

Guilty Greenie: Season 1, Episode 7

Dying to Be Green

Cait Bagby: Hello, and welcome to Guilty Greenie live here on fireside from the Climate Collab auditorium. We are your imperfect hosts. I'm Cait Bagby,

Sarah Ferris: and I'm Sarah Ferris. And I don't know about you, but we are tired of perfectionism in trying to live more sustainably. And to be honest, it's a complete minefield out there.

In fact, only today, I tried recycling a pill packet and a quick look on Google suggests and I quote the most efficient way to recycle pill packets would be use them in different craft projects. No pressure then. Now on top of composting, I've got to learn how to incorporate aspirin foils into cross stitch, not happening. I can tell you that much. So let's get real for a minute and focus on what we can achieve, because I don't think my kids will appreciate a christmas stocking filled with pharmaceutical themed arts and craft, upcycled gifts. So join us as we bare all. We'll share our own guilt, share our own journeys and just add some levity in our attempts and fails to be more eco-friendly but in the real world, right Cait?

Cait Bagby: Absolutely. And now you have me wondering about pharmaceutical foil cross-stitch. Lot of possibilities for Christmas, I think.

Sarah Ferris: It's wide open.

Cait Bagby: It's Sarah and I, we share our own journeys, the good, the bad, the laughable. And today we are talking all about how to be environmentally friendly, even after death.

Sarah Ferris: Right. And we should probably give you a little trigger warning. So if you're sensitive about listening to two of us, probably slightly irreverently discussing the ultimate in upcycling funerals, then it's time to tune out. So how Cait would you describe this week's episode? Because it's quite a doozy.

Cait Bagby: It is quite a doozy and it can be quite a sensitive subject, but I would say you phrased it perfectly when we were talking earlier, it's about cleanly pushing up daisies: start to finish how to be environmentally friendly.

Sarah Ferris: Um,

Cait Bagby: Oftentimes, when we talk about death, it's very removed from the environmental impact. But as people are becoming more aware of options available to them throughout their living life, many are also now starting to question what their options are after death, but it's still a sensitive topic.

Sarah Ferris: Well, yeah, cause nobody really wants to think necessarily about their own death. But the reason that I kind of thought this would be a fun topic a couple of weeks ago,

is we were driving past a cemetery, my husband and I, and we were like, it just seems really inefficient to be using up all of that land just for decomposing well bodies, essentially. But you know religion does play into it. There's certainly constructs around death that we have to kind of fit within. But I think the kind of breaking down a little bit now in terms of, I don't think everybody feels they need to be buried necessarily in a church yard. It's interesting. What's your thoughts or relationship with the idea of death?

Cait Bagby: I think that's such a tricky question because when we first talked about, this topic as a show, this was actually an article that I had been working on for quite some time. And by quite some time, I mean, probably a good six months. And for some reason I could never just sit down and write it. I had all the information, but there was something blocking me from actually writing the article itself.

And I'm wonder, I haven't quite figured it out, but I do wonder if it causes like a tinge of discomfort where then you really do need to start thinking about, you know, what what's going to happen. And right, as you said, no one really wants to think about their mortality, but it's an important conversation to have. What's your relationship with it?

Sarah Ferris: I have to say I've got quite a different relationship with death than I did probably a few years ago. So, um, I had breast cancer five years ago now and once I had that, I don't know like that confrontation with death, essentially. I feel a lot freer from it. So I don't have that fear that I think goes with it. I kind of feel like, we're all running out of runway in one way, shape or form. And I'm just really hoping that science is going to play a blinder and alter my genome so that I can just live forever, because that would be my favorite thing to do. just to torment my children and their grandchildren, and then their grandchildren. Totally unsustainable for the planet. I know.

Cait Bagby: Oh my gosh. I have to say that is one thing I would never want, to live forever.

Sarah Ferris: Never. Really?

Cait Bagby: Mmhmm.

Sarah Ferris: Why not though? Why not?

Cait Bagby: cause most days I'm just tired because no, you know, jokes aside about kinda modern living. I think I, yeah, I don't really know. I think, I want to be here on earth for a period of time, give back what I can, but also time to pass the Baton time, to pass it to future generations without input, without influence from older generations. I think.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, my God, you are so much like less selfish than me. I would just have ultimate FOMO. That's my problem.

Cait Bagby: But you never know. There's a party question I always love to ask, which is if you had the ability to either travel back in time or travel into the future as an observer, you couldn't change anything, which would you do?

Sarah Ferris: Oh, that is the best question, Cait, nobody's ever asked me that before. I'm so torn. I'm so torn because part of me wants to go back to sit down with Jesus and just go, Hey mate, do you realize the impact you're going to have?

Cait Bagby: Uh, do you know what's about to happen?

Sarah Ferris: Yeah, heads up. And then I think perhaps the future might be more interesting cause that might change my ideas about well, maybe I'd go forward and get the lotto numbers. That's what I'd do.

Cait Bagby: You can't change anything, but that's my first thought too.

Sarah Ferris: Isn't that? Everybody's first thought. No, I like that. I don't know. What would you do?

Cait Bagby: Uh, future absolutely a future because I'll never know the future. And even though I don't have a fantastic grasp on history, I can learn a certain amount of it. Yeah. I can, you know, you can learn whatever you want to learn to the information available, but no one will ever know the future.

Sarah Ferris: True. True. Well, uh, there's one little saying that I think well in this, episode and that is, there's 'nothing as certain as death and taxes.' And often the death part starts with a ceremony. I don't know about you, but I often have this game where I will hear a really inappropriate song and I will say to my husband, you better play that at my funeral. That is just the song I want. For example, I don't know about you, but I a hundred percent, I'm a massive Queen fan.

Cait Bagby: So favorite band.

Sarah Ferris: Mine too. Didn't know that about you, but I've got this vision of me being taken down in the coffin down the, whatever it is to another one bites the dust, and then just everyone just like laughing and thinking, God, you are so inappropriate either in and death. Um, or there's another really good song by flight of the Conchords. Do you know a song called not crying?

Cait Bagby: No

Sarah Ferris: Oh, the lyrics are so funny. It's like, 'I'm not crying. I'm just cutting onions. I was making lasagna.' Um, and that would also be at my funeral. What about you?

Cait Bagby: So I'm the same as you. I actively have a playlist I've been creating for several years now. They include songs, like wake me up. Oh, I forget who the artist is.

Sarah Ferris: Yes,

Cait Bagby: When I think about funerals, my own death, right? I do not want a funeral. I don't want a wake. I want people to have a dinner party, like a really nice dinner party out on the farm. Play really good music. Read some poetry. Have some good laughs like just celebrate instead of... mourn. I mean you can mourn in through celebrating, I think.

