

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 7.13: The Killer in Me

[CHIME]

Kristin: Oh hey there, Scoobies. It's me, Kristin, speaking before Jenny because Jenny's not here. As of this recording, she's in Los Angeles, about to play her last show on the west coast with friend of the pod, Hrishi Hirway. And then she'll be back, but for now, I'm up in the intro, all alone. Sometimes it's really fun when that happens. Who knows—I have no idea. I didn't even write anything down on paper. I'm just here, talking about my feelings. I've been given free license to do whatever I like.

First of all, we have not one, not two, but three live shows coming up in this, the back half of the final season of Buffering the Vampire Slayer. On June 11th, we will be in Philadelphia, doing a live taping of Storyteller. Did I buy a camcorder to make a video while we're doing the live recording? Yes, in fact, I did. At World Cafe Live. In July, on the 23rd and the 24th—two nights, that's right—it's a Dirty Girls weekend in Chicago, at Lincoln Hall. We will be doing a live taping of the episode Dirty Girls on Sunday. And on the Saturday that precedes it, we'll be doing a Buffy and Faith variety show, including first-time ever live performance by Jenny Owen Youngs and Jess Abbott, playing the roles of Buffy and Faith, singing Bad Girls, singing Faith, Hope and Trick, singing the maybe already written—probably definitely already written—Dirty Girls and some other fun stuff. Will Jenny and I do the PowerPoint again, explaining what happened in the missing hours between the vampire nest and dancing at The Bronze in Bad Girls? Yeah. We will.

And of course, on September 17th and 18th, we'll be in New York City, at Brooklyn's Bell House, doing our very last taping ever. It is sold out, but we will be adding a virtual option for those of you who did not get tickets and for those of you who just are too far away to be there in person. But save the date on the 17th and the 18th. The 17th, Jenny's gonna play our favorite Buffering songs with a full band for the first time ever. And on Sunday, we're gonna tape a little episode known as Chosen. You can find all of the information—and there are still tickets to the Saturday night of Chicago's weekend and to Storyteller in Philadelphia. Not too many, just a few. So if you want them, scoop 'em up.

Alright, now Jenny always does the Sexual Tension Award winners, but she's not here! Ha-ha-ha! So I will tell you the winners. From Season 7, Episode 12, Potential. Alright, I mean, this was a sweep, a full sweep, as well it should have been. In fourth place, Amanda and That Guy—which was the guy whose shins Amanda kicked, I believe?—only came in at 3%. I think That Guy was probably

lobbying against getting kicked in the shins anymore, so. At least someone won in this loss. [laughs] Ten percent of the vote to our third place pairing, Dawn and Amanda, taking a little walk on the sidewalk and bumpin' into each other. In second place, Buffy and Spike. Spike's little belly. Just a little graveyard tumble. They got 15%. That's *low* for Spuffy, but you wanna know why? It's because somebody else was in that graveyard, watching them feel attracted to each other. And her name was Rona, and she said, "That's hot," and then she licked her lips. And for those actions, she won. With 72% of the vote, it is Rona and Spuffy. And you know what, Rona, I'm mailing you all three trophies, because man, that was good.

And before we get into The Killer in Me—oh my god, what a jaunt of an episode. I should tell you that today's song is sung from the perspective of one Willow Rosenberg, voiced by our Willow, Bess Rogers. So get excited for that. Or, I don't know, get a box of tissues out. It's really sad. But thank you, as always, to Bess for being—oh my gosh—just the absolute best voice of Willow that anyone could have ever hoped for.

I have one quick email before we roll into the episode. Ava wrote to us. The title is "bunsen burners." [laughing] We had a long conversation about how perhaps eighth graders should not be left alone with bunsen burners. Here's an example of why. Ava says, "Okay, so this isn't lighting a cigarette with a bunsen burner. However, in eighth grade physical science, we did an experiment with cotton balls and different chemicals, where we soaked the cotton in a chemical and then [laughing] lit it on fire using the bunsen burner. Each chemical made a different colored flame. Cool! After we lit it, we were supposed to drop the cotton ball in the sink and do the next one. Usually, the cotton balls would drip chemicals on the counter [laughs] on the way to the sink. At one point, our lab group held the flaming cotton ball too close to the drips of something on the counter and lit the whole counter on fire. Like, fully on fire. In literal seconds, our lab table was flaming. Luckily, the table itself wasn't flammable, but it did happen to be covered in very flammable liquid. We ended up putting the fire out with our water bottles, but in conclusion, we definitely shouldn't have been using them in eighth grade." [laughs]

My favorite part of this story is not the cotton balls. It's not the big fire. It's the image of a bunch of eighth graders all squirting their water bottles on the fire that they have caused in a classroom, doing exactly as they were instructed by the physical science teacher. [laughs] Anyway! Let's go light this episode on fire, shall we? Onwards, forwards, upwards, through-wards? To The Killer in Me.

[Buffering theme plays]

Jenny: Oh! Hello. And welcome to Buffering the Vampire Slayer, a podcast where we are watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler free, in tandem with the only two gals I'd definitely never cast [Kristin laughs] a penance malediction upon—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Nice. Nice!

Jenny: Angel on Top! [Kristin laughs] I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: And I am Kristin Russo, and this week, we are talking about Buffy, Season 7, Episode 13—lucky thirteen!—The Killer in Me. Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song, written by Jenny, recapping the Buffy episode we are discussing.

Jenny: The Killer in Me was written by Drew Z. Greenberg, directed by David Solomon, and originally aired on February 4th, 2003.

Kristin: Honestly, fantastic fucking job, Drew Z. Greenberg, in my opinion. I think that this a—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: And I know I didn't finish the intro yet. Don't worry. Don't worry! It's old hat, you know? I got it, Jenny, don't panic. [Jenny laughs] But I will say that I just thought—I mean, I don't know a ton about script writing. But this just felt so well put together to me, in the way that it was like, paced and everything. I just thought, you know, maybe this is, like, a script that you give to somebody to say, like, "if you're learning how to write a script, try this one." [Jenny laughs] But we should ask our nemesis-ses about that, 'cause they know a little bit more than we do.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: This is the one, according to IMDB, where "after Willow and Kennedy share their first kiss, Willow is transformed into Warren, the man she killed last year. When she sets out to find help, she bumps into an old friend." Ooh! I have a song for the old friend. Are you ready?

Jenny: [gasps] Uh-huh.

[Bullet with Butterfly Wings by the Smashing Pumpkins plays]
Despite all my rage, I am still just a rat in a cage

Despite all my rage, I am still just a rat in a cage

Kristin: Oh my god, thank god that Amy is back, because I really missed the fucking boat on playing that song for her while she was an actual rat—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: In the cage, so anyway. [Jenny laughs] The description continues. "Meanwhile, Buffy searches for answers when Spike's chip causes him great pain and the gang suspect that Giles may really be the First." A lot going on in this one.

Jenny: Listen to these Previously Ons, okay?

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs]

Jenny: Previously on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, the First wants to end the Slayer line. Spike was recently a sleeper agent. Amy existed. Professor Walsh and Riley Finn and Hostile 17? And Warren shooting Tara and Willow skinning Warren? And Kennedy saying, [laughing] "You better not hog the covers." [Kristin laughs] One of these things...does not have the dramatic weight—

Kristin: Yeah! [laughs]

Jenny: That the other things have. [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, I don't think we needed that in the Previously On. I don't think we needed it. I think we could have put two and two together. [laughs] But yeah, my notes for the Previously On were like, "let's recap an exposition, the Potentials, the First, Spike has a chip." And then it's just, "Amy?! Riley?! Warren?! Tara?!" So.

Jenny: Kennedy already put two and two together for everybody. She's just walking around with a four, trying to...[Kristin laughs] wave it in your face.

Kristin: I have some behind the scenes intel that I gathered from a very secret source called Buffy Wiki, that I wanted to share. Like, just because—okay, so clearly, this is the one where Willow is Warren and Warren is Willow and we're getting a ton of scenes, which we'll talk about in detail, where it's Willow but also she's appearing as Warren. And then Warren starts to, like, overtake Willow, so then there's more Warren in the Willow. Anyway. I read—

Jenny: Eugh!

Kristin: I read—and maybe you picked this fact up as well, Jenny—that every scene with Willow and Warren was filmed twice, once with Alyson Hannigan playing Willow and again with Adam Busch as Willow. And then whichever actor performed the scene first depended on how “Willow” Warren was supposed to be. So like, in the beginning half—I mean, I don’t know if that’s the correct measurement. But basically, when there’s more Willow than there is Warren, Alyson Hannigan would do the scene first and Adam Busch would watch Alyson Hannigan do the scene and try to imitate her to the best of his ability. And as Warren takes over Willow, Adam Busch would do the scene first and Alyson Hannigan would watch. And apparently, it was, like, very—like, they had to do these scenes over and over and over again to get the precision that the director slash—you know—everyone was after.

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah. Elizabeth Anne Allen—Amy—was quoted as saying, “Everything had to be so exact. If Alyson or Adam gestured or moved their head differently from the other person, they had to do the take all over again.” The scene she was talking about took them a day and a half to shoot. [laughs]

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: Yeah. So I just thought that was interesting and fun. I especially like the idea that, when there was more Willow, Alyson went first and when there was more Warren, Adam went first. That’s fun.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: So. Here we are. I was so tired watching this episode earlier today. I’ve had a very sleepy week, so we’ll see what it does for me as the host of a podcast. [laughing] But I was so tired when I started taking notes that the location of this scene is “Giles.” [both laugh]

Jenny: Okay, so in the Summers living room—

Kristin: Uh-huh. I corrected it, don’t worry. I do have the right information. [both laugh]

Jenny: We’re finally—here’s the payoff of the stuff we’ve been seeing in previous episodes. Giles, always with his hands in his pocket, not hugging Buffy. Giles, not touching—you know, opening the door for himself when he first arrived—like, all of the stuff they’ve taken such great care to have Giles never touch anyone or pick up, move, anything—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Is all getting paid off in this episode. And we see a little bit more of it here, when Giles asks Dawn to run Vi's notebook out to the car.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: So he is not picking some things—notably, not picking something up.

