

## Buffering the Vampire Slayer

### 0.27: A Return

[CHIME]

**Jenny:** Hey Scoobies! Hello.

**Kristin:** Oh my gosh, hello. Hi! Hi, Jenny

**Jenny:** You might remember us? I'm Jenny.

**Kristin:** I'm Kristin. And... I said hello to you, but you know you left me hanging over here —

**Jenny:** Well, hello. Hellooooo! Hello.

**Kristin:** HI. So, it's been a minute. And the math — the hellmath — there is, like, a minute equals a month... um, maybe even a little longer than that, that we've been out of your ears. We took this time — and I am sure that many of you already know this — but we took this time off because we were specifically examining how the work that we do *here* at Buffering can be better structured so that it is supporting and uplifting our Black, our Indigenous and our POC listenership.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Hell yeah.

**Kristin:** First things first, because we do have a good amount we want to share with you today — but before we do that we want to speak directly to our Black, our Indigenous, and our POC listenership and say that we're sorry for harm we have allowed to happen in our shared community spaces. We are sorry for the many times

we have neglected BIPOC voices and experiences in our conversations here in the podcast. And, we are also sorry for the loss of comforting content here in our feed during our hiatus.

**Jenny:** Yeah, and as we continue through this message today, you're gonna hear us sharing information and sometimes we are going to be reading. You know, it's really important with what we're talking about to deeply consider language, you know, these are very nuanced and critical topics — racism, white privilege, and white supremacy — it's very serious. So, don't be alarmed! We are not robots. We just want very much to be clear in our language.

**Kristin:** Yeah. You know we — Jenny and I — are learning in this space and we're people who, like Jenny said... we talk off script. We don't script our episodes. But here, in this episode, and probably in future episodes there will be moments that are scripted and also moments where we say to you very honestly, "We are going to engage in this but we might mess up. We might fuck up, and we're doing our best to learn in real time, to talk in real time. But, if you hear us reading today or in the future, it is exactly what Jenny said: it is us trying to have the respect that is owed to anti-racist topics, especially when spoken about by two white creators.

**Jenny:** You might be wondering what we've been up to.

**Kristin:** Mhm.

**Jenny:** Let me illuminate for you that we've hired consultants, community members, and pop culture experts to help us begin work on restructuring the podcast to have an anti-racist base and to bring the work of becoming and staying anti-racist into our community as a whole.

One of our goals is to undo some of the erasure that we have contributed to the Buffyverse and to begin to make amends and reparations moving forward. This is exciting and challenging work and the goal of improving our community spaces will require an ongoing commitment.

**Kristin:** Yeah and this work, and the commitment to it, it starts with us — with Jenny and I. And, in our own lives, we are examining the ways we have already failed BIPOC communities, we are looking more closely at how white supremacist structures have informed the way we intake the world around us and the way that we show up as individuals and as creators. We're gonna talk more about this in future episodes, but in addition to the commitments we are making here today, Jenny and I have been talking to each other about the environments where we were raised. Both of us went to schools that were predominantly white; that we had white teachers for nearly our entire history of education; the job opportunities that have been afforded to us because of the fact that we are white, and on and on. We really want to delve into that more because the way that those experiences frame how we take in *everything* including Buffy the Vampire Slayer is really important.

We're also learning how to better listen, how to step back more often, and how to hold ourselves more accountable. You are going to hear more about those processes, and more about our personal histories, as we move forward.

**Jenny:** Before we tell you more about returning to the podcast space, we want to expand out on some of the changes we are committing to making here — and all of these commitments, as they shift and grow, can also be found at [bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting](http://bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting)

If you wanna know, if you want to remind yourself what we're up to — it's there for you.

