

Buffering the Vampire Slayer
Episode 4.08: Pangs

[Clip from episode plays]

Buffy: Will, you know how bad I feel about this, okay? It's eating me up—a quarter cup of brandy and let it simmer. But even though it's hard, we have to end this. Yes, he's been wronged, and I personally would be ready to apologize, but I—

Spike: Oh, someone put a stake in me!

Jenny: Hey! [yells] Oh my gosh! Hey everybody!

Kristin: Scared me!

Jenny: Sorry, I didn't mean to scare anyone. [Kristin laughs] Uh, it's us. We're here. Before we get started, we have a whole bunch of very exciting—it's going to be a real emotional rollercoaster here in the cold open.

Kristin: It is.

Jenny: We have a lot to share with you. [Big breath in] Let's do it!

Kristin: [Laughs] So, right out of the gates we want to let you know that we will be taking a few weeks off. We're coming back hot, hot, hot into your ears with something very special for "I Will Remember You." You might say, "Oh, but Kristin and Jenny, that's not an episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," and to that we say,

Both: Isn't it? [both laugh]

Kristin: So, we are coming back October 3. We know that seems so very far away. But trust us, we have a jammed-pack September for you.

Jenny: It's like we are taking September off from making podcast episodes, but we are not taking September off.

Kristin: That's correct.

Jenny: On September 2, your friend Kristin will join *Angel on Top*, for an "I Will Remember You" watch. So, you will be prepared, or you will begin your emotional preparation for our return on October 3.

Kristin: Yes, it's true. I will join Brittany and Laura, and if you are a member of the *Angel on Top* Patreon you know, it's on the Facebook group. It's going to be really fun, or really sad? It's gonna be whatever.

Jenny: It will be both.

Kristin: We'll see, but you should join us. Speaking of watches, Jenny and I are doing a *Buffy* watch on September 8. Just a few short days later. We will be watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the movie.

Jenny: The feature-length film.

Kristin: You have all been asking for this. So, all of our patrons, you know where to find us on that secret Facebook page. We will be watching the movie on September 8.

Jenny: Yes, yes, yes! Then on September 16, I, your hero, Jenny Owen Youngs, will be playing a *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* concert streaming for anyone on Facebook Live. Play all of your favorite songs about demon lizards, and ensouled vampires, and forbidden faded love, and more demons. It's going to be hot.

Kristin: And that's, just to repeat, this is for everyone, that concert. Patrons and non-patrons alike will be able to watch that concert completely for free, which is going to be really fun. And then, it's not done. We're not even done!

Jenny: [laughs] We're just halfway through the month!

Kristin: September 19, we're doing a mailbag for *everyone*. We do mailbags regularly for our patrons, but the month of September we're going to give you a special mailbag for everybody. So, that means if you've got things to send to us, send them to bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com. We'll be collecting those questions and doing a special mailbag episode for you that is coming out on the 19th.

Jenny: And then on September 30—wow! Wow, wow, wow! All of our patrons are welcome to join me, oh my gosh Jenny Owen Youngs, once again, for a guitar lesson? via the internet? if you want?

Kristin: You are going to teach people to play the *Buffy* songs?

Jenny: I'm going to try my dangedest to teach people to play the *Buffy* songs!

Kristin: Sounds super fun.

Jenny: If they feel like it. So, you can tune in, grab your guitar, join me, and I will walk you through a few of our jams, and hopefully by the end of our session you'll be able to play those songs for your cat, or mom, or whomever.

Kristin: Yes, so that's a lot of information to throw at you. All of that information can be found on our website, bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on "Calendar" or if you are like really savvy you know to go to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/jennycalendar, which is where you find our calendar.

Jenny: [incredulous] ... *Jenny* Calendar?

Kristin: Did you not know that?

Jenny: Oh my god! I was like "*my* calendar"? I'm an idiot. Okay. [both laugh]

Kristin: Two other quick scheduling things. We are going to PodCon, Jenny!

Jenny: Whaaaaaat?

Kristin: In Seattle on January 19 and the 20. Holy shit, you can also go to PodCon remotely. And those tickets are up at podcon.com.

Jenny: Do you know who is going to be there?

Kristin: Who is going to be there?

Jenny: [gasp] Joseph Fink, Jeffrey Kraner, [inaudible]! Oh my god!

Kristin: Kathy Tu! [Jenny squeals]

Kristin: Yeah!

Jenny: And also Tobin!

Kristin: The two hosts of *Still Buffering*, who we don't know, but we feel like we should.

Jenny: They are definitely our nemeses.

Kristin: [laughs] And, if you are across the pond, a reminder that we're going to be at the Vampire Ball, November 30 to December 3. Again, all of that information can be found on our calendar. We love you all. Okay, a couple of other announcements, before we get into some really bad-ass stuff that's going to happen in this episode, yeah, Jenny?

Jenny: Yeessss.

Kristin: Okay, so, if you have not known this yet, you will know this now. [Jenny laughs] Patrons now have a new level of giving: the \$25 level. And it's an exclusive merch level. So, the exclusive merch has been decided upon. There will be a beautiful moss-green t-shirt that says....

Jenny: "Giles in the streets, Ripper in the sheets"!

Kristin: And an enamel pin that says "The council is trash."

Jenny: About time!

Kristin: Now, here's the catch, you have to be pledging at the \$25 level by the end of August to get that merch that goes out at the end of September, beginning of October, okay?

Jenny: Get it, get it get it!

Kristin: So, if you want this merch, you have to do it now. Because if you pledge in September, you'll get the next round of merch, but you won't get this one, okay? So, here's your reminder, you've got a few days before the end of August. Get your little pledges in there, and then we'll get you your special merch. Yeah?

Jenny: Speaking of hot, hot merch, just wanna remind you all, that we have a *flaming-hot*, amazing new shirt, illustrated by Isabella Rotman and inspired by Heather Hogan. It's the "Support Your Local Alewife" shirt, and it's up now in our store, which is, of course, at bufferingthevampireslayer.com. Just click on "Shop," and you can find that and so many other delights ready for you.

Kristin: Wow! Okay, so, now a couple of things about this episode. So, we're about to roll into "Pangs," and we want to let you know that we had the distinct pleasure of getting to speak with Coya White Hat-Artichoker. Coya is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, a writer, a poet, and speaker on issues regarding race, equity, and two-spirit identity. Coya has been involved in various communities and movements since she was 15 years old. And we are—oh, oh! And something that is not in her bio—she's a massive sci-fi/*Buffy* fan. A little ways into the episode, you

will get to hear me speak with Coya about some of the themes and things that happen in this episode, bringing some light not only to what is happening in the episode but also what is happening in our world currently. Which I think is really special. I think it is a really, really wonderful gift that we were able to speak with Coya.

Jenny: I've heard the conversation that *you* haven't heard yet, and it is so great! Also, we want to tell you that in lieu of a song this week, we'll be playing a selection from a speech given by Standing Rock elder Phyllis Young to the Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the Dakota Access Pipeline. We felt like maybe we don't really care about Buffy's perspective by the end of this episode.

Kristin: Yeah, rather than write a song from the perspective of white guilt, first Jenny had the idea of doing three minutes of silence as the song. And then we talked about it a little bit more and thought, well, silence is one thing, but what if we filled the silence with the words of someone who is a Native person? So that's what we are doing at the end of this episode, though we are going to try to work on something special for when the album itself comes out. So, there will be a track for "Pangs," but for this week, that's what we are using the time for.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: Also, last thing? Last thing before we get into the episode.

Jenny: Last thing!!! Wooooo!

Kristin: As you know, we occasionally do lyric sheets, where we hand-write lyrics to the song of your choice, any *Buffering* song. And the proceeds from those lyric sheets go to benefit an organization. So, of course, for "Pangs," in the month of September, we'll be doing 10 lyric sheets. So that's more than we normally do. We normally limit it to 5, but because we are taking the month off, we're going to do 10 lyric sheets. And all of those funds that we raise from the sales of those lyric sheets will go to the Native American Rights Fund.

The Native American Rights Fund has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide, who might otherwise have gone without adequate representation. They've been around since 1971, and something specific about this organization that I want to mention is that right now they are doing a lot of work around the Bears Ears National Monument. So, if you don't know this, forty years ago, the US Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act so that Native people could practice their faith freely and access to their sacred sites would be protected. However, in our current world, their religious practice is threatened all over again. In December of this past year, the Administration

reduced the Bears Ears National Monument, an area that has been sacred to Native people in Utah, by over a million acres. So, this is one of the many things that this organization is fighting against.

We want to use this space in this episode, use our power as Scoobys, as *Buffering* listeners, and just people who love this show to raise funds here. So. you can go over to bufferingthevampireslayer.com/greatergood, and that will take you to the landing page where the lyric sheets will be up for sale. Pretty spectacular thing, I think, to do. You get a really cool lyric sheet and you also give back something that is really important. And we get to take this episode, which I think did some stuff, but, as we'll talk about, surely missed the mark in other places; and maybe hit the mark in some places where the episode did not. Yeah?

Jenny: Yeah!

Kristin: Alright. Let's stop yammering about here.

Jenny: Wooooo! So, let's watch Anya being super-hot and funny.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah! Let's follow Riley home, perhaps, to his suburban Iowa lake with his dogs.

Jenny: [laughs] Let's tie Spike to a chair!

Kristin: Yeah, you know what? Let's do that.

Jenny: Let's tie Spike to a chair... Right now!

[Buffering the Vampire Slayer theme plays]

Jenny: Hello and welcome to *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*, a podcast where we are watching and discussing every single episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, one at a time, spoiler-free. I am Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: And I am Kristin Russo, and *this* week, we are so lucky to be talking about Season 4 Episode 8, "Pangs." Stay tuned at the end of this podcast every week for an original song, written by us, recapping the *Buffy* episode we are discussing.

Jenny: "Pangs" was written by Jane Espenson and directed by Michael Lange and original aired November 23, 1999, at which point I had been 18 for one entire day!

Kristin: [chuckling] Are we now going to begin the countdown to 19? [Jenny laughs] "Just *twelve* months until I turn 19!"

Jenny: Yeah, exactly.

Kristin: [signs] Uh, you know November 23, 1999, no this is the Thanksgiving when I came out to my parents...

Jenny: Riiiiight. [in agreement] Mmmmmm.

Kristin: But it was the year prior, so this would mark my one-year anniversary of being a gay.

Jenny: Wow.

Kristin: This is the one where "On Thanksgiving, Buffy encounters the spirit of a Native American warrior whose people were wiped out by the settlers." That's the IMDB description, and as you can probably tell from the description alone, boy oh boy, do we have a lot to talk about here today.

