

## Season 1, Episode 8:

# Taylor Swift x Intimate Publics with Margaret H. Willison

### SPEAKERS

Margaret H. Willison, Marcelle Kosman, Hannah McGregor

**[Material Girls Theme plays: "Shopping Mall" by Jay Arner and Jessica Delisle]**

**Marcelle Kosman** 00:29

Hello and welcome to Material Girls, a scholarly podcast about popular culture. I'm Marcelle Kosman.

**Hannah McGregor** 00:36

And I'm Hannah McGregor, and today we are joined by longtime friend of the pod, cultural critic, and Material Girl in her own right, Margaret H. Willison. Margaret, pronouns she/her, is a culture writer and podcaster. You may have heard her on NPR's Pop Culture Happy Hour, or know her from her newsletter, Two Bossy Dames. Welcome, Margaret.

**Margaret H. Willison** 01:01

Hi, I'm so excited to be here. And thank you so much for honoring the "H" middle initial, you know, not every podcast does. And it's a very important part of my identity.

**Marcelle Kosman** 01:03

I love your identity. And I'm so glad that you're here with us!

**Margaret H. Willison** 01:10

I'm very excited.

**Marcelle Kosman** 01:13

Okay, you guys, we're here to talk about Taylor Swift.

**Hannah McGregor** 01:22

Finally.

**Marcelle Kosman** 01:23

It's been broiling.

**Margaret H. Willison 01:24**

People have been clamoring.

**Marcelle Kosman 01:25**

They have. Give the people what they want is what we always say. So, we are so lucky to have you on because you, as a cultural critic have, in fact, written about Taylor Swift.

**Margaret H. Willison 01:38**

I have. I also just recently taught a class on Taylor Swift and confessional writing for, like, our friendly organization, Not Sorry Productions.

**Marcelle Kosman 01:50**

You are essentially a Taylor Swift expert.

**Margaret H. Willison 01:52**

You know, it really depends on how you define that. I've been on, for example, a bunch of Pop Culture Happy Hour episodes about Taylor. And on one of them, I indicated that I was not aware that there was a special significance to track five on all of her albums. And I did get at least one tweet saying, how could you possibly have someone who doesn't know the significance of track five on to speak about Taylor Swift? They're obviously not qualified. **[Hannah laughs]** So what I would say is as with any topic, as academics, I'm sure you understand this, right, that there is a degree of expertise that passes as substantive for the general population that within a dedicated field is not held to be... And I would say that that is the amount of expertise I have on Taylor Swift. **[Hannah laughs]**

**Marcelle Kosman 02:43**

I love it. Well, then in that case, let's just we're just going to start, we're just going to start gentle. I just want to ask, I want to ask the two of you which Taylor Swift album you have a particular relationship to?

**Margaret H. Willison 02:57**

The album that I have listened to the most and love most is definitely *folklore*. But for the class that I just ran, we listened to the entire catalog. So now I have a very different emotional relationship to all of the albums in her catalog. And a whole new perspective on how much internalized misogyny was influencing my understanding of her early work that we can dig into or not as, as the moment presents itself. But *1989* was the album where I consciously, like I stopped fighting the fact that I liked her.

**Marcelle Kosman** 03:34

Nice.

**Margaret H. Willison** 03:34

That was my turning point album.

**Marcelle Kosman** 03:35

Yeah. How about you, Hannah?

**Hannah McGregor** 03:37

Literally, identical answer, like comically identical answer. *1989* is the first album that I like, downloaded the entire thing and actually listened to it dedicatedly rather than just catching her singles, and *folklore* is the album I've listened to the most.

**Marcelle Kosman** 03:53

Mhm, yeah, I have so much in common with the two of you. So clearly, there's something happening here. So.

**Margaret H. Willison** 04:00

Well, I have theories about that.

**Hannah McGregor** 04:02

You've come to the right place!

**Marcelle Kosman** 04:04

Listen, I can't wait to just talk at you for the next two hours about my relationship to Taylor Swift and I wrote the script. So that's basically all we're doing. So let's just jump into the next segment and I'll get started. Okay?

**Hannah McGregor** 04:17

Sounds good.

**Margaret H. Willison** 04:18

Excellent.

**[Upbeat interlude music plays]**

**Hannah McGregor** 04:21

Okay, normally in our "Why This, Why Now" segment we ask the ruthlessly objective question, what are or were the historical ideological and material conditions for our object of study to become Zeitgeisty, but in this episode, we're going to make a bit of space for our feelings because they might just be a key ingredient to those material conditions.

**Marcelle Kosman** 04:47

So like I said, I'm just gonna talk at you for the next two hours about me being a Taylor Swift convert... **[Margaret laughs]**

**Hannah McGregor** 04:53

I'm going to put my mic away. Ha ha! Never!

**Marcelle Kosman** 04:57

Margaret, you, I think, really identified a central point to my, what I will call-

**Margaret H. Willison** 05:07

Your thesis.

**Marcelle Kosman** 05:08

No, not we're not, oh god, Margaret. We're not there, girl. Oh no.

**Hannah McGregor** 05:11

You think we're ready for a thesis?

**Marcelle Kosman** 05:08

No., No, no, there's so many, I have so many more feelings to tell you about, like you described internalized misogyny as being one of the reasons why you didn't allow yourself to like Taylor Swift's music and I described myself as having a militant disinterest. Like I took a great deal of pleasure in being publicly dis-interested in Taylor Swift and what she was producing. Whereas after *folklore*, I did this deep dive, like gradually, very gradually, mind you, but deep dive into her catalog, and would constantly be texting my sister in law who is nine years younger than me, and has always loved Taylor Swift and be like, hey, hey, Jill, have you heard *Red*? It's like, really good! And she'd be like, yeah, Marcelle. I know. I know it's good. Hey, Hey, Jill. Have you heard *Reputation*? That album slaps. She'd be like, Yeah, I know. I know. **[Hannah laughs]**

**Hannah McGregor** 06:12

Oh, my God.

**Marcelle Kosman** 06:13

So Margaret, since you are our guest, cultural critic. Why don't Hannah and I ask you just some, like, helpful primary questions to like, presumably, we're not the only people who have had this sort of like, strange relationship with Taylor Swift. I imagine lots of our listeners have too, so...

**Margaret H. Willison** 06:32

I suspect so. And there's so much lore.

**Hannah McGregor** 06:33

Okay, well, let's get into it. And we're gonna start with a big one, which is, can you talk to us a little bit about the parasocial relationship that fans have with Taylor Swift, you know, particularly around that very carefully managed image she has?

