

## **'Who died and made you John Wayne?'**<sup>1</sup>

### **Or, why Riley Finn could never be a Scooby.**

***Buffy (to Riley): You think I need help? Believe me, I don't. You know, if you were a real gentleman, then you would just leave. You would go far, far away, now! Shoo!***

***The Initiative, Original Air Date USA 16/11/02, Aust 27/03/00***

Within the global Buffy fan community, there has been overwhelming negative reaction to the character of Riley Finn – Buffy Summer's second significant boyfriend in the series. Riley is first introduced as a Psychology Teacher's Assistant in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* (BtVS) first college episode *The Freshman*, later, in *Doomed*, Buffy calls him 'Riley Finn, corn-fed Iowa boy'. Over the course of three seasons, Riley degenerates from this wholesome country boy, to using Vampire prostitutes, then fleeing Sunnydale for a super-spy job and marriage. Despite this dramatic storyline and his overall niceness, Riley is the most thoroughly rejected major character in the *BtVS* series.

Riley's rejection can be found by asking almost any Buffy fan, or by a quick search of the Web, where such sites as Riley hate-listings (the opposite of fan listings)<sup>2</sup>, anti-Riley fan fic, with titles like 'The unfortunate demise of Riley Finn'<sup>3</sup>, and random information, such as how to insult Riley in different languages<sup>4</sup>, proliferates.

---

<sup>1</sup> Buffy in *The Initiative*

<sup>2</sup> Visit Staphylococcus, C. *The Hatelistings.Org – Riley Finn (BtVS)*

<http://www.thehatelistings.org/current/listing.php?cat=52>

<sup>3</sup> Ducks *The unfortunate demise of Riley Finn*

<http://www.basiamille.com/misc/demise.html>

<sup>4</sup> Spikeygirl, *Say Riley Sucks in other languages*

<http://www.angelfire.com/pq/spatula/index.html>

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

Riley is polite, intelligent and, significantly for the Buffyverse, essentially normal. Through examining Buffy and Riley's character attributes and the values inherent in the series I will highlight the textual cues for the audience to reject Riley as a character, as well as question the relevance of the John Wayne style hero in late modernity.

In order to fully understand the rejection of Riley, we first need to consider Buffy as a character and a series. Who is Buffy Summers? What value systems does she, as an individual, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer as a series represent?

Buffy Summers is an example of the new Girl Hero, as defined by Hopkins (2002). She is 'a female protagonist who travels through rebellion, risk and adventure to find her stronger self' and has the characteristics of 'physical strength and stamina, superiority and dominance, courage and determination', all of which signpost her as a Girl Hero (Hopkins, 2002, p. 3-4). This Girl Hero assumes the 'privileges of masculinity and femininity' resulting in a supergirl who can fight her own battles, in a mini skirt and boots – or whatever the fashion is at the time (Hopkins, 2002, p. 3).

Buffy can be read as a third wave, liberal feminist, presuming her equality and unrestrained by her gender. Her family and communal ties set her apart from previous slayers – and continually facilitate her survival. Buffy is marked as an individual by her use of speech or 'slayer slang'. She is known within the supernatural community as different from previous slayer's, and it is her voice which can be read as independence, confidence and assertiveness, which sets her apart.

Buffy Summers represents an Unruly Woman as defined by Rowe's work (1995). Buffy's Unruly characteristics include:

- creating disorder by refusing to be dominated by a man/men. This is highlighted by her continually conflicted relationship and subsequent rejection of the Watcher's Council, then her personal assumption of authority, before sharing her power in *Chosen* with all the potentials.
- having excessive speech and laughter. Buffy examples include an entire book devoted to 'Slayer Slang'<sup>5</sup>, many Buffy websites having areas devoted to Buffyisms<sup>6</sup> and, as numerous villains have found, it is very difficult and dangerous to try and keep Buffy quiet.
- being sexual. Rowe defines this as looseness or even whorishness (1995, p. 31), so it would be possible to include Buffy's deviant relationship with Spike, her one-night stand with Parker and the complications rort from sex with Angel or Riley
- an association with dirt or liminality and taboo. *BtVS* presents the obvious contradiction of a slayer who sleeps with Vampires. And what more liminal space could there be than Sunnydale, literally the threshold of the Hellmouth?

Each of these *Unruly* characteristics complicates Buffy's relationship with Riley, as I will discuss.

*BtVS*' depiction of an empowered, vocal, unruly, girl hero appeals to a certain viewing demographic. As Hopkins discusses, it often seems that Joss Whedon, is deliberately encouraging an academic fan culture (2002, p. 116). As Buffy Academics, we are aware of Joss' film school education and this education is evident within the texts that he creates<sup>7</sup>. However, Joss plays with our knowledge of film and television, by subverting our expectations (e.g. killing Buffy numerous times, subverting the male gaze to empower women and having villains that include a bimbo, nerds and the hero's best friend). *BtVS* falls in line with Joss' imperative of presenting a feminist role model who, when chased down an alley, can round on the attacker and

---

<sup>5</sup> Adams, M. 2003 *Slayer slang: a Buffy the vampire slayer lexicon*, Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see the *Slanguage* section of *buffyworld.com*

<sup>7</sup> Joss attended Wesleyan University where he majored in Film Studies (Havens, 2003).

beat them to a pulp (Havens, 2003, p.21). Buffy is a show that offers a feminist discourse, empowering young women and challenging authority and expectations. Let's keep this in mind as we introduce Riley.