Jenny: Yes.

Kristin: We're going to do our very best to talk about this episode, which is one of the, maybe *the* most controversial episode.

Jenny: I can think of maybe at least one other one.

Kristin: Yeah at least one other one. So, one of the top, probably, *two* most controversial episodes of *Buffy*. There's a lot happening in here, and you know that we've referred to this book *Joss Whedon and Race*. It's a collection of critical essays edited by Mary Ellen Latropoulos and Lowery A. Woodall III. And the essay is called, "Let It Simmer: Tonal Shifts in 'Pangs'" by Rhonda V. Wilcox. I'm going to refer to it a couple of times as we talk. Actually, I think a lot of the things that I'm going to refer to are Rhonda referring to *other* people's critical essays.

There's a lot of good quotes in here from some of the critical work that's been done around this episode. But I just want to start with a little quote from the beginning of the essay where Rhonda says, "It is unquestionably," as we just said, "one of the most controversial episodes of *Buffy*. It is also one of *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon's declared favorites. As Jane Espenson says, 'the core of it was something Joss had wanted to do for a long time, which is have a dead Indian at Thanksgiving—a very poetic illustration, I think, that we do kind of live in this country by virtue of some very ugly conquest. And then the next thing you know, we had a very nonthreatening bear and some funny syphilis.'" [Jenny moans]

That's kind of the thing is, like, if we're talking about writing and the arc, it's absolutely brilliant

Jenny: It's some of the sharpest—there are some best jokes. Like, Spike—Spike.

Kristin: Yeah, I mean, the episode is a brilliant episode of television structurally and like the way that it moves, the dialogue is written really brilliantly. But then when we look at what is happening in this episode, it's really, it's controversial for, I think, good reason. There's a lot of really fucked-up shit that happens, but there's also, for me, a lot of very interesting stuff that is brought up, because you know, this could've just been a Thanksgiving episode.

A lot of, a lot of television shows just have Thanksgiving episodes, right? Where are nothing is challenged. It's just fucking Thanksgiving. And we're all sitting around, eating our turkey.

Jenny: What happens on the *Friends* episode of Thanksgiving?

Kristin: Joey gets his head stuck in a turkey. That's all I remember.

Jenny: Is that the same episode where they play football and Monica is really competitive?

Kristin: Oh yeah!

Jenny: Hmm!

Kristin: And nobody's talking about... right? Like, and we all watch *Friends* and we're like, great, great, another show about—

Jenny: About how we eat turkey at this time of year.

Kristin: Yeah, about how a group of white people get together to celebrate Thanksgiving. So all that to say that, you know, I think there is something in attempting to look at white guilt, in attempting to look at the destruction of people.

Jenny: Materialism, the...yeah.

Kristin: Yeah, all of these things and Jenny and I are going to do our best, but we're also going to bring in someone else to help us talk about this too, because, you know, we've done a little bit of work learning about these things, but certainly,

Jenny: Surely, we are not the most educated voices that could be speaking.

Kristin: We are not, but we're still gonna talk about this stuff. We're still gonna talk about what happens in this episode. Let's just jump in here.

Jenny: Can we start with the previously on?

Kristin: Yeah, I actually didn't have any notes from the previously on this week.

Jenny: These are all of my notes from the previously on: "I was thinking of asking out Buffy. I've never courted anyone like Buffy before. Um, Buffy, awkward pause."

Kristin: Did you just write an erotic novel? [Jenny squeals] [Kristin laughs]

Jenny: *Nobody* wants my Buffy/Riley erotic novels. Nobody wants it.

Kristin: I think they'd be Jenny / Marc Blucas erotic novels. [laughing]

Jenny: Truly. Truly. And then I have a quick sidebar. Is it just me, or is Professor Walsh's hair like markedly different when she's in the classroom versus when she's in the underground lab? When she's in the classroom, it's like soft, mom hair; and then downstairs it's like "I gelled."

Kristin: Yeah, a lot more hairspray. Exactly, a lot more gel. It's a lot firmer, harder edge.

Jenny: She gets butcher down there. And then my last note is: "You're a little peculiar. I can live with that."

Kristin: Oh, so your notes were just you writing down all of the dialogue?

Jenny: It says like everything that Riley has... There's other stuff that happened in the previously on, but there is a *solid block* of, "Hey, just do you guys remember Riley? Riley, he's into Buffy now."

Kristin: Do you remember the guitar strings that play every time Riley's on?

Jenny: *Ding, ding, ding.* [imitating guitar strings]

Kristin: So, after the previously on, we go through the credits, and we get to the opening scene to which my first note is, "Oh my god, remember fleece vests?"

Jenny: Yeah, this vampire just got off work at North Face and uh...

Kristin: Did you have a fleece vest?

Jenny: Of cour—*well*, probably. I definitely had some fleece *items*. I don't remember. Like hats over long sleeve things, probably a vest in there somewhere in the collections.

Kristin: The fleece vest was a really hot-ticket item in the nineties.

Jenny: God, why? [pained]

Kristin: And this vamp is very interesting to me, right? Because he, first of all, doesn't want to be bothered. He's strolling along, and Buffy's like, "Excuse me?" And like Buffy has to *make* him angry for him to show that he's a vampire.

Jenny: Right, right. He's just trying to fly under the radar.

Kristin: He's trying to go about—and here's one of our very first little parallels. I think he's trying to just live his life as a vampire. And here comes this slayer who's like tap, tap, tap. I'm gonna kill you. And he has a line where he says, "Go back to where you came from!" You know, like why don't you just go back to where you came from.

Jenny: "Things were great before you came."

Kristin: Yeah.

Jenny: Okay. So, I'm just going to mention, though, that she's been in Sunnydale for like three years. [Kristin laughs] So does he mean like before she got to campus? But, like, I think campus officially would be in her patrol range.

Kristin: I think what he means—or would you like to keep going with this, Jenny.

Jenny: No, no, I'm sorry. Obviously they're just trying to accomplish something. Please go on. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: I just think that is supposed to kind of give us this little parallel of like people coming into the territory of other people and...

Jenny: Vampire Slayer imperialism.

Kristin: Exactly. Precisely.

Jenny: I mean this is like something we've touched on very lightly before though, right? Like what's up with just like free range to kill vampires.

Kristin: Right. What gives you the right? Who says what's right here? Animals hunt other animals all the time. Where do we draw the lines? But yeah, this is in this episode *specifically* to set us up with this like who was here first and what does that mean kind of thing. But, also, this vampire is weird. Why does he talk the way that he talks? You know, like, once he vamps out he becomes like those guys in *Scream* with their little fucking vocoder thing.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah. And he's all like "*Slayer!*" [imitating vampire] [Kristin laughs] I think that was pretty much verbatim the deal. And then you know what else is happening in this scene? These two aren't just fighting, unobserved.

Kristin: Oh, they're not, Jenny?

Jenny: No. Someone's in the bushes.

Kristin: Who is it?

[DETECTIVE ANGEL jingle plays]
De-tec-tive An-gel!

Jenny: Yeah, so, our sister podcast, *Angel on Top*, Laura Zach and Brittany Ashley talk a lot on there about how Angel is essentially just a stalker. He's a stalky boyfriend, and I feel like that's something we didn't necessarily entirely miss it, but I feel like we focused more in this show on, like, how detecty he is and less how like, dude, why are you always looking in windows, hiding in the bushes, or whatever. This is like the first time I've seen it through their eyes in the Buffy context. Angel, you're being a creep!

Kristin: Well, he's there— We should contextualize this just in case people are only watching *Buffy* and not *Angel*. But in the last episode of *Angel*, "The Bachelor Party," the episode ends with Doyle having a vision of Buffy in peril. And so, that's why Angel has gone to Sunnydale.

Jenny: I want you to know that when you said, "Buffy in peril," I got full-body goosebumps. What is wrong with me?

Kristin: You were worried about her? [laughing]

Jenny: I'm just like *engaged*. [Kristin laughs] And, like, I know what happens.

Kristin: Yeah, what's weird is that I don't really feel like Buffy was any more in danger in this episode than she's been. It's not like, it's not like Doyle had a vision, and Angel showed up and it was "Graduation Day, Part 2," you know what I mean? Like it's just... It doesn't seem...

Jenny: Yeah, did Angel being there make much of a difference?

Kristin: No. Well, they have an end scene where he does, like, snap a bunch of necks and—

Jenny: But, those spirits aren't *dying* by his hand. He's just kinda kind of like—

Kristin: Like, temporarily pausing them?

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah. I mean, listen, this is setting us up; we're being set up here for more that is to come. But not much happens in this episode that is really changed by Angel, except us getting to play the "Detective Angel" jingle a couple of times, which is everyone's favorite thing to do.

Jenny: Yes, hooray!

Kristin: So, after the credits, we go to this groundbreaking ceremony.

Jenny: Okay. First of all, this woman, let's just call her "the anthropologist." I think, technically, she's the director of the cultural studies center or something, but let's just call her the anthropologist cause that's a few syllables shorter. Her pantsuit is *so oversized*, [Kristin laughs] and I didn't want to let it go unmentioned.

Kristin: Well, there's a lot of fashion to talk about in this scene, because after we see her oversized pantsuit, we pan over to the trio of Scoobys we have over here: Buffy, Anya, and Willow. And, oh boy, are they wearing some outfits.

Jenny: Well yeah, let's talk about it please.

Kristin: Yeah, let's talk about it.

Jenny: Okay, so first of all, much has been made of Buffy's black cowboy hat in this scene, which, of course, sets us up for the age-old trope of cowboys versus Indians. And she's wearing a black hat, which indicates a certain amount of villainry, traditionally. But, also, I'm more interested in this hat in this moment for a different reason. [Kristin laughs]

Because Anya is like, "Have you ever seen anything so masculine?" And then Buffy looking at construction-worker Xander is like, "Oh yeah, very manly. Not at all Village People," *she said from underneath her cowboy hat!* [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Good point.

Jenny: People in cowboy hats shouldn't throw Village People stones phones, is my personal opinion!

Kristin: Very solid, very solid thesis statement. Very solid argument. Five points for Gryffindor—I mean Ravenclaw.

Jenny: Thank you.

Kristin: So yeah, everybody's wearing some choice clothing. This is really, I mean, Anya's been coming out of her Anya shell, but this is it.

Jenny: This is like the best episode for Anya so far. She's crushing.

