs]

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** Wasn't something instilled in us very much. Like, oh, you did the work, great. Obviously, there were situations in which people tried to impose that, but like, again, that confidence of a mediocre white man. It went right over my head that that was something that, like, they were requesting of me. [both laugh]

**Alba:** And, like, also in this episode, her fucking history professor dude, who, like, is not down to hear her perspective or her input on what could have been happening with—it's Rasputin, I think, right?

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** That they're talking about? It's just, like, so infuriating to watch. But he just, like, dismisses anything she has to say. Like, laughs her out of the room and humiliates her for having a different opinion. He's like, "Some of us are here to study *history*. Like, it's called studying history." And it's like, yo. [laughs] Whose history?

**Mack:** Not even whose history. Who translated this history? Who took down this history? Because I would like to remind everybody that many books of the bible and lots of old-timey stories were translated by monks, who were historically extremely conservative and—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.



**Mack:** And squeamish when it comes to sex and violence. Just putting it out there. So like, whose history? Who translated that history? Because even if accurate history was conveyed, who translated it from whatever archaic Latin it was into English, right? You know, we learn more and more constantly—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** Like, as people are dying, and first-person narratives through letters—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Are becoming public, we're learning that a lot of—you know, like, we had a whole gay president. Did I know that? Yes. Did most people know that? No. But like, it's now becoming clear. Or even, you know...Malcolm X.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** Most people don't know that he was a hustler, but like...and by hustler, no, I don't mean rich white ladies were paying him. I mean, he had sex with dudes for money. [laughs] Most people don't know that.

**Alba:** Mmm.

**Mack:** Even more, like, people—the history of him is like, he's super anti-white people and blah-blah-blah. He also had, like, a long-term relationship with a white man. So like...[laughs] so like, whose history? Who's telling the history? Because both of those things—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** Are two things that are not in the autobiography of Malcolm X. They are not in the movie about his life. [laughs] But they're factual things that have been confirmed.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** You know? So I—that—that's sort of what comes to mind with the history professor. Where I'm just like, [laughs] what? Like, history is not static, as much as we would like it to be.

**Alba:** I think he needs to go study his history.

**Mack:** Well, even, like, Kris—

**Alba:** He needs to go educate himself, sir.

**Mack:** Well, even, like, things that we know, that we think we know—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** So like...there's a famous picture of the Nazis burning books, right? It's famous, it's in every fucking history book. What they don't tell you is that those books were at...it was—I forget the long—it's a very long name in German. But basically, it was an institute that studied sexuality and a lot of those books were about trans folks' experiences. It was documenting some of the first gender reassignment surgeries and hormone therapy and queer identities that they burned. Those histories are gone, those were the only copies. They erased those people and their existence off the face of the planet. They never tell you that about that picture.

**Alba:** Yeah. And in the episode, Giles is the only one who really calls out—I mean, not the only one. But he calls it out. He says, like, she fails if you don't—if she doesn't do whatever you say. And that's it, right? That's just, like, such an allegory for the reality of, like, women, for sure. Women of color, even more. People of color, one hundred percent. That society tells you if you don't follow the rules exactly, then you will fail. Like, you will be punished. And many, many, many people are punished by society.

**Mack:** Oh, yeah.

**Alba:** When they don't even have an option not to.

**Mack:** Whether you're, you know, a professor with a PhD—

**Alba:** Yeah. And they've—

**Mack:** Or you're an Around the Way Girl, no one cares. Like, you will be punished.  
[laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** You're either too uppity with that degree—

**Alba:** Mmhmm, mmhmm.

**Mack:** Or if you don't have one, you're, like, ratchet and low-class.

**Alba:** Yeah. I mean, luckily, Buffy realizes and she, like, realizes how much power she has. And how much power they *don't* have, and that's why they're making her feel like she doesn't have power. And that's another just clear metaphor for what—this experience and what I was talking about earlier of like, holy shit. My experience, my education, my background, the culture that I've experienced, the diversity, is so fucking valuable. Monetarily valuable, to myself, to others. To anything that I touch—will increase in value. And it took me so long to even get here. You know?

**Mack:** Yeah, because of the rules that were—

**Alba:** [simultaneously] It's very hard to realize.

**Mack:** Impressed upon you by patriarchy and white supremacy and, like...that is Buffy moving from, like, her own value being invisible to herself—like, not just her power being invisible to the Watchers' Council. But her own power being invisible to herself—to moving to a place where she's like, no, no, no, no.

**Alba:** Mmhmm. Yeah. That's it. Yeah, to all the people of color—black, indigenous, people of color listening to this episode, you are so valuable. You are so worthy. And you can—like, you can monetize that if you want to. [laughs]

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** And if you don't want to, also respect. But like...