Kristin: And also, Xander comes in, leaving the door open—

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: For Giles to walk out of, you know.

Jenny: And also, conveniently Giles'—

Kristin: Can't drive! [laughs]

Jenny: [simultaneously] California license lapsed, so Molly and Rona are fighting over who's gonna drive first. [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, and Molly winds up in the trunk in this fight. Which made me have a—

Jenny: Yes, Rona.

Kristin: Good laugh, because I have only in my life put one human being inside of a trunk. And it was to surprise Jenny for her 30th birthday and it was her friend—

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: Whose name is Molly. So—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: I know! So I was like—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Mollies, they just have a way of winding up in trunks.
[laughs]

Jenny: Mollies love to be in the trunk.

Kristin: Molly, Jenny's friend, also pretty compact. Able to fit very well in a trunk.
[both laugh] Oh, also, in case you're wondering why I made her hide in a trunk, it was because we were going to, like, an Airbnb—it was before there were Airbnbs, but you know, something of the equivalent. And she had flown all the way from California to New York to surprise Jenny. So I told Jenny to put, like, the suitcase in the trunk. And when she opened the trunk, Molly was in there. It was really great. It was a good moment for me and Molly.

Jenny: Filming me. [both laugh] Well, Kristin, you're tired. You know who else is tired? Sarah Michelle Gellar's poor little throat!

Kristin: Dude, I know, 'cause—

Jenny: In this scene.

Kristin: When I woke up this morning—my voice has gotten a little bit better. But when I woke up this morning, I was like, really hoarse. And we've talked a little bit in pod—probably we will talk a lot more in, you know, the book that we're writing.
[laughs] About how our life has paralleled Buffy the Vampire Slayer. So when I woke up croaking like a frog, and then she opened her mouth and was croaking like a frog, I was like, oh no! [both laugh] Also, two episodes ago, when we met Botox's Eye, my eye—my right eye twitched for two entire weeks. So I just am saying. It's getting creepy, around here. [both laugh] But yeah, she's sleepy. She's tired.

Jenny: Giles is taking the Potentials out to the desert, I guess, on a Sineya vision quest. Right?

Kristin: Yeah. Which is interesting, 'cause how do they know that Sineya—like, it worked for Buffy because that was, like, part of being a Slayer. But...[laughs] I guess they're trying?

Jenny: I guess they're trying. [laughs]

Kristin: I guess they're trying. I don't know. I mean, the truth is, is that they didn't have the budget to have the Potentials in every episode. So this was, like—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: The way that they dealt with that, was like, “they’ll go to the desert. And, uh...”

Jenny: [laughs] “They’re already in the car.”

Kristin: Yep!

Jenny: And...

Kristin: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And Kennedy, of course, can’t go because she—

Jenny: She’s, uh, sick.

Kristin: She’s so...

Jenny: [simultaneously] She’s far too sick to go on a fieldtrip.

Kristin: [simultaneously] So sick. She has her sick suspenders on—

Jenny: [fake-coughs]

Kristin: And her sick leather jacket on. [laughs] So sick.

Jenny: Giles, Giles, so, like—he’s already so over this trip [Kristin laughs] that has not yet even begun. He’s like, “oh, god, I’m gonna end up singing campfire songs.” As if this man doesn’t already have his little acoustic guitar in the car.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Kristin: Yeah. He’s so friggin’ excited. He’s like, “Does anyone know any Indigo Girls? Let’s go!” [both laugh] Also, I would like to state for the record that Giles is wearing yet another different kind of jacket. Like, he had a corduroy jacket on an episode or two ago. And now he’s wearing, like, a jacket that has a shearling collar folded over. And I would like to state that I think Giles is getting some. I think Giles is *date-ing* someone. I think he’s having some feelings—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Oh!

Kristin: For someone. I think—

Jenny: So he's jacket shopping.

Kristin: He's looking—he's just looking like a guy who's feeling good about—you know—his love life. That's all—I just feel—I just feel it in my bones.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yeah. Good for him.

Kristin: So Giles is off to the desert with the Potentials. And left at home are Kennedy and Willow, Spike and Buffy, and then our favorite, growing closer every day quartet, [laughs] Anya, Xander, Dawn and Andrew.

Jenny: [laughs] The squad.

Kristin: So in the basement, we learn that Spike—I think we learn. I don't think we knew this—that Spike is keeping himself chained if he's not with Buffy. That, like, that's his—

Jenny: Aww.

Kristin: That's his, like, safety policy, is like, "I know you could make sure that they were safe if you were there, but if you're not, then what if I do something bad?"

Jenny: But hey, if he's—okay, in order for it to be effective, the keys have to be out of his reach. So every time he has to, like, get up to go to the bathroom, he has to get somebody to come let him out? But then that could be a trap! Kristin, I don't think this method is without its flaws.

Kristin: [simultaneously] It's not foolproof, but it's better—it's better than a free range Spike, I think.

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: I think.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: And maybe he, like—I mean, maybe he, like, pees in a vessel. And then empties it when he has to poop. And so that's embarrassing, because—

Jenny: Oh my god!

Kristin: The only time he has to tell them that he needs the keys is when has to poop. So.

Jenny: Kristin. This podcast is not for this kind of talk. [both laugh]

Kristin: I just stared into Jenny's eyes because I knew that she would absolutely never, ever talk to me after I said the word "poop" about the word "poop." But I'll stop—

Jenny: You have to stop saying...[Kristin laughs] what you're saying. [both laugh]
This is—

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: My podcast too.

Kristin: Okay, so the chip is malfunctioning.

Jenny: Oh no!

Kristin: [simultaneously] That is a short fucking shelf life for a fucking chip, the Initiative. Okay?

Jenny: His poor little head.

Kristin: I mean, like, it lasted for, what? A few years? That's—they could have built it maybe a little better.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: They have, like, billions of dollars, you know?

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But the chip is malfunctioning and it's causing a ton of pain. I mean, we go into the credits from Spike just screaming, as this chip is zapping him from the inside of his head.

Jenny: Yeah. Poor Spike's noggin in this episode.

Kristin: Ugh, yeah. Especially 'cause we know—I mean, really, everybody on this show is pretty tough. And so when you know a character or a person is pretty

strong and tough and, like, won't really even whimper if they're in massive amounts of pain, when they are just screaming their fucking head off. Like, that is a different kind of measurement than when, like, I would maybe scream my head off, you know?

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Although I'm pretty tough too, so.

Jenny: [laughs] Okay.

Kristin: Anyway.

Jenny: In the kitchen.

Kristin: In the kitchen!

Jenny: Willow's like, "I'm taking Kennedy some tea." And Buffy's like, "Mmmm-hmmmmmm?"

Kristin: It's, like, literally how Sarah Michelle Gellar delivers that line as well. [Jenny laughs] It's really good and it's really cute. Because we don't get—like, we haven't gotten a ton of Buffy/Willow around, like, Willow's queerness that hasn't also been, like, touching trauma or—you know—or coming out?

Jenny: Like, fraught in some way.

Kristin: Fraught—right. Like, we haven't gotten to see them just, like, play around with it. And this is one of the first times we get that and it's really fun and cute. And Willow is just protesting. "It's just tea!" [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: And the scene ends and I don't know if we have to talk about in the middle of the scene. But the scene ends with Buffy being like, "Have fun delivering the tea!" [Jenny laughs] Buffy is Jenny Owen Youngs in this scene. [laughs]

Jenny: Whaaaat!

Kristin: And Willow is like, "Don't say it dirty like that! It's just tea!" It's never just tea.

Jenny: Up in Willow's room, Willow's trying to deliver this tea, but her patient is up and out of bed and putting boots on. She's fine, she's clothed and she, quote, "has her own mission."

Kristin: She looks great.

Jenny: Her mission is to go—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: On a date with Willow to The Bronze. [laughs]

Kristin: Yes. Kennedy understands work-life balance, okay? [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh. That's healthy.

Kristin: It is healthy. And like, she's like, I don't even—like, why are we going to the desert? Okay? Just...she just wants to go on a date. She wants to have a moment. And you know what, it's good, because painting with a very large brushstroke, she wants to go on a date with Willow. Maybe you're like, "That's irresponsible, Kennedy, you should be working right now." But maybe Kennedy's like, if we're always working, we can never deal with our feelings and feelings are important too. And Willow processes trauma that she has needed to process for a really long time, which guess what, will make her better fighting evil, because she's not carrying this weight of all this trauma on her shoulders. So points to Kennedy for understanding that feelings matter just as much as quests. [laughs]

Jenny: Okay. [laughs]

Kristin: Okay?

Jenny: Alright.

Kristin: Okay, so there they are. The mission begins at The Bronze. And Jenny and I—it seemed, from before we hit record—have different takes on this scene. There's a moment when it goes off the rails for me, but in the beginning, I am so here for this. I think Kennedy is showing up in a way that lets us know—because Kennedy has shown up really strongly, right? Like, she's been very overtly flirtatious with Willow and I think she shows us in the beginning of this scene that she also can be gentle and soft and kind and compassionate, and like, can be soft around places that are tender to Willow. And I think that that's important. I think that it sets us up for all the rest of the things to come. But let's talk about what happens.

Jenny: Well. I just wanna preface talking about this scene and the rest of the episode by saying that I was watching this episode and all of Season 7 for the first time on DVD.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And I think I was, like, home from college, on a break or something. And I watched this episode with my parents, [Kristin laughs] not knowing what was going to happen.

Kristin: [laughing] Oh no!

Jenny: [laughs] So I feel like I was more like—I'm, like, more yucked out by this than is really necessary.

Kristin: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Jenny: [simultaneously] Because I have my own stuff.

Kristin: Yeah. [laughs] Well, she—wow, that's good context.

