

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 6.01: Bargaining Part One

[AD]

[CHIME]

Jenny: [singsong] Well! Come to the intro.

Kristin: [singsong] Welcome to the intro! Yeah!

Jenny: We're back! [Kristin laughs] Some might say we never really left.

Kristin: It's true. It's true. Like a—

Jenny: So short was our seasonal break.

Kristin: Quick blink of an eye. But you know what that means, Jenny? That it'll be only a blink of an eye before we get to the end of October, and something really important is happening at the end of October, besides Halloween.

Jenny: Yeah, you wanna know what it is? I'll freakin' tell you! [Kristin laughs] It's a live taping, online, upon the internet, for Season 6, Episode 3, After Life. Saturday— [imitating echo] Saturday, Saturday—October 24th at 6 PM Eastern. Tickets are available now at bit.ly/buffyafterlife. Or you could always head to our calendar of events at bufferingthevampireslayer.com, click Events. We will be talking about After Life, we will be doing it streaming, we will be saying all of our stuff, we will be doing all of our bits. I will be making [Kristin laughs] all of the jokes, Kristin will be asserting all of the theory. [Kristin laughs] And it will be a good time. And please join us. And... cool.

Kristin: Did we or did we not both purchase a few items identically for a potential costume to wear to the live event?

Jenny: I cannot confirm or deny—

Kristin: Great.

Jenny: These rumors.

Kristin: Great, great, great.

Jenny: This unfounded gossip!

Kristin: [laughs] So yes, please join us October 24th. Hey, we have told you already but we're gonna tell you again. Bookending that live event, we have two events with Mack MacDade. We're doing this month—so every three months, we're doing an anti-racist reading and discussion group. The book that we are focused on for October is Mikki Kendall's Hood Feminism. And Mack is going to be doing two sessions. They are distinct from each other, which means you can come to one or to both if you'd like.

Thursday, October 22nd will be direct with Mack. Mack's gonna talk about the book, how the book intersects with our work with Buffering, with the show Buffy the Vampire Slayer, et cetera, and also do a Q&A. October 29th will be small breakout sessions so that you can talk with your fellow Scoobs about the book, about anti-racism, and about—you know, if you've read some of the other books that we've been reading over the past few months—about those books too. You can learn more at bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting.

Also, this is a great time to remind you that, beginning last July, we opened up our Patreon access to all of our black and indigenous listenership for free. You can also learn about that at bufferingthevampire.com/justkeepfighting. All of the perks—the digital music releases, the ad-free episodes, access to the Facebook group, for both Buffering and Angel on Top—are free to you if you're a black or indigenous listener. Bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting.

And on that note, we have a couple of Patreon-specific fun things coming up. [Jenny gasps] This Saturday, just a few days from now, we have a double-header, Jenny. You and me. [Jenny gasps] Doing an Angel, doing a Buffy. [Jenny makes snare drum beat] First, we're doing an Angel Watch. Jenny and I together will be watching Heartthrob [Jenny's beat stops] featuring David Boreanaz, who we are... probably both bi for, I guess, just by nature of—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: You know, being in this universe. Jen—[laughs] I was like—

Jenny: Couldn't be avoided.

Kristin: Looked at you, Jenny, to see if you would agree or disagree and you, very responsibly, just went with the bit. So thank you so much. [both laugh] Also, tune in Saturday, October 10th. This is for all of the Angel on Top patrons. You can get the Zoom link that you need to join us, if you're a patron of Angel on Top.

Saturday, October 10th, that is at 2 PM Eastern, 11 AM Pacific. I don't even need to write down Pacific times any more. My brain just does the math, it just, like, churns it out of my head.

Jenny: Hell yeah.

Kristin: Right after that, on the heels of watching Heartthrob with us, you can—if you are a Buffering patron of \$10 or higher—join us for our livestream hang. This is where Jenny and I hang out—hang out on Crowdcast. We answer your questions, we talk about things. I usually love to tell you secrets about what is ahead, even though I'm not supposed to. [Jenny laughs] I love to tell secrets—

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: All the time. And Jenny plays music as requested by you. So it's a really good time. And that is, again, 3:30 PM, Saturday, October 10th. You can go to Bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Calendar. I'm so sorry, I wrote Events, Jenny. You said "events" but it's actually Calendar. I feel like you can figure it out. And you can find out all the information you need to find for all. Of. These. Things!

Jenny: Well! You know what else is happening. You're about to listen to the first episode of Season 6 of Buffering the Vampire Slayer. But one week from today in this feed, you will find a gift for your ears and brains. The first episode of Angel on Top, Season 3, featuring our new host, LaToya Ferguson.

Kristin: Woo!

Jenny: We are so pumped. And not just featuring LaToya Ferguson, but also featuring... both of us. We'll be talking to LaToya about Season 3, Episode 1, Heartthrob. It's gonna be so fun, we've been working really closely with LaToya and making some new jingles—

Kristin: Mmhmm!

Jenny: And she's been working really hard on some structural, segment-y business. It's gonna be super fun, so definitely look out for that episode next week.

Kristin: Oh my god, it's gonna be great. And I don't mean to spoil anything for you, but I wanna say that it's possible that we posit what a relationship between Fred and Faith would look like, during that conversation. I'm just saying, maybe—we cannot confirm nor deny if that conversation will happen in next week's episode of Angel on Top.

Jenny: Mmm-hmm!

Kristin: Normally, Jenny, I read an email from a listener in the intro. It's a delight, a true delight. Instead of reading one email from a listener this week, I am going to paraphrase dozens of emails that came through after last week's Mailbag—

Jenny: [snorts] Ha!

Kristin: Where we read an email that said, "The math of 7-3-0 doesn't check out. Dawn arrives and here's the math." And boy oh boy, did we all fuck up. 7-3-0 is not referencing Dawn's arrival. 7-3-0 is referencing Buffy's death. I am sorry, Jenny is sorry. We apologize from our heart space and also appreciate all of you sweet fucking cherubs who were like, hey, um? Great mailbag episode, but Hellmath, a bit off. [both laugh] So we're so sorry. You'll actually hear—if you wanna hear like, sort of a behind-the-scenes moment later in this episode, you'll hear me reference 7-3-0. And I—we had recorded this episode before I realized the error of our ways. So I cut out where I did it wrong again, so now you know.

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: The mistake was there, but by the power of editing, it is gone forever. We've been corrected—

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: We will never make a mistake ever again!

Jenny: Never again! [Kristin laughs] What we will do is release music! Yes, that's right.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: CDs for "Songs from Season 5" are currently in our European and United States stores. We've got the digital album coming out on Friday on all DSPs. And uh, we've also got some—

Kristin: DSPs?! Digital streaming platforms?

Jenny: Digital—yeah. Exactly.

Kristin: What a nerd!

Jenny: [sarcastically] Oh, I'm sorry. It's just my industry. [both laugh] We've also got some new threads for you. In the US and Euro stores, we've got new Sleepaway Witch Camp pullover hoodies, mm-mm-mm! And in the US store, we've got a new tee designed by A. Andrews, that says "Burn it down!"

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: In a beautiful nine-color print. So gorgeous, a great reminder to burn things down. [Kristin laughs] All the way, to the ground, to cinders, to embers and then use that ash to fertilize new crops.

Kristin: Fuck yeah.

Jenny: You know? As I always say.

Kristin: What is that thing that comes from the ashes?

[long pause]

Jenny: The phoenix?

Kristin: Yeah, baby!

Jenny: Okay. [both laugh]

Kristin: Seriously, the new tee is really stunning, it's so beautiful. And you know, pretty thematic 'cause we're all ready to burn it down. So let's burn it the fuck down together. You can find links to both our US-based and European-based stores by going to bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Shop. Um, and... I think—Jenny, that's it. I think we're ready for a beautiful theme song followed by the dulcet tones of us, once again, talking about Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Jenny: Arms up! Rollercoaster peak! Here we gooooo! [Kristin laughs]

[Buffering theme plays]

Jenny: Hello! And welcome! To Buffering the Vampire Slayer, Season 6! A podcast where we're watching and discussing every episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, one by one, spoiler free. I am Buffering the Vampire Slayer's sweetheart, Jenny Owen Youngs!

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: Ha-ha!

Kristin: What the hell! I am Kristin Russo. I was not told to bring an airhorn to this recording [Jenny laughs] but I would have prepared better, had I known. Hey, this week—holy shit, after such a long vacation—a luxuriating, relaxing time, months and months away, we—[laughs]

Jenny: Oh yes, who can even remember the end of Season 5? It's so distant, through the haze of crude memories since then.

Kristin: We're back, with Season 6, Episode fuckin' 1, Bargaining Part One. Listen, stay tuned at the end of this podcast every other week for an original song written by this podcast's sweetheart, apparently—

Jenny: That's right. Yeah.

Kristin: Jennifer Owen Youngs, recapping—

Jenny: [singsong] Hell yeah!

Kristin: The Buffy episode that we are discussing.

Jenny: Bargaining Part One was written by Marti Noxon.

Kristin: Woo!

Jenny: Directed by David Grossman.

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: And originally aired on October 2nd, 2001. Just... [Kristin laughs] one month and 20 days before I turned 20, thank you. [both laugh]

Kristin: And um, so you know—if you don't know, Bargaining Part One and Bargaining Part Two both aired on this day that Jenny just mentioned. However, we're just two girls trying to make a podcast, so you have to wait two weeks to get Bargaining Part Two from us. And, um—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Hey, this is the one where, according to IMDB, the gang hopes to bring Buffy back from the dead. Meanwhile, motorcycle-riding demons discover the Buffybot has been posing as the Slayer. Vroom-vroom, baby, am I right?

Jenny: I... suppose? [Kristin laughs] You are right. Listen, I know we've seen Willow talking inside people's heads before, but never so strategically as this, and never from so high up.