Riley is first shown as a Teacher's Assistant to Professor Walsh in Buffy and Willow's Psychology class at U C Sunnydale. After several clumsy attempts, following the Parker Abrams fiasco (where Buffy naively slept with another student who was just using her for sex), Riley manages to invite Buffy on a picnic date. Riley is shown to be a traditional, white, Christian male; a farm-boy who has good manners and will care for Buffy. However the audience soon learns that Riley is also a leading commando in the Initiative – a secret government operation, neutralising the Human Sub Terrestrials (HSTs), or supernatural creatures, that populate the Hellmouth. At first this would seem to make Buffy and Riley a perfect match – superheroes fighting on the same team. However as we all know, and is suggested by textual cues, Buffy will not fit into the world of the Initiative.

[Here I showed my first clip from \*The I In Team\*. For a transcript, please see Appendix 1.](#)

As we can see from these images, Buffy stands out clearly from the soldiers in a number of ways:

- Her appearance. She is marked as different, problematic, hyper-feminine. The mise-en-scène is deliberately constructed to jolt us from the uniformity of the soldiers to Buffy's individuality and femininity. Her bright orange halter top contrasts dramatically in visibility and impracticality to the soldiers camouflage gear, allowing them to easily underestimate her and question her credentials as a serious fighter.
- Her voice. Buffy challenges military operations by questioning the process, which she later states is 'an Initiative faux pas.'<sup>8</sup> Uncontrollable voice is a key aspect of Rowe's *Unruly Woman* (1995) and Buffy clearly demonstrates in this extract that she will not be 'shushed'.

---

<sup>8</sup> *The I In Team*

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

- Her attitude towards the enemy. Buffy credits HSTs with motives and 'human' thought patterns, as anyone in a military operation knows, it is easier to kill the enemy if you do not suggest that they possess intelligence, emotions, motivation and other human qualities. Buffy's approach comes from previous dealings with demons, while also suggesting a more empathetic stance for their behaviour.

The crediting of demon's with human characteristics, such as thought, will be a continuing problem in Buffy and Riley's relationship. This also points to one of the major reasons for Riley's rejection- he sees the world in simpler terms; humans good and monsters bad. In this episode Riley expresses to Buffy that he is 'in the military to follow orders, not ask questions' and that he knows all he needs to know – 'we're doing good here'<sup>9</sup>. However, through his interaction with Buffy, he comes to realise that the world is not a simple place – that vampires can have souls and that werewolves can be friends. Riley's binary understanding of the world is specifically challenged later in the same episode when he comes back from a mission to find his mother figure Professor Walsh in the following compromising situation.

[Here I showed my second clip from \*The I In Team\*. For a transcript, please see Appendix 2.](#)

In this moment, we see Riley disobey orders for the first time. As fans, we also recognise that our suspicions (and those of most of the Scoobies) are correct – The Initiative is dangerous, or, as Buffy states, 'it's not safe for any of us'<sup>10</sup>. From this episode, fans realise that Riley is uninformed and the parallel narrative of the Scoobies operating on Spike to remove his tracer, thereby thwarting Riley's mission, highlights the antagonism between the liminal Scoobies and the Initiative/Riley.

---

<sup>9</sup> *The I in Team*

<sup>10</sup> *The I in Team*

We realize that Riley is extremely naïve as to the actions of the body he is a part of. This reflects Willow's concerns that 'there's certain questions you should ask before you go off and enlist'<sup>11</sup>. The Scoobies question the Initiative's power and motives, Riley (until this point) has accepted it as the natural order of things. This presents two main ideas to the fans – firstly, intellectual curiosity is valuable although it may be in contradiction to legitimized authority. This reaffirms the target audience's belief in the value of independent thought for ethical action, which is particularly topical in the current global climate. Secondly, we can see that the Government organization is a threat to the liminal Scoobies, as it attempts to wipe out Buffy's difference and any challenges to authority, along with the evil of the HSTs. The Initiative's unsuccessful attempts to contain and destroy the 'Other' can be understood as a critique of Darwinist rationalization, racist attitudes and anti-intellectualism, reinforcing Joss Whedon's feminist imperative of tolerance.

It is important to quickly note here that the members of the Scoobies are as liminal as the creatures that live on and in the Hellmouth, each of the Scoobies is a magical being in some way – even Xander casts some spells, although nothing to compare with the power of Willow and Tara, or Giles. Dawn is a key of pure energy, essentially a spell herself. Anya is an ex-demon, Oz a werewolf, Spike and Angel – Vampires - and Buffy the chosen one who would not exist as a slayer outside of this magical, liminal world. These liminal beings are what the Initiative hunts, experiments on and kills. The audience has to interpret the Initiative as a threat to the Scoobies.