Sarah Ferris: Well, yeah, because you want to be remembered. That's the whole point, isn't it, to remember the person for a bit of time. And it just reminds me... the best funeral I've ever been to is my grandmother's. She was 94. She'd had a great innings and she's a really hard stick. Oh, she was such great, great laugh. And at her funeral, all of the grandchildren actually ended up playing games and, uh, you know, we played survivor and voted each other off the table. We made a human pyramid. We had arm wrestles. I mean, it got ridiculous by the end of it, but we all had such a good time. And the whole point was, you know, we knew that she would have been looking down, or, whatever your belief system is, we knew that she would approve that this was our last moments to honor her really. Having fun was the message that we wanted to leave her with and we did. So, you know, that's how death kind of starts but then there's the problem with the body disposal. I'm just going to put it out there.

Cait Bagby: Yeah. And I feel like another disclaimer on this show, Sarah and I will probably inadvertently use language that is maybe not the most delicate. Not intentional

Sarah Ferris: I mean, I can a hundred percent tell you I will be indelicate in this topic. But yeah, so there's quite a few options, right?

Cait Bagby: There are a lot of options, but before we dig into....

Sarah Ferris: Oh, nice.

Cait Bagby: The eco burial options...

Sarah Ferris: sorry but was that a deliberate pun, the digging in, or did you miss that?

Cait Bagby: No, I did miss that.

Sarah Ferris: Love it.

Cait Bagby: Uh, before we do that though, typically most people think there are two options or two predominant options, I should say, for how your body can be dealt with after death.

The first is a traditional burial so we're thinking like embalming and caskets and then the second is cremation. And Sarah, another personal question until we go through the options.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah.

Cait Bagby: Have you thought about either those two options and do you lean one way or another?

Sarah Ferris: If I only have those two to choose from then I'll probably go the cremation and then make my children like do a world trip, scattering me in a fabulous places. That would be probably my ideal out of those two options, but there is another option that I do like the idea of, and that's to be made into like a tree or something.

Cait Bagby: There's some foreshadowing for you. We are going to get to that one.

Sarah Ferris: I don't know much about it so I am interested to find out what about you?

Cait Bagby: I feel like you and I are cut from the same cloth, because same, I always thought cremation for me, that would be the way to, I mean, not go, after I go, cremate me. Um, but I had thought over my life, I wanted to accumulate contacts from every single country in the world. And then I don't know if this is possible or not.

So please no one try this without checking with state and you know, different laws around the world. I wanted to send a part of my ashes to a contact in every single one of those countries so they could scatter it in what they think is the most beautiful place there.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, that's such a great idea. I like that.

Cait Bagby: I feel like there's a business opportunity there for someone to set up.

Sarah Ferris: Can you post your ashes though?

Cait Bagby: I don't know. Don't be sending powder around the world without checking.

Sarah Ferris: No, definitely not check that one first but that's a great idea. Okay. So

Cait Bagby: let's talk about environmental. Let's start with, what's called conventional burials. So we're talking caskets, plot in a cemetery, buried and another small astrick on this... most of this, actually, all of this is going to be U S centric for numbers and for options available, there are different options available in different countries, but it vastly differs. And I was not going to go down that rabbit hole, but here are the main ones.

Sarah Ferris: Fair enough.

Cait Bagby: So in the U S right now around 35% of people choose conventional burials. So this number is actually going down and cremations have been on the rise, but then we're also seeing an influx of individuals interested in green burials. So right now, 35%. The average cost is around 8 to \$10,000.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Wow. That was going to be my next question, because is it going down because it's so expensive?

Cait Bagby: There's a lot of talk on that. In the U S there's a lack of transparency in the funeral industry, and I'm sure people will have their opinions on that, but on a whole, there's a

lack of transparency and prices are not the same from town to town, state to state. People can and it definitely happens that they are financially taken advantage of when they are arguably in one of their most emotional states.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. Yeah.

Cait Bagby: And this is also why people will plan out their own funerals ahead of time to prevent that distress on family members.

Sarah Ferris: But is the one way though that's overall cheaper than the other, because I'm imagining like cremation you're paying for, you know, casket and then the burning of the body but you're not paying for land essentially like you are with a plot.

Cait Bagby: So cremation can cost anywhere from 5 to \$8,000. Whereas, traditional burial is eight to 10, and those are rough numbers. Again, there are definitely going to be places where it is more expensive and they're going to be places where it is least expensive or cheaper. Traditional or conventional burials, how the process generally works is the individual is embalmed, and I'm going to start going into the environmental factors of why conventional burials are not great. Embalming involves filling the body with a cocktail of different preservatives.

These include formaldehyde phenol, methanol, glycerin, and others. And you know where this is going, Sarah, cause we've talked about, we've talked about chemicals in other shows. All of those can be quite toxic.

Sarah Ferris: Why, why do you do that? Like surely your body just breaks down. Why do you have to pump it full of something to try and not let it break down. Isn't that fighting against nature anyway.

Cait Bagby: Well, the main two reasons that it's done today is for a transport of the body. Okay. And the second reason is, um, open casket funerals or wakes.

Sarah Ferris: Right?

Cait Bagby: Because the body will start to decompose pretty quickly and so that is predominantly why it's been done. All of those different chemicals, for instance, formaldehyde, phenol and, um, methanol can all cause skin, eye, nose, and throat irritation at high level, some of them can cause cancer at other high levels or, long exposure it can cause kidney damage, tremors, convulsions. Now of course, if you're dead, that doesn't matter to you. But..

Sarah Ferris: You might be how you want some mourners down with you as the point, if you're putting all that toxin into the environment.

Cait Bagby: Well, so that's the thing one, we do have to think of funeral directors and embalmers. They take precautions, but being around any kind of toxic chemical like that for long exposure, we know it doesn't necessarily end well. The other issue with the embalming

or one of the bigger issues with embalming is that embalming fluids that are not used or that leak out of the body during the embalming process, that often goes into the public wastewater system through the sewers.

Sarah Ferris: Oh that is so grim. I can't tell you. Okay.

Cait Bagby: It does go through filtration systems, but I don't know about you I don't really feel like that's probably the best thing to be dumping chemicals into our water.

Sarah Ferris: No. So here's the thing, a question. If you wanted to be more eco about your disposal and you wanted to go down the route of being buried, you could just skip the embalming part couldn't you?

Cait Bagby: Absolutely. Is it right?

Sarah Ferris: So you can actually do.

Cait Bagby: Yeah. You don't have to be embalmed. There is nothing in place that says you have to be embalmed

Sarah Ferris: and I'm thinking it's cheaper.

Cait Bagby: Oh, I wouldn't imagine.

Sarah Ferris: I'm just skipping as many steps as I can.

Cait Bagby: Just straight to the ground.

Sarah Ferris: Straight to the ground.

Cait Bagby: Best case scenario, you're getting up there and you just start taking your naps outside. Well, there you go. Skip everything straight to the ground.

