

Wonderful! 73: Kayak Driver

Published on February 27th, 2019

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](#)

[theme music plays]

Rachel: Is that how you're gonna sit?

Griffin: Fuck yeah, it is!

Rachel: [laughs] Hi! This is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, this is gonna how I'm—Gonna how I'm sitting. On *this* one, it's Griffin McElroy, The cool-sitter!

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!* Griffin is—

Griffin: Aww yeah...

Rachel: Sitting—

Griffin: I feel like you talk about how I sit, on this show a lot.

Rachel: Like a frontiersman.

Griffin: I do kind of feel like I've just slain a bear, and I turned him into a new house for me and my wife and our kids.

Rachel: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: Uh, we're all sick with something, but it's okay because I've just turned a bear into a big house and now I'm sitting down comfortably.

Rachel: I do also want to make sure the listeners at home realize not just that you're sitting like a frontiersman, but you got a nice new haircut.

Griffin: I have a nice new haircut, and—

Rachel: You can't hear it in the audio, but it looks great.

Griffin: I sat down on a barrel, and three birds flew down and chomped it all off—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Right outside of my new bear-house, that I live in. And thank you all for listening to our show. It's uh—It's a fun time around here, because we're about to go on a big cruise and uh, a big fun family trip, and also the Max Fun Drive's coming up, so we're just—We're just cranking it out, right now. We're on our grind, right now.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, but that doesn't—It's—I feel fine about it for this show, 'cause there's no shortage of good things out there, I feel like.

Rachel: You know, that's true!

Griffin: There's always more things!

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement]

Griffin: The universe is infinite, technically speaking. Probably. People think. I don't know. I'm li—I'm real little, in the grand scheme of things, so who am I—Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do.

Griffin: Hit me.

Rachel: Really good customer service.

Griffin: It's so important!

Rachel: Especially when you order stuff online.

Griffin: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rachel: So I did this thing today, where I thought I was gonna order something online, and then as soon as I submitted my order, I regretted it?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, and so like five minutes after I ordered it, I cancelled it, uh— [laughs] And they like, got back to me right away! And—And were like "Please come back!" And gave me like, a coupon for my next purchase.

Griffin: That is so sweet!

Rachel: And I just thought “What a great company.”

Griffin: I—We just had to cancel a few flights, uh, with uh—An airline, and I’m not gonna put ‘em on blast. But the person I spoke to on the phone was so helpful, as she explained they were gonna charge us [laughing] \$200 per ticket.

Rachel: [laughing] Oh no!

Griffin: Um, yeah. So they rogered us, but good on that one, but they were really sweet when they explained—

Rachel: They were nice about it? [laughs]

Griffin: How they were gonna do it.

Um, I’m gonna say spaghetti.

Rachel: Oh! That’s a good one.

Griffin: I don’t think you can go wrong with spaghetti. I know I’ve talked about, um—What’d I talk about? I talked about lasagna, which is like spaghetti’s big flat cousin. But uh, man. You just can’t beat spaghetti. It’s—

Rachel: Griffin and I went to a nice Italian restaurant here, not long ago.

Griffin: We did!

Rachel: And I was just so excited to have Italian food because it is always what I want.

Griffin: Yes, it was—What’s it? Oh, L’Oca d’Oro, here in Austin. It was very nice!

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: Very nice.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We should—What if we did like a, just like a restaurant review podcast, but an extremely localized one? How many people live in Austin? If we could net like half of them, I think we could make a sustainable podcast.

Rachel: We have a fair number of Wonderful Austin-listeners, uh, but I have a feeling... They would tire of that podcast. [laughs]

Griffin: I think they would, And also, we don't know anything about food.

Rachel: Yeah, and also, we only go out like once a month. [laughs]

Griffin: That is true, also. Who goes first this week?

Rachel: I think it's you!

Griffin: I think it is me, also. My first thing is... Being on a boat. Being on a boat.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: On—When you're on a boat, the feeling that you have when you're on a boat. Um—

Rachel: Okay, now can you provide a little background as to how many boats you have been on?

Griffin: Seven, maybe... Seven to twenty. That's—And I know that's a pretty wide range.

Rachel: Now are we including canoes?

Griffin: I wanna include every sort of watercraft imaginable, here.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: If you—If you include every kind of watercraft, it's, you know, it's—We're in the triple digits.

Rachel: Cause I will say, we—We are about to go on a cruise.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: We have not been on a cruise ship before, I wanna make that clear.

Griffin: I've never been on one, yes.

Rachel: We've never been on a yacht.

Griffin: Mmm... That's probably—That's not true, for me. I went to a—I went to a party at Comic Con on a yacht.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: It was pretty—Yeah, it was pretty tight!

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: It was pretty good! Uh, and I don't wanna drop names, but uh it was a pretty big—Pretty big names.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Let's just say it was Calm Trues, if you uh—Crahm Toos, if you know what I'm saying. Wink wink wink!

Rachel: I—I have n—

Griffin: Tom Cruise.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: It was his big yacht.

Rachel: Was... Was it called "The Cruiser"?

Griffin: It was called The Cruiser! Yeah.

Rachel: I like that.

Griffin: It was called—He actually made it say "Cruise's Cruiser"—

Rachel: [Gasps in excitement]

Griffin: Which is like "We get it! You didn't have to double up!"

Rachel: What? What about "Cruising for a Bruising?"

Griffin: "Cruising for a Cruising"—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Is what actually, what it said.

