

Angel On Top
Episode 3.11: Birthday

Kristin: Hey there, little angels. It's Kristin...Russo. You might know me from Buffering the Vampire Slayer. I'm just here to give you a little note at the top of this episode of Angel On Top, that as of this episode, Birthday, I am officially producing in the room with LaToya and Morgan. Virtually, of course. But basically, if you think about Frasier, you know how, like, Frasier Crane was on air but Roz was behind a little piece of glass, and occasionally she'd pop in? That's what I'm doing. I'm trying it out. So you'll hear my voice, just for one brief little moment in this episode, and I don't plan on talking very much. But I just wanted to let you know that I am here. I am here and present, I am listening along with you. I cannot tell you how much of a joy it is to witness Angel On Top, live in real time, and if you hear my voice from time to time, just don't be surprised. Don't be surprised. Alright. Let's get to the bell. Let's get to Morgan. Let's get to LaToya. Let's do this.

[CHIME]

LaToya: Welcome back to Angel On Top, a podcast where we watch and discuss every episode of Angel, one by one, spoiler free and in tandem with our arch nemesis, Buffering the Vampire Slayer. [Morgan giggles] I'm your co-host, LaToya Ferguson, AKA the Cordelia Chase of the Buffering verse, AKA Bones, AKA one half of the Gunn Squad—bang, bang!—AKA Theodore K. Mullins, AKA Gilly, AKA lover of long winded bits, AKA really not a fan of people telling me what not to do, especially on a podcast that I host, AKA 30% that bitch.

Morgan: And I'm your co-host, Morgan Lutich, AKA the Winifred Burkle of the Buffering verse, AKA also Bones, AKA the other half of the Gunn Squad—bang, bang—AKA Frank Scabopolis, AKA sorry, AKA also not a big old fan of people told what to do, AKA not really that bitch, but trying! [laughs]

LaToya: And this week, we're watching Angel, Season 3, Episode 11, Birthday. Birthday was written by Mary Smith and directed by Michael Grossman. It aired on The WB on January 14th, 2002, our first Angel episode of 2002.

Morgan: And this is the one where Cordy dies on birthday? And then learns she might be able to change her fate, but at what cost?

LaToya: It's also the one that is my favorite episode of Angel.

[Angel On Top theme plays]

LaToya: Previously on Angel. "I'm gonna have a son!" Whoops, Darla had to stake herself for that to happen. Cordelia's roommates with someone she never sees, because he's a ghost, as this ADR line that says, "He's a ghost" says! [Morgan laughs] It does not sound good at all. [both laugh] The network clearly said, "Make them know it's a ghost and not just a weird wall pusher thingy. Angel and Cordy are fight training. They're drawn to one another. Gunn explains that the Powers that Be give Cordelia these visions. A sarcastic "I look forward to my next vision"—not! [both laugh] And then again, I'll just note. It's not in the Previouslys, but still no cases. Eleven episodes in.

Morgan: Look, there's just—there was—offscreen, they did a really big case and they made crazy bank and they just didn't tell us about it. [laughs]

LaToya: Obviously. But also, in these Previouslys, I almost forgot. "These visions are killing me." She's taking some secret pills, and if she loses the visions, she's afraid she won't be able to help anymore, that they won't need her anymore. And by "they" I mean Angel.

Morgan: Ouch. Ouch, ouch, ouch.

LaToya: And you know, we've been talking a lot about birth these past few episodes. But now, it is time for a birthday, and no Holtz. I wish you could have seen the Previouslys, that way you could have seen no Holtz and been even more excited to watch this episode, Morgan.

Morgan: I was excited because I know it's your favorite. And I thought I had an idea of what might happen, and I hoped it was the one with the Cordy credits. But I wasn't sure—I didn't dare let myself hope too hard. Because obviously, expecting that and not receiving that would be the ultimate disappointment. But luckily, it was. [LaToya laughs] And I was really thrilled. This episode absolutely bangs. Good favorite pick.

LaToya: Thank you, thank you. So we open, again, with the idea of the Previously. We left the Previouslys, we know the Angel/Cordelia relationship. So this speech that she's doing right now is supposed to seem like an emotional scene she's having with Angel. And it ends with her saying, "I love you." What? Twist! It's an acceptance speech for an acting award that she's been practicing for years. You know what? Fred's in awe of this speech.

Morgan: Fred says it gives her "chill bumps" instead of goosebumps. Because she is the cutest person that's ever existed. [both laugh] And I love it.

LaToya: Yeah, I'm sure—I'm sure you were very happy with some Fred stuff in this episode.

Morgan: Very, very, very happy, yes. [laughs]

LaToya: And because this all, again, takes place in the shortest time frame possible, they are just now cleaning up the entire mess from all the carnage and the kaboom that happened in the lobby. That's where we're at.

Morgan: Yes, and Gunn is all masked up, which was odd to see. [laughs]

LaToya: It was familiar, in these trying times. It felt safe to me. But yeah, he's cleaning up the blood. He's on that duty.

Morgan: Gunn makes me feel safe in general. And Fred is looking at him with heart eyes. Like, it is on. Please kiss. [both laugh]\

LaToya: You heard it here first. Morgan wants them to kiss. You have to kiss now.

Morgan: Look, I demand it, and therefore it must happen. It is also mentioned that Wes is out and not back yet. And Angel comes out with that baby. And Connor is awake and he is being cute and no one is allowed to touch that baby without washing their hands. Which means Angel is on his shit and he's being a good dad.

LaToya: Yes, this is progress. Much more reasonable than in Dad, where no one could touch it at all. [Morgan laughs] But you know what, pig drinking bloodsuckers are okay. And Cordy meant that in a nice way. So they're also doing a secret thing.

Morgan: Doing a little prank. Once Cordy leaves, they're all like, "Does she know?" And then Wes arrives and it's like, dun-dun-dun, what's it gonna be? It's something cute.

LaToya: [sarcastically] I wonder what it's gonna be with this episode titled "Birthday."

Morgan: [laughs] We have a secret pill scene, which I know from watching, like, after-school specials and teen shows where moms take pills with white wine, that it's not good to take secret pills in secret, ominously.

LaToya: But usually, as you're saying, that means addiction. That's the shorthand for addiction. But that's not what it is here. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: It genuinely is for extreme pain.

Morgan: Yeah, it—poor thing. Like. Cordy. As if my heart is not broken a thousand times for her, many times throughout this series. My heart was going out to her at this point. 'Cause gosh, these are taking their toll on her.

LaToya: Ah, the Powers that Be. Dicks. You know.

Morgan: Super dicks.

LaToya: Super dicks.

Morgan: She then leaves the bathroom and goes out and is revealed to be surprised with a Super Cordy cake! She has a cape! I love this.

LaToya: It's great. The show splurged to have them all sing Happy Birthday.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: 'Cause this was before you could do that. You had to pay the big bucks to those ladies.

Morgan: Yeah, those—congrats, ladies. You got your money. I hope you're happy. [laughs]

LaToya: You monsters.

Morgan: You monsters! I'm so glad it's in the public domain now. As LaToya and I have made our love of the public domain and the music that belongs into it quite clear, I think, over our careers as podcasters. [laughs]

LaToya: Yes, and this is one of those greats. Angel is so sweet and cute here. As we haven't said that enough this season, apparently.

Morgan: I know. I mean, I know I made my love for Daddy Angel very clear last week. But I just would like to say, still working for me. Still doing well. I saw someone comment on our Instagram that they missed hearing the Bi for Boreanaz jingle. And I just—

LaToya: Don't worry. They'll hear it in this episode. [laughs]

Morgan: Yes. And I just think it's because, since you and I are just, like, bi disasters in general, [LaToya laughs] we are just constantly thirsting over Boreanaz and not even considering—[laughs]

LaToya: Don't you worry.

Morgan: Labelling it with the jingle. So.

LaToya: You'll hear it again soon.

Morgan: But yes, Cordy says, like, in terms of her cake and her presents. Like, it's no—like, it's no Jude Law, but it'll do for a birthday surprise.

LaToya: Agreed.

Morgan: [laughs] And they all tell her that they have presents for her. And she's like, cool, let me give you that baby then instead, so that she can have the presents. And Angel's like, you really, like, want presents more than holding my baby? And she's like, "No, *take the baby*," 'cause she is having a vision.