Sarah Ferris: Put me under a little tree. Yeah, I like it. A little leaf blanket just to get it started.

Cait Bagby: Yeah. Just give me a nice, give me a nice cotton blanket. We're good to go. Uh, so embalming right. Step one, caskets are step two. Caskets also pretty nasty.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah.

Cait Bagby: And I'm not talking. And we will talk about like the pine box and a little fun fact for that the pine boxes actually went out of favor in the United States around civil war timeframe, which is kind of interesting.

Sarah Ferris: Why?

Cait Bagby: That is a whole history book, which I am happy to...

Sarah Ferris: Not a history podcast though, is it? but I hear where you are going.

Cait Bagby: But the caskets that we know today, which are the four sided. So I did learn this. Another fun fact, a coffin is six sided. A casket is four sided. Or it has four sides, obviously, top and bottom. We're not counting those. There's about 1.8 million caskets that are sold in the U S every year.

Sarah Ferris: That's a lot. That's actually, no, hold on. That's not actually that many, is it 1.8? Do you know how many people die?

Cait Bagby: You know, what I didn't check is how many people die.

Sarah Ferris: No, that's fine. Moving on.

Cait Bagby: They are either made from wood or metal. Generally, it's a combination and then they are lined with synthetic fabrics for the most part. That uses if we're talking in terms of resource usage, I'm going to throw some numbers out at you, 30 million board feet of hardwoods, 2,700 tons of copper and bronze, 104,200 tons of steel and 1.6 million tons of reinforced concrete. And we'll get the concrete part of burial plots. We'll get to that. That means, or roughly works out to 4 million acres of forest or enough to build 4.5 million homes.

Sarah Ferris: Wow. The thing that's really shocking me is that none of this sounds like it's really going to decompose very easily. Like almost wrapping something that can decompose in all the elements to stop it decomposing.

Cait Bagby: Oh yeah. It gets worse. Yeah. It gets worse. So the casket use varnishes, sealers, preservatives, metals. These can be incredibly toxic because they use chemicals like methyl and xylene and several casket manufacturers, the EPA has gone after them for, industrial waste sites. So essentially they're heavy polluters into the environment around them, including the ground water.

And at one point, and I couldn't find the exact date on this, but casket manufacturers were listed as one of the top 50 hazardous waste generators by the EPA.

Sarah Ferris: Wow. Yeah, there's nothing good about that.

Cait Bagby: Remember I talked about the concrete, right? So concrete is 1.6 million tons of reinforced concrete I actually didn't know this, that most burial plots have what's called a burial vault or a grave liner. Did you know this?

Sarah Ferris: What does that mean? No, of course. I didn't know that.

Cait Bagby: Essentially it's a structure generally made from concrete, metal or, um, polystyrene, which is a hard plastic. And it's put into the grave site before the coffin is lowered into it.

Sarah Ferris: Really,

Cait Bagby: Yeah, to reinforce the sides. You can do like concrete caskets themselves, or what's very typical are what's called grave liners. I thought that was really interesting.

Sarah Ferris: Well, I've just got the vision of the old grave Digger guy doing the six foot hole or whatever. I don't ever remember seeing a liner in it. That's weird.

Cait Bagby: I don't ever remember seeing a liner, but if I think back to the funerals, I've been to the burial site was always lined with like a green faux grass. You never actually saw the dirt.

Sarah Ferris: Yes, that's so true yes, yes, yes. You're right. Yep. Totally.

Cait Bagby: So now we're adding plastic on top of that too. So great. This is just getting..

Sarah Ferris: Oh god. I mean this is just not the way forward.

Cait Bagby: The reason they do these burial vaults or grave liners is over time, the body does decompose even with embalming, the caskets do deteriorate. It's a very long process. Without the burial vaults the soil on top and around will actually collapse into the coffin itself, casket itself. So it will create a depression in the ground above. And cemeteries don't want that because how are you going to mow your pristine green, you know, green acres?

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Well, I think that, that's just sounds like the most nuts way that we could go, because we're not even letting people decompose it's just, everything is against us decomposing.

Cait Bagby: Yeah, pretty much. And as it does break down, there was an article, I think it was out of one of the Southern states where flooding had happened and the caskets had been lifted out of the ground. There were some studies done after, and they actually found there was a pretty high rate of toxic chemicals in the water as a result of the bodies being exposed to it. So that goes back to the embalming. And then let's just top this off. Let's just put some icing on this cake. When we think of a typical cemetery, we think of, you know, headstones lined up, very green, maybe there's a couple of trees. It requires so much water and so many synthetic and chemical fertilizers to keep it looking that way.

And of course, then that runs into the waterways and seeps into the soil as well, which harms wildlife, things like bees, which are already in decline.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. Right. Well, that's the nail in the coffin, ironically.

Cait Bagby: I'd say, I don't know if the show is going to get more depressing, but I mean, we're talking about death,

Sarah Ferris: so there's that.

Cait Bagby: Okay. So let's cremation?

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. I mean, that is totally dead in the water that one. I'm going to use as many death puns as I can obviously.

Cait Bagby: Someone keep counts of these..

Sarah Ferris: I think I'm up to two. Cait's got one in there as well from earlier. So we're up to three. Uh, tell me about cremation.

Cait Bagby: Cremation was really not accepted until the early to mid 19 hundreds. It was widely introduced in the late 18 hundreds, but the Catholic church was absolutely adamant that it should never be used because it was complete disrespect for the body. And we're going to see the Catholic church come up again in a more eco-friendly manner. They are now against that as well. Eventually they got behind cremation and now it is the most common form of how do I say this? I want to say body

Sarah Ferris: disposal. Yeah. Just go for it, embrace it.

Cait Bagby: Uh, and in the UK and Canada, around 70% of people choose cremation in the U S it's 60 to 70%. In the 1960s, that number was only 3%. So it's grown in popularity and some countries it's over 90%.

Sarah Ferris: It's interesting because I was brought up Catholic and I don't think I've ever been to a cremation of any one in my family, it's all still been, uh, in the terribly un eco grave plot with the coffin, et cetera. So I'm going to take note and see if it does move away from that. I don't want to, I don't want to do a poll on this, but yeah. Interesting how religion affects how we dispose of the body. It's all part of the ceremony.

Cait Bagby: Very much so and different religions actually have very eco-friendly Methods for burial or, you know, end of life or not end of life after life for an individual. I was not raised Catholic. I was raised Protestant, but I also have never had a family member that was cremated. My parents on the other hand have said, that's what they would want so I'm curious to see if that's going to be the first generation in my family that's choosing something different.

Sarah Ferris: Different. Yeah, absolutely.

Cait Bagby: Okay. Environmental impact cremation. Here we go. The body needs to be heated to 1200 degrees Fahrenheit minimum, right around there. The average cremation uses

the amount of energy and has the same emissions as about two tanks of gas in the average car and I think it worked out to like a 500 mile trip via vehicle.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: So it's a lot of emissions and energy usage.