Rachel: "Cruising for a Craisin". [laughs]

Griffin: [sighs] It wasn't Tom Cruise. But yes, we are about to put our money—I am about to put my money on the—Where my mouth is, by going on the JoCo Cruise, cause it's gonna be certainly the longest continuous boat being-on—

Rachel: Yes. [laughs]

Griffin: That I've ever done, by a pretty large margin. Um, my boating experience's admittedly kind of limited, but I'm always excited about the opportunity to be on a boat or some sort of water-craft-thing, um whether it's a pontoon boat, or a barge, or a canoe, or a raft, or... Whatever!

We just went out with a—a group of friends, for a friend's birthday, out on a pontoon boat out on Lake Travis, and it was really nice! And just being out there on the water made me realize, like "I like this. I like this, I think!"

Rachel: Yeah! You—I remember when I first met you, you had just returned from a 4th of July weekend in which you spent a fair amount of time on a lake?

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: And you were real jazzed about it.

Griffin: That was mostly raft-based.

Rachel: Okay!

Griffin: Uh, raft-based activities. Um, but yeah. So when I was trying to think of what I really like about being out on water, on a boat, uh my first big reason is that it's not—It's not the land. And that's kind of wild.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's like you're in another sort of realm of the earth, that we live on. And really, that realm is the biggest one? It's quite, quite bigger than the land realm.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Um, you can't discount the fact that you're sort of exploring, you're experiencing the world on a completely different kind of surface. I think that's very good!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Like what's even out there, on the water? I don't know cause I don't go out there very often.

Rachel: I wish I came in here and you had a dry erase board on the wall, and it just showed your thought process—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: For putting together a *Wonderful!* topic.

Griffin: And a big—

Rachel: Cause I can see you—

Griffin: [laughter in his voice] Yeah?

Rachel: Writing down "boat".

Griffin: Mm-hmm?

Rachel: And then an arrow... And then "land" and then a line over it.
[laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] I've written—I've written "Why?" In big capital letters and then like circled it.

Um, I'm just saying, I look out at a swamp and I'm like "I can't go out there." But then I get on a hovercraft, and I can?

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: I have been on a hovercraft before.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: My no—My nonnie took me out on one, down in Florida, and we had ourselves a great time. Uh, I did not like the loud noise that the hovercraft made—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But I liked being out there. It just makes you—Being out there on water makes you feel like anything's possible, because now you're on water... And you shouldn't be.

Rachel: [laughing] Okay?

Griffin: Number two: I don't usually get boat-sick, um, but that may change on the cruise. Hopefully it doesn't? But I like the experience of just kind of being on a surface that's not exactly steady. I think that it's very soothing, I think that it can be very nice.

Rachel: Now, question.

Griffin: Yas?

Rachel: Does this thrill apply to plane usage, for you?

Griffin: Oh, god no!

Rachel: Cause you're up in the air in a—

Griffin: It's different.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: If—If a—If while I was up in the air, the plane... I don't like plane movement when I'm up in the air. I'm not like afraid to fly to anything like that.

Rachel: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: But like, uh I don't enjoy turbulence.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: If that's—If that's what you're asking. But if the turbulence was like a gentle swaying, back and forth, side to side like a little baby in a cradle?

Rachel: Yeah. Okay. Okay!

Griffin: You'd think about it! That's kind of like what being in the womb is like!

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: It's like being on a boat.

Rachel: I mean, I don't remember, but I can imagine.

Griffin: I think that's a Jimmy Buffet lyric. Being in—Something about a boat being like a womb... And it—Yeah. And he's—

Rachel: [sighs] We need to have Justin McElroy on, ready for questions like this.

Griffin: I mean, I can probably get his number.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: It wasn't his boat, either. I'm never gonna say what yacht I was on. You'll have to—You'll have to guess.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You also—If you're on the ocean, you don't only get that feel of the rocking and the rolling, you get the smell of the salt and the feel of the breeze, and the sound of the ocean. It's a sensory explosion, it's so nice.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: I'm very excited to get out on that big boat. Uh, number three: being on a boat is also usually tied to some other fun activity. Whether it is jumping off the boat and swimming with all your friends, having a good time, or uh you know, white water rafting, which I've done before and *very* much enjoy. Uh, or... You know, having some brews with your buds, as long as you have a designated boat driver, because I don't fuck with that.

Uh, and yea, it's just—Nobody gets on a boat to do their taxes, you know?

Rachel: Have you ever driven a boat?

Griffin: Have I driven a boat? Uh, you're talking about a boat with like a motor on it?

Rachel: Yes. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: How else would you drive it? [laughing]

Griffin: Well I was gonna say, like I've driven a kayak, before!

Rachel: I—Well, that's paddling, dear. [laughs]

Griffin: That's fine. Uh, I have not! I think I'd be really good at it.

Rachel: I'm really curious what it's like!

Griffin: Um...

Rachel: You think they'll let me drive the cruise ship?

Griffin: I think they probably will, if you ask very nicely.

Rachel: Give me a little, little—like a little cruise pin.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: To put on? Like a little miniature pilot?

Griffin: I like that a lot!

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: You've painted a wonderful picture.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Reason number four, and this may be the most important reason?

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Boats have the best terminology.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Boats have *the best* terminology.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: When I played that uh, "Return of the Obra Dinn" game, I had to learn very much how boats worked to solve the mystery.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: It's such a good fucking game!