LaToya: A terrible vision, a violent vision, about a teenage girl. And before she gets into it, she throws herself into the weapons cabinet. And now she's comatose, which, never good. But even worse when you're comatose and you wake up in a coma. Cordelia has done it. She's done what Giles thought she was crazy for saying. She has woken up in a coma. Take that, Giles. Take that, Buffering the Vampire Slayer. Team Angel! [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah. Hey, on our show, the impossible has happened. So I don't know. Sounds like we're maybe the cooler ones. Just something to think about.

LaToya: But yeah, she's woken up in a coma. Point Angel On Top, negative points Buffering the Vampire Slayer.

Morgan: As always.

LaToya: And before we get, like, really into it. I wanna, you know, note how people are always like, nitpicking this. Which, um, so in the first season, in Prodigal, when—you remember the episode, like, where Cordelia's like, "We're gonna get an alarm system. And I'll make it—like, the password my birthday so everyone remembers."

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And they're like, we don't know your birthday. And in there, it's—the code is 0522, so it's like, well, clearly, it's not 05-22 that is her birthday. But the thing is, that is one of the many beautiful Easter eggs about Buffy's death.

Morgan: Oh!

LaToya: Yeah, 'cause The Gift is Episode 5-22, which aired on May 22nd, which is always...pretty amazing.

Morgan: Oh, wow! That's really interesting.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Good for them.

LaToya: That's always fun.

Morgan: I love a little Easter egg.

LaToya: Love a little Easter egg about Buffy dying. [laughs]

Morgan: Whenever we can make light of that. [both laugh]

LaToya: But yeah, so they're trying to wake Cordy up. And she's over on the astral plane, you know, trying to communicate, but no dice. Angel notes she's still alive, she's still breathing, so she's, like, in a coma—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: Or some trance. He brings up the vision. And Cordelia's trying to tell him everything, but again, he can't hear. Astral plane.

Morgan: Yes, and again, I know we've talked a lot about, like, Cordy's growth. And we're also just at a place where she is not her Sunnydale self anymore. But it is so beautiful to see her, in this, like, very scary place and situation, and almost exclusively focused on relaying the vision to them and trying to save someone, rather than being scared about her own situation. Like, amazing. Five million stars. I love her. I am so proud of her. This is an episode that's just—it loves this character and so do I. And I—it's obviously your favorite for dang good reasons. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, it is! I mean, Angel calls himself a champion in this episode. But you know what? Cordelia, also a champion.

Morgan: Fully agree.

LaToya: Change approved, Cordelia's a champion.

Morgan: [laughs] So Lorne walks in and she's like, oh my god, you'll hear me! And he walks right through her, so Cordelia's little form is incorporeal.

LaToya: Also, Lorne, way to avoid cleaning up the mess. [Morgan laughs] It's not like they helped him clean up the mess when they, like, ruined his club, either time.

Morgan: Yeah. So yeah, I think he is well within his rights to not help. They discover the pills.

LaToya: And they're like, maybe we should take her to a hospital. To which Angel says, no, because of how in To Shanshu in L.A., they did jack shit, the doctors. So what would they do now? Nothing, 'cause it's mystical, clearly.

Morgan: Yeah, and Lorne can, like, sense mystical vibes, so he confirms it. They say, maybe we should, like, go to her apartment for more evidence of what's going on, if she has these pills. Cordelia does *not* want that to happen. And she is still trying to insist that they act upon her vision, but obviously, they can't hear her. But what she can hear is [makes whispering sounds]. A bunch of whispers.

LaToya: See, we don't even need to put in the actual audio, 'cause you just did that, Morgan, so you're good.

Morgan: Yeah. This is a very professional vocal performance from me. You're very welcome. [laughs]

LaToya: Mmhmm. But yeah, in all this, Cordelia's still like, I need to leave them a message about the vision. Tries to pick up a pen, she cannot. Over at Cordy's, Phantom Dennis has planned a birthday surprise for Cordy himself. But, nope. And then, Morgan, how much did you love this entire scene? 'Cause obviously.

Morgan: Oh my god, I was obviously thrilled. I took a thousand screencaps for socials and for my own personal uses. I—

LaToya: For your collection? [laughs]

Morgan: For my collection. They're—they—Gunn gets confetti thrown at him. Fred is so cute. She introduces herself to Ghost Dennis. She doesn't—she tries to shake his hand, but realizes she can't. So she just wiggles his little party hat.

LaToya: Oh, yeah.

Morgan: Which made me want to cry. And she says, you know, "I'm not sure, really, how to do this." And she's so cute. And Gunn just takes the words right out of my mouth, and looks at her and says, "Fred, you are so cool." When I tell you I wailed. [LaToya laughs] I really did. I just let out an unbridled cry of passion over these cuties. I can't handle it.

LaToya: Did Michael ask you if you were okay?

Morgan: No. He's truly just like, this is the way it works now. He knew that I was watching Angel, so he just was like, of course, something cute must be happening. [both laugh]

LaToya: But yeah, so I had to look at the shooting script for this. So in that moment, it says, "Gunn can't help but grin. He gets a kick out of her." [Morgan whimpers happily] That is all it says, and then J. August Richards—he brings that to life.

Morgan: You and me both, Charles. [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah, they need to tell Dennis that something's wrong with Cordelia.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And they can't get him to sit down, 'cause they don't know if ghosts do sit down. Which, I would like to know that.

Morgan: I would like to know—yeah, I would like to know if it's helpful for them to be sitting down when they receive bad news. But our next scene is over in Wes's office. You know, incorporeal spirit Cordelia is yelling at him. He actually does consider that she might be on the astral plane and he opens a book to the page with that kind of information on it. And Cordy hustles over and hunches over his shoulder to watch, to try to read, and he turns the page too soon, and she's like, gah! You know, the problems of being a little ghost. [both laugh]

LaToya: Just a little ghost. Not a full ghost, it's a little ghost.

Morgan: She's just a little ghost. [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah, we go, like, right back to Fred and Gunn looking through her apartment. And it seems too normal, according to Fred. [laughing] Gunn's all up in the underwear drawer, because he's Gunn.

Morgan: Very, very Damon Salvatore of him to immediately touch a bra. I love that for him. Fred is—like, Fred is so flustered by this. [laughs] And is like, "You have to put that down!" Which echoes back to—not to give kudos to our enemies—but my absolute favorite comedy Buffy scene, which is Willow hiding her bra from Angel. [laughs]

LaToya: Oh, yes. The scene—'cause I always bring up how she has a full face of makeup in that scene. [laughs]

Morgan: Very weird. But a perfect scene, nonetheless. [both laugh]

LaToya: So they have to basically just tell Dennis, like, Cordy's life is in danger. And Gunn's like, "Unless you want her to be a ghost like you." Which, that does the trick.

Morgan: Aw!

LaToya: And Fred gives him shit—goes under the bed.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: And she's like, oh, you had to look in the underwear drawer first, didn't you?

Morgan: [laughs] And it is a big, like, tupperware storage tub full of different pills. Which, not—not a comforting sight. [laughs]

LaToya: Again, all those after-school specials said this is bad.

Morgan: They taught me to very much fear those little pill bottles. [laughs]

LaToya: Did they tell you—teach you to be like, "I don't touch the stuff!" [both laugh]

Morgan: Yes. I'm a classic Finch. Then, in Angel's room, Angel is like, you know—like, sitting vigil next to Cordy. And he is mad at her for dying.

[Clip from episode plays]

Angel: You really piss me off, you know that? I thought we trusted each other, but you've been lying. MRIs and cat scans, it's been going on for over a year? Why couldn't you let me in? I could've helped you. [sighs] God, you make me so furious.

Morgan: Little stinker. What a little stinker. [laughs] This—

LaToya: He asks, "Why couldn't you let me in? I could have helped you." Aww!

Morgan: Ugh! This episode is very aware that, like—us—

LaToya: That we're watching it?

Morgan: That we're watching it, that us as viewers are like, hey, so Angel and Cordy seem like they sure wanna do a kiss and neither of them are acknowledging it. And this episode is like, well, we sure are going to acknowledge it a heck of a lot. You teases. You—how dare you mess with me like this. [laughs]

LaToya: We have a tender love over on this show. Over on that Buffy show...

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: They're doing stuff with long skirts.