Sarah Ferris: It's more expensive in two tanks of gas. I'd like to point out.

Cait Bagby: Well, not if gas prices keep going up. The average cremation has scrubbing filters or systems to remove heavy metals that are released from the body. The most common is mercury, and that generally comes from dental fillings, but also general accumulation in the body, just over our lives. Not every crematorium uses the same type of systems. I don't even believe all of them use them. What the filtration systems don't do is neutralize the CO2 emissions. So it pumps a lot of greenhouse gases out into the air.

Sarah Ferris: Right. Okay. Okay.

Cait Bagby: The estimate for total CO2 output is around 360,000 metric tons each year in the United States. So it's a lot and then it also relies on predominantly natural gas so we're using a fossil fuel too.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. The thing that really is odd, isn't it like we are nutrients. We are made up of molecules that could then become nutrients for something else and the way that we've chosen to dispose of ourselves is basically to rob the earth of that in both those methods, because when you burn something and you're left with ash how good is that for the environment? Like that's the nutrients sort of gone? Isn't it?

Cait Bagby: I mean like you said, we come from the earth, well, some people will believe that some people do not, but we are made up of natural elements. The body is about 70% water. That can go back into creating a healthy environment, working in a closed loop system. We've just completely, as you mentioned, removed ourselves from that. In my opinion it's, I feel like I'm going to get myself in trouble for this, but I'm just going to say, I feel like when we remove ourselves from the environment, we're playing God in having dominion over everything else, instead of understanding our role in giving back.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. So, the cremation overall, what's your feeling on it?

Cait Bagby: Now that I know the green options, it's a ney for me. What about you? Yeah.

Sarah Ferris: For me it's a ney but I'm yet to hear something that's a yay.

Cait Bagby: Let's start going into the option. The good news is right around 54% of Americans are now considering green burials.

Sarah Ferris: That's great. That's a big number.

Cait Bagby: And it's growing. There is still a lot of confusion in terms of what is, and is not allowed. This does depend on your local and state laws. So green burials on a whole are allowed across the United States. Certain types of green burials may not be allowed in certain states.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. When you say green burials can you give us an overview of what might constitute a green burial?

Cait Bagby: Yes. So let's do this. I'm going to give you a couple different options and then you tell me which one you want to dig down into. How's that?

Sarah Ferris: Stop with the digging. I'm loving it. Sorry.

Cait Bagby: We're just, we're buried under options right now.

Sarah Ferris: Stop it.

Cait Bagby: There it is.

Sarah Ferris: We're up to five, I think.

Cait Bagby: Okay. We talked about this a little bit burial with no embalming. Then you can use a simple wooden casket, a cardboard container or a shroud. So a casket that's not treated, talking like simple pine box, but then they also have caskets made out of sea grass or banana leaves or recycled pulp. There's a lot of different options out there. There's a lot of different manufacturers but again, you can also use a simple shroud as well.

Sarah Ferris: If you're going to go the burial route, that's a no brainer, isn't it? Don't go getting yourself filled with formaldehyde and making it super hard for yourself to break down. Make sense.

Cait Bagby: Exactly. In terms of burials they have a loop mushroom pod or a cocoon, and then there's also a mushroom what's called infinity suit.

Sarah Ferris: I need to know more about this, cause I can't even understand what that is. What's a, what's a loop mushroom pod? Let's start that with that.

Cait Bagby: So Loop is the name of the company, as far as I'm aware, they are the only ones manufacturing this right now. They make caskets that are grown from mycelium: from fungus, think mushrooms. The casket itself is made through growing mycelium in these molds. It's compressed, essentially the mycelium is inactive until the individual is buried, lowered into the ground, think traditional burial, but no burial liners, just you in the mushroom cocoon in the ground. Once the container, the cocoon, is exposed to groundwater, moisture in the ground, the mycelium actually becomes activated. As the body's breaking down the mycelium network then starts to grow and work with the local environment and the nutrients from the body help to strengthen that.

Sarah Ferris: So you don't turn into a mushroom. That's what I was imagining that you would then be in some little, I didn't know, you'd become a little fungi stack.

Cait Bagby: No. I mean, you help it grow and I guess you could argue that as your body breaks down into organic compounds, yes, in a way you do.

Sarah Ferris: Right. But it's more that the fact that it's like a casket that's made out of the mushroom substance versus,

Cait Bagby: Yes.

Sarah Ferris: Me wearing a mushroom body suit. Disappointing.

Cait Bagby: So 92% of all plant species rely or work with microorganisms such as my mycelium, which is why it's incredibly important to help your local environment through methods like that.

Sarah Ferris: Right. I mean, when I say disappointing, I just mean it's disappointing from a comedy factor. I was imagining that I was having to make my, you know, the pallbearers walked down the aisle holding a giant me in a mushroom suit, but that's not what's going to happen by the sounds of it.

Cait Bagby: I was just thinking of the poor foragers out there, you know, getting their mushrooms for dinner.

Sarah Ferris: It's like 'Oo a little mushroom, with little toe.'

Cait Bagby: Okay. This has gone. This is we've taken it a step to far? It. We've taken...

Sarah Ferris: sorry. Moving on.

Cait Bagby: Check with your local...

Sarah Ferris: forages.

Cait Bagby: No, not foragers. Check with your local, uh, you know, zoning laws. A lot of states actually, most states, I believe now have a green cemeteries. You can bury yourself in a green cemetery, which is well, not yourself, but you know what I mean? Um, that process takes about 30 to 45 days until the body is decomposed and back one with the earth.

Sarah Ferris: 45 days. Oh, that's nice.

Cait Bagby: Oh. And I didn't put pricing on that one. I do have pricing for everything else.

Sarah Ferris: For the mushroom one?

Cait Bagby: Yeah. For the pod.

Sarah Ferris: Well I'm liking the mushroom pod. That's up there. So what's next?

Cait Bagby: Let's stick with mushrooms then the infinity suit. I don't know how to say the name of this company. It's C O E I O. Oh, I just want to start singing old McDonald had a farm E I E E.

Sarah Ferris: COEIO.

Cait Bagby: So the infinity suit, it costs around \$1,500.

Sarah Ferris: Right.

Cait Bagby: And this was actually the brain child of an MIT student who was looking at sustainable packaging and then went into essentially zero waste design. The suit, like the cocoon, is made completely of mushrooms and other microorganisms. It's custom made and what essentially does is it helps to neutralize any toxins found in the body and then helps during the decomposition process to transfer the nutrients into the surrounding plant life.

Sarah Ferris: Oh, I love that you can die in a custom suit. Yeah.

Cait Bagby: Ooh. For the fashionista in all of us.

