



Nerdin' About Season 3 Bonus

Nerdin' About Podcast Transcript, Season 3 Episode Bonus

Michael

Hey everyone and welcome to Nerdin About I'm Space Michael. And with me not so much as always, these days as she's been working pretty hard on her other amazing podcast, Nice Genes. That is the rat detective Dr. Kaylee Byers.

Kaylee

Oh, it's so good to see you. I have missed your face. So, it's nice that I get to see your face.

Michael

Yeah, this is fun. We wrapped up our season. How has it been three seasons?

Kaylee

I know, it's a lot. I'm impressed by past us.

Michael

I certainly am as well, because if I think back to like the beginning of this whole situation that we're in and all that time that has passed and thinking about what we're doing now. I know, a lot of people been asking "When's Nerd Nite coming back?", and the honest answer is, "I don't know." Right? We're still sort of in this.

Kaylee

I know, it is wild to think of how this really started as a way to get through the pandemic and to be over two years later and be like, "No, we're still in it, and Nerd Nite still isn't happening." I know I am desperately missing Nerd Nite. We probably want it to come back more than anyone, but it just still feels it's maybe not right to put everyone in a room and have everyone breathe on each other.

Michael

There's definitely lots of opportunities for people to go see events. I'm going to see Kraftwerk tonight, and I'm wearing a mask, but I mean, it's going to be amazing. Story Collider, I know is going to be doing an event in the fall here in Vancouver. So, there are events that are going to be out there, there's not going to be as many events you know. So, if you're feeling comfortable, I definitely encourage people to go see events. At some point, we'll come back at some point, I figure at least to do one show, we just don't know when.

Kaylee

For sure. I mean, and I think part of our problem is when we get back together, I want to breathe on everyone. I just want to exhale really deeply on every single person who comes. So, it's really a me thing.



Michael

Yeah, we want it to get very messy with drinks flowing. (Laughs) So for this episode we don't have a special guest, but we do have lots of clips from our past guests of this past season. We had lots of extra content in our conversations, so many amazing guests that we had this season. I thought that we could maybe focus on some of those bits of the conversation that we pulled out on some variety of different themes. The first one that I want to focus on is from Aaron Fairweather, we talked about ants in a wonderful conversation with our friend Aaron. One thing that came up was this comparison of humans and ants. Kaylee, you're the rat detective. Is it a thing when you're talking about rats to compare rat behavior to human behavior?

Kaylee

I think it's really natural for almost all species to try to, like, anthropomorphize them a little bit, or like, give them human like characteristics, or to see ourselves or aspects of human nature in them. I think it's especially common with rats, because they literally are our neighbours. We might live with more rats sometimes than we do other people. So, I think it's really natural for us to do that, but whether or not those things we project on them are true, is another issue. I mean, I think sometimes we just take our own baggage and put it on rats. Like you're dirty and let me not clean up my garbage at all. So, I think it's totally natural, but maybe not always correct.

Michael

Aaron certainly felt that way, as well. So, let's hear from them about how they feel about comparing ants to humans.

Aaron

So, I think I typically like to draw them just because it makes it more personable to a lot of people, and it makes people light up and be like, "Wow, they're more similar to us than I ever realized." We get to see them as a single species entity as a group. There is this huge speciation event happening where there are these different species that are very different from one another. They have these very specific roles that they have evolved into over time rather than learned or they are cognizant of, right? They don't have value judgement on these things. Whereas we do, and if we put the behaviours in, oh, this is just something that all species will do over time as they become intelligent. It's like no, these ants are very different from us, they just happen to have these very similar convergent behaviours, but they aren't cognizant of what they mean, or how they're impacting other species. They're just trying to survive.

Michael

So if you didn't hear Aaron's [episode](#), you should definitely go back and check out that full episode on ants. You know, Kaylee, when I'm talking about space, I think it's something that I actually am actively interested in, thinking about philosophy and space. It's not anthropomorphizing space, but it is humans going out into space and the concepts of space. So, for me, personally, I like to make those connections. But I think maybe when it comes to biology and animals that have their own systems in place, that can be challenging.