So why does Riley captivate Buffy? Superficially, he is intelligent, good looking and 'normal', something which Buffy longs for after her dark relationship with Angel. As Money suggests, Riley's name harks back to a simpler time in America, with connotations of Huck Finn (2002, p. 106). The name Riley also suggests the good life, or the life of Riley, so from combining these names we get an optimistic, old fashioned character – Riley Finn. These elements suggest that Buffy can find old fashioned values and 'the good life through Riley.

---

<sup>11</sup> *The I in Team*

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

However, the show demonstrates a lack of respect for Riley, with characters constantly calling Riley names that belittle his attitudes and military employment. Spike and Buffy call Riley 'regimental soldier'<sup>12</sup> and 'tin soldier'<sup>13</sup> questioning the independence of his action. Willow and Buffy call him 'Teutonic'<sup>14</sup>, 'cowboy'<sup>15</sup> and 'John Wayne'<sup>16</sup>, amongst other names<sup>17</sup>. John Wayne is significant, because it points to many of the problems that Riley's character has on the show. He represents an old fashioned hero, a guy who can come into a town and save the day. Wills describes Wayne as the American ideal of masculinity (Wright Wexman, 1998). But this role is superfluous in the Buffy verse, leaving Riley to be representative of ridiculed authority, as we see in Willow's dream sequence in *Restless*.

**Here I showed Willow's *Restless* extract. For a transcript, please see Appendix 3.**

Aside from demonstrating her own insecurities, this extract shows that Willow sees Riley as 'Cowboy guy', a representative of American values, including punctuality. When Giles accepts Riley's response and denies Harmony's answer, he is reflecting Willow's concerns about difference. Riley's voice of authority and normality is correct, whereas the liminal voice of Harmony is incorrect even with the same answer. This dream sequence highlights Willow's insecurity about her latent homosexuality, but also draws attention to a significant concern of all the Scoobies – the problem of difference. Riley has not had to experience the isolation of difference or othering in the same manner as the liminal Scoobies, as he has always been 'normal'. Ironically, this makes him abnormal on Buffy.

---

<sup>12</sup> Buffy in *The I In team*

<sup>13</sup> Spike in *As You Were*

<sup>14</sup> Buffy and Willow in *The Initiative*

<sup>15</sup> Willow (subconsciously) in *Restless*

<sup>16</sup> Buffy in *The Initiative*

<sup>17</sup> For names that Riley has been called, visit *Buffyverse Dialogue Database- Riley AKAs* <http://vrya.net/bdb/aka.php?char=7>

Throughout the fourth season, Riley's personal belief system is brought into question. Riley's initial trust in The Initiative as 'right' shows a modernist trust in technology and science that is deconstructed by the postmodern nature of the show. Riley's masculine belief that all demons are 'bad' is deconstructed by Buffy's feminist ethics, which follow a contextual approach suitable to the moral ambiguities inherent in the Buffyverse. Riley's faith in himself is questioned when he discovers that he too is a monster of science and Adam's brother. Even Riley's faith in religion is represented as simplistic in comparison to the complex and political fighting between good and evil that Buffy engages in every day. As we know, the only god likely to show their face in Sunnydale is Glory.

When Buffy dreams of Riley in *Restless*, as when she dreams of him in *Hush*, she sees him as a monster, however the two monsters are significantly different. In *Hush*, Riley turns into one of *the Gentleman*<sup>18</sup>, which is appropriate, as these creatures steal one's voice or one's strength. This depiction is located at a point in the series where Buffy plays down her number of kills so as not to intimidate Riley and she holds back when fighting him, in an attempt to seem attractive. She is renouncing her voice or power slightly, to seem better to a man, which compromises personal integrity and contradicts the shows underlying feminist themes. However, Buffy's image of Riley in *Restless* is far more disturbing than that of a simple monster that she can kill.

[Here I showed Buffy's \*Restless\* extract. For a transcript, please see Appendix 4.](#)

Buffy's dream shows Riley as on par with Adam, both monsters in their plans for world domination, backed up by the might of the military (as represented by a gun, significantly positioned above Buffy, on a glass table). We have previously, momentarily, seen Riley as a monster in *Hush* and we have seen his struggle going through withdrawal and dealing with his scientifically modified body, however this new monster is clearly a result of the military-industrial complex and a corruption of power, representing an intellectual evil – different from the usual

---

<sup>18</sup> *The Gentlemen* are fairytale monsters who come to a town and steal everyone's voices, so that they can murder people and take their hearts for their own gruesome purposes.

'natural' evils of Sunnydale. Whilst Buffy feels isolated from Riley, the reference to a fort shows that she can also see that his is an immature pursuit, not as developed as her slaying. Hopkins notes that Buffy's power is frequently positioned as superior to institutionalised male power (2002, p. 115). In this depiction, Adam seems more human than Riley. In this way, the presence of Riley Finn problematizes the Buffyverse, as, unlike the vampires that Buffy has been associated with, Riley has made a conscious, human choice to participate in the 'evil' of the Initiative which represents a different kind of 'sleeping with the enemy' for Buffy.