Rachel: Do you understand the difference between like, starboard and—

Griffin: Starboard's to the right, port's to the left? Yes.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: I—Well, more—More about like job roles on the ship, like what the top man does and what a midshipman does.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. You say all this, but you won't watch *Below Deck* with me. [laughs]

Griffin: [sighs] Rachel's been getting really into *Below Deck*. If *Below Deck* was, uh—Well if it was a bigger crew and also they didn't cater to just universally horrible people, I might be into it.

Rachel: [laughing] Okay.

Griffin: Okay, here's a few words that I learned today, when looking at boat terminology.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, "Athwart"... Athwart means perpendicular to the ship's center line. "Athwart". I don't know when you would have to use that specific direction—

Rachel: Is that two words or one?

Griffin: One word. "Athwart".

Rachel: Athwart.

Griffin: It's like thwart, like you can thwart somebody's plans—

Rachel: Yeah. With an "Ah".

Griffin: But with an "A" in front of it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, "Gunwale". [laughs] Which is a fucking great word, that does sound like, you know, uh "Baby Beluga Strikes Back".

Rachel: Uh-huh. [agreement]

Griffin: It's "Gunwale", uh it's actually G-U-N-W-A-L-E. That's the upper edge of the side of a boat.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Uh, and then this one, I'd heard before, but I hadn't really appreciated how phonetically pleasing it is: "Mizenmast"? The mizen—

Rachel: Oh, I have heard that. What does it mean?

Griffin: The mizenmast is like, it's the shorter mast located aft of the main mast on a yawl or a catch.

Rachel: Whew!

Griffin: "The mizzenmast". Oh! The Yawl and catch is also extremely good, extremely powerful!

Rachel: I know, that alone!

Griffin: You could make up boat terminology, I would be none the wiser.

Rachel: Yeah, it's true.

Griffin: It's just, boat's themselves are their own little universe and they let you explore parts of our world that otherwise are inaccessible to you, and I like that.

Rachel: It's kind of amazing to me how boats... Float. I don't really know that I understand that.

Griffin: You can't—We can't start—Yeah. That—

Rachel: Like, you put a car in the water, it doesn't float—

Griffin: Doesn't—Why not?

Rachel: But you put a boat in, much heavier—

Griffin: Does float. Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rachel: It does float.

Griffin: Does float. Big boat, too.

Rachel: Big boat! [laughs]

Griffin: Big boat. There's so many little mysteries like that in our world, that if I start thinking about, I start to get really panicky about.

Rachel: [laughing] Okay!

Griffin: What's your first thing?

Rachel: My first thing... And you know what I've started thinking about, a little bit?

Griffin: Huh?

Rachel: You know how in the episode description, you say like "Rachel's favorite X", or whatever?

Griffin: Yeah. I usually try to couch it sometimes, if it's like—If it's like uh, "Rachel's favorite poem about the state of Iowa, written by—"

Rachel: [laughing] So—I'm curious to see how you're gonna spin this one.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: Because the thing I wanted to talk about this week is "True Crime."
[laughs]

Griffin: "True crime that I—"

Rachel: So I don't want you to say like "Rachel's favorite brutal murder".

Griffin: Interesting, yeah. I wouldn't say that in a million years.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: This'll be interesting to talk about!

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I used to be right there with you, and now I am super not.

Rachel: I... I held off for a while talking about this, even though I've been kind of *really* eating it up on the sly.

Griffin: Mm-hmm?

Rachel: Because... It's not a thing that I like that I feel like I'm especially proud of. [laughs]

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: But I started to do kind of a tally in my head, of specifically true crime podcasts that I've been eating up?

Griffin: And there's a lot of them.

Rachel: Yes. Uh, there's—Uh, I counted today and there are seven of them? The most recent one *Over My Dead Body*, which just came out.

Griffin: Okay. That's a good name.

Rachel: Um—

Griffin: They have the best na—I will give them this!

Rachel: It's true.

Griffin: It's not my favorite genre; they have the best names.

Rachel: Typically, the ones I like are like an unsolved murder.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Or like a death where there is some suspicion around it.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: I guess we should mention here, this is so-not that podcast? That, I guess we're gonna talk about murder for a little bit, which may not be your jam.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And if that's true, then uh, you may want to fast-forward a little bit.

Rachel: Well, I'm gonna—I'm gonna focus, I'm gonna focus more on what about it is interesting.

Griffin: That is good.

Rachel: Uh, not specifically like the conditions.

Griffin: The crime's themselves.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yes, please.

Rachel: So, this—this kind of became a big thing, 'cause not only are there podcasts but there's a lot of T.V. shows about it, right now.

Griffin: I mean, they've always been...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I mean—

Rachel: Oh yeah, for sure.

Griffin: Did you watch *Snapped*?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: *Snapped* was my shit!

Rachel: I did not.

Griffin: When I was in like, high school, I would watch *Snapped* and just be like "They sure did!" [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They sure did.

Rachel: Yeah, like *The Staircase* was really big, for a while.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: And then we watched some of that one that was on HBO... I can't remember what it was called... Uh, but I looked into the, kind of the reasons behind people's interest in this.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: And it made a lot of sense to me. Um, so there was, um, an article on Mental Floss that kind of detailed a lot of the reasons. One of them talks about the adrenaline rush, associated with it? As you kind of like—When you hear about this, you get this kind of like euphoric, like rush from like "Oh my gosh, this crazy thing happened but I'm okay." You know?

Griffin: Okay? Interesting.

Rachel: But um... And then also, like the solving the mystery, you know? Like being able to—

Griffin: You think you're gonna be the one to finally crack it.