**Mack:** Yeah, look, if what you wanna do is, like, tell stories and raise kids, guess what? That is every bit as valuable as, like, wanting to get a PhD and teach on, like, a wider level. If what you wanna be is cook [INAUDIBLE] street corner academics, if you wanna drop your knowledge via, like, pissy tweets and Instagram posts, that's every bit as valid as getting a degree. If, like, your way of expressing your life and your choices is making traditional jewelry or passing on stories or passing on stories through food. Whatever it is, like, who you are, you are valuable. You don't have to prove that to anybody.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** You don't have to reach anyone's benchmark.

**Alba:** No.

**Mack:** And like, that's what the world teaches you. Like, here is the, like, status that we've—we have, as white people, like—have like, created. And here's where, like, they expect us to reach. You ain't gotta do any of that. If all you do today is breathe, you're good.

**Alba:** Yeah. And never think that someone is better off without your work, because they will suffer without it.

**Mack:** Mmhmm.

**Alba:** They need you. Lies My Parents Told Me, real fucking interesting episode. I really loved it, actually. I hadn't watched it in years, 'cause I was like, no, that's like a sad, scary episode. And I watched it, like, now, as an adult who's been through therapy, and I was like, holy shit! This episode's fucking amazing! [both laugh]

**Mack:** We never watch Angelus murder a Slayer. Ever. And he's generally implied to be the one that we're supposed to, like...[laughs] but—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** What I find interesting is that Nikki Wood goes toe-to-toe with Spike, every step of the way. And that's what I find interesting.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** So whenever Angelus is going after somebody, even Buffy, she's at a disadvantage. Because...she loves him. You know, when he's going toe-to-toe with—I think he goes toe-to-toe with Spike at least once. Like, there's always a bit of disadvantage. This is the only character I've seen go tit for that, like, you know, punch for punch with Spike. And there's something about that that I think was so empowering in an episode that was so painful otherwise. [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmm...

**Mack:** It's like, you know, Buffy had to literally be, like, on her knees with, like, a sword pointed at her for her to find, like, the ability to fight back. Like, we meet Nikki Wood who's a mother with a kid, with everything to lose, with Spike at his prime. And like, again, she doesn't die easy. And like, there's just something about that in the midst of this, like, horrible episode. [laughs]

**Alba:** She doesn't. She doesn't back down.

**Mack:** At all.

**Alba:** And I think—this is, like, an interesting thing again that happens, where her value as a mother is invalidated by Spike. Because she had a job to do, because she had a mission, and that somehow makes her less of a mother. And I think that's really common for working moms, that society tells you that you're not a good mother because you have a career that you need to pursue. And literally, Nikki has to save the fucking world.

**Mack:** Mmhmm.

**Alba:** That doesn't mean that she didn't love Robin any less. You know? And we look at the situation. We look at Spike's mom, living in this, like, beautiful house, rich, dying. Caring, quote-unquote, for her son. I don't, like—what—I don't even know what we wanna leave with that relationship. But obviously, not the healthiest one, you know? Not, like—not a real example—I mean. We don't really see a clear example of, like, motherhood in either of them. But Nikki didn't have the opportunity.

**Mack:** Like, the Watchers' Council kind of comes in and goes, this is your life now.

**Alba:** And we—that doesn't mean that she wasn't a good mother. And—we just didn't see it. Because that's— isn't that the case, of so much labor, of black women—is that we just don't see it. Doesn't mean it wasn't done.

**Mack:** Yeah. And like, you know, even as part of Spike's backstory. We actually know more about his mother than we do about Nikki, who's in fact, Wood—who becomes, like, basically a main character's mother. We don't know anything about her. We don't know a whole lot about Wood, either.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** You know.

**Alba:** And also something that stuck out to me a lot was Spike had the power and the privilege to save his mother from death. Like, he had to kill her 'cause he couldn't live with what he ended up creating or, like, what he ended up being faced with. He couldn't deal with it, so he killed her. But Robin couldn't save his mom, because he didn't have any power to. He was a tiny little baby, and he couldn't

save her from Spike. You know? But Spike could save his mother from the illness that she was faced with.

**Mack:** Yeah. And I think what's most interesting too is again, also, Wood is somewhat punished for that. Because Wood comes in and what it's made him is hard and angry. [laughs]

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** And not like, yes, I'm willing to follow the mantle of this girl—

**Alba:** [simultaneously] Rightfully so.

**Mack:** Who is, like, half of my age. And it's something that we're uncomfortable with, right? Like, abandonment and that sort of thing. It's supposed to make you either self-sacrificing or, like, a super broken person that we can save and pity. And we don't think about the fact that, like, the trauma of loss and also, probably the trauma of watching his mom fight Spike on a regular basis. It can make you hard and angry and mean and that's okay. But we are so uncomfortable with that, in general—

**Alba:** That's really okay.

**Mack:** And especially coming from people of color—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** And especially in this universe.