**Margaret H. Willison** 06:51

So what I would say about this parasocial relationship, the intensity, and what I think is unique about it, is the sense of reciprocity, right? Because you know, how I would distinguish it from like, the relationship Beyonce has with her fans, is it's like, Beyonce is like a deity, who has graced us with her presence. And like if mother says that we are to wear silver to all of the shows in September for her birthday month, despite the fact that it's like three days before we're going to some of the shows. And we've probably spent six months planning our outfits, like mother asked for silver, so she will get silver.

And to be clear, I think that the Swift fans would be just as eager to follow a directive from their dear leader, but that the dynamic is different. And the way that I described it on Pop Culture Happy Hour is that when you go to an Eras concert, it is like you are going to see your best friend get married, right? It's this huge event, right? But there is a sense of pride and mutuality and mutual understanding that completely informs why it's so important and so special.

**Hannah McGregor** 08:04

So instead of a dress code, it's friendship bracelets.

**Margaret H. Willison** 08:07

I mean, right! And that's not even something it's not like at any point, Taylor Swift was like, everybody make friendship bracelets, right? It was just like, there's a straight line and one song. And because you read these the way that you would read, like, you know, if your best friend was like, Hey, can you look at these text exchanges for me? And you'd be like, Yes, I can do a PhD doctoral dissertation on these text exchanges. Because I understand it's important. That is the

way that Taylor's missives are received by her audience. And that has been a construction of a number of years. But I would say that one of the big factors is just like, this is an audience that's literally grown up with her. She has been making music in the public eye since the release of her self titled debut in 2006, when she would have been 17. That's the beautiful thing about one of the albums being named *1989*. So as I always know, the year she was born, very helpful for orienting yourself. **[Hannah laughs]**

**Marcelle Kosman** 09:09

Okay, so Margaret, let's talk about the albums. Okay? So, at this time of recording, Taylor Swift has released 13 studio albums since 2006. And her 14th, which you pointed out in our episode script comments, her 14th album, a Taylor's version of *1989* is going to be released in late October. So okay, so for the uninitiated, can you talk about what these Taylor's versions are? Why is Taylor Swift re-recording and re-releasing some of her older albums?

**Margaret H. Willison** 09:51

So, as is often the case with tay-lore, there is Taylor's version of why this is happening. **[Hannah laughs]** Then there's, the sort of, the more of the drier version, that's a little bit more about business. And one of the one of the like, brilliant capitalist things about tay-lore is that there is no separation between emotional drive and sort of capitalist drive. Right? So in Taylor's version of why she has to make these things, she left her old record label right after the release of 2017's *Reputation*, and moved to a new label. Because she signed that deal when she was, again 15, it was structured the way most deals for debut musicians are, which is a lot of money and care is being put into this person's work. But that means that the work that they're producing, instead of it being something that they get to own outright and sort of carry away with them wherever they want to go, belongs to the record label.

So the master recordings for all of her songs for the first six albums belong to her record label. And, as is the case with many artists, like famously, Prince had wild disputes about this, and that's why he became the artist formerly known as Prince, Taylor wanted to be able to buy back her masters. Reportedly, Scott Borchetta, the head of Big Machine Records would not sell them to her. That's Taylor's version. The record says maybe he tried to but it like wasn't on terms that she found favorable and so she declined. And then back to Taylor's version, in a betrayal layered upon perfidy he sold the record label and her masters to a man named Scooter Braun-

**Marcelle Kosman** 11:47

Never trust a Scooter.

**Margaret H. Willison** 11:48

Do never trust a Scooter, it is like a bad name. No offense to any Scooters listening.

**Hannah McGregor** 11:52

A little offense to any Scooters listening, unless you are a non binary and chose the name Scooter in which case that slaps.

**Margaret H. Willison** 12:00

This is exactly what I was thinking, and did it in honor of the Muppet! The muppet is good.

**Marcelle Kosman** 12:05

So true! I love Scooter. Only good one.

**Margaret H. Willison** 12:09

Either way, Scooter Braun. Bad news. We only know his name because Taylor Swift took against him so severely, but he is or was at that time a music manager and just sort of like a like a like a like a mogul, aspiring mogul. And he's specifically behind the career of one Justin Bieber. In tay-lore, Justin Bieber is a problematic figure. Oh, he's also attached to some small degree, he was managing Kanye West at a time when he and Taylor were really at odds with each other.

**Hannah McGregor** 12:43

Oh my god, I totally forgot about "I'm gonna let you finish." Wow. Wooo...

**Margaret H. Willison** 12:47

Scooter Braun basically committed the sin of being attached to a number of figures who Taylor felt had bullied her at various points in her career, namely, Justin, Kanye and Kanye's wife, Kim Kardashian/

**Hannah McGregor** 13:02

Oh my God, and now he owns her masters!

**Margaret H. Willison** 13:05

Right. And this is an emotionally unacceptable situation. And that is what necessitated Taylor Swift creating the three Taylor's versions that we have, the fourth that is coming out, and the two that presumably will follow. She is creating recordings as similar as possible to the masters that she owns herself so that she can functionally replace the use of those masters in everyone's life with audio recording she has complete control over, and over which she from which she makes exclusive money, rather than this money going, again, in a perfidy of epic proportions to this villainous man, Scooter Braun, who's since sold it to another company.

But either way, that's, that's the version and it is the situation where again, there's just perfect union between Taylor's emotional needs, and what will benefit Taylor Swift Incorporated. And those unions are so complete that I think it often makes it seem suspicious, but I will argue that I think it is sincere.

**Hannah McGregor** 14:23

Okay, this, I think will be a quick one. Can you just tell us what the Eras tour is and what Eras refers to?

**Margaret H. Willison** 14:31

Sure. So the Eras tour is the world tour that Taylor Swift is currently in the midst of and it is meant to pay tribute to sort of each of the album's she's recorded over the entirety of her career, and the different sort of era of her like style and self presentation and artistic output that that coheres into, and this is inspired I heard very simply by the fact that between the last time she was able to tour for *Reputation* around 2017, or 2018, and now 2023, when this tour began, she released four completely original albums. And two and a half Taylor's versions-

**Hannah McGregor** 15:22

She writes so fast!

**Margaret H. Willison** 15:24

She's so prolific. And that's been, that's been true of her since she was a teenager. Like, you can hear her co writers from that time period speak to that their primary role was just editing her, not actually creating. But I say two and a half Taylor's versions because she released *Speak Now*, Taylor's version, which is the rerelease of her third album, the first one, she wrote completely by herself, in the middle of her North American Eras tour.