Kristin: It's true. Well, she just learned the trick, right? Didn't she just learn it in The Gift? And now she's been like, oh hell yeah. [Jenny snickers] I can just talk to everyone—I love the fact that Xander talks out loud. I would fully do the same thing. Just for—

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: You know, point of reference, I don't often say I would do that thing Xander does. [laughs] But this is a thing I would do.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: But yeah, Willow is sort of, like, point up there on the top of the crypt, or whatever you call that thing. Mausoleum? And there are—like, everybody sort of has their roles. Giles is very winded. There's a lot to talk about in this scene. Jenny, I wanna talk about the fact that there are—eventually, there are two vamps. But at first, there's like, six fucking Scoobies—one, an incredibly powerful witch—[laughing] against one vampire! And—

Jenny: One, a vampire!

Kristin: [laughing] One singular vampire.

Jenny: Like... how are Willow, Tara and Spike not just clearing... this out? I also love that Willow can't communicate telepathically with the Buffybot, because the Buffybot is a machine. [Kristin laughs] So her only recourse is to just get everyone to kind of like, herd the vampires toward the Buffybot.

Kristin: Yeah. I mean, there's—you know. There's a lot to clear—like, I wanna have sympathy from like, a writer's room perspective. Because it is, it's an enjoyable scene and it's like—it's fun and we're happy. And the—you know, the tease is there of, we've lost Buffy but then oh my god, we get this reveal of, you know, her standing over the vamp in her leather pants. And you're like, oh my god, she's alive. And we'll talk about it in a little bit more detail, but you know, I have

sympathy for the fact that they had to do a lot here to get us to where we need to get to. But in real life—

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: In real-life Sunnydale, I don't think that it would take six Scoobies—these six Scoobies to defeat one vampire.

Jenny: I agree.

Kristin: So let's talk for a moment about this vampire. There eventually are two vamps in the cemetery, but we start with this one vampire, who is very much modeled after, like, the football... linebacker? Is that how you talk about sports?

Jenny: Um, you know, it's interesting. I... linebacker was the first word—as a football expert—[Kristin laughs] that occurred to *me*, when I was watching this. But then I looked up, what is the position that's traditionally played by, like, the largest, most intimidating players, and it's "offensive linemen." And I think their whole deal is protecting the quarterback at all costs.

Kristin: Oh, okay. Yeah, that makes sense. I was thinking of, um—there was a football player called—like, his nickname was The Bus. I think he played for the Pittsburgh Steelers. And it was like, the first year that I ever got into football. Which—listen, I—it's a whole thing, don't make me get into my conversation around football in this podcast. But I will just say that I think of him when I think of, like, that position and I don't know if that's what he did.

Jenny: It's, uh—Jerome Bettis is that player's name.

Kristin: Yes! Yes. Jerome Bettis. He played for the Pittsburgh Steelers, it was his retirement year and they won the Superbowl. It was his only Superbowl win, it was his last year playing football, it was really emotional. You know me, everybody, I'm an emotional viewer. So I got very attached to Jerome Bettis. Anyhow. This vampire—who knew Season 6 would start off with you finding out that I had emotional feelings toward Jerome Bettis—

Jenny: Mmm. Mmhmm.

Kristin: Who played for the Pittsburgh Steelers. You really can't predict these things. [laughs] But I know that—Jenny, you and I both wanna talk about the fact that this vampire is modeled—like, very much modeled after like, a linebacker or an offensive lineman or whatever you wanna say. But is also—opening shot. Like, this

character—this vampire character is put in this episode to be the butt of jokes. Buffybot's first line to him is, "Big, fast and dumb, just the way I like 'em." And of course, this is the only black character that we see in the opening scene. And apart from the teacher later in the school, is the only black character in the show. And we've talked a lot about, already, the end of Season 5—we've been talking about how black actors are put into this show and many other shows simply to sort of tick a box, not being any kind of part of the plotline or developed in any kind of way. And in many instances, used exactly in this way, as the butt of a joke. And Jenny...

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Alba had an idea for us, awhile back, that you have brought to fruition for us, haven't you?

Jenny: Indeed! In our very first exchange with Alba, way back, she suggested that we consider bringing a "White Supremacy" jingle into the mix. And thus! I have collaborated with an incredible musician—singer, songwriter, violinist, Aisha Burns. We got together on Zoom. We worked on writing this jingle together. You're about to hear Aisha's voice for perhaps the first time. Some of you, I know, came out about a year and a half ago when I played some shows in the Northeast. Aisha was opening up those shows. She's so amazing and I had such a blast working on this with her. And huge thanks to Alba for the idea to begin with. So, here we go. Kicking off Season 6... with the very first implementation of the White Supremacy jingle.

[WHITE SUPREMACY jingle plays]
You know what that sounds like to me? (What?)
White supremacy! (Oh no)
Woven in not too subtly (Duh)
White supremacy! (Uh-uh)
Open your eyes and that's where you'll find it
Crush that (squash that)
White supremacy!

Kristin: Holy shit. Aisha, thank you so much.

Jenny: Aisha's so fucking amazing. And you should absolutely check her music out. You can find her aishaburns.com and we will have a link in the show notes as well.

Kristin: Hell yes.

Jenny: She's so great.

Kristin: Thank you also, Alba, for having the brilliant idea in the first place for us to create this jingle. You know, sadly, it will not be the last time you hear it in here. But—

Jenny: Alas.

Kristin: It's pretty—it's pretty great. It's pretty great that we have it and that we can use it in moments like these, to shout it out.

Jenny: Now... I feel like this vampire's pretty smart, actually. And here's why. He picks up the Buffybot and kicks Spike in the face with the Buffybot's feet. I feel like that is a resourceful move, and I salute him.

Kristin: It's incredible and I actually wrote down in my notes, Jenny: where do vampires learn wrestling moves, though? Because it seems... [both laugh]

Jenny: They just come—when they crawl out of the grave, they all seem to be imbued with this knowledge.

Kristin: Right? It's like—I understand getting like, super strength and—

Jenny: [gasps] Which further begs the question, are any pro wrestlers or perhaps *all* pro wrestlers actually vampires?

Kristin: Ohh!

Jenny: We need to consult LaToya Ferguson.

Kristin: LaToya Ferguson, yep.

Jenny: We'll find out.

Kristin: We need to find an expert, LaToya Ferguson. Don't worry, we'll—we know her number. We'll call her up, we'll get her input on this burning question. But yeah, it's like, you know, I understand super strength. I understand, you know, drinking blood. I understand all of the lore that goes [laughs] along with vampires. But I just wanna know, like, is it—do they just wake up with those moves or is there a training gym? You know what I mean? Is there a little vamp—[Jenny laughs] a little vamp wrestling training gym where they're like, no, no, Spike. That was good, man, but you really got to get the legs higher. Get the legs higher.

Jenny: I think, in addition to the increased strength, there's a heightened—much like Buffy, you know, there's faster reflexes, probably a much greater awareness of things like balance and like, your own kinetic energy and all of that stuff—

Kristin: Ohh!

Jenny: Which would play into wrestling moves. But I still—there's still a missing link, of like, [Kristin laughs] how did you figure out—

Kristin: [laughing] Right.

Jenny: Exactly what to do?

Kristin: I mean, really, one of my—one of my little Bingo cards for this taping, Jenny, was—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: "Get Jenny to say 'kinetic energy' in the first ten minutes." And I think I did it.

Jenny: Hey!

Kristin: So I win. Before we get to Bingo... 'cause we'll be talking more about that word. There's a couple of things. You already touched on the wrestling moves. And I would like to talk about the fact that Spike dusts a vamp maybe in the sexiest way a vamp has ever been dusted? And also begs the question—which I think we've asked here before. Why don't they use flaming arrows for vamps? Why is it only stakes? It's like, if you can just set a vampire on fire and then poof.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, Spike literally lights his cigarette and dusts the vamp, and doesn't even tell Giles. Willow's like, yo, what are you doing? Why aren't you helping him? And he's like, puff-puff, I did. [both laugh]

Jenny: Not thinking for a moment about how dangerous that enormous open flame is to himself! Immolation watch!

Kristin: [laughs] I—we get an amazing moment between Spike and Giles here, which I *must* point out. Where, you know, Spike lovingly, I would say, helps Giles off the ground, in their like, odd-couple way. And Giles is like, you coulda told me

what your fucking plan was before I saw my whole life flash before my eyes. And Spike's like, oh yeah, well, I'm sure it was just "cuppa tea, cuppa tea, almost got shagged, cuppa tea." [both laugh] It's very—it's fun. I love these two, I love them for each other.

Jenny: Then we get this vampire who looks like a He-Man action figure?

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: You know? Like a—

Kristin: With the, like, wrist cuffs?

Jenny: Like a bad guy from—he's got, right—he's got these long, leather, studded bracelets that go up almost to his elbows. He's got, like, a sleeveless sort of like, button-down shirt that's flapping open. Like, he's just really the stuff of action-figure molds from the late 1980s.

Kristin: Yeah, definitely.

Jenny: It's so strange. What is his look?

Kristin: Yeah, I don't know. They went—they really went, like, really detailed on several vampire looks in this episode. Because we'll soon get to Hansen Vamp, who has his—

Jenny: Ha-ha.

Kristin: Own particular style going for him. But Jenny, this is the moment when our reveal happens, right, with the—because we've seen—like, to back track. As the viewer watching this episode for the first time, we've seen the vampire and then Buffy. Allegedly, getting atop the vampire in a very Faith-inspired outfit, lots of leather, lots of red. And you know, it's intended to be a viewer being like, oh my god, she's *not* dead. But then of course, we get this line.

[Clip from episode plays]

Buffybot: That'll put marzipan in your pie plate, Bingo!

Jenny: I mean, if I had a dollar for every time I had to say that to somebody.
[Kristin laughs] We wouldn't need ads.

Kristin: I found something fun that I'd like to share with you, Jenny and our listeners, about this line, okay. So you know how sometimes things have deeper meaning. Like for example, 7-3-0 being exactly two years—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Very deep, inherent meaning in that line. And then sometimes, like, maybe people like to dig really deep and lay meaning over a line. I'm not saying that I believe or disbelieve this thing I found on the internet. But I found this very long essay by this person who was like, there's so much meaning in this line that everybody thinks is a joke. I'm not gonna talk about it, you can Google it. Google "marzipan in your pie plate, Bingo," it's one of the first things that comes up.

