

Angel On Top
Episode 3.06: Billy

Kristin: Oh, hi there, angels. Uh, it's Kristin. I'm just sneaking in here at the top of the episode with my little producer hat on—it's a cute hat—[laughs] to tell you a few things about this episode of Angel On Top and also our upcoming episode of Buffering the Vampire Slayer. First of all, this episode of Angel On Top marks Morgan Lutich's second appearance in the podcast space here with us. But this time, she's here to stay. We are so freaking excited to welcome Morgan to the podcast space as LaToya's permanent co-host on Angel On Top. Hell yes, welcome, Morgan.

Next, a head's up that as you do all of your vocal warmups in preparation for February 10th's release of Buffering the Vampire Slayer's Once More with Once More with Feeling, we wanted to alert you to a few upcoming events related to the musical extravaganza. First, Saturday January 30th, we will be doing a live watch of Buffy Season 6, Episode 7, Once More with Feeling. That live watch is open to the public, it's totally free. It is going to be so much fricking fun. And it will be at 2 PM Eastern, 11 AM Pacific. Again, that's Saturday, January 30th. To register to join us, just head to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/oncemorewithfeeling. You can find all of the links and details for everything I'm about to tell you, right there on that link.

Following that live watch, we are going to be doing a special sneak peek of our upcoming podcast episode and all that we have been working on behind the scenes for literally months—years? I don't even know—[laughs] in a hangout with all of our \$10-plus patrons. That Q&A special hang is gonna be right after the live watch, Saturday, January 30th, at 4 PM Eastern, 1 PM Pacific. As you know, the episode itself is going to air on February 10th. And then we also want you to mark your calendars because we're gonna be doing a very special live taping on Saturday, February 13th, Valentine's eve, at 5:30 PM Eastern time. All the information about what we're gonna be doing in that live taping, the tickets for that and everything else is at that link that I mentioned earlier, bufferingthevampireslayer.com/oncemorewithfeeling.

Lastly, before we roll over into the bell and begin this episode, please note that today's conversation on Angel Season 3, Episode 6, Billy, does contain themes of sexual violence. Now, I'm gonna sound that bell, and I'm gonna scoot on outta here. Make way for LaToya and Morgan.

[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 Buffering the Vampire Slayer. I'm your co-host, LaToya Ferguson.

Morgan: And I'm your other co-host, Morgan Lutich.

LaToya: And this week, we're watching Angel, Season 3, Episode 6, Billy. Billy was written by Tim Minear and Jeffrey Bell, and directed by David Grossman. It aired on The WB on October 29th, 2001. This is the one where everyone learns a little something about misogyny.

[Angel On Top theme plays]

LaToya: Ah. Angel On Top. Two hosts, once more.

Morgan: Yay! I'm so excited to be here. Um, hi, everybody! You might remember me from the Carpe Noctum episode. And now I'm back, on a decidedly less horny episode.

LaToya: I decided that the way to reward Morgan for being on an upsettingly horny episode where we felt weird about doing Fuck Watches is to make sure she becomes the official cohost on a decidedly un-horny episode where it's even harder to do a Fuck Watch. That's the person I am, that's the kind of friend I am, basically.

Morgan: And I just wanna say, thank you so much.

LaToya: Morgan, before we, like, really get into Billy, an episode that, you know, people have a lot of thoughts about, I have a lot of thoughts about. A difficult episode to discuss, an episode that Kristin chickened out of being on. [Morgan laughs] Do you wanna talk about how far you are in, like, your Angel re-slash-official watch?

Morgan: Uh, yes. I am almost all the way through Season 1. I just have the finale left to watch. I've been trying to kind of keep my separate continuities in whatever way that I can. So when I watched Fredless to catch up on this watch, I figured I would not watch more Season 1 of Angel until I watched Billy and we did our episode. So I'm gonna return to Shanshu in L.A., very soon. And me and my boyfriend, Michael Chasin, are having a really good time watching it. I have some unique takes—not unique. They're not exciting. I have some takes on Angel and him being a rescuer of women, which is very much what Season 1 of Angel feels like. And this is definitely an episode about men and women and the way they relate to each other and the way things are socialized and has a lot to dig into

about, like, Angel as a protector of—I mean, at least Cordelia. In this episode, so it should be fun to talk about.

LaToya: And so, like, Season 2 is, like, really, really your blind spot, right?

Morgan: Yeah. I truly, like, barely remember—I think I remember resenting him going dark a fair amount. 'Cause again, I was fifteen and I just wanted him to kiss Buffy. [both laugh] So, um, when was, like, being mean and, like, having sex with Darla, I was like, absolutely not. This is—where is my beautiful husband? [both laugh]

LaToya: So this episode I think is great. I always thought it was great. Points deducted for being written and directed by men.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: And then there's one scene I really wanna talk about that, from the IMDB trivia, I know it was specifically written by Joss, also. Who was not a credited writer on this, but, you know, he's Joss.

Morgan: Yeah, I mean, he gets to write whatever he wants for it. So yeah, that makes sense. I'm excited to find out what scene that is as we get into it.

LaToya: You can probably guess what scene it is, too. 'Cause I also had kind of a feeling watching it, and then the trivia kind of affirmed it for me.

Morgan: I mean, like, is it, like, the final stuff on the plane tarmac with, like, Cordelia and, like, throwing—like, with the crossbow and stuff?

LaToya: No. It's the Lilah/Cordelia scene.

Morgan: Oh. Okay. Yeah. Something I kinda wish had a female pass? But, um—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Yeah, okay, that makes sense.

LaToya: So I... you know, just coming up in the world and, like, reading criticism. A lot of my criticism that I read was, like, on Television Without Pity, rest in peace. A very snarky worldview of television. Whenever I say, you know—on a podcast, which is often—that I'm not a mean person, usually someone like Morgan laughs at that [Morgan laughs] because they know me personally. [laughs] But in general,

what I mean when I say that is, like, I try very hard not to be, like, the snarky person I once was and once was in my criticism, pre-, like, this being my career, obviously.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And—but a lot of that snarkiness came from just, like, the worldview of being a Television Without Pity reader. And it's fascinating, because, like—so I went back, specifically 'cause I remember that, like, recap on this episode, which gives the episode a C minus.

Morgan: Oh, wow.

LaToya: That's why for, like—part of like, why, in my mind, people poorly received this episode, which I think is phenomenal and which I think time has even said, like, this is a great episode. And I think, as I mature as a woman, you know—as I'm no longer—like, you know—a teenage girl—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: I can realize the reality of a lot of the stuff in this episode.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: So especially going back to that, I'm just like, no, this is good! This is right and this is not, like, unrealistic. This is sadly very realistic, what is happening in this episode.

Morgan: Yeah. And I thought it—just to get in, a little bit, to some of the global thoughts I was having about the episode. Like, this is so much more of a nuanced version of Angel as, like, a good man in a bad world. Especially specifically a good *man* in a bad world.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: In a world that is, like, you know, obviously—we're all suffering under the boot heel of the patriarchy.

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

Morgan: I think that the fact that he's not just scooping up a, like, often white, often beautiful—often delicately fragile in the most gorgeous way—woman, girl and like, scooping her up from the train tracks. And a mustache-twirly guy goes—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: "Ahh, I don't—ah, goodbye!" Like, it—that's kind of what a lot of the cases of the week in Season 1 kinda boil down to for me—

LaToya: Oh—

Morgan: And why I felt like I was enjoying it a little bit less than I thought I might. [laughs]

LaToya: Mmhmm. Yeah, as I've noted before, my straight friend—straight male friend, Chris, who is the one good straight while male. [both laugh] When we would watch Angel, after the pilot of Angel, you know, Tina—Tina is the girl he couldn't save. Like, the next victim was also, like, a blonde, white girl. And he's like, well—so every victim's a Tina, is basically what he would say—[Morgan laughs] is what it is.

Morgan: Yeah, like, every victim is this, like, waif who trusted the wrong, like, paunchy, rich man chomping on a cigar and going, "Heh! Like, in my opinion, dames ain't good! And you gotta have a tough hand with 'em!" Like, it—[LaToya laughs] to a certain extent, I kind of enjoyed the fact that it had this, like, old Hollywood, like, '30s-esque aesthetic in that way.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: But then I—I kind of was waiting for it to evolve and felt like it didn't as much. Which, I will say, watching Season 3 of Angel, along with Season 1, for this podcast and to listen to it when I was a fan of it and now that I'm a part of it. It—I just—I found the difference so striking. And I think—I just appreciate the muddiness of this more.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: And the idea that Angel does the wrong stuff sometimes. And that is understood as okay, because he ultimately does the right thing. Like, there are moments where he's a dick in this episode. And he's acting kind of too rashly and he's not really listening to Cordy and—

LaToya: He's letting his emotions get the better of him, which is—you know, that's what makes him quote-unquote "human," honestly.

Morgan: Yeah. And that's what, like, I feel like makes him more authentic. And it makes him someone I feel like you can relate to a little bit more. And I don't know, there's also the issue of, like, there—Season 1 has so many, like, "you can't have sex" jokes. Like, this idea of him as this, like, sexless protector. And I was trying to see if there was any kind of line between the idea that, like, Angel can't have sex, has this kind of, like, lack of sexual desire/sexualness posed upon him, that makes him, like, the perfect celibate protector of all of these women. And something about that that just feels really icky to me. Like—

LaToya: It's like, the idea that—

Morgan: That you can only imagine a perfect guy if he—'cause he can't fuck. Like, eugh!

LaToya: Mm, the idea that he's the safest bet. Even though everything we know about Angel means he's—shows he's not the safest bet. Like, even Cordy doesn't think he's the safest bet, even when she makes those jokes.

Morgan: Which, just again, feels more realistic, authentic, lived in, honest. And I think it makes the friendship they have and the love for each other they have—which, whether you wanna talk about if that's, like, platonic friendship love or romantic sexy-times love—feel real. And feel like something you as the viewer can buy into and understand and, like, hold and care about, which rules. Like, I think this show has benefitted so much from getting more complicated and darker. Not in, like, a grimdark, bad way that I don't think is interesting—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: But, like, in a way that I think is nuanced. You can be lighter when you're darker at the same time too, because—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: You know, you gotta balance it all out.

LaToya: Dark in the good way, which is not, like, the kind of like, darkness we, like, mock in general. Especially in this particular episode, because I think that Grossman's direction plays a lot with darkness.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And in a way I'm, like, really excited to talk about. Previously on Angel. Fred is trading one cave for another!

Morgan: Aww.

LaToya: The visions aren't coming from the Powers!

Morgan: Ahh!

LaToya: Oh no, Angel's released this dude from hell!

Morgan: Eughh!

LaToya: Angel: "It's just business. I'll kill you next time!" [laughs]

Morgan: Hot?

LaToya: Which, by the way, so I spent the day watching Japanese wrestling with my mother, because that's the kind of person I am.

Morgan: Hell yes.

LaToya: But when she was leaving and I had, like, Angel starting and she heard that part in the Previouslys where Angel, like, threatened Lilah. Like, "the next time you fuck with Cordelia, I'll kill you." She's like, "That's right!" [both laugh]

Morgan: Hell yes!

LaToya: Uh, maybe I should get my mom to, like, chime in with some Buffy and Angel opinions. 'Cause she does have them.

Morgan: I would love to hear them.

LaToya: My mom's a Spike girl.

Morgan: Oooh.

LaToya: She loves Drusilla. She loves Kendra the vampire slayer, actually.

Morgan: All of these are phenomenal takes.

LaToya: So we open on Angel training Cordy, which is a sweet introduction to this episode.