Sarah Ferris: Absolutely. So mushrooms are really, they're doing a lot of heavy lifting in this death section, I have to say. I like them. I like them. What's next? Give me the next section that's not food related. surely.

Cait Bagby: There is, let's do a couple of these odd balls here. There's a burial at sea. In the United States. It is legal to be buried at sea. There are private companies that do this. It costs anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000.

Anyone can be buried to see whole or cremated, but all materials must be biodegradable. So anything that's used during the burial process.

Sarah Ferris: This is my nightmare burial. I'm not joking.

Cait Bagby: Is it?

Sarah Ferris: Yeah I have? Yeah, no, there's no way I could have a watery grave essentially. Isn't it? It's not because I've got a horrible fear of sharks. So that is just no, don't feed me to the sharks when I'm done. Nope, Nope, Nope. That's a hard no for me.

Cait Bagby: Okay, well, for those of you who might be interested, we know it's not Sarah.

Sarah Ferris: Is it good for the environment? I guess it is cause it's giving your nutrients straight back to the environment in order to get broken down pretty quickly

Cait Bagby: I'd imagine as well.

Yes, I don't know... we can touch on this a little bit. During the cremation process if you have things like a pacemaker and I believe other metals in your body, definitely a pacemaker, they have to be removed prior to cremation because it can cause massive issues. I'm curious if the same is required for sea burials, because I don't think you'd want to be putting metals or anything into the water, but I don't know.

Sarah Ferris: Interesting.

Cait Bagby: There are different laws around this. Again, it is completely legal in the United States. You do need to file for it and all this kind of stuff. Um, depending on where it is, depending on what state, the body may need to be weighted, it must be conducted at least three nautical miles from land and in waters of 600 feet deep or more.

Sarah Ferris: Because what happens if it just catches a current and heads back to shore, that's pretty horrific. Isn't it?

Cait Bagby: It would be.

Sarah Ferris: That must happen. That's not that far. Three nautical miles. I'm terrible with distance, but I mean, I feel like, you know, a bit of a storm, you haven't weighted it down enough and then bish bosh bash, auntie Mary's, you know, come up on the beach, that's a nightmare situation. I'm just putting it out.

Cait Bagby: I don't think she's just popping back up on your, at your house, I mean.

Sarah Ferris: That's just not one for me.

Cait Bagby: Maybe it's maybe it's for someone who always wants to take a cruise and never got around to, oh yeah, there you go.

Sarah Ferris: Auntie Mary, she loves that stuff.

Cait Bagby: Oh gosh. We are going to get so many comments on inappropriate language usage.

Sarah Ferris: Hate mail is what you're looking for there.

Cait Bagby: Okay. So the other two kind of not cremation related are, and this one is not technically available yet, but I wanted to include it because it's been heralded as one of the newer technologies that we're going to see happen which is a Swedish company called PROMESA. They're experimenting with freeze-drying, which is so fascinating to me.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: So the body is dipped in liquid nitrogen. Right then it is vibrated until it breaks up and then those pieces can be buried in the ground or use for fertilizer, whatever you want to do with it. I thought that was so fascinating.

Sarah Ferris: It's fascinating. But you know, how much do they have to pay you to work in that factory because that's gotta be slightly traumatizing to watch.

Cait Bagby: Oh, you don't watch it. It's not like it's out in the open, they're just rolling people around.

Sarah Ferris: I've just got this version of like some person on the manufacturing belt or somewhere watching a body being vibrated into a thousand pieces. It's just horrific.

Cait Bagby: No, I'd imagine it's in a closed container, but if you think about it, I mean, it's kind of the same as cremation, right? Someone has to be doing these practices.

Sarah Ferris: You're right. You're right. I've just got a very vivid imagination. Great. Okay. I'm going to stay away from that one. All right.

Cait Bagby: So no burial at sea and no freeze-drying for you. Okay. And like I said, it's not available yet publicly. I think privately, too. It was not available. So let's just put that out there. The other kind of non cremation one is you can donate your body to science. The best known facility is at the University of Tennessee. It's called the forensic anthropology center. And a lot of people may know it as the body farm. Essentially what happens is you can either donate to a university or research Institute, or you can donate to a medical facility to have your body studied. At the forensic anthropology center at University of Tennessee this actually helps in a lot of crimes. So they'll put bodies out in different exposures. So maybe direct sunlight or under a certain type of soil, for a certain length of time and they're actually able to study the body to help both in medical science, but also for solving things like cold cases.

Sarah Ferris: That is quite amazing but I'm not sure, even with my kind of theory that, you know, when I'm gone, I'm gone. I still don't know if I want to be just left out to see how long it takes me to decompose.

Cait Bagby: But if you think about it, that is what natural burial is about. Just in this, in this regard, you're just helping science. In other regards you're just helping a forest.

Sarah Ferris: True, true.

Cait Bagby: You know, you're doing both at the same time for medical. There's different facilities, different research institutes, and you can specify and work with them for quite a few so you can know where your body's going, what it might be used for. It's actually quite fascinating, in my opinion.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Um, I'm not sure. I'm on the fence on that one.

Cait Bagby: Well I do have a couple other. The other one we didn't talk about burials is recompose. Have you ever heard of this?

Sarah Ferris: No.

Cait Bagby: Recompose is actually a bit newer. They've been around for a couple of years. They are super popular. It's a company out of Washington state, and I will just say upfront, the cost is \$5,500. You can buy a membership and pay in installments.

Sarah Ferris: I'm not opposed to a bit of planning.

Cait Bagby: What they do is your body can be transported there, if you're outside of the state, and they put your body into what is called a capsule inside of a greenhouse and around your body they include things like, hay, alfalfa wood chips, essentially things that will aid in the decomposition process.

Your body will break down in about 30 days after which it creates about one cubic yard of soil.

Sarah Ferris: that's the ultimate to me. I'm turning into nutrients for something else. But can you use that? Like, is that okay?

Cait Bagby: Oh yeah.

Sarah Ferris: It's not disgusting to put that around your tomato plants next summer?

Cait Bagby: No, and there's two practices in here, Recompose and then there's also aquamation, where people have said they actually feel much more at ease with it because they know that they can then take their loved one and they can go on to help grow something.

So you could take the soil home if you wanted which people certainly opt to do. The other option is Recompose works with Blue Mountain Conservation and the soil is used to help repair vulnerable ecological areas.

Sarah Ferris: Oh now, now, I like this one. I like this one, but this one sounds similar to what I kind of had in my mind which was, I wanted to be turned into a tree. I have seen, I don't know where I've seen it, but a little pod that you end up and your kind of tucked into the fetal position and then you're planted with a tree on top of you.

Cait Bagby: Yes.

Sarah Ferris: this is the one that I thought I would like to be. Can you tell me if that's a nice eco option or if I need to start thinking about, be thrown out to the ocean and my most horrific nightmare.