Jenny: I was like, Kennedy, could you be cool, please?! My parents are here, actually. [both laugh]

Kristin: So she starts by—like, Willow wants to leave. Willow is, like, unsure if she's even ready to engage in this. And she's right to be unsure, because as we see, she was not quite ready. But this is part of the process. Kennedy says, "You're sexy when you pout." It's nice. It's like—

Jenny: Is Willow pouting?

Kristin: I mean, she's not pouting, but she's like, grumpy. Which I feel like is the same as pouting. You know, like, stop being so grumpy—

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: But also, you look sexy. I just—I love this—I love this. Because Willow—Tara and Willow had a particular kind of love and it was powerful and wonderful and beautiful. But often, it was not, like, presented as sexy, you know? We got a couple of great moments, but most of them were coded as magic. And I just—I think—it's just really nice, for me, as a person, to see someone call Willow

sexy. And to tell Willow that—like, later in this scene, Kennedy is like, “Have you seen you?” Like, Kennedy is just so comfortable clearly saying, “You are so attractive to me. I would like to touch you and kiss you.” And I think that that’s really good for Willow. I mean, she’s gotta turn into Warren and turn back again, but like, I just think it’s good. And Jenny, just because you’re uncomfortable with overt displays [Jenny laughs] of affection doesn’t mean that they are not healthy. [laughs]

Jenny: Primarily when my parents are around, okay?

Kristin: Yes. Yeah, that’s fair. I would also be uncomfortable. I would be uncomfortable right now in the year 2022 [Jenny laughs] if my parents were there, so. [both laugh] Okay, so they have this conversation that I think is fantastic. And the writer of this episode of television is gay, so great. Because I think that that’s the only reason that we get some conversation that feels, at least to me, very real. First of all, they begin immediately with Kennedy being like, “How long did you know you were gay?” And then Kennedy does something that I find very great, which is—Willow’s like, “I never—how did you—what did you—?” And [laughs] Kennedy corrects and says, “Okay. Alright. How long have you known that you like having sex with women? I don’t have to put a label on you. I just am getting the vibe that you like to have sex with women, so how long has that been going on for?”

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: And then, Willow is basically like, but how—like, how do you know? Like, how—not only, like, how do you know that I was interested in maybe kissing you, but how do you know if somebody else is queer? How do you know? And I don’t know if you know this about me, but I’ve spent the better part of my adult life answering questions for LGBTQ...[laughs] IA communities, advice questions. And this is a big one, okay? This is a really big one, especially for people who are newly out. Like, but how do I know? And I thought that Kennedy’s response was great, so let’s hear it.

[Clip from episode plays]

Kennedy: It’s like flirting in code. It’s using body language and laughing at the right jokes and...and looking into her eyes, and knowing she’s still whispering to you, even when she’s not saying a word. And that sense that if you can just touch her, just once, everything would be okay for both of you. That’s how you can tell. Or if she’s really hot, you just get her drunk, see if she comes onto you.

Kristin: Jenny and I had a really interesting—well, I think, anyway—off-mic conversation about the way that Kennedy ends this. Because she ends it by saying, “Or you just get her drunk to see if she comes onto you.” In 2022, that’s a little—mmm. You know, I think it gives all parties a pause. But I was also alive and flirting and dating in the year 2003. And I can tell you that no one would have fucking batted an eye at this idea, because it was just part—like, it was before most of us understood [laughs] how that could be, perhaps, a little problematic. So I just wanna, like, acknowledge that. That like, maybe you watch it now and you’re like, that’s not cool. But this was not uncommon to be like, well, I’m not sure if she likes me or not, but we’re gonna go out and have a few drinks and then, like, I’ll have a better sense of how she feels. Because—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: You know, especially as a queer person. And maybe I will regret saying this, but like, as a queer person, especially newly out—like, for me, it would often take me, like, going to a bar and having a drink to feel comfortable enough to be more of myself and more...I don’t know, honest about, like, how I felt and what I wanted and things like that. So it was just a—it was a different time and we talked about things a little bit differently. And I think—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: We’re in a different place now, but I think 2003, Kennedy did a pretty fucking great job at explaining exactly [laughing] how you know if a girl is queer. So. Points to Drew Z. Greenberg and to Kennedy for, I think, knocking it out of the park.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. Also, points to Willow for referring to Kennedy’s innate knowing if people are gay as lesbo-dar.

Kristin: [laughs] Kennedy’s like, oh, baby. Baby, baby. [both laugh]

Jenny: Okay, we gotta start at the beginning, actually. [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah, and this scene ends in a—I think—a really nice place, where Willow is sort of like, “It was three years ago. And it wasn’t women, it was one woman. Just one.” And Kennedy says, “Lucky woman.” And she doesn’t—like, and that’s what I love about this starting scene for the two of them is that, like, Kennedy is flirting but she’s also, like—when she says “lucky woman,” she’s not saying it in a way that’s like, overtly sexual or anything. She’s like, really genuinely, like, showing

Willow that she appreciates her and respects her and thinks she's fucking awesome. And that whoever got to—

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Be with her was genuinely lucky. And I think that that's really nice.

Jenny: I agree.

Kristin: In the basement. Spike has a bloody nose.

Jenny: He does. And he brings up the point that, like, maybe—he says, “Maybe I wasn't meant to last this long.” I.e., maybe the Initiative designed the chips to degrade in case a test subject escaped or something.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: As a failsafe.

Kristin: Mmhmm. Yeah, and they're trying to figure out, too, other—if it's degrading quicker or if it's malfunctioning because—maybe because of the trigger that the First has been using on Spike. Or like, maybe because Spike went and got a soul. There's a lot of variables here. [laughs] That the Initiative probably didn't anticipate, so—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know. And also, when he says that line, he's like, “Another thing you and I have in common.” To Buffy. Which is just—

Jenny: Aww.

Kristin: I think that what I'm loving about Season 7—and this happens later, when Xander and Anya are the last to leave as they go to the desert. There's, like, a lot of moments that our core cast have with each other that have—like, the cast that has been here for years and the characters who have been fighting for years together—where like, there's this whole new influx of new people and new information. And something that I think it gives us that we haven't gotten as much in other seasons is, like, how comfortable they are with each other because of their history. And how adult they've become over the last seven seasons.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And I just—I really love it and I feel like that’s—a lot of the moments that Spike and Buffy share in this are just, like, [laughs] two really tired people who are just like, oh my fucking god. And the other one’s like, I know, right? [both laugh] And I have a deep appreciation for that. I have no idea why, but I just do.

Jenny: Back at The Bronze, we get a little bit of Willow’s sort of relationship with her mom. Just a tiny window, as pertains to her coming out. Willow’s mom, very predictably—[both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Was like, “Ah, yes, I’m so proud of the political statement my progressive daughter is making by being gay.” [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah, and then kind of didn’t care after that. And like, didn’t—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Barely met Tara. Though I do think it’s fascinating to learn that there was a dinner between Mrs. Rosenberg and Willow and Tara, in the past. Would love to see that footage.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know. But yeah, and Willow has a moment—this is a quick scene, but in addition to that, we also have Willow saying, like, you know, “My mom didn’t meet Tara but also, Tara and I are private.” And then she, like, takes a beat and she’s like, “We were private.” Just really good writing, it’s just really good fucking writing. The whole episode, I was just like, thinking that, over and over again.

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: So in the Summers house—

Jenny: Yes!

Kristin: Spike is on the stairs and Jenny is so excited, because the name—her favorite name in the Buffyverse is about to be uttered.

Jenny: Oh my god! Buffy’s on the phone, trying to talk to Agent Finn! We can tell, over the course of this conversation, that she appears to be calling a flower shop,

which she thought was a cover for, you know, a place that receives secret ops phone calls. But now, she's not so sure, maybe it is actually a flower shop. 'Cause they're just acting like they just have flowers, and she's telling them "a problem with Spike's chip. No, his *chip*." [Kristin laughs] What do you think they heard? His dick? His nip?

Kristin: Oh my god, I hope it's—I just defaulted to "dick" but I hope it's "nip." I hope it—Spike is having a problem with his nips, so. [both laugh] Can someone help us?

Jenny: And Riley's the only one who can help. [both laugh]

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: Oh no. While Buffy is on the phone, Spike is having another chip attack behind her. And he's—

Kristin: [laughs] You mean nip attack.

Jenny: [laughing] Maybe a nip attack. [both laugh] And he's in great pain.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Ohh, buddy.

Kristin: Yeah. Also, do y'all remember when fucking Riley and his scar and his wife came back to town? And Sam was like, "Hey, Willow! Here's my email—" Why are they not using the contact information provided by Sam, in this episode?

Jenny: [laughs] Maybe Drew didn't watch that episode.

Kristin: [laughs] Alright, so we go back to The Bronze. And I would like to say that I have never seen the film *Gone with the Wind*, shocking probably none of you. But I am adding it to my list of things to watch so that I know exactly what Kennedy is referring to when she explains that it's her root because she wanted to sweep Scarlett off of her feet.

Jenny: Okay. She is what a lot of people would call objectively hot?

Kristin: [laughs] Scarlett?

Jenny: Yes. I'm just—I'm doing research right now, while we're recording. I'm just looking at some pictures.

Kristin: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Jenny: Scientifically.

Kristin: Mmhmm?

Jenny: And—

Kristin: The job is—you know, it's a very demanding job that we have here.

Jenny: Yeah. We wear a lot of hats around the Buffering offices. [both laughing] Sometimes you have to look at pictures of a hot girl and tell the world that she's hot.

Kristin: So would you—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Somebody's gotta do it, Kristin!

Kristin: Would you say that before you knew you were gay, if you saw this woman, you would also have wanted to sweep her off of her feet, Jenny?

Jenny: Um...

Kristin: Have you seen *Gone with the Wind*?

Jenny: I have not.