Morgan: Yes. I am looking respectfully.

LaToya: I—because I know you. My first note is, "Angel training Cordy, there is *respectful* touching." [both laugh]

Morgan: I have written in parentheses, "hot, hot, hot." [laughs] I was so excited by this scene. People training other people to fight stuff is my romantic genre show kryptonite, so I was weak in the knees for this.

LaToya: [singing] "I get so weak in the knees! I can hardly speak!" That's some SWV, for all of you white Scoobies. In case you don't know. [laughs]

Morgan: [quietly] I didn't know.

LaToya: And in case you're Morgan. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, that was for me, thank you. [both laugh]

LaToya: So I—'cause at this point, from Fredless on, I was like, officially watching Angel week to week. So I strongly remember the promo for this episode, where a good portion of it was, like, the Angel training Cordy and is, like, in the "go team" part.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And it's just like, this is—I like this. I like this. I like what's happening here. Literally from the opening, her smile when he asks if she trusts him is—it's a good smile.

Morgan: Ugh, they are so, like, warm with each other and lovely. And again, being in my, like, point in the show, in Season 1, the affection has increased by leaps and bounds, and the trust, and the easiness. And it also just makes Angel so much warmer and it's so nice that Cordy can really, like, push him on this—

LaToya: Yes.

Morgan: When he's like, "yeah, I'll teach you enough so that you can kind of stave a guy off until it's time for me to finish him off." And she's like, "no." [laughs]

LaToya: Because he—he genuinely cares what she thinks about him and how she sees him.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Very much so.

LaToya: Even when it's like, shallow Angel, where it's like, he's talking about how he's gonna save her. And he's worried that she thinks that he won't come to save her.

Morgan: Yeah. And that—that killed me. What a—like, a beautiful little moment that is, when he's like, "you don't really think I would?" And she's like, "no, I know that—" like, Cordelia knows that Angel cares about her and wants to protect her. But she's smart enough to know, one, she could be fighting him some day. Which he, you know—goth little boy that he is—loves to remind us all that he's bad sometimes. [LaToya laughs] So he should know that, first of all. But also that, like, she also just wants to be capable of this on her own. And, like, as a woman who believes that everybody should have a, like, basic knowledge of self defense and feel like they should be able to protect themselves, because it's something that's been really important to me throughout my whole life. I can't say, like, how empowering it is just to have the sense that you can basically take care of yourself. And you know, again, I'm not like a black belt or anything. But I think you just feel so much more different when you can do that. And it's great to see Cordelia in that place—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: 'Cause, you know, this is her fifth season of being on supernatural shows. And we honestly haven't seen her throw down as much. So it's nice—

LaToya: Well, this is her sixth. [laughs]

Morgan: Sixth? Oh, god! It is her sixth. Jeez. Math. And, um... yeah, it's nice to see her, like, want to do this. It's such a nice piece of growth for her.

LaToya: Yeah. And you know, she knows that, like, Angel and Wes and Gunn won't always be there to protect her. So she just—just in case. But also, the thing is that she doesn't realize what Angel's saying when he says, like, "you don't think I'll be

there—" like, him specifically. We talk about how Angel is kind of obtuse in some ways, but like, Cordelia's also a little obtuse. Literally when she's talking about what—to Wesley and he's like, "Maybe we should all just end up together." And she's like, "no, we should probably just be alone." Like, girl. [both laugh] No.

Morgan: Oh, that moment made me laugh so hard. 'Cause again, I had forgotten what was to come. [both laugh]

LaToya: Cordy is, like, Sunnydale through and through. So she can hold her own, because honestly, being from the Hellmouth, you can hold your own. Even fucking Xander could hold his own in LA because he is from Sunnydale, you know? But—

Morgan: Oh yeah, she's tough as hell.

LaToya: Getting actual training, that is a very important step.

Morgan: Yes.

LaToya: I think that a lot of the obvious, like, familiarity with Cordelia and Angel, you know, comes also from the fact that, like, David and Charisma have just—like, they've been there since Day One, too. 'Cause you have to, like, remember—'cause I feel like people—I don't know, [inaudible] or not. Like, they are literally number one and two on the call sheet. Like—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: In those WB back lots, it's—it was always David and Charisma there.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: The kind of chemistry that obviously you expect of Bones and Booth on the television show, Bones. But like...

Morgan: [laughs] Bringing up Bones just to make me laugh. [both laugh] We had a long discussion about how there are more episodes of Bones than there are bones in the body, and we think that that's wrong. They should have stopped at 206 episodes and said "no more, because this is how many bones there are in the body." [both laugh]

LaToya: [laughing] We looked it up.

Morgan: [laughs] Just a little glimpse behind the scenes.

LaToya: And now to not have fun anymore, because we are at Wolfram & Hart.

Morgan: Oof.

LaToya: And Lilah is panicking because Billy is in her office with Gavin.

Morgan: Ugh.

LaToya: Shooting the shit. Billy went for a walk apparently for three days. Enter the congressman, who looks like a poor man's Christopher McDonald, honestly.

Morgan: [laughs] Fair. I—again, in this scene, I hate that they're making me feel a lot of sympathy for Lilah. Because she's dealing with, like, awful work sexism.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Like, she's a bad person. I don't wanna feel bad for her. I don't wanna relate to her—

LaToya: 'Cause she—

Morgan: Because she's dealing with a condescending male coworker.

LaToya: 'Cause it's literally what we're dealing with right now in the world. And she literally sold her soul to the devil. Like, that's what happened.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And she just keeps doubling down on it. She even says, like, she's not like Lindsey, who at least felt bad about what he did.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: And so, after this chat with Billy and Billy is taken away by not-Christopher McDonald—sorry to this man, but that's what's happening here. [Morgan laughs] Gavin's passive misogyny that we've been talking about for these past few episodes becomes very, very active.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And then, you know, he—when he's just saying, like, the classic just chauvinist bullshit that—Lilah's like, "come on." She's like, "At least Lindsey knew how to—" and she's gonna say, like, verbally spar. But before she can—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: She is physically attacked by Gavin.

Morgan: Yeah. Uh, not great, Bob. Yeah, he, like, yanks her by the hair and throws her into some glass shelving. And it's, like, horrifying. It's, like—I think... like, this scene is really well done and shot and choreographed in that the—like, it's such an upsetting thing. But like, the way the temperature kicks up, like, so automatically. Like, that it goes from kind of what you'd expect—like, the harsh and shitty way he treats her, to something that is escalated quite further, is so, like, shocking and visceral. So like, it's great, but god, it is not a fun time to watch. [laughs]

LaToya: I will say, um, David Grossman, who directed it. He directed a lot of female-led series, so—like, I'll give—like, I think he took a lot of care. He also directed a few episodes of *Bones*, which is also, again, a female-led series. 'Cause *Bones* in the woman, you guys.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: *Devious Maids*, *Desperate Housewives*, so he worked with Marc Cherry a lot. Um, 9-1-1 and 9-1-1: *Lone Star*, your shows.

Morgan: Hell yeah, hell yeah.

LaToya: *Some Why Women Kill*.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: *Some 12 Monkeys*. Yeah, he had a, like, really prolific career. Some—he did a *Revenge* episode.

Morgan: Oh, there we go.

LaToya: So, yeah. I—I think he—I would hope, at least, that like, you know, he's the kind of director that, like, women feel comfortable with, like, behind the camera. 'Cause I think he took a lot of care with this episode.

Morgan: Yeah, I would definitely hope so. It—I thought that, you know, it's—it's content that I think people can find, like, triggering and upsetting. But I definitely didn't feel like it ever edged into something, like, exploitative? Which I think that sometimes when shows handle this subject matter, it can get—like, there can be some kind of, like, vicarious thrill-seeking that feels like it's coming from behind the scenes, to like, make this kind of behavior in some way, like, sexy or interesting or dangerous or provocative. But it's... covered as just plain wrong—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: For this, and I appreciated that.

LaToya: Like, I imagined a version of, like, original Charmed doing this and it'd be a very bad version. And like, Smallville, as I will mention of course to you, Morgan, had a similar episode, which wasn't necessarily misogyny. It was, like, kind of like an inhibition—like, removing thing for, like, men and women, so it wasn't just that. It had, like, a similar kind of episode and even that still—like, it doesn't reach the levels—like, the heights of this episode, you know?

Morgan: Yeah. Fair enough. Yeah, I think it's—it's a really tough thing to try to handle. So I thought, like, they did a pretty dang good job. Especially given the—like, when it came out, for the—for its time, also, this feels really progressive.

LaToya: Yeah. And now... [sings to tune of Angel theme] "Angel the TV show, a show—" I'm not gonna sing the whole fucking thing. But that's where we are right now. [Morgan laughs] And then, I pull a Morgan and literally scream at Gunn and Angel playing video games while Fred watches. [both laugh]

Morgan: Good. I was dying. I had such a good time. They are so cute!

LaToya: Watching this, like, Angel was genuinely having fun, playing video games. And not like, being Old Man Angel where he's like, "I don't understand how this works!" And I honestly bet that Xander is pissed that Angel never played video games with him. [both laugh]

Morgan: I don't know. Xander has never really liked Angel. He might have been—because if Angel had beaten Xander at a video game, Xander would have thrown such a tantrum, I feel like. [laughs] Or he would have just... wallowed for forever.

LaToya: [simultaneously] But Xander would have loved if he beat Angel in a video game, that's the thing.

Morgan: He would love that. And it would be like, okay, Xander. Like, congratulations on beating the 200-year-old man. [both laugh] At Pong.

LaToya: And I will just say, it is a testament to J., David and Amy in this scene. Just the way—'cause, like, they're not playing anything, obviously.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: They don't even show the screen. They don't even pull an OC and show the screen. I think that J. and David are, like, playing very well at like, "we're playing a game" and it doesn't look, like, goofy. And, like, Amy is playing very well that she's watching and enjoying this. Like, I think she's playing it very well. It's like—there are so many little acting things I really love in this episode.

Morgan: Yes. I love small, interesting actor tricks. Like, especially people who are great at improvising, like, the other half of a telephone call and making you really believe they're talking to someone. Actors good, question mark?

LaToya: They're okay. [both laugh] But while this is happening, Wesley and Cordy are in the kitchen, 'cause we're at Wesley's apartment. And Wes is actually praising Cordy for taking the initiative to train with Angel. And she—like, he calls it inspiring and he says he's proud of her and I wanna cry!

Morgan: I also wanted to cry. It was so lovely. Especially, like, again, from my Season 1, like, you know, perspective. Jeez, have they come a long way!

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: And even from, you know, their first season together in Buffy. Like, the mutual respect, how lived-in their relationship feels. Which I'm sure is just an extension of, you know, actors knowing each other for that long. But jeez, it's—it just does feel so earned. They've both grown up so much and you love to see it.

LaToya: And—but this is also when we realize that Wes invited Fred to an intimate dinner for two, and then he ended up inviting everyone. And Cordelia was the only one who realized what had happened. [laughs]

Morgan: Wes! Wes's game is almost as bad as mine. [laughs]

LaToya: You have a boyfriend, shut the fuck up! [both laugh]

Morgan: But I was—this is where I wrote in my notes that Wes *likes* her. How cute. You know, there have been, like, significant glances and things that like. But this is our first time getting it, like, fully established and it's nice! Cordelia and Wes kind of transition into talking about, like, office romances?

LaToya: Yeah. Um... 'cause he's worried that the last thing any of them should be doing is coupling with each other. The odds of them finding someone else who could deal is not, like—they're slim. And the thing is—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: Like, Wes had Virginia in Season 2. And who—her father was a warlock but, like, I don't think she practices. And eventually, she broke up with him—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Because of the danger of his job, so like—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: Even though she's aware of this world, she still couldn't deal.