Morgan: [laughs] They're doing stuff that's breaking houses. Come on. Bone responsibly. [both laugh] Lorne comes in and tries to, you know, like, touch her temples and use his powers to kind of figure out what's going on. He is very wary because the last time he did that, he got zapped clean across the room. And Cordy is like, yelling to him, is like, "Lorne, like, please. Like, hear me, I'm here." She's trying to say the address and Lorne just says, "She's gone. Like, I can't sense anything." Ugh!

LaToya: Not good. She's clearly there. And also, again, she has probably, like, one chance to send a message to Lorne. The address from the vision.

Morgan: Mmhmm. Yeah, she uses her one bullet to do the right thing, because that's who she is now. And it's...you love to see it, folks. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Angel remains very angry, as I have written multiple times in my notes. And he's like, "Lorne, you're gonna go talk to the Powers that Be and I am not fucking asking." Fair enough.

LaToya: Yeah, no asking. And I honestly wrote, like, "my hero" in all caps.

Morgan: Mmhmm!

LaToya: Yeah, and Cordy's like, getting more whispers. She's genuinely afraid now.

Morgan: Mmhmm. They kind of sound like [whispering sounds].

LaToya: Correct.

Morgan: For the—you know, for those of you who didn't watch the episode.

LaToya: I hope we're painting a proper word picture with what we're saying and the whispers that Morgan is doing.

Morgan: I think we're doing an amazing job, yeah. [laughs]

LaToya: We're great.

Morgan: Yeah, we're great at this. So then, we cut to the same room, but later. Cordy sees that Angel's asleep. And she goes and she sits in him. [both laugh] Like you do. I was going hog wild. This was making me laugh so hard. [laughs]

LaToya: Did you not remember the body-jacking?

Morgan: I did not, and it was so silly and funny. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, she got that tactic from one of Wes's books, so hovering over him did help.

Morgan: Yeah. So Cord-Angel stumbles on over to the wall, grabs a pen, and starts just writing the address, like, you know, right on the wall because where else are you gonna do it? Cordy yells at the whispers and she's like, you know...booped out of Angel's body. It clearly—you know, she can't maintain her hold on his physical form for long.

LaToya: Yeah, so there's whispers and like, a dark spirit. Like, it's a ghost. Like, the evil ghost in Ghost, yeah.

Morgan: Mm. Very spooky. And then Angel falls to the ground and Wes comes in and is like, "Hey, Angel, why are you on the floor?" And he's like, "I don't...know?" Think, Angel. Think about why you might be on the floor.

LaToya: He says he had a dream that Cordy was trying to tell him something important. But I mean, look at the wall! [both laugh]

Morgan: Please. It is very dark—it is a very darkly-painted wall, so I imagine it would be kind of hard to notice the Magic Marker on it.

LaToya: I'm sure he could see it, with his vampire eyes. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, come on, Angel. Aren't you supposed to be a detective?

[DETECTIVE ANGEL jingle plays]
Detective Angel!

Morgan: Do your job! [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah, so they study Cordy's latest cat scans and more bad news.

Morgan: Yeah, it looks like her brain is dying? And I'm not a doctor. But I don't think that is supposed to be happening.

LaToya: You might need a second opinion but yeah, I think so.

Morgan: Yeah. That is so scary to hear and then there is wind and shadows and a big demon appears!

LaToya: And a Skip!

Morgan: Yay! Hi, Skip! [both laugh] I love Skip's look so much. I love Skip's horns and the little, like, piercing circle thing he has on his chin. It just—Skip—Skip has good vibes, in my opinion.

LaToya: Except for all the whispering and the little dark spirit thing that he was doing.

Morgan: Yeah. I like to think that he can't help those things. But like, you know, I enjoy his aesthetic and his mood. And I love his pop culture opinions. We're gonna have to get into those.

LaToya: Of course. But yeah, she—Cordelia is worried that Skip is death coming to take her. And he's like, nah. [both laugh]

Morgan: "No, I'm Skip!"

LaToya: And then he sees, like, her body, you know, in Angel's bed. And he's like, you know, most people go astral, their spiritual shapes tend to be an idealized version of themselves. But obviously, that's not gonna be the case for Cordy. But like, I actually like that and I don't think I've ever seen that actually be the case in anything with astral projection. I wish it kinda was the case.

Morgan: I definitely like it as an idea, and I love it for the—you know, like, the joke slash truth it states, which is that Cordy's really comfortable with herself and very like, proud of her own body and doesn't feel the need to, like, put any frills on it. Which I think rules and is very her. But yeah, I would—I feel like it's usually, like...I feel like you and I have had conversations about, like, your ghost outfit. Like, when you die and you become a ghost, it's like, what's gonna be your ghost outfit? You know? And so I guess it's kind of like that. Like, her astral projection outfit would be her ghost outfit. And she's like, no, I look hot in sweats. I look hot all the time. I'm Cordelia fucking Chase. Which...queen shit. [laughs]

[CORDELIA jingle plays]
Cordelia... (ah-ahh)
I love you, Cordelia (ah-ahh)
You're perfect, Cordelia (ah-ahh)

LaToya: Amen. Yeah, she has a lot of questions, obviously. And he's like, I'll answer them as soon as we leave. And he's like, you don't belong here anymore. Which, no? She belongs here. She's Cordy.

Morgan: Yeah, she belongs here very much. She's a member of Team Angel, maybe you've heard of them? They walk towards camera in slow-mo. [laughs]

LaToya: With a baby!

Morgan: Yeah, they do it with a baby now, guys! [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, he's like, she's not dead yet but will be soon unless she comes with him.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And she's like, okay, I'll come with you on one condition. Tell my friends about the vision. So still—

Morgan: Still being a very good kid. I'm so proud. But Skip's like, doesn't work that way. But you know, the way it works? The way it works is you come with me now. And she's like, fine.

LaToya: Yeah. She's like, I don't wanna die. And he's like, so don't. And off they go. But yeah, let's talk about how scary Cordelia's cat scans are. Um...very scary.

Morgan: Oh! Yeah, uh, Cordy? What the hell? Why would you not tell anyone about this? I mean, I know that she's trying to be a big dang hero and all that stuff. But...this feels like something someone needs to know about. [laughs] Someone besides Ghost Dennis.

LaToya: Her brain is like that of a cucumber, they say, basically. She—there—she should not be able to live.

Morgan: Yeah, which means that, like, she's been suffering for a long time. And that the effects are enormous and multiple, and she's been hiding it all this time. Which, I mean, we know that Cordy's strong but that's, like, a very impressive level of strength. But also, a needless level of suffering. [laughs] I, um, you know—don't be a martyr. Please, take care of yourself.

LaToya: Oh, Cordy. [Morgan whimpers] Speaking of someone who needs to take care of themself, Lorne has been beaten. He is back. His horn is broken.

Morgan: So importantly, Gunn is like, "Who did this? We're gonna kick their ass." Which makes me so happy, because like, given the issues they had earlier in this season. There was, like, a point at which Lorne still seemed a little salty about that, which, you know, fair. They destroyed his place. But now, it seems like everything is all good and they are on good terms. And Gunn is very protective of him and that made me draw a lot of hearts in my notes.

LaToya: Of course. You draw a lot of hearts in your notes.

Morgan: I do.

LaToya: So he writes it, gives it to Angel. And Lorne warns him, like, only a champion can deal the conduit, is what it is.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And even then, you'll have to—and he keeps—so he can't finish the sentence. And in the script specifically—'cause like, on Hulu, it just says, like, "garbled language." In the script, it says [garbled phrase]. [both laugh] It is spelled out, each time.

Morgan: [laughs] Very cute. Yeah, he cannot speak of this place. Which I—like, that kind of stuff always gets me. That makes me laugh. I'm happy. [both laugh]

LaToya: So now we're in a mall.

Morgan: Skip, you're—again, you're talking my language.

LaToya: [chanting] Mall-pisode! Mall-pisode!

Morgan: Mall-pisode! [both laugh] A mall also brings me peace, Cordy. Thank you very much. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, but it's actually a construct of a mall.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: You know, a little like the Matrix.

Morgan: Skip likes the Matrix and I like Skip. Wachowskis forever. The Matrix rules. Skip may guest on Wes and Gunn's film podcast that I still would really like to listen to. [both laugh]

LaToya: So he's gonna give her a choice. But first, he needs to show her some archival footage.

Morgan: Mmm.

LaToya: The first is of Doyle. Aww.