Kristin: Anya really is just fantastic in this episode, like, the whole time through. Anya is like the character that just sees through all of the bullshit and is like "Your ritual sacrifice?" and they're like, "What do you mean?"

Jenny: Dude! Dude, dude. It's so great.

Kristin: Yeah, it is. She's great. I really hope, Jenny—I don't know who you picked for the Sexual Tension Award nominees. I know we'll find out at the end—but I am really hoping that Anya gets a play here, because I just feel like Anta wanted to fuck everybody in the episode. They literally leave the dean's house later, and she's like, "I really liked his wife." [laughs]

Jenny: But she also isn't, like, taking subpar entries. When she's waiting for Xander to start digging and the anthropologists digs first. She's like, "Pff, she's not rippling at all." [Kristin laughs] She was ready to be open, but no rippling.

Kristin: Yes, to any gender, but no rippling. As long as you've got ripples, Anya's into you this episode, probably any episode.

Jenny: We also find out here that Willow's family doesn't observe Thanksgiving.

Kristin: Yes, which is really one of the first positive things I've heard about her mom doing since the start of the series.

Jenny: Pretty much the only thing, right?

Kristin: Because her mom's been a witch-burning nightmare up until this point.

Jenny: And also, like, a shrinking-your-own-kid nightmare. Ugh.

Kristin: Right. So this scene, I mean, god, there's so many scenes in this episode, but this moment where Willow is like, "Uh, the destruction of an Indigenous people is not the fucking melting pot." We get from the anthropologist—I like that we're calling her the anthropologist—we get from the anthropologist that, like, you know "This country as a melting pot." I think she specifically says something like "Contributions from *all* cultures making *our* culture stronger," right?

Jenny: That does sound like some bullshit.

Kristin: It does sound like some fucking bullshit. And also, like, I think something that this episode *does* underline in a way that is accurate is the way that white people, specifically, gloss over the truth of a thing to make it seem like this very wonderful, beautiful journey that we're all going on together. When, in fact, when you pick up the fucking covers and look underneath, it's like, in this case, the destruction of a people.

And I do want to point out too that the Chumash people are the focus of this episode, and one glaring discrepancy is that the narrative of this whole episode is like they've been wiped out completely; they've been exterminated. That's *not* true. One of the pieces referenced in this essay by Rhonda Wilcox is a piece by Dominic Alessio, who in 2001, this essay says that "Dominic sounded the first major note in the debate on 'Pangs' with his condemnation of the episode as essentially colonialist."

And I bring up *his* points because one of his important points that he brought up in 2001 was that there are, in fact, approximately 3,500 Chumash living across the United States, some still in California. I also want to point out that looking into the Chumash people, they are mostly in the Santa Barbara area. So like, just one more, a little penny in the bucket for Sunnydale is Santa Barbara.

Jenny: A penny in the bucket for Sunnydale is Santa Barbara, sure. Yes, yes.

Kristin: So, Willow is calling out the anthropologist on her bullshit, on the general bullshit that the melting pot usually represents. And Buffy... This is, and you pointing out, like, the color of Buffy's hat and the fact that she's kind of... Buffy's really set up in a way in this episode to have her be, I mean, not the—"villain" is

probably the wrong word, but she's not the good guy. She's not on the right side of this debate. She struggles with it as we walk into the episode, but her response to Willow saying these really important, impactful things is, like, white-girl—

Jenny: "I never thought about it that way before, because I never had to think about it."

Kristin: "I didn't think about it before." Also, like, and then she changes the subject. Like,

Jenny: "I just want the turkey!" [imitating Buffy] Mmm [disapprovingly].

Kristin: Right. And that's... Okay, so this is really a fucking episode, because that's a whole 'nother thing, right? That Buffy—if we can go there now—Buffy wants to host Thanksgiving.

Jenny: Yeah. And, and she wants to do it for reasons of like comfort.

Kristin: Yeah, and nostalgia, and chosen family.

Jenny: Sure, there's positives.

Kristin: Yeah there's absolute value in like her wanting to assemble with her closest people and, like, observe a tradition that she is used to that makes her feel warm and familial.

Jenny: What doesn't feel great about like the overall arc of this episode is that Buffy's conflict is sort of her in between what the Chumash spirit guy represents and then she just wants to have Thanksgiving cause that's what she wants and she doesn't want to think about it. She just wants the tradition that she had. Like the American traditionalism thing that runs through this whole episode. We have so many things that are so ingrained in *our* experience of whatever American culture that like, you know, you have the luxury of not thinking about where they come from and what their roots are.

Kristin: Exactly, and the privilege of saying, like, *but having turkey around the table is so nice* without examining anything. And there's a, sorry that—I mean, I'm not sorry that I keep referencing these essays—but there's a part in this essay that talks about that. You know, later in the episode there's this quarter-cup; it's the sound clip we played at the beginning of the episode where she's sort of, like, talking about her guilt,

Jenny: Dude!

Kristin: And then she interrupts herself to say "a quarter cup of brandy and let it simmer," right? And so, here, Rhonda Wilcox says "With Buffy's quarter cup of brandy interruption, there's the intrusion of the personal into the political. I wouldn't say that the effect is to make a mockery of concern for the Chumash. Instead, it makes a mockery of the speaker, Buffy, fond of her, though many of us may be. The tonal shifts suggests not a debasement of the significance of the issue, but a weakness in Buffy, a very human weakness in a person many of us identify with, a weakness in someone who asserts conscientious consideration for the social issue, but who at this moment is more involved in getting dinner than righting wrongs."

Jenny: Mmm! At this moment.

Kristin: And isn't that it?

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah!

Kristin: Isn't that the America that we fucking live in? It's just like everybody's too fucking busy, and they're too busy with their own lives and their own kids and their own this and their own that, that they can't really stop for a second to put down the fucking quarter cup of brandy and say, "You know, this is actually really important," because it doesn't affect them. This doesn't affect Buffy. And we're seeing her struggle with it, and we'll talk about it more. Cause now I've really taken us to like the three-quarter mark of the episode, but these are the themes in this episode. Like we're coming out heavy because this is a really heavy episode. Really, there's a lot in here.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: Anyhow.

Jenny: Xander digs.

Kristin: Xander digs [laughing].

Jenny: See Xander dig, see Xander fall into pit. Hear ominous flute music.

Kristin: Of course! Yet one more. Like this is the same flute that we heard for...

Jenny: In "Inca Mummy Girl"! It's the same fucking shit. Get that flute player we had for "Inca Mummy." Get them back in.

Kristin: Did the Chumash even use flutes? Who cares? [crosstalk]

Jenny: Yeah, White American people watching this show will know. Like, this will trigger for them what we need to trigger in them.

Kristin: Yes. Lots of problems in this episode [singing].

Jenny: Now, you know what else—

Kristin: Wait! But before we change scenes! Before we change scenes, I just want to talk about two things that we missed with Anya. One, Anya's line, "It's a ritual sacrifice with pie." And two, Anya twice in the scene saying, "I'm imagining having sex with him right now." It's, like, [Jenny shrieks] Anya, what are you up to here? Like, you know what I mean? Where are you doing? Where are you headed talking about your sexual fantasies with these ladies?

Jenny: Ooh!

Kristin: Just saying

Jenny: You think she's knock knocking at the... Okay.

Kristin: Knock, knock, knocking on threesomes' door [singing].

Jenny: Okay, okay. So um,

Kristin: Oh, then you know what happens?

[DETECTIVE ANGEL jingle plays]
De-tec-tive An-gel!

Jenny: Are we sure that we shouldn't change the jingle to like "Stalker Angel"?

Kristin: Real lurk-y An-gel [singing to the tune of "Detective Angel"]!

Jenny: So, like, this is not the only time this happens in this episode. There are multiple moments where it feels like Buffy has some kind of like spidey sense tingling because Angel's around, but she doesn't know why. Have we ever, like that feels like very overt, but it's not something that's like addressed or...

Kristin: Ever, right? It's just like supposed to be their soul—

Jenny: Oh, their true, true deepest love. [sarcastically] Mmm! Yes. She's like, "I smell clues and detective work."

Kristin: "I smell the leather-bound copy of nausea." [both laughing]

Jenny: "I hear the yonder distant rustling of leather duster."

Kristin: "What are all these buttons scattered across the floor?" [both laughing]

Jenny: Cool. So, Angel is staring up at Buffy's window, and we're like, that's creepy, until we see Buffy staring out her window. And we're like, "Oh, maybe they deserve each other."

Kristin: Yes. A lot of people staring at windows in this episode. That's like a whole theme. It's like Spike looking in on the meeting, and Angel looking in... That's a whole thing. Uh, so we're in the dorm room after Angel lurks for a moment and Buffy's looking out the dorm room window. I wanna say, I'm very surprised that Willow still has her Dingoes poster up on the wall.

Jenny: Oh yeah, that's—well, no, but she's holding out hope that Oz is coming back any minute.

Kristin: Yes, but she's playing, like, sad music. Don't you think that like she would have had at least one night where she's playing sad music and she took it down?

Jenny: No, she's too gentle.

Kristin: It's so sad.

Jenny: Um, speaking of gentle. I just want to note that Buffy is seen holding a stuffed cow, *not* her stuffed pig, Mr. Gordo.

Kristin: Oh my god. The whole time I was like, oh, it's Mr. Gordo. I forgot that it was a stuffed pig and not a cow.

Jenny: He's allegedly a pig.

Kristin: I wonder what the cow's name is.

Jenny: Uh, don't know. She also decided she's gonna throw Thanksgiving in this scene.

Kristin: Yes. "It's a sham," Willow says. "It's a sham with yams," says Buffy.

Jenny: A yam sham.

Kristin: Great, great, great dialogue. I mean, this is Jane Espenson, right? Benson, however we say her last name. She's, I mean, she's an incredible dialogue writer.

Jenny: Also, Willow's like, "Ooh, we could *not* invite Anya." I feel like Anya rocks! Why? I guess Willow has residual Xander—

Kristin: Possessiveness. Absolutely.

Jenny: Yeah. Fucking Anya rocks though.

Kristin: And Willow caves. Willow caves to Buffy, which I feel is like Willow is seeing the nostalgic end of things and Buffy says everything's different now. She can tell her friend is sad. She wants to help her friend, but she also wants to, like, not be complicit in this racist fucking situation. It's like a real challenge for Willow. But they decide they're going to have Thanksgiving, and Spike—

Jenny: Dude, there's so many. Okay. Can we just like talk for once? Okay. What's that movie where, like, a girl is selling flowers to buy matches, or selling matches to buy food, or like I think she's—

Kristin: This is like that time you tried to tell that Bible story [both laugh] with the two pennies. What are you talking about?