Morgan: Yeah. And I mean, she points out—she's—like, 'cause he's like, "well, you know, in a normal workplace, you know, you wouldn't encourage this." And she's like, "well but also, this isn't normal."

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Like, on the other side. She's like, you know, "only we are going to be able to understand the things that we as a team go through." And that's when we have that moment of, like, them both reaching complete opposite conclusions, of Wes being like, "so we're all meant for each other." And Cordelia being like, "so we should all never, ever have sex with each other, ever." [both laugh]

LaToya: You know what, I think Wes is right. And also, maybe the solution is a Wes/Gunn/Fred throuple, actually.

Morgan: You know I love a throuple as a solution to a love triangle. People are not brave enough to do it in basically anything I've ever watched. And... I'm waiting.

LaToya: You still haven't watched You Me Her, though, right?

Morgan: I have not. [laughs]

LaToya: I just—'cause I just finally finished the final season. And it—very sweet. Cordy says, "Wesley, if you like her, tell her." And then Cordy has a terrible, terrible vision.

Morgan: Oof. Yeah.

LaToya: It's a very painful vision that she is experiencing, a man hacking his woman partner into pieces, basically. That's not great. I think this episode has a lot of what Fred is—like, what Fred's purpose is too. 'Cause, like, she's able to basically calculate the convenience stores and, like, the—probably the right one, if they let her keep going.

Morgan: Yeah. Like, honestly, I was just like, don't stop her. Well, until—

LaToya: I mean, Gunn—

Morgan: Cordelia revealed why she was stopping her.

LaToya: But also, Gunn, like, translates what she's saying too. [laughs] Gunn can—Gunn speaks Fred, basically.

Morgan: Oh, which is so, so cute of him and so sweet for the two of them.

LaToya: Yeah. But apparently, yeah, the murder happened a week ago. And Cordy's like, why the—why would the Powers That Be show me this now? Then we have Wesley with a crime scene file, because this episode has—in a post-Fredless world, Wes is, like, showing that he's actually the detective of—he has so many sources. What the fuck?

Morgan: It's so sweet. I was like, good job as new boss, buddy.

LaToya: So we—I guess we need—

Morgan: Pounding that pavement.

LaToya: A new jingle, which is, [singing] "Detective Wesley!" [Morgan laughs] Sorry, Angel.

Morgan: [sings tune]

LaToya: [laughs] That's the Brooklyn 99 theme song. That's copyright infringement, actually.

Morgan: You're right, I'm sorry. I'm not good at inventing melodies, so I'm gonna leave that to, you know... anyone else. [laughs]

LaToya: Literally. Anyone else. But yeah, sorry, Detective Angel, you no longer exist because Detective Wesley is on the case.

Morgan: Hell yeah.

LaToya: He says, "I did it the old fashioned way, I bought it." And he has a source with tabloid connections. Like, the sources they should have. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, it, like, totally makes sense. Like, a nice, easy, solvable bit of writing there.

LaToya: Yeah. So the guy who killed his partner was, like—he says she wouldn't listen to him. He was trying to get her to stop talking. And the guy even confessed to doing what he did.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So Gunn's like, why the vision? This happened a week—like, a week ago too, and obviously it's all solved. And then Angel sees the pictures and he realizes why it happened. They see the guy Angel broke out of the hell dimension, and of course, Angel and Wesley and Gunn all recognize him. And Cordy's like, "who the fuck's this guy?" Ah...

Morgan: Ugh!

LaToya: Cut to Cordy and her very, very 2001 jeans. [Morgan laughs] Spiraling after being told who it is.

Morgan: Yeah. And she's just blaming herself completely for all of, like, the havoc that Billy is wreaking. And I do really appreciate that Angel's like, well, one, I did it. And two, it's not even *my* fault.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Like, it's Lilah's, it's Wolfram & Hart's fault. Like, they're the people that are, you know, doing this—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: And enabling this guy's behavior, not us.

LaToya: The fact that Angel, the king of self-flagellation, is like, "it's not even my fault." [laughs] That's how you know it's not your fault, either.

Morgan: Yeah. That's—as a generally guilty and anxious person, I really appreciated Angel's doing that. I was like, well, that solves it. Felt very calm.

LaToya: It's also worth noting in this episode, which—it's probably happened in previous episodes but, like, I'm only really realizing it now. Because, like, it helps a lot with the narrative. Cordelia's wearing the necklace that Angel brought her back in Heartthrob.

Morgan: Aw. That's sweet.

LaToya: Yeah. [Morgan giggles] It—yeah, 'cause—I realized it 'cause it—like, look how it brought out her breasts, you know? [both laugh] So Angel, immediately... he goes to Lilah's place and she's already very jumpy.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But he can't get in. And great—like, the great use of shadows and darkness, not to reveal what she looks like right now.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: And then she's like, "Billy never touched me and you can't touch him." She reveals herself and she is fucked up.

Morgan: Just, like, yeah. Looking quite hurt and bruised up. And just like, you know, shaken, not our usual Lilah.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: And she's trying to put on a good show and be confident and do the banter and be the vicious bitch that she is. But it's—you know, it's clearly a ghost of her normal self.

LaToya: Mmhmm. And yeah, she talks about how Billy is related to Congressman Nathan Blim. But yeah, they're basically the Kennedys but, like, super evil. So Wolfram & Hart is obviously the Big Bad of, like, Angel the series.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And he can obviously fight them and their clients, 'cause a lot of them are just, like, obvious monsters. But like, even without Wolfram & Hart, these terrible people would still have their privilege and be in charge. And like, Angel can't really fight that, besides just, you know, killing humans. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah. And I appreciate the, like, adulthood of the problems in Angel, like, feeling very differently than the, like, kind of more, like, coming-of-age problems that Buffy faces. Which are a lot about, like, feelings and issues and stuff like that. But I think this deals with, like, privilege and class in a way that the show doesn't—that Buffy doesn't always. And I really enjoy that. Like, the evil corporation and the fact that it wields power through capitalism kinda rules.

LaToya: That's why Angel allowing so many high-powered lawyers from Wolfram & Hart to get murdered by Darla and Drusilla ultimately still does nothing.

Morgan: Mmm.

LaToya: [strained] Great. We live in a great society.

Morgan: Everything's good. [laughs]

LaToya: But yeah, he—like, you can't hack away at systemic issues, Angel. That's the thing.

Morgan: Yeah, they're very hard to change when you're just one person.

LaToya: Mmhmm. And, like, Lilah brings up how she knows that Angel, you know, wants to kill her. But she's not just going off That Vision Thing. She's also still going off Carpe Noctum.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So she's, like, really on edge about Angel. And he doesn't know.

Morgan: Yeah. Especially, like, the idea that she experienced, like, a kind of—like, I mean, I guess not kind of—like, sexualized violence, like, from Angel. Like,

that's... a horrifying position to be in, for her. And yeah, I think it's—the scene's played, like, beautifully by—like, Stephanie Romanov is great in this whole episode.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: I really think you—like, the iciness, the fear, but also, like, the self-preservation on top of it. I just think she's good.

LaToya: Mm, yeah, he points out her hands are shaking. And then she's like "stay away from my client" and just slams the door on him.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So the boys then go to the Blim estates. And they're trying to figure out how to get in, 'cause there's a huge gate. And then Angel just use—as Angel, just jumps over the gate. And Gunn... [both laugh] says, to Wesley, "So, wanna go next?" [both laugh]

Morgan: I loved Gunn's pitch that, like, "do we all go in, like, dressed as security guards or something?" And I was just like, I wanna see them all in coveralls with, like, fake mustaches. [laughs]

LaToya: That's very Season 1. That is what would happen in Season 1. [laughs]

Morgan: [bad Italian accent] "We're here to a-fix the plumbing." Like, I wanted them to be like Mario and Luigi and—

LaToya: That is literally from the plot of Saved By the Bell, Hawaiian Style. [both laugh]

Morgan: Good. Then we know it works. [both laugh]

LaToya: So Angel is skulking, as Billy's clearly—just on the phone, just standing with his glass windows all around. And then Billy just stares directly at him. [laughs] So he is like, hey, dramatic ass. Throws a chair through a window. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, when has a problem not been solved by throwing a chair through a window, for Angel? Um, never. I love that he just does it. What a chaotic, emo boy. I love Angel. And I love that Billy is such a smarmy piece of shit. Like, he's immediately just like, "I haven't hit a woman. Like, I'm not bad." Like—

LaToya: [sighs] I—[sighs] I want to punch this man. [laughs]

Morgan: I want to hit this man. He is not a good dude. And he says—and he gets such glee out of, like, the beat change of going, "yeah, I don't, like, hurt women. I just like to watch." And I was like, ugh! Like, it is really, like, blegh! It gives me goosebumps. It makes me very uncomfortable. And it's a really good performance and, um... but it's just a really unpleasant one to watch.

LaToya: I... don't understand, really—so Billy is played by an actor named Justin Shilton. I'm surprised he hasn't got—like, he never got more work, basically.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: I feel like he weaponizes his, like... um, "I'm just a nice guy" thing very well.

Morgan: Yeah, I think it's—it's a very—like, I think it's a very nuanced performance. It's a performance that's very grounded in a real type of guy, which is, I think—the best kind of villain performances on both Buffy and Angel are the ones where, no matter how despicable the person is, they feel like a person. Like, you know, a person even if they're a monster or a demon or whatever.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: But they feel like someone you could meet. They feel like they have characteristics like that. And I—I just think he is being a lot of awful people I've seen. You know? It's scary.

LaToya: Yeah, he's—he's very, very familiar.

Morgan: Yeah. And so the cops, like, show up. They seem to—they're like, "oh, hey." This—they don't arrest Angel for throwing a window through—uh, for breaking that huge window. [laughs] But they do arrest Billy, who, like, touches the cop. And we see, like, the cop's skin glow red under his fingers, which is, you know, like—

LaToya: That's the effect, yeah.

Morgan: A decent effect. And he's like, "hey, I'll come quietly. Please don't—you know, don't cuff me." And I'm like, Jesus.

LaToya: It's like a combination of his powers on Officer Sanchez, who—like, who glows. And also his white privilege that he's, like, allowed to not be cuffed at all. And the black female detective is like, "okay!"

Morgan: [laughs] Yeah. It's—yeah, must be nice to be able to tell the cops that you're going to be nice, so there's actually no need for handcuffs.

LaToya: 'Cause he doesn't have, like, persuasion powers in that way. That's just his white privilege that's happening there.

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

Morgan: And I would also assume, like, his immense wealth as well—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Like, in that he's, like, technically like a Kennedy-esque figure. That probably helps too. But either way, it's gross and bad.

LaToya: Also gross and bad is Officer Sanchez beating the shit out of his female partner who's driving.

Morgan: Yeah, um, not only is it gross and violent and bad. I don't think it's very smart to, um, [laughs] hurt the person who's driving the big, metal, moving weapon you're inside. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, but this power is not apparently smart.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So—and fuck Billy, who ends up, like—he does get hurt from this accident, as we see.

Morgan: [laughs] Yes, he does get hurt. He does, like—it draws blood. And he, like, staggers away, as we later learn.

LaToya: So Wes also has a contact at the city morgue, we learn in this episode. Again, [singing] "Detective Wesley!"

Morgan: His Rolodex is getting some *work*!