Kaylee

Yeah, for sure. I mean, they've got enough stuff to deal with, on their own, let's not give them our stuff to deal with too, you know?

Michael

Which brings up the next point of interdisciplinary work. When I'm at the Space Centre, we often try to bring in different perspectives from totally different fields. Kaylee, this is something that in academia is something that people want to do. I know you are certainly very interested in doing this. How does academia approach interdisciplinary work?

Kaylee

I did a PhD, literally in Interdisciplinary Studies. That is what my degree is. I remember when I was just getting started, a lot of people were like, "Oh, do you think that that's a good idea? Are interdisciplinary studies really a thing?" It's been quite incredible over the last seven or eight years to watch such a shift in how people think about interdisciplinary work in science and seeing the real value of it. Interdisciplinary work allows you to both ask and answer questions in really novel ways, and usually very collaboratively in a way that you wouldn't necessarily be able to do if you were just restricted to your one field, right? So that's something that Lauren Eckert brings up in our [conversation](#) with her about the value of that interdisciplinary work. So, let's hear what Lauren has to say.

Lauren

Along with pressure for interdisciplinary research, there needs to be better support structures for interdisciplinary research, and we're not quite there yet. I think one perspective that informs my thinking on interdisciplinary research is that I've had the great fortune to collaborate with Indigenous scholars and leaders, and Indigenous knowledge systems have often have sort of an inherently more holistic viewpoints on knowing, especially in the context of the natural environment that has informed the way I have grown as a scholar to ask questions about things like human wildlife relationships. I think the academy is expanding to understand the value of that more holistic thinking, but we don't have the structures in place yet to really be moving towards well supported interdisciplinary scholars or knowledge bridging exercises, but hopefully, we'll get there.

Kaylee

So, one of the main things that I'm hearing in what Lauren is talking about is how science is interdisciplinary, but it's also important that it is holistic. It goes even just beyond the disciplines in which we are thinking about things and talking about them to also think about, who's doing the work? Who's collaborating together? How do we make sure everybody's voice is at the table? Is that something that you're seeing more and more in your field to Michael?



Michael

Oh, absolutely. The museum industry has been going through this process it feels like at a snail's pace, certainly, from my perspective, like, it's not going as quickly as I would like it. There's lots of voices within the museum community that are certainly pushing it. There's a push and pull because museums, like academia, are rooted in very old systems in place that are being funded through old systems. So, all of the structure comes back to society as a whole. It's sometimes frustrating to see the speed of progress, but it's still progress.

Kaylee

Yeah.

Michael

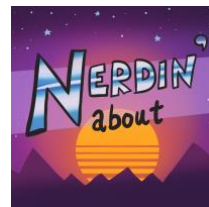
So, our next clip is going to come from an episode with [Dr. Alex Moore](#). We talked about mangroves and all sorts of fun things in bogs and swampy lands. I learned a lot in that episode. Also Dr. Alex Moore is actively involved in equity, diversity and inclusion. I find it's a really interesting approach that they take and they're actually just coming out here to the west coast to the University of British Columbia as a new professor. So, Alex gives their approach to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Alex

I mean, it's not going to feel very different than what I've already done or what I have been doing. I think that incorporating issues around diversity, equity and inclusion have been top of my list in everything that I do, and I expect to continue to do that moving forward. So, as you can think about these positions as being broken down between, your teaching, and your research and mentorship and service, which is amorphous and means a lot, I expect myself and expect those that I collaborate with and work with to really value these issues as much as they value the work that they do in their research. So, my plan is really to take all of these histories and different ways of approaching problems and ways to engage various stakeholders. Then incorporate all that into my teaching and incorporate that into all of my research, and have all of my students think about those important questions along with whatever other research questions they might be interested in. It's just going to be a part of everything. It's a tricky question, right? Because it's not really how will it be a part of things because it is sort of inherently already a part of everything that I do.