Rachel: To listen along? Um... And then—And then also the “Being scared in a controlled way”. Right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like it's like, it's kind of similar to the same reason people like horror movies, of like this feeling of like “I know I'm gonna listen to this or I'm gonna see this, it's gonna be okay at the end. I'm gonna be a little freaked out in the middle, and then I'm gonna find out what happens and then I'm gonna turn it off and then we'll be done.”

Griffin: That's the thing—That is, again, that's like nothing new, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like that was Edgar Allen—

Rachel: Oh, for sure!

Griffin: Edgar Allen Poe had the whole like, macabre fascination theory of— And that's like basic--Basic human nature-stuff.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement] Um... And then I also saw this interesting thing. So, there was a study in 2010 by the Social Psychological and Personality Science Journal, that revealed that uh, women are more likely to be interested in true crime than men.

Griffin: Why?

Rachel: Well, so there—there's speculation. I read this, um... This thing, uh, from Marnie Feuerman, who is a clinical social worker and licensed marriage and family therapist, and she said “Perhaps the biggest reason women are drawn to true crime, is that most women live in fear on a daily basis that they can easily become a crime victim, and that many true crime stories end with the bad guy being caught, and that provides women with a sense of satisfaction to see the criminal brought to justice.”

Griffin: That is fascinating and bleak as hell!

Rachel: [laughing] I know! It's very terrible.

Griffin: It's very bad.

Rachel: It's very terrible. I have been, um... Listening to a lot of true crime podcasts, when I take my walks! [laughs]

Griffin: Not great!

Rachel: [laughing] Which is not great! Uh, it definitely makes me more alert. I saw a lot of theories that like, people are listening to these, uh, to become more prepared, in case of emergency?

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Which, I don't think that's why *I* listen? Uh—

Griffin: But it's an added side-effect.

Rachel: But it has made me more vigilant.

Griffin: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rachel: Um—

Griffin: Now, nobody's gonna serial me!

Rachel: Yeah, for sure!

Griffin: I haven't—I haven't had a serial, in a while. [laugh]

Rachel: [laughing] Uh, so yeah. So I kind of struggled to bring this up, but I recognized I was spending a lot of time enjoying it?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And felt like I need to bring this to the podcast, because it's a genuine interest of mine that I have slowly been discovering. Especially as uh... My—My work schedule has become a little slow?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's like a nice little thrill in my day, you know?

Griffin: Yeah, sure!

Rachel: Uh...

Griffin: I—I feel like it doesn't necessar—It's a—It's a little uh, incompatible with my like, anxiety these days—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I feel like it, as a medium for storytelling, like it's... It is—They are stories that are—

Rachel: I mean *Serial*, *Serial* was the podcast that I feel like everybody—

Griffin: Oh yeah!

Rachel: Was like “Oh, this is gold!” And now there are like hundreds of them.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. I mean—

Rachel: If you go to the like, “Society and Culture” section of iTunes, it's just full of them. Uh...

Griffin: I mean, that didn't just launch the true crime, sort of craze, that launched like the storytelling—Podcast storytelling, craze.

Rachel: Yeah, but that, like—Raised, yeah, the public awareness of it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, yeah. I don't think you should feel any shame for liking true crime podcasts!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Like, everybody on earth, more or less, does.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: Um... Yeah. Should we start a true crime podcast? What—What is the opposite of a true crime podcast?

Rachel: You know what we could do? We could get on *Nextdoor*.

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: And we could—

Griffin: [gasps] Oh fuck!

Rachel: Follow the package theft! [laughing]

Griffin: [slapping his knees and laughing] Yeah. We could follow and get— Every time somebody posts on *Nextdoor*, like “A strange man came to my door!” And it’s like “The mail carrier?”

Rachel: [laughing] Or like, calling Amazon like “Where you aware that packages are being stolen from front doorsteps? What are you doing about it?”

Griffin: [laughing] We’d have to do episodes four times a day, that would all just be labeled like “Gunshots?”

Rachel: “Or Fireworks?”

Griffin: “Gunshots or Fireworks?”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We used to be in a Facebook group in our old neighborhood that uh... Just was this very much all over. It was—It got pretty wild—

Rachel: Oh, it was so funny. People used to really kind of troll each other.

Griffin: Yeah, so there was like a younger generation that lived in the neighborhood that was like moving up there, and then there was a very old-guard part of the neighborhood, and as you can imagine, like the two sort of hemispheres there like uh... Would jab each other, from time to time. Uh—

Rachel: Yeah, there were a lot of concern about the teens in the neighborhood.

Griffin: Right. Yeah, in a very um, overtly racist way.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Coming from the—The sort of old-guard. And the younger folks weren’t really having any of it?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then every 4th of July, the younger folks [laughing] Would get on, every night.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: On the 4th of July, and just be like “There’s gunshots everywhere! We have to get the fuck out of Austin!” Uh, yeah. That was—That was some fun little uh, inter-neighborhood tension.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: But hey, can I steal you away?

[music plays]

[ads play]

Griffin: I’ve got a jumbotron here, and this one is for Andrew and it’s from Diana, Katie, and Sarah, who say:

“Hi Andrew! It’s your good friend’s Diana, Katie, and Sarah. We could tell you you’re the world’s best DM, but we’d rather remind you that you’re seriously one of the coolest people on the planet. Don’t fight us on this, it is now legally binding. Happy birthday, Andrew!”

I’m so glad they recognize our sort of legal authority, over anything that we say, out loud. Um—

Rachel: Yeah, this’ll hold up in court.

Griffin: Yeah, so like in the big court case of the U.S versus “Boats”, this episode is gonna be submitted for evidence.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: And “Boats” is gonna win!