LaToya: Yeah. So it confirms the info about Billy's tip that he sent in about the body, which is what got him arrested. Angel realizes Billy—especially after being in the hell world—likes to just be out in the world, creating this chaos. That's why he—like, he went on a walk for three days. That's why he, like, "I wanna be arrested." Just to not be cooped up in his palatial estate, which is where his family keeps him, because they—as we learn later, like, they all know how you deal with Billy.

Morgan: Yeah. That part, I'm excited to get into and talk about, like, the innate privilege of that kind of thing and how gross it is. But yeah, this is where Angel's like, raring to go and is like, "okay, I'm gonna go, you know, deal with this guy." And Cordelia's like, "hey, hey, hey. What if we pumped the brakes and you, you know, thought about it first?"

LaToya: He's like—yeah, she's like, "What if he lays the whammy on you?" and he's like, "He won't be conscious enough to try." He's like, "I'm just gonna use my fists."

Morgan: Um, thank you, angry boy.

LaToya: Mmhmm. And Fred's listening to police scanners, like, well, he's not—there's been an accident, basically. So you're not even gonna find him in jail, 'cause like, he's—he's, like, about to break him out of jail just so he can do what he needs to do to Billy, whatever that is. And then I guess they go, um, to downtown LA, to the arts district or something. That's what I saw from—[laughs] from my watch. You can tell me—

Morgan: That's what it seems like. No, it seems downtown-y.

LaToya: Yeah. And Gunn and Wes are on the scene. And they decide that Gunn should go to the hospital and pull the sick relative card to get some info. Angel's also there, and he smells blood 'cause he's, you know—he's a vampire. In case you didn't know.

Morgan: What?!

LaToya: [laughing] Oh, I'm sorry, Morgan. Did I spoiler you?

Morgan: I've learned that for the first time and I'm—I'm upset. [LaToya laughs] I thought he was a nice, [laughing] red-blooded American male and I'm furious. [both laugh]

LaToya: You should probably call your senator to let them know, we won't let this stand. [both laugh]

Morgan: Yeah, if we could just stop recording right now so I could go do that, I'd really appreciate it. [laughs]

LaToya: So this is something I never really noticed, I think, watching this episode. But like, Wes actually touches, like, Billy's blood handprint before he uses the paper bag. He touches it—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: And then he puts the paper bag over it. Which I always thought, like, oh, maybe it seeped through the paper bag. But no, he touches the blood.

Morgan: Not wise of him. Like, this guy—like, we've made it clear that his touch is what does this. Like—

LaToya: You use a paper bag. Why are you touching it?

Morgan: Mmhmm. Yeah, also, wouldn't that contaminate the evidence? Like, even like aside from the worries you'd have about Billy and how his powers work and stuff? Like, come on, man.

LaToya: Wesley, what are you doing? This is not—

Morgan: Bad science.

LaToya: This is not very Detective Wesley of you. Meanwhile at the hotel, Cordy's stocking up on weapons. And Fred's all, like, "whatchya doing?" [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah. [laughs]

LaToya: And Cordy tells her an errand. Which, you know what, Fred says that later and Wesley gives her shit. But like, that's what Cordy says, so...

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But yeah, Fred's like—Fred is aware enough at this point to be like, no, don't do this. 'Cause she knows what she's about to do, why she's stocking up on weapons.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: And Cordy just says, "How can I not?" and leaves.

Morgan: Ugh. Again, which is, like, kind of like the stereotypical Angel move, a little bit. Like, the tortured—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: Like, moved by a purpose, it's my duty kind of stuff. And meanwhile, Angel is also, like—you know, he's like—he can't stop and wait for the analysis on the blood. Like, he's so eager to keep tracking Billy—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: And to, like, stay on top of it. Like, there is kind of this single-minded desire just to eliminate this guy that they're both sharing.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: And this kind of like, anger and heat that—I mean, the episode seems to, like, talk about a lot in men. But it's really interesting to see Cordy and Angel kind of parallel in that way, when they're usually always, like, opposites.

LaToya: Because they follow the same beats that—they just do it in an opposite order. Because obviously, Angel—he goes to Lilah first and then Cordy goes to Lilah. But Cordy gets to Kris Polaha's character first, before Angel does, even though we don't see it.

Morgan: [singing] "Detective... Cordy!" [both laugh]

LaToya: But yeah, so as soon as Cordy leaves, Wesley arrives. And he's like, "I wanna figure out the demon lineage with the blood." And I note—like, that him being strangely sweet is already actually creepy.

Morgan: Yeah. At first, it, like—before I remembered what I had blocked out about this episode. I was like, oh, this is sweet! Like, he's really, like, excited to see Fred. Like, that's—'cause he's got a little crush. But yeah, unfortunately a sign of bad things to come, I guess.

LaToya: Did we talk about how you blocked this episode out? Do you want to talk more about that and—

Morgan: Oh!

LaToya: How you didn't know what you were in for?

Morgan: I just—yeah, I—we probably talked about that off mic. I just totally forgot the Wesley stuff that happens in this episode, where he—you know, like, affected by the whammy that is Billy's powers, is just, like, awful and violent and sexist and predatory towards Fred... until it started. And then I was like, oh, right, and remembered all of these things about Wesley, a character I really like. So I assume I shoved them to the back of my mind so that I continue to remember the good times. And I was full of dread, when it began, and for most of the duration of it. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, because you didn't know why Kristin—both Kristin and I were just like, "okay, we're doing Billy. Yeah." And were just, like, very hesitant. And you're like, oh no—'cause I think you had a feeling that it was, like, a bad episode. I'm like, no, it's not a bad episode. It's just... it's a lot.

Morgan: Yeah, it's very, very intense. But I thought it was—it was really good. And it was, like, very sad to see Wesley like that, and we can talk about it later. But like, yeah, it's a really upsetting episode. But I think it's effective. Like, it—I don't think it's upsetting for upsetting's sake. It is saying something and trying to reach a kind of, like, narrative catharsis that feels real and earned and good.

LaToya: Mmhmm. So Cordy walks right into Lilah's place, 'cause she's not a vampire, lady!

Morgan: [laughs] Hell yeah.

LaToya: And she wants to know about Billy. And then they have, like, this back and forth that I think is really good. Which—and they talk about fashion, which makes sense for them and it, like, works and then—

Morgan: Loved that.

LaToya: And then, like, the cut to, like—like, "Billy Blim makes people crazy," like, the hard cut. And I'm like, Joss wrote this scene, didn't he? [laughs]

Morgan: Well, see, you were thinking about Joss during this. But I was just thinking about Lilah when she talks about, like, what happened to her and working at Wolfram & Hart. She says that she knew the risk. And I was like, you know the risk but you had to work for Wolfram & Hart? Interesting, interesting, interesting. [LaToya laughs] It—also, Cordelia immediately being like, "whatever, you just cried." Look, if you're gonna, you know, reach into your arsenal and pull out your mean girl attitude, Lilah's a pretty fair person to use it on. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah. She's *evil*. [laughs]

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: She's a very bad person. And again, in these times we live in, we can't just, like...you know, make excuses for these characters. Because I think that, at least with Lindsey, they gave us enough shading to make us realize, like, again, he was conflicted. He came from, like, humble means. We don't know any such thing with Lilah, you know?

Morgan: Yeah. And I will say, another thing that's interesting is the way that Lilah explains Billy's powers. She talks about it being a—like, bringing out a primordial misogyny.

LaToya: Because Buffyverse loves a primordial or primal thing. That's—they love to make that the reason for things. [laughs]

Morgan: Yes. And this is the one thing that—that I think kind of rubs me, actually, kind of the wrong way about this episode, is I wonder, is it implying that, like, men are inherently misogynistic and that it's not something that is, like, taught by society? And I don't know if that's something I, like, agree with. The idea of, like, a primal misogyny, is—is that saying that all men have that and have to contend with that—like, and it's something innate that they're born with? 'Cause that's maybe not so good.

LaToya: I mean, it seems like—so that's what she believes. But like, I feel like all of the reactions and the way it works is based on amplifying something that's already happening right now with the men that are happening—like, the men—like—so, for example. The convenience store thing. Like, I'm assuming this man was already upset with his wife and then that was amplified, for whatever

reason. A male cop who's made to ride shotgun, whatever, probably—possibly inferior to his, like, female partner—

Morgan: Yes.

LaToya: Also feeling that. Wesley is feeling... like, when we see Wesley, he's feeling kind of, like, in a beta kind of way—

Morgan: Like, he's feeling kind of impotent, yeah.

LaToya: Yeah. So that's being amplified. Gunn, when he has it and, like—you know, Gunn fights it. But like, because everything's amplified, when it bursts out, it is very aggressive in a way. Like, kind of like, the adrenaline of the situation too, also making it—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Yeah. So—

Morgan: So sorry to counter that with two points that should immediately be cut. But one, you're saying everything is heightened, correct?

LaToya: [laughs] Yes, you asshole.

Morgan: And two, the only metaphor that—like, that makes sense and I think that's, like, a fair throughline, but like—

LaToya: And also, I will say—

Morgan: The primordial threw me off. Yeah.

LaToya: Like, Gavin, like I said—like, his passive misogyny just becomes active, basically, you know.

Morgan: Right. So it's the idea that it's—the only way I can frame this in my mind, and I'm apologizing that it's this, is the way that I know, like, Cialis works [LaToya laughs] from the film, *That Awkward Moment*. Which is, like—it doesn't—it's not just a pill that gives you a boner right away. It's a pill that when you *want* a boner, gives you, you know, a super boner or whatever. Correct? That's seeming to be, like—once you express any kind of misogyny, that misogyny becomes super misogyny. [laughs]

LaToya: Sure, Morgan. Sure. I—let's allow this example from the Mackenzie Davis classic, *That Awkward Moment*. [laughs]

Morgan: Look, if I watched Zac Efron lay down on a toilet and pee, it better have been for something. [laughs] So yeah, no, I just—no. I think that—I think that's an important line to draw and I appreciate you going through it with me, in that way. 'Cause, like, the implication that, like—and it's kind of similar in some of the, like, werewolf mythology that *Buffy* explores, I feel like. That, like, men are inherently beastly and have to contend with this thing in a way that, like, maybe women are not? Which I do feel like is kind of sexist and, like, puts women up on this, like, unfair pedestal, like, as if we never have to deal with any negative or ugly emotions.

LaToya: Except for—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: Veruca, but she accepts it 'cause Veruca, you know, sucks. [laughs]

Morgan: Well, Veruca's a cool girl. [both laugh]

LaToya: Veruca is the ultimate cool girl.

Morgan: Veruca's a cool werewolf. [laughs]

LaToya: She's not a regular werewolf, she's a cool werewolf.

Morgan: [laughs] Yeah. So I don't know. I think—I thought there was something to look out for there. But I appreciate the idea that it's like, whatever you have, it turns the volume up on it.

LaToya: Yeah. It—

Morgan: And you know, when you live in a patriarchal society, you are—it is hard to not be affected by it and internalize it in some ways.

LaToya: It makes sense for her to say, like, you know, this is what he does, but like, this doesn't necessarily mean that's exactly what he does. It seemed more like he just... amplifies it. Which it makes, also, sense why it eventually doesn't work for Angel.

Morgan: Yes, which I do appreciate. And I like that—so she explains that, like, Billy's touch works differently on different people. Like, it can take a longer time for the negative behavior to manifest. Like, sometimes it can be right away and sometimes it can be, you know, hours and hours.

LaToya: Yeah. And—

Morgan: Which makes you very nervous about Wesley.