**Hannah McGregor** 15:56

So I'm just gonna round up and say, three, I'm just gonna round up and say she released three Taylor's versions.

**Margaret H. Willison** 16:01

That's completely fair. But still, that's seven albums of new material, to some extent, that had never been played in a stadium, that her audience had never gotten to sing along to. And, you know, it's suggested itself and it's been very successful.

**Marcelle Kosman** 16:18



Okay, so Margaret you started touching on this already in this idea of, of attempting to regain control of her first six studio albums. Right? So re-recording in order to gain control of her masters. You mentioned that it is both emotional as well as financial for her. But, can you talk a little bit about like, what it means for listeners, too?

**Margaret H. Willison 16:43**

What Taylor Swift has done with her career that's so remarkable, right? She has created art that is both just like broadly accessible, and sort of irresistibly delightful, right, that'll bring outsiders in, right, but she has also created art that is sometimes a little bit more alienating, and also just like, very, very rewarding of deep engagement. And, in the case of her surprise releases during the pandemic, and then the onset of the Taylor's version project. She's just kind of a genius about her moment in time. And I don't know how consciously she understood how valuable creating these very sort of interior focused indie aesthetic albums, in the midst of everyone being locked into their homes was going to be, but for obvious reasons, they were like, really great. I'm just gonna lie inside with my headphones albums.

**Hannah McGregor 17:49**

Can I read this quote from Swift when she released *folklore*, because it's so pertinent to what you are saying, so she wrote in the announcement, quote, "most of the things I had planned, the summer didn't end up happening. But there is something I hadn't planned on that did happen. And that thing is my eighth studio album, *folklore*. Surprise! Before this year, I probably would have over thought when to release this music at the quote unquote, perfect time. But the times we're living in keep reminding me that nothing is guaranteed." End quote. And that's fascinating, because it is a narrative about not releasing things at the perfect time, that frames this release as the perfect time.

**Margaret H. Willison 18:35**

And she lives at the intersection of these kinds of contradictions all of the time. Like she's the most powerful pop star in the world, arguably, but also, she is kind of like, she's a permanent underdog, right? And like, somehow, she really does manage to embody sincerely, both of those identities and you're like, but how? And then you're like, I don't know, she just does it.

**[Marcelle laughs]** But here with those albums, I think that you do see that this is also a natural outgrowth of her artistic trajectory. Like I think she's maturing a ton as an artist. Between the release of these albums, and her previous world tour, she created a documentary, where you really do get a sense of behind the scenes, just how much her life up to that point has been geared towards receiving public approval. And you also are glimpsing the fact that she's realized that that's a scam, that's a scam for women. That being a woman is the opposite of eating a Reese's cup. There's no right way to do it. **[Hannah laughs]**

**Hannah McGregor** 19:44

I'm really interested in both sort of, Margaret, I hope, I hope in the final segment when we, you know, really get into the meat of the songs, meat? Gross.

**Marcelle Kosman** 19:57

The protein.

**Hannah McGregor** 19:58

I'm interested in sort of what you're saying about internalized misogyny and not liking Swift's early work, and also what brought me like, what, what made me really love her is her more political feminist work, like I kind of fell in love with her when she wrote a murder ballad. So can you talk about that shift a little bit?

**Margaret H. Willison** 20:22

Yeah. So I think what you see, most prominently in *folklore* and *evermore*, the two albums that she released, surprise, during the pandemic, is that where with an album like *Reputation*, there's this very clear divide between like, these are the radio singles. And this is how I'm presenting myself and my story in those. And then these are the album tracks, or the late release singles. And this is where I'm hiding my secret, vulnerable, complex heart, right?

These albums, when she wrote and released them, I don't think she was thinking about how they were going to play in a stadium. I don't think she was thinking about what the press narrative was going to be about them, I think she got to be in a much more unformed creative space. And that these are all sort of soft underbelly. So what I'd say is that there's a complexity in those albums that's been present throughout her work in really meaningful ways. But instead of it being buried, where you had to go and find it, you had to care enough to look for it, it was right at the top. So there's that element.

And then I also think it's just a major evolution point for her as an artist. Up until this point, she was in brief relationships, and she was sort of happy to regurgitate parts of them in her art, and have that be part of her public image. And I think at this point, she's started realizing that is a fool's errand for one thing, and for another thing, she'd been in an ostensibly happy relationship for six years, that had stayed happy, in part because of how private she kept it. So I think that prompted her to branch out more and to write from a fictionalized place much more often and you see how rich a vein that is for her in those albums. And it means that she's writing something like "no body, no crime," where she, Taylor, truly even in her villain era. Her album,

her villain era anthem is “Look What You Made Me Do.” It's like, you did this! You did this to me.  
**[Hannah laughs]**

**Marcelle Kosman 22:27**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Margaret H. Willison 22:29**

So she couldn't write a murder ballad before that, because Taylor Swift, the construct, can't own that kind of mess. But because of this space, she gets to play around with fictional characters. It's like, narrator on “no body, no crime,” they can kill a man if they need to. Right? And I think that that's really spectacular. It also leads to her playing around a little bit more visibly with queer signifiers.

**Hannah McGregor 22:55**

Yeah, like Lavender Haze.

**Margaret H. Willison 22:57**

Yes. Which obviously I responded to a lot. And then like you say, on *Midnight's*, I think you can see, what does it look like when she's taking the things she's learned from the pandemic period, right, and reinterpreting them back in her role as self mythologizing. And I think the results are really interesting.

**Hannah McGregor 23:18**

I can't help but notice that we are really drawn to actually talking about the lyrics and content of her songs. So, Marcelle, is there some theory that might help explain why we are focusing so much more on content here than say how, like, music streaming has increased the importance of touring?

**Marcelle Kosman 23:42**

Yes, Hannah. Yes, there is.

**Hannah McGregor 23:45**

Oh my God, will you tell me about it?

**Marcelle Kosman 23:47**

Yeah, let's get into it in the next segment.

**[Upbeat interlude music plays]**

**Hannah McGregor** 23:54

Marcelle, I know you really want us to skip this “The theory we need” segment entirely and just collectively vibe to *evermore* but I actually really want to hear your thesis about Taylor Swift and not even you can base a thesis on vibes alone. **[Margaret laughs]**

**Marcelle Kosman** 24:13

You’re right, Hannah. I accept my limitations. But you know what I can base a thesis on? *The Female Complaint* by Lauren Berlant. Okay. Now, Hannah, I know for a fact that Lauren Berlant is one of your personal favorite critical and feminist theorists. And you brought up Berlant’s notions of what we’re going to talk about today, intimate publics, as well as cruel optimism, which we’re not going to talk about today, in our previous episode on the *Queer Eye* reboot. So would you be willing to remind our listeners what exactly Berlant means by intimate publics?