Rachel: “Boats” is gonna win!

Griffin: Do you wanna read the other one, here?

Rachel: [pauses] Aww!

Griffin: Aww!

Rachel: This one is just for Rachel and Griffin, and it is from Sophie!

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: [laughing] And the message says:

"Here's an idea for a restaurant called 'Pesto!' The menu has a variety of pesto covered foods, and the logo is a classic tux-clad magician with a top hat and a wand, and he's pulling a bunch of pesto noodles out of the hat and he's saying 'Pesto-Change-o!' I love pesto so much, but I only have \$100, and that's not enough to open a restaurant. Someone, help."

Griffin: [He's been laughing since the first sentence of the message and hasn't stopped]

Rachel: Sophie, thank you so much!

Griffin: [quietly, still laughing] God...

Rachel: Thank you so much. I would like to see... Just the art, for this.

Griffin: [composed] Yeah.

Rachel: Just a little magician... Just, with a wand saying "Pesto-Change-o!"

Griffin: [whispers] It's the best [unintelligible]... [regular volume] Yeah I'd like to—I'd love to see that art illuminated as a neon sign, hanging above the restaurant that this is gonna be, so...

Rachel: Yes! And it's like animated, so the wand goes up and down?

Griffin: And the pesto pops out... Ah...

Rachel: Oh, like a rabbit from a hat!

Griffin: Damn, pesto's good!

[ads play]

Griffin: Can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: I wanna take us on back. I'm gonna take us on back, to the last decade. Uh, pretty early on in the last decade, a special time for me. When I was in high school—Which was actually, I take it back. That was the least special—That was not a very special time.

Rachel: [laughing] Okay?

Griffin: The only least—Less special time, was when I was in middle school. But high school, you know. It had it's ups and downs. What it had up, was... The Shins, when The Shins released their first two albums, when I was in high school.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Uh, I'm talking about the—

Rachel: I thought you were gonna talk about like your first, like...

Griffin: My first what?

Rachel: Your first lo—

Griffin: My first good thing to happen to me in high school?

Rachel: No, like your first romantic experience, in a movie theater or something terrible.

Griffin: I mean, I can talk about that too?

Rachel: No, please don't!

Griffin: That wouldn't be—It was not terrible.

Rachel: Please don't.

Griffin: It was gingerly, just sort of rubbing pinkys with "name-withheld here", while we were in *Prince of Egypt* and my parents were there with me.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: I'm talking about The Shins, on this segment. Have you heard of them?

Rachel: I am familiar, yeah!

Griffin: You gotta listen to this one song, it's gonna change your life.

Rachel: Oh, no! [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] You fell right into my trap! Uh, they've released a bunch of albums, uh, obviously since I've been in high school, and they've been good. But I really want to drill down into their first two albums.

Uh, 2001 was *Oh Inverted World* that came out, and that one had uh, some—some tracks you might know from the movie *Garden State*, that came out in 2004. Uh, but before *Garden State*, in 2003 *Chutes Too Narrow* came out and that one is just front to back, just all fucking good songs.

Were you—Were you uh, were you down with The Shins in this like, in this era? I feel like everybody kind of came on board.

Rachel: Yes, I had a moment while I was living in Chicago, which was from like 2004 to 2007—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Uh, that I was a Shins enthusiast.

Griffin: 2004 is obviously when I got on board, because it's when um... It's when *Garden State* came out, and I was like obsessed with that movie—

Rachel: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: When I was a junior in high school? And then like these—these two albums. Having a, just uh—A vault of Shins music to listen to, was uh, was really eye opening.

Rachel: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: And the type of music they were making *really* split the uprights, for like 17 year old me's interests?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Um, so The Shins uh, was the side project from James Mercer, who was the lead singer? He was also in a band called Flake Music, with some of the other members of like, original members of The Shins. Which, I don't know if you've ever listened to Flake Music?

Rachel: No!

Griffin: [enthusiastically] It sounds a lot like The Shins!

Rachel: Okay! [laughs]

Griffin: Which was apparently like a [laughs] real conflict, between the two bands.

Uh, it's really good, I really like Flake Music. I actually didn't know that it existed until I was in a record store like three years ago, here in Austin? And I heard The Shins, and I was like "Whoa! Is this new Shins?" And they're like "No, it's pre-Shins. It's Flake Music!" And it was—

Rachel: Interesting!

Griffin: It was really nice. Um, but eventually Flake like, pseudo-disbanded, pseudo kind of like transformed into uh, The Shins. They started touring with Modest Mouse, uh and during that time when they were touring, James Mercer was like preparing the songs for *Oh Inverted World*.

Uh, and—Yeah, he was going through some tough stuff, like he was living in Albuquerque, and the music scene there wasn't doing so well and he started to become kind of resentful of a lot of the folks he grew up with. And I think you get that a lot, uh, in the album. Especially in "New Slang", which is just like explicitly about that exact thing.

Uh, "New Slang" was their single that like set the indie rock world on fire, and made the—their first album like this hugely anticipated thing, and then it—It came out, and obviously like, I didn't listen to it because it was 2001, and I listened to like, three bands total, in my entire life at that point? Um, but uh, it was pretty successful!

Obviously, *Garden State* sort of launched it into the—the stratosphere, and it's a little bit played. I feel like—I feel like Garden State is a butt—An easy joke-butt? Um... But I feel like this is a good track. "Caring is Creepy" is on that album, and it's a good one, but "New Slang" is the one I want to play a little bit of. And you've heard this song a thousand times probably, but it's just really pretty, and really nice, and—

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: I always get very excited. Weirdly enough, I was in CVS today, uh and—

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh?