LaToya: Yeah. And this is also why she—like, she's trying to plant that, like, oh, Angel's gonna be a thing. But this is also why it doesn't take that long for—it takes longer for Gunn, I would say, is just 'cause—and Gunn's able to fight it. Because most of Gunn's, like, issues are, like, self-hatred related anyway.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: He's not dealing with that kind of bullshit 'cause he's more just internalizing other things.

Morgan: Ugh!

LaToya: My poor boy.

Morgan: Sweet boy! But then, I like the core of the—like, the place that Cordy and Lilah find common ground is the idea that they both believe that no woman should have to be helpless against, like, you know—like, male power. And, uh, same. [laughs] I also think no *one* should have to be helpless from anyone's power but you know. If we gotta go this way, let's go this way. [laughs]

LaToya: Let's go this way.

[AD BREAK]

LaToya: And now Angel is in Hollywood, I believe, based on just vague sights. And we have these fucking New York taxi drivers in LA in this scene. [both laugh]

Morgan: They—it was very New Yorky, and I was like, ah, yes, the vibrant community of cab drivers in Los Angeles. Which, to be fair, I have only lived in Los Angeles in a largely, like, post-Uber and Lyft world. In which case, that is very much a culture. [laughs]

LaToya: David Boreanaz plays, like, Angel's silent seething at these men so well. Like—

Morgan: Yes. And it—

LaToya: He is disgusted by them.

Morgan: And it's really interesting to think about the fact that this is motivated by—you know, now that we know that he actually can't be affected by Billy's powers—fully just... like, anger at these people that is, like, fully warranted. Like, fully just, like, anger about the way they're talking about women, the way they're talking about someone who is a victim of, like, awful behavior. Like, he is—he helps the helpless and they are shitting on the helpless right now. And it's really—it makes me really like Angel. Like, I—that's the kind of superhero I relate to. And you know, maybe he shouldn't rough this guy up, but... you know. [crosstalk]

LaToya: Maybe he should rough this guy up. [Morgan laughs] Because you know what? He's walkin' here!

Morgan: We're *all* walking here. [both laugh] What is this actor's name that is at the party, who is in Wonder Woman 1984, who I like?

LaToya: This is our beloved Kristoffer Polaha. We love Kristoffer Polaha.

Morgan: Looking quite good at what I called a pool party. Not because they're at a swimming pool, but because there's a pool table there and people are playing pool.

LaToya: Yes. So Kris Polaha, besides being in Wonder Woman 1984. This is his first role, actually, which is—it's really sweet.

Morgan: Baby's first role! And he does great. Like, he doesn't seem, like, green, as an actor. Like, I—when you said that—

LaToya: He seems, like, established. Yeah.

Morgan: Yeah, when you said that, I was kind of watching for it to be, you know, a performance that was maybe, like, a little weaker or a little unsure. But no, like, he's playing a very, like, confident, relaxed, privileged dude. And, like, I think it's hard to look relaxed and powerful on screen. Especially if you're, like, the new guy, you know, who's just there for a day to do your quick scene with David Boreanaz, who could probably be intimidating. But he really owns it. Like, it's a—I think it's a really nice little performance.

LaToya: [singing] "I ain't happy, feeling sad. I got sunshine—"

Morgan: [singing] "Sunshine in a bag—" [sings tune]

LaToya: [singing, simultaneously] "In a bag. I'm useless... [mumbles lyrics] the future—"

Morgan: [singing] "Is going on."

LaToya: [singing, simultaneously] "Is coming on."

Morgan: [laughs] That's how you know—

LaToya: Finally, someone let me out of my cage! [both laugh]

Morgan: And that's how you know they're at a *cool* party. [laughs]

LaToya: I mean... yeah!

Morgan: Yeah! And I agree. And I love that Billy shows up, immediately fucks the vibes, 'cause he's terrible to have at your party. And he's instantly just, like, not into this couple that's making out *hard* on the couch. [laughs]

LaToya: He's immediately like, let me ruin this, like, making out. Like, fuck you, dude. You—you fuckin' Mormon. No offence to Mormons, but like, that's the vibe. [laughs]

Morgan: It's very, like, he—like, it's interesting. 'Cause like, there's a version of his powers where like, he is, like, gross and, like, really—for lack of a better word—like, rapey. But instead, he's very, like, against sex. [laughs] Which is an interesting take, and I think a helpful and appreciative one in terms of drawing some lines there. But yeah, he's, like, not happy people are being happy.

LaToya: 'Cause it's not, like, a characterization of him, like, being asexual and like, demonizing asexual people. Because like, being asexual doesn't mean, like, *you're against sex*.

Morgan: Oh god, no. Yeah.

LaToya: He's just a piece of shit.

Morgan: Yeah. This guy just sucks and he doesn't like anyone having a nice time, I think.

LaToya: So apparently on the commentary track for this episode, writers Tim Minear and Jeffrey Bell explain that Billy's backstory is that his father raped a good demon and the result was Billy.

Morgan: Very unfortunate.

LaToya: Because, like, you—obviously you wanna know what Billy's deal is. But I feel like... it's good not to have that. It's—the episode is fine as-is without even knowing the actual backstory for why he's a demon.

Morgan: Yeah. Which is why I think, like, it's fine to reveal that kind of thing in, like, a commentary. But yeah. Just, uh, very dark.

LaToya: Yeah. Especially in the series *Angel*, because you have, like, a lot of half-demons, like the whole Doyle thing. You don't need to know the backstory of why someone is half-demon or whatever it is.

Morgan: And I think especially with a villain and especially with a villain that is kind of, like, dispatched of so quickly. Because I think a lot of the time, it's scarier not to know where someone like Billy comes from.

LaToya: We have Wes and Fred looking at Billy's blood. And I wrote in my notes, like, Alexis' performance here, like, explains a lot of why he plays such fucking douches, post-*Angel*.

Morgan: Yes. It's weird that this ends up being such a Wesley showcase episode. Again, like, the idea that, like, this is an episode written by men. And in this way at the end, I was like, are we propose—like, putting forth that, like, the ultimate victim of all of this was Wesley? Because... maybe that's not good. But it—something very bad does happen to him here in that he's taken over by this. And this is where my notes get very chaotic and are filled with a lot of no's and bad and not good and stop. [laughs] So like, the way they build Wes, just kind of, like, the—slowly, his behavior starting to get worse and worse and worse. And Fred's, like, fear. It just, like—I don't know.

I—I am very reticent to that, like, "every woman has experienced this" and make my experience everyone else's. But I think most women have an experience of, like, being alone with a man and there being the tension of, like, okay, that—they just said something weird to me. And is that something weird to me that is gonna

be the weirdest thing that happens all night? And they—or they didn't mean it or they meant it, but that's the worst thing they meant and said. Or is this scenario about to take, like, a more unfortunate turn where I'll have to, like, put my foot down or get the hell out of here or something like that. And I thought that the feeling of that, like, precariousness in that situation, I think Amy Acker plays really well. And Alexis Denisof plays the other side of it really well. And I thought it was just scripted... really well. So. [laughs] Yeah. Ugh.

LaToya: Yeah, and as much as the season, you know—we talk about how Fred's kind of in a victim position or, like, kind of, just you know, a weak thing. I think that Fred plays this all very well, where she realizes something is wrong and she's, like, trying to get out of the situation. And obviously, it escalates because, like, Wesley has been whammied. But you know—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: She is very aware and it's not, like, playing her just, like, as oblivious to what's going on. 'Cause she—again, she's a very, very intelligent woman.

Morgan: Yeah. She's really, really smart and I think—

LaToya: And she's—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: I was gonna say, also, she's a woman, first, honestly. [laughs] She understands the world.

Morgan: Yeah. I mean, yeah. She's—it—she has likely been around a guy that's made her uncomfortable like this before, even if it didn't necessarily get to this point.

LaToya: Mm.

Morgan: So yeah, it—you can just—the tension is very high in this scene. I think it's just done really well.

LaToya: This might be a stealth all time episode of Angel, actually.

Morgan: It could be. And especially, like, performance-wise, it's really hard to discount it. Like, pretty much everyone's got something great going on.

LaToya: Yeah. 'Cause it's just so upsetting. You don't really wanna kind of, like, revisit it, in a way. It's just like—like, no one's gonna casually put on Billy, you know? And then, we get Wesley backhanding Fred. And she has to do, like, the horror, Final Girl run through the hotel. And he does the two black eyes, quote-unquote, "joke."

Morgan: Mm, yes.

LaToya: Which I think this is possibly the first time I ever heard that.

Morgan: I think this was probably the first time I ever heard that, too. So, yeah. It's... just, like, awful. But it just means that that's something that, like, Wesley had heard that joke before. Like, that's—that's another just piece of shitty misogyny he'd internalized and now, he's throwing it back out there. But yeah—

LaToya: Do you imagine he heard it when he was studying to be a Watcher?

Morgan: I wonder. Yeah. He has a really tough relationship with his, like, family. His dad—

LaToya: Yeah, either his father or, like, going up, like, trying to be a Watcher. It's one of those two.

Morgan: Yeah, like, I wondered if that—honestly, I wondered if that was from his dad. Like, yeah, 'cause it's—just jokes like that are so gross. And that's often the way it's the most chilling to hear this kind of stuff, when it's framed as a joke. So it's... just horrifying. [laughs]

LaToya: Mmhmm. And then, she's running up the stairs, like, Wesley—you know, he loosens up his tie, you know. Being a—getting back to his caveman roots. And then he—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: He's also—the weapons are right there. Which is the issue with the weapons being right there in the lobby. [laughs]

Morgan: Ugh, this toxic masculinity is making me thirsty! [laughs]

LaToya: And then we have Angel coming to see Kris Polaha. And it almost seems like Kris Polaha is, like, Boreanaz's stunt double, which is what's happening here.

Morgan: So this is the scene we were talking about where this character—like, Dylan kind of reveals that there are rules to knowing Billy that everyone in his family is well versed with. You can't touch him. You don't leave him alone with your girlfriend or your pets. [pause] Yikes!

LaToya: Yeah. So I—he's not using his power on those pets. He's just killing 'em.

Morgan: Yeah, not a great dude. [laughs]

LaToya: And you know what? Maybe he can do things to women. We don't know, 'cause he's so invested in doing things to men. But it's very possible he could do things to women with his powers.

Morgan: Mmhmm. [sarcastically] I don't know, LaToya. He said that he's never hurt a woman? And I mean, I'm inclined to believe him. I don't have any reason not to. [laughs]

LaToya: You know, he was always a nice man—a nice young man. [Morgan laughs] He was always quiet. He... I never saw him do anything wrong, so...

Morgan: Therefore, nothing bad could have ever happened.

LaToya: He was always nice to *me*. [laughs]

Morgan: Ugh! I'm gonna flip a table. But yeah, I love—there's something about that. And maybe it's just that I was, like, excited to see Kris Polaha and I wanted to give more to the performance. But—or I was just feeling exceptionally generous. But like, the idea of guys like this. The idea of, like, the Hollywood abuser, the rich guy abuser. The idea that all of these people who are similarly privileged, that circle around them and enable them, rather than dealing with it in any way. That felt very lived-in and realistic to me, the way he talked about kind of, like, washing his hands of it, of like, "oh yeah, I mean, you gotta follow the rules with Billy. 'Cause it's just the way he is." It's never, "and that's why my family had him committed" or "that's why we—"

LaToya: [laughs] Yeah.

Morgan: "Put him in jail." Like, it's—no, it's—

LaToya: That's the thing we haven't discussed, which is the fact that he got that single cell in hell because his family had connections. Because—it's interesting, because Dylan is clearly, like—he comes from this very privileged Kennedy-esque

family. And he's clearly not doing that. He's just, like, chilling in Hollywood, partying. He's, like, having a Leo life without, like, doing the Leo work, you know?