**Hannah McGregor** 24:54

Oh, absolutely. So, if you’ve already listened to our *Queer Eye* episode, you may remember In an intimate public is an example of what Michael Warner calls a discourse public. So that’s a group of strangers who become part of a community, specifically organized around texts and their circulation. And that’s texts in a very general sense. That may include, for example, songs, wink. So, while anyone can theoretically be part of a discourse public, intimate publics are specifically populated with people Berlant describes as non dominant people, especially though not exclusively women. If you are hearing this description of a discourse public right now and going wait, isn’t that just the thing I call being a fan of something? Yes, correct. These are fandoms. We’re talking about fandoms. For sure. We just call them discourse publics because we’re academics and we’re awful.

**Marcelle Kosman** 25:54

Michael Warner was never a fan of anything. **[Margaret laughs]**

**Hannah McGregor** 25:59

It’s how academics describe fandom because we don’t know how to, because we’re dead inside.

**Margaret H. Willison** 26:05

Well, you can’t admit that there’s joy in your work. It would delegitimize it.

**Hannah McGregor** 26:08

Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

**Marcelle Kosman** 26:08

Sorry, Hannah. Sorry. Go ahead.

**Hannah McGregor** 26:10

So here's how Berlant describes intimate publics in the preface to their book, *The Female Complaint*, quote, "an intimate public, whether linked to women or other non dominant people, flourishes as a porous, effective scene of identification among strangers, that promises a certain experience of belonging, and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline and discussion about how to live as an X." End quote.

**Marcelle Kosman** 26:43

That was perfect, Hannah, thank you so much. Okay, so there are a number of reasons why I think that Taylor Swift, the pop culture phenomenon, not the person, it's important we are now talking strictly about Taylor as the artist and not Taylor who had a red scarf one time. So the reasons why I think Taylor Swift, the pop culture phenomenon can be helpfully understood by diving into intimate publics is what Berlant calls, quote, unquote, "women's culture." So Lauren Berlant is not a biological essentialist. So the framing and discussion of women's culture is important. Margaret, would you do us the honor of please reading Berlant's description of what women's culture is?

**Margaret H. Willison** 27:35

I am honored with a "u" to be asked. Quote, "This women's culture is distinguished by a view that the people marked by femininity already have something in common, and are in need of a conversation that feels intimate, revelatory, and a relief, even when it is mediated by commodities. And even when its particular stories are about women who seem on the face of it vastly different from each other, and from any particular reader." End quote.

**Hannah McGregor** 28:10

Any particular reader (or listener)!

**Marcelle Kosman** 28:13

Or listener, yes. So Berlant further adds that, quote, "one may have chosen freely to identify as..." this is the "x" but for our purposes here, a woman, "...one may be marked by traditional taxonomies. Those details matter, but not to the general operation of the public sense that some qualities or experiences are held in common." End quote. So in other words, the texts that constitute so called women's culture, take for granted that the consumers quote, "already share a worldview and emotional knowledge that they have derived from a broadly common historical experience." End quote.

**Hannah McGregor** 28:57

Yeah, yeah, and this is really key. So for our purposes, Berlant is basically saying that consumers of women's culture are perceived as having a commonly lived history, and that the narratives and texts of women's culture are presumed to depict that history, while simultaneously, you know, they're claiming, like, we're just talking about what it's like to be a woman, but they're actually shaping narratives and conventions of what it means to be a woman. And the intimate publics that crop up around women's culture promise the consumers a better experience of social belonging by expressing these sensationalized and embodied experiences of living as women.

**Marcelle Kosman** 29:47

Mm hmm. Totally. Margaret, would you put this in the context of Taylor Swift for us?

**Margaret H. Willison** 29:53

Absolutely. In the context of Taylor Swift, we could say for example, that Women's culture presumes that all women know the experience of being in love. Swift songs, major texts of women's culture, depict being in love as tumultuous, devastating, thrilling, and risky, etc. Her music might reflect a listener's experience with love or romance. But more importantly, it tells listeners that tumultuous, devastating, thrilling and risky etc, is what they should expect being in love to feel like. We, consumers of Taylor Swift, take pleasure in the intimate public of her fandom, because being a woman is hard, but at least we have *Red* (Taylor's version) to help us get through our unhealthy relationships and inevitable breakups.

**Marcelle Kosman** 30:49

Okay, so Margaret, I admit, I wrote that, and I wrote it for you to say, because I wanted you to say it, I wanted to hear it from you. And I also want to hear what else this whole context might bring to mind. Is there anything you would add?

**Margaret H. Willison** 31:02

So the thing that I find sort of most interesting about putting Taylor Swift in conversation with this idea of intimate publics, and also with the way that intimate publics are both relational, and kind of dictatorial, is that what I think you see, as you trace the course of Taylor Swift's career is a growing awareness that she is the author of other people's experiences. And growing into that power, and embracing that power to create a vastly more complex understanding. I'm like, it's cute that you mentioned *Red* (Taylor's version), because I feel like that's the ultimate illustration of it.

That album is sort of where she starts to enter a period of real artistic maturity, I think, in the eyes of the world. And it is the final one she's doing, at least partly in the country music vein, before she switches over to being a popstar, which means that it's kind of the peak of emotional vulnerability, being a big part of how she is presenting herself to the outside world. And so on that we get the short four minute version of "All Too Well", which is a very good song in and of itself, about her relationship with Jake Gyllenhaal. But it is one that follows conventions, like much more closely, right, like it fits our expected narrative for what a song about, like an abruptly ended relationship, that should have been more looks like and is this very sort of beautiful, idealized picture of what young love is.

And what you see, with the Taylor's version, which is sort of, again, this is her in her artistic maturity, reclaiming the work of her youth, and taking full ownership of it, but also taking full ownership of those narratives, and getting to make them richer and more complex. And in that, you get the masterpiece that is the "All Too Well", (10 minute version). I would say that's an incredible example of how much more complicated she gets to make those stories. And what it looks like for her to be the known author of an intimate public, rather than sort of the unwitting perpetrator of one.

