**Amy Williams: Interpersonal Communication in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*:
Theories of Self-Disclosure in "Hush" and "Once More With Feeling"**

Within the field of Whedon Studies, there is a wealth of excellent scholarship on the use of Joss Whedon's work in college teaching. As someone who teaches interpersonal communication, I have found essays exploring the role of nonverbal communication in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode "Hush" (Shade, 2006; Cogan, 2010) to be most helpful to my own work. I've used "Hush" to teach nonverbal communication for several years, but as my teaching has shifted from the fundamentals of interpersonal communication to more advanced theory courses, I have begun to use the episode in new ways.

Specifically, "Hush" lends itself beautifully to the study of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships. A self-disclosure is anything we choose to tell another person about ourselves, from the most trivial detail to the most deeply personal. Disclosures—or the avoidance of disclosures—are strategic communicative acts used to accomplish relationship goals, and are at the heart of relationship development and dissolution. Additionally, the musical episode "Once More With Feeling" provides a complement to "Hush" that allows the discussion of self-disclosure to continue. Said Whedon in a 2011 interview, "I think of 'Once More With Feeling' actually as a sequel to 'Hush' because they're both about communication. They're both about when your natural mode of communication stops...or it's elevated to this mode where you can't stop telling the truth...it completely either binds or dissolves what people think of as their natural relationships."

This paper will discuss the ways in which theories of self-disclosure are illustrated by both episodes, making them useful tools in sparking discussions in the interpersonal communication classroom. Emphasis is placed on social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973), the staircase model of relational development (Knapp, 1973; Knapp & Vangelisti, 2009), and communication privacy management theory (Petronio, 2002).