Morgan: You know, the kind of life that you and I live in LA when, you know—like, pre-lockdown. You know, you and me, just living large. [both laugh] Making it rain everywhere we went. [laughs]

LaToya: With our good friend, David Arquette. [both laugh]

Morgan: That would rule.

LaToya: We can say, we did see David Arquette in one of our last outings out in the world. This is true.

Morgan: We spent New Year's Day with David Arquette. [laughs] LaToya and I. And several other people. [both laugh]

LaToya: But mostly, David Arquette.

Morgan: But mostly David Arquette. Pretty fun. [both laugh] But I really liked that scene. And I love that he tells Angel that a girl told him that some melodramatic guy named Angel would be coming by. [laughs]

LaToya: And this is—this is why Kris Polaha is actually, like, really great in his first role. I—I didn't mean to, like, completely brag about how great he is, but like, he really is great in this episode. [laughing] When Angel, like, just grabs him by the collar—is like, "oh, is this melodramatic?" [both laugh]

Morgan: And he's like, "ah, ah, fuck!" Like—

LaToya: Oh, so what you're saying is that *this* is melodramatic. [both laugh]

Morgan: Good shit. And yeah, just again, the idea that—I mean, these are the best jokes. Like, character-based jokes that are about everybody knowing each other. Like, it's the thing that makes me happiest.

LaToya: [simultaneously] I am surprised that Polaha didn't, like, join Joss's stable of actors. 'Cause I think he could, like, pull it off.

Morgan: I was surprised too, 'cause I was like, this feels like an impressive audition, to be included in, like, the Whedonverse.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: But it just didn't happen.

LaToya: Okay, so for Fred running through the Hyperion, did they go on location?

Morgan: Yeah, this must have been a location that they, like, redressed. 'Cause there are long hallways and stuff like that that are probably tough to get—would be tough to build. I wrote in my notes, this feels bad. "Beguile me with your girlish ways?" Fuck this shit! Oh, this is fucking gross. "I'm a man?" Vomit. [LaToya laughs] We are bringing *Eve* into this?! Um, so. As you can maybe tell by the tone of my notes, very upset in this scene. [laughs]

LaToya: You're going to share that last page of notes so they can all see, right? Like—

Morgan: Oh, I'll take some pictures of my notes that I've take—yeah, they're bananas. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, 'cause—[laughs] there's a lot of "no's" on that last page. [both laugh]

Morgan: Yes, I sent LaToya a picture when I was in the middle of it and she was like, oh. Look at your notes. [both laugh]

LaToya: I definitely have quoted in my notes, "I'm a man." Ugh! Ugh! He gives her shit for hiding and deceiving, it's nothing new again—the Eve bullshit. Serpent bullshit.

Morgan: Yeah, it's just like—

LaToya: And this is where in my notes I put: it's like Charmed but—like, I can imagine the same from Charmed but bad.

Morgan: Mmhmm. And it's—it's just very [inaudible] like, "you're a tease." Like, it's the kind of like, friend-zoney bullshit—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Like, toxic nerd masculinity kind of stuff that you hear all the time. Which I think—

LaToya: Which is the real issue, I think, with like, Wesley/Fred that they establish here. It's like, Wes went for fucking Cordy. [both laugh] Like... he can go for Fred. It's not, like, that big a deal.

Morgan: Yeah, and I guess—and it's also the idea that, like, I—you know, our Wes, not under the influence of Billy, I'm sure maybe feels, like, the gentlest version of this stuff. Where he's just like, "ah, man. She's wearing the pretty dress again and here I am, just being a dumb idiot, wishing that I could make the move and I can't 'cause I'm shy," or whatever.

LaToya: It sucks because I feel like—

Morgan: But ooh.

LaToya: Our Wes—like, he can make the move. Obviously, it takes him awhile, as Cordy noted. But like, he's gonna do it. Like—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: That's the thing. Obviously, like I'm saying, this amplifies the terrible parts of him. I don't think that he is, like, you know, all-caps "nice guy."

Morgan: Yeah, I agree.

LaToya: But that's just what is amplified here. You know.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: I think he was on the path to actually doing what he wanted to do.

Morgan: Yeah, in his own way. It was just going about it very slowly and Britishly and—

LaToya: And he confided in his—

Morgan: With glasses. [laughs]

LaToya: In one of his best friends, which is Cordelia, which is really, really sweet.

Morgan: Which, the idea that they have grown from a place where she was like, [laughs] the hot high school girl he had a crush on as an adult man. Which... I have notes. [LaToya laughs] To now, they are friends and equals and they treat each

other with a lot of, like, respect and love and care—is the thing that I think speaks the most volumes about him, is that he's a good dude who sees women as people.

LaToya: Yeah, which also, I can't believe we didn't note the best line of the episode, which is: "Speaking of Cor—speaking of saliva." [laughs]

[Clip from episode plays]

Wesley: Speaking of saliva, where's Cordelia?

Morgan: [laughs] Ugh, a bad kiss.

LaToya: Really awful.

Morgan: A bad kiss.

LaToya: I've had some of those—

Morgan: I love to watch a bad kiss.

LaToya: I've had some of those Wes/Cordelia kisses. [both laugh]

Morgan: We all have.

LaToya: I've had some of those in my life.

Morgan: Yeah, I've had a bad kiss. So Fred hides under the bed in this scene. And because Wesley is smashing everything, she makes a distressed little sound. And he finds her there and pulls her up and shoves her against the wall and kisses her on the mouth.

LaToya: Ew, ew.

Morgan: Which—it's a no for me, folks.

LaToya: Yeah, he says, "Why do you make me do this?" Fuck that. And she knees—like, knees him in the groin and I'm like, fuck yeah.

Morgan: And, most exciting of all, she has put nails between her fingers and punched him—

LaToya: Yeah, she's—

Morgan: Really hard.

LaToya: She is so—like, she's so ingenious. She's so fucking smart. And I just love it. Smart girls, rise up!

Morgan: Yes! But no, like, it's—again, it's the idea that it's really nice that, like, to—this is a story that I think is smart to tell at this point, when Fred has, like, regained, I think, like, some semblance of like, her power and strength and—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Confidence in herself.

LaToya: And to know what her place is in, like, all of Angel Investigations, basically.

Morgan: And I'm really proud that it doesn't seem like—like, when we end this episode, she seems like she's over the experience. Like, to—you know, to—like, a healthy extent, where she's like—

LaToya: She understands the world in which they live, so she's not going to blame Wesley for this, even though he blames himself.

Morgan: Yeah. Like, she's like—I'm sure it's an upsetting experience. And you know, like, she is probably rattled by it, like—and, you know, dealing with it as she moves on. But, like, she's not like, "oh, I can't even look at Wes anymore." She knows that wasn't him. And—

LaToya: Because we know that—shows today would do that.

Morgan: Yeah. Which I—which is a real bummer. I'm interested in Wes having a crisis of faith about himself and being, you know, worried that he is not the man he wants to be or the man he thought he was. And having to deal with, like, the disgust of having those feelings inside of him that maybe, you know, aren't even his. But I just so appreciate that Fred is smart enough and, like... like, that the—that the show has, like, faith and confidence in her to not, um... I don't know, for her to be able to get over it, I think shows so much, like, strength and grace on her part. Which I think is, like, a really unique and great thing about Fred.

LaToya: This is why I love Angel so much and I get upset when people act like only Buffy was the one who—like, the show that was, like, ahead of its time. Like, Angel

was very much ahead of its time, in terms of certain things, too. And it understood a lot, and like, it also—it was more—I would say it's more ahead of its time in terms of just like, the way it presents certain things. Whether it's from—just like, widescreen. [laughs]

Morgan: Yes.

LaToya: To the way it tells its stories, in general.

Morgan: And I realized the point that I was circling around so intensely is that to continue to play this as a problem between Wes and Fred would feel like false drama. Because we know that these are not Wes's actions. Like, Wes can have his own struggles with it internally, but we as an audience know that he was whammied by Billy. So to play, like, "I don't know, is that how you *really* feel?" like, would feel very... shmuck-baity. Which is a word I have loved—uh, used in writers' rooms around me before. Like, very like—like, that kind of story where you see it and you're like, okay, well, that's there to spin wheels. Because I know that's not Wes. Everyone should know that's not Wes. Like, it's great. We just skate on by that, which I appreciate.

LaToya: I'm just gonna say right now, by the way. This is a great fucking episode of Angel On Top. Just so you know. [both laugh]

Morgan: I'm so relieved to hear that you think that.

LaToya: We're doing that shit! [laughs]

Morgan: What-what! [both laugh]

LaToya: [laughing] Don't say "what-what."

Morgan: Um. You're darn right! [laughs] Is that better?

LaToya: You're damn skippy! [both laugh]

Morgan: We go next to the—like, the tarmac where Billy is waiting for his private plane, his private jet, also known as a PJ, for listeners who love Vanderpump Rules. And—

LaToya: Stop it! [Morgan laughs] I'm banning Vanderpump Rules from my podcast! [laughs] Banning Real Housewives, unless it's a Garcelle Beauvais situation. Or Lisa Rinna, I'll allow that. But that's it.

Morgan: [pauses] I love Lisa Vanderpump. And now I'm done talking about it.
[LaToya laughs] But yeah, Billy's waiting for his PJ and he is, you know, approached by Cordelia Chase.

LaToya: [singing] "Cordelia Chase!"

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

Morgan: Cordy shows up, she's got a crossbow. She's looking pissed as all heck. And, like, Billy is immediately the worst. [laughs]

LaToya: [groans] [laughs]

Morgan: He's like, "Oh, are you here to whine?" and I was like, this man must be dealt with.

LaToya: I'm—actually, I'm fascinated by his reaction. Because when she shows up, he's like, "oh, do I know you?" And he seems, like, a normal person. But once she says who she is, and for, like, an understandable reason—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: He's a little—he's the worst.

Morgan: I wondered if he thought she was, like, someone who was gonna lead him to his jet. And that's why he was nice. [laughs]

LaToya: Ah, she's like, "I'm here to send you back." And then, Fred is still running.

Morgan: [sighs]

LaToya: And we get some real The Shining vibes. You know what? It's good. David Grossman's, like, direction is, like, really, really good in this episode. And—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: It's—you know. Obviously, TV write—like, TV is, like, a writer's medium, not so much the director. But I think, like, David Grossman—like, he makes a mark in this episode.

Morgan: Yeah, I mean, the right director can make TV very cinematic. And you know—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: You and I can do the whole, "is TV movies, is movies TV now" debate for forever. I think the thing is—

LaToya: But as we know, TV is movies now actually, so...

Morgan: Yeah. I mean, like, movies *wish* they were TV, in my—IMO. [laughs] But...

LaToya: Grossman—so he directed two episodes of Buff—uh, Angel before this and then an episode of Angel after this. Season 1 of Angel, I Will Remember You.

Morgan: Oh, I'm familiar with the episode. [laughs]

LaToya: Season 2 of Angel, The Shroud of Rahmon, which is also a Gunn showcase.

Morgan: Ooh!

LaToya: He actually—I think he's—is a pro-Gunn director. Because after Billy, he does Double or Nothing, which is also a Gunn showcase this season.

Morgan: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

LaToya: Our boy! Gunn Squad! [laughs]

Morgan: I love Gunn so much. Getting to the part where Gunn showed up in Season 1 of Angel with Michael, I was just like, dancing in my seat. I, like, could not wait for him. I wanted to see his face.

LaToya: Yeah. We determined—which means I determined and Morgan said okay—that we are the Gunn Squad. That's our thing.