Griffin: It was like playing over the radio as I walked in, after I had just written these notes. Uh, and it was nice! It was a nice. Here's "New Slang".

[“New Slang” by The Shins plays]

Griffin: It's got the—It's got these like Simon and Garfunkel vibes, that I really like.

Rachel: Yeah, I see that!

Griffin: I think a l—

Rachel: I mean and also, I think it's interesting that you like transitioned from like Ben Folds to Shins, because it seems like a natural progression to me.

Griffin: Yeah, and Shins, what I really like owe to them, is that Shins were like a gateway drug for me to like a lot of the bands that I was like obsessed with in college, like Clap Your Hands, Say Yeah—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And Islands and Deathcab, like... Uh, Shins were kind of like the first—As uh... As much as I can look back on how much I liked *Garden State* and find it kind of silly, the amount of music I was turned onto because of the soundtrack of that movie, is like kind of, kind of wild.

Rachel: Oh, yeah! I think that was true for a lot of people.

Griffin: Yes. Um... So, yes. Also before *Garden State* came out, their second album came out "Chutes Too Narrow". Uh, and their first album was like well received, but this one was like really, really critically acclaimed. They still didn't have very many like, resources because it was pre-*Garden State*, uh, so they recorded the album in Mercer's basement in like apparently a kind of rough part of Portland, and close to the end of their recording of the album, somebody broke in to the basement and stole their computer with all the master tracks on it, and they just had to do it again!

Rachel: Oh my gosh...

Griffin: Um... But, I mean despite that—that rough patch that they went through there, uh the album was really, really, really good. It was a lot happier, and sort of pop-pier than the kind of quiet keyboard-lead stuff on *Oh Inverted World*.

Rachel: Yeah. During—During that time period, at least for me, if I had to like explain to somebody what indie music was—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: I would've definitely had The Shins on that list.

Griffin: This and Modest Mouse.

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement]

Griffin: And the fact that like they toured together, you could kind of just like—

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah!

Griffin: Go there, and then not go to a concert for ten years, and then kind of still be able to follow what's going on.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: Uh so anyway, the music is like more guitar-lead and a lot like, uh... Happier, and more upbeat. And uh, my favorite song on the album is what I'm gonna play now, to kind of show that off, and it's um "Mine's Not a High Horse".

[“Mine's Not a High Horse” by The Shins Plays]

Griffin: And then *Garden State* came out, uh, a year after that and then their songs started appearing in McDonald's commercials, and they were big fucking phony sellouts, so—[blows a raspberry]

Rachel: No, Griffin!

Griffin: [blows another raspberry, and continues sarcastically]

Who cares? Um...

Rachel: Says the man who did an entire episode of his podcast devoted to Totinos! [laughs]

Griffin: Listen! Listen, listen. No, you don't understand! No, listen: That was for money!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, I don't know. I feel like the—The Shins was like a perfect kind of band for the age that I was at.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Uh, cause it was so clever but it was also—I mean, there were a lot of clever bands around that time, that I also found just unlistenable, because they were very clever and smart and also n—Like, not musical in the way that I liked my music from—from like, Ben Folds and They Might Be Giants?

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [understanding]

Griffin: Uh, The Shins like, was very approachable, but also like really, really clever and turned me on to a lot of other good music. And like I said, like their other uh, their other music that they've come out with since then—I think they just released an album like last year. Uh, it's—it's been good, from what I've heard of it, but I don't think I will ever be as big a fan, as I was during that sort of formative period of my life, when I got turned onto their stuff.

Rachel: I just came up with a new game, as you were talking.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: We don't have to play it uh, during the podcast, but—

Griffin: I'm excited!

Rachel: We've talked a lot about how particular albums or movies can come to you at the exact right time?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: That would be a fun game to play with somebody you just got to know, of like just go back and forth naming albums or movies that came to you at a like, a very—

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: Particularly important time period, in your life.

Griffin: That's good!

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: So I could say, um... Uh, oh god. Barenaked Ladies... Uh, oh shit! What was the name of the album? It was like a single-word album? It wasn't "Crash". That was a—That was a, uh, Dave Matthew's Band album. Anyway—

Rachel: I—I would probably list "Crash" by Dave Matthew's Band, as one of my albums! [laughing]

Griffin: [laughs] Um... Yeah, shit, that's probably one of them too. "Stunt"!

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: "Stunt" by Barenaked Ladies was up there...

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: Um...

Rachel: I would say "Title" by Fiona Apple.

Griffin: Uh, Blues Traveler, the one with the cat on the front cover of it.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: [pauses] What was that one called? [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: It was the one that had "Hook" on it...

Griffin: "Four".

Rachel: "Four"!

Griffin: Was the name of that one.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [affirmative] Uh, the "Blue Album", Weezer.

Griffin: Uh, that one I—[mumbles incoherently] That one, I missed a little bit. That one, I was late to. That one, I was late to.

Rachel: Ooh, it changed my life.

Griffin: Yeah. Hey, what's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing is, the way that your voice sounds when you inhale helium.

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm excited to learn about this!

Rachel: [still laughing]

Griffin: Do you—Are you bringing this because of the new, I think it's a Geico commercial, where like the helium truck explodes and the cops are like speaking and they have high—No? Okay.

Rachel: No!

Griffin: That's just for me.

Rachel: No I honestly, I don't know exactly what brought this to mind...