Jenny: I was trying to think of some particular iconic occurrence in popular culture of, like, a small girl who might be an orphan who is cold, living on the streets.

Kristin: She has two pennies. [Jenny laughs]

Jenny: She has two pennies and one blanket is full of holes.

Kristin: The blanket!

Jenny: The blanket is full of holes, and also he's, like, pulling it over his duster. Like he's wearing a leather... I mean, I get that, like, what we're seeing is Spike can't eat, so it's like making his body all fucked up, and he's way colder than he would normally be. He's like maybe colder than room temperature. We don't know. Or he is having a hard time, and he's so cold that he needs a blanket over his floor-length leather jacket—

Kristin: That is full of holes. It's very dramatic. Then Riley and his bros are in the fucking woods. My note is, "Riley and his bros, blah, blah, blah." Everybody has gone home for Thanksgiving.

Jenny: They've added camo face paint.

Kristin: Yes, yes, which seems really unnecessary, gentlemen. [laughs]

Jenny: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Kristin: So, then Xander's got syphilis, we don't know that yet.

Jenny: Oh my god, he looks so sick.

Kristin: They really, like, the makeup team on this episode did a great job with Xander. He really does look like he has smallpox,

Jenny: He looks like he has malaria, [crosstalk]. Yeah, yeah, totally. Oh my god. And then we get to see a decidedly human portion of Anya. Well...

Kristin: We've seen a lot of human Anya, I think.

Jenny: Her libido is human. Her desire to care for a very, very sick Xander is human. Her declaration when he is like, [Kristin laughs] talking about dying, and she's like, "We'll die together; it's romantic." That feels pretty human to me.

Kristin: Uh-huh. And then!

Jenny: And then he says, "You're a strange girlfriend."

Kristin: And it's, like, record-scratch. Anya's like "Say what?" [laughing]

Jenny: "What did you call me?" [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: And Xander's like, "Oh, it's the disease talking." And she's like, "Well, I kinda like the disease."

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, she's into it.

Kristin: Then a green mist suddenly,

Jenny: Materializes into the vengeful spirit of a Chumash dude.

Kristin: Yeah, a Chumash dude, who... Actually, in reading this essay, I couldn't tell: does he have a name in the episode or he was supposed to have a name?

Jenny: Oh, why bother naming the—

Kristin: Well, Jane Espenson did, though. In the original script, this Chumash, Hus—H-U-S, I believe—not only had a name but also was the one who delivered the information about his people, rather than it coming from, like, Willow and her books. It actually was him speaking about the injustices done to his people. So, you know, just kind of a major shift that was taken out and changed, but probably a better way to have had that delivered would have been exactly that. Anyway, he arrives...

Jenny: He also might've been like, "Actually, there's about 3,500 of us."

Kristin: Yeah, if we let him speak, he probably would have said a couple of factual things a little bit differently. So, he gets this knife out of the case, the case that was probably like "A knife taken peacefully from the Chumash," and he totally kills the shit out of the anthropologist. Byeeee, sorry.

Jenny: That's one *dead* anthropologist. Willow has some theories once she and Buffy can get to the crime scene. She's like, "So, I'm thinking it's a witch. There's some great spells that work much better with an ear in the mix," because the anthropologist's ear was removed. And then she, like, spins out a little farther and is like, "or an ear-harvesting demon building a demon completely out of ears."

Kristin: Yeah which, please, those of you who are listening, who are artists. Please send us—

Jenny: I don't want to see that. Don't send...

Kristin: I do! I want to see a rendering of ear demon and demon even made entirely of ears.

Jenny: I don't want to see it. And then she goes into Van Gogh, to round out her bizarre collection of theories.

Kristin: Her ear monologue. So, we go to Giles and,

Jenny: Oh my god, as a resident of Southern California, I can finally appreciate this line. I don't know if you caught this. Buffy's like, "It was more like a riot than a Ralphs."

Kristin: Ahh. [understanding]

Jenny: Ralphs is a grocery store chain. I don't know how far it extends, but it's all over Los Angeles.

Kristin: Yes, and now you know. You too have shopped at a Ralphs, just like Buffy.

Jenny: Wow. I've never experienced a Ralphs being more like a riot, so far, and I hope I never do.

Kristin: So, we get more of this back and forth. Also, more of her sensing Angel. We get more of the back and forth, Buffy saying to Giles, "If you're going to move to this country, you have to assume our traditions!" Cause Giles is, of course, annoyed that Thanksgiving is being hosted at his house cause he knows he's going to get stuck with the cleanup.

But it's just a little bit more of these one-liners of: it's our culture, so assimilate, or it's our culture, so blah blah blah. And then, hey. Who's together again, Jenny but Angel and his boyfriend, Giles.

Jenny: Gangel!

Kristin: Gangel? [laughing]

Jenny: Oh no, we said "Angiles," didn't we?

Kristin: "Angiles" was their official couple name. [Jenny laughs] Just, like, the way that he walks out and like—

Jenny: But, this is immediately proceeded by Buffy having another, like, spidey sense. She's like, "Hmm?" and is like, "I have to go get more whipped cream supplies."

Kristin: Right. And then, like, dad and ex-boyfriend really go into it here where there's a little reference to *Angel*—Doyle having a vision that's talked about. And then it's really like, "It's not your job!" And Angel's like, "Well, it's not yours either!" There's basically two dudes telling each other to stop protecting a lady. Meanwhile, Buffy's like, "Everybody could just fuck off; I'm going to get whipped cream."

Jenny: Yeah.

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

Kristin: Lovely, lovely, lovely. So, here we are at the fucking Espresso Pump.

Jenny: Having just run over from three blocks up and two blocks over. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, Riley's got a crush. And Willow is fucking hilarious. Alyson Hannigan, I know we say it a lot, but like—

Jenny: She's so great!

Kristin: Oh my god, she's incredible. Her comedic timing and delivery is just really on point, and she just has this moment where she's like, "Hey, how about that coffee that they serve here? Gotta go!" and runs off because she wants Buffy and Riley to start dating. And then, Angel—*why?*

Jenny: Grabs her and covers her mouth.

Kristin: *Why?* Why doesn't he just... He didn't leave evil! It's not like he like Willow would see him and be like "Oh my god, it's Angel" [in fearful voice].

Jenny: No, he's just so dramatic and...

Kristin: Very dramatic.

Jenny: But maybe her first response to seeing Angel would instinctively be to be like, "Buffy!"

Kristin: Right.

Jenny: I just turned my head and said, "Buffy!" I don't know if you could tell.

Kristin: It just seemed over the top. But, he grabs Willow, and she's like, "Are you evil? Are you evil now?" [in muffled voice] from underneath his hand. He's like, "No, I'm not evil," which is like this tiny little...

Jenny: Exactly what an *evil* person would say.

Kristin: And this is kind of a recurring thing, cause it happens later with Xander and he's like, "Why does everybody think of evil?" Like, well, dude, cause you literally had some epic, epic evil moments in the last three seasons.

Jenny: Yeah. Then he's all like, "Buffy can't know I'm here. Buffy is in danger." And then she does this whole like, "I've had it with this like 'I'm leaving for her own good' garbage. You can't just give up because there's obstacles," and Angel's like, "Uh..."

Kristin: Hector projector! [laughing]

Jenny: Yeah, then Willow's like, "Oh sorry, it's my stuff. Sorry."

Kristin: And then Willow does this amazing thing where like—obviously, there's a lot in this episode, so we don't have a lot of time to, like, let them have the conversation we want them have—we get a little taste of it with her being like "Of all the people you could've hired. *Cordelia*?" And to that, Jenny, I say we don't get a Cordelia name drop in many episodes, so shall we just play the Cordelia jingle for old time's sake?

Jenny: Please.

[CORDELIA jingle plays]

Cordelia,

ah ah

I love you.

Cordelia,

ah ah

you're perfect.

Cordelia

ah ahh.

Kristin: So, of course, Angel has a very pressing question, his *concern* for Buffy.

Jenny: Yeah! He's so worried. Oh gosh, "Can you just tell me, *who is that guy?*"

Kristin: "Who is that guy? Who is that guy who looks like me left out in the sun?"

Jenny: Dipped in butterscotch! [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: And meanwhile, Buffy is making some massive moves outside.

Jenny: Wow, she just invites him to Thanksgiving?

Kristin: To Thanksgiving!

Jenny: It's like a no-parents Thanksgiving.

Kristin: Sure, but it's still a pretty big deal.

Jenny: "Do you wanna come to Thanksgiving with me, my three friends, and uh, the librarian from my high school?" [imitating Buffy] [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: Yeah, "and also of vampire." She doesn't know that part yet, but it would have been a great time if Riley had shown up.

Jenny: Ah, good thing! But, we find out that Riley's from Iowa, and I don't mean to, like—

Kristin: Can you hear me rolling my eyes as I'm rolling them, audience?

Jenny: I don't think you can argue with this: The Riley Finn family Thanksgiving sounds pretty tight. It's on a farm, after dinner, they take a walk with the dogs down by their river, and there's lots of trees.

Kristin: What I liked about this moment was that I was, like, I wrote the note: "*Oh brother, Riley.*" And after I did that, he was, like, "I know it sounds like a fucking whoever, whoever painting." [Jenny laughs] What I liked was that he called himself out on, like, how cookie-cutter..."

Jenny: On how idyllic and peaceful and lovely that sounds? Yeah, punish him! [sarcastically]

Kristin: So, you know, speaking of *punishing* him, let's go to the next scene, [Jenny laughs] where Harmony has been doing a lot of reading of self-help books!

Jenny: God, I love her.

Kristin: Her line, I wrote it in all caps [excitedly]: "I've been doing a lot of reading, and I'm in control of my own power."

Jenny: Yeah, yeah!

Kristin: Incredible! And she fucking holds her own, cause you think she's gonna—

Jenny: Cave?

Kristin: But she does not!

Jenny: Cause she is powerful and beautiful and doesn't need Spike to complete her. And also, she has a stake in their bed!

Kristin: A stake underneath the bed, which is a hilarious thing, like just imagine a vampire sleeping with a stake under the bed.

Jenny: Like, you might roll over onto that in the middle of the night, or the middle of the day.

Kristin: Be careful, Harm! She's setting fires, sleeping on stakes. Also, I just want to give a tiny little shout-out to her hair. It's pulled back, and it looks like it's just pulled back, but then when you see the back of her head and the side of her head, it's all these, like, teeny-tiny little ponytails. It's really *good*.