Jenny: Hmm.

Kristin: It's a Reddit thread. But what I do wanna tell you that I learned in the thread, Jenny, is that marzipan—the word "marzipan" is what is referred to as a "hapax legomenon"? Have you ever heard of that before?

Jenny: [sarcastically] Yeah, obviously, of course. [both laugh] What is that?

Kristin: I don't know if I said it right, but it's a word, one word, that appears only once in an entire text. So like, in the entirety of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, "marzipan," the word, only appears one time. And this is the time. The reason it's interesting—I mean—I mean, it's a great word, first of all. But the reason it's interesting is because we know how much Buffy leans on Shakespeare, takes from Shakespeare, Joss Whedon is a big Shakespeare fan, on and on and on.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Well. A word only used once—a hapax legomenon, if you will—I'm so sorry, I'm probably saying it wrong every time—

Jenny: I will.

Kristin: To the delight of all of our linguist listeners. But marzipan—it was actually a different word in Shakespeare's time. I don't know if it's pronounced mark-pon or march-pon or what. But it's—to mean marzipan—was used only one time in all of Shakespeare, in Romeo and Juliet. "Look to the plate. Good thou, save / me a piece of marchpane, and, as thou loves/ me." So... just saying. That's fun. It's fun—

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: That that word is one time in Shakespeare and one time in Buffy. And it's also fun that we now all know... "hapax legomenon" or [pronounces it slightly different] "hapax legomenon." Or—every time I say it, I just think of Agamemnon. [laughs]

Jenny: Mm. Mmhmm.

Kristin: But anyway. That's your little linguistic corner—

Jenny: Wow!

Kristin: From me. I was delighted by it.

Jenny: Great journalism. [Kristin laughs] So this strange would-be quip is kind of the definitive indication that this is not Buffy, but rather the Buffybut. Then there's this handy little... [laughing] verbal human centipede of—[Kristin laughs] going down the line of Scoobies. "You want her to be exactly, she'll never be exactly."

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: "I know. The only really real Buffy is really Buffy. And she's gone." To which Buffybot... wisely inquires...

[Clip from episode plays]

Buffybot: You want her to be exactly she'll never be exactly I know the only really real Buffy is really Buffy and she's gone who?

Kristin: Oh my god, it's so funny. So Jenny, you did a decent job with that set-up but what you didn't say is that Buffybot, apart from being programmed to try puns out, used to be obsessed with knock-knock jokes. [laughing] And so—

Jenny: Oh, yeah. [both laugh] Oh, yeah. Sorry, that's an important part of the set-up.

Kristin: The reason that this is, like, extra hilarious is because she has said "knock knock" before this whole conversation happens. [both laugh] So. Um, it's really delightful. Uh, listen, you know, it's the premiere of Season 6, so I know that we're only, like, a scene in. We've just gotten to the credits. But this is what happens. It's a season premiere, a lot's happening, a lot's moving and shaking. So like, just buckle in. 'Cause the credits are new, Jenny.

Jenny: Plus we have a lot—a lot of stuff that has been building up inside us over the many months that we took off.

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah.

Jenny: So much commentary.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: The credits!

Kristin: Hey.

Jenny: Uh, Giles is not in the credits. What's up?

Kristin: [gasps] Wow, I didn't even write that down—I wrote so much down, I didn't write that down. But that's why there's two of us. Do you know what the opening fucking shot is of the credits now?

Jenny: What is it?

Kristin: It's the goddamn alien head from The Gift. The alien head is now the first fucking thing that you see in the Season 6 credits. [Jenny cackles] We have two Xanders, no waiting in the credits now.

Jenny: Wow!

Kristin: We've lost Faith and Buffy dancing at The Bronze.

Jenny: I know!

Kristin: But it's been replaced with Anya dancing at The Bronze.

Jenny: Which is pretty good. But...

Kristin: Pretty good.

Jenny: It's not the same. It's not the same.

Kristin: It's not the same. We also though get Anya with a bat. And I think Anya with a bat plus Anya dancing at The Bronze is equal to Faith and Buffy dan—mm, no. You're right, nothing's equal to Faith and Buffy dancing at The Bronze. [laughs]

Jenny: Mmhmm. Correct.

Kristin: And we get—you know, the—we've talked a little bit about the fact that there's always this hero shot at the end of the credits. And that in every season, the goal is to get that hero shot to use, then, in the next season's credits. Well, we do in fact have that hero shot from The Gift, from when Buffy was in the alleyway with that vamp and said, you know, "I keep telling them that I'm just a girl." Like, when that whole exchange happened. That hero shot is from that moment. So a lot of stuff. We also get Willow's queer culture, you know, throwing lightning bolts at Glory—

Jenny: Mm!

Kristin: Moment.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: So yeah. Credits of Season 6. Wow, wow, wow, wow.

Jenny: Okay. So here we are. At the Summers' residence. Willow and Tara live here now. They have—

Kristin: The gayest opening line of all. "Where's my clog?" [both laugh] You mentioned that at the cemetery, Jenny, there's this exchange, of like, you can never make her actually Buffy because she's not. And it's played off in that scene as a bit of a punchline, but there's a bit of gravity to it as well.

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: In this scene, it starts to really be hammered home. And you know—myself anyway as a viewer, having been thinking about the reality of the lived experience of these characters. They have just lost their sister, their best friend, their—like, all of these, you know, very intense relationships that they had with Buffy. And since the moment that they buried her body, they have been living with this robot that looks exactly like her and feels—

Jenny: Oof.

Kristin: Exactly like her and talks almost exactly like her. That is, like, trauma on some level that I don't even wanna think about.

Jenny: Yeah, it's a lot.

Kristin: But hey, she makes a lot of sandwiches.

Jenny: So many sandwiches! The leaning tower of sandwiches. [Kristin laughs] We get this funny little homophonic joke, "mega wiches, mega witches." [Kristin laughs] Xander arrives and declares, "house of chicks, relax, I am a man and I have a tool." I think he got "have" and "am" mixed up again.

[THE PATRIARCHY jingle plays]
The patriarchy! [thunder clap, evil laughter]

Jenny: But he's happy to receive a stack of sandwiches and do his part in, you know, making them disappear.

Kristin: And there's this fun—you know, the thing that this show always does, right, of like, "we're facing our biggest challenge yet." And you're like, set up to think, oh, what's the big monster? And of course, it's the parent-teacher meetings.

Jenny: [intense announcer voice] Parent-teacher week! Okay—ugh.

Kristin: [laughs] At the middle school. Also, rewind. Because Buffy's father, Hank Summers, does not know his daughter is dead. Buried under the ground.

Jenny: Yeah... that's a lot.

Kristin: That's—

Jenny: That's an interesting choice everyone made together.

Kristin: Yeah. Well—and what's really the most wiggly part of this whole episode is the choices that are made together and the choices that are made not together, as a group.

Jenny: Mm.

Kristin: Lot of choices being made in this—

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: Situation, where Buffy has died. So anyway.

Jenny: This episode could be called "Decisions, Part One." [Kristin laughs] So at parent-teacher week, Buffybot manages to pull off exactly what she was able to pull off when interacting with the Scoobies for the first time. She says, uh, totally random shit. And everyone around her interprets it in such a way that it perfectly integrates into the topic at hand. Bless.

Kristin: Mmhmm. Mmhmm.

Jenny: And before you know it, you know, the parents are clamoring behind their leader, Buffybot, for school lunch reform.

Kristin: Yeah, and like—

Jenny: Hurray!

Kristin: Spike—you know, in a later scene, Spike kind of sums this up very nicely by saying, like, of course she succeeded. Like, she's so predictable and like, that is—like, you know, he refers to it as, like, a teacher needing something predictable to be a teacher's pet. But really, it could be extended, I think, to the parents in the room. Like, this is something that, like, they can latch onto to get their actual concerns out into the open. Spike's line of reasoning is more about how you just come out of school as an automon [sic]? Auto—auto—

Jenny: Automaton.

Kristin: Yep. [laughs]

Jenny: A mindless automaton. [both laugh] Um, cool.

Kristin: A mindless ottoman! [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah, whew!

Kristin: Okay. Should we please, please talk for a moment about Anya and Giles having a fucking slap fight? Because it's one of my favorite things in the whole world.

Jenny: This is reminiscent of the Xander and Harmony big fight. Isn't it? A lot of slapping.

Kristin: Hell yeah. Which means it was probably choreographed.

Jenny: Oh, yeah, no doubt. [Kristin laughs] And didn't, um, Mercedes McNab tell us that they wore like, kneepads and shit?

Kristin: [laughing] Yes! [both laugh] Oh my god, I hope—I hope, more than anything, that they made fucki' Emma Caulfield and Tony Head put on some padding for this newspaper fight. Anya is—you know, the information that's important is that Anya is frustrated. She has this Anya way, right, of saying things that are so... poignant? And the way that she describes that the stress and bossiness is leaking out of her [Jenny laughs] because all these conflicting things was so—I felt so called out.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Like, so called out. I was like, oh my god, that's literally—stress and bossiness leaking out is how I feel quite often.

Jenny: Yeah. My notes say, "I was being patient but it took too long: The Kristin Russo Story." [Kristin laughs hard] Giles is going to England or so he keeps saying, but he keeps not leaving and Anya's getting very itchy. And imagine how difficult it must be for Giles to think about leaving. But also, why in the fuck is Giles leaving all of these children alone—

Kristin: Dude. On the Hellmouth!

Jenny: In charge of another tiny child on the Hellmouth!

Kristin: On the fucking Hellmouth! Like, what?!

Jenny: Giles, Giles, Giles.

Kristin: Also, why is Faith not here? What's happening?

Jenny: Faith is in prison, isn't she?