Morgan: Guys, remember Doyle? [laughs]

[“Counting Blue Cars” by Dishwalla starts to play]
Tell me all your thoughts on—[LaToya, edited in] “Doyle”

Morgan: He calls this kiss and the transfer of powers a “big cosmic whoops.”

LaToya: How dare you, sir.

Morgan: I know. I’m like, excuse me. What it was was very cute and made me very emotional. And he says, like, nobody could have anticipated his feelings for you. And that fact that, like, that is what made the transfer of power possible. But Skip says that it’s a mistake. Skip. This is the first time we’re disagreeing here. I’m not—I don’t—I’m not on board with that. I think it was a really good decision and that Cordy deserves these visions.

LaToya: And Cordy is like, “Doyle gave me the visions because he loved me?” She is surprised by this. But I guess she was kinda—like, she knew he had a thing for her but I guess she didn’t know how strong it was. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, which is, like—is really sweet. And it’s sweet to see the show kind of reckon with Doyle’s memory and touch it. Because on—like, as you pointed out last week, the—like, the cult that killed him was on the whiteboard, and this. It’s nice that he isn’t, like, wiped from history.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Like, he matters and his sacrifice matters, and the love that he had for Cordy really matters. And I mean, how could you not love Cordy? She’s fucking great. [laughs]

LaToya: Absolutely. But yeah. So he keeps saying it’s a mistake because the Powers the Be can’t, you know, foresee free will.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But maybe they should. Get better! [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, come on, Powers. Like...learn. [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah, he says the visions are an ancient, powerful force. Demons are the only ones who can withstand them. Uh-huh. Sure, Skip.

Morgan: Well. Except for Tammy. [laughs]

LaToya: Oh, Eliza Doolittle herself?

Morgan: Ah-oh! [laughs]

LaToya: I felt like I knew you were gonna get a kick out of that, Morgan.

Morgan: Yeah, I loved Tammy. Obviously. She had the visions for a year in 1630. I write in my notes, "cutie." Then I write in my notes, "her head 'sploded." [laughs]

LaToya: You wrote nothing about her accent in your notes. I am surprised.

Morgan: I didn't even need to. It's just—it's pure vibes. It's good. It's 'cause I had no notes. [laughs]

LaToya: I brought up the Dick Van Dyke'ing, like, a few episodes ago, and here it is, in full force. This is the accent I want Holtz to be doing. [laughs]

Morgan: Look, yeah, I would respect Holtz more if he did this accent. Because it's just—it's—I think it's cowardly to throw it away and try to do a vague accent. You gotta just, like, hit the gas and try something bold. [laughs] Even if it's very silly.

LaToya: It's very silly. But yeah, so people thought she was a witch. They were gonna burn her, but they didn't get a chance to because her last vision blew out the back of her skull. And then they do the little turn and they show it, which I'm pretty sure, in some syndication, they don't show the back. I think sometimes on TNT—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: I'm pretty sure they don't show the back of her head. Because, um, that's gruesome to show, like, I don't know, five AM or whenever they air it on TNT. [both laugh]

Morgan: Yeah, with like, hair and like, clumpy flesh and blood and stuff. It's gross, it's gnarly, I loved it. The conduit, like, speaks in many voices and is like, you know, not something you can see, which I liked. I dig that. Like, I think it can be really hard to...to show, like, all-powerful beings.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: I think it can be really difficult to try to, like—especially because the—like, the Buffyverse in general has so many of these, like, big all-powerful things. Especially Angel with, like, the Powers that Be and all this stuff.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: But I think this was a good—a good workaround. A spooky voice, a fire. It was menacing. And Angel yells that he wants the visions gone and that Cordelia has suffered enough. And the conduit tosses him around the room about it. [laughs]

LaToya: They call him “it” a bunch and they’re like, “The Powers owe nothing.” You know what? Angel refuses to leave.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: It’s not fun for him, at all. [laughs] None of this is fun for him. Then we get back to talking about Cordelia’s acting career. She’s like, “I don’t have an acting career.”

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And then we get a football play. [both laugh] On the party in the pilot.

Morgan: Yes, I love Cordelia watching the pilot.

[Clip from episode plays]

Skip: Inside every living thing there is a connection to the Powers That Be. Call it instinct, intuition. Deep down, we all know our purpose in this world.,

Cordelia: Are you saying I was meant to be an actress?

Skip: No. I'm saying you were meant to be an incredibly famous and wealthy actress.

Morgan: And Cordy could absolutely have the life that she dreamed of when she first came to Los Angeles. But she would not be able to, you know, work with Angel or be around him at all, ever.

LaToya: Yeah. No more monsters, no more visions. No dying until, you know, you’re old and it’s natural.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But she's like, "No Angel?"

Morgan: [whimpers] And he says, yeah, if you go back to your body right now, you will be locked in it, unable to move or speak until your next vision comes and blows the back of your head out. Ow!

LaToya: Not good. But she's like, "He needs me." And Skip is getting visibly frustrated the longer this goes. 'Cause I'm sure with any other person, it'd be so much quicker to do this.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: This is Cordelia Chase, though. She is stubborn as hell. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, and most importantly to me, she says, "But what about that girl?"

LaToya: Mmhmm!

Morgan: Like, again, she wants to do the right thing. She—the fact that she has seen pain and suffering, that she knows it's possible to stop, like, has lit this, like, fire under her that she can't put out. And that's hero shit. That's good shit and I am just—I am so proud of her. And I mean, I know you and I are both people who like superheroes and, like, you know, shows about, you know, do-gooders. And this is why you watch it. It's—it only works when I feel like the people have that real earnest motivation to do good and to be kind and to save people. And Cordy has it. She—that's why she's Super Cordy on her cake.

LaToya: But yeah, frustrated Skip takes her to watch Angel with the conduit. And of course, this is some—this is honestly some real Sahjhan shit. He brings her, like, at the worst possible moment. Angel is just saying, like, the frustrated things, basically doing anything he—he's saying anything he can to get them to take away the visions, basically. Not that he—he's not saying it because he thinks she is just—like, *just* a rich girl from Sunnydale. He's saying that 'cause, like, well, maybe this will help—

Morgan: Yes.

LaToya: To get them to do the thing!

[Clip from episode plays]

Angel: She's not strong enough to handle them.

Conduit: Obstinate. It speaks and does not listen.

Angel: [yelling] No, you're not listening! Cordelia's not a champion. She's a rich girl from Sunnydale who likes to play superhero. She doesn't have what it takes to do this! Don't the Powers get that? Stop whispering and listen to me, damn it! She's weak.

Morgan: I write in my notes, at this point, I'm cry. Because I just, like—I don't wanna see that! That hurts me and it obviously hurts Cordelia. She's like, take me out of here. Like, I don't wanna watch this anymore. And I wonder, do you feel like Cordelia knows what's happening and like, that this is, like, to a certain extent, an act? Or does she, like, really believe that Angel feels this way about her? Because gosh, I hope she doesn't. That hurts my heart.

LaToya: I think she believes that—I think she believes it, unfortunately. And obviously, she doesn't hear the rest of it, which is where he says that he's more afraid of her dying than she is, what is that? And I write in my notes, that's love, baby!

Morgan: Absolutely and completely heartbreaking. The idea that Angel, like, is in many ways, like, such a stranger to, like—to adult love. But also to loving someone so vulnerable. Because loving Buffy is very different than loving Cordelia, because Buffy is, to a certain extent, like, kind of indestructible. Whereas Cordelia's, like, significantly more vulnerable. And, like, you know, this hero stuff is maybe not super easy for her. It's something she's had to work at and earn and develop.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: And the idea that he—he doesn't even understand his own feelings. One, makes sense, because Angel. Love the boy, but his emotional intelligence is not, um, not vast. But two, just...that is love, buddy. [laughs]

LaToya: That's what that is.

Morgan: Yeah. I teared up, 'cause I—

LaToya: I mean, the conduit can't answer that question for you 'cause obviously, they don't know what love is. [laughs] But that's what that is.

Morgan: Yeah. We can tell you. [laughs] These two voices.

LaToya: So she makes the choice—Cordy makes the choice. Skip's gonna make her a star! And then you know what? She becomes a two-time Emmy-winning star. I write, "okay, sure." [laughs]

Morgan: Okay, sure. I love it. Do we wanna talk about the believability of this, given what we've seen of Cordelia's acting abilities in the past? [both laugh]

LaToya: Right? That's the thing. 'Cause she—she took acting classes. She's just not good. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, she's never seemed particularly good about it—at it. She's—

LaToya: She got good at it because of the visions, because she could tap into new emotions. That was happening at the end of Season 2, before the Pylea arc.