Starting today, we will be opening up our Patreon-only community to Black and Indigenous listeners at no cost in order to increase the perspectives in those spaces and help bring in more listeners who may be living with economic disparities in their day to day lives as a means of reparations. Some of you are already intimately familiar with the concept and application of reparations, and others may hear that word here, in the context of a Buffy the Vampire Slayer podcast, and wonder how it applies — how it could possibly apply — to a space like ours. We are creators in a shared community space, and we view our work as a microcosm of the larger world — what we do here, no matter how large or small the scale, is impacted by structures of white supremacy and influenced by our own lived experience as white creators. It also makes an impact in the world around us. If you are someone who wants to know more about the concept and application of reparations, we've added links to important articles for you over on that landing page: [bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting](https://bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting)

**Kristin:** We are also going to be working with the current moderators in our Patreon Facebook group and other community spaces to restructure the way that mods are selected and oriented. Our focus here in this restructuring is to lessen harm in those community spaces and to also be more prepared for ways to address harms when they happen. One of our additional commitments in those spaces is ensuring that our senior mods in those spaces have pre-existing experience with anti-racist work.

We're also increasing the number of BIPOC voices in both the Buffering and Angel On Top universes on an ongoing and regular basis — Black, Indigenous, and POC voices and perspectives are immeasurably valuable to our collective experience of Buffy, of Buffering and, by extension, to the way in which we apply those conversations and texts to the world around us. It is important that we honor the value of those voices and give space to them as we move forward — and you're going to be seeing those changes unfold over the next few episodes and definitely into the sixth season over here.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. We are working with BIPOC creators directly, with a focus on Black and Indigenous POC creators, to curate and produce episodes specific to race in the Buffy & Angelverse. Before we return on July 15th with our episodic conversation about S5E18: Intervention, we will be releasing an episode — [laughs] a *really* amazing episode — featuring LaToya Ferguson, Alanna Bennett, and Ira Madison III in an over-arching conversation on the treatment of race in the Buffy & Angelverse as one of our first actions toward reparations. Uh, the thing about that episode is *fascinating* and really, just like, offers so much perspective that I didn't have before, but it's also so fucking funny because LaToya, Alanna, and Ira are all hilarious and amazing.

**Kristin:** Fucking dream team. Truly, the dream team over there in that episode. I can't, I'm so — I'm so excited for everyone to hear their conversation.

**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. Buckle up, okay? [both laugh] Yes.

We know that we've missed and neglected many important moments in our five-season journey through Buffy and this episode will be the first in an ongoing series featuring many different BIPOC voices to continue these reparations. We know, of course, that as two white cis women we will never have the full scope of understanding and perspective that BIPOC creators do, which is why our voices are not gonna be present in this Wednesday's episode, and our commitment to being listeners alongside the larger Buffering community begins here. That episode will be released this Wednesday, July 8th, and we are so, so excited for you guys to hear this conversation. So great.

**Kristin:** So excited. Um, and you know to this end — just in the past week, we've seen Joss Whedon, who you may have heard of, being called out for being abusive and unprofessional on the set of the Justice League, as well as perpetuating racism within the film itself. When Joss was brought in to take the place of the original director, Zach Snyder, he removed all 4 supporting characters of color and also removed large

amounts of Cyborg's storyline. Cyborg was played by Black actor Ray Fisher. These actions, paired with Ray Fisher very recently calling out unacceptable on set behavior shows a consistent pattern of unexamined behavior that perpetuates white supremacy culture. It's asking us to more deeply examine the ways in which we may not be able to see the racism and see the harm in media because it's literally woven into the fabric of the lore. It also calls us to consider how BIPOC viewers and listeners feel watching racist plot threads, racist monsters of the week, or even racist fashion choices be overlooked or blatantly ignored.

**Jenny:** Also, starting this month we are going to be hosting and facilitating group discussions on the topic of becoming anti-racist. We have over 300 of you signed up already to join us in that effort and our hope is to become a legion of Slayers who can go out into the world and dust some racist structures.