Morgan: G-g-g-g-Gunn Squad!

LaToya: Pew-pew-pew-pew-pew!

Morgan: Pew-pew-pew! But yeah, the—all the hotel, like, chase stuff does feel, like, very horror movie. And, like, is filmed very evocatively and yeah. I like it.

LaToya: And then, knight in shining armor Gunn shows up to—

Morgan: [sings triumphant tune]

LaToya: Save the day.

Morgan: Oh, I was so happy to see him. And he's so sweet. And as said in the previous Angel On Top episode, I do really believe that Gunn is a himbo. Because his instant, like, "wait, I wasn't supposed to touch the bloody handprint?" [laughs]

LaToya: Yes! [laughs] In that scene, I'm like, oh my god, he's the ultimate himbo!

Morgan: He's a sweet himbo. And he's just... he's trying his best. [laughs]

LaToya: J. August Richards, so hot in this show. I mean—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: He's obviously attractive elsewhere. But like, I think—like, he's at his hottest here.

Morgan: Yeah, Gunn—Gunn cute? Gunn good.

LaToya: Leonard Roberts also a very attractive man. Still keeping it tight. Fuck Ali Larter. [both laugh] Kristin, you can cut that out if you want to, but also, fuck Ali Larter. Like I said in my tweet, that was one of the first Hollywood stories I ever heard when I moved out here about her racist-ass behavior. So again.

Morgan: Ugh.

LaToya: Fuck Ali Larter.

Morgan: No thanks.

LaToya: Yeah but also, like, fuck Billy. Cordelia Chase is an icon, which I wrote in all caps in my notes.

Morgan: Yes. Yes.

LaToya: I—honestly, I wish she killed him. It's a whole thing. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah, um... really, fuck Angel for stopping that from happening. [laughs] He doesn't hate women, who he calls "whores who sell themselves for money or prestige." But then he does say that men are just as bad for wanting, quote, "what's under your skirt," end quote.

LaToya: [takes deep breath, groans]

Morgan: Billy! [laughs]

LaToya: Billy fucking stormed the Capitol and you know that's true.

Morgan: Like, Billy coming live to us from the Access Hollywood bus. Like, what? Eww!

LaToya: I—so I wish my—I kinda wish my mom stayed around to watch the whole episode. 'Cause I feel like she would have the best takes for Billy and all this bullshit. She'd be like, this fucking Trump motherfucker, is what she would say. [laughs]

Morgan: I—yes. And I would like to hear, like—like, I would love to hear anyone go off on Billy, 'cause what a piece of shit. But this is, again, kind of coming back to that, like...

LaToya: Billy—I'm just gonna say, Billy is the alt right leader who gets punched in the face on live TV, is what he is.

Morgan: Yes. And I—forgive me for my alt right lingo being rusty. I believe he is one of those guys who is, like... is it when you're black pill? When you are one of these guys who is perhaps straight, but like, refuses to have sex, like, be—with women because it gives them power that is inherently, you know, yours and belongs to you? Like—

LaToya: Is that black pill? 'Cause I know that's definitely volcel, and that's also what the Proud Boys are up to.

Morgan: That's vol—yeah. He's volcel. And he's spewing some volcel nonsense. And it's, uh, super gross. Again, it's interesting to see the specific politics of Billy's gross misogyny. But... yeah.

LaToya: It's so upsetting, 'cause I—like, I—obviously, all of Billy's bullshit is, like—we know what it is and we can decipher it. But like, I kind of just like, want more, to know what, like, the show would have done if, like—with more Billy, basically. I, like—would they have kept going down the correct path?

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Which is what I think they are doing here. Or would they have, like, fumbled the bag, honestly, you know?

Morgan: Yeah. And I would have liked to have seen all of our guys have a little bit more time to unpack their experiences, like, being under Billy's influence, or just dealing with him in general. Like, the episode does kind of just, like, end pretty quickly. And Wesley really only gets—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: His one scene with Fred at the end. And I would have liked to have seen more about how he felt about it. Just to, like, show... like, what the healthy version of all of this stuff looks like. But obviously, we all know—

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: These guys are good and sweet.

LaToya: But yeah, that's also why this show is kind of ahead of the time. Again, we are huge Vampire Diaries fans. But like—like, what is the usual thing is—this would have been a multiple episode arc for Billy, besides just That Vision Thing introducing him and then this following up on that. Which is, like, very different from what was happening on television in general, besides Alias. Which again, premiered this season and which also—

Morgan: Yes.

LaToya: Changed the game for serialization. This makes sense to, like, keep going on—at least for an episode or two after this.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But you know what? They did what they needed to do. They got through it. They told you what the deal was. They made the thing, and then—because, again, the season—without spoiling, the season pivots—

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: Heavily. It's not even spoiling, because this is—what it pivots to heavily is something that's been established from the first four episodes, also. [laughs]

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So—and this is only Episode 6, so.

Morgan: Yeah. And I mean, the—it—Billy is treated very much like the monster of the week. So, you know, we have dealt with him and therefore, we are done dealing with him. But it's just—it's interesting to think about the idea of them, like—his effects, like, lingering on them and how it kind of feels. 'Cause it seems like we leave Wes with so much to grapple with.

LaToya: Yeah. Gunn is like, "hey! What the hell happened to Wesley?" [Morgan laughs] And that's where Himbo Gunn shines through. He shines bright, he shines far, don't be shy, be a star. As he lives where he are, [laughs] by picking up the handprint with the blood. And he's like, let me touch this, because... this boy doesn't know when a demon head is not paper mache. He doesn't know when he shouldn't be touching fucking blood finger—like, handprints. Himbo. [laughs]

Morgan: Fool! Um, beautiful fool. But what a silly, silly boy. And so he's like, okay, shit. Well, um, if I—you know, he was—he and Fred—

LaToya: Yes.

Morgan: Were barricading themselves inside that room. And he's like, well, if I have been infected, essentially, like, by Billy's blood—

LaToya: I need to get outta here.

Morgan: Then I need to get the fuck outta here. But unfortunately, that is when Wes shoves his ax through the door. And now, it is time for Plan B. [laughs]

LaToya: And Plan B, um... so Gunn's gonna try a Plan B but Billy's blood affects him. And then he says something very upsetting and is like, "oh no." And he

catches himself too, which is where I wrote in my notes: "I love Gunn." All caps, love.

Morgan: Yeah, Gunn hears the words coming out of his mouth and is like, oh, shit. Like, things are starting to happen that I am not in control of. And therefore, I need to be taken off the board. And he gets Fred a very hefty table leg and is like, smack the shit out of me, please. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah. And then, she's like, "I don't—"

Morgan: That's an ally.

LaToya: She doesn't wanna do it, *Charles*. 'Cause she calls him Charles and I love that.

Morgan: It's so cute. Ugh, she's so sweet.

LaToya: Because—if Gunn had a problem with him—like, her calling him Charles, we would know he had a problem with that. But he doesn't.

Morgan: No. I think he likes it. [laughs]

LaToya: Aww.

Morgan: And so she—[laughs] she, like, smacks—smacks him with it. And he's like—continues to say awful, hateful shit. And then she has to hit him *again*. [laughs]

LaToya: Hot.

Morgan: And finally, he goes down. But then she does the thing that infuriates me, when any Final Girl does it in any horror movie. Which is she, like, drops the weapon. [both laugh] And I'm like, k-keep it. Keep the weapon. Keep the weapon, keep your back to the wall. And, um, be smart. [laughs]

LaToya: Okay, here, we're back on the tarmac and Angel is here. And he's trying to get Cordy to leave. And we're supposed to think, like, oh, this is part of his, like, misogyny thing. It's—no, it's just part of his hero thing. [laughs] We should also note—just, especially for the future. Like, Angel doesn't think that Cordelia's incapable. It's just that, because he cares so much about her, he wants to protect her. Like, he wants to protect all of them. Like, if any of—honestly, if any of Team Angel were in this kind of situation, he would do the same thing.

Morgan: Yeah. And he also just knows how dangerous Billy is. And knows how—like, that this is clearly, like, a person who will fight dirty and will do awful, ugly things. Especially to women. So like, obviously he's, like, afraid for Cordy. But Cordelia is being so great and she's just like, "I can't leave you. Like, I won't." And I, um... am emotionally compromised. [laughs]

LaToya: And again, she's like, "This is my fault." And Angel's like, "no, it's not your fault."

Morgan: Yeah, so then, Billy does the only relatable thing he does in the episode and that's put his hands on David Boreanaz's face. [laughs]

LaToya: Oh, I thought you were gonna say, put his hands on the ground and, like, do a weird—I don't know what that is.

Morgan: He does a weird ground pound!

LaToya: That's actually—that's why this is an A minus, is because of the ground pound. [laughs]

Morgan: It's like some Donkey Kong shit. I was very confused. [laughs]

LaToya: Is he getting misogyny out of the ground?

Morgan: You see, misogyny comes from the Earth's core. [laughs]

LaToya: 'Cause primordial, is what you're saying. [both laugh]

Morgan: 'Cause primordial. [laughs] It's the primordial ooze from which we came out of. Which is at the Earth's core.

LaToya: Okay, Ivan.

Morgan: [laughs] That's me. Um, but yeah—so poor Cordelia is trying to aim her crossbow at two people who are fighting. Which is, you know, not easy. And then she gets her clean shot. She's aiming her crossbow, and then we hear, blam-blam-blam! And he goes down. And if you're me, you're like, that's not a sound a crossbow makes... [both laugh] And then we reveal—

LaToya: What's the—I'm sorry. Morgan. What is the sound a crossbow makes?

Morgan: Pshew! [pause] Bink! [LaToya laughs] Pshwah! [LaToya laughs] That's what I assume it makes.

LaToya: Which one? Is it all three?

Morgan: Kind of like a combination. Depends on the crossbow, you know? Depends on, like, the materials. Actually, if I pulled out my Matt Fraction Hawkeye comics, I could probably find some good arrow sound effects. [laughs] But I will spare you guys me sifting through those and waiting.

LaToya: You hear that? Morgan's a comic girl.

Morgan: Yeah! A little nerd.

LaToya: Don't dox her.

Morgan: Please don't. [laughs] I don't know anything.

LaToya: But yeah, also, Billy's shit doesn't work on Angel. [laughs]

Morgan: Which fucking rules. Like, cool. Like, I appreciate that they back-fill it later and, like, explain why it doesn't. 'Cause at the time, I was like, oh, okay. 'Cause, like... 'cause Angel's a woke bae? [laughs]

LaToya: Basically. [laughs] But also, it's especially great because as—we're conditioned to think maybe it will work on him. Because we just had, in our beloved *Carpe Noctum*, Marcus's magic working on him after he was like, "It's not gonna work on me" and it immediately worked on him.

Morgan: Mmhmm. So yeah, he's—yeah, it depends on the thing. But we reveal that Lilah is the one who shot Billy. Which, I mean, you know, good for her. [laughs]

LaToya: So after Fred knocks Charles out—aww! Charles!

Morgan: [squeals] Charles!

LaToya: She has to deal with Wesley still. And she fucking knocks him out with a Home Alone contraption.

Morgan: That ruled. She made, like, a little bear trap. It's so cute and I'm so proud of her. And it's right after Wes says, "Do you wanna know my theory? [laughing]

My theory is that you're stupid." And I wrote in my notes: my theory is that I'm mad. [LaToya laughs] And then I wrote: bonk! In all caps. [laughs]

LaToya: Yeah, 'cause his whole thing is like, she'll retreat to small, dark places. Which she does, because you know, her trauma.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But also, as we know, again, Fredless. She likes to make contraptions. She likes to make weapon contraptions, you stupid asshole. [laughs]

Morgan: Bye! [laughs] So—so now Fred's safe. And our next scene is Angel and Cordelia training again. And we're back to nice vibes.