Kaylee

In that clip, you heard Dr. Moore talking about equity, diversity, inclusion, and how it really is integrated in all aspects of their work. If you listen to our podcast, you're going to know that we also care a lot about this, EDI is definitely a recurring theme on this podcast. It's something that I think we've been thinking a lot about, and have certainly been integrating into Nerd Nite, over the last, oh my gosh, how long have we been doing this thing, who even knows now, for a while. It's such an important conversation, and definitely, a lot of our own work has been because of incredible community members who have either provided advice or recommendations or raised



concerns around ways to make Nerd Nite a more inclusive space. So that's something we're really grateful to everyone who's a part of this community for being a community with us and sharing their perspectives and thoughts to make sure that we are creating safe spaces.

Michael

I think as science communicators, it certainly was something that I started to think about that being a science communicator didn't just mean that I put on the hat of a science communicator when I walked through the doors of my job. It is now something that is part of my life. This relates to creating inclusive spaces, because it's not just creating inclusive spaces in your place of work, but in your entire life, which means the conversations that you're having with your peers, with strangers on the street, when you're not in that workspace. So, it is an approach that you have to take in all aspects of your life. So, we go back to Aaron Fairweather, who talks about creating inclusive spaces in their work.

Aaron

Yeah, so on campus, there has been a little bit more of a push lately, especially to get more recognition for alternative peoples, different pronouns, and making spaces where people can know that they're safe, especially in downtown centres and bars and stuff like that. So, part of that work has been to reach out to the local business owners, and that kind of thing, and get signs put up and that this is a safe space, or that we accept all people here and that kind of thing. We don't tolerate any prejudice. At the university level, I've been involved in some work that is creating videos, and educational content for professors, faculty, and staff, about the use of alternative pronouns and how to address people and bring that up in a classroom setting. Like if we were to call on somebody, maybe you ask their name, and what pronouns that you use before you actually get them to answer a question or something like that.

Kaylee

You know, one of the things that I love so much about this podcast and just Nerd Nite in general, is that we have the opportunity to learn from and with so many incredible folks that are doing work in so many different fields, right, we were talking about ants, and we had a clip from a wetlands episode, and we had one on bear conservation. We've also had lots of conversations about health as well. How is your health feeling there Michael? How are you doing over there?

Michael

Oh, it's been it's been wild. I've gone through, such a shift of being alone, needing to cook more than I ever have before, and actually thinking about the foods that I'm eating. I have more time to research the foods that I'm eating instead of just mindlessly throwing things into my face. At the same time, getting older, where my body is changing it seems right before my eyes. So, it's been interesting, because I've now been very mindful about my health, if that makes sense.



Kaylee

Yeah, it totally does.

Michael

I know one thing, Kaylee, in this episode with [Desiree Nielsen](#), you were going through this process as well. Since you got an expert who thinks about these things, and something that you have been thinking about is probiotics. I know you had some of your fridge, maybe still have some in your fridge. But you asked Desiree specifically what's up with probiotics?

Kaylee

Sure did. I think that people talk a big talk when it comes to probiotics enough that at some point in my life, I have purchased them. Then the science seems all over the place or also non-existent. So, I was like, hey Desiree, probiotics, what up with that?

Desiree

Okay, so everyone who is really serious about nerding out on this needs to read the [Psychobiotic Revolution](#). It sounds like a super fad, diet book, but it's actually written by an amazing science journalist (Scott C. Anderson) in collaboration with two hard core probiotic, and microbiome researchers from University College Cork (John Cryan, Ted Dinan). That's an amazing book that talks about the association between different microbiota states, and also the physical, the potential physiological basis behind it. Probiotics are really cool. There was a huge backlash against them, then a huge acceptance of them, and now a further backlash against them and the medical community. It's because there's a ton of crap on the shelves, there's billions and billions of dollars' worth of really poor probiotics, and a really small handful of companies that are trying to make probiotics that actually do good, like, help prevent *C difficile* infections.

Kaylee

Ugh don't love *C diff*.