When Riley becomes informed about the world around him and the way in which he too has been manipulated by the Initiative, he becomes increasingly lost and desperate. Dasplit notes that Riley articulates the difficulty of moving to a postmodern knowledge system when he states 'I thought I knew, but I don't... I don't know anything' (2003, p. 125).

As season five begins, Riley wallows in self pity, feeling that Buffy has rejected him because he isn't evil enough. As Shuttleworth notes, Riley is the nearest thing the series has ever had to an unambiguous white hat (2001, p. 236). These two points lead us to the most damning critique that fans have of Riley: he is 'Captain America'<sup>19</sup>, 'Captain Cardboard'<sup>20</sup>. He is essentially a good person, not interesting enough to compete for attention in the dark world of the Buffyverse. He comes from a modernist standpoint where faith can be held in institutions and technology. Sadly, it is impossible to just be good or find truth in the Buffyverse.

After having Buffy change his world, Riley wants to become darker for her to love him as she loved Angel. As Season Five develops, Riley's character becomes more infantile, jealous and attention-seeking. Riley degenerates to a point where he uses Vampire prostitutes, because 'they needed him'<sup>21</sup> in a way that Buffy never will. This 'dark' Riley could be construed as an attempt to make Riley a liminal character. Buffy is difference and Riley attempts to be different, but it just

---

<sup>19</sup> Xander in *Shadow*

<sup>20</sup> Spike in *No Place Like Home*

<sup>21</sup> Riley in *Into the Woods*

feels forced. Blaming his faults on Buffy, for opening his eyes to a wider world, Riley leaves the series and, despite Buffy's last minute change-of-heart, she is too late and he is air-lifted away from her and out of the series, allowing Buffy to have a forbidden, darker relationship with Spike. Riley's self pity is unforgivable from a fan's perspective and most fans were happy to see him go.

Essentially Riley and the Initiative represent a binary opposition to the values held by Buffy, the Scooby Core and the series as a whole (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Table of opposites**

<b>Buffy and the Scooby Core's Values</b>	<b>Riley and the Initiative's Values</b>
Different	Uniform
Alternative/Liminal	Mainstream
Acceptance	Judgement
Feminist	Patriarchal
Question	Action
Unruly	Polite
Magic	Science
Freelance	Military/Govt/Initiative
Destiny	Enrolment
Queer	Straight
BC/pagan/Wicca	Christian
Liberal (left-wing)	Conservative (right-wing)
Community	Individual
Family	Hierarchy

Riley is in direct contrast to the Girl Hero, Buffy, which the series focuses on. By being involved with Riley even as the most palatable form of this opposing value system, Buffy is compromising her group and the series' values. If time permitted, it would be possible to elaborate on further areas of difference, highlighting Riley's inability to fit into the series, examples could include Riley v Tara in terms of character introduction and development, or Riley in comparison to other masculinities present in the Buffyverse. Riley, as representative of the patriarchal, individualistic, military-industrial complex is at odds with the communal, liberal feminist ideology that underpins the series *BtVS*. The 'normal' and traditional aspects of Riley's character are antithetical to the 'alternative', liminal nature of the Buffyverse.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

However, Riley returns when Buffy is in an existential crisis – working in fast food, sleeping with Spike, not being able to spend any time with her sister and essentially living the downtrodden lifestyle of a lower class single mother.

[Here I showed an extract from As You Were. For a transcript, please see Appendix 5.](#)

*As You Were* (a military instruction), brings Riley back, enjoying self-parody, his voice is gruffer, he has better toys than before and he calls on Buffy. She can momentarily fantasise about what her life would have been like if they'd stayed together, however it is soon revealed that he has a wife – Sam. Riley has found his quasi-traditional life as a married, James Bond style guy. This episode allows Buffy to laugh at Riley. However, Riley is still a good person, reminding Buffy that she is 'the strongest woman he's ever known'<sup>22</sup>. Lawler notes that 'it is her Christian, church-going, soldier lover who reminds her of who she really is' (2003, p. 113). Riley defers power to Buffy, recognising the power and wisdom that she represents and *As You Were* shows Riley in his true red, white and bland colours for the fans.

As *BtVS* is a feminist show, targeted at an intelligent market, Riley is rejected as an insertion of 'good ol' American values' at a time when globalisation and the impacts of numerous social movements and historical legacies, mean that a cowboy character, riding in to save the day does not represent the hope for the future that a community of intelligent, liminal characters can. Effectively, due to the impact of third wave feminism, the solitary white male hero has become redundant.