Kristin: [laughs] Yeah. No, she is, but—like, don't you think the Watchers' Council would get together and like, fucking figure some shit out? They just—do the Watchers' Council not know that Buffy is dead? And is the only reason that this is a successful plan because Faith is alive but also in prison? Listen. Wow. Let me back

up and go back to where we were in the scene, 'cause I'm getting all sorts of worked up.

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: Anya is upset, for the reasons that you said. But also, Anya is upset because she got engaged to Xander in the season finale—

Jenny: But it's still a secret!

Kristin: And it's—and they haven't told anybody yet, right. And so she's like—she's just feeling like, caught in this place where nothing is moving forward in any way.

Jenny: Yeah, mmhmm.

Kristin: And she's feeling really overwhelmed by that.

Jenny: Ugh!

Kristin: So that's relatable content.

Jenny: Yeah. She also says, "just remember that this whole marriage thing was your stupid idea." [laughs] Hell yeah!

Kristin: [laughs] So we talked a little bit about the conversation that happens between Spike and Dawn when they're at the house. But I would like to give a special shout out to Spike's hair. It looks pheno—*phenomenal*, Spike. Spike's Season 6 hair, thumbs up from Kristin.

Jenny: You know what would be cool? If, along with this hair looking so great, Spike did not have violent outbursts—not directed at Dawn, but happening directly in front of Dawn.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: This sucks, and maybe, I don't know, is a good reminder that Spike is a vampire and doesn't have a soul. And even if he does, you know, experience feelings that he is perceiving as love or tenderness or whatever, like, he still is lacking a certain foundational, like, lining—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Of himself.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: That would maybe... not that people with souls can't also have violent outbursts.

Kristin: Right, well, that's what I was gonna say, that I think that this is just—you know, we're seeing obviously many different manifestations of grief. And I think that Spike is a character, vampire, person, however we wanna refer to him, who—regardless of if he had a soul or not—would likely show up to a space like this. Who would likely sort of roll up and be like, I—like, I am never going—he show—'cause that moment that he has, you're talking about where he slams the cards down or whatever on the table—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: And he says, "I'm not leaving you to get hurt, not again."

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: It's his way of, like, also showing his like, love and appreciation for Buffy and for Dawn. And it comes out through violence and that is what you're saying. And it's—it's a problem.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: It's one of Spike's main problems.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: So.

Jenny: Well! [Kristin laughs] Meanwhile. Buffybot—

Kristin: Meanwhile at Hansen Alley.

Jenny: Yeah. Buffybot is encountering one of the most fearsome and notorious strains of vampire in Sunnydale. [Kristin laughs] Vampires who love Hansen and aren't afraid to wear Hansen t-shirts.

Kristin: Yo, this guy straight up was like, can somebody turn me into a vampire, please? Like, this is his whole deal. Like, this guy went to one of those vamp dens, probably paid good money to get sired so he could be like—

Jenny: Oh yeah.

Kristin: "I'm a vampire, I'm so cool now."

Jenny: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Kristin: You're not cool, man. You're not cool. But he happens to be at the right place at the right time. And just, I mean—

Jenny: With the right bottle in his hand.

Kristin: Right. Like, if it's not common for a vamp to pick up a bottle, but this guy does. And he injures the Buffybot, revealing that she is a machine. And he—I mean, it's kind of—like, they jump to a lot of conclusions, the vamps and the motorcycle demons. Because there's nothing to say that they just didn't figure out how to make a bunch of Buffybots and send them around town.

Jenny: Right?

Kristin: Like, it doesn't—

Jenny: And also, later, one of the bikers says that the Hansen-loving vamp said that Buffy has been replaced with a robot.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Like, it's just—it's just a lot of assumptions.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And you know what happens when you assume? Kristin, when you assume, you make your entire... oh no, I can't say it 'cause it's a spoiler for the next episode. [laughs] Never mind!

Kristin: [laughs] Okay. The vampire runs away to go tell the motorcycle demons about this revelation. Meanwhile, the Buffybot is just walking repeatedly into like a pile of stuff in the alleyway, saying "vampires beware, vampires beware."

Jenny: Aww!

Kristin: And you know, I'm just gonna—I know. I know that like, when we started this conversation about the series, we would talk for like 45 minutes and now we talk for like two hours. I can't help it, I have a lot to fucking say. And like, I just—I'm gonna say it, you know?

Jenny: Mmm. Mmhmm, mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: But I just thought that it was a really interesting and powerful parallel. Because in *The Gift*, we see Buffy in an alleyway with a vamp, who's sort of like an any vamp. You know? And in this scene, we're seeing Buffybot in the alleyway with sort of an any vamp. And the different—the way that those two scenes play out, parallel to each other, I just thought was really important. Because this whole episode is hinging on the fact that nothing could ever replace Buffy, that this Buffybot could never fill her shoes.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: You know, in any way, shape or form. And that is because—and this is—if you didn't listen to our mailbag, we had this whole conversation about like, where a robot and a human, where that line is. Like, what is—where is the line and it's getting more and more blurry. But this scene I think is really here to show us that it doesn't matter how strong the Buffybot is. She's fallible in ways that human Buffy was not.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Anyway. Shall we talk about the Urn of Osiris? [laughs]

Jenny: "I bought it on Ebay." [laughs] Is that the Ebay slogan? I'm casting about in my mind, trying to remember what people say. [Kristin laughs] Uh, I found it on Ebay? I got it on Ebay? I located it on Ebay? [laughs]

Kristin: I think "I got it on Ebay" sounds good. Anya got this fucking—the last known Urn of Osiris on Ebay from a desert gnome in Cairo. Uh, drove a hard bargain and Anya's very proud of herself. And this is when we dig deep into the bringing Buffy back from the dead conversation. Do you wanna know a little bit about Osiris, Jenny?

Jenny: Please tell me everything.

Kristin: Okay, so Osiris is the god of fertility, agriculture, the afterlife, the dead, resurrection, life and vegetation in ancient Egyptian religion. So, you know, that's a bit on Osiris, but also another interesting detail about Osiris is that his brother, Set, cut him into pieces after killing him. And then Isis—

Jenny: Rude!

Kristin: Very rude—his wife found all the pieces of Osiris, wrapped his body up, and enabled him to return to life. He is the first to be assoc—

Jenny: Get yourself a girl who will find the pieces of your body... [Kristin laughs] wrap them up and enable you to return to life, as I always say.

Kristin: As you *always* say, Jenny. Osiris is the first to ever be associated with the mummy wrap. And obviously, this like pulling together of parts... bringing back, resurrecting, it's all—it all makes sense. So I think it's a good choice for the urn that we're going to use to fill with a fawn's blood to put on our faces and bring back Buffy the vampire slayer. [laughing] Don't you, Jenny?

Jenny: [exhales] Hell yeah!

Kristin: Whoo! Giving us the nuggets of happiness that we need in what is a dark episode and perhaps a dark season, in what one might say is a dark time, we find out that in addition—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: To the Urn of Osiris, the desert gnome in Cairo threw in a limited edition Backstreet Boys lunchbox for one Xander Harris!

[Part of "I Want It That Way" by Backstreet Boys plays]
You are my fire
The one desire
You are (you are, you are, you are)
Don't want to hear you say
Ain't nothin' but a heartache (yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah)

Jenny: No, no, no, it was for a friend! [Kristin laughs] It was definitely for a friend.

Kristin: Xander—I feel like—

Jenny: Xander loves the Backstreet Boys?!

Kristin: Of course he does! Of course he does!

Jenny: Wait. I gotta look up a picture of the Backstreet Boys and then decide which one I think is—

Kristin: [singing] "Backstreet's back, all right!"

Jenny: Xander's favorite.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: Hang on. [pause] Okay, so...

Kristin: You don't think it's—isn't it Nick?

Jenny: Who are these men?

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, I just—I would have thought that it would be Nick Lachey. Personally. But you think it would be somebody else?

Jenny: Okay, so there's... um... I'm looking at this photo, I'm gonna go left to right. The Christian one. The really tall one with a goatee. Nick Lachey. And then random Backstreet Boy 4 and random Backstreet Boy 5.

Kristin: Great, you're doing great, Jenny. The Backstreet Boys appreciate your sport. [laughs]

Jenny: I think actually Xander might be into the Christian one, because he's the one who objectively looks the most like Spike.

Kristin: Oh, okay. Wow. I mean, you know what, I'm here for that. So—

Jenny: Thank you.

Kristin: Let us know at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com which Backstreet Boy you think Xander Harris would have the biggest crush on.

Jenny: Please let us know. Well! Now that this Ebay shipment has arrived. It would appear that the Scoobies have everything they need for that thing. Especially... because Mercury's in retrograde.

Kristin: I thought you're not supposed to do shit when Mercury's in retrograde, specifically. [Jenny makes blabbing noise, both laugh] It's almost like—between if you have two queer women in a room, one of them must know what Mercury in retrograde really means.

Jenny: I can help. I can help. Actually, I learned, while looking up how I could explain this reasonably to you. [laughs]

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I learned that 75% of the year, at least one planet is retrograde.

Kristin: Oh.

Jenny: And here's why. Are you ready?

Kristin: I'm ready.

Jenny: Okay, so picture this. The sun is at the center of our solar system.

Kristin: Got it.

Jenny: Orbiting very closely is Mercury.

Kristin: 'Kay.

Jenny: Hermes, the messenger of the gods. He's swift, right? [Kristin laughs] He's just *whipping* around the sun, okay? [Kristin laughs] Outside of Mercury's orbit, Earth is also orbiting the sun—

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: Forming a concentric orbit around Mercury's orbit.

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: We are not traveling the same distance around the sun that Mercury is. So we might be traveling in, where I love to drive, the slow lane. [laughs] And then Mercury might be swinging up around and passing us. You know that feeling when you're sitting at a red light and it turns green, and a car next to you starts moving. And even though you are standing still and they are moving forward, it feels for a moment like you are moving backwards?

Kristin: A hundred percent.

Jenny: It's kind of like that. The optical illusion of Mercury traveling backwards is created by the difference in the speed of our respective orbits and Mercury, essentially, passing us.