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Today... But it did send me down like a Youtube rabbit hole, and I am pleased to report that there are videos of Vin Diesel inhaling helium?

Griffin: Love it!

Rachel: And Helen Mirren.

Griffin: I once watched a Youtube video that explained anti-helium?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: That can make your voice go lower?

Rachel: I saw that when I was doing my research, but I didn't delve into it.

Griffin: It's wild! It's so wild.

Rachel: I haven't watched those videos yet.

Griffin: It's so good! It basically makes your voice super deep, and it's—

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: And in the alternate sort of opposite register. It's very good.

Rachel: So this is—This is apparently a, uh, popular game on Jimmy Fallon’s Tonight Show.

Griffin: You don’t say?

Rachel: I watched a few of these videos, uh, today, thinking that I might find a favorite, uh and honestly it’s just kind of always the same?

Griffin: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Rachel: And so I did some research into why that is.

Griffin: It’s just Jimmy saying “Debase yourself”, as he does with all the—

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: “Smash this dirty egg on your head, and then go take a shit in the middle of the stage!”

Rachel: It’s just people with like... Um, kind of signature voices.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So like, Alan Rickman, and Sofia Vergara, like he has all of them do it, and it’s kind of similar results.

Griffin: Mini small wonder, Alan Rickman. Continue.

Rachel: Yeah? So, here’s how it works. Do you know, how it works?

Griffin: I have no idea how it works!

Rachel: Okay. So the sound of your normal voice is determined by the shape of your mouth, throat, nasal passages, tongue, and lips.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Your voice—

Griffin: All my—All my favorite stuff.

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement] Your voice begins in your larynx, uh, and your larynx contains your vocal chords. These two folded membranes vibrate when air passes between them. These vibrations resonate through your throat, nasal passage, mouth, tongue, lips, to create sound. The air you breathe is made up of mainly nitrogen oxygen.

Griffin: Right?

Rachel: But helium is much less dense than regular air. Due to its lower density, sound travels over twice as fast through helium than it does regular air.

Griffin: Okay? I understand everything you've said so far.

Rachel: So when you—When you breathe in helium—

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: Your voice travels much more quickly across your vocal chords.

Griffin: And that's...

Rachel: So it's not that the helium is changing the pitch of your voice, it is changing uh, the frequency at which your vocal chords vibrate. So if you think about the chipmunks, or like a track sped up?

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: Like, the air is getting through your larynx faster, and it's creating this kind of like sped up quality in your voice.

Griffin: Well, and your vocal chords are vibrating twice as fast.

Rachel: Exactly.

Griffin: Because those are the things that actually form the—

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: This is really interesting!

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement]

Griffin: It's interesting to do this actually, while—And talk about this, while we are looking at Audacity, showing us our sound waves.

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement]

Griffin: Because you can kind of visualize what that looks like.

Rachel: So, sound travels faster and thus, the resonance of your vocal tract changes, uh, and makes it more responsive to high frequency sounds.

Griffin: [pauses] Interesting!

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [agreement]

Griffin: So I'm guessing anti-helium does... The opposite? And—

Rachel: I guess so! I didn't do research into that, but it—it would stand to reason...

Griffin: It's chunky air, basically.

Rachel: Uh-huh! [agreement][laughs]

Griffin: And your vocal chords really have to work, to get through it.

Rachel: Well, and that's what's interesting! So obviously, prolonged inhalation of helium can be bad because you're not getting the oxygen you need.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: But doctors have sometimes used a mixture of helium and oxygen, to treat things like COPD.

Griffin: Mm-hmm?

Rachel: Uh, because helium's lower density can help improve airflow in the lungs. But the effect only lasts as long as there's helium around your vocal chords.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So as soon as regular air replaces the helium, your voice returns normal. Which is why like people have to—inhale helium speak, and then immediately inhale helium again to like, get the same effect.

Griffin: I was always like, really worried that I would do it too much and die.

Rachel: I know, right? Me too!

Griffin: I'm glad I didn't!

Rachel: Me too. I never like, made a game out of it? But it is just always a treat!

Griffin: It's fun!

Rachel: It is—It is... Universally, a fun activity.

Griffin: I didn't like it though, when like... I would be at a party and they'd be trying to get the balloons to go up, but then I would do the helium as a fun joke and people would yell at me because I was wasting good helium.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That always hurt my feelings! And I don't know why they did it. Cause I was just trying to have a fun time, too.

Rachel: I know! Well, you always get the party started, Griffin.

Griffin: I always show up at the party, and I get it turned out...

Rachel: Mm-hmm! [agreement]

Griffin: And it's because of my funny high-voice I do, from all the helium.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... That was a very pure segment, babe.

Rachel: You know, it's a simple pleasure!

Griffin: It was a nice—Nice sort of diametrically opposed, to your first segment! [laughs]

Rachel: [laughing] True crime podcast and inhaling helium.

Griffin: And funny balloon jokes!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: You know, I almost did—

Rachel: You know—

Griffin: Oh, I almost did balloons, this episode. That would've been wild.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, we're complex people, you and me.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean I like boats and uh, early aughts indie rock, so...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Can't beat that. Hey, thank you so much for listening. Hey, do you want to hear some submissions from our friends at home?

Rachel: Hey, I sure do!

Griffin: Hey, okay. This one's from Aiden, who says:

"There's a few crows that live by my dorm, that I give food to, sometimes. Crows are very smart, and can recognize faces of people they like, so sometimes they follow me to the cafeteria or my classes."