By looking closely at *BtVS*, we can see the textual cues for fans to reject Riley as an attempt to 'normalize' Buffy. We can also learn about feminist ethics and the acceptance of difference. Riley offers a strong point of contrast to Buffy's action and identity, reinforcing the message to the fans that tolerance and feminism are the appropriate discourses for late modernity and indeed, those

---

<sup>22</sup> Riley in *As You Were*

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

who still follow simplistic, modernist approaches to life are laughable. The Scoobies celebrate feminism and difference, whereas Riley represents patriarchal hegemony, therefore Riley could never be a Scooby.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

## Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Clip from *The I in Team*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com
- Appendix 2 - Second clip from *The I in Team*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com
- Appendix 3 - Willow's dream sequence extract, from *Restless*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com
- Appendix 4 - Buffy's dream sequence extract, from *Restless*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com
- Appendix 5 - Clip from *As You Were*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com

## Appendix 1:

### Clip from *The I in Team*, as transcribed at [Buffyworld.com](http://Buffyworld.com)

Cut to Briefing area at Initiative HQ. There is an overhead projector displaying the image of an ugly demon on a large white screen. Riley is standing to one side of the screen as Professor Walsh walks in front of the group of commandos seated in rows before her. Among them near the back, Buffy sticks out like a . . . well, like a girl in a sea of broad-shouldered military green. That, and she's also the only one seated with a plunging neckline.

Walsh: This is your objective. Sub-T: 67119. Demon class: Polgara species. Though visual confirmation has not yet been made, we're confident of the target's approximate position as it leaves behind a distinct protein marker. Dr. Angleman will brief you on its defenses.

She takes a seat to the side as Dr. Angleman steps up next to the projector and overlays a second transparent page over the first. This adds long sharp looking protrusions from the demon's arms.

Angleman: When threatened . . . bone skewers jut from the creature's forearms during battle. It's imperative when ensnaring it not to damage its arms. That's all you really need to know.

Amidst the commandos Buffy raises her hand.

Buffy: Question.

Dr. Angleman doesn't seem sure how to respond, unaccustomed by this. He glances at Walsh who stands up again.

Walsh: Buffy?

Buffy: Why exactly can't we damage this poker thing's arms? I, uh, not that I want to, it's just in my experience when fighting for your life body parts get damaged and-- better its bits than mine. (glances at the guys around her) Or . . . ours.

Angleman: We wish to study the physiology of every subterrestrial's natural defenses. It's part of the research we do here. (before he can continue--) Uh-- Yes?

We see that Buffy had her hand raised again.

Buffy: What do they want?

Angleman: Want?

Buffy: Why are they here? Sacrifices, treasure, or they just get rampagy? (she is starting to get looks from the commandos) I find it's easier to predict their responses if I know--

Angleman: They're not sentient. Just destructive, I believe.

Walsh: They do have keen eyesight, however. You might want to be suited up for this.

Buffy: Oh. (glancing at the military green around her) You mean the cammo and stuff? I thought about it but, I mean, it's gonna look all 'Private Benjamin.'

This gets chuckles from some of the commandos.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

Buffy: Don't worry I've patrolled in this halter many times.

This gets even more chuckles and Riley has to bow his head and clench his jaw to keep from laughing his ass off.

Walsh: Why don't we give our attention to Dr. Angleman (Buffy raises hand) and save all questions until the end.

Angleman: Actually, I'm finished.

Walsh: Oh. Uh, well, Agent Finn, deploy the teams.

All business, Riley walks out in front of the group.

Riley: Okay, listen up. We'll be going in a four squad set-up. Team Leaders: Gates, Taggart, and Stavros. Alpha Team, you're with me.

Walsh: Report for TLs for assignment and weapons requisitions. Reminder: this is a zap-n-trap, people. Capture not a kill. Any questions? (sees a raised hand) (sighing) Buffy.

**Extract Transcription from Buffyworld.com**

[http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/69\\_tran.shtml](http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/69_tran.shtml)

## Appendix 2:

### Second clip from *The I in Team*, as transcribed at [Buffyworld.com](http://Buffyworld.com)

Return to Initiative headquarters. Riley walks up behind Walsh who is still standing in front of the Control operations panel. At the sound of his voice she turns to face him. She looks shaken.

Riley: Regret to report Hostile 17 is still at large. I left Beta Team to comb the area but the tracer's--

Walsh: (interrupting) Riley, something's happened. I-I don't know what to say. It-it-it's about Buffy.

Riley: Buffy?

She takes a few steps away from the monitors, com-cam POV still on the sewer floor, and Riley stands in front of her.

Walsh: Two of our hostiles broke free and escaped into the tunnels. She . . .went after them on her own. (meets his eyes) She's dead, Riley.

Riley: (shocked) . . . What?! (this transcript does not do justice to the amount of pain he puts into that one word)

Walsh: I did everything I could to stop her. I told her to wait for a back-up team, she kept insisting she didn't need any team. She could handle it by herself. I-I'm so, so sorry.

Riley's obviously struggling not to break down as he hears this.

Riley: I don't understand.

Behind Walsh, the com-cam image on the monitors suddenly start to move.

Walsh: I know what she meant to you.

Riley: How could this happen?

Walsh: She was a very, very special girl.

The com-cam image is still and Buffy steps into the picture and kneels in front of it. Her expression is pissed to the tenth power.

Walsh: I didn't understand at first. But she had something. I don't know . . . maybe I could have stopped her.

Riley sees Buffy's face in the monitors.

Walsh: It's hard not to blame myself.

