

Wonderful! 74: The Funny Container Man

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[theme music plays]

Griffin: Let's do it. [clears throat]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [coughs, then laughs] Let's go! Party time.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Let's do it. Party time. On with the show. Here we do. Here we do.

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: [laughing] This is Andrew Dice Clay, apparently! This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: It sure is! Uh... yeah. I was coming at ya a little hot there, uh, audience. I apologize for that. Uh... let's just say, uh... I've edited so much content. I've produced and edited so much content in the last two days that I feel like I am—I'm becoming a sort of like, hardnosed Las Vegas, like, five shows a day performer.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I don't know how they do it. I'm getting very—

Rachel: No, I'm all for efficiency. I appreciate it.

Griffin: It's not even efficiency, anymore. It's just like a complete, sort of, mental... switcheroo, where I'm just like "Yeah! Yeah! Come on!"

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um, so that's fun. How are you doing? Let's check in with you.

Rachel: You know, I'm good!

Griffin: Good, good.

Rachel: I'm good. Uh... you know, just living... living my life.

Griffin: One day at a time. [sighs]

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: That's what I always say.

Rachel: You know, and you, as far as I know, are the only person that's ever said that.

Griffin: Yup! No day but today.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And that day is one at a time.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: So do you have any small wonders, I guess?

Rachel: I do, actually. So, uh... New York Magazine has this video series on YouTube, uh... where they look at people's homes? Uh, and it looks like, previously, it was not uh, particularly focused on any kind of notable person, but they did one on Amy Sedaris.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: On her apartment.

Griffin: Is it like Cribz? Is that what we're talking about?

Rachel: [laughs] No. But sort of, in that we do—

Griffin: I mean that—it sounds like explicitly the plot of Cribz.

Rachel: We do walk from room to room, uh, and Amy Sedaris... her apartment is everything you'd want it to be and more.

Griffin: Well, I don't know what that means.

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: I imagine a lot of gingham pattern?

Rachel: She—her—the walls are just covered, like, floor to ceiling. Uh, she has a rabbit, like a live rabbit, that hops around the house.

Griffin: Just loose?

Rachel: Yeah. Um... I mean, she has a hutch for it, but she just lets it wander. She pulled back her comforter to show the holes the rabbit had chewed in her bedspread. [laughs]

Griffin: [sighs]

Rachel: Which suggests a lot.

Griffin: Yeah! I mean, I guess that's the price you pay for having a delightful little woodland—

Rachel: She has a craft room.

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: That she calls 'the baby's room.' Uh, she doesn't have a child, she just calls it the baby's room, and it's just full of crafts, except she has one pair of baby shoes that she just throws on the floor when people come over to be like, "Oh, and that's the baby's room!" [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Okay, you're right, that does not disappoint.

Rachel: Yeah, it's delightful. What's your small wonder?

Griffin: Fiber. [pauses] It's good.

Rachel: [quietly] Uh-huh?

Griffin: Yeah. I take it for granted and I don't eat enough of it from time to time, and then I've—there's a reckoning, and then I start, you know, reincorporating it. And instantly, it's like I'm—it's like Superman and the yellow sun. Like, I just get my power from it. Fiber is amazing. It just makes everything work better.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. That—you know, 31-year-old Griffin McElroy.

Griffin: These are my concerns.

Rachel: Here we are.

Griffin: Metamucil... I've never—actually, I have had Metamucil before.

Rachel: You have definitely.

Griffin: [laughs] I don't like that you know that!

Rachel: [laughing] Since we've lived together, I believe I have seen you purchase it.

Griffin: Uh, but not consume it, right? I do it in a weird way.

Rachel: [laughing] Find out more!

Griffin: It's just me backstage at my Las Vegas show, five nights a day, and just—just cranking that—just snorting that `mucil. Just like—

Rachel: Hmm...

Griffin: Just to keep, uh, just to keep my heart pumping!

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I think you go first this week.

Rachel: I do!

Griffin: I can't wait to hear it.

Rachel: So... earlier today, I sent you a song.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: And I bet you thought, "I bet she's doing this song."

Griffin: I... did.

Rachel: And, in a way...

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: But I wanted to talk to you about my new favorite St. Louis Blues hockey tradition.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: Which is, on that victory streak they had of 11 games?

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Uh... they used to play that every night in the locker room, after they won.

Griffin: We need to explain the...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. Let's explain the number of things we need to explain.