**Marcelle Kosman** 33:36

So that makes so much sense to me, because what Berlant is essentially saying here is that the power of the intimate public is that while assuming all quote unquote, women have these shared histories, shared experiences, shared lived histories, what's really powerful about the intimate public is that it takes the otherwise regular experience, the sort of sentimental, the average, the everyday, the not special, but it elevates it to something that is special, and that is general and that is real, while always still being specific and unique to the individual consumer. And so the idea that Taylor Swift is writing these experiences for people to have just makes so much sense that... It makes so much sense that she's able to take something as simple as a three month relationship, a three month relationship and turn it into a masterpiece, an emotionally poignant masterpiece.

**Hannah McGregor** 34:47

I'm convinced by both of you that Swifties are part of an intimate public, but I think there's more to unpack around what Berlant calls the female complaint, the title of the book.

**Marcelle Kosman** 34:59

Such a good point. Yes, you are so right, Hannah. We're barely scratching the surface. Margaret, could you do me a favor, please and read how Berlant themselves describes or summarizes the female complaint?

**Margaret H. Willison** 35:13

Absolutely, quote, “Women live for love and love is the gift that keeps on taking,” End quote. So in other words, sentimentality and complaint are two sides of the same coin?

**Marcelle Kosman** 35:27

Yes, I think so. And Berlant calls them quote, “two ends of this commercial convention, with feminism as a kind of nosy neighbor,” end quote, which I love. I include that because I love it. Hannah. Hannah, would you please tell us about the mode of complaint?

**Hannah McGregor** 35:47

Yeah, absolutely. I will. But I'm gonna warn you this is the last Berlant quote I'm gonna read.

**Margaret H. Willison** 35:54

Tough but fair.

**Marcelle Kosman** 35:55

Listeners, you're welcome to be relieved at this point. **[Hannah and Marcelle laugh]**

**Hannah McGregor** 36:00

Everybody, open up for the airplane. The airplane is a Berlant quote. Quote, “the mode of the female complaint foregrounds witnessing and explaining women's disappointment in the tenuous relation of romantic fantasy, to lived intimacy. Critical, they are also sentimental, and therefore ambivalent. The complaint genres of women's culture tend to foreground a view of power that blames flawed men and bad ideologies for women's intimate suffering, all the while maintaining some fidelity to the world of distinction and desire that produced such disappointment in the first place.” End quote. Marcelle, this is such a good explanation for the complaint that people have that Swift is constantly framing herself as the victim of bad romances.

**Marcelle Kosman** 36:58

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. We haven't really and probably don't have time to get into the apparently autobiographical meanings related to Swift's music on the whole, but it is, I think, worth bringing up here to stress that her success and popularity are not the result of telling listeners about her shitty boyfriend. Autobiography, a wonderful, wonderful field. It cannot account for the intensely intimate identification so many listeners have with her music because it's not about her. It's about the experience of being a woman. Secondly, the men in her songs, while



undeniably based on her exes, are not literally her exes. They are characters, they are the flawed men and bad ideologies!

**Hannah McGregor** 37:51

Bad ideologies! We can all agree bad ideologies are the real villain.

**Marcelle Kosman** 37:57

Man, you're so right. Listen, we have nothing left to say. Let's just vibe to *Lover*.

**Hannah McGregor** 38:03

No, Marcelle. No, I'm too jacked on scholarship for vibes! I need a thesis. And Marcelle, I need it to be so long!

**Marcelle Kosman** 38:14

I'm gonna give you the longest thesis, you won't even believe it. And it's not even based on all that much research. **[Marcelle laughs]** It's based on vibes.

**Margaret H. Willison** 38:25

I am so excited.

### **[Upbeat interlude music plays]**

**Hannah McGregor** 38:29

Okay, Marcelle, we are mere moments away from vibing to *Midnights* but first, because the segment is called "In this essay, I will," I am going to need to hear from you a sort of cogent, succinct thesis statement that summarizes the key takeaways, and the sort of overarching premise of the argument that you are making. Can you give me one of those?

**Marcelle Kosman** 39:00

I can give you cogent, I can't give you succinct, buckle up. **[Hannah laughs]** **[Marcelle clears her throat]** In 2019, Taylor Swift's rights to her own music became a matter of public conversation, unable to purchase her own masters from her former label, Big Machine, Swift has embarked on a project of reclaiming her catalog by re-recording her first six studio albums and releasing them as quote, "Taylor's versions" End quote. This project, a massive undertaking in its own right has had the side effect of bringing her earlier styles and sounds back into relevance, reminding fans and non fans alike of her generic and lyrical roots at a time when she was experimenting with her voice and generic breadth under contract with her new label, Republic records.

The global COVID 19 pandemic that wreaked havoc on all of us, prevented Swift from touring *Lover* her first new studio album with Republic. At a time when we were all struggling with an unknown future, plans indefinitely postponed, isolation, depression, etc. Swift surprised listeners with the sudden release of a brand new studio album *folklore*, an intimate, poignant soundtrack to pandemic life. A few months later, she did it again with *evermore*. The release of these unanticipated albums amplified the already intense parasocial relationship fans have with Swift. The album's felt like gifts, like reassurances from a friend. Moreover, their radical departure from the pop sounds that characterize *1989*, *Reputation*, and *Lover* demonstrated to not yet fans like you and me that Swift's song craft could not be pigeonholed.

By the time pandemic restrictions had relaxed enough to make planning a tour feasible, Swift had no less than six studio albums to tour; the aforementioned *Lover*, *folklore* and *evermore*, as well as *Fearless* (Taylor's version), *Red* (Taylor's version), and her 10th studio album, *Midnights*, a return to pop! Swift's Eras era is not only a celebration of femme culture broadly defined, it is supercharged with pent up intimacy, the multiple genres of identification that Swift's eras offers to fans, functions as reassurance that no matter which era speaks to you, your lived experience is legible, visible, identifiable by other Swifties even though as Berlant would say, your lived experience is quote, "not shared by many or any." End quote. In this essay, I will...

**Margaret H. Willison** 41:58

Wait. We have to talk about the 10 minute version of all too well. **[Hannah and Marcelle laugh]**  
Did I do that convincingly?