Kristin: Okay. We're gonna watch *Gone with the Wind* together, and then we'll—

Jenny: Noo. Please don't make me watch *Gone with the Wind*. [laughs]

Kristin: We're watching *Gone with the Wind* together and then we're going to report back on if one, both, or neither of us wanted to sweep Scarlett off of her feet. Okay?

Jenny: I...hate this plan. [both laugh] Cool.

Kristin: So at The Bronze, after we learn Kennedy's root, we get some more flirting. More great flirting! You know, Willow's like, but why do you like me? She's

like, "Have you seen you?" And then she's like, "Plus we like all of the same things." And then she rattles off a list of things I guess we're to imagine that Kennedy likes. Italian, skate punk, Robert Parker mysteries, and fighting evil, only one of which is actually a thing that Willow likes. This is funny flirting. This is smart, witty banter.

Jenny: I don't know. Based on the covers—I know you're expressly not supposed to judge a book by its cover, but I don't have time to read the books right now. So I'm judging Robert B. Parker mysteries by their covers, and they look very, like...your mom's book club that is actually a drinking wine club where everybody buys a book at the same time. Kind of book.

Kristin: [simultaneously] I love this for Kennedy. I absolutely love this for Ken—because that means Kennedy is, like, jamming out to some skate punk and then reading her romance mom mystery novels. I'm telling you, Kennedy, A plus. But—

Jenny: Is she saying Italian like the food, Italian like the language, or Italian skate punk?

Kristin: [laughs] Oh, shit. I didn't consider the third option. I just thought she meant, like, Italian the language slash culture of—

Jenny: Okay.

Kristin: Italians, but maybe she meant Italian skate punk, I don't know. I thought she paused for comma between Italian and skate punk.

Jenny: I think you're right. Kristin. She says, "I dig the way you *always* turn off the Moulin Rouge DVD at Chapter 32 so it has a happy ending." How long have these girls been in the Summers house, and how frequently is Willow watching Moulin Rouge?

Kristin: Also, if you're younger than a particular age, what did you think she meant when she said "chapter 32"? You know what I mean? [both laugh] DVDs used to have chapters. Maybe they still do. But I think—I just took that to mean that, like, in their sleepover conversations, Willow had said that she always does this—

Jenny: Mmmm.

Kristin: Rather than Willow has been [laughs] watching Moulin Rouge on loop.

Jenny: [laughing] I prefer that.

Kristin: [laughs] And so this is where—'cause I was with Kennedy, every step of the way. And I'm still with you, Kennedy, but this is where I lost it. 'Cause she says, "I like the way you turn off Moulin Rouge so that it always has a happy ending." Great. "I like the way you speak." This is *good* flirting. Then she's like, "And your freckles," I'm like, [pleased] ugh! I love when people say they love my freckles! And then she goes, "Lickable." And I was like, [gasps] no. [laughs]

Jenny: It's just like...it's just like...where are they? And do you wanna be licked there?

Kristin: I mean, listen—

Jenny: And also, do you want a verbal...harbinger?

Kristin: Right. That's also a good point. Even if you want somebody to lick your actual face, which not yucking any yums here. Maybe you don't wanna be told that your face is going to be licked. Because those are two different thing—fantasy versus reality. You know?

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: [laughing] It was just one step too far for me. But again, not yucking anyone's yums. But then she sticks the landing, I think. 'Cause she's like, "I'm not super into magic, but it matters to you, so I think it's cool."

Jenny: I thought you were gonna dislike this because she says, and I quote, "I'm not so into the magic stuff. Seems like fairytale crap to me."

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: I don't feel like the "but it matters to you," like, quite undoes...that. For me.

Kristin: Yeah, and I will be honest, I did have an issue with that until I finished the episode. And then I, like, gave room to the writing. Because it is nice—

Jenny: Yeah, okay.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: But I agree. When I first heard it and didn't realize that the, like, bow at the end of this episode was gonna be the second kiss turning her back and it being like a fairytale. I was like, really? 'Cause even—not even being like, what the fuck, Kennedy? But really, just being like, [laughs] you're a fucking Potential Slayer. We've talked about this already, like, how could you think that this is fair—how could you not—I mean, it feels like it's all kind of part of the same package deal here.

Jenny: It's weird.

Kristin: But I do love the setup. I think it's really, really nice, the way that, you know, it all comes together. So. And I think the general message of like, I—like, even if you think something that somebody else is involved in or works on or whatever is, like, not for you. But you're like, it's not for me, I don't really fucking get it, but also, it means something to you, so like, that makes me wanna value it. I think, like, the core is still powerful enough.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, okay. Well.

Kristin: [singing] Take me back to your apartment so I'll see if—

Jenny: [simultaneously] No! Kristin!

Kristin: I didn't plan to do it, it just happened. [laughs]

Jenny: Stop that. Okay, so listen. Everybody, ignore Kristin. [Kristin laughs] Willow's dropping Kennedy off at her pla—but it's Willow's room, but it's also where they both live, except now the girls are all out of the house, so maybe one of them is sleeping on the cou—it's weird! But then, never mind that, because it's time for kissing.

Kristin: Yeah. A good kiss—

Jenny: Kissing!

Kristin: They're kissing. And this kiss is powerful that it makes the camera revolve around them. You know it's a good kiss when the camera's like, excuse me for one moment, I need to rotate both of your heads a few times.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, yep. But then, oh no. Who could have seen this coming? This kiss is also so powerful that it turns Willow into Warren? Question mark? Exclamation point.

Kristin: So talk to me about penance...what is it called? A penance...muh—

Jenny: Malediction?

Kristin: Malediction. 'Cause—'cause what—I just wanna understand exactly what is meant by this spell. Okay, so—

Jenny: Well. A malediction—

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: Is a magical word or phrase uttered with the intention of bringing about evil or destruction. A curse! Penance—

Kristin: I know what penance is.

Jenny: Is voluntary self-punishment inflicted as an outward expression of repentance for having done wrong. This all makes sense. It just sort of, like, is weird that maybe Amy did a spell that would go off at a certain time—like, it just...

Kristin: Well, it—so it—but—okay, here's my starting question and I know that probably everyone knows the answer except for me and my goldfish brain. But like, this is Willow's—Willow is the person who is repenting for her sins. And the punishment that she has given to herself in her mind is that she is the man she killed and the man who killed Tara. That is—that is correct?

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: The math is correct there, okay.

Jenny: Yep. Yep.

Kristin: Okay. So then, I think that the trigger—I mean, I don't know that Amy understood exactly what the trigger would be. I think, like—I think it's interesting because we've moved through a good amount of Season 7. And we've gotten a few emails about, like, Willow and Willow's grief and like, is it not being given the space that it deserves, given the fact that she lost Tara. Because we've only gotten, like, you know, a handful of moments with her in this grief since the start of this season. And I actually think that it is resonant and reflective of the way that people often grieve, which is not with any particular schedule, not with any particular consistency. And with very unknown things causing, you know, a downward spiral

into feeling very, very, very, very, very upset. And so I think that Amy probably cast this spell thinking that, like, it might just be effective immediately. But Willow's probably been doing a lot of things in her life to not have to sit with this grief all the time, and guilt all the time. And of course—of *course* when she's gonna kiss somebody else for the first time, this is gonna cause a massive, massive amount of feelings in her. And for her, that includes guilt. So I think that's why. I think that makes sense.

Jenny: I feel like usually spells in this universe have, like...

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: They're immediate.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Or like, close to.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And the fact that this is just sort of, like, a pop goes the weasel spell. [both laugh] It's like, whenever you feel bad, then the spell will go off! It's funny.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Sorry, you said pop goes the weasel and all I thought was, "my toys!" [laughs]

Jenny: "My toys!"

Kristin: "They took my toys!"

Jenny: [laughs] Okay, so. Kennedy's like, what the fuck?

Kristin: [laughs] Kennedy, god.

Jenny: Willow goes to the mirror and is like, what the *fuck*?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Then she goes down to the living room.

Kristin: [laughing] This is—

Jenny: [simultaneously] And Xander's like, "Oh!" and Anya's like, "Oh!" [both laugh] And Kennedy's like, "I'm not sure what happened." And Andrew's like, [gasps] "You have no power over me any longer!" And Buffy just walks in and punches Willow-Warren in the face. [laughs]

Kristin: This is an amazing scene. Like, an amazing—it has to be up there with scenes in the Buffyverse. Because it is perfect. It is, like, a perfectly timed, perfectly chaotic, perfectly hilarious—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Moment in this living room. Because also, Spike is, like, writhing on the floor. Like, while this is all happening.

Jenny: Oh, yeah.

Kristin: It's just, there's so much chaos in the Summers living room right now, and that's saying a lot, 'cause usually it is the point of chaos. [laughs]

Jenny: [laughs] Once Buffy punches successfully, everyone's like, oh, it's not the First. And Andrew hugs Willow-Warren from behind. [Kristin laughs] And does some bad touching.

Kristin: Willow says "bad touching." But also, I'm like, so if it is Warren—'cause it's Warren, for Andrew. So did Andrew hug Warren by wrapping his arms around his chest and holding each one of Warren's boobies. You know what I mean? Did that happen? [both laugh]

Jenny: Un. Known. Willow is able to convince everyone that she is herself by threatening Xander with some other stories from kindergarten where he doesn't come out in such a nice light.

Kristin: Yeah, Aquaman underoos are involved. Do think this—what do you think happened here?

Jenny: Uh...you know. Kid underwear stuff, I don't know.

Kristin: So like, probably he—probably he pooped? You think he pooped? [laughs]

Jenny: Could you—this little theme. Could you...abandon it?

Kristin: [simultaneously] I'm sorry! You fucking begged for that shit by the way that you fought it in the beginning. I would have never talked about fucking Xander poop—I mean, get me out of here. I would like to leave.

Jenny: So in this scene—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: [laughs] I've made a note that Adam Busch is doing a really nice Alyson Hannigan impression here, and I guess we know why.