Desiree

Right? It's not even *C. difficile* anymore, but it's late. So, some probiotics actually do work, and they have human clinical trials to show that they work. As a whole, there's a lot of garbage out there. So, I really caution people against just going to Whole Foods and being like, just give me any probiotic, it's going to be amazing. And also, against thinking that they're like a magic bullet. Because the biggest determinant of what that microbiome looks like is what you feed it. If you can trickle in a probiotic, but if you are not feeding it, it wants to be fed, it's not going to stick around, it's like inviting a bunch of vegans to a steak house. Like, they don't care that it's your 50th birthday. They're leaving.

Kaylee

I've been there. (Laughs)



Desiree
Right?

Kaylee
Like bye.

Desiree
Bye! Not for me. So yeah, so it's really, really critical. So, a probiotic in our practice. I've seen it, over a decade of private practice, I have seen probiotics do some pretty remarkable things for people who are on a lot of medications from a lot of really, really amazing gastroenterologist and probiotics help. I've seen other people were like, "Oh, I've been on this probiotic for like seven years." And I'm like, "Why?" "Well, I think it's good." "But you're seeing me, so it hasn't made you better." If it's working, it will make you better. That's a really easy thing. So, if you're like, oh, I've got like 50 bucks sitting around that I want to blow on a probiotic. Go ahead, try it out for 12 weeks. But if you are no better in 12 weeks, put it away.

Michael
So, speaking of health, Kaylee, you know, something that I think has come up for both of us is this concept of burnout and how it can approach you and how it can hit you in different ways. Like, for me, I was not working. I was not socializing for a long period of time, very isolatory. Then all of a sudden, everything happened at once. Then I was a little bit overwhelmed. It's like in a car, immediately burning out the engine because you're revving so fast. What about you? What has burnout meant for you over these past couple years?

Kaylee
Yeah, burnout was a lot different for me. My burnout, I experienced really around the time we started this podcast, it was when I was finishing up my PhD and it had been building at that point for a couple of years. I was just doing a lot all the time, this which is a joy, but like PhD and job and it kind of just kept going. There was always okay, next week, I won't have so many things to do. Then it was like, a year later, I was like, Oh no. So, for me, it happened really slowly. It is only in the last like six months where I have really felt like I'm back to my regular pre burnout self. So, it took a really long time for me to recover from it as well. So, I think it's important to be mindful of burnout. Thankfully, we've got folks like [Farah Qaiser](#), who talked to us a little bit about managing burnout.

Farah
So, it feels like I'm both the best and worst person to answer this one. I'm pretty terrible at saying no, but that is something that I've been working on a little better for the past few years, it's always been a work in progress.

Kaylee
Thank you for saying yes to this, by the way.



Farah

It was my pleasure, I would have said yes to you anytime Kaylee. But it is really hard. It's so hard to say no to opportunities. I can do that. It's just one interview, I can do that. It's just one meeting, but it all really piles up. At the end of the day, you don't have as much energy. In these past few years, I've really been working hard on setting boundaries. For example, I've just cut out zoom on weekends. It's hard. Sometimes I cut out things when I'm just like, I think I really need to go zoom free on weekends, to preserve whatever little sanity I have left in this ongoing pandemic. I've just started trying to read more and just watch mindless TV and not worried about time ticking by. I don't know if both of you have ever felt this. But every time I go to school, I find that I can't really read for fun, and it takes some time to get back into it.

Michael

Certainly, some good perspectives there from Farah, someone who talked a lot about the policy of science, really interesting episode with her if you haven't heard that episode, but one thing Farah brought up is reading for pleasure, which I thought might be a good opportunity for us to nerd out and talk about our own stuff that we're into these days.

Kaylee

Oh my gosh, it's been so long since we nerded it out. Yes, please.