Cait Bagby: I started becoming okay with that.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah.

Cait Bagby: The tree pod straddles burial and cremation so that's like the perfect segue. I do want to say before, we move on to that, that right now in the United States, human composting is only legal in three states. I believe there is a fourth state, which is pushing for it now, which I find strange. You can be buried in a mushroom coffin. You can be buried in a mushroom suit. You can be buried in a shroud, which you naturally compost, but you can't actually willingly compost. Like you can't decide. I dunno, there's some legal jargon there. That's weird.

All right, tree pods. Perfect segue. So the company that does this, I believe there are Italian. It's called Capsula Mundi. The cost is \$500, but they have different products you can buy. Sarah, I was a little disappointed when I started researching this

Sarah Ferris: No... one it sounds cheap, which I'm in for. And I liked the name of the company.

Cait Bagby: Here's the deal. I saw this a couple of years ago when they were still in their concept phase and all the graphics they showed was you in the fetal position, in a little egg, under a tree. I assumed, I don't know why I assumed this, that when your family or loved ones, whomever got your capsule, the tree was attached to it. It is not.

Sarah Ferris: I'm confused. What you're just given a fetal-y shaped capsule and then you can bury it yourself or what are you supposed to do with it?

Cait Bagby: Yeah, you bury it where you are allowed to bury it and you put your tree on top of that. And again, the idea is that as the body breaks down, which the capsule helps to do, your nutrients are feeding the tree.

Sarah Ferris: There's still some purpose to the capsule then. Right. So you, it's still doing what I envisioned. I just not getting a free tree with it.

Cait Bagby: Well, right. And I actually think that's probably a good thing because then you're not planting invasive species anywhere. You get to pick whatever tree you want. So that's good. What, I don't know, is how would that differ than just being planted or planted? Wow. Buried in a shroud underneath a tree. I don't know if the capsule provides any specific nutrients to aid in the process. I don't know that.

Sarah Ferris: But so let's go back to that. Can I just be buried in a shroud though? Like you can surely there's some kind of council limitations that don't let you do that.

Cait Bagby: It varies by your local laws and jurisdiction. So for instance, I learned through this research process that in Massachusetts, the state I'm in, you can be buried on your own land. You do need to get permission and I'm sure there's whole wetlands and all sort of setbacks and all these different things, but you can with permission to be buried on your own

land. Now, would that go a step further to say you can be buried, but it has to be in a casket, can it be in a shroud. That's where you start get into those nitty gritty details that, and why we can't cover all of them.

Sarah Ferris: That's a really good point because when I think about being made into a tree, I don't want to be just like made into a tree somewhere random. I want to be in a tree that is attached to somewhere that's special to my family. I didn't actually take that into consideration that I'm not sure that I could actually bury my own body in my backyard with the council being okay with that. Then it takes you back to maybe the composting is an option because you get that done elsewhere and then you can still be scattered around at home

Cait Bagby: or green cemeteries. There's a huge rise in green cemeteries and green cemeteries are going to vary for some, you could do trees, for some it's just burial without anything synthetic, toxic. It all really does come down to what's available to you.

Sarah Ferris: So is that all of our options?

Cait Bagby: Oh no, technically eco-friendly cremation.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: This is the one I find the most interesting. It's called Aquamation, or it goes by a couple of different names, it's aquamation or alkaline hydrolysis, or resomation or water cremation. So pick a name.

Sarah Ferris: None of them sound good. I'm just going to be honest because it's got the word water in there.

Cait Bagby: I feel like this is not going to be for you.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. They're already giving me alarm bells.

Cait Bagby: So it can cost up to \$4,000. The average is \$2,000. It is not available in every single state and remember how I said we were going to come back to the Catholic church. This is where they come in.

Sarah Ferris: Amen.

Cait Bagby: In New Hampshire, aquamation became legal in the state but There was a lot of pressure from one Congressman. I believe he came out of Illinois though, and started this whole campaign to essentially say the aquamation was irreverence to the body. It was, you know, we weren't treating the dead with any kind of sensitivity and the Catholic church got behind this just like they did with cremation. And so two years later in New Hampshire actually rolled back the law.

I do believe it's available in about 19 states and more allowing this to happen. What it is your body is placed into a stainless steel container, it is then filled with a mixture of water and then, um, alkaline solution and then heat is applied and the body is gently vibrated, Sarah.

Sarah Ferris: God. There's a lot of vibration and water in these.

Cait Bagby: What you're left with is a combination of liquids because again, your body is water, so you're left with liquid and then you're left with the bones, which can be essentially ground down or powder down from there. And you get quote-unquote ashes, which then you can do whatever you want with. There was a heartwarming and heartbreaking story at the same time of this mother whose son had passed away. Um, I believe he was in his mid teens and he was terrified of fire but wanted to be cremated and his mother didn't know how best to honor his wishes.

And they found a aquamation and what they loved about this is, it was water-based. But then the family could take both the water and the quote-unquote ashes and they used the water to create a Memorial garden for him. Then they, um, took the ashes and I, I don't know if they kept them in an urn or scattered them.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah, and I think that's the thing, isn't it? You've got to find a way that honors the person that's gone and their wishes and that's, that's a very special story. Yeah. Okay.

Cait Bagby: And remember in, um, we were talking about embalming that the wastewater is, you know, it goes back into the sewage systems. If for some reason you don't want the water from a water cremation, it can very safely go into the sewage system. So that's the eco cremation version.

And then from there you can decide if you want to do a biodegradable urn, the tree pods, you can do the, uh ashes. I'm going to keep saying ashes. Cause I don't actually know what else you'd call it. What do you call it?

Sarah Ferris: Hmm, pulp. I don't know. That's not what I want to be called.

Cait Bagby: I don't think anybody wants to be called pulp. Do you get ashes? No, I got pulp.

Sarah Ferris: Um, is it real or is it pulp fiction?

Cait Bagby: I'll just say ashes, you can take the ashes and you can do biodegradable urns, there's water urns where you can keep them, like they're made from biodegradable materials, uh, plant materials, cellulose, things like that. You can keep the urn as long as you want. As soon as it's put into water, it will biodegrade. And then the, I guess last option is a coral reef burial, or what's called reef balls.

Sarah Ferris: I mean, it still sounds like my nightmare, but I'm liking where it's going. Tell me more.

Cait Bagby: This one's actually a bit controversial. I'd say it's the arguably the most controversial, essentially what it is is your ashes hopefully done through something like aquamation, which I should also add only uses 10% of the energy that traditional cremation uses and there's no emissions. So winning on that front. So you take your eco ashes slash pulp, they're combined with a concrete mixture to form a ball, which is about five feet tall, six feet wide.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. But that doesn't sound good. Concrete's not good. Is it?

Cait Bagby: That's the controversial part? So concrete, uh, accounts for about eight percent of the world's CO2 emissions.