Morgan: Yeah. And she's just, like—I don't know. I would—it would make more sense to me if Cordy was like, you know—like, not a reality personality, but like, was herself. Like, if she had, like, a talk show or something like that.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Like, wouldn't you watch the Cordy talkshow?

LaToya: Yes.

Morgan: Like, I—like, Cordelia's made to be a morning show personality. And I say that, meaning it of the utmost compliment. I would like to wake up and have my cup of coffee with Cordelia Chase. [laughs]

LaToya: Yes.

Morgan: That sounds good to me.

LaToya: At the same time, the Cordy theme song slaps.

[Cordy theme song from episode plays]

Cordelia: One, two, three, four!

Singers: Yes, you can hear it in her laughter

Ooh, you can see it in her smile
Yeah, you'll be hanging from the rafters
Ooh, you better stay awhile
Ooh, better stay awhile
Yes, the whole world is full of laughter
Ooh, you got my heart a little wired
Yeah, you'll be hanging from the rafters
Ooh, better stay awhile
Ooh, you better stay awhile

Morgan: Absolutely slaps. I wrote in my notes, "titles I would watch." I would love to watch Cordy. I love that there are all these other people and other characters on the periphery of the titles and they are constantly just, like, being pushed out of frame by Cordelia doing something a-dork-able. Like, I love it.

LaToya: [singing] "Ooh, baby stay a while." It's Marti Noxon and David Greenwalt. Yeah.

Morgan: Aww! That makes me so happy. I assume you must have so many opinions on this opening sequence.

LaToya: Well, have you seen the deleted scene, which is a scene from this show?

Morgan: I have not and would like to. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, 'cause it's on the Angel Season 3 DVD and I've watched it many times. I gotta say, it's for the best it's a deleted scene. It's...I mean, I appreciate them doing a—like, literally filming a multi-cam scene with a live studio audience. [both laugh] That is awesome.

Morgan: Multi-camera acting is different than other acting. Not better or worse. Very different.

LaToya: Cordelia was very much trying to be, like, a dramatic actress. And that was—that was not the route for her. [laughs]

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Post show, Cordelia is talking with her assistant, Nev, played by Patrick Breen. One of those, hey, it's that guys. He was in Galaxy Quest. He was in the episode of Ally McBeal where John and Taye Diggs and Robert Downey Jr. do the Barry White dance.

Morgan: Love that for him. As a beleaguered Hollywood assistant, I relate to Nev intensely. And Cordelia saying that she wants something, something high. [laughs]

LaToya: She has a nagging feeling that she's forgetting something, which is something Skip was telling her about. Which was supposed to be, like, the thing she felt for her acting career, but whoops. [Morgan laughs] And yeah, she stumbles on wanting to go to the Hyperion, which is poppin' in this reality.

Morgan: Yes, the sideways Hyperion is beautiful and is, like, decorated in all these twinkly lights. And the concierge is stunned to see the famous Cordelia Chase.

LaToya: This creep. [both laugh] But yeah, also, it's poppin' but like, knowing the history of the Hyperion, like, a bunch of people are gonna die soon. [laughs] In that place.

Morgan: Yeah, any second.

LaToya: It's still, like—the demon's probably still feeding off all of these people.

Morgan: Yeah, hundred percent. Yeah, the concierge does really put his foot in his mouth and say several accidentally creepy things to Cordelia. But eventually, he takes her up to her luxury suite.

LaToya: And she says, no, I—she is drawn to a standard suite, which is Angel's room. Which, I don't believe that's standard. It's a very large room. We've seen Angel's room, it's large.

Morgan: Yeah, and it's like, why would Angel be like, I won't take the larger room. Like, I mean, you live there. You're allowed to take whichever room you want, buddy. [laughs]

LaToya: Angel continues to punish himself, takes a standard room instead of the luxury suite. [laughs]

Morgan: This—that isn't getting you any points. Like, it's not getting you any Shanshu prophecy tokens, dude. [both laugh]

LaToya: But yeah, she goes into Angel's—what is usually Angel's room. And she removes the wallpaper and sees the message—the 171 Oak that she made Angel write. Because—Skip even says, basically, you're kinda just—it's not really going back in time, but you're kind of just, like—it's a coat of paint, pretty much. So it

literally is—what he just—what he and the Powers did was wallpaper over the actual reality anyway.

Morgan: Yeah, which I love. And I think the logic of that works, like, very nicely and very cleanly. Like, the less you explain, the better it is and I think they do a really good job there. And she heads right on over to 171 Oak.

LaToya: In Reseda, baby.

Morgan: Yeah, baby!

LaToya: Going deep Valley in here.

Morgan: [laughs] Love to see it. She is greeted by, like, a young woman who's like, "Oh my god, you're Cordy." [both laugh]

LaToya: Yeah, she is fan-girling out, as we all would in that situation. Even without Cordelia Chase being a celebrity. But yes, this young teenage girl, Cynthia, played by Aimee Garcia in one of her first roles. Aimee Garcia, of course, on Lucifer. She was in Dexter in all those terrible seasons. [Morgan laughs] But she was still—hey, she was still making that Dexter money, so good for her.

Morgan: Hell yeah.

LaToya: You know, she's been around the block. And she's actually—one of the last episodes of Lucifer, like, in its original Fox run is an alt-world episode, where one of the characters is a celebrity.

Morgan: Oh!

LaToya: And she interacts with Aimee Garcia's character, who like, fan-girls in this exact way when she meets her. [laughs]

Morgan: That's so cute. I love that. [laughs]

LaToya: It's very, very cute. It always works, the fan-girling.

Morgan: It's adorable. And Cynthia's so excited to see her, but does ask, what are you doing here, famous person? Because, like, we cannot all be that girl that, like, Harry Styles visited her room, you know? Like, why are famous people coming there?

LaToya: What are you doing here in Reseda, famous person? You're not here for indie wrestling, so why are you here? [both laugh]

Morgan: And Cordelia asks, "Is everything...okay here?" [both laugh] Honey.

LaToya: This is, like, a tabloid story waiting to happen. Like, Cordelia Chase on a bender shows up in Reseda. [both laugh] Asking if everything's okay. [both laugh]

Morgan: Yeah, TMZ's gonna pick that up, for sure. [laughs] Cynthia explains that, like, her dad left. Her mom is, like, out of town, I think in Ojai. And she says, "Do you wanna see something cool?" [both laugh]

LaToya: "Cool" is subjective, obviously.

Morgan: Cynthia. Babe? I'm—I'm worried about you. She's doing a spell to get her dad to come back and she's like—

LaToya: A retrieval spell.

Morgan: "Cool pentagram, huh?" [laughs]

LaToya: And Cordelia—okay, so. Cordelia, she's from Sunnydale, so she knows that's bad. [laughs] And not cool. So that hasn't changed, obviously. But I just wanna note, 'cause this episode has, like, a lot of, you know, callbacks and stuff. A demon appears—before they can leave, 'cause Cordy's like, "we gotta leave"—a demon. So back in To Shanshu in L.A.—'cause this kinda goes back to that. Wesley talks about a prophecy beast, a razor toothed, six-eyed harbinger of death that's due to rise in Reseda. It's supposed to be in 2003, but I think this—it's 2002. I think it's fine.

Morgan: Wow, okay, good. Good on them.

LaToya: 'Cause you don't get a close look at this demon, 'cause they're kinda moving fast, probably—I don't know how it actually looks. 'Cause it could be, like, really cheap and they're like, let's just up the frame rate. But it kinda looks like it might be the demon.

Morgan: That is great. I totally buy it and that makes me happy. Like, continuity-wise and nerdy brain-wise.

LaToya: Yeah, 'cause specifically, it's just saying, a demon will be summoned in Reseda around this time. Like, that's kinda very specific, you know?

Morgan: Very. I love that. We cut to commercial and come back. Cordy uses her Sunnydale skills and attacks the monster with a lamp. [laughs] So she's still—she's still capable of fightin'. And then—

LaToya: I mean. She is. She's very capable of fighting. [laughs] "Fighting." Even if this wasn't a true Sunnydale callback, I wish she would have had a spatula.