Kristin: Yeah! Yeah. I think they do good work here. It's really—it's gotta be tricky, 'cause this isn't just, like, an apples to apples switch, you know? Like, this is actually probably as close as Adam Busch got to just being Willow. But like, for the majority of the episode, they're like, back and forth between who they are, even in the middle of a sentence, you know?

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: So that's tricky and I think they do a good job, as well. So Willow's, like, convinced that she did this, that like, her subconscious turned her into Warren. And she doesn't want anyone's help. She's like, "I'll fix it. I did it and I'll fix it." And she's out. And meanwhile, Spike is basically like, "I don't think we can fucking wait for fucking Riley to call back, if he's—if he even works at that flower shop. Because I am not well."

Jenny: Yeah. And also, Willow's like, working overtime to be like, "It—uh, something triggered it."

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: "Something happened but it's none of—never mind—never you mind. Do not look at the man behind the curtain."

Kristin: Yeah—

Jenny: "Kissing the Potential Slayer." [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah. She doesn't—I hate—I hate, in this universe—I know—I understand it's, like, hard for Willow and whatever. But I hate, in this universe, when something catastrophic has happened and they don't share the complete information with the

team. I'm like, you're just—you're doing everyone a disservice here, okay? We need all the cards on the table to help you—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Not be Warren. So Kennedy decides she's gonna go and she's gonna help. She runs into Willow-Warren on the street, and is like, "Let me try to help." And Willow is like, no. And Kennedy is like, okay, then let me at least tag along, to be around. And good thing she does.

Jenny: Good thing. We also learn in this scene that Willow tried reversing the spell herself, but it did not work.

Kristin: Right. Now we go to the woods. I didn't know how to mark this location, 'cause it's not really the woods but I didn't know how to describe a field of dirt, which is kind of where we are. [both laugh] It's where the secret entrance to the Initiative is.

Jenny: Yep. Yep, yep, yep.

Kristin: Most important thing to me in this brief scene is that Buffy is wearing a denim jacket, and I like it. I would love to see the Slayer in more denim jackets. Great work, everyone.

Jenny: Mmm, mmhmm, mmhmm. I will endorse that.

Kristin: Basically, information in this scene is that Spike is after some kind of medication that will make the pain go away and Buffy is after some paperwork that might explain more about the chip. So they're going into the bowels of the Initiative.

Jenny: This just seems, if I may be so bold, like a bad plan. [both laugh]

Kristin: It's true, but what else do they got?

Jenny: What else can you do? They already tried calling the flower shop.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Except for actually having Riley's email address. Except for that, but. [both laugh]

Jenny: Oh yeah, except for that. Okay, so back at the Summers living room, my favorite thing ever happens. The phone rings. Andrew runs to get it. [Kristin laughs]

He says, "I'm supposed to get a call when the new League of Extraordinary Gentlemen comes in. I gave them this number." [both laugh] Which is my favorite part, because it used to be, like, a thing—like, you know, if you were staying at your friend's house—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: For a week 'cause your parents were out of town—

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: You'd be like, oh, my friend is gonna call, I gave them this number.

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: Is that okay? And Xander reflexively, immediately, is like, "Can you see if they can get two?" [Kristin laughs] Because...they are in love!

Kristin: They are.

Jenny: And then Xander tries to look cool as Dawn and Anya stare him down and judge him harshly. I love this.

Kristin: Yeah. And he's like—

Jenny: Xandrew rides again!

Kristin: [laughs] He's like—Xander's like, "Loser." I'm like, you said the other thing out loud, sir. You don't get to have two separate scenes in one room with the people who would have already heard you say that you want that comic book too, so. This has very—

Jenny: [laughs] I am now, for the first time in my life, on the pull list of my local comic book shop for certain comics that I want to read monthly—

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: That sell out if you don't go in right away.

Kristin: Wow. Nerd alert, nerd alert.

Jenny: Yeah, there's a little manilla—I don't mean to brag, but there's a little manilla folder with my name on it, where they put my little comic books.

Kristin: That's hot. That's hot. I love having a—

Jenny: I feel very powerful.

Kristin: Yeah. That's good stuff. [both laugh] I was gonna say, this gives me—like, Andrew being like, "I gave them your number so they can call me and let me know," very like, decoder-ring energy, from—what's that—A Christmas Story. Where he, like, calls into the radio station to get his decoder ring and they mail it to him.

Jenny: Ohh.

Kristin: Like, it just has that general vibe, of like, a time when there was a lot—

Jenny: Simpler times, Kristin.

Kristin: A lot more analog. Things were a lot more analog.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So hey! Fucking Robson didn't die. Can you even believe it?

Jenny: He. Just. Blacked. Out.

Kristin: Robson is gonna be so pissed when he learns that Giles took all of his different jackets before he went to New York. [both laugh]

Jenny: Also, Giles just left him there?

Kristin: I know! [both laugh] But like, he must not have, right? He must have alerted some kind of medics on his way out.

Jenny: But why—why even—

Kristin: [laughing] I don't know.

Jenny: Why not just stay until he woke up?

Kristin: I don't know. I mean, have we seen—have we seen what happened yet? We don't know what happened. So like, who knows? You know, who knows what ghostly face was doing in actual time, you know?

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Perhaps we'll find out.

Jenny: Ghostly face. [both laugh]

Kristin: I just love that the—was it a Bringer? At the place in England?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah? Do you think the Bringers have British accents when they're British Bringers? [laughs]

Jenny: Oh. Well, they never speak, so.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: I actually—right? They never speak?

Kristin: Yeah, no, they don't speak.

Jenny: I'm thinking they don't have tongues, that's what I'm thinking.

Kristin: Oh, cool, cool, cool-cool-cool-cool-cool. So, everyone thinks that Giles may have died. And Andrew—this is ridiculous to me. So first of all, they're like, that's a horrible thought to have, but also, we are tasked with having thoughts like these so that we can, like, try to get to the bottom of it all. And somebody says—I think it might even be fucking Dawn—that's like, "But how could we ever tell?" I'm like, really? It gives Andrew the opportunity to be like, "We actually can tell, because the First is incorporeal."

Jenny: [snootily] "Because the First is incorporeal."

Kristin: Which, like, good on Andrew, but also, you guys come—

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yes, we know!

Kristin: We know, and they know, and if anyone knows, it's fucking Dawn. We literally ended the last episode with Dawn just studying her face off. So like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Clearly, Dawn would know this information.

Jenny: I cannot believe that no one has hugged Giles this whole time.

Kristin: Yeah, that's pretty—honestly? Shame on all of them.

Jenny: Mostly, shame on Giles.

Kristin: Okay, fair. [laughs]

Jenny: Andrew wants to go with them out to the desert. He's been working on a mix that he'd love to grab for the car. What do you think is on Andrew's mix, Kristin?

Kristin: Definitely NSync. A million times over, there's some NSync on that shit.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: There's probably some Britney, you know? There's probably some Britney, some NSync. Let's see, what else is—it's 2003. I bet you there's some, like, Blink 182 on that shit too. I think Andrew would be like, I am so hardcore! [laughs]

Jenny: Mmm. Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: You know? What else? Maybe, like, the soundtrack to—or the theme song for Lord of the Rings. [both laugh] What do you got?

Jenny: Alright, alright. I'm thinking it's like, Michelle Branch.

Kristin: Ooh, nice, yep, mmhmm.

Jenny: You know, Goodbye to You. I'm thinking Nick Cave...

Kristin: [simultaneously] Willow's like, "Can you stop playing that song in the house?" [both laugh]

Jenny: I'm thinking Nick Cave, Red Right Hand...

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: I'm thinking Andrew's a big scream head.

Kristin: Love that.

Jenny: I'm thinking maybe a little, like, Soul Coughing.

Kristin: Okay, that's a little too cool for Andrew, I think.

Jenny: No, I think he may have stuff, 'cause it's—it's, uh...kind of literate. I don't know—and they had a song on The X-Files television series—

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: Soundtrack.

Kristin: I didn't know that.

Jenny: So that's where I'm at, with Andrew's mixtape. But you might be right.

Kristin: No, I actually think that together, we crafted the beginnings of what could be a beautiful Andrew mixtape.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Soul Coughing just take me—I was busy in my brain, thinking about myself in the parking lot—I guess this was way before 2003, though. This was 1999, maybe, 8? But my roommates—you know, we didn't have a lot to do. We were freshmen in college, like, what are you gonna do? And so we would sometimes drive my little car to this parking lot that was always empty. And just blast—whatever the album—whatever the Soul Coughing album was that had Soundtrack to Mary on it. We would just blast through that whole album and dance around the parking lot like a bunch of fools. It was so fun.

Jenny: I think that's...Irresistible Bliss?

Kristin: Yes! Yes, that is correct. So you know, Andrew has made a mix, that doesn't work. Andrew's like, "Don't leave me alone, I might die!" That doesn't work. And then...[laughs] then he's like, "Don't leave me alone, I might do something evil, like burning something or gluing things together." Honestly, probably—

Jenny: Gluing things together.

Kristin: That's pretty evil! [laughing] That's pretty evil, like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That's—it's a good trick. And that works.

Jenny: He'd road-trippin'.

Kristin: He's road-trippin'.

Jenny: Cut to Giles by himself, staring creepily into the fire, for absolutely no reason. This feels so cheap.

Kristin: This is like when we got the Principal Wood shot of just him through the miniblinds, you know? [both laugh] Just—guys, come on! It's Season 7, okay?

Jenny: [simultaneously] Yeah, just have a reason. Have a reason, my guy.

Kristin: [simultaneously] Just everybody, be cool.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah. Also, the end of the last scene—I said it already. But this is where we get the Anya-Xander moment that I was referencing, which—you know, it's like, the kids leave, Dawn and Andrew are out the door, and they just, like, stop and acknowledge, like, all of these girls might be dead.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And we might be driving to find all of these dead girls. And like, we're tired. [laughs] And this is hard and sad.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Time to go to UC Sunnydale. Haven't been here in a minute. [long pause] [both laugh] I promise you all that I will make a fucking GIF of what Jenny's fucking face did while she just paused to think about whatever you're about to say. 'Cause it was the funniest—I've never seen someone's mouth move the way that your mouth just moved. [laughs]

Jenny: I'm so sorry to break this to you, but I was trying to think of a way to adapt "home sweet home" to be, like...college related.