Sarah Ferris: we're winning with one hand and taking away with the other,

Cait Bagby: yeah. What ends up happening is the reef ball is put underwater into fragile ecosystems to prevent further erosion. What happens first is algae starts to grow on the area. Then the fish start to come, you know, the little things that eat the algae and then the bigger things that eat the little things that the algae and so on and so forth. And they've seen some success with it.

Sarah Ferris: Okay. Interesting.

Cait Bagby: That's it. I have no more them.

Sarah Ferris: Now the hundred million dollar question, what one would you go for now that you've researched this and such depth?

Cait Bagby: I would have two options, either a complete natural burial, like shroud, no, no container whatsoever. Like just give me a shroud. If I have to have one otherwise just dump me in the ground. Or I would probably go with aquamation and go back to my original plan, which is to mail my pulp out to different people in the world so they can spread it in the most beautiful places. That's what I'm going with.

Sarah Ferris: Love it.

Cait Bagby: What are you going with after all that?

Sarah Ferris: I'm not swung away from the tree pod, to be honest. I quite like the idea of the tree pod. I think I'm sticking that.

Second to that would be the, um, custom made mushroom suit. Just because I can have old McDonald playing at my funeral, something along the lines of Old Mc Donald made a mushroom infinity suit C O E I O something like that.

Cait Bagby: They're going to reach out for marketing I know it.

Sarah Ferris: If you want to be sponsored, we can use them.

Cait Bagby: No, I meant for their new jingle. They're going to hire you.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. I know. I'm wasted. I'm wasted.

Cait Bagby: I mean, sponsors are good too.

Sarah Ferris: Definitely. But then they make you use your product. So I don't think we want a whole lot of , coffins and stuff, turning up for us to use as

Cait Bagby: a giveaway, uh, mushroom giveaway. Well with all of that, very fun death, destruction, and upcycling, I would argue.

Sarah Ferris: Mmhm. the ultimate upcycling. I think.

Cait Bagby: It really is. I really like that more and more people are considering and wanting green burials. I think as a result, we're going to see more legislation in support of it. So that makes me very happy.

Sarah Ferris: I think also, it's one of those weird situations in the green world where it's actually slightly cheaper to turn to the green option because the traditional burial is running thousands and thousands. Whereas some of those options, you know, work on a shroud and bish bosh bash you're done.

Cait Bagby: Is that your challenge for next week? Make your own shroud.

Sarah Ferris: Oh God, that could be my life project. Now. I'm going to be really thinking about what my shroud looks like. I'm thinking of all those things that I can't actually recycle well that I could incorporate into the shroud, like the pill boxes that I've discovered that you can't actually recycle like an aspirin tablet thing, so that won't break down so I can't make it into something that I'm going to wear in a shroud, anyway. You wouldn't let me do that, would you?

Cait Bagby: No, but I have this picture in my head of you sitting there knitting, day after day, year after year, and your kid's going, what are you knitting? And you saying, you'll see, you'll see.

Sarah Ferris: And I'm going to knit it into the shape of a giant mushroom as well.

Cait Bagby: Here's my playlist and here is my shroud. The rest is up to you.

Sarah Ferris: This is what you've got to work with. There's the script. I love it. Perfect.

Cait Bagby: Oh, that's great. All right, so speaking of challenges, your challenge last week was composting and finding out what the process was in your area. How did it go?

Sarah Ferris: I think I'll play the audio first because there's highs and lows in this one. I'm not going to lie. It's certainly challenged the guilty power of my greenie, so I'll let the family do the talking.

This week's guilty greenie challenge: did anyone actually notice any changes in the house?

Sarah's Family: The green bin in the kitchen, my guess is that we have to put all of our food recycling in the bin.

Sarah Ferris: Do you know if eggshells count as food waste?

Sarah's Family: Yes they do.

Sarah Ferris: They do? You can recycle that? Do you actually know why we need to compost our food waste?

Sarah's Family: Because if it goes into landfill, then it's not in a ideal conditions for decomposes to survive because there's not enough moisture and oxygen, which means that it won't recycle the nutrients back into natural environment.

Sarah Ferris: I didn't know that.

Sarah's Family: They learn stuff at school actually. Absolutely, the carbon cycle.

Sarah Ferris: So whoever's on the table after dinner, you have to put the food waste into the bin, but only food waste. Do we think we can keep up the composting?

Sarah's Family: Possibly.

Sarah Ferris: Josh , Josh, why is it that right beside the composting bin, I can count 1, 2, 3 banana skins. Mr. I'm going to save the planet. I'm about a week and a half in composting has been going okay but this morning I went to change the bag and got bin juice, which I can't stand and then I remembered how much I hate it and that's why I stopped doing it. But, I'm sucking it up cause obviously that is the first world problem and there's bigger issues

what have you just done? Seriously? What have you just done?

Sarah's Family: Ah. Sorry, the strawberry's in the wrong part of the rubbish bin.

Sarah Ferris: Seriously. It's right there. I have picked out so much food.

Sarah's Family: Standing habits of 45 years.

Sarah Ferris: So there you go: the highs and lows. It's quite a long one this week. Apologies.

Cait Bagby: It was really good. I feel like it, it really captured the enthusiasm, the knowledge, but also the kind of day to day, like, oh, I didn't really think about it.

Sarah Ferris: Wanted to take you on a journey.

Cait Bagby: I feel like the banana peels next to it is not so much a judgment of not wanting or being able to recycle. I feel like that's more telling of a teenager just not picking up.

Sarah Ferris: You realize that the person at the end of it was my husband who was continually just putting the food waste in front of me, into the other bin and I was just losing my mind. Every time I opened the bin, I was like, seriously, it's right beside it just you're millimeters away from putting it in the right bin. But anyway, there was definitely, you know, highs and lows to it.

Cait Bagby: What do you think the biggest takeaway was, was there?

Sarah Ferris: Oh, oh, okay. Well, the biggest, win I think of it was two things, firstly, that Josh was actually learning something at school. That was mind blowing to all of us, that he actually knew the process and where we had to do.

But the second part of the challenge that you gave me was that I had to go and find out where my garden or my food waste goes.

Cait Bagby: Right. What happens to it.

Sarah Ferris: And I was thinking, I wonder what this is going to be, you know, just put it in something really unexciting and blah, blah, blah. It breaks down. But I went onto their website and actually I was so surprised because it kind of goes through the process. And this is what it says on the website. Your food waste is recycled by bio collectors. Here it is anaerobically digested, decomposed in the absence of oxygen in a controlled system, the process uses naturally occurring microorganisms to break down the organic matter in a digestate.

That sounds gross. A compost like product used as a soil conditioner fertilizer on the farmland. Okay. so that's all the scienc-y bit, but this is the bit that I thought was interesting. The bio gas that is produced from that is fed into the national gas grid. So the energy produced from recycling food is provided straight to homes and businesses helping to reduce the UK's reliance on less sustainable energy sources, such as natural gas or fossil fuel.