Jenny: I did *not* see that.

Kristin: Well, I did. Uh, I'm representing for the fems over here, and I saw all of her ponytails, and I liked them. But yeah, Spike is—

Jenny: Oh! Sorry.

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: I just want to note that Angel is wearing, in this episode: black pants, a dark-red button-down shirt, and a black leather duster. Do you think Angel and Spike are gonna make out?

Kristin: Oh my god, wow. There must've been a sale at—

Jenny: At Burlington Vamp Factory?

Kristin: Yeah. I think there was a sale on red, vampire button-ups. So, Harmony kicks Spike out. Spike's really pathetic. Just like, "Bu but, could I just have something to eat before I go?"

Jenny: Aww, poor Spike! He's so hungry! As somebody who becomes a different person when I'm really hungry, I have a lot of feelings for Spike.

Kristin: You know, that's why you don't fucking just shit on people all the time, Spike. Cause hen when you need something, they're not going to be there for you. Not for shelter, not for sex, and not for food. Harmony is like, "Get out and stay out!" And I wish we had a Harmony jingle for *this episode* for her, but you know, we're working on Giles, so...

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Hang in there.

Kristin: Yeah. So, okay. So uh, Father Gabriel had seven sons, and seven sons had Father Gabriel. [singing]

Jenny: What?

Kristin: Do you know that song from camp? I think it's Father Abraham.

Jenny: Oh yeah, that sounds vaguely biblical and familiar.

Kristin: Well, Father Gabriel, we learn, is dead.

Jenny: Yes, we do learn that. And he's been hanged.

Kristin: Yes, he has been hanged by Hus, who earlier, we weren't sure if Hus had a name in the episode or not. And he does, because this is the moment, the only time that we hear his name. He references it in his speech where he says, "I am vengeance. I am my people's cry." And so, this is the moment of conflict for Buffy. It's, like, all the things that Willow's been saying in the episode are settling into place, and she's like, "How am I just going to kill this man? This spirit? It's not a black-and-white thing. It's a gray area for her.

She feels conflicted, and, like, this episode is, I don't think it does a good job, but there are pieces of it that if it had just been done *well*, like this part is, I'm here for it. I'm here for Buffy being privileged, not understanding or privileged, starting to learn that she has privileged, starting to learn there's more complex things happening, *and then doing something about it*. And that's where the episode really peters out for me.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: But in this moment, she doesn't kill him, because she's conflicted. And she goes back to Giles, and she's like, "I don't fucking know what to do. I don't know," and that's when our arguments begin.

Jenny: Right. Do we want to also just mention that Hus, before departing, busts into—

Kristin: Fucking birds!

Jenny: A flock of crows or ravens or something? Um, first of all, cool.

Kristin: Yeah, coo effect.

Jenny: Second of all, fetishization of the Mysticism inherent in Native American... Like, *mmm* [disapproving].

Kristin: Yeah, because it's there. He's birds, he's a wolf, and then, of course, most—

Jenny: Wolf? I think coyote. Blending in, in Southern California.

Kristin: Well you would know, Jenny. [laughs] It's true. Maybe that was nobody. Maybe it was just a coyote.

Jenny: That could've just been a coyote.

Kristin: And they just were really dramatic about a coyote showing up there.

Jenny: They were like, everybody's looking in the windows—Angel, Spike, this coyote.

Kristin: Yeah. But it is, it's like you want that episode to highlight the things it's highlighting about the destruction of an entire people. But, you also want to believe that more research was done here and more was put into it, and, because we know that there are still Chumash people, we know that there wasn't *a ton* that went into—well, it seems like there wasn't a ton that went into the research. And then when you pair that with, like, birds and a coyote and a bear, it's like...

Jenny: And we *are* watching like a supernatural, dramatic comedy that has a lot of monster-of-the-week stuff, right? So, they're leaning as hard— Like, wherever they can lean into those ideas within what's actually happening in this episode, they're doing it, but also, like, I think it's important to maybe look at that a little more critically.

Kristin: Yeah. Yeah. Right. And I think that we're watching a show where the creators are primarily white. The writers are primarily white. The cast is primarily white. And, I think at the very bottom of it all, we *at least* have to say, let's look at this critically. Because, these are white people—

Jenny: Because nobody did before, so, god, somebody should!

Kristin: These are a bunch of white people extensively writing a narrative to... And white people *should be* definitely, like, trying to unpack this and trying to write

narratives and trying to tell stories about this. But I don't think that, especially in '99, we were in a place in Hollywood where Hollywood felt accountable enough to really do the work properly.

Okay, before you and I talk about this too much—though probably you can't talk about it too much—I think that we should go now to the conversation that I was able to have with Coya White Hat-Artichoker. Coya is a huge *Buffy* fan and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Coya is also going to tell you even more about herself when we get into the interview. We talked about some of the things that we've already talked about in the episode and many things that we haven't covered here yet. It was a true pleasure to speak with her and I think you'll feel the same.

[CHIME]

Kristin: Coya, thank you so much for taking some time out of your day to speak with us. This is a really, really controversial episode, an episode that I think really warrants a bigger, deeper discussion of some things, o, I really appreciate you being here. Thank you.

Coya: Yeah, of course. I'm happy to be invited. I love *Buffy*, so.

Kristin: That's our commonality, right? That's what brings everybody to the table is our love for *Buffy*. And what's so cool is that our love for *Buffy* then brings out these conversations about other things in the world. And maybe a good place for us to start is you just telling us a little bit about who you are, um, and obviously that'll contextualize why you're speaking with us today.

Coya: Yeah, sure. No problem. My name is Coya White Hat-Artichoker. I am Sicangu Lakota from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. I'm an enrolled member. And I am a two-spirit, queer, feminist, activist type person, and I've been doing organizing work in different movements for about 20 years. And uh, I am also a huge sci-fi nerd. I, like, love everything sci-fi, so when *Buffy*... I was late to the game with *Buffy*, but I fully embraced it.

Kristin: You sit perfectly at the Venn diagram of today's conversation. Um, yes. And that's really exciting, we're going to get into the specifics of the episode, but you and I had the chance to talk a little bit before sitting down here to record our conversation. And a couple of things came up. One of them was, a little bit we talked about the California missions. And that's something that you had a story to share about something that kind of brings this to the present. Obviously, the California missions are kind of a cornerstone of the narrative of this episode. So, I'd love to share that with our listeners.

Coya: When you look at what happened to the Native people in California, it's actually unlike other places in the country, and it's *really* destructive. There was a really intentional, sort of campaign, and you see it because the missions were throughout California. So, there was an intentional campaign to sort of assimilate and destroy culture of Native folks in California. And there are also, like, it's no accident that there are no, there are very few federally recognized California tribes. And when you have federal recognition, then that is how people enforce treaties. So, they sort of managed to do this campaign of setting up these missions and assimilating and/or killing folks, um, [inaudible], you know, Christian culture. And you see that with boarding schools in the Midwest or in Canada. Um, but they really amped it up and got real systematic about it in California.

And a lot of that had to do with the gold rush and the resources that California has. And also, I mean, the other thing is I know in the modern-day context, I have a friend who is a PhD candidate in the UC California system, and she was talking about how her daughter was taught about the California missions for like a week in her school and had to, like, write up a story about it and talk about it, and never in a context of, like, critiquing it. And so, it was really painful for her as a Native woman to have her daughter being taught that they didn't do anything really wrong as much as they were trying to, like, "civilize" Native peoples.

Kristin: And this is like—when was this happening? This is like now, this is 10 years ago? When was her daughter in school?

Coya: This is a year and a half ago.

Kristin: I mean it's, you know, atrocious that that kind of instruction and education happened at any time. But, I do think that a lot of us think that that has stopped, that we are no longer learning these false things or that kids aren't learning filtered tales of things that were really, really horrible.

It's very upsetting. And I think that's why you and I are having this conversation of that this isn't something that happened, you know, hundreds of years ago, and this isn't just something that happened 50 years ago, and this isn't something that was just going on in an episode of *Buffy* 20 years ago. This is something that is *today* actively happening.

Coya: Yeah. And it's not, I mean it's one thing where it's like children in California; it's another to like be a Native child and have to sit in a classroom and to have to hold both worlds in that moment.

Kristin: Something else that I wanted to talk to you about, Coya. In our conversations, you've used a variety of words to describe Native people or to refer to Native people. And that's a piece of this episode is this is 1999 and you know, Giles says "Indian" and Buffy says, "Sorry, that's not what we say anymore. We say 'Native American,'" and I've heard in our conversations you've used, "Native person," as well as "Indian" all to describe Native people, Indigenous people. And so, I would just love to hear a little bit more from you on the language and our use of language and your thoughts on those terms.

Coya: Sure. And Willow also used "Indigenous" at one point. She referenced, "Oh, I meet Indigenous people and within like five minutes I'm acting like Custer," I thought was kind of funny. Um, I think that, you know, language is really always important. I myself, I don't like to use the term "Native American," because our people existed here before America existed. I think, oftentimes, it's really the best course of action is to ask people "What do you want to be referred to?" Because there are 562 distinct nations recognized by the federal government in the United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. So, we have names that we call ourselves, our people. And then, you know, we have things, we have words that we use for political purposes. So like, I call myself "Indian," cause we grew up calling ourselves Indians, even though it's a misnomer, it's not correct. It comes directly from Christopher Columbus.

But if you ask me, like I say, I am Sicangu Lakota, which is my band and which is part of the larger, Oceti Sakowin in of the three nations that comprise the Oceti Sakowin, which is all of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota people. So, and it's similar like you, like you call people "Navajo," but if you ask them what they call themselves, they call themselves "Dine." So, I think language is really important to pay attention to. And I think if you don't know, it's just better to ask. I think we say that about gender and queerness all the time is if you are unsure, you should just ask, "What do you want to be referred to as?" And people will tell you different things. And I make my distinctions based on my background in political organizing. And also, you know, the word *Indigenous* was used, and I use that word because it allows me to have solidarity with other tribal folks from South America and Mexico, and it's a recognition that our people have walked this continent since time immemorial, and we know that, and these borders are constructed and they're false to us.

Kristin: Thank you for sharing all of that. I did hear echoes of conversations that I have definitely in regard to sexuality and gender around language. And I think that for so many of us, it's really just being able to feel comfortable asking questions and also being respectful enough to then, listen to those answers, use those words, and ask questions if you then meet somebody else. That we're not just using these

words as blanket statements for everyone, but for individual people and individual experiences. So, let's talk a little bit about the episode itself, right?