Kristin: [whispers] Wow.

Jenny: I found an incredibly helpful video on Youtube that I'd love to link to in the show notes—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: That just illustrates this very simply.

Kristin: Wow! I'm sorry, I know I was so quiet. If I can, I'm gonna actually pull out this part of our video recording for our patrons. [both laugh] Because you will then see that I was just like, plastered to the video screen, in complete awe. That is a great explanation. And I'm assuming that the video that you're gonna link to is where you got some of those skills that you just used to explain that? [both laugh]

Jenny: Well, the—I actually did some reading. And then the video is actually—

Kristin: [sarcastically] You? Reading?

Jenny: Yeah. [both laugh] Is just—it just sort of shows the orbits and like, where Earth and Mercury are, in relation to one another, as they orbit the Earth [sic]. It's super simple to look at and there's more reading to be done. Unfortunately, when you Google "Mercury retrograde" or "Mercury in retrograde," like, 60% of the search returns are like, "Mercury in retrograde explained without stupid astrology, what a bunch of losers!" Like, that's the tone.

Kristin: Wow!

Jenny: Like, you can't just explain it without being like, meh!

Kristin: But so you're not—I mean, what I'm taking from this is—I understand what it means now, in terms of like, planetary movement. I've always been told not to buy electronics or purchase anything or do much when Mercury's in retrograde. But apparently, bringing my best friend back from the dead is something I should do when Mercury is in retrograde.

Jenny: You know, everybody has their own idea of what best practices are. [both laugh] I would actually maybe argue that bringing your best friend back from the dead is best done *never*.

Kristin: Okay, yep. Fair point.

Jenny: But if you must, then I guess when Mercury is in retrograde. This seems like—I mean. As I just said, like, you know, all the planets can be in retrograde at different times. Mercury is in retrograde three to four times a year for usually about a few weeks at a time.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: I think this is the case of—like so many of the things that we pick apart—where, like—

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: It's just something that's like, easily accessible in the collective consciousness enough to include in a television script.

Kristin: Right, right.

Jenny: You know?

Kristin: Totally. So, I mean, this scene is—Xander's been getting a lot of, like, I think accolades, from us? He had a pretty—[Jenny laughs] he had a pretty good season in Season 5. And I think that he has a really strong presence in the room in this scene, in a way that I have respect for. The general idea, the core of this episode, is that Willow, Tara, Xander and Anya have decided, the four of them, that they are going to bring Buffy back from the dead. But that they are not going to tell Giles, Spike, or Dawn. Spike, fine, whatever. I mean, Spike I think is probably the dude you wanna tell, because he is, like—has probably been to—

Jenny: He knows shit.

Kristin: He knows shit—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But like, in terms of just his presence in their life, who he is, leaving him out, fine. I can give you a pass on that. Leaving Giles and Dawn out of this decision is when you know you should be maybe considering why you're doing it. Because if you can't get the faith and trust of Buffy's Watcher-slash-father, and her sister, then that means that there might be a reason you shouldn't fucking do it? Just putting that out there.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I don't like the lies. I—not for a decision this big. That's not what this show is about. [laughs] It is what the show is about, I guess.

Jenny: What I do—

Kristin: But. [both laugh]

Jenny: What I do like is two things. I just can't get my head around Anya loving monkeys and hating bunnies. [Kristin laughs] I just... can't.

Kristin: Uh-huh.

Jenny: I cannot. And then, I lo-lo-lo-love that Xander is like, "Willow, who made you the boss of us?" and...

Kristin: [laughing] Yes.

Jenny: It is revealed that Xander made Willow the boss of them. He said there should be a vote, it was unanimous, he made her a little plaque that said "boss of us." [laughs]

Kristin: With sparkles! Probably while he was listening to the Backstreet Boys. [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But you know, he's sort of say—I mean, Xander's having an appropriate emotional response to resurrecting Buffy from the dead. To say, wait, wait, wait—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Tomorrow? Like, I know we talked about it, I know we made a plan. But like, things he doesn't say, which would also be valid, are: we were in the complete shock of losing our best friend when we had those conversations.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: I'm trying to think about this as a person who maybe has taken a few steps since that loss has happened. Like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: This is a big deal and we need to revisit it. And Willow—like, Willow—you can see that like, Willow is coming from the Kristin Russo place of decision-making, where like, it's a fire sign trait, I believe, to bring astrology back into the mix. Where it's sort of like, you need it and you need it now. And you shut out anything that would say possibly that you need to think about it. Like, telling Giles or telling Dawn or involving yourself more in conversation with Xander. Like, go, go, go, now, now, now 'cause if you don't do it now, it's not gonna happen and maybe you'll lose it forever. And that's never, ever a good place to make a decision from. Ever, ever. If you find yourself thinking about a decision that you're about to make and you're using those guidelines, I am here, Kristin Russo, telling you, stop. Pause.

Jenny: [singsong] Slow down.

Kristin: Slow down, because that is never the place to come from and... doesn't really matter, does it?

Jenny: But you know, Willow has her mind set on it. She's adamant that nothing will go wrong. Xander says, what if she tries to eat our brains? [Kristin laughs] And Anya helpfully says, zombies don't eat brains unless instructed to do so by their zombie masters. Common misconception.

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: This... dung? Dinged? Dinged a bell [Kristin laughs] in my memory, for an episode of The X-Files that deals with zombies. And it led me to do a quick Wikipedia'ing, where I discovered—are you ready?

Kristin: I'm ready.

Jenny: A zombie is a fictional undead corporeal revenant—[whispers] what a sentence—[Kristin laughs] created through the reanimation of a corpse.

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: Zombies are most common found in horror and fantasy genre works. The term comes from Haitian folklore in which a zombie is a dead body reanimated through various methods, most commonly magic. Right? And then, the zombie master can then get that zombie to do their bidding.

Kristin: Ah-ha.

Jenny: A *new* version of the zombie, distinct from what was described in Haitian folklore, emerged in popular culture during the latter half of the 20th century. This interpretation of the zombie is drawn largely from George A. Romero's film *Night of the Living Dead*—

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: Which came out in 1968.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: This is so interesting because the word "zombie" is not used in *Night of the Living Dead*, but was applied later by fans. So this is a case of Haitian folklore influencing movie-going public—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: To kind of project a label onto something that wasn't assuming that label, and I believe *Night of the Living Dead* is kind of the Patient Zero of the modern zombie genre—

Kristin: Right, right.

Jenny: Phenomenon. Leading all the way up to now and *The Walking Dead* and stuff. So like, it seems as though modern zombie stuff actually has its roots in this—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: In this Haitian folklore, which I think is really interesting.

Kristin: You know what's interesting too, is that like, Anya knows this, right? And why does Anya know this? I'm not sure. But Anya seems like a person who I kind of wish more people were like this in the current world, who really wanna understand not just the system, but where the system originated. You know, I'm like—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Thinking back to her—she has some problematic moments, trying to figure out what America was all about. [laughs]

Jenny: Uh-huh.

Kristin: But like, the root of that for Anya as a character was that she was like, what are you people doing? You know, it's—and it's like, such an Anya fucking thing, that like, she would know the history. I feel like Anya is a character who wants to understand the larger history of things, in all elements, right?

Jenny: We certainly see her on an ongoing quest, now that she's human, to understand the human condition.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And we can assume that for the thousand years that she lived as a vengeance demon, she was similarly curious about the things that—

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: You know, she was surrounded by—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Over those many years.

Kristin: Anya! Aw. I'm gonna give her her jingle later—

Jenny: She's got a thirst for knowledge.

Kristin: I'm gonna give her her jingle later, so don't think that like, we're taking it away from her. Small thing I wanna note in this. It's so tiny, but it just bothered me, is that Willow refers to Joyce as "Mrs. Summers." I don't think that that has ever happened before. They call her "Joyce."

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Why?

Jenny: Yeah, it's weird.

Kristin: It's weird.

Jenny: It's very weird.

Kristin: But Willow is—you know, I gave a big, long case of like, why this is fucked up that Willow is making this decision. I mean, they're all making it, but that like, Willow is really pushing it, pushing it, pushing it. But Willow gives voice at the end of this scene to why that fire is burning for her, why she feels the need to push this. And it's rooted in the fact that Buffy didn't die a natural death. And so, with your blessing, Jenny, I would like to play the last bit of dialogue in this scene, which is Willow explaining to Xander why she's pushing so hard.

Jenny: By all means.

[Clip from episode plays]

Willow: This isn't like Dawn trying to bring Mrs. Summers back or anything we've dealt with before. Buffy didn't die a natural death. She was killed by mystical energy.

Tara: Which means we do have a shot.

Willow: It means more than that. It means we don't know where she really is.

Xander: We saw her body, Will. We buried it.

Willow: Her body, yeah. But her soul. Her essence. I mean, that could be somewhere else. She could be trapped in some sort of hell dimension like Angel was, suffering eternal torment just because she saved us, and I'm not gonna let her—I'm not gonna leave her there. [pause] It's Buffy.

Xander: What time do we meet?

Kristin: That's, um, sad. I mean, essentially, like, the decision—bad or good as it may be, I suppose we will find out—is made because they don't want their best friend to suffer in a hell dimension for all of eternity. Which like, [laughing] seems...

Jenny: Fair.

Kristin: Like, *kind of* reasonable.

Jenny: Relatable content.

Kristin: [laughing] Yeah, yeah.

[AD BREAK]

Jenny: So Willow gets home to discover that the Buffybot has returned to the house on Revello Drive looking for servicing.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Spike is still there. We get this kind of... remnant of Buffybot's original programming, servicing, when she says something about Spike's washboard abs.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Spike is... not happy about this. And urges Willow to scrape out any of the original programming that may still remain.

Kristin: Yeah, and—

Jenny: Isn't it weird how the abdominal—the abdominal skin of the Buffybot looks way faker than the skin on the Buffybot's arms and stuff? [Kristin laughs] Isn't that so crazy? So weird!