Morgan: Mm. I mean, that would be the dream, yes. But then, there's a big noise and who bursts in the door but Wes and Gunn! But they're looking...a little different. [laughs]

LaToya: I mean, only one of them's looking a little different. [laughs]

Morgan: I mean, Gunn has a scar.

LaToya: I didn't really notice that, actually. It's not as prominent as the lack of arm. [laughs]

Morgan: It really isn't. And the, like, days' scruff that Alexis Denisof is rocking. So Wes has one arm, Gunn has a scar. And Cordy does recognize Wes from their time together in Sunnydale. And is like, "what the hell?" [laughs]

LaToya: See, 'cause that's the problem, really. All of this, like, do-over basically, doesn't change the fact that Cordelia was raised in Sunnydale. And she was part of the Scoobies and she knows about—like, she's just not gonna be like, "I don't care that this still exists in the world" if she's, like, brought back into it, you know?

Morgan: Yeah, you can't un-know all of that stuff. And you can't un-know...how important it is that it's dealt with. [laughs]

LaToya: It's one thing to be like, well, I'm not in the Hellmouth anymore, so maybe the demon thing isn't as bad as it would have been in Sunnydale. And leave and—but if you're confronted with it again in Los Angeles, like, you're not just gonna ignore it.

Morgan: Yeah. And so, the monster is killed. And—

LaToya: Yay!

Morgan: Cordy tells Wes that something weird is going on. Sunnydale weird.

LaToya: That is true.

Morgan: And poor Cynthia is really worried that her mom's gonna freak out [laughs] 'cause the place is destroyed.

LaToya: She is Cynthia.

Morgan: And it's like, yeah—

LaToya: But also, I feel bad for Cynthia. Like, she's not doing well and her mom just went to go hang out with her friends in Ojai. Like, this poor kid!

Morgan: Yeah, somebody supervise Cynthia, please.

LaToya: Cynthia! Be adopted by Cordelia. [laughs]

Morgan: Please.

LaToya: Angel's like, "There's a new kid in town! [laughs] On Angel!" And Cynthia just has, like, pink hair and you know, she plays her music too loud.

Morgan: I love it.

LaToya: How will Angel Investigations handle...Cynthia?

Morgan: Angel Investigations is up against its worst enemy ever. A teenager!

Both: [makes electric guitar noises] [laugh]

Morgan: Ah. Yes. We both did electric guitars, with full miming, and that is good. [laughs]

LaToya: God, we suck.

Morgan: Jenny, give us a Cynthia jingle! [both laugh]

[CYNTHIA jingle plays]
Cynthia! La-la-la!
Having fun, tearing up Hotel Hyperion

Morgan: So then, outside the house, Cordelia kind of explains what's going on with her. And, like, she actually gets to meet Gunn, who's, like—cannot believe that Wes and her know each other. [laughs]

LaToya: He didn't—like, he thought, like, Wes was just making shit up, apparently. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah and he's like, "Um, did you guys actually kiss?" And Cordelia's like, LOL, yeah. [laughs]

LaToya: I love that we can laugh about that. 'Cause again, it was funny.

Morgan: It was very funny. It was a very comedic kiss. And you know, they—Gunn makes this great point about Sunnydalers and repression. [laughs]

LaToya: But before he does that, we learn that a Kungai demon is what got Wes's arm, which, the Kungai demon was what he was hunting when he appeared as a rogue demon hunter. He lost his arm as soon as he got to Los Angeles.

Morgan: Oh, Wes. Wes, Wes, Wes. God, as if, like, we could not clown on the rogue demon hunter, like, phase enough. The fact that it ultimately would have resulted in the loss of his arm. Like, honey, that was not it. [both laugh]

LaToya: So much leather. [Morgan laughs] So, repression, Sunnydale. Yeah, that's how you survive in Sunnydale. [laughs] If you're not, like, part of the Scoobies, you have to repress. Joyce! [both laugh] Joyce, the queen of repression.

Morgan: Yes, absolutely. Like, everybody is not remembering things just to get by. [laughs]

LaToya: Ahh.

Morgan: It's the only coping mechanism they have, Gunn. Don't knock it.

LaToya: Simpler times.

Morgan: Truly. But then we go—we actually—our next scene is at—I assumed this was, like, Wes's place? Yeah?

LaToya: Yeah, this is Wes's place. We got that blue color tone, and I love it. And also, I learned from the shooting script that those flash cut transitions. It says "flashy mcflash cut."

Morgan: [laughs] Cute, cute, cute. Harkening back to, like, old school Angel transitions. And Wes explains to Cordelia that Angel, you know, like, is different than when she knew him in Sunnydale. He came to LA alone, and then his only friend Doyle died and gave him visions.

LaToya: So!

Morgan: [high-pitched] Did Doyle...did he?

LaToya: Well, we know—it's canon that Doyle's a little bi for Boreanaz. And—

Morgan: Yeah, baby.

LaToya: If—I only know one way to transfer the visions from person to person.

Morgan: I actually only know of one way, too. To do a little smooch.

LaToya: Hmm, transitive property? They smooched.

Morgan: They kissed. Yeah.

LaToya: Play that jingle. Play that fucking jingle!

Morgan: Play it, baby! [laughs]

[BI FOR BOREANAZ jingle plays]
He's got a broody stare and hot spiky hair
If you're straight or gay,
Your tingly feelings don't care
You're just being honest 'bout this
Sexy demonic and you're...
Bi for Boreanaz
Bi for Boreanaz
Bi for Boreanaz

LaToya: I hope everyone's happy. Bi for Boreanaz.

Morgan: Ohh my god. Um, so, yeah. So sad, so sad. I don't like to hear it. I don't like to think about this version of Angel and what his life has been like. It hurts my heart and my head. And Cordelia says this all seems like the suckiest job in the world.

LaToya: Yeah. It is. And she's like, "This is how you make your living?" and Gunn's like, sometimes, basically. But hey, still doing better than Buffy and company.

Morgan: Mmhmm. And like, Wes is like, just so you know, like, Angel is not well. Why don't we just tell him you stopped by and say hi? Like, he really is trying to protect both Cordelia and Angel from this interaction. Which is just really good Wes stuff. Like, very believable Wes of any universe stuff. And I love it and it hurts me.

LaToya: 'Cause yeah, he says that sometimes Angel sends them out to save people he killed 200 years ago. Oof.

Morgan: Ugh! Yeah. That's not good. And there's—there are few things this camp loves more than to write someone in, like, the throes of madness, mumbling things to themselves. And they sure do deliver here and that definitely tracks with that and breaks my heart.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: So it's great that this—these newfound abilities didn't distract him from his awful guilt that plagues him at every moment of the day.

LaToya: And, like, as Skip said, you have to be a demon to, you know, be able to take them on without them exploding your head. But it is because of Cordelia's strength that she didn't, like, snap the way Angel did and wasn't wracked with guilt. That's the difference.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Angel doesn't have the same strength as Cordelia in that form, even though he is a demon.

Morgan: No, he doesn't, like—and I think Angel would be the first to admit, like, that he is a quote-unquote, like, "weak" person. Like, he's very ruled by his guilt and his feelings. And he's not good at coping with anything. And you know, like—which is not a value judgment on him. Those things are hard to do. But he is clearly, like, not cut out to have these powers and have access to these people's pain and suffering. Because he already—already, all of his thoughts are about pain and suffering. [laughs]

LaToya: Yep.

Morgan: Mmhmm. At least Cordy has thoughts about cool shoes sometimes. [both laugh] And malls.

LaToya: Yeah. But yeah, Wes lets her in and now we see this version of Angel, which means, I guess we can do Fuck Watch at this very upsetting moment.

Morgan: [unenthused] Woo-hoo.

[FUCK WATCH jingle plays]
Flirting, understanding consent, and kissing
Flirting, understanding consent, and kissing
Fuck Watch!

Morgan: Who's yours?

LaToya: [laughing] Who's yours?

Morgan: I have it picked. I struggled to pick.

LaToya: I also struggled to pick. I think I know what yours should be. I think I know what mine is. I'll just be honest, it's one-armed Wesley.

Morgan: I mean, yeah, fair. He could get it.

LaToya: And because it is an alt-world version of Wesley, if I pick Wesley again, it's different.

Morgan: Then I think—following your lead, I'm gonna pick alt-world Gunn.

LaToya: I'm surprised you did not pick Skip. I thought that was gonna be yours.

Morgan: I—Skip, I want to discuss film—cinema with. You know? Like, I don't see our relationship as in any way sexual. But—

LaToya: Oh, so as a terrible person would say, you're putting Skip in the friend zone.