"Pangs" comes in, the Thanksgiving episode, and does something that most episodes of Thanksgiving television don't do in that it brings in the racism, the violence associated with the holiday. But, it struggles and fails. I know I'm not going to put those words in your mouth, but that's how I feel in many ways. And I'm wondering if you have some takeaways from this episode or major things that you'd like to talk about.

Coya: I think that it's one of those things where, like, I applaud Joss Whedon for, like, taking a stab at it and the team behind *Buffy*, because I think it's in that, sort of, it's in the sci-fi realm where you can create this sort of situation to sort of wrestle with the kind of moral issues there. I agree with you. I think at the end, they did not land where I wish they would have landed.

I grew up as a very spiritual, cultural person. And so, I do have a belief system that involves spirits. And I do believe that there are ways to sort of reckon with the past that allow people to move on. And I didn't see that here, you know? I think that, you know, even as Lakota people, we have ceremonies for our grief and ways in which we sort of tried to move our people forward, move ourselves forward, and recognize the past, but to let it go in a way that's healthy in a good way. And what I saw here was more of, yes, we recognize this, we see that it could be real, and in the end we're still gonna destroy the Indian.

Kristin: We see lots of lots of demon spirits, et cetera, in the Buffyverse who are complex, right? They're not *just* evil. Like, this character of Hus is sort of positioned as a complex character, but also no one really engages him and speaks to him and talks to him about anything. Whereas, you know, we have Oz, we have Angel, we have all of these other characters where they may have come to us or they may have like parts of them that are doing things that are harmful, like Hus is killing people and cutting off people's ears and things like this, but there's no conversation that's ever had. And, you know, we'll talk about this a little more, but I just thought that that was an interesting parallel to draw between the lack of dialogue that really happens here between them.

Coya: Well, I think it's also—I mean, I could be wrong here—but it could also be like a bigger metaphor for just how this country deals with Native folks in general. You know, it's very much, I think people feel a lot of guilt or a moral ambiguity about what has happened to Native people in this country and in the history of this country, while at the same time being completely incapable of actually tackling that history. And so, the reaction becomes, like, you know, there is no redemption for

the savage warrior or the like, you know, we don't know what else to do but to ignore the problem, and the best way to ignore the problem is to kill the problem.

Kristin: Right, which is exactly what we see here. And that really segues into the next thing that I wanted to touch on, which is this through line of white guilt and how it's handled. We see, especially Willow and Buffy as the examples, I think the bigger examples in this episode of white guilt. They reckon with the knowledge that they didn't have before. They learned something about the Chumash people, they learn about the missions, and they grapple with it, Willow and Buffy specifically in slightly different ways, you know. And then, of course, we see other characters who don't grapple with it at all. Spike being the other end of that spectrum. This is something that I feel that I experience in day-to-day life when it comes to white people unpacking things that have happened to people of color, Indigenous people, immigrants, saying, sort of, this is bad. I recognize this as bad, this is really bad, and I acknowledge it, but I have to get my kid to their soccer practice, I have to make dinner, I have to, like, deal with my life, so I recognize it's bad, but you know, I'm sorry or, like, I feel bad, but I don't have anywhere to take it.

And that's what this episode kind of leaves us with is, is that there's not action. And I'm wondering if there are ways in which you think the episode could have taken a more active stance and, of course, then that will likely parallel how, you know, white people can be more active.

Coya: I, you know, I think that one of the things that has been a constant in my life is kind of the white feminist who has a lot of guilt and doesn't know what to do but really, really wants to like acknowledge that there's something bad happened. And so, I feel like I see that represented here quite well. I see the end results of that represented here quite well, which is that again, in wrestling with that uncertainty and, you know, this sort of inability to reconcile to really, really, like you mentioned, nobody stopped and had a conversation with Hus. Nobody asked the question of like, "Why are you here?" you know? Versus, like you mentioned other characters like Oz, you know—multi-arc, got to understand, try to be understanding, we're going to build them a special little cage. Like, you know, like there was efforts to, like, really grapple with that character, and here there wasn't, right?

And I think it really touches a deeper, something that is really deep within white consciousness, white American, consciousness of, like, just a complete inability of knowing how to reconcile with the genocide of Native people. And I think there are lots of places you can look to see this occur. Like, even the museum of the Native American on the National Mall in DC, all their exhibits are contemporary Native stuff, and they never talk about the genocide in that whole museum.

Kristin: *What?*

Coya: Yeah, if you ever go to DC and go to that museum, there is no mention of the genocide, and that is a particular political, cultural choice, and like a societal amnesia or a desire to not talk about it. But if the National Museum and the Smithsonian can't do it, why would we expect *Buffy* to be any better?

Kristin: I wish sometimes that I were not as shocked by learning some of these things that I learn as I unpack my own whiteness and, you know, what has happened in this country and what happens in the world, because it's, like—all at one time, I want to not be shocked, but I am just floored. I'm floored.

Coya: Well, and, you know, I feel like this is part of this sort of intentional eraser of Native people and this desire to keep us in the past as interesting artifacts, right? Which is why you see the woman in the beginning of the episode, like, in a museum with the artifacts, you know? That is very much the way in which Native people—Like it's easier to see us as in the past, and it's hard to see us as contemporary. Because if you look at us as contemporary Native people who are still here, then you also have to acknowledge that it's a miracle we're still here, and we are constantly saying *we have to talk about the genocide*.

Like, we are not in the conditions that we are in because we wanted them or we created them. This was something that was done *to* us. And that's where you get into the idea of historical trauma. I feel like Hus would be like the manifestation of historical trauma, right? Cause he says, "I am here as vengeance," right? And so, in my world I'm like, "Yeah!" you know? Other people might be like, "This is a bad dude," and me, I'm kind of like "This guy makes sense."

Kristin: Yeah. Something that I would love to hear from you about too is just, you know, we're talking about some of the actual characters in the show, but obviously this is a television show and there are creators behind it. And Joss Whedon is a white, cis dude. And many of the people, if not all of the people at this point in time in that writers' room, were white people. And, I think, you know, white creators certainly have a responsibility to use our platforms to elevate the voices of people who have less of a platform than we do. But I'm wondering if you have thoughts on how that can be done more responsibly?

Coya: Well, you know, it's hard because, again, I give them credit for even trying, because I think, oftentimes, because it was complex and it was a little nuance more than I often see in other arenas around Native stuff, especially when it's not created by Native people. And so, in that sense, I'll give them their due around that. But, I think what you are witnessing is very much a white lens on the California missions and very much a California take on it. And to the extent that,

like, in the end, you know, again, the lack of complex, the lack of engagement with that character, but also in the end, the decision that like, "Oh, we're just going to kill him, and then we're going to express our guilt about the killing of them again." So, everything to me about that screams: this is what it looks like when white people write about Native people from a really limited knowledge base.

Kristin: Right, which I think is points to send the direction of the thing that white creators can do to be responsible is *bring in* people of color, bring in Indigenous people, bring in queer people, bring in trans people, bring in disabled people. If that is the storyline that you're writing, then involve those actual human beings in the creation of those stories so that it is more nuanced, it is more truthful, and it is, uh, less with that lens that we see this episode in.

Coya: Yeah, and maybe with a hint of compassion, you know? Nowhere in this episode, or at least from the parts that I reviewed, is there like any sort of attempt to really, sort of, have some compassion for this vengeful spirit and to try to sort of engage. And, again, I go back to, like, I think a lot about trauma and historical trauma and what does it mean to heal. And I think that part of what we see here is the trauma of a people, and rather than heal it or try to engage in it, you see them just do what has always been done—just like try to kill it or make it disappear.

Kristin: Is there anything that you want to talk about before we wrap up today? Something that I didn't ask or bring up?

Coya: No, no. I'm just, I'm excited to, like, be in the middle of this particular Venn diagram for this particular conversation.

Kristin: I can't tell you how thrilled I am that Jenny and I both are to have your voice in this episode of the podcast. It's just really powerful to hear from you and to have been given the opportunity to have a conversation around some of these things with you. So, thank you so much for your time and for sharing all of this with all of us.

Coya: Yeah, absolutely. Again, thanks for the invitation, and I really love talking about this, so thanks.

[CHIME]

Jenny: Wow, thank you so much to Coya for taking the time to talk to us. That was—I feel like I learned *so much*.

Kristin: Yeah, same. Coya, thank you. And all of you should definitely follow Coya and Coya's work. She's on Twitter @coyahope, C-O-Y-A-H-O-P-E, on Twitter, and

you can find out a lot more about the work that she does and just tap into an incredible, incredible resource. It was such a pleasure to speak with her and I hope to have her back to talk even more cause it was really, really rad.

I also want to mention that I did another interview with somebody named Yirssi. Yirssi works at Race Forward in New York City. She's a two-time immigrant, born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Spain before she moved to the US. We had a really wonderful conversation about this episode, but when we found Coya, we prioritized that conversation.

And in the episode, we're going to put the conversation that I had with Yirssi up on Patreon. That's for everybody. It's for free. You don't have to be a patron; you can just find it on our Patreon page. So that'll be up now, and we're really hoping, and I think we will achieve this goal, to have Yirssi in another episode in the future, because it was phenomenal. She's phenomenal.

Jenny: As the objective third party, who was not part of the conversation but who has heard the conversation, I want to highly recommend to everybody that you all listen to it. It is really fantastic.

Kristin: Thanks, Jenny.

Jenny: Yeah.

Kristin: All right, so let's get back into the episode. Okay, so Willow—

Jenny: Is detailing some atrocities, as she calls it, and it is of the ears being removed, of people being hanged, all the stuff that we've already seen—

Kristin: Imprisonment, forced labor...

Jenny: Right, herded into the mission and exposed to diseases. Now, can you get in any other way other than through sexual transmission?

Kristin: Why are you asking me? I don't know.

Jenny: I'm asking, like, the world. I didn't mean like, I need an answer from you, Kristin Russo. I'm just saying like, huh. That one stuck out to me. Smallpox, malaria—okay. But syphilis? It's like an all-star special reunion tour of some of the greatest diseases to ever take the stage. [Kristin laughs]

Kristin: So, everyone's beginning to fight, like your standard family holiday, right?

Jenny: Yeah, very Thanksgiving. Giles and Willow are having the imperialism versus white liberal people argument, of course.

Kristin: "Maybe we should be helping him." Uh, you know, "bringing the atrocities to light," says Willow. I mean, we're talking about Buffy has like the embodiment of white guilt, but really it's Willow who's the embodiment of white guilt in this episode, where she's just like, we have to do something. What do we do? This is bad. That's the problem. Nobody ever has an actionable thing. And so, in the end, whatever, we'll get there. We'll get there. Uh, Angel—not terribly stealthy.