Kristin: I don't like the image, even as like, silly as it might be—I don't like it. I don't like to see them pull open Buffy's stomach into the wiring—Buffybot's stomach into the wiring. This, like—my feelings of like, eww, yeah, no, I don't like that are then hammered home in the next bit of this. Spike has left and they've been threading through, like, this is—this is funny, we get to see Sarah Michelle Gellar being really funny as the Buffybot. And that's great 'cause you just had to see her die, so that's nice, right, guys? But on the flip side, on the underbelly of that, is this trauma of it all for everyone involved. And this next little scene is where they just slam you with it. Because we see Tara and Willow in bed. Remind me, Jenny. I

wanna say something about Tara and Willow and their romantic relationship. I have a bone to pick. But we see—[laughs] we see Tara and Willow in bed, and then we cut to Dawn. And Dawn walks over to Buffy's room, where Buffybot is like, plugged in, in like three places. And Dawn—

Jenny: Charging overnight.

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: Eyes open, full lipstick.

Kristin: And—

Jenny: You'll have to excuse me, as Dawn climbs onto the bed to cuddle with the Buffybot, as I have... something in my eye.

Kristin: Yeah. I know. You just refuse to wear goggles, every taping. But it's *really* devastating.

Jenny: I do.

Kristin: It's really, really sad.

Jenny: Oof. Oof!

Kristin: And it's just like, the trauma that Dawn has experienced before her sister was a robot in her bed, glowing, and she was cuddling with her. Like, ugh, I'm so sorry, Dawn. Somebody needs to call the Sunnydale therapist for these kids. Because they all need—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: To talk about their trauma. If you'll indulge me a moment, I do—I just wanna say something. And, you know, we'll see if I feel this way as we continue forward in the series. But I was thinking today about being a queer woman and like, the ongoing joke of like, "sisters? We're close." And like, how, when you're in a queer relationship and you show up with your partner, people are like, "oh, are you two *sisters*?" Because they can't figure out, like, the bond between you. I just started thinking about how Willow and Tara are portrayed in the show. And you *know*, obviously, we are two queer women. We, you know, have the utmost respect for Alyson Hannigan, for Amber Bensen, and for the relationship as it is portrayed in the show.

But I do think that there's a bit of like, softness and sisterly-type affection that we see between them without a lot of balance on, like, any other end, that makes me feel—and this scene was what, like, drove it home to me. Because it cuts from them holding each other in bed—which is so sweet! And I'm not saying that that's not a foundational piece of a loving relationship. But it cuts right from that to Dawn and Buffy together. And Season 5 ended with Buffy using Dawn as a way to explain that she understood what Willow had lost in losing Tara, in those last few episodes.

And like, I just—I just—I'm feeling a little bit of wiggly-ness about it. That like, I'm here—I get to look back from the year 2020, where there's a lot more representation of queer women in media. But I do think that there's a bit of that, like, oh, women in a relationship are just so tender and they're so sweet and like, they probably don't fuck. I'm just saying! That's not what this is, but it just rang a couple of little bells for me.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: So get mad at me, be happy with me, talk to me, whatever you wanna do. I'm here for it. Let's move on.

Jenny: Shoutout to some lovely Santa Barbara B-roll. [Kristin laughs] So beautiful.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Love to see it. And then we've got Buffybot, working the punching pads with Giles.

Kristin: Mmm.

Jenny: Who instructs her to remember her breathing, which she... does to great effect. [both laugh]

Kristin: This is so nice for Sarah Michelle Gellar. Like, I just—I'm so happy that she gets to have this, like, comedic fun. It's nice, 'cause she does have to carry—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So much heaviness in her actual role as Buffy the vampire slayer. So yeah. And Giles—you know. Giles is obviously working through his shit, and the Buffybot winds up kind of helping him here. Because he is comfortable enough to say to the Buffybot what he probably wouldn't say to anybody else, which is like, I think I

failed her. Like, I think it's my fault, essentially, that Buffy didn't live and I should have been a better Watcher. And he sort of talks himself through this, and she says, well then why are you still here? And that's kinda the push that he needed to get from circling, circling, circling, to being like, she's gone. And I don't have a purpose here anymore. I mean, I think he's wrong, but you know, that's another story for another day.

Jenny: Yeah. I think he's definitely wrong. What I don't buy about this scene is when he says he can't help but wonder if Buffy would have been better off without him. This just seems like... I know he's like, going through it. But that is so far beyond what I can reasonably imagine him—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Thinking through, like—

Kristin: I think he's just not okay.

Jenny: He's—he's seen other Watchers in action.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Like, he knows what they have to offer.

Kristin: Yeah, but how many times have—I mean, I know that personally, I've had many times when I have thought things to myself like, I [sic] probably would have been better if I just wasn't even there at all. Or like, if—and I know deep down that that's not true. But it's like, your deepest—you know, your deepest fears manifesting, your deepest vulnerabilities. And... it's rough.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: So he sort of has that moment of clarity. Anya is like, dude, what are you doing? This is not a human. Her ancestors are toaster ovens, Giles. Like, give it a rest, you know? Anya, being very Anya-y.

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: And then, vroom-vroom, baby! Let's go to the motorcycle demon bar.

Jenny: Yeah! Hansen vamp is hanging out at the demon bar. It's the middle of the day. How did he get here?

Kristin: Guess he has a Spike blanket.

Jenny: Just wondering.

Kristin: Do you think Spike has trademarked that blanket and now sells it to other vamps? [laughs] Get around during the day! Just simply use this small piece of fabric. [laughs]

Jenny: I love the design of the Hellions.

Kristin: Yes. I do too! I do too, I do too! It's very like, leather bar meets demon. You know?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. There's something kind of like cat-like about them.

Kristin: Yeah, their noses are fantastic. They're like—they're actually kind of like, Voldemort-y, in their, like—that like, sort of—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: The flatness, like, where a nose would be. Sort of having that be flattened, it reminds me of like a Voldemort styling. Though these guys came before Voldemort. Actually. I guess they came before the visual of Voldemort but not the character creation of Voldemort. Anyway! Motorcycles, yeah!

Jenny: Yeah. This is the scene where the Hansen vamp informs this motorcycle gang that Sunnydale is unprotected. They thank him for the info by killing him.

Kristin: Yep.

Jenny: And ride off!

Kristin: Ride off. And then, we're like, oh no, motorcycle gang is heading to Sunnydale, what ever will happen? But then we're immediately distracted by Willow sitting peacefully in the woods, with a [New York accent] "cute little doe-eyed deah!"

Jenny: What could go wrong?

Kristin: Jesus Christ almighty! What is happening?! I know what's happening, I understand why it's happening. But it is like, very upset—because if there was a

[New York accent] "cute little doe-eyed deah" in this series, it would be Willow! It would have been Willow. And so seeing our cute—

Jenny: Not anymore.

Kristin: [laughing] Seeing our cute little doe-eyed deer thrust a fucking dagger into the heart of this tiny little fawn, is *very* upsetting. Willow is calling—you know, she's doing an incantation here. She is basically getting the blood of this fawn because it is, what we learn later, is the wine of the mother. It's a critical ingredient in the spell that they're gonna do. And it is—you know, I mean. Animal sacrifice is something that has been around forever, I would like to say? And manifests in all different cultures and religions over time.

You know, we had a really, really fascinating conversation about like, the Christ figure with Alba in *The Gift*, and how like, the Christ figure is everywhere once you start seeing it. I remember taking a class in college that was on sacrifice in Christianity, which was fucking fascinating. Essentially, like, really looking at Christianity, and like—in Christianity, you like take the blood and body of Christ. [sarcastically] Hmm, I wonder where—hmm, that concept came from? Oh, you mean it wasn't original? [Jenny laughs] No, it was not.

Animal sacrifice is, you know, part of just more cultures and more of history than we could ever do service to here. But is commonly found in a place like this, where Willow needs something. She's sort of like, honoring Osiris and also exchanging. There's—both of those elements are like, at play in the sacrifice, that she both needs to sort of show her reverence to Osiris. But also, you know, she—there is an allusion to the fact that like, this is a life, also—like, a life for a life, kind of a thing. That like, she will give this—

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Baby fawn's life—poor little baby fawn.

Jenny: Everybody knows that Osiris's drink of choice is wine of the mother. Of course!

Kristin: Of course. I mean, also, don't you think it would have only been fair for them to see if the fawn could also slay vampires before they exchanged the lives? What if that fawn—[both laugh]

Jenny: Hmmm.

Kristin: Could have held that shit down on the Hellmouth, is all I'm saying. They didn't even give it a chance. [laughs]

Jenny: I like that we get this clear indication that Willow did not tell Tara what was required and will never tell Tara what was required.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: To spare her.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: To spare her delicate little feelings.

Kristin: I mean, I wouldn't wanna tell my partner that I was capable of killing a deer in the forest. So. I get it.

Jenny: No, no, no, no, no.

Kristin: Just when you thought Willow killing a tiny baby deer wasn't gonna make you cry. In the Magic Box, in the next scene, we learn that Giles has left. This is actually the moment where I would really like to give Anya her jingle. It's before she finds the note. The reason she finds the note is because Tara is very anxious, and Anya says, "would you like to look at the money? It always calms me down." [both laugh] Anya, you—you've earned it. You've earned your jingle.

[ANYA jingle plays]

[cash register rings]

She spent one millennium, demonically vengeancin'

Speaks her mind and then some, you know

She's partial to the finer things

And down with double boyfriends, oh yeah

Exchanging cash for goods and also services

She'd love to hold the money for ya (she'll hold that cash)

Just keep the bunnies far from... Anya!

Jenny: So! There's Giles, sitting contemptively at a gate at the Long Beach airport. Greeked to be the Sunnydale airport.

Kristin: Nice, nice.

Jenny: And you know, the gang rolls up on him. And he says, "I was trying to avoid a scene." And Willow's like, "pssht! Scene? [Kristin laughs] What's a scene?" While producing an enormous "Bon Voyage Giles" sign, decorated with multiple inflated balloons.