Buffy: (steely voice) Professor Walsh. That simple little recon you sent me on . . . wasn't a raccoon. (Walsh slowly faces the monitors) Turns out it was me trapped in the sewers with a faulty weapon and two of your pet demons. If you think that's enough to kill me, you really don't know what a Slayer is.

Walsh is speechless.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

Buffy: Trust me when I say you're gonna find out.

Buffy stands up and walks off camera. The image suddenly pitches to the floor and there is a crunch as all the screens turn snowy with static.

Walsh slowly turns to face Riley again. He's looking down at her doing a pretty good tenth power pissed expression himself.

Walsh: Riley . . .

Without a word he starts walking away.

Walsh: Agent Finn. I order you to stop!

He doesn't.

Walsh: Agent Finn!

He's gone.

Walsh: RILEY!!

**Extract Transcription from Buffyworld.com**

[http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/69\\_tran.shtml](http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/69_tran.shtml)

### Appendix 3:

#### Willow's dream sequence extract, from *Restless*, as transcribed at [Buffyworld.com](http://Buffyworld.com)

(Cut to Willow entering the backstage area. Costumes hanging on a rack. People getting into costume. Makeup table with mirrors. Sound of an orchestra tuning up. People wearing all kinds of different costumes. Willow walks around looking lost.) (Harmony runs up to her. She's dressed as a Swedish Milkmaid with two braids.)

HARMONY: Isn't this exciting? Our first production! I can't wait till our scene! I love you! Oh! (Hugs Willow. Suddenly drops the fake friendly act.) Don't step on my cues.

WILLOW: Production?

(We see Buffy peeking out through the curtain at the audience. She runs over to Willow and Harmony. She's dressed as the lead character in "Chicago": short straight black hair, short tight black dress.)

BUFFY: Ohmigod. The place is packed. Everybody's here! Your whole family's in the front row, cheerful) and they look really angry.

WILLOW: There's a production?

HARMONY: (rubbing Willow's shoulders) Oh, somebody's got stage fright.

WILLOW: Isn't this the first class?

(Riley approaches, dressed as a cowboy.)

RILEY: Well, you showed up late, or you'd have a better part. (Smiling) I'm Cowboy Guy.

BUFFY: (to Willow) Your costume is perfect. (Whispers) Nobody's gonna know the truth. You know, about you.

WILLOW: (bemused) Costume?

BUFFY: (pouting) You're already in character! Oh, I shoulda done that! (Stomps foot, turns away)

WILLOW: But how come there's - I mean, I was given to understand that a drama class would have, you know ... drama class. I mean, we haven't even rehearsed!

HARMONY: (snorts) Well, maybe some people haven't. (Smiles up at Riley)

RILEY: I showed up on time, so I got to be Cowboy Guy. (Harmony nods)

WILLOW: (to Buffy) I just think it's really early to be putting on a play. I, I don't even know what... (Eyes widen) This isn't *Madame Butterfly*, is it, because I have a whole problem with opera.

GILES: (offscreen) All right, everyone! (Buffy looks excited. Sound of Giles clapping hands for attention) Pay attention! (Everyone gathers around Giles) In just a few moments that curtain is going to open on our very first production. Now, everyone that Willow's ever met ... is out in that audience, including all of us. That means we have to be perfect. (Shot of Willow looking upset) Stay in character, (Willow sees something hairy behind a prop. She stares) remember your lines, and energy energy energy, especially in the musical numbers!

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

(Shot of Buffy looking really excited.)

WILLOW: (whispering) Did anyone see that?

GILES: Acting is not about behaving, it's about hiding. The audience wants to find you, (We see Harmony behind him, wearing vampire face, grabbing his shoulders and trying to bite him) strip you naked, and eat you alive, so hide. (to Harmony) Stop that. (She stops)

GILES: Now, costumes, sets, um, the things that you, uh, you know, uh, you, um... (Shot from above. We see the cast gathered, Harmony still jumping up behind Giles trying to bite him) you hold them, you touch them, uh, use them, um...

HARMONY: Props?

GILES: No.

RILEY: Props?

GILES: Yes! (Points at Riley) It's all about subterfuge.

**Extract Transcription from Buffyworld.com**

[http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/78\\_tran.shtml](http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/78_tran.shtml)

## Appendix 4:

### Buffy's dream sequence extract, from *Restless*, as transcribed at Buffyworld.com

(Shot of two men sitting at a conference table, facing each other, in a room with high ceilings and plain gray walls. On the left wall is a big map of the world. On the right, a row of cabinets. There are two empty chairs. In the foreground we still see Buffy's feet.)

(Man on the left speaks. It's Riley.)

RILEY: Hey there, killer.

BUFFY: (offscreen) Riley? You're back.

RILEY: I never left.

(Buffy's feet walk closer, as does the camera angle.)

BUFFY: (offscreen) But how did the debriefing go?

RILEY: I told you not to worry about that. It went great. They made me surgeon general. (Shot of Buffy looking surprised.)

BUFFY: Why didn't you come and tell me? We could have celebrated.

(Shot of Riley sitting in the chair, wearing a suit.)

RILEY: Oh. (Looks at the other man ) We're drawing up a plan for world domination. (Looks back at Buffy, pleased.) The key element? Coffeemakers that think. (Buffy frowns.)