**Hannah McGregor** 42:08

Perfectly, perfectly. An urgent interruption. Marcelle, I love this thesis. Obviously. We're clearly caught in some sort of war of escalation. **[Marcelle laughs]** At some point, at some point, these thesis statements are going to be full 20 minute conference papers we just deliver in the middle of the podcast episode. That's fine. I feel like I am already satisfied by understanding that what drew me to Taylor Swift was ultimately her deploying her role as like, the poet laureate of the women's intimate public to actually expand the repertoire of experiences and affects that get to be part of that women's public, which is why I suddenly was like, Oh, I love her because now she has songs about being like a terrible, badly behaved feral murderer. And I'm like, at last I feel represented, because like, I'm not pining for Jake Gyllenhaal. I don't care that he kept her scarf. I'm indifferent to that experience. **[Hannah laughing]** But I am extremely interested in murder. **[Marcelle laughs]**

**Margaret H. Willison** 43:28

Yeah. Especially when it happens to deserving men.

**Hannah McGregor** 43:32

Yes, yeah. I'm satisfied. I have, you know, achieved intellectual completion. **[Marcelle laughs]**

**Margaret H. Willison** 43:38

Yeah, Hannah may not care about Taylor's relationship with Jake Gyllenhaal. But she doesn't speak for all of us. Because I deffo care.

**Hannah McGregor** 43:48

Yeah, I want to hear, I want to hear about what you love about the 10 minute version of "All Too Well."

**Marcelle Kosman** 43:55

This is the first and only significant song that I told Hannah that must be listened to as homework in preparation for this essay, but I gave everybody else like a big long list, and we haven't talked about any of them. And that's okay.

**Margaret H. Willison** 44:10

You know, you and me, Marcelle, we can get off line afterwards and just go ham.

**Hannah McGregor** 44:14

We've got half an hour left to record, just go ham for the next half hour.

**Margaret H. Willison** 44:18

You know, we'll figure it out. But specifically, this pair of songs, the original radio release, "All Too Well," from 2012 and the epic 2021 10 minute rereleased version, incidentally, the longest pop song to ever pop the Billboard Hot 100. And what is great about these is not only that they allow me to use the literal most academic term in my vocabulary, which is that the 10 minute version is a palimpsest.

**Hannah McGregor** 44:54

I was, oh my god, Margaret. You're in my head. I was like, is Margaret about to say that this is palimpsestic? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely.

**Margaret H. Willison** 45:01

Love to use an academic term that Microsoft Word for a very long time did not recognize as a word.

**Hannah McGregor** 45:06

Can we define palimpsest real quick?

**Margaret H. Willison** 45:08

Sure. So a palimpsest is specifically it is a piece of paper, where a multiple texts have kind of been written over one another with time, where the experience of it is not merely any one text, but it is this collective amalgamation, this accruing of meaning that has come from multiple meanings being layered over one another. Did I do well? Cause' I only have a Master's in library and information science. This is amateur level fancy speak.

**Hannah McGregor** 45:37

Parchment. Parchment used to be more expensive, and so people would scrape off or clean parchments and reuse them, but you can read the traces of what used to be on them. And so they, it's Yeah, yeah.

**Margaret H. Willison** 45:52

And in today's economy, relationships with Jake Gyllenhaal function the same way. **[Hannah laughs]** He just scraped the meaning right off them. And, and, and plaster new meaning on top of them. And that is the beautiful thing that Taylor Swift is done with the 10 minute version.

**Marcelle Kosman** 46:09

Okay. Let's talk lines. Right? So I have for us here, okay? Because, okay, okay, sorry. I'm excited. Okay.

**Margaret H. Willison** 46:19

Yeah, I'm excited too.

**Marcelle Kosman** 46:20

Because I promised listeners, or because I told listeners that it's not just Jake Gyllenhaal. It is Jake Gyllenhaal, a character. And the character represents a bad ex boyfriend who like, you know, strings you along, and then leaves your hanging-

**Hannah McGregor** 46:41

A bad ideology.

**Marcelle Kosman** 46:42

A bad ideology.

**Margaret H. Willison** 46:43

What I think is beautiful, both about the original version of the song, and then even more so about the 10 minute, is that if you listen to it, what it is about more than anything else is Taylor Swift's assertion that her subjective experience of this relationship has meaning and value. That she cannot be shamed out of the importance she ascribes to it, just because her partner is pretending it doesn't matter. And like you say, you hear that in a very real way in the short version and then you hear it in a much more complex and angry way in the 10 minute version.

**Marcelle Kosman** 47:18

That's right. I want to start with the original bridge. It's also the bridge in the 10 minute version but nevertheless, and I quote, "and you call me up again just to break me like a promise, so casually cruel in the name of being honest," and quote. **[A soundbite of the bridge from "All Too Well" plays]** I swear to God puts Shakespeare to shame, the finest rhyming couplet in the history of English literature. Okay, so we already know, listeners to the original song already know, man, there is something going on here where this guy is just making her feel like absolute garbage. And saying, I'm just being honest about it. Okay?

**Hannah McGregor** 48:16

Which is such a fuckin bold line too, in the midst of like, deeply confessional, songwriting. Right, Like the really fascinating thing. It's like, Oh, you are also doing something right now in the name of being honest. But the really crucial thing is that in the name of being honest, you are not being casually anything.

**Margaret H. Willison** 48:39

No, you are being calculatedly cruel, if anything.

**Hannah McGregor** 48:42

Calculatedly and lengthily cruel. Poetically, beautifully.

**Margaret H. Willison** 48:51

Yeah. irrefutably cruel. It's so beautiful. I, as a person who represses all of my aggression, God, it just thrills me to the core.

**Marcelle Kosman** 49:01

So our re-release provides us the listeners with additional context about this bad man, bad ideology, being particularly older than the speaker of the song and using that age difference, as an opportunity not only to humiliate her but also to place the responsibility of the relationship not working out on her. So we have the new lines, quote, "you said if we had been closer in age,

maybe it would have been fine and that made me want to die. The idea you had of me, who was she? A never needy, ever lovely jewel whose shine reflects on you, not weeping in a party bathroom, some actress asking me what happened. You. That's what happened. You." And the fucking punch line, quote and "I was never good at telling jokes, but the punch line goes, I'll get older but your lovers stay my age." I have chills!

**Margaret H. Willison 50:12**

I have goosebumps. [Hannah laughs] And what I love about what you've pulled out here, specifically, and the reason that I think this was worth interrupting your "In this essay I will," to discuss specifically about this song is the way that it encapsulates, I feel like, the turn that Taylor Swift has taken in her own writing life.

**Marcelle Kosman 50:35**

Say more, say more, say so much more.

**Margaret H. Willison 50:38**

I think as young women, as part of the intimate publics of young women, we are given lots of narratives about who we should be, how we should be. And they are not usually written by women. Right? They are, they are generally speaking, catering to the needs of the patriarchal. So it's all about patriarchal expectations. And what you don't realize when you are a young woman, and you're interacting with people who have more power over you, who are forwarding these narratives is that they're all fucking bunk.