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: But then I couldn't think of a word that rhymed with home that was associated with college, so.

Kristin: It was worth it for what happened to your face.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Are these wiccans wearing purple glow sticks around their necks? Is that what's happening here?

Jenny: You know, I did not notice.

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: I was too busy wondering if these are the individuals who were, like, doing the bake sale and were all, like, you know...kind of inactive?

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Spell-wise.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Why would this be the place that Willow goes for help—Willow's like, I know where to go!

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: The people I totally blew off because they weren't doing anything real when I was. [laughs] What?

Kristin: Right. Right, right. Yeah, it doesn't—doesn't make sense. I feel like she probably has a couple of other connections, given her attempt at ending the world—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: That might have more power than the college wiccans. But I kind of love this, because I feel like the wiccan group on campus gets their moment to be like, “Honestly, fuck off.” Which, like, it feels earned. Like, okay, so Vaughne is sort of like—it seems like she’s in charge. She’s, like, the leader of this group. And ‘cause—and Willow makes a cutting remark, like, “Oh, I see you’ve moved past the bake sales.” [laughing] And I love Vaughne’s response, because she’s like, “No. We still have bake sales every other Tuesday.” And like, you know, Amy—who we learn—whatever, is just fucking everybody over, but put that aside for a second—is like, “We actually don’t really do the thing that you’re asking us to do. Like, this group is really focused on healing and nurturing your life force and et cetera.” And I just kind of liked it, because I felt like, you know—the way it was painted before was like, they’re not doing real magic, so fuck these people. And I just liked that it gave this group of magic practitioners their moment to be like, there’s nothing wrong with having a bake sale and there’s nothing wrong if our magic doesn’t put up force fields. You know? Like, we’re valid too. [laughs]

Jenny: Totally.

Kristin: Right?

Jenny: It just doesn’t seem like—

Kristin: No.

Jenny: The intuitive place for her to go for help.

Kristin: Not at all.

Jenny: Also, as you noted, Amy is here! And Amy is like, “I fucked up. I hit rock bottom. I’ve been working on things with these guys, and I’m doing much better.” Kristin, I don’t under—this feels like so much more effort than I would expect Amy as we know her to put in to, like, Prank Sinatra’ing Willow. She’s—how long has she been coming to these meetings and, like, pretending to be in—

Kristin: [simultaneously] Yeah, because she has, like, a deep relationship with them. Like, Vaughne is very protective of Amy. [laughs]

Jenny: I know! This feels...funny.

Kristin: It’s a little funny. It’s a little—you’re right, it’s a little funny. I let it slide, because I thought there was a lot of good writing and I thought the pacing was great. And—so I let some of it slide, but you’re right. It doesn’t make any sense for

Willow to go there for help. And it also makes no sense for Amy to be there at all. There's no reason that Amy even needed to be involved—like, if Amy's goal was just to punish Willow and have more power than Willow, then she didn't even need to be—she just needed to chill. And do whatever she normally does as an Amy.
[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But it's fun. I like that we're back at the college. And I love that we get Vaughne. And you know who likes that we get Vaughne the most is Kennedy, it would seem, from a—

Jenny: Oh—! These two.

Kristin: Oh my god.

Jenny: These two. You know the spell has the best chance of working if you lean into the person you're sitting next to, *really* tightly.

Kristin: I was like—I had to, like, take a beat. Like, the scene—so, okay. So what happens is, they walk in. Amy's like, surprise! I'm here and I'm, like, all restored and I'm healthy now, and blah-blah-blah. And then Willow-Warren is like, okay, let's at least try—let's try, then. If you're willing to try, I'm willing to try, let's see what we can do here. [laughs] And then the scene cuts, and they're now—like, now we can see them sitting as Amy and Willow-Warren are gonna attempt this spell. [laughs] And that's when we see Kennedy sitting basically in Vaughne's lap. It's...really a moment.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Doesn't work. Spell doesn't work, does not work.

Jenny: It didn't work? No, it didn't, you dumb bitch, slap. [both laugh] Wow!

Kristin: Wow.

Jenny: That seems...

Kristin: Yeah, and this is when—

Jenny: Like an overreaction.

Kristin: Yeah, this is when Willow is like, "It wasn't me. It was Warren." And we're like, uh-oh, it's not just a fucking glamor. Because now, Warren is starting to, bit by bit, take over Willow.

Jenny: It's not good.

Kristin: No.

Jenny: It's not good.

Kristin: It's not good.

Jenny: Willow does say—and this is kinda weird—she's like, "Oh, I'm becoming him, a murderous, misogynist man. I killed him for a reason." Uh...this doesn't exactly jive with the—

Kristin: No.

Jenny: Willow's tale of redemption and—

Kristin: No.

Jenny: Repentance.

Kristin: Yeah, after she talks about the murderous, misogynist man that she's becoming to Kennedy, she's like, "You understand nothing about magic and in case you hadn't noticed, our little date is over." And then she throws up a fucking shield so that she can leave without Kennedy following her.

Jenny: Ohh my god.

Kristin: Yeah. And it's kind of hard to parse, at this point, which is Willow and which is Warren. I mean, I—'cause I think this is just Willow. I think this is just, like, Willow has had enough and like, is realizing the danger that she is in. And does—and also probably remembers that, like, earlier in this episode, Kennedy was like, "I don't really believe in magic, it's kinda like a bunch of fairytale shit." And so Willow's like, I cannot right now, with you. You know, like, you don't even—you have no clue about what is happening to me or the, like, risk involved.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: [sighs] At the Initiative, all they did was seal the place up with all the demons in it.

Jenny: Bodies, bodies, bodies. Do you think that humans and demons decay at relatively the same rate?

Kristin: Probably not. Probably very diff—there are probably some demons that decay at a human rate, but I bet you there are some demons that never decay. [Jenny gasps] Have you ever heard of a film called The Mummy?

Jenny: Oh my [yells away from mic] god! [both laugh]

Kristin: Jenny and Jess just showed me The Mummy for the very first time, so that was, like, kind of relevant. But also mostly just an inside joke of me knowing a particular kind of way of preserving a body.

Jenny: Okay. [both laugh]

Kristin: So—

Jenny: Oof, that—mm. Just thinking about that mummy.

Kristin: So before we go deeper into the Initiative, we get a fun, quick scene of the road trip where Mom and Dad, played by Xander and Anya, are driving their kids, Andrew and Dawn, to the desert to see if they can save the Potentials from the First disguised as Giles. [laughs] And—

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: Everyone is playing their parts. Dawn, silently just trying to ignore Andrew. Andrew, trying to play every fucking car game that he can think of. And Anya, saying, “What are we gonna do? Just a teen, an ex-demon and two big geeks.” Nailed it, Anya. [Jenny laughs] Nailed it.

Jenny: So fucking funny. Drag him, Anya. [Kristin laughs] Okay, back in some alley somewhere, Willow-Warren is crying and is really sad. But then is like, “Look at me, crying like a little girl.” Which makes them have an idea.

Kristin: Them. [laughs]

Jenny: They jump up. And power walk away.

Kristin: Oh, god. Oh, god, there's a lot of layers of fucking gender shit that's happening with this back-and-forth.

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: But for now, let me tell you how I feel about this Initiative situation. And what I mean by situation is, like, the filming of it. It's a pretty dark scene. But I'm pretty into it. I feel like we don't get a lot of this, in this series, where it's like—they're very, like, flash-lighty. I have not yet seen the show *The X-Files*, but it reminded me of—

Jenny: This is very *The X-Files*.

Kristin: What I've heard about *The X-Files*. Thank you, yes. But it's really cool, and I—

Jenny: There are actually four main characters of *The X-Files*. Dana Scully—

Kristin: Uh-huh?

Jenny: Fox Mulder and then each of their flashlights.

Kristin: [laughs] But this is fun, right? And the demon is—it's also fun that they're like, fighting a demon that doesn't have to have a big back story. I was like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Really into that, that this is just a demon. And they just need to kill him. For no huge reason, except for survival. [laughs]

Jenny: Yep, yep, yep, yep.

Kristin: Demon's got some big fucking teeth, and I don't mean the vampire kind.

Jenny: Yeah, I like this demon.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: The—what we can see of its design. And I think you're making a nice point. It's like, oh my god, there doesn't always have to be a reason.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Sometimes a demon can just exist and wanna eat you.

Kristin: Well, and—yeah, exactly. And also, I think the darkness—because I was just taping an episode of Angel on Top. And over in—I don't know if you guys know this, but in Los Angeles right now, there's actually not—there's no sun. So it's like—there's, like, a lot of shit going on in California right now, okay? So just—but the darkness does a lot more for the demons than when they are brightly lit, like, you know, Turok-Han, for example.

Jenny: Oh, poor Turok-Han.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, Turok-Han had, like, a fucking spotlight on him. But like—

Jenny: Well, yeah, 'cause all the better to see his top hat and cane and dance number. [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah, that was a fucking lay-up for you right there. [both laugh] But yes, I just—I don't know, I just really liked this scene.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So back in college, we have Kennedy—

Jenny: This—I'm just gonna say, this episode is made up of a lot of very short scenes. Just whipping around all over the place here.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: It feels natural. The pacing is good. I'm just, like, noticing how many location markers I have, and I'm like, dang.

Kristin: Totally. Totally.

Jenny: They're just all over the place.

Kristin: Yeah. Kennedy and Amy are having a chat. Amy starts by, you know, just saying, "She's gonna be fine. It seems like you really like her. Don't worry, she was fine long before she found herself a big Potential Slayer bodyguard." [makes brake squealing noise]

Jenny: Oh, no! The classic villain slip-up of saying something that you know that you're not supposed to know as though the person you're talking to told you, but they totally didn't. Ahh!