Morgan: Ah, yes. Yeah, I'm friend-zoning Skip. And...[laughs] I—

Kristin: I just want everybody to know that I picked Skip. Okay? That's all I have to say. [Morgan and LaToya laugh] Bye.

LaToya: Kristin's like, someone's gonna fuck Skip! If I have anything to say—

[laughter]

Morgan: I love—

LaToya: That's Kristin's Corner, saying "I wanna fuck Skip."

[Kristin laughs]

Morgan: Love that journey for you, Kristin. Yeah, I'm gonna go with hot face scar Gunn. Who is, like—still has a sense of humor enough to clown on his friends, even though things are dire. Which to me is the mark of a fun person. [laughs] So yeah. It's alt-Gunn.

LaToya: Aw, that's nice.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: You know what's really sad?

Morgan: Mm?

LaToya: In this world, Fred's stuck in Pylea.

Morgan: [quietly] Well, I don't wanna think about that.

LaToya: Sorry.

Morgan: [inaudible] [laughs] That hurts my heart and it hurts my soul and I don't wanna think about it. 'Cause I like my Fred safe. I like my Fred in Los Angeles. [laughs] And I like my Fred happy.

LaToya: I like my Fred eating comically-sized ice cream cones.

Morgan: Absolutely. And no longer pining after Angel. [both laugh]

LaToya: That's for sure. But yeah, it's—Angel's not really in a pine-worthy form right here. He's very unwell and it's...it seems like, you know, they're afraid he might hurt Cordelia. But really, Angel's the one who's afraid of her.

Morgan: Yeah. He—there are, like, restraints in the room for when they have to, like, you know, subdue him from either hurting someone else or himself. Which is, you know, upsetting to see and to think about. He's muttering to himself. And the second he sees her, he, like, runs away and hides in a corner. Ow!

LaToya: And Wesley says this is one of his good days.

Morgan: Yeah, so this is a relatively [laughs] well-adjusted sideways Angel we're seeing here. And it—yeah, it's—like, he's fully just kinda broken. And it—it is interesting to think about the idea that this is a burden that Cordelia carries pretty dang gracefully. And that has, like, fully tanked him. So if there is any doubt that she is—you know, that she's still just some girl from Sunnydale who isn't a champion, this should clear things up for ya. 'Cause Cordelia Chase fucking rules and she has not let this, like, bring her down. Sure, it is damaging her brain. But that's what the pills are for, baby. [both laugh] She's still here and she's still cool and I love her to death. But Cordelia sees Angel suffering, and it clearly hurts her heart, much like it hurts ours. So what does she do? She does—she did what Doyle must have done at one point.

LaToya: There's—

Morgan: And she kisses Angel!

LaToya: There is no other option as to what Doyle and Angel must have done to transfer these powers. Because now, she kisses Angel and Angel transfers his powers, kissing.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And you know what? Also, that means, love, baby. 'Cause love's part of it.

Morgan: Yeah, it does. And what'd you think of this kiss? Were you—because, LaToya, I'm gonna make this assumption about you. You kinda seem like you're really into, like, Cordelia and Angel as a romantic pairing.

LaToya: [sarcastically] What?!

Morgan: This is something I have picked up that I think has been quite subtle.

LaToya: Been so subtle. [Morgan laughs] It's good. And the thing that, I guess, sucks is that...Angel doesn't know this happened. [laughs] In general, I wanted to

talk about just, you know, alt-world episodes of TV. 'Cause this is a great alt-world episode, obviously.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Buffy has had alt-world episodes, like The Wish, which was far more tragic for Cordelia, I must say.

Morgan: Yeah, ouch.

LaToya: Or of course, Superstar, which is far more selfish than what Cordelia's doing in this episode.

Morgan: Very much so, yes.

LaToya: But a show I always reference and I must force you to watch, Morgan, is the US version of Being Human.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And in the final season, they have, like, a two-episode alt-world arc which I just think is, like, one of the best in general. And in it, basically, the character who is—like, she is experiencing this. She falls in love with her—like, with one of the guys. And at the end, when she's about to go back to her world, he's like, "You have to make me remember, basically, that we were in love 'cause I don't wanna forget this, obviously." So she goes back and she's spending, like, the rest of the season, like, trying to remind him, 'cause he doesn't remember this. It's—

Morgan: Aww. Well, that is deeply romantic.

LaToya: It is deeply romantic. And obviously, I'll just say it. The male half of that is Witwer.

Morgan: Hot!

LaToya: Sam Witwer, my love. Come on the podcast. I don't know if you've ever seen Angel, but come on the pod.

Morgan: Sam Witwer, come on the pod. LaToya and I are your biggest fans. [both laugh]

LaToya: It's true.

Morgan: This is lovely. Yeah, alt-world episodes. Now, of course, that you've mentioned it, every single one that's ever existed has flown out of my brain. I can only think of the Friends one. [both laugh] Which does include my favorite Phoebe joke, where she explains that's when she lived in a box, thought she had to work on stocks and only eat lox, 'cause she thought that everything that rhymed was true. [both laugh] So Phoebe remains—

LaToya: [laughing] I can't believe you referenced the Friends alt-world episode.

Morgan: Yep, that's all I got.

LaToya: Yeah, alt-world episodes are up there with Groundhog Day episodes as my favorite...fun little twist on things.

Morgan: Absolutely, yes. Yeah, I love a Groundhog Day episode. That's, like, the best Supernatural, in my opinion.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Speaking of pop culture. This is when Skip comes back. And he does make a Gladiator reference, to which he says, didn't love it. Which, I do agree that The Matrix is better than Gladiator. So, like—

LaToya: Wow! Hot take.

Morgan: I know. I know. I am just throwing down gauntlets here. But yeah, The Matrix rips. Cordelia's like, look, I know you said this was impossible but you need to find a loophole. And there is one.

LaToya: Yeah, there is. Basically, she'd have to become part demon. The visions will be fine, but she may never be able to lead a human life again. And she, without hesitation, says, "So demonize me already." Yeeaahh!

Morgan: Yes! So cool. Yes. No refusing the call. Just being a badass. Like, it—and hte thing is, when was the last time Cordelia was living a normal fucking human life, at all? Like, she—the die is cast on this. Like, she is who she is. Why not take this—[crosstalk]

LaToya: [simultaneously] Fucking D&D nerd.

Morgan: Yeah, baby. [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah. And then, you know, Skip says, "It was an honor being your guide, Cordelia Chase." Which leads me to think his frustration was kind of a prank.

Morgan: Maybe a little bit of a prank, or maybe ultimately he's like, well, we've had a lot of fun here. Like, I got exasperated with you, but you're a champ.

LaToya: But think about it. The vision is solved, but it was only going to exist in the alt-world for her to save. So like—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: She had to kinda go through all this. It was a little bit of a prank.

Morgan: Little bit of a prank. Alright, Prank Sinatra. [laughs]

LaToya: Skip is Prank Sinatra. Cordelia wakes.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Angel hugs her and he says, "I thought I lost you." And I wanna cry.

Morgan: So many feelings. This is sweet and romantic and lovely. She feels herself for horns or a tail and is excited that there aren't any.

LaToya: Shout out to "aspect of the demon" from Earshot. [both laugh]

Morgan: They are all just like, what is going on with Cordelia? [laughs] But—

LaToya: And then she goes, like, all Wizard of Oz, saying there was this actress and this one-armed guy. [both laugh] And she's like, that vision's been taken care of, but I'm having another one. And she just...just says it so casually.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: No pain. And they're all staring. And why are they staring, Morgan?

Morgan: Oh, no reason, just that she is floating in midair! [both laugh]

LaToya: Aspect of the demon, baby!

Morgan: Yes. Love, love, love. Just fucking great. So cool. Like, I—I'm—

LaToya: Imagine—

Morgan: I adore her.

LaToya: Imagine young LaToya. I am a freshman in high school. I'm watching this episode of television and that happens. Imagine just me losing my shit. Cordelia's floating!

Morgan: Ugh, to be a fly on that wall. I would love to have seen a small LaToya react to that. It's such a, like—it's so lovely and joyful. And this episode is so, like, celebratory of who Cordelia is and who she's been and how she's grown. And it is about kind of, like, launching forward into this new chapter for her. And it's just, like—it makes me feel so good. Like, the fact the show loves her like we do is good to me. And is what the character deserves, is what Charisma Carpenter deserves. It is—I'm very happy.