Right? That they're garbage. And that it is this idea of basically like, we tell women and men in hetero relationships, that like, they should be able to get all of the good parts of being with a partner, without any of the work, without any of the care. Without any of that, we both instruct women that that's what they should present. And we tell men, that's what they should expect, right? And that's what you see so clearly in that second couplet, right? "The idea you had of me, who was she? A never needy, ever lovely jewel whose shine reflects on you," That is what all of us were sold. And for a long time, that is who Taylor Swift sold herself as.

**Hannah McGregor 51:56**

And of course, then received so much misogynist criticism for performing precisely the version of femininity, that every single message was telling her it was her job to perform.

**Margaret H. Willison 52:10**

And not just that, but for responsively, changing the version of femininity, based on feedback from the public, when the public was like, No, you're dating too many men, she's like, Okay, I'm

gonna stop dating men completely. And all you're gonna do with me socially is how I'm socializing with women. And then people were like you're only socializing with the wrong women. And this is obviously performative. And she's like, Okay, well, I guess I'm a villain now. So just, I can't do anything right. So I'm just evil, right?

And she was very much stuck in this feedback loop where she kept trying to meet unrealistic expectations, and not understanding the value of really anchoring herself in just like her own experience of the world. And what you see here is she's being like, fuck that noise. Right? She's not a never needy, ever lovely jewel, she is weeping in a party bathroom. And telling an actress the reason I'm crying in here is that dirtbag, that dirtbag right there. That's why I'm here. That's why this is happening to me. And I think it's meaningful to point out that she performed the entire 10 minute version of this on Saturday Night Live, which is like, when a musician is given the right to sort of define their own artistic trajectory and artistic vision, like Saturday Night Live, or an award show, those are the places you get to do it in a really public way. It's where you get to tell the people who don't care about you normally, this is what I'm about. And she performed this song, and you know what? She fucking crushed.

**Hannah McGregor** 53:40

I mean, that's what because she is impossibly permanently intertwined with, like, a public performance of femininity, that has made her successful, right, like she is a thin white blond cis woman. So there are lots of aspects of like, who she is and how she moves through the world that are, you know, performance or not performance, are just always going to sort of inherently frame who she is and the kinds of public she's capable of summoning into being and, you know, there's, there's, we simply can't get into why, for example, it would be so much harder for a Beyonce to create intimate publics, why the intimate public is particularly the work of white women. And why like we kind of see what happened when Lizzo tried to create an intimate public.

**Margaret H. Willison** 54:39

Meaningfully a white girl. Yeah, I do think her girlishness has been an essential part of why we let her be messy, and unfinished and imperfect in a way that we don't allow adult women for the most part, and certainly not adult Black women to be in public. And a willingness to be messy is kind of a central thing to that intimacy building. It's that willingness to be messy, right, that creates intimacy. And for better or for worse, it is that intimacy that fuels the vast capitalist machine that is Taylor Swift Inc, right? It's like, you know, that this new 10 minute version depicts reality in this richer, more complex way. And that's why you need it in five different colored vinyls. All with different collectible covers, right? Like you love me so much that you must demonstrate it by buying everything.

**Marcelle Kosman** 55:46

I do think it's I think it's worth noting that like, the distinction between Taylor Swift re-recording her entire albums, and not just re-recording some hits and making like a, like a, like a best of or, or Taylor's Greatest Hits or something like that, like the fact that she's not wrong, that fans will repurchase, fans who already had the Deluxe *1989* are clamoring to buy the Deluxe *1989* like sunset Moon edition, whatever it's gonna be. They're gonna buy it.

**Hannah McGregor** 56:31

And it's inextricable from the intimacy with which she not only invites you into her sort of autobiographical experiences via her song lyrics, but also the way that she invites fans into her fights with her labels. That then being a fan of Taylor Swift becomes not only vibing and identifying with her songs, but also like rebuying her albums when she asks you to do so.

**Marcelle Kosman** 57:01

We didn't, we didn't really have a chance to talk about the juxta-political but like Berlant talks specifically and this is the like feminism as the nosy neighbor kind of thing. Like, like, Berlant talks about women's culture and intimate publics as being juxta-political because they are not political in the same way that more hegemonic discourse publics are able to be political. And so I think that like Taylor Swift's very public beefs with her exes, and with her former record labels, and with people like Kanye West and Kim Kardashian, it exists outside of a kind of actual political framework, but it allows young femme women identified people to kind of play with feminism in a way that is like feminism light, does that make sense?

**Margaret H. Willison** 58:02

She's like the perfect Trojan horse. Right? She is garbed in the clothing of someone who conforms perfectly to patriarchal expectations. And, unfortunately, because those expectations are so garbage she has internally become the crone that we all are. And she is giving crone lessons to people still entrapped in the patriarchal thing. That said, they are very limited.

**Hannah McGregor** 58:30

Yeah, like a Trojan horse, but I'm not convinced there are soldiers inside the horse.

**Margaret H. Willison** 58:35

One of her strengths as an artist, and one of her shortcomings as an artist, is that she is phenomenally self righteous. **[Hannah laughs]** She has this incredibly rich experience of her own life. And I think she has a really, really, really, really, really limited ability to imagine anyone



else's. And I think in some ways, that's part of what makes her art so strong, because she has all of these sensory details that let us enter into those moments and really embody them.

**Hannah McGregor** 59:06

Yeah, she's got she is like a master of voice as, like, not just in the sense of like a singing voice, but the sense of like, having a narrative voice in her work that is evocative and specific.

**Margaret H. Willison** 59:19

And it does always mean that she is always focused on the ways that she is being harmed. And she is vastly less adept at understanding the ways that she is perpetuating harm, or understanding her capacity to be that and it's disappointing, and I do hope she matures out of it.

**Hannah McGregor** 59:38

I want to tell you guys about a lyric that I am completely obsessed with in the song "Hits Different." And the reason why I'm obsessed with this lyric is because I think that it is like self-parodic in a very sly and fun way. And it's a rare example of a song where she talks about herself as being an asshole. It's this very strange sort of rhyming couplet that doesn't quite become a rhyming, okay? It's four lines, I'm just gonna read them to you-

**Margaret H. Willison** 100:12

That won't put Shakespeare to shame.