**Alba:** And especially when it goes against what Buffy wants.

**Mack:** [sighs]

**Alba:** We missed, like—well, one point kind of in relation to Lies My Parents Told Me. Not only, like, is her work—Nikki's work as a mother—just not validated. But also, like, that idea that black and indigenous people cannot be good parents, often, is like—that's generally the case. And like, people of color, but there's different—again—degrees to that. But especially black and indigenous people are not permitted, even, to be good parents. And often, in Canada, not permitted to be parents at all. Fifty percent of kids in foster care are indigenous, when indigenous people make up something like—I don't wanna get this statistic wrong now. Not more than fifteen percent of the population.

**Mack:** Oh. Similar here. There's a huge conversation—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Especially in the midwest, where a lot of our indigenous people were pushed onto reservations. You know, you'll take a kid, because their family doesn't have running water, and then you'll give their foster parent \$40,000 a year—

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** In money and food stamps and help—

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** When you could in fact just give that money to the parents—

**Alba:** To care for the child. It's so fucked up.

**Mack:** Yeah, or even just—you know, it's also about culture, too.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** It's like, okay.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** No, they're not living in a house with, you know, heat, but like, pioneers live that way. Like, it's not gonna—it's not great, but it's not gonna kill them. They're still getting to school, they're still—just, this home doesn't meet sort of like a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant level of, like—

**Alba:** It's just—

**Mack:** This is what it means to live.

**Alba:** Yeah. It's just another method of assimilation. It's another method of—you know, they don't have the residential schools anymore.

**Mack:** Oof.

**Alba:** But they have the foster care system.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** So...it's the same thing. And in this episode, I mean, Robin goes to live with his Watch—Robin...Robin goes to live with Nikki's Watcher. We don't know who the Watcher is or how he was raised or whatever. But...

**Mack:** It's safe to extrapolate that it's a white dude.

**Alba:** [simultaneously] He was not allowed to be—yeah, exactly.

**Mack:** [laughs] A white dude with money. Probably British.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** Well, because, again—my favorite character. I will keep saying that. Juxtapose Faith and Wood.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** The one who had to survive—

**Alba:** Buffy, with—yeah.

**Mack:** On her own, who is our stand-in for black women.

**Alba:** Yeah.

**Mack:** And the black guy who was definitely raised by white people. Who is more easily and quickly accepted.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** How does he get to be principal and she gets to be a con? A convict.

**Alba:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Mack:** It's proximity to whiteness.

**Alba:** Absolutely. Yes. That's it. Yeah, proximity to whiteness is so fucking important. It makes a huge difference—



**Mack:** Yep.

**Alba:** In, like, your life and privilege that you will have. Like, it just does. Proximity to whiteness makes—is just—changes the game.

**Mack:** The struggle's real.

**Alba:** And we can get into that another time. I think.

**Mack:** Yeah.

**Alba:** Maybe in the Instagram live. [both laugh] So we have an Instagram live, that we will be, like, answering questions about this episode, on the 23rd.

**Mack:** 23rd.

**Alba:** Of January. Mack put some articles up related to this episode, to our discussion, that people can go read. And it's basically, like, suggested reading.

**Mack:** Suggested reading, yes.

**Alba:** I think you can submit questions to us on the Buffering page—

**Mack:** [simultaneously] Yes, I believe that there's a way to submit—

**Alba:** Slash InvisiBIPOC.

**Mack:** Yes, I think there's a way to submit questions, potentially on the website, but I also know, like, email's an option. And I know during the live, somebody will be looking at, like, the stream. And will potentially be able to catch questions there.

**Alba:** Mmhmm.

**Mack:** It will not be us watching the stream, because we have to talk. And my brain can't do both of those things.

**Alba:** [laughs] No. Gotta focus. Yeah. So we hope that you enjoyed it. If we missed anything, message us. We can discuss it in the Instagram live, super down to do that. And like, really super excited to see everybody there. Please, you know, join us. I can't remember the time that it's gonna be at, but it should be—it'll be in a post on Buffering. Maybe in the show notes here, also. And, um...yeah. Thanks so much for joining us.

**Mack:** Thanks! I'll talk to you next time.

**Alba:** Thank you, Mack, also.

**Mack:** [laughs] Thank you. It's always fun.

**Alba:** Sounds good! Okay, bye! [laughs]

**Mack:** Bye!

[CHIME]