That blew my mind that it went back into the national gas grid. I thought that was great recycling

Cait Bagby: That's what a closed loop system should look like. That's exactly what it should look like. We're taking something we absolutely need, and we're seeing it all the way through in terms of providing for energy needs while also providing for the thing that we need in the first place in terms of soil.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. Is that something that's normal? Would that happen in the U S do you know if your compost goes back into, well, you probably don't cause you're on a farm.

Cait Bagby: Yeah, I don't know. We don't have composting bins, like curbside bins where we are. It's not a very common thing. It's becoming more so, but still not.

I mean, we're on the farm, right? So everything that can be composted is so that we can use it in the following seasons.

Sarah Ferris: I have to say it was a win, this challenge, the composting challenge in the fact that, oh, I love that little fact that I feel like it's going in a little circle of life. So I'm definitely, obviously gonna continue doing it. Um, I will put up with the bin juice.

Cait Bagby: You can put it in the freezer though. A lot of people put their compost in the freezer. What do you mean?

Sarah Ferris: The problem was that the compostable bag kind of composted before it got out of the bin and that was the issue. So I think my lesson is just to do it quick and just to do smaller amounts of, um, of waste. But yeah.

Cait Bagby: So what I do is, and there are different types of countertop, composting, so there's vermiculture, there's just the typical composting like what you're doing, where it goes out to your, um, bio collectors.

What I do is I actually have a bin in the freezer, so no liners, no nothing and then I just toss everything in there and it almost immediately freezes. So it doesn't smell, there's no juices, there's no nothing and then when I'm ready, I take it out to either the compost pile or to the animals.

Sarah Ferris: That is brilliant. I like that. Uh, I've got no room in my freezer, but if I did

Cait Bagby: I feel like one of the highs though, was Josh learning or you learning that Josh is learning this in school, right?

Sarah Ferris: I know! I was blown away that just came out at the table when I asked and I was like, oh, well, he's just making that up. And then it started to make sense. And I was like, oh, I think you're right. So yeah. That's great schools working.

Cait Bagby: What were some of the other highs and then what were the lows?

Sarah Ferris: Well, I think that's pretty much it really. The lows where the bin juice and them not putting it in the bin and then the highs were the fact that Josh was learning something at school, and that I discovered that it was in that little nice cycle. What would be your guilty greeny, low points?

Cait Bagby: Oh, it's definitely around food. We're getting ready for Thanksgiving. I do really try to cut down on excessive packaging in food and with the run up to Thanksgiving, it's become very, very difficult. Um, and this mainly has to do with dietary restrictions. So things like pie crusts, could I make a gluten free dairy free yada yada yada pie crust? I absolutely could. Am I going to make six pies from that and spend two days doing it? I am absolutely not. So I will be buying the packaging and I feel torn about it, but at the same time,

Sarah Ferris: yeah, I think that's one of the biggest, devils within this whole eco sustainability space and that's time. We just don't have the same time do we to do all these things that we could do? We don't have the time to make six pie crusts that are gluten free.

Cait Bagby: Right. But hopefully guilty greenie is giving people options. So if you knew nothing about green burials, now you may have heard one or two and want to learn just about that instead of having to dive into the entire thing and feeling overwhelmed by it all.

Sarah Ferris: So what was your high point then? Give us your high point.

Cait Bagby: Okay. Um, I don't know. I guess one of my high points is, so the weather has been getting colder, so we've been cleaning up and, you know, preparing for winter outside.

And this year for the first time I cut my lavender and I dried it to use as natural fragrances around the house so I don't use candles and things like that.

Sarah Ferris: You're actually dead to me right now. That is the one fragrance that would make me never walk into your house. It's so offensive to me, lavender.

Cait Bagby: Artificial lavender to me is offensive. Fresh lavender, I think, can be in small doses, nice.

Sarah Ferris: Nope. Nope, Nope, Nope. Nope. It's a no for me. Uh, anyway...

Cait Bagby: Before we get to the challenge, I just want to say we started off on the same page and as the show went on, we have gone our separate ways.

Sarah Ferris: Yeah. And we're learning lots of different things about each other. Aren't we, I don't like water burials. You like lavender. I mean, crikey. Uh, so tell me what you're going to hit me up with cause I'm a bit nervous about this week's challenge. You've given me zero clues.

Cait Bagby: Depending on the type of person you are, this could either be the easiest challenge or one of the hardest challenges.

Sarah Ferris: What do you think it's going to be for me?

Cait Bagby: Hard. I think it's going to be hard.

Sarah Ferris: Oh shit. Does it involves swimming?

Cait Bagby: No, it actually involves sitting in front of your computer or phone, your choice, whatever you want.

Sarah Ferris: Okay.

Cait Bagby: Your challenge this week is to eliminate everything except for the important emails in your inbox and unsubscribe from any unsolicited emails that you get, that's your challenge for this week?

Sarah Ferris: Okay. But how has this green?

Cait Bagby: So every time you send an email, it's approximately four grams of CO₂. And of course that adds up very, very quickly.

Sarah Ferris: God, are you joking? Didn't know this was another minefield I had to wade through.

Cait Bagby: Oh, it's massive. The amount of emissions from email and just tech in general, the email is massive. And then every time you don't delete an email, it's sitting on a server space somewhere it's taking energy to just keep it there.

Sarah Ferris: This is why these conversations are so good cause you've just blown my mind. I had no idea about that. So, um, I'm probably responsible for a couple of ozone holes with the amount of stuff I've got sitting around.

Cait Bagby: Your job is to like Marie Kondo, your email.

Sarah Ferris: I like it. I like it.

Cait Bagby: Perfect. And that's everyone else's challenge for the next week. And what are we talking about?

Sarah Ferris: Well, I think we had a conversation just briefly about looking at travel and uh, I want to look at, you know, we've been in COVID for so long now and the impact that it's had on the environment, it's, undeniable, it's been actually good for the environment. So I want to see if we can look at the ways that maybe we can take some of those wins that we've had from not traveling and move them forward into a world that we can still travel. Because I can not give up traveling, it's one of my absolute cannot live without, so yeah, that's what we're talking about next episode.

Cait Bagby: I'm right there with you. Travel is not something I will willingly give up at all. There are eco-friendly or ways to travel and we can discuss all of that as well as a personal impact and what you can do to help offset that or just find less intensive, ways to travel. So, with that.

Join us next week to see if Sarah accomplished her challenge for more, the good, the bad, and the laughable.

As we tackle our own sustainability journeys, exclusively on Fireside in the Climate Collab Auditorium. Thank you for joining us on this week's episode of Guilty Greenie.

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Sarah Ferris: Bye-bye.