**Kristin:** Fuck yeah.

**Jenny:** We are also creating a digital library of anti-racist websites, reading lists, and social media accounts to follow to supplement the facilitated groups and for general perusal. Once again, you can learn more about these efforts, and also sign up for our reading + discussion group at [bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting](https://bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting)

Kristin: This is just the start, and we're committing to all of these things and also to be accountable, to be transparent, as we move forward. We've built out a feedback form that is primarily for our BIPOC listenership to voice concerns as this work continues — that form can be found at that website that we've talked about a few times, [/justkeepfighting](https://bufferingthevampireslayer.com/justkeepfighting). The form will be monitored by Jenny and I as well as a POC consultant who will be working with us to help in the receiving and implementation of this feedback. Working with a POC consultant is not intended to defer our responsibility or accountability, it's intended to create a safer space for our BIPOC listenership to

access with their concerns.

**Jenny:** And hey, hello. We also know these changes might be causing you to have some very big feelings. Maybe you're wondering why Black and Indigenous listeners will get free access to bonus materials that you pay for; maybe you are feeling that you've already *done* the work to be aware of white privilege; maybe you're a Scooby of Color and you are bracing for the aforementioned big feelings to come your way; maybe you're feeling overwhelmed or ashamed about the possibility that you've been being racist without knowing it. All of those are all valid feelings and we are hopeful that the resources we've already built out and are continuing to expand will help us navigate them together.

**Kristin:** I don't know if you've heard of Sunnydale? Have you heard of Sunnydale?

**Jenny:** Yeeessss.

**Kristin:** You have! Oh this is great I am so glad —

**Jenny:** It's a beautiful town in Northern California.

**Kristin:** Yes, nothing ever, EVER happens that is bad in Sunnydale. Listen. [laughs] In Sunnydale, vampires and demons are running up and down every single alleyway, there was a nightclub for minors that also was frequented by, like school librarians?! Kids would just straight up go missing — a band of high school students ran around town all night wielding magic and swords and the high school sat on the actual HELLMOUTH. But no one — or virtually no one — seemed to notice. Most of Sunnydale just accepted the weird occurrences, the implausible experiences. Even Joyce knew, deep down, that Buffy was up to something, but it was easier to just ignore

the uncomfortable truth. It wasn't until graduation that the whole town was forced to really reckon with the ugly underpinnings of Sunnydale.

The United States of America? Is fucking Sunnydale. Wild, terrible things go on everyday and we have been socialized to explain them away or to not even see them at all. The white cis heteropatriarchy — Jenny you're gonna have to expand the jingle.  
[laughs]

**Jenny:** [laughs] It's gonna be a long-ass jingle.

**Kristin:** [laughs] The white cis heteropatriarchy imposed by colonialism *is* the Watcher's Council. Forever setting arbitrary rules that have harmed vulnerable populations for centuries - and those vulnerable populations and a few allies were the only ones fighting and dying. Finally, the world is waking up. Finally the world is saying enough is enough. Like the Scoobies, a coalition of different people have come together to defy the status quo and destroy their local Hellmouths around the world. But none of the work in real life or Sunnydale comes easy. Buffy had to learn to trust and share her power, Willow had to stop fearing her power, Faith had to learn to stop internalizing the way others saw her (except for Joyce because she always loved Faith... but that's another story for another day). Dawn had to learn to work within the limitations of what she had. And for our community here, it is reckoning with the harm that has been caused, it's examining the ways in which we benefit or are disadvantaged because of race and maybe the scariest and most painful thing of all: it's learning to divest from the harmful structure of white supremacy that's been woven into every facet of the United States of America and the rest of the colonized world.

**Jenny:** Phew.

**Kristin:** Right?



**Jenny:** We commit to prioritizing the BIPOC community here at Buffering the Vampire Slayer in all the ways we know how, and all the ways we are committed to learning.

We stand with you in the fight to take down the biggest of the Big Bads.

And we'll end here by saying -- "From now on, every scooby in the world who might be a Slayer, will be a Slayer. Every one of you who could have the power, will have the power. Can stand up, will stand up. Slayers, every one of us. Make your choice. Are you ready to be strong?"

[CHIME]