Kristin: Yes. Like, balloons obviously blown up by their mouths, that are just like, hanging there.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Anya has gotten apple pie as a symbol of America for Giles to take with him on the plane.

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: And in a very referenced moment, of course, Tara has on her finger a little monster that she brought for Giles. And she makes it say, "Grr. Arr." Which is our little Mutant Enemy monster we see at the end of every episode, so that's fun. Mutant Enemy—

Jenny: Aww.

Kristin: I'm sure that you all know this, is the production company that works on Buffy the Vampire Slayer. So something that I wanna note too is that this episode was taped at a time when you could go to meet your friend at the gate or like, walk them all the way to the plane gate. I always, always think—whenever I see a scene like this, where they're like, getting to the gate right before—I always think of Friends. Because there's that, like, fucking [Jenny laughs] very classic scene of Rachel chasing after Ross and—anyway.

What I would like to say is A., this scene would never exist anymore. And B., the fact that it wouldn't exist anymore hinges in this moment that this fucking episode aired. This episode aired on October 2nd, 2001, three weeks after 9/11. And so the shift of airport security in the United States happened, like, in real time here. So this was probably one of the last airport scenes that was ever filmed like this, which is really interesting. And without getting too deep into it, I do also wanna say that Season 6 of this show hit at a very, very difficult time for this country and for the world, a time that was, like, impacting people in so many ways that still exist. And so the fact that, Jenny, you and I are hitting Season 6 where we are in the country and in the world, I think is, um, a thing, you know? I keep feeling like we're—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: Sebastian in The NeverEnding Story and we've picked up this book and now we just can't stop turning the pages and what will happen next? [both laugh]

Jenny: Well! I'll tell you what will happen next.

Kristin: If somebody will just say my name, then probably it'll be okay! [laughs] Okay.

Jenny: Mmm.

Kristin: Sorry, I just love The NeverEnding Story. Go ahead, Jenny.

Jenny: So. They have this really sweet—

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Goodbye, the one that Giles tried to avoid. And you know, the—they say a couple times that, you know, we'll be okay. But we'll miss you, but we'll be okay.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: But we'll miss you.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And Anya says she'll take really good care of Giles' money. [Kristin laughs] And then! Look how far they've come. Xander and Giles hug. They almost shake hands, but then they're like, we've matured. [Kristin sighs] Let's hug. Creating, in that moment, an image—I'm torn between calling it "Two men in brown jackets embrace, mixed media, 2001" [Kristin laughs] or "Two men in brown jackets embrace, 1080P HD."

Kristin: Oh, w—oh, wow.

Jenny: Is it high art?

Kristin: Wow! Who knew—

Jenny: Or is it sexy art?

Kristin: It was gonna get sexy at the airport? Not me! I didn't!

Jenny: Uh-huh!

Kristin: Yeah, I actually—I love what you've done with the moment, Jenny. When I watched this, I was like, okay, everybody. These guys have watched people die that they love. They're hugging! They're not gonna fuck—I'm just over it. I'm over the joke of like, two men having to hesitate before they hug. But I like what you've done here.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: I like what you've done with the place, Jenny. [laughs]

Jenny: I'm over... the reality of the only adult man in the situation, *fleeing the country* [Kristin laughs] and leaving these 21-year-olds in charge of a 14-year-old girl. What I'm—what I'll never be over is this lovely piano cue that we get from Thomas Wanker—

Kristin: Oh, boy.

Jenny: Wonker, Vanker, Vonker—

Kristin: Okay.

Jenny: It's very—it's very reminiscent of *American Beauty*, that film that came out in 1999.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: Famously scored by Thomas Newman. I feel like the score of that film really impacted score, in general. And this is a couple years after that. It's sort of like, impressionistic, and really just heartbreaking. I love this piece of music.

Kristin: Aw.

Jenny: End of rant.

Kristin: Yeah, that's lovely. Yeah, this is a—it's—each goodbye has its own energy. It's done really nicely, I think. You know, the Dawn goodbye really got me. It really fucking got me, because you could see, like—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You know, Tony Head and Michelle Trachtenberg are both brilliant. And you could really see, especially from Tony Head's perspective, like, the fact that he was saying goodbye to Dawn and also to Buffy's little sister. Like, you saw both of those things in that goodbye. And just—it really read. And then—and then of course, like, the last goodbye we get is Willow. Because you know, Willow and Giles, man! It's like you almost want—I know they couldn't put a montage here for us. But like, I want it. I would pay for it. [Jenny laughs] If there's bonus content, I will sign up for the montage. [both laugh] But it's really, really sweet. And I think as Giles boards the plane, we should probably play his jingle, eh, Jenny?

[GILES jingle plays]
Giles! Hot dad!
When you were younger you were real bad
But now you're older, you got glasses
That help you watch over us!
Thank you, Giles!

Kristin: [sighs wistfully] Giles. Giles, Giles, Giles. He said in the airport, actually, before all the goodbyes happened, "this is, uh, impossible, really." Which I thought was probably the best summation of him leaving this group of people. It's not possible.

Jenny: Yeah. It doesn't make sense.

Kristin: Anya! Also bringing truth to the situation, as they leave the airport: Maybe we should have told him. What we're doing tonight. [laughs]

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: You think?! You fucking think? [sighs] So the motorcycle gang is like, vroom-vroom! Everybody point your engines toward Sunnydale! And then we go to the cemetery. They are all standing with candles. [laughs] Anya's having a very 2003 moment with her fucking lighter. Like, I can't tell you the amount of times that that's been me [Jenny makes lighter strike sound repeatedly] with my fucking lighter. Just, god! 'Cause there's not enough fluid left in it. She gets it lit—

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: And this is intense! Wouldn't you say?

Jenny: This is very intense. The ceremony begins.

Kristin: Whew!

Jenny: Willow entreats Osiris, the keeper of the gate, to accept their offering and know their prayer. And then she begins to be tested. She gets cut up. Then there's stuff crawling around inside her skin—

Kristin: Ugh! And I always—

Jenny: Blegh-gh-gh-gh!

Kristin: Jenny, you—for—I saw you, so many times, play the song Clean Break—one of your songs. And at every concert that you played, you would tell a story about an episode of X-Files where cockroaches crawl under people's skin. So I don't know that episode—

Jenny: Yep.

Kristin: But I know that it exists. And this is what I thought of—

Jenny: Another point where this episode and The X-Files intersect.

Kristin: 'Cause there's some cockroaches underneath Willow's skin. Crawling the fuck around—

Jenny: Yeah, it's bad.

Kristin: It's really bad. She's got Freddy Krueger slashing her arms. She's then gonna puke. Before she gets quite there, what I really love, actually, about the way that they set this up is that Xander is like, we need to stop this. We need to help her. And Tara is like, she is strong. And she fucking told us not to help her. She's good. Like, that Tara—as much as Tara loves Willow, is like, I am going to abide by what she said. And she's strong enough, she can handle this. That's cool.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Then she pukes a fucking snake.

Jenny: Yeah! Then a... great big snake slithers out of her mouth. [Kristin laughs] Not the biggest snake we've ever seen in Sunnydale, but... [Kristin laughs] much larger than one you'd like crawling out of your throat. I think.

Kristin: Ugh! God. Oh, god! And Alyson Hannigan, great job at making us cry and also apparently does a great job at fake-puking a snake up. Because it's *very* believable.

Jenny: Okay. Two Titans converge. Buffybot happens upon the Hellions creating havoc.

Kristin: Mmhmm.

Jenny: And when she is—when she is first sighted by a Hellion, he does a little round-up cry that's like, "Hey, you guys!" [Kristin laughs] Except it's like [hisses].

Kristin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Jenny: And they all gather round. And Razor says he's been hearing some interesting things about her. [laughing] And Buffybot says, "Yes, I am interesting! [Kristin laughs] Now you and your friends should get back on your loud bicycles. [both laugh] And get outta here." And he's not having it. He slice—we guess that he got his name from his little razors on his little fingertips.

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: And she starts kicking ass!

Kristin: She does, she's strong.

Jenny: And then she's off to find Willow 'cause she's been wounded.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: She needs servicing.

Kristin: So she's off to find Willow. Unfortunately, the timing is super unfortunate. This—

Jenny: You know—you know that thing where you really, really, really need somebody's help, but they are completely enveloped in a column of mystical flame?

Kristin: I do. Yeah.

Jenny: And so they can't help you?

Kristin: I know, I hate when—

Jenny: Ahh, so annoying!

Kristin: I hate when that happens, I really do. [laughs] Willow is straight up—well, wait. Before we completely leave the Hellion scene, I just wanna say that we get a beautiful shot through the giant letter U that's on the main drag there in Sunnydale. And the last time there was a person of any kind in that U, it was Faith with her arrow pointed right at Angel's heart. So any time I see—

Jenny: Oh my god.

Kristin: Any time I see that U in any way, shape or form, I think of our girl Faith. So you know, I'm cheers'ing to you, buddy. [laughs]

Jenny: Ha!

Kristin: But yes, Willow is—

Jenny: Gone from the credits but never from our hearts.

Kristin: [laughs] Willow is very encased in, like, a Poltergeist-y red hue. It's done pretty nicely, very 2000-and-whatever year we're in. 2001. Very 2001—

Jenny: Mmhmm.

Kristin: But it's doing its thing. And then... these motorcyclists. You know, they're very clumsy. They're very, very clumsy. They...

Jenny: Oops! [both laugh] Oops! Oops, there goes the last known Urn of Osiris. It's been smashed by an errant motorcycle tire.

Kristin: It just drove right over it!

Jenny: Oops!

Kristin: And this, of course, as much a joke we may make of it, *devastating*. And Willow lets out a scream and like, falls to the ground. It's very upsetting. Jenny, before we just, like, fully round the bend to the end of this episode, why don't we take us from Willow's devastation right into the Sexual Tension Awards? Just to give everybody the whiplash that they deserve.

Jenny: Oh yeah!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Well! Here we have... gentlemen-only—well. Gentlemen and paper products only. [Kristin laughs] Special edition of the Sexual Tension Awards in—

Kristin: [laughing] "Gentlemen and paper products only." I *hate* you.