BUFFY: World domination? I-is that a good?

RILEY: Baby, we're the government. (He swings around in his chair to strike a James Bond-like pose. The camera shoots him from below, through the glass tabletop. On the table we see a handgun.)

RILEY: It's what we do.

OTHER GUY: She's uncomfortable with certain concepts. (He's wearing a suit too, with no jacket.) It's understandable. Aggression is a natural human tendency. (Looks at Buffy) Though you and me come by it another way.(Shot of Buffy with the dark-haired creature behind her.)

BUFFY: We're not demons.

OTHER GUY: Is that a fact?

(Shot of Buffy. The creature is gone.)

RILEY: Buffy, we've got important work here. (Same camera angle on Riley, the gun prominent in the foreground.) A lot of filing, giving things names.

BUFFY: (looks at other guy) What was yours?

OTHER GUY: Before Adam? (Shakes his head. Suddenly the lighting turns blue) Not a man among us can remember.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

(Buffy looks around at the blue lighting. In the background we see shadows moving; we hear noises like emergency doors slamming shut.)

COMPUTER VOICE: The demons have escaped. Please run for your lives.

ADAM: This could be trouble. (He and Riley stand)

RILEY: We better make a fort.

ADAM: (nodding) I'll get some pillows. (Leaves)

(Buffy looks very nervous. Shadowy figures behind her seem to be moving closer. She looks down and sees her weapons bag lying at her feet. Looks up.)

BUFFY: (gasping anxiously) Wait! I have weapons!

She sits on the floor and opens the bag. It's full of mud. Buffy frowns, putting her hands in the mud and moving them around. Lifts her hands, covered in mud. Brings them up and smears the mud on her face. Reaches in for more, rubs it all over her face as the colors invert again like a photo-negative.)

**Extract Transcription from Buffyworld.com**

[http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/78\\_tran.shtml](http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season4/transcripts/78_tran.shtml)

## Appendix 5:

### Clip from *As You Were*, as transcribed at [Buffyworld.com](http://Buffyworld.com)

Cut to the counter. Buffy walks up to the cash register.

BUFFY: Welcome to the Double Meat Palace, how may I help...

She pauses as she sees who it is.

Reveal Riley, standing there dressed all in black with a bulletproof vest on.

BUFFY: You.

Closer shot on Riley. We see that he has a long scar running from his forehead across one eye and down his cheek. His expression is grim.

RILEY: Hey.

BUFFY: Huh?

Blackout.

---

### Act II

---

same scene. Buffy stares up at Riley.

BUFFY: Riley.

RILEY: Sorry to just drop in on you like this, Buffy.

BUFFY: It's you.

RILEY: It's me.

BUFFY: You're here.

RILEY: I know.

BUFFY: And ... were you always this tall?

RILEY: (leans closer) Look, this isn't the way I wanted it. But something's come up, something big. We don't have much time. You understand?

BUFFY: (nodding) Not a word you've said so far.

RILEY: Right. I should have known, anticipated. You're working.

Longer shot of the restaurant interior. There are a few customers waiting in line behind Riley.

Buffy is the only person working the counter.

Cut back to close shot.

BUFFY: Well, just counter, not grill any more.

RILEY: I want to explain, I just don't have time. I've been up for 48 hours straight tracking something bad, and now it's come to Sunnydale.

BUFFY: My hat has a cow.

RILEY: (sighs) I know that I'm putting you on the spot, showing up like this, but ... but you know, here we are. I need the best. I need you, Buffy. (Buffy staring at him) Can you help me?

Todd appears, sticks his face next to Buffy's.

TODD: Hellooo, Buffy? People are waiting.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

Buffy and Riley stare at each other, oblivious to Todd.

Buffy takes off her Double Meat hat, puts it down, grabs a black coat from under the counter, and comes out from behind the counter to join Riley.

TODD: Buffy, uh ... Buffy! Wait! Buffy!

Buffy follows Riley out.

Cut to the street. Buffy (wearing her black coat over her uniform) and Riley walk along.

RILEY: Look, I'm sorry this is all so sudden. You know, if we get a minute, I'd really like to sit down...

He stops as something on his belt begins to beep. He grabs it and looks at it.

BUFFY: What is it?

RILEY: Suvolte demon. Rare, lethal ... nearly extinct, but not nearly enough. (Buffy grinning) It's close.

Buffy starts to laugh.

RILEY: What?

BUFFY: Sorry. It's just ... you still carry around all that James Bond stuff.

Close shot on the device in Riley's hand. It looks like a flip-open cell phone except that instead of a digital display it has a red radar screen. Two large blinking red dots show the movement of the demon.

BUFFY: It's so cute! I forgot.

Riley puts the device away, gives Buffy a look.

BUFFY: Sorry. (fake-military) Carry on.

RILEY: (resumes walking) We've been tear-assing through every jungle from Paraguay up, taking out nests. As soon as we put one Suvolte down, a dozen take its place. They're breeders, Buffy. One turns into ten, ten becomes a hundred. This gets out of hand and there's a war with humans? Humans are gonna lose.