Jenny: I think he's lost his edge.

Kristin: I think he's lost his edge [laughing]. Oh, it's good, it's good, it's good.

Jenny: And then Ander and Zanaya, of course—Xander and Anya show up, and everyone's like, "Wow, Xander, you look terrible," except for Buffy, who's like, "You didn't bring rolls?" It's pretty tight.

Kristin: But Buffy has a— Fuck, I mean, she's mission driven, just said that last week.

Jenny: Capricorn in action.

Kristin: Yes. She just needs to have her goddamned Thanksgiving fucking dinner. Then Xander makes a comment about vengeance demons and, like, "Obviously we kill vengeance demons" to Anya being like, "Um, excuse me. But a demon has to do what a demon has to!"

Jenny: They're fighting, and then Willow and Giles flare back up, and Buffy keeps escaping to baste, escaping to add condensed milk, and then there's one more knock at the door.

Kristin: Knock, knock, knock—vamp on fire. [laugh] Spike is here *begging* to be let in. "Please feed me. Please don't let me burn." And they're like, "What? Why would we ever?"

Jenny: And yet!

Kristin: And yet, well, because he's got information. He has information about the Initiative—

Jenny: It is wild that Buffy doesn't just, like, stake him immediately though. You gotta suspend your disbelief, but they've got something special.

Kristin: Yeah, they've had something special from the beginning.

Jenny: Oh yeah, remember when they all teamed up? Aww!

Kristin: Yeah. You know, they have like *feelings* past just bad vamp, good vamp.

Jenny: Then as soon as he gets inside, he goes from, like, throwing himself at their mercy to like, "Oh, the ropes are too tight; it pinches. I'm too hungry to remember everything. And I wouldn't say no to a Brandy."

Kristin: I don't remember if I talked about this in "The Initiative" last week, but I came across this quote that I'm going to just paraphrase from Joss, who basically was like, "Once Cordelia was gone, we really needed a character who was just going to be rude to people outright." [Jenny laughs] The quote was something like "The neighbor who's like, 'Can I have your sugar?' but then is also just rude to your face. Like, 'Can I borrow some sugar, but also fuck off.'" And so, we get more of that with Spike. I mean Spike is giving us a lot of what Cordelia would give us. I mean, apart from the entire monologue that he has about being an imperialist, but—

Jenny: Right, right, which he goes into right here, and he talks about conquering nations and like you can't like boohoo over— Like this is what Caesar did, and this is what Americans—*colonists*—did.

Kristin: This is what colonizers *do*.

Jenny: Right, and Xander's like, "Hey, this is like starting to like sound like something that makes sense." And Giles is, of course, like "I made a lot of these points earlier, but nobody wanted to listen to cool dad."

Kristin: Did you notice that it's all the men in the room who are agreeing with this?

Jenny: "Wow, yeah, what a great idea!" [mocking] Yeah, what the fuck is this? Like, why would you accept, like, in order to whatever—

Kristin: In order to get to X, you must destroy the entirety of Y. But you know what's interesting to me about this monologue though is it makes me feel a lot less gross than watching the performance of white guilt that we see in the episode, you know what I mean? And I don't know if that's a good feeling or a bad feeling I have. But Spike is, like, very direct about his intentionality. It's sort of how I feel about racism in general. It's like when you have people who are like, "I feel this way, and I am racist, and I am blah, blah, blah," it's like, you can see who that

person is, and they're less dangerous to me when you can see who they are and they're vocal about who they are, than when there are people who are like, "But I'm a good person and I just love everyone." To me that's more dangerous.

Jenny: Somebody who professes goodwill and thinks that exonerates them from having to examine *anything* going on inside themselves.

Kristin: Exactly. So, so for that, I am really here, I mean, and Spikes monologue is a brilliant monologue and delivered brilliantly by James Marsters, so I've got to give him a shout for that. But yeah, Spike also has a line, I don't know if it's part of the monologue or if it comes after the monologue, where he basically like— Willow's like "But, if we could just talk to him," and Spike is like, "You *exterminated* his race! What could you *possibly* say that would ever make him feel better?"

Jenny: Such a good question.

Kristin: Yes, like I'm *really* here for that, because it's true. It's like what are you going to do here? What are you going to say, Willow? What are you going to do? Um, so Spike briefly tells us what happens when vampires don't eat, which I was excited about, cause I just asked about it last episode. They just turn into little skeleton vampires.

Jenny: So then, Hus, along with, uh, his *squad*?

Kristin: Yes.

Jenny: Of spirits he has raised, shows up at Giles's house, and Buffy has a pretty unfortunate line, when she shouts at them: "You can have casinos now."

Kristin: Oh yeah. You know, I actually appreciated this line, because I felt like it called out the ridiculous. I feel that the purpose of this line—

Jenny: Was not to, like, express like,

Kristin: "But we gave you this thing." It's literally to express, like, are we fucking serious as people that were like, "Um, we took away your all of your land, we robbed you of your fucking—

Jenny: Genocide,

Kristin: "But here, have a casino!" You know, it's an unfortunate line that Buffy speaks, but in the context of the show, I was here for.

Jenny: It's more of a call-out than a—

Kristin: Yeah, I think. So, I think that's why it was there. And so, we see a little bit of the siege.

Jenny: Spike gets arrowed, and he's like, "Hey!"

Kristin: Right, we didn't even mention that Spike is tied in a chair and just being so Spike while tied up, which now you know that when we post images and gifs of Spike tied up in a chair, well, we're starting here, you know what I mean? Starting here, starting now. So, we go to outside of the dean's house, because, of course, something we didn't mention is that they think that the next target is the dean, cause it's supposed to be somebody in a position of power. So, then we get Anya,

Jenny: With her pie line.

Kristin: Yeah, with her pie line, like really crushing on the dean's wife, and then meeting Angel for the first time!

Jenny: Oh yeah!

Kristin: "He's large and glowery, isn't he?" she says with her sexy eyes. [laughs]

Jenny: And then is it Xander who was also like, "Are you evil again?" [laughs]

Kristin: Yes, and Angel so irritated. Like, "Oh, I'm never going to shake this..."

Jenny: "I haven't been evil for a long time, guys!" [imitating Angel] Then, [laughs] in an act of petty crime, Angel breaks some bike locks with his bare hands so that,

Kristin: So that we get this beautiful scene of like *ET*, or really probably *Stranger Things* is the most recent incarnation of kids on bikes saving the day. And we learn the reason that they're getting on those bikes is because, of course, they've put it all together. A warrior, you know, Hus is a warrior, and so for *him* he's going to want to kill the warrior—who is the slayer.

Jenny: Right, Buffy in some position of power.

Kristin: So, Scoobys on bikes. This is really fun. I really like this. I like them on bikes, racing up to the house, and then I want to just point something out. I never see anything. I always read like flubs or like, "Oh, you could see this in the scene or like this in the shot." I never see it. *I saw it in this scene.*

Jenny: What'd you see? What'd you see?

Kristin: When we go back to the siege, which first of all, Angel calls Giles, and Giles is like, "That was just somebody." Like, everybody needs to get better at lying. There's a scene where all of the Chumash spirits are jumping through the glass, you know, and this glass breaks and this glass breaks, and I think it's like two Chumash spirits after Hus comes in—you can see like eight sets of hands *holding* the wall while the person jumps through the window. And so, I was really excited cause I saw it. Nobody even told me, I just saw it. I like rewind it, and was like I think I just saw a bunch of hands.

Jenny: Congratulations.

Kristin: Yes, go back if you want to see that. You're welcome that I have the eyes of a tiger.

Jenny: *Uhhhhh* [skeptically].

Kristin: Cats have good vision, don't they? No? Okay.

Jenny: So, the Scoobys roll back up, and they're trying to help out fighting these dudes that will not die because they are spirit-based, we presume. Also, doesn't Giles have neighbors? There is, like, a full-fledged rock 'em, sock 'em—

Kristin: But they're in Sunnydale! Just another day.

Jenny: Yeah. That's true, everyone's like. "Go indoors; I hear a supernatural rumble outside."

Kristin: I'm telling you, the best business to be in, in Sunnydale is glass replacement.

Jenny: Yeah, totally.

Kristin: Those guys are making so much money replacing windows, constantly. Uh, there's a great moment where Angel comes over and snaps the neck of one of the spirits, and Anya looks at Willow and is like, "What is he like when he *is* evil?" [laughs] Giles I believe maybe gets knocked out?

Jenny: Dude, he's getting his head smashed against the wall repeatedly.

Kristin: So are we counting it as a knock-out?

Jenny: We don't see him knocked out, so I don't think we can count it.

Kristin: Then we get this contrast of Spike coming out of this monologue that, you know, he's delivered so eloquently, whatever. And then he just is like "A bear."

[Clip from episodes plays]

Spike: A bear! You made a bear!

Buffy: I didn't mean to.

Spike: Undo it! Undo it!

Kristin: Just scared shitless of this bear.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kristin: Which is really funny, cause why would he be scared of a bear? Like what's the bear going to do to him? The bear can't stake him or set him on fire.

Jenny: Yeah, maybe he's just got deep-rooted, like maybe that's some of the humanity that's left in him: bear fear.

Kristin: Maybe Spike had a run-in with a bear before he got sired.

Jenny: Could be. Also, if the bear bites his entire head off, decapitation is a—

Kristin: Oh, right. That's right. Somebody's got decapitated with a cymbal back in Season 1. I remember that cause it's a lyric. Cool.

Jenny: We've got Xander throwing dinner rolls at the bear.

Kristin: Yes, which is great. Like really great. And then, Buffy realizes that the Chumash knife is the thing that can hurt Hus. And she kills him.

Jenny: And we're supposed to be like, hooray?

Kristin: Right? And that's the thing, is that this is where the episode takes a turn that is hard to stay on board with. Because we've had this conflict, we've been set up with this conflict, white guilt, and the extermination of a race, and blah, blah, blah. And then, the end result is kind of just, like, well we have to do this thing, and it's kill or be killed, so we have to do this thing. Not that it would have been like the perfect episode if it had taken a turn after this, and it was, like, they brought to

light the Chumash people and what actually happened to them, and the cultural center redid their exhibit, and whatever. But that could have been like *one* way that, yeah, we're not gonna fix it, but at least we're not just going to repeat it and leave it here.