Kristin: Villains need to learn to not talk. Is it—

Jenny: Villains of the world, be cool!

Kristin: [laughs] Just say less. So Kennedy is like, "How did you know who I was?" And Amy, like, barely tries. "I think you said. You know, whatever. Mmm." She's like, "No, I didn't." And then Amy—

Jenny: [simultaneously] And then she's like...oops! [laughs]

Kristin: Elizabeth Anne Allen, honestly, absolutely stunning work, as usual.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah.

Kristin: She is fucking great. She is great.

Jenny: She's doing so great.

Kristin: So fighting, fighting, fighting. The toothy demon gets Spike, drags him away in the Initiative. And now, oh no, we're at a place that we never wanna be: at the gun shop in Sunnydale—? Does Sunnydale have its own gun shop or you think they had to go to the town over?

Jenny: [simultaneously] Guess so.

Kristin: Yeah, probably they do. They're ridden with demons. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Willow-Warren's buying a gun and the gun shop clerk says, "Same model as last time? How'd that work out for you?" Sir, what exactly do you mean?

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Jenny: We also get a fantastic, I think, line reading of "you'd be amazed" by Alyson Hannigan, which is definitely a stellar Adam Busch impression. Real good.

Kristin: Really good. I think that Willow wins the Willow-Warren Off. Willow nails Warren better than Warren ever nails Willow in this line.

Jenny: Mm. Out in the desert. [both laugh] With absolutely no pomp or circumstance. [both laugh] Giles is tackled by all four of the squad.

Kristin: I love this. I love it.

Jenny: And they're all like, "I feel him!" "I feel him too!" "I also feel him!"

Kristin: This had to really tickle me on my first viewing, like, back in 2012 or whenever I watched the series. Because it's like, one of the scenes that I remember. Like, I just think it's very funny. [Jenny laughs] You know what I hate, though, is this—this line that Giles—

Jenny: Dude, this is like—they were like, we've got a punchline. How can we reverse-engineer a scene around it? It's so, like, clunky and unnecessary. It doesn't really work.

Kristin: [simultaneously] And not Giles. Giles would never make this joke. Giles says, like, "You think I'm—so you think I'm evil if I bring a group of girls out to the desert and don't touch them?" Ba-dum-bum. And it's not funny, it's fucking weird. Giles would literally never say this. And we didn't need it. The scene could have ended—what was funny was them tackling him. So I'm mad about this. I—this is a great episode, it's written well, but I would like to have a word about this line.

Jenny: Okay, huge news, Kristin.

Kristin: Huge!

Jenny: Back at the Initiative, Buffy kills the demon and she goes to Spike and she's like, "Are you okay?" And then, [imitates banging sound] the sound of many floodlights all being turned on in short order. [gasps] There are soldiers! [gasps] There's one, like, really cool guy who seems to be in charge. He has such an incredible vibe.

Kristin: Yeah, he does.

Jenny: I'm like, where, sir, were you, when the Initiative was really happening?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Because you would have made Season 4 more enjoyable.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And he says, "Miss Summers, Agent Finn reported that you tried to contact him earlier today." And Buffy is like, "I fucking knew it!" [Kristin laughs] And then he says, "We're to provide you anything you need to help...Assface here." And Buffy looks at him and is like, what? And he's like, "Those were his exact words, ma'am." [both laugh] So, from afar, even though he's married and in the jungle, killing demons somewhere, Riley took the time to insult Spike.

Kristin: I thought you were gonna say, to flirt with Spike, but yeah, same difference.

Jenny: Well, some people might say, what's the difference? [Kristin laughs] And I would be one of those people in this instance. Remember when they...shared a bottle of whiskey?

Kristin: I really do. They were, like, under the ground, bonding.

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: Mmhmm. I do remember.

Jenny: Ohh, yeah.

Kristin: Also, do you think Turok-Han is so jealous because this spotlight turn-on was even better than the spotlight turn-on that happened [both laugh]—

Jenny: Yes, up in Turok-Han heaven. [Kristin laughs] Turok-Han is like, "What the fuck?!" [both laugh]

Kristin: Oh, god. Okay. So Willow is walking—[singing] Willow's got a gun.

Jenny: Walking with purpose. You know?

Kristin: Yeah, she's got a Gentleman Jack walk about her right now. She's fucking—she's got somewhere to fucking be. Don't fuck with her.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: In the Initiative, we learn that the chip has degraded and oh no, it will be fatal.

Jenny: Yeah. So it's up to Buffy. Should we repair the chip or remove the chip?

Kristin: What will she decide?

Jenny: [simultaneously] Dun-dun-dunnnn! Oh my god.

Kristin: Also, just a hat tip to Riley. Because it is said that Agent Finn said all decisions about Hostile 17 were to be left in your hands. I like that.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: It's nice. And I know we were there. Like, we were there with Riley and Buffy. But it's just, like, nice. I love to see Riley trust Buffy with her work, as he does his own.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, some might say he's actually a good guy.

Kristin: Back at college. [both laugh] Kennedy's like, "Why? Why did you do this?" And Amy's like, zwap! And throws her across the room. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. Amy yeets her across the room.

Kristin: Just your standard penance malediction. We have a friend named Randi who would say this fucking phrase over and over again. She loves good-sounding word combinations, and "penance malediction" is definitely a good one.

Jenny: Yeah. I can hear it now.

Kristin: [laughing] I know. "Why Warren and why after we kissed?" And Amy—ugh, god, Elizabeth Anne Allen, doing such a good job. She laughs from her toes. She's like, "mua-ha—wow. Could have never thought of that shit. That must have been some kiss." And she sort of explains that the person's subconscious picks their form of punishment better than she could ever think of. Which is—that's a nice line. That's, like, a good—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: True thing. And she labels this choice of Willow's subconscious as "elegant." [both laugh]

Jenny: It's good.

Kristin: It's good.

Jenny: It's very good. Then Amy has this little speech, about how Willow always, in quotes, had all the power, long before she knew what to do with it. The rest of us—who are the rest of us?—had to work twice as hard to be half as good. Remember how Amy and Willow were friends for, like, four minutes? And then Amy was a rat for a very long time and then they partied together for, like, a week?

Kristin: I'm sorry, are you suggesting that a human and a rat cannot be friends?
[laughs]

Jenny: No, I'm just saying I don't think that they were, like—was Amy trying to practice magic when she was a rat?

Kristin: Right, right. No, no. She's just mad. She's mad because—and this—what was interesting to me about this is that I feel like we've been hearing the same argument from Andrew. Like, Andrew's busy being like, "Spike killed people! Why am I in trouble? Why did I—why am I the bad guy?"

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: And Amy's kinda doing the same thing here, of like, "Willow tried to fucking end the world and I'm the one who's the bad guy?" It's like, you guys, it's not necessarily limited to the actions you take. It's also inclusive of what you do after those actions happen, and how you as a human try to make amends and, you know, restore things that you have harmed and become a better person. That's also a part of this, okay? Okay.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So Amy's like, "I'm not the bad guy, but speaking of the bad guy, wonder where he'd be." And then she snaps Kennedy from the college into Buffy's backyard.

Jenny: Where Willow-Warren is saying Warren's lines from Seeing Red.

Kristin: "You think you can do this to me, that I'd let you get away with this."

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Mm, no thank you.

Jenny: And then, Willow-Warren is like, "I made it happen and I'll make it stop. I killed her." And Kennedy's like, "Her?"

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: And Willow's like, "It was your fault, slut. You tricked me and got me to forget." Ahhh, this is very upsetting.

Kristin: It is, but honestly? Like, if I had to choose between slowly working through my trauma over the course of, like, several years in small conversations, or just, like, absolutely being devoured by it and then screaming all of my most deepest feelings, I would choose this route. You know? Like, it's rough, but—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: They end up in a decent place, and I think Willow got there a lot quicker than she would have if [laughs] she hadn't, you know, been turned into Warren. But Kennedy does a great fucking job back here too. Like, she's real—because she's really listening to what Willow-Warren is saying. And like, calling her/him out on the discrepancies. And like, you're saying this but you said her. But you also said I was there, what are you saying?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Kennedy says Tara's name. And Willow is like, "You do not get to say her name. You tricked me into kissing you." And then she sort of cracks, which is of course, given to Alyson, because no—I don't care how good of an actor you are. You could never mimic this, like, shattering Willow moment. "I can't hold on. He's winning. I'm being punished. I kissed you for a second, but it was enough. I let her go. We should have been forever and I let her be dead." Ohh, no.

Jenny: Urgh!

Kristin: Then they give a back and forth to Adam and Alyson with, "Come back, baby," which I think is—like, I just feel like that's also—who directed this?

Jenny: David Solomon.

Kristin: So I think that this was also directed really well, you know, because this—these are good choices. Like, we get Alyson when we need Alyson to make this shit land. But then we also get this really good back and forth of them both on the lawn, crying—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And sort of calling out for Tara.

Jenny: Oof.

Kristin: But this is—I mean, this is, like, what has sat with Willow since we lost Tara. Like, there is guilt. There is grief and there is—I mean, I have never personally had to date or fall in love again after my partner died. But that's a real thing.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And I would imagine that it comes with some really fucking heavy shit, like this. Even if—I mean, you know, the way Tara died was especially violent and sudden. But even without that, it's like, you know, this is hard for her to, like, be okay with. And I don't know. I just think that it's done really, really well. And I think Kennedy being there, not only to kiss Willow, not only to tell Willow that she's sexy, but also to tell Willow that it's okay that she has these feelings, is really great. And also, if we're being honest, really gay. So good job, everyone. [both laugh]

Jenny: Quite gay. Yeah, I do—I do like this—what they've chosen to make the key to unlocking the spell.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Again, I'm just really—I have so many questions about, like, the mechanics of a penance malediction. [laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, yeah, it's a wiggly spell at best, definitely. But I do think—like, if you take—if you believe that the thing that turned Willow into Warren was the fact that that was the punishment she felt she deserved when she had the guilt—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And felt like she did this, then I do think it stands to reason that as she's hearing from Kennedy—not only via this kiss, 'cause Kennedy then kisses Warren-Willow and transforms him/her into Willow-Willow. But it's like, not just the kiss. It's also what Kennedy was saying before the kiss, which is, "You didn't—you didn't do this." You know, and like, these are the things that—Willow needs to hear that she didn't do this. And Willow also needs to hear that it's okay that she feels sometimes like this was her fault. And also that it's okay to, you know, be interested in other people—like, these were all the things that, like, I think she had

to move through, that would help her not feel so guilty. 'Cause it was the guilt and her feeling like she had done something wrong that allowed the spell to, like, activate in the first place.