**Extract Transcription from Buffyworld.com**

**Transcribed by Joan the English Chick ([pisces@englishchick.com](mailto:pisces@englishchick.com)).**

[http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season6/transcripts/115\\_tran.shtml](http://www.buffyworld.com/buffy/season6/transcripts/115_tran.shtml)

## ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Episode References:**

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 57, *The Freshman*. 1999. TV, WB, Dir: Joss Whedon, USA, 5 October 1999.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 63, *The Initiative*. 1999. TV, WB, Dir: Douglas Petrie, USA, 16 November, 1999.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 66, *Hush*. 1999. TV, WB, Dir: Joss Whedon, USA, 14 December, 1999.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 67, *Doomed*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: James A. Contner, USA, 18 January, 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 69, *The I In Team*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: James A. Contner, USA, 8 February, 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 78, *Restless*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: Joss Whedon, USA, 23 May 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 83, *No Place Like Home*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: David Solomon, USA, 24 October, 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 86, *Shadow*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: James A. Contner, USA, 21 November, 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 88, *Into The Woods*. 2000. TV, WB, Dir: Marti Noxon, USA, 19 December, 2000.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 115, *As You Were*. 2002. TV, UPN, Dir: Douglas Petrie, USA, 26 February, 2002.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Episode 144, *Chosen*. 2003. TV, UPN, Dir: Joss Whedon, USA, 20 May, 2003.

Jenny Stokes' Slayage paper transcript, as presented at the Slayage Conference on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Nashville, Tennessee, May 2004.

## References:

Adams, M. 2003 *Slayer slang: a Buffy the vampire slayer lexicon*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Connolly, M. *Buffyworld.Com: A complete guide to all of the Buffy The Vampire Slayer and Angel episodes*, visited 10/05/04 and 17/07/04  
[www.buffyworld.com](http://www.buffyworld.com)

Daspit, T. 2003, 'Buffy goes to College, Adam Murders to Dissect: Education and Knowledge in Postmodernity', in South, J. B. (Ed) *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: fear and trembling in Sunnydale*, Open Court Press, Chicago, pp 117 – 130.

Ducks *The unfortunate demise of Riley Finn*, visited 20/05/2004  
<http://www.basiamille.com/misc/demise.html>

Havens, C. 2003 *Joss Whedon: the genius behind Buffy*, BenBella Books, Texas.

Hopkins, S. 2002 *Girl Heroes: the new force in popular culture*, Pluto Press, N.S.W.

Lawler, J. 2003, 'Between Heavens and Hells: The Multidimensional Universe in Kant and Buffy the Vampire Slayer', in South, J. B. (Ed) *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: fear and trembling in Sunnydale*, Open Court Press, Chicago, pp 103-116.

Money, M. A. 2002, 'The Undemonization of Supporting Characters in Buffy' in Wilcox, R., & Lavery, D. (Eds), *Fighting the forces: what's at stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Rowman and Littlefield, USA, pp. 98-107.

Rowe, K. 1995 *The unruly woman: gender and the genres of laughter*, University of Texas Press, Texas.

Shuttleworth, I. 2001 'They always mistake me for the character I play!': Transformation, identity and role-playing in the Buffyverse (and a defence of fine acting)' in Kaveney, R (Ed) *Reading the vampire slayer : the unofficial critical companion to Buffy and Angel*, Tauris Parke, London, pp. 211-236

Smith, A. *Fishboy: The Riley Bashing Site -Riley Fanfic*, visited 12/05/2004  
<http://www.angelfire.com/pq/spatula/index.html>

Spikeygirl, *Say Riley Sucks in other languages*, visited 20/05/2004  
<http://www.angelfire.com/pq/spatula/index.html>

Staphylococcus, C. *The Hatelistings.Org – Riley Finn (BtVS)*, visited 12/05/04  
<http://www.thehatelistings.org/current/listing.php?cat=52>

vRya, *Buffyverse Dialogue Database- Riley AKAs*, visited 10/07/04  
<http://vrya.net/bdb/aka.php?char=7>

Wright Wexman, V. 1998 *Book Reviews: John Wayne's America: The Politics of Celebrity In Film Quarterly*, visited 05/05/04  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1070/is\\_n4\\_v51/ai\\_20995397](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1070/is_n4_v51/ai_20995397)

## **Brief Bio:**

**Ms. Jennifer Stokes** works as a tutor and Edit Supervisor in the Film and Video Production Department of the University of South Australia. She is currently completing her post graduate studies in Communications, focusing on feminism and animation. She also works in a freelance filmmaking capacity for SOJE Productions.

## **Footnote:**

I hope to have the finished, retitled version of this paper in to Slayage later this year and I'd just like to thank all the great people who attended the 2004 Slayage Conference in Nashville, particularly Bronwyn Auty, for taking a chance on a crazy kid ☺ Many thanks go to Buffyworld.com for the transcripts that I have used in the Appendix section of this paper. I also wish to thank Dan Sage for all his patience and help and Linda Rust for hearing my drafts and heading across the world with me!