(Music)

Kaylee

So, Michael, what have you been nerding out over the last two years? (Laughs)

Michael

Well, this is true, because my nerd out is actually related to what I have been nerding out about for the past couple of years, which is baseball cards. I have actually been reading a lot of books. Some of them audiobooks does that count as reading, if it's if it's an audio book? I'm part of a science book club, which is mostly just a way for me to force me to read. I came across a book that has nothing to do with science, but my non-science interest, and that's baseball. It's a book called [A High Five for Glenn Burke by Phil Bildner](#). It drew me in not only because Glenn Burke, the baseball player, and it had his baseball card on the front. Glenn Burke is known for a couple things. He is the first ever openly gay baseball player, played in the late 1970s, but was also the first person, at least recorded instance, to raise their hand and meet another hand, the first recorded instance of a high five. Now, this book actually is fiction. It's a young adult novel. It's about a young boy who does a presentation about Glenn Burke in their class, and it leads them on a path of coming out to their friends and classmates and teammates. I randomly came across this book and started reading it, and because it's a YA novel, it just ploughs through the action, and it just gets into all of these emotions. I was like, whoa, this is so intense. I haven't read a book like this in so long. This book caught my attention because it's Pride Month, but



also, you know, now doing research that not surprisingly this book is banned, in a lot of schools in the US and it's actually set in Texas. You know, there's a lot going on in the States right now.

Kaylee

Understatement of the year, decade.

Michael

This is our new reality, and it's really hard to acknowledge that, but the thing about this book is that we understanding that there are still people, humans living in this new reality, and things can change. This book is a celebration of being yourself in the face of a lot of adversity and the hero is an embodiment of that celebration, the person who invented the high five. So that's my take away, a nice little feel good story and who doesn't like a high five?

Kaylee

Truly and I love that. I like to think that setting the book in Texas was like a tiny rebellion.

Michael

Yes. Tiny little rebellions. Yeah, it's wild what's going on right now. What about you Kaylee? What have you had the time and energy to nerd out on that's non-work things?

Kaylee

Good. Strong pivot. I love it. Ugh time. What is it? Where is it? I really have been enjoying something that is also pride themed, and I love some RuPaul Drag Race I truly do. I always enjoy watching it. This season is especially good, it is all-star seven, queen of all queens, and you've got past winners who are all competing. You've already got folks who have won their seasons or one other like, well they've won seasons anyway. They're all competing. So, they all have these beautiful looks that they create, dancing for most of them is pretty good. Some of them recognize they are not dancers. Some of them also recognize they're not sewers, (clears throat) Jinx. But on the whole, what I love so much about the season isn't even the talent, it's that nobody goes home. Unlike in other seasons, where somebody's leaving every week in this season, they all get to stay the whole time. Like you can win a legendary legend star, and that can get you to the finale, but otherwise, no one's leaving. What I love about that is everyone has an opportunity to show their talents throughout the whole season. I mean, RuPaul's Drag Race is literally just sunshine and joy in a bottle for the most part, but this is an especially joyous season. I am so into it, like here's my schedule. RuPaul's Drag Race comes out on Friday. I usually streaming it in the morning on Friday or a little bit later. Then I watch the Pitstop with Bob the Drag Queen, because Bob does a recap, usually on the next day. So, I watch that, then I watch a preview of the next episode on Thursday. So, it is fully integrated into my schedule. So that's what I've been nerding out about.



Michael

Wonderful. Well, you know, it's certainly a theme in both of our nerd outs, a celebration of pride. This is wonderful. I'm so glad that we have wrapped up another season. Kaylee, thank you so much for all of the hard work and getting through that burnout, and still energy to keep doing the quality of work that you're doing, especially with your other podcasts. If any of you have not checked out [Nice Genes](#), you should definitely go check that out. As for this podcast, check out our feeds, we may have some surprises coming out. No promises. Thank you to everyone for sticking with us. Stay tuned. Follow us on social media. We'll throw out some info every now and then.

Kaylee

Yeah, and back at you, Michael. This is always a highlight of my week, or month, or whatever it is I get to see you. I look forward to the next episode. Thank you everyone so much for listening. This was a real pleasure. If you want to hear more from us, you can follow us on our socials [@NerdNiteYVR](#) on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. This episode was hosted by us and edited by us and also audio engineered by Elise Lane. We hope to be back in your ears not too long from now but until we meet again from both of us, from bone us? Bonus episode?

Michael

Great, you did it! Bye everyone!

Kaylee

HAGS!