And maybe there was some like subtlety that was trying, and we've talked about this in this podcast before, like this is not the place for subtle writing, because you're not going to have the majority of your audience watch this and pick up anything from it, but like, "Oh, okay. And then they all had Thanksgiving dinner, and then it was fine."

Jenny: And Xander's syphilis is clearing right up!

Kristin: Yeah, and they do like a little unpacking of like everything that happened.

Jenny: Willow says she's disappointed in herself because, like, just a few minutes of conflict and she—

Kristin: And she wanted, or aimed, to kill.

Jenny: Right, right, right.

Kristin: And Giles, to be fair, I mean, I do understand Giles's a point of like, well you were in conflict and when your body is in conflict, it's fight or flight. You're not like really reasoning through your politics at that moment, which is a fair point. But, it ends on this comedy beat. And I'm here for the comedy beat, if it wasn't for—

Jenny: Wish we could have had something a little more substantial *before* the comedy beat.

Kristin: Yes, *something*. And we didn't. And that's, I think, why this episode is as controversial as it is. If it intended to unpack something, I do not feel that it really did. I mean, like we said at the beginning, it's not an episode of *Friends* where we're all just having turkey. Like, it did call out the fact that like this holiday is connected to literally us coming here and just taking over an entire culture and being like, "Hey, fuck off. You can have a casino and we're gonna eat turkey to celebrate." And that's really fucked up.

And so, I want to give the episode and the writing and the *intentionality*, right? A lot of the work that I do, I talk about the difference between intention and impact. And I think some of the intentionality here was to bring light to something that I think deserves to have a lot of light brought to it. You know, there's still people out

there that think Christopher Columbus was a great guy, and it's important that we bring to light that that is not the case at all.

Jenny: But you don't get points if you run the football to the middle of the field. You have to get it all the way to the end zone.

Kristin: And so, I think that we both wish, and I think probably anybody listening to this wishes, that this had been carried a little bit further. Also, nice football metaphor. [laughing]

Jenny: Just a little football analogy for Thanksgiving, no big deal! Just tossing the old pigskin around.

Kristin: But, I do want to at least give a little nod to the fact that we made it through the whole episode with everybody keeping the secret that Angel wasn't there, Angel wasn't there, Angel wasn't there.

Jenny: And then Xander... [laughing]

Kristin: And then Xander was like, "Yeah, it is like the gang's all together, especially with Angel being here." And we end with this classic—I mean, this is, like, one of *the* most classic shots in the series of everybody. It's like Buffy POV and everybody just looks at her. And then the episode just ends, like, kind of deadpan.

So, I would like to encourage emails from you all on this episode. Jenny and I tried to be as responsible as we can when it comes to unpacking really big issues around race and sexism and all sorts of things. And this episode in particular, you know, at the end of the day, we are two white ladies,

Jenny: Just waiting to be called in.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah, 100%. And so, we mentioned this at the top of the episode, but we will be doing a mailbag episode for everyone—a public, free, open-source mailbag episode. And so, you know, we want you to write to us about a variety of things, but please write to us about your thoughts on this episode and also our handling of the discussion, because it would be great to sort of bring some more voices into the mix, as well. Bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com is how you do that. So, Jenny, I think we should probably get a little sexy.

Jenny: Let's do it!

[SEXUAL TENSION AWARD jingle plays]
Sexual tension award!

Jenny: Yes, yes, yes. The time has come once again to discuss any and all tensions of the sexual nature. From our last episode, Season 4, Episode 7, "The Initiative," wow, we had a broad span. There was, you know, abstract concepts. There was a mechanical item in the mix. There was a fantastical beast...

Kristin: Tell us who won!

Jenny: Yes, yes, yes. Well, Buffy in the fro-yo machine, were in fourth place with 13%. Boooo!

Kristin: Well, I mean...

Jenny: Then, in second place with 26% of the vote, we had a Gander, Jander? Jander and a sense of purpose. Nice work, boys. Mmm second place, 28% of the vote: Harmony and her unicorn poster. I'm sorry, Kristin.

Kristin: Boo! Boo!

Jenny: But I think you'll just be thrilled to hear that in very first place, with 33% of the vote, we have Willow and the death of love.

Kristin: Okay, fine. But in my heart, Harmony and the unicorn get it. And also, I want to say there were many, many write-ins for Giles and the flare gun, and we apologize for our oversight there.

Jenny: Mmm! A gross oversight, here at the department of sexual tension. [Kristin laughs] We sincerely apologize for any and all inconvenience this has caused.

Kristin: So, let's get to this week's nominees, shall we?

Jenny: Well, well, well, there's one person who will definitely win! [Kristin laughs] Half of every nomination for this episode has one person in common, and that person is Anya. We've got Anya and Xander digging! We've got Anya and ritual sacrifice! We've got Anya and dying together! And we've got Anya and the word "girlfriend!"

Kristin: Ooh, that's a good one.

Jenny: How will you choose? I do not know, but please exercise your right to vote in this beautiful democracy. We will have the poll up on Twitter for *one week*. We are @bufferingcast, and we want to hear from *you*. Thank you.

Kristin: Anya, congratulations,

Jenny: In advance.

Kristin: In advance on your win. So, here we are on the other side of Sexual Tension, and we hope that you enjoyed our discussion of “Pangs.” We hope that we were responsible and did right by you all with this episode. I'm glad that we had a chance to unpack some of it.

Jenny: Yeah. And I'm glad that it's over. [Kristin laughs] Good, now more than ever, gravy. Um, I'm Jenny Owen Youngs.

Kristin: You are Jenny Owen Youngs.

Jenny: And when I'm not watching *Buffy* and making this podcast with Kristin, I am making songs, and you can learn more about me and hear some of those songs at jennyowenyongs.com, and you can give me a shout on Twitter, whenever you please, @jennyowenyongs.

Kristin: I am Kristin Russo. And when I'm not talking about *Buffy* and imperialism, I am trying to help LGBTQ people and their families. You can find more about me at kristinnoeline.com, that's K-R-I-S-T-I-N-N-O-E-L-I-N-E, and that's also my Twitter and Instagram handles. And you should also check out *My Kid Is Gay*, a resource that I run for parents and families and educators of LGBTQ people. It's really a great resource for *anyone* to learn about these things. So go on over there, check that stuff out.

Jenny: *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* is on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @bufferingcast, and you can send us emails about anything, especially for our upcoming mailbag episode, at bufferingthevampireslayer@gmail.com.

Kristin: Hell yes. Also, you can support our work, keep us chugging right along over here, [Jenny laughs] by going to iTunes. You like that? Is that a funny joke?

Jenny: It just made me think of like chugging beer. I don't know why.

Kristin: You can keep us chugging beer—

Jenny: Chugging gravy.

Kristin: By heading on over to iTunes and rating and reviewing the show. You can buy some sweet, sweet merch. We have a brand-new fuckin' shirt [singing]. It's the fucking ale wife sitting on the back of a demon. It says “Support your local alewife,”

and it rules [still singing], and you should get it. Isabella Rotman designed it, the infamous designer of Smash the Demon Lizard Patriarchy is back again bringing us an alewife shirt inspired by "Beer Bad" and Heather Hogan. Gift upon gifts, so you can find that at bufferingthevampireslayer.com and going to "Store."

You can also, of course, join us in our Patreon family. The Patreon link is also on that aforementioned website, and you can join us at the dollar, \$5, \$10, or now \$25 level. You can get exclusive merch, you can get the songs in advance, you can get a family, which is what we all have over there.

Jenny: Oh I was like, *whoa*, oh okay, I got it.

Kristin: At the \$50 level, you'll get a family! But, no, you can join our family. I think it is a family over there. Any level joins the secret Facebook group, and it's really a beautiful community, beautiful family over here.

Jenny: Truly. Let's instead of howling like wolves, let's howl like coyotes this time, in honor of Hus.

Kristin: Coyotes, okay, yes very distinguishable.

Jenny: Yes, coyotes are, like, very high-pitched.

Kristin: Oh!

Jenny: Remember how creepy they are?

Kristin: Kinda.

Jenny: Maybe let's just be wolves. It's fine. Everybody Google, "coyotes howling." It's terrifying. Till next time,

Together: Awooooo!

[Standing Rock elder Phyllis Young's speech plays]

We have survived incredible odds. You must know that we are Sitting Bull's people. You must know who we are. We survived Wounded Knee, a massacre. We are survivors. We are fighters. And we're protectors of our land.

So it's nothing for you to come and say we want to do this. We want to be friends with you. Was very astute for you to go around the Northern

boundary of Standing Rock as we see it in modern times. Those are ancestral lands. Fifty yards, a hundred miles north is treaty territory. So you are bound by the laws of this country to adhere to those laws that are federal laws for the protection of our people.

So we are not stupid people. We are not ignorant people. Do not underestimate the people of Standing Rock. We know what's going on, and we know what belongs to us, and we know what we have to keep for our children and our grandchildren.

You mentioned nothing about the water. You don't want to infringe on Native lands, but our water is our single, last property that we have for our people. And water is life: Mni Wiconi. You as a human being cannot drink oil. You need the water to survive. 75% of our body is water. We believe in the natural systems that we have. We have fought for that. We have sacrificed for it, and we're still waiting for the compensation for the building of the dams. We are still on the construction of those dams: \$339 million. That's probably a drop in the bucket for your oil company.

We are owners of 13% of the hydropower on that river. How do you separate it? How are you going to separate the oil from the water when it's contaminated? How are you going to do that? Only the creator can do that. Maybe in your high technology you think you can, but this is our property. This is our homeland, and we are protected by statute, and we will do whatever we have to do to stop this pipeline, as we do 55 other pipelines proposed in North Dakota. Dakota. North Dakota. [Lakota language] Dakota. I'm Dakota. Dakota means "friend and ally."

This is Dakota territory. This is treaty territory. This is where you agreed not to come into my territory. We signed a treaty of peace that you would not come here, so we have put on our best. We will put our best warriors in the front. We are the vanguard. We are Hunkpapa Lakota. That means "the horn of the buffalo." That's who we are, we are the protectors of our nation of Oceti Sakowin, the Seven Council Fires. Know who we are.

We will put forward our young people, our young lawyers who understand the weasel words now of the English language, who know that one word can mean seven things. We understand the fork tongue that our grandfathers talked about. We know about talking about both sides of your mouth, smiling with one side of your face. We know all the tricks of the Wasi'chu world. Our young people have mastered it. I have mastered your language. I can speak eloquently in English language. My grandmother taught me, but I also know the genetic psyche, and I also have the collective memory of the damages

that have occurred to my people, and I will *never* submit to any pipeline to go through my homeland. [Lakota language]