LaToya: I will just say—

Morgan: This episode made me very, very happy.

LaToya: David Greenwalt always believed that. I will just say that.

Morgan: Absolutely. [laughs]

LaToya: Ah. And now, we have completed another episode of Angel, which means it's time for Angel himself to watch some television. From The WB.

Morgan: Woo!

LaToya: Hit the theme.

[DUBBA-DUBBA-WB jingle plays]
Angel is a vampire
Does he even like TV?
"I think he'll *like* The WB."
They got that hot teen drama
To ease the pain and trauma
And here's the episode that he
Needs to see (aw yeah!)

LaToya: I love surprising you with these episodes, Morgan. You never know what we'll choose.

Morgan: Never.

LaToya: What do think it'll be, like...in the ballpark for episodes? You know, we've talked about a lot of TV in this and a lot of TV styles.

Morgan: Mmhmm. So this is an episode—

LaToya: [simultaneously] There was a lot of concepts.

Morgan: Yeah, a lot of concepts. This is an episode Angel needs to watch. And I think he...if—so by that metric, this episode, he really, like, was reminded how much he values Cordy. Maybe—kind of, like, we learned a lesson that he also might need to learn about Cordy's fortitude and it maybe looking a little different than his own kind of fortitude. So...naturally, I'm gonna assume 7th Heaven.

LaToya: [laughs] No! I still haven't chosen 7th Heaven.

Morgan: I'm waiting.

LaToya: I know, I think everyone's waiting for me to choose 7th Heaven. But no, you know, this is obviously about Angel learning a lesson. And in this case, it's about, you know, the things we do for the people that we love, to quote Bush. And this will be episode—Season 3, Episode 20 of Gilmore Girls, Say Goodnight, Gracie. AKA the episode where Dave Rygalski stays up all night and reads the Bible cover to cover asking Mrs. Kim for permission to date Lane.

Morgan: I have melted into a puddle, because this is the most romantic thing that I have ever seen on television. I don't like Gilmore Girls, listeners.

LaToya: I know.

Morgan: And I'm sorry about that. Because I know that makes people mad and people get very confused, because I'm a fast-talking brunette. But don't stereotype. But Adam Brody on Gilmore Girls is so cute. He is, like—he's my dream boy. Like, that's the dream. He read the Bible for her. Yeah, Angel needs to see that. Angel needs to know what—what a real man looks like. [laughs]

LaToya: I mean, this is what you do. I understand, you know, going to the conduit and everything you did. But you don't insult the woman accidentally when you're

trying to help. You don't do that. I don't think Dave Rygalski was insulting Lane, as he was reading the Bible. Even though the quote that Mrs. Kim said was from Henry VI, it wasn't from the Bible, so he read the wrong thing anyway.

Morgan: [squeals] He just—he's good. He did that. I love—I fucking love him. I would have probably liked Gilmore Girls a lot more had he not left for The OC. [laughs] But I'm glad that Angel's gonna learn a little something.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: About how to treat a lady.

LaToya: Exactly. You could learn a lot from Dave Rygalski. Maybe not Seth Cohen. Actually, you'd learn what not to do from Seth Cohen. But this is also the episode where Dean in his suit tells Rory he got engaged to Lindsay.

Morgan: Oh. [laughs]

LaToya: Which is always hilarious to me. It's just him in his goofy suit, like, "I'm engaged!" And then he gives Rory shit for having a terrible boyfriend in Jess and that's always good to me. [both laugh]

Morgan: Very funny. Nothing like hearing that your childhood love is engaged to make you feel all sorts of ways. [both laugh]

LaToya: Nothing like just graduating high school and your childhood love saying, "I'm engaged."

Morgan: Oh, Gilmore Girls.

LaToya: But yeah. That moment right there is, like, the kick that is the alt-world. Dean saying, "I'm engaged."

Morgan: [laughs] Yeah, I feel like that—this will teach Angel several lessons.

LaToya: Oh, this episode is also the episode that brings in Jess's father, played by Rob Estes, to try to prep for the spin off that never happened. And this will also teach Angel how to be a better dad. [laughs] By not being like Rob Estes and not fathering anyone who could grow up to be like Jess Mariano. [both laugh]

Morgan: I am not as anti-Jess as you are, but I agree that there is a lot for Angel to learn in this episode. And I think you've done a great job picking a good one.

LaToya: [laughing] This has been us talking about Gilmore Girls for way too long.
[both laugh] Hit the theme again, please.

[DUBBA-DUBBA-WB jingle plays]
Angel is a vampire
Does he even like TV?
"I think he'll *like* The WB."
They got that hot teen drama
To ease the pain and trauma
And here's the episode that he
Needs to see (aw yeah!)

LaToya: Ah. We did it, we talked about Birthday.

Morgan: We did. Is there anything else you'd like to say? I know this one's really special to you, so I wanna make sure you get all your stuff out.

LaToya: I mean, this episode just fucking rules! It's—if you disagree with that, I don't know what's wrong with you, actually.

Morgan: Yeah, we'll fight you.

LaToya: Sorry you're wrong. [Morgan laughs] You know, there's always, like, bigger episodes of shows and stuff. But I don't usually go for, like, the big event episode. I go for, like, the ones that, you know, are really character-driven in—like, in just a quote-unquote "normal" way.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So I feel like Birthday is that. Birthday is a culmination. It's just full of callbacks and just little...

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: It's just...it...we got to this place. It's been a long and winding road and it just—it's beautiful to see.

Morgan: Yeah. And I know often saying that things are, quote, "for the fans" can be, like, a toxic thing. But this does feel like it is for the fans in the best way. Like, it has all these Easter eggs. Like, it will—it's, like, lovely to watch multiple ways. It has so many fun things about it. Like, it rewards you for earnestly loving and caring

about this show and I think that's the best kind of television episode you can make. So I agree, it's very special.

LaToya: [singing] Mmm, baby stay awhile! [Morgan laughs] Next time around, we're doing Episode 12 of Season 3, Provider. What do you think's gonna happen in that one, Morgan?

Morgan: Someone's gonna provide! [laughs]

LaToya: Ooh! You know, I've always heard, the earth, it provides. [both laugh]

Morgan: I'm assuming Holtz will be back to darken my doorway once again. Along with Justine. [both laugh]

LaToya: They're providing our favorite characters, Holtz and Justine.

Morgan: And "provider" sounds like kind of what a parent does, so maybe more Angel and Connor stuff.

LaToya: What if the episodes were just like: Dad, Provider, Father, Parent. [both laugh]

Morgan: Papa. It'd be good.

LaToya: Guardian. [both laugh]

Morgan: I'd like it.

LaToya: The season finale, Emancipation. Oh no! He's a baby!

Morgan: No! [laughs] Too soon. Shall we move on over to plugs?

LaToya: Hit 'em with the plugs, Morgan.

Morgan: Woo! You can follow this podcast @AngelOnTopCast on both Twitter and Instagram. And you can send us an email at angelontoppodcast@gmail.com. And you can visit our website, at angelontop.com, and also, we have Patreon where we are starting a new and exciting movie club. We should have our Down With Love episode out, which is me and Kristin, discussing that movie, which is one of my favorites. And April's movie will be...Legally Blond with another member of the Buffering podcast, one Miss Jenny. And she's never seen this movie, which in my mind is a crime and we will be correcting that. And if you would like to follow me on

socials, I'm @LorganMutich on everything. So treat yourself or don't. And where can the people find you, LaToya?

LaToya: Don't. [both laugh] Again, my Twitter is @lafergs. If you follow me, do not tweet at me, please. I just want peace.

Morgan: Please give her peace. Please understand what a joke sounds and looks like. [laughs] That's all for us, so until next time, gang...

LaToya: They can't hear my salute, but I saluted.

Morgan: [laughs] They can't hear your salute. Bye!

LaToya: Bye!

[Cordy theme song from episode plays]

Cordelia: One, two, three, four!

Singers: Yes, you can hear it in her laughter
Ooh, you can see it in her smile
Yeah, you'll be hanging from the rafters
Ooh, you better stay awhile
Ooh, better stay awhile
Yes, the whole world is full of laughter
Ooh, you got my heart a little wired
Yeah, you'll be hanging from the rafters
Ooh, better stay awhile
Ooh, you better stay awhile