I'm so sorry to hear that, Aiden. You've made a—

Rachel: Oh my gosh!

Griffin: A bed for yourself there, that sounds just uh—

Rachel: That's kind of adorable though, if you think about it?

Griffin: It's adorable behavior for any animal to exhibit...

Rachel: Uh, I have to imagine people that uh, see this person on campus are like "Oh! It's the crow folk."

Griffin: "It's the crow folks! Here they come."

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, here's one from K.T, who says:

"Something I think is wonderful, is the instant you decide to go home. There's a distinct moment between realizing you no longer want to be at a place, and remembering that you're an adult and can just leave and it is such a relief every time it happens.

Rachel: Griffin McElroy...

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: There's no more appropriate small wonder than this, for you and me! [laughs]

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Yeah, this is actually the basis of mine and Rachel's entire romance!

Rachel: Griffin, more than any other compliment he has given to our relationship, uh, the one thing that stands out is that we both like to leave at the same time.

Griffin: Exact same time!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Every fucking time! Every time we're at a party, we will look at each other and just not even need to say anything.

Rachel: He brags about this to other couples, as if we are describing a very like powerful piece of our relationship.

Griffin: It is!

Rachel: Like "Hey you guys, I know you think you've got something special, but me and Rachel? We like to leave at the same time!" [laughs]

Griffin: It's true.

Uh, one last one from Madison, who says:

"The Twitter account 'Bodega Cats': An endless supply of pictures of cats in bodegas. Nothing's better than scrolling through Twitter, and stumbling upon a cat curled up with some cup a noodles, or laying on some LaCroix, or snoozing in a Snickers box."

Rachel: Who submitted this?

Griffin: This is from Madison.

Rachel: Thank you, Madison.

Griffin: Thank you Madison. [laughs]

Rachel: I'm gonna look into this.

Griffin: Rachel's gonna—We're gonna put our best folks on this, right now!

Rachel: Thank you so much, Madison.

Griffin: Thank you so much. And thank you, at home, for listening. Uh, thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song “Money Won’t Pay”. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Uh, and thank you so much to Maximum Fun.

Max Fun Drive is coming up *very* soon. Uh, real—Really looking forward to that, um... And we’re—We are a pledge-funded network, and we are a pledge-funded show, and your support has allowed us to grow and turn this into a career, and start touring and do all kinds of great stuff, and we—we uh... I can’t say how much your support means to me, because it’s changed my life—

Rachel: Can I give an example, of how the support has changed our lives?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: I used to sit on a piano bench... Now, I sit—

Griffin: Rachel used to sit on a piano bench.

Rachel: On a real folding chair. [laughs]

Griffin: A real, big-girl chair! [laughs]

Rachel: [laughing] Thanks to your support!

Griffin: But, yeah. It’s coming up here, uh, in a couple weeks. We will make sure to tell you more. Uh, you can support us and your favorite shows on the Network, get some cool stuff, in—in return, but um, more on that, later. What else? I mean, there’s the Max Fun shows, that you know and love.

Rachel: Yes! I—I am always hitting that Max Fun website, to see what is on there, week to week. Um, there’s a really great episode of *Jordan Jesse Go*, this week with Matt Braunger? There’s a great *Stop Podcasting Yourself* with Paul F. Tompkins? It’s a star-studded week here, at Max Fun. I encourage you to check it out.

Griffin: Uh, not to mention the rebirth of Dr.Gameshow has come to Maximum Fun—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: It's a very fun game show, uh, from Jo Firestone and um, Manolo Moreno, and they play games that their listeners just like send in ideas for, and then they play them with their callers. It's a very, very good, very pure show, also. And that's—that's new on Maximum Fun, now! Uh, yeah. There's a bunch of good stuff.

Anything else? [sighs]

Rachel: That's all I got.

Griffin: That's all I got, too. I'm plumb out. I'm frickin empty, over here. Look at me over here, all hollowed out!

Rachel: Oh no!

Griffin: I'm all empty... I need to fill myself back up with podcast-stuff. Cause over here, I'm plumb-tuckered, and plumb-hollered out. [Exaggerated country voice] I'm firing frog's hair, split four ways, all—[mumbling incoherently] Plumb-tuckered!

Rachel: Oh my gosh... I—I need like a compendium of all of your Appalachian expressions.

Griffin: [still in accent] Well, I'm gonna—I'm angrier than a corn crow at midnight on the 4th of July.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Bye!

[theme music plays]

Maxiumumfun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Listener supported.

[gavel smacks on wood three times]

Bailiff: I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, and justice is within your reach!

Speaker 1: My mom refuses to take my phone calls!

Speaker 2: My boyfriend says I should take our cats with me to graduate school, but I think he should keep them.

[cat meows]

Bailiff: In the court of Judge John Hodgman, justice rules!

Speaker 3: My partner's board game collection is out of control!

Speaker 4: My sister won't stop stealing my clothes!

Judge: I'm Judge John Hodgman. I'm tough, but fair.

Electronic echoing voice: Tough, but fair!

Bailiff: I'll bring you justice, and I'm only a click away. Tipping! [gavel smacks] Automotive etiquette! [gavel smacks] Siblings! [gavel smacks] Roommates! [gavel smacks]

If you've got a case, go to maximumfun.org/jjho. Judge John Hodgman is tough, but fair.

Electronic echoing voice: Tough, but fair!

Judge: Subscribe to the podcast, today!

[laser sound effect]

Bailiff: Judge John Hodgman Rules!

[gavel smacks three times]

Electronic voice: That is all!

[bass drops and fades out]