**Hannah McGregor** 100:14

It will put Shakespeare to shame because it's so good. "I used to switch out these Kens, I just ghost. Rip the bandaid off and skip town like an asshole. Freedom felt like summer then on the coast, now the sun burns my heart and the sand hurts my feelings." The Lyric, the sand hurts my feelings, which is a failed rhyme like it anticipates, right? It's like ABA feelings. So it's a failed rhyme that instead allows her to insert this line that like, she's positioned herself as the asshole. And now she's like, No, no, no, but I'm the one who's being harmed. Remember? I'm always the one who's being harmed. I'm harmed so much that the sand hurt my feelings. And it's, it's so funny, but also, like, funny at the level of like, like, she knows, yeah, she knows she's totally aware of this persona that she has generated. And there's no outside to it. Because when you are an artist of this level of fame, there is no outside to your public persona. You simply can't escape it and create something that isn't in conversation with you as a public figure, because you've been a public figure your entire fucking adult life. Yeah. And so instead, all you can do is just continue to play in the space.

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:01:43

So I spoke earlier about the way that she is very consciously creating a publicly consumable narrative of who she is, and a private narrative of who she is that is for the people who truly engage. And what I would say is that leads to her picking garbage singles, by and large. That said, I think it's telling that with *Midnights*, one, the single that she picked happens to be one of my favorite songs on the album, and it is absolutely like, the most self lacerating song I think she's ever written.

**Hannah McGregor** 102:15

Which song?

**Marcelle Kosman** 1:02:17

Antihero. It's me.

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:02:20

It's me. Hi, I'm the problem. It's me. And it really is just unabashedly self critical. And it is one of the ones where like, you don't see her introducing somebody else into the space and saying that they are the problem. She's like, No, it's me. And my inability to stop engaging with what everyone thinks of me and stop reshaping myself to meet their expectations. Like that's the source of my misery. It isn't. It isn't Kanye West. It isn't Scooter Braun. It's me. Hi, I'm the problem. It's me. And I think that that's a very interesting step for her as an artist. And I'm really excited to see where she gets to grow from here, how she grows from here. Because I have real optimism about that.

**Marcelle Kosman** 1:03:06

I honestly cannot. And this is why I will never be as successful a pop star as Taylor Swift. I can't imagine-

**Hannah McGregor** 103:16

**[Hannah laughs]** Don't sell yourself short, Marcelle.

There's still time. I can't imagine following the Eras tour with anything other than retirement. Like this is like, she's peaked. But will she peak again? Will she further climb? And you know what? I do truly have faith that she will because she is extremely talented. Her songwriting skills are phenomenal. I'm constantly just like, oh! Songs that I've listened to 100 times surprise me every time. She's very, very good. She will, I'm sure, continue to grow. But like how? How can the Eras tour not end with retirement? Maybe it will.

**Hannah McGregor** 1:03:59

Rock opera.

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:04:01

I know she will grow artistically, I don't know if she will ever be as absolutely and unquestionably culturally dominant as she is in this moment right now. Right? Like, we're recording this right after a weekend where she appeared at a football game in America. And it's like, every single outlet is like, oh my god, Taylor Swift appeared at a football game. This is huge news. To the extent that Spotify created a new playlist for me, and it's like a "tailgate party," and it's a picture of Taylor Swift at the game. And it's like, we're in our football era. **[Hannah and Marcelle laugh]** And it's just like, Spotify doesn't do things like that if they aren't gonna make money off of it. I hope for her sake as an individual, that she stops being this pervasive, but I think she is going to continue to grow and succeed artistically. I'm very excited to see what that looks like.

**Hannah McGregor** 1:05:03

Yeah, and no matter what her next era is as a musician, it's going to be really interesting to see the role that she continues to play or doesn't continue to play in terms of the shaping of this thing we call women's culture. Because whether or not she stays at the center of it as a figure, or somebody else steps into her place, that's going to tell us a lot about the conversations we're having about gender and feminism, the nosy neighbor.

### **[Upbeat interlude music plays]**

*Material Girls* is a *Witch, Please* Production, and is distributed by Acast. You can find the rest of our episodes and our other podcasts on Acast or at [ohwitchplease.ca](http://ohwitchplease.ca). Also on the website, all kinds of tools to foster your participation in the *Material Girls* intimate public: Including a link to subscribe to our Substack which we are now releasing twice a month. You can also find our transcripts, our merch, there's some really hot new merch coming, keep your eye on this space, our reading lists and of course, most importantly, a link to our Patreon which is [patreon.com/ohwitchplease](https://patreon.com/ohwitchplease), where you can find so so much bonus content, an embarrassment of riches. Margaret, where can the listeners find more of you?

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:06:32

So where I spend the most time is on Instagram @MrsFridayNext. I write as part of the writing team that produces the Two Bossy Dames newsletter @twobossydames, that's [substack.com](http://substack.com).

**Marcelle Kosman** 1:06:46

And hey, maybe you're looking to increase your parasocial relationship with us. We're on Instagram and threads and possibly another platform depending on whether or not there's a paywall @ohwitchplease and we're on tiktok @ohwitchpleasepod. It's called "Shopping Mall" by Auto Syndicate—develop an intimate public by checking them out on band camp! And to ensure you can cultivate your parasocial circle, I'm going to thank everyone by name on the Witch, Please Productions team. Thanks to our digital content coordinator Gaby lori **[Sound effect of BOING]**, our social media manager and marketing designer Zoe Mix **[Sound effect of record player reversing]**, our sound engineer Erik Magnus **[Sound effect of chimes]**, and our executive producer Hannah Rehak, aka COACH **[Sound effect of sports whistle blowing]**!

**Hannah McGregor** 1:07:44

And at the end of every episode, we will continue to thank everyone who has joined our Patreon or boosted their tier to help make our work possible. Our enormous gratitude goes out this episode to:

Meredith B.  
Valeriusjka?

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:08:01

I would say... Valeriusjka?

**Hannah McGregor** 1:08:08

I'm pretty sure that this person has been like, OG Witch, Please fan so we've probably got this pronunciation before. Anyway...

Zoe M. S.  
Emily.  
Ruby O  
Julia M.  
Anna M.  
Andrea P.  
Stephanie T, who is p.s. a former graduate student of mine.

Ah, thanks, everyone.

**Marcelle Kosman** 1:08:35

We'll be back next episode to tackle yet another piece of pop culture through a whole new theoretical lens. But until then...

**Margaret H. Willison** 1:08:43

Later reput-tators!

**[*Material Girls* Theme plays: "Shopping Mall" by Jay Arner and Jessica Delisle]**