Jenny: In! The first position, wow, 'kay! One possible coupling from today's very special episode. That "cuppa tea, cuppa tea, almost got shagged" moment, Spike and Giles.

Kristin: Yeah, baby!

Jenny: You have received your nomination.

Kristin: Maybe it'll be "cuppa tea, cuppa tea, got shagged, cuppa tea."

Jenny: Wow!

Kristin: If you know what I mean!

Jenny: Okay. I... [sarcastically] you're being so obscure, I don't know. [Kristin laughs] In the second position, what else could you vote for, perhaps, if that's not your cuppa tea? Cuppa tea, got shagged. Uh, well, we have Giles and his vast array of very precious spreadsheets. He's so attached to them, there's really something there, something—a bond that we can't hope to understand, from the outside of the relationship.

Kristin: I mean, they, perhaps more than anyone, understands [sic] why he takes his glasses off and puts them back on so often. You know?

Jenny: Indeed. In the third slot, we've got... Xander and—why not?—*all* of the Backstreet Boys.

Kristin: Yeah, baby! [laughs]

Jenny: Uh... ding-ding! I'm here for the lunchbox special, please. Thank you! [Kristin laughs] And in our fourth slot, majestically hugging in broad daylight! So secure in their brown-jacketed masculinity, it's Xander and Giles, why not.

Kristin: [laughs] Oh my god, Giles is nominated in three out of four categories.

Jenny: It's true!

Kristin: It's—three out of four slots. It's quite amazing. If you're somehow just beginning the podcast, you can vote for your pick of the Sexual Tension Awards by following us on Twitter, @BufferingCast. The poll will be open for seven days, beginning when this podcast airs. You can vote, and then that winner will move forward, advance to the next round.

Jenny: If all of the nominees combined in one giant cheerleader pyramid, here's how it would go. Spike on top.

Kristin: [laughing] Yep.

Jenny: Two Xanders underneath.

Kristin: [laughing] Yep.

Jenny: Three Giles underneath the two Xanders. [Kristin laughs] *Five* Backstreet Boys underneath the three Giles, and *one million* spreadsheets underneath the five Backstreet Boys. [Kristin laughs] [sings] And a partridge in a pear tree!

Kristin: Oh, that's so satisfying!

Jenny: [simultaneously] And then you wrap the lights around it, you plug the lights into the wall. Hell yeah! Very festive.

Kristin: Wow! Oh my god, that was the most satisfying—that was the most fun I've had in a Sexual Tension Award segment ever. Ever! This was my favorite one.

Jenny: Woo!

Kristin: I said it!

Jenny: Hurray!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Okay! Are we ready to run it into the end zone like a member of a football team whose title I do not know?

Kristin: Jerome Bettis! [laughs]

Jenny: Does he run it into the end zone though, or does he just protect the QB?

Kristin: He can do *anything*!

Jenny: Oh! Okay. [Kristin laughs] Cool.

Kristin: Okay, yes. We're ready, we're all ready to run it into the end zone. Tara is going to save Anya using a little bit of magic, which is a nice moment.

Jenny: Love it, love it.

Kristin: And what it gives us—and this is important because of course, we ended the season with Buffy dying. But what we didn't get is a moment really between Xander and Willow, who really create the core trio of Scoobies, with Giles. And Xander has Willow. Because Tara went to save Anya, it gives us Xander with Willow. And Willow just looks at him and says, "did it work?" And he just says, "I'm sorry." And she completely collapses and passes out.

Jenny: Oof.

Kristin: It's so—

Jenny: Oof.

Kristin: It's like, you know, they really have been building to this moment. And the fact that they did *all* of this work, they put all of this effort into this thing. They think that their best friend is sitting in a hell dimension and they tried to save her. And this, you know, fucking urn was run over, just a matter of poor timing, is maybe just the most devastating thing ever? But then there's one—one more moment. In the episode, isn't there? [laughs]

Jenny: Well. You know, for reasons we couldn't possibly predict, the eye of the camera begins to drift [Kristin laughs] subterraneously, down about six feet or so, into Buffy Summers' coffin!

Kristin: Ugh.

Jenny: Where she is all, uh, dried out and corpse-ified. But in a moment that I'm guessing—well, I would guess took up a pretty big chunk of the episodic budget for this—this one.

Kristin: Uh, yeah.

Jenny: I think they did an incredible job, especially for the time—

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: With the visual effect of Buffy getting re-hydrated and re-imbued with life.

Kristin: Uh, and eyeballs.

Jenny: She's back.

Kristin: Specifically. That's a moment, when the—

Jenny: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Kristin: When those eyeballs pop in, man, that's real.

Jenny: Whew!

Kristin: That's some real shit, right there. [laughs]

Jenny: [shudders] Yeah. I think it looks awesome.

Kristin: Yeah. So, um, that happens. And then, if you were in the year 2001, you would simply need to go refill your Diet Coke and get your popcorn and sit back down again [Jenny laughs] to watch Part Two, to find out what happens. But here, in Buffering the Vampire Slayer, you're gonna have to drink a lot of Diet Cokes before we get [laughs] to Bargaining Part Two, to find out what the fuck happens next!

Jenny: Da-da!

Kristin: Well. There's no turning back now, Jenny. We've begun. We've begun Season 6.

Jenny: Wooo!

Kristin: We cannot stop now, it's all happening!

Jenny: Descent into the maelstrom! [Kristin laughs] Wow, I can't even begin to conceive of what lies ahead of us.

Kristin: So much. So much. And I—listen. Let's just try to be in this all together, you know?

Jenny: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

Kristin: Let's just hold each other as much as we can. We're in a very intense time right now. We are in a very intense season right now. We're gonna breathe together. We're going to, you know, hold each other's hands. Maybe we'll get in a couple of fights along the way, like any family does.

Jenny: Mmhmm!

Kristin: But we're just gonna keep fighting and taking naps. That's the addendum. Addendum [laughs] to "just keep fighting"—

Jenny: [singing] Just keep fighting and keep napping!

Kristin: [singing simultaneously] And take naps! Nice.

Jenny: Nice. [both laugh] Whew! I don't even know. I don't even know. The only thing I'm certain of, for sure, is that I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: Great.

Jenny: And when I'm not making this podcast about Buffy, I am usually making hot, hot jams. You can hear some of them at jennyowenyoungs.com. I've been putting out a bunch of music very recently. I have a re-issue of an EP called Night Shift that just came out on Friday, featuring a Ra Ra Riot remix [Kristin gasps] and a remix by The One AM Radio, which is the musical project of friend of the pod, Hrishikesh Hirway.

Kristin: Nice!

Jenny: And a cover of the Katy Perry classic, Teenage Dream.

Kristin: Ugh!

Jenny: You can find that on all streaming services. I also have a couple songs I've put out exclusively on Bandcamp over the last couple of months. So that's all out there. And you can also listen to me talk at length about another petite blond protagonist on my other podcast, Veronica Mars Investigations. Also, shout at me on Twitter, @JennyOwenYoungs!

Kristin: Hell yes. I am Kristin Russo. You can find out more about me, Twitter, Instagram, my website, all have the same handle. That's KristinNoeline, K-R-I-S-T-I-N-N-O-E-L-I-N-E. Dot com for the website and you can use that spelling for those social media places. When I'm not talking about Buffy, I'm watching Buffy or I am producing Buffy or I am—[Jenny laughs] I also do work with the queer community. But I will be real with you. Buffy is really taking front and center stage for most of what I'm doing. But Joanna Robinson and I have a little Patreon-only podcast that we do. It's called Feels Like the First Time. And with this episode coming out in October, it means we will be in what we're calling a spooky sandwich. Normally, the way that the podcast works is I watch movies I've never seen before. But for October, we're going to give the podcast the gooey center of Hocus Pocus and watch it together, just because we want to.

Jenny: Woo!

Kristin: And then Joanna's gonna pick a movie for me to watch that's spooky that I've never seen. And I'm going to have her watch Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors for the first time.

Jenny: Nice.

Kristin: And so we're just gonna have a fun little Halloween-y time together. Yeah. So do those things. Follow me. It's great, you'll love it. [both laugh]

Jenny: Buffering the Vampire Slayer is on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, @BufferingCast. You can drop us an email at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. You could leave us a voicemail at 216-30-BUFFY.

Kristin: You can. You can support us in so many ways. We have a very wonderful Patreon family. You can find all of that information at bufferingthevampireslayer.com, click on Patreon. You can go to our shop. We have a US-based store and a UK-based store. We're gonna have some really fun new things heading your way, and we've got the restock on old classics there for you too. I will also say that we're just a few weeks away from doing our first live taping of the season. We will be recording Season 6, Episode 3, After Life. And you can

snag tickets to join us October 24th at 6 PM Eastern, 3 PM Pacific. We're gonna have some special guests, it's gonna be so fun. And all of that information is at bufferingthevampireslayer.com, just click on Calendar and you can find all that you need to find.

Jenny: Wooo! And till next time...

Both: Awwwwwooooooooooooo—

Kristin: [singsong] Oh my god, will we make it through Season 6?

Jenny: [singsong, lower register] Probably not. [Kristin laughs]

["Bargaining Part One" plays off the album Songs from Season 6 by Buffering the Vampire Slayer]

I hit the streets every night
My sacred calling's to bring the fight
To vampires and demons
So says my programming

Not a woman, and not a girl
One chosen robot in all the world
To scour the cemeteries
Clean up the back alleys

And all my living friends
Are trying to pretend I'm real

When they look at me
All that they can see
Is somebody who is long gone

When they look at me
All that they can see
Is somebody who it hurts to miss

Each day I'm up with the sun
To do the work of the chosen one
I make the sandwiches!
Parent teacher meetings!

When night falls, back on my grind
To be the scourge of all monsterkind
Pie plates and marzipan
So says my programming

And all my living friends
Are keeping secret things from me

When they look at me
All that they can see
Is somebody who is long gone

When they look at me
All that they can see
Is somebody who it hurts to miss