LaToya: And I noted here—and it's important for the scene—like, Charisma's, like, very good at this? This whole—her movements are very fluid. Like, David's been doing this since he's been doing tai chi on Buffy.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: You know? But this is new for charisma.

Morgan: Yeah, and I think, like, it—I appreciate that they—the, like, in-show reasoning. Where she's just like, "Yeah, I'm a dancer. I'm good with choreography." Because that is, in general, like, something that's true. Like, people who are dancers and have dance training usually tend to be inherently good at—not just fighting, but even more specifically fight choreography. This is in my notes where I wrote: woke bae Angel can't be whammied. And "smiles" with a heart.

LaToya: Yeah. 'Cause he says, it didn't work because he doesn't have, like, that hatred and anger that, like, Billy tapped into. Which is—from what—you know, it's true, honestly.

Morgan: Mmhmm. Yeah, the idea that he's, like, I—like, the evil I've done has always come from this, like, place of, like, hedonism. And like, seeking pleasure through the pain of others. And you know, drinking the blood and doing the evil. It's never been, like—

LaToya: And yeah—

Morgan: An anger thing.

LaToya: And with his soul, he just feels a lot of remorse and bad for everything. So he's not—again, he's not driven by a place of, like, anger and resentment. He just... he's sad. [both laugh]

Morgan: Yeah. He's too sad for it to work on him.

LaToya: I also—I love how casual this whole scene is, too.

Morgan: Mmhmm. It's a very—it feels—it's a very safe place to bring it back to. Like, especially—even the idea of, like, how they're dressed and like, you know, Cordy's in her workout gear. Which is, like, you know, more skin tight and form fitting and stuff. And there's no—like, the way the camera views her is very, like, respectful and not, like, you know—like, the way Zack Snyder shoots Wonder Woman in Justice League. [laughs] Like, you know? We're not just, like, looking right at her butt or anything like that. Even though, perhaps, I looked respectfully at her butt. It's really nice. Like, the fact that it returns to a place that is very gentle and feels kind of, like, vulnerable, in the way that they're, like, dressed, in the way that they're treating each other. Like, it really does give you the sense of, like, okay, we've put a lot of this away. Like, both of us are okay again and are healed—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: And everything between us is fine.

LaToya: They're not dwelling on, like, the fact that Angel had to come—in his mind, had to come save her. There's nothing about that. There's no baggage about what happened at the tarmac, basically, for them. Which is in contrast to what we have with Wesley and Fred in the final scene.

Morgan: Yeah. Which is very sad. Fred has, like, showed up. She's like, "Wes, I've been calling you. Like, I've left a lot of messages." And he is just, like, so clearly wrecked. And like you've mentioned, like, the light and the darkness in the episodes. Like, he is just, like, sitting in the dark, alone in his apartment. Which, you know, relatable. But not a good sign.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Fuck. Like, he really thinks this was something that was inside of him, that he now needs to contend with.

LaToya: Yeah, it's been days. And she even says, like, "You're the boss. We need you." And again, obviously Angel pulls off the role of, like, I'm gonna, you know, jump over a gate because I can. But even he acknowledges, like, Wesley is the one in charge. Like, he is the one helming this ship.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: So they—they are aware that Wesley is the boss and he is in charge and they do need him. And Fred is the one who decided—Fred literally took the initiative to be the one to go see him. Which is—it's a huge step for her, honestly.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: She even tells him, "It wasn't something *in* you, it was something that was done to you." Which, you know, really makes sense for what—how we're saying Billy's powers actually worked.

Morgan: It's just, like—he just has this moment where he, like, chokes out that he's sorry. And his voice just keeps, like, completely disappearing on him. Like, that he can't even bring himself to look at her. Like, the amount of shame that he's clearly holding, like, you know, right in his chest, is—is like, pretty overwhelming. Like, it's a really... it's a very raw performance.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: And I think it's so good. And he just says he doesn't know what kind of man he is anymore. And Fred's like, "You're a *good* man." And I'm... a mess.
[laughs]

LaToya: And without spoiling, I—just, like, thinking about it. I really feel like this moment is what drives and affects Wesley for the rest of the season, possibly the rest of the series, honestly.

Morgan: Mm. And it's interesting to end this episode that is a lot about kind of, like, the—about, like, violence against women and, like, a man who has the power to incite this kind of misogynistic rage in men. To end on Wesley being the one person who can't get over it is—is kind of interesting. And I was going back and forth about it. Like, are we saying, like, Wesley's the biggest, like, you know, victim of all of this? Like, I don't—I think that would be a bad message to send.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: But I think instead it's trying to tell us, like, a more nuanced thing about how, like, the patriarchy cuts both ways.

LaToya: Mmhmm.

Morgan: And can be—

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Like, harmful to men as well, in the way that it encourages a kind of, like, toxic and ugly behavior that can get out of control. And can—

LaToya: Because I think—

Morgan: Hurt people before you know you're exhibiting it, yeah.

LaToya: Yeah. Because I think the fact that the trauma's not on Fred is just that—because again, she is a woman. She was a woman in—on Earth before she was on Pylea. She understands the world in that way, and she is, of course, getting back to what the—this world is. Like, so she's able to process and she's able to know the difference between, like, a piece of shit who's harassing her and, like, something happened to Wes that made him do that.

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: She knows the difference. She's able to parse that. And that's why it's not about her trauma in this situation, because this is a situation where she knows that the one who was actually violated was Wesley. Because he was. Wesley—

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: Both Wesley and Gunn were violated. Gunn was able to fight it and talk his way through it.

Morgan: Mmhmm.

LaToya: But Wes unfortunately was not.

Morgan: Yeah. And I mean—and largely because also, like, Gunn was told what was happening to him.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Whereas, like, Wesley knew what had been going on and knew, like, the cases. But he didn't know that he had, like, infected himself. It's really sad.

LaToya: Yeah.

Morgan: Like, he really is, like, taken over by this thing and doesn't have a chance to fight it until he's doing something that he doesn't know how to take back.

LaToya: I'd say it's a much better version of Beauty and the Beasts, from Season 3 of Buffy.

Morgan: Yes. I was gonna say, like, that... like, that that is one of, kind of, the similar, like, kind of reductive things about male anger that I think the series has handled before. And I do think this is more, like, nuanced and interesting.

LaToya: I—'cause I—I think Tim Minear and Jeffrey Bell are both fucking great writers for Angel. And Jeffrey Bell goes on to be a showrunner for the show, I will say. But I do—I really wish there was, like, a female voice for this episode. That's the one thing I have.

Morgan: I will say that is, like, the one thing that is missing. Like, the—'cause like, some things about the, like, Lilah and Cordelia scene. Like, the dialogue's snappy and I love them going at each other about shoes. And, like, I love owning calling yourself a vicious bitch. Which does feel very correct to both of them. But there is something that's, like, missing. That authentic... thing that I feel like you always have when you have a female writer writing for a female character. Like, it's—just feels like the kind of thing that should be there.

LaToya: I—you know what—you know what's... crazy? I think that Marti would have been much better as the showrunner for Angel than Buffy, actually, considering her dark tone.

Morgan: Oh. That is actually—I would have loved to have seen that. That is a fun alternate universe pitch. Yeah.

LaToya: Like, make Jane Espenson the showrunner for Buffy and Marti Noxon the showrunner for Angel.

Morgan: Yes, please. [laughs]

LaToya: And that's it. And we're not doing Fuck Watch, because... I mean, our Fuck Watch is just Kris Polaha, right?

Morgan: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

LaToya: That's the safest bet?

Morgan: Look, if we have to, let's just say, yes. 'Cause we—and that really doesn't fuck us up for any future episodes. So that's a safe choice.

LaToya: With that, I will talk about the episode of a WB series that I think Angel should watch.

Morgan: Yes, please. [singing] "Angel is a vampire, does he even watch TV? [speaking] I think he'll *like* The WB."

LaToya: [simultaneously] "I think he'll *like* The WB." [both laugh]

[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: So what I'm gonna go with is, um, an episode of the one-season WB series, Black Sash. Episode 6, which was the final aired episode of the series. It's not the final produced episode. But because produced episodes after this never aired... hey. If you work at Warner Brothers and you have those masters? Send them my way. In this episode, the character Allie, played by Sarah Carter. She meets a college boy, who decides that taking photos without this teenage girl's consent is actually good. And for some reason, she decides to date this boy and it's bad. And you know who says it's bad? Her best friend, played by Missy Peregrin, her best friend Tory, who's like, "This is bad." And they have a little spat and that's bad. But the thing that happens is they eventually realize this guy is bad. And they bond by beating this piece of shit up, set to the tunes of Evanescence's Bring Me to Life. Should I start bringing up Bring Me to Life in every episode? Maybe.

Morgan: Uh, yes, please.

LaToya: The reason I'm choosing this, besides, um... gay. [Morgan laughs] It's just like, you know what? Women can do whatever they want. They can beat up men, set to Bring Me to Life. Because that's what we're doing in 2003. They can also just... be friends who have meet cutes with Missy Peregrym being on a motorcycle. [sarcastically] And they're definitely just friends, they're definitely just gal pals. [Morgan laughs] I can't really—honestly, it was hard for me to find an episode for this episode because... everything we've just said for the past two fucking hours. [laughs]

Morgan: Yeah.

LaToya: But you know what? Something with girl power and gayness. And just so you know, at the end of that episode—which again, is the last episode that aired of Black Sash. It ends with the two of them sparring, in the *gayest* possible way. [laughs]

[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: Morgan. What are your plugs, baby girl?

Morgan: Uh, my plugs—thank you so much for asking—are just that, uh, you can follow me on Twitter, @lorganmutich. I'm that on whatever platform you may be interested in following me on, if I have it. And also, please listen to LaToya and I's other podcast, The AMPire Diaries, which is covering the show, you guessed it, The Vampire Diaries. And it's really fun and we are also joined by our dear friend, Jill. And what are *your* plugs?

LaToya: My plugs are @lafergs. And from there, you can click on my little Tumblr blog and you find my email so you don't email the wrong black female critic when you're trying to hire me for things. Just so you know. But—

Morgan: Jesus! [laughs]

LaToya: Did you see that tweet?

Morgan: I did, and what the fuck? [both laugh]

LaToya: Jourdain literally texted me and she showed me the screencap. [laughing] She's like, it says, "Hey LaToya!" And it emailed right to her.

Morgan: Do better.

LaToya: And she's like, the other day, someone emailed me trying to email Angelica Jade Bastién from Vulture. [laughs]

Morgan: Do. Better!

LaToya: Angelica, who will definitely be on the podcast in the future, because she has Angel opinions and she always gives me shit for preferring Angel to Buffy. [laughs]

Morgan: Oh my god, I can't wait. [both laugh]

LaToya: But yeah. You can also follow us on the Twitter and Instagram, @Angelontopcast, baby!

Morgan: Woo-woo!

LaToya: Email us at angelontoppodcast@gmail.com. Go to angelontop.com immediately! For our Patreon. Which will—we'll be having... some live watches!

Morgan: Mmhmm!

LaToya: Our next episode... is Angel, Season 3, Episode 7, Offspring. And all I'll tell you for that episode is... all the girlies say, Angel's pretty fly. For a white guy.

Morgan: [laughing] Good god.

LaToya: [laughs] It's a wrap, baby!

[Angel On Top theme plays]