Jenny: Yeah. So Kennedy kisses Willow and Willow poofs back into herself. And Kennedy's like, "Hm. I *am* good." [both laugh] Which I like.

Kristin: Yeah. I do too. And then—and this is when I was like, you know, this is a good little fucking episode. Because then, we circle all—we've circled back to fairytale. And now we circle all the way back to tea, when Kennedy says to Willow, "Are you alright?" And Willow says, "I have no idea. I'm so tired." And Kennedy says, "I'll make you some tea." And they walk into the house with their arms around each other's shoulders. And it's nice! And I like it! A lot. We will have more to say about Kennedy, clearly, as the season continues. But I was reading, Jenny, the AV Club review of this episode when it came out. And—

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: You know, there was various things about the episode. But the quote that I pulled—or like, the bits of quotes that I pulled were about this—the author is Noel Murray, who still, you know, is a writer for, like, The New York Times and yada-yada. He's a white dude, I should say, as I feel like that's important. And he—his biggest issue with this episode was that he was like, Ken—he says, "Kennedy, who has barely registered as a character in the previous episodes, and who seems so aggressive and un-nuanced that it's hard to believe that Willow would be attracted to her. So if I can't buy their relationship, I can't buy the emotional arc of The Killer In Me." Later in the thing, he also says, "It would be an incredibly powerful moment—" now he's talking about the scene we just described—"again, if I cared about Kennedy or believed in this coupling." And this is what really got me. In parentheses, he says, "Why oh why couldn't it have been Vi? Or Amanda?" Y'all. We have seen Vi do one and a half things. Okay? One and a half—and bless Vi's sweet, lovely heart. But like, the way that Kennedy, I feel like, was picked up—and we talked about, like, part of the why is because Tara died and that was unfair and everyone was really angry. But also, part of the why is like, how are we taking in Kennedy? And how are we taking in Kennedy as a woman who speaks, like, very, very firmly and clearly about what the fuck she wants and what the fuck she needs. And the fact that she's a character of color—a woman of color, who is saying what the fuck in what she wants and what she needs. Calling this character, at this point, un-nuanced and aggressive seems absolutely bananas to me. Not believing—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Right? That there's, like, a way for them to be attracted to each other also seems fucking bananas to me. And then suggesting that we know Vi better than we know Kennedy, and that you would believe more in a Vi/Willow pairing? Is just—it just feels like a lot of what we have started to say about the audience reception of Kennedy, and we'll say probably a bit more, later on—is really captured in this, you know, 2003 AV Club review. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah. That's, uh...

Kristin: Right?

Jenny: Not great.

Kristin: It's not great. But—and I think, like, what we always try to do here is look at these—'cause it's not great, but it exists. And like, there is a lot of division about the character of Kennedy, and I think there are various reasons for that. But I think that when you have a text like this—and by text, I mean this, like, review of this television episode from the time when it aired—you also can really see a lot of what was happening, clearly. And like, that's important. That's, like, really important to bring, I think, into the conversation. So sorry to call you out, Noel, but I feel like you're doing fine. And I feel like you'll continue to do fine. And maybe you even feel differently about what you wrote now, who knows? But—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: I just think it's important that we look back and we see where we were with these conversations and what was actually kind of hidden underneath, not so well—[laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: The words.

Jenny: Yeah...

Kristin: Hey, we should play the White Supremacy jingle. How about that?

Jenny: Okay!

[WHITE SUPREMACY jingle plays]

You know what that sounds like to me? (What?)

White supremacy! (Oh no)
Woven in not too subtly (Ugh)
White supremacy! (Uh-uh)
Open your eyes and that's where you'll find it
Crush that (squash that)
White supremacy!

Kristin: Alright!

Jenny: Kristin, you got any cool segues to move us from the White Supremacy jingle to the Sexual Tension Awards?

Kristin: [laughs] Well, knowing how much Kennedy is present in the nominations, I would say that we are going to do service to all that Kennedy has brought to us so far. So—

Jenny: Indeed.

Kristin: How about that transition? [laughs]

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Well! Welcome back to another installment of the Sexual Tension Awards, the most important democratic process that occurs within the boundaries of our podcast. Today, we have, as usual, four slots for you. And eight noms to pair within them. We hope you find these offerings acceptable. In slot number one, you can tell an awful lot about a woman by the way that she leans toward you in her university seating, and takes up space on your armrest. It's Kennedy and Vaughne!

Kristin: Honestly, like, I know that Kennedy and Willow deserve to take this week. But like, all I want is a picture of Kennedy and Vaughne in the final round of voting. Because it is good.

Jenny: Mmhmm. It's good. In slot number two, the only coupling that actually kisses in the episode, [Kristin laughs] and also they have, you know—they do some important processing. [both laugh] Very lesbian. It's Kennedy and Willow!

Kristin: Flirting, feelings. Yeah, it's a good time.

Jenny: [laughs] In slot number three, waiting by the phone for that call from the comic shop to inform them that their one copy of The League of Extraordinary

Gentlemen that they'll have to squeeze into an armchair and read together, side by side, each holding one side of the comic book! It's Xandrew.

Kristin: Do you think that it actually wasn't the Potentials opening the bathroom door? It was just Andrew. [both laugh]

Jenny: Of course he's curious! [both laugh] And in slot number four, well, it's my pick. A love that knows not the boundaries of such manmade constraints as time and space. A love that doesn't even need to have both parties in the room together for it to be felt.

Kristin: [laughs] Mmhmm.

Jenny: It's Riley and Spike. Riley and Spike!

Kristin: But I'm gonna put it in the poll—I probably won't be able to fit it. But in my heart, it will be listed in the poll as "Agent Finn and Assface." [both laugh]

Jenny: Please, please, please let us know how you feel, cast your vote in our Twitter poll. You can find it @BufferingCast and the poll will be live for one week from the air date of this episode.

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Wow, we're really chugging through this season, Kristin.

Kristin: Yeah, I think it just feels like that because we're desperately trying to cling to [both laugh] our podcast.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Keep us—keep—what—oh, we're just gonna go back to Season 6—we forgot a couple of things in Season 6.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: We left a couple of trinkets in Season 3.

Jenny: Yeah, I left my wallet in Season 2, so we'll have to go back.

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah, it's true. Thirteen through. Wow. Well, Jenny. I think this was one of my favorite episodes so far of the season, actually. I really enjoyed it.

Jenny: Yeah, I'm with you. A little something for everyone.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. A nice—especially coming off some of the episodes that we've recently gone through, where they've just been, like, either really heavy with exposition or—

Jenny: Oof.

Kristin: You know, there's just been a lot to lift for everyone in this season. And it was nice to have an episode that was like, here's a clear couple of things. Chip is malfunctioning. Kennedy and Willow are kissing, and oh no, Willow's got trauma. Like, that's the Buffy—that's the kind of Buffy formula that I think works the best. So—

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: I was happy to, like, roll around in it for 45 minutes today.

Jenny: [laughs] Hey, you watch episodes however you want, Kristin. [both laugh]

Kristin: I just—I just [laughs] print out every frame from the episode and then I spread them all—

Jenny: [laughs] You just—you Scrooge McDuck through them. [both laugh]

Kristin: Yeah. Alright, Jenny. In case they still don't know, tell them who the fuck you are.

Jenny: Listen, good people! Listen, for once, and let me tell you that I am Jenny Owen Youngs. And when I'm not watching Buffy, I'm making music. I in fact just released a new song a couple weeks ago, a song I wrote with friend of the pod, Hrish Hirway. It's called Ghosts and it's from the fourth-coming EP, It's Dangerous to Go Alone, a collection of songs inspired by video games. You can preorder the EP on Bandcamp. You can find my music on your favorite digital music platform. You can give me a shout on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs and you can join me for live streams on Twitch on a weekly basis.

Kristin: I am...Kristin Russo. Still am, after all these years. Still Kristin Russo. [Jenny laughs] And apart from watching Buffy, watching Angel, talking about those

shows all the time, I also have been doing work in LGBTQ communities for a very long time. Like, I don't know, 15 years or something. Right now, I do a lot of talks at workplaces and at schools, and you can learn all about that work and the work that I've done previously on my website, kristinnoeline.com. That's K-R-I-S-T-I-N N-O-E-L-I-N-E. And you can use that spelling to also follow me on Instagram or on Twitter. And if you just don't want either of us singularly, but only together, well, we have a place for you to do that, too.

Jenny: Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @BufferingCast. And you can drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: If you want to support the things that we do here, you can. We have a Patreon, it's just Patreon.com/bufferingcast. You can also buy some stuff in our merch store, or just really have warm and good feelings about all the things that we try to do and sometimes actually do. Everything you need to know about us is on our website, bufferingthevampireslayer.com. You can find Patreon there, you can find our store there, you can find our events there. So have a blast.

Jenny: This episode was produced by Kristin Russo, Jenny Owen Youngs, and Alba Daza, with support from our consultant, Mackenzie MacDade. It was edited by John Mark Nelson. And till next time...

All three: Awwoooooooooooo!

[Bess Rogers performing "The Killer in Me."]