Rachel: The song is 'Gloria,' and it is by Laura Branigan.

Griffin: Should I play a clip of it or should we just sing it? It goes like...
[singing] "Gloria! Gloria!"

Rachel: I would like you to play a clip of it.

Griffin: Well—but this is a great opportunity, cause I can sing it.

Rachel: Oh, for all of us to sing?

Griffin: I can sing it perfect!

Rachel: Oh, you want me to harmonize?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Rachel: Alright, you do the high part.

Griffin: [singing in falsetto] "Gloria!"

Rachel: [singing the deeper part] "Gloria!"

Griffin: It sounds like that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It also sounds like, uh, this.

[‘Gloria’ by Laura Branigan plays]

Rachel: I didn’t realize this was a thing, but it makes sense now that I hear it. You hear about sports teams having a lot of like, superstitions? You know?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I didn’t do a lot of research into like, all the various teams, but I’m sure a lot of people are familiar with them. Uh, and the St. Louis Blues, I guess, typically have had a song when they win that they play in the locker room. Uh, prior to this song it was ‘Runaround Sue!’ [laughs]

Griffin: [scoffs] What a terrible, terrible pump up jam!

Rachel: Uh, but there’s a story behind them using ‘Gloria.’ They were watching a Eagles/Cowboys games in Philadelphia in January, as a team. I guess they were on the road. Uh...

Griffin: [gasps] Sorry, it’s messing me up thinking about a sports team watching another sport.

Rachel: [laughs] I know!

Griffin: Like, thinking about these hockey players watching football and like giving a shit. Like...

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: All I do is make podcasts, and I don’t traditionally go out there and like, listen to, uh... audiobooks. This is a bad example.

Rachel: Yeah! [laughs]

Griffin: This is nothing. There's no—I am so far from being an athlete. There is no metaphor there.

Rachel: Uh, so they went to this bar in Philadelphia, and there was a DJ, and whenever there was a commercial break, they would play music. And all these guys from Philadelphia would get up and start dancing. And they played this song 'Gloria' a couple times, and one guy looked at the DJ and said, "Keep playing 'Gloria!'" So they kept playing it. While—and this is just some local people, while they were there. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: Uh... And so right there, they decided – the Blues team players decided they should play that song after they won. And they won the next game, and got a shut out, and so, they just kind of kept playing it, and this continued throughout their, like, franchise streak recently, where they won 11 games in a row.

Griffin: Which is a record for them, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Or it was a tie there. Yeah, that's um... that's the fastest superstition I've ever heard, like, developed.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They were playing it while watching a game, and said, "This song's a bop! We should play it after our games! Oh, we did it and won! Okay, this is forever, now."

Rachel: So it's—so it's kind of incredible that they started this in January, because in January, they had like, no hope of being in the Playoffs. So the top three teams—

Griffin: This is new? This is a new tradition?

Rachel: Yes! Yes.

Griffin: Oh! Wow, okay!

Rachel: So the top three team, uh, in every division. And there's like, you know, the Blues are in the central division. Uh, go to the Playoffs. And they were like, waaay out of contention, and like nobody thought they were gonna make it.

Um, they had fired their coach, just after 19 games, and they had a brand new coach. Uh, and then they moved up to third in the central division. They currently have 74 points, and the second place team has 78 points so... it's, you know, it's very possible they could get in to second place if they continue playing well.

Griffin: Well, they just gotta keep listing to this—this slapper.

Rachel: I know! Well, this is the thing. So they have since, lost, since their streak—

Griffin: Whoa!

Rachel: So I don't know if they're still playing 'Gloria.' I hope that they are?

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Uh, the thing that's interesting is that just like, apparently St. Louis has like rallied behind this song, and they keep reaching out to Laura Branigan's family, uh... and fellow band mates, for like, performances of this song, but she passed in 2004.

Griffin: Aw.

Rachel: So they're not able to kind of continue this, but they really

appreciated kind of the renewed interest. There was a... an interview with the former drummer, that says one out of every two people do not know that she even passed after all these years. Uh, but they are thrilled that this song has regained popularity.

Griffin: It's funny, when you sent this song to me, like... I couldn't have told you the name of this song, let alone—

Rachel: I know, but you knew it, right?

Griffin: I knew the... [vocalizes the melody of the song] But maybe I'm thinking of the Saturday, uh, Night song by Elton John.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: It's kind of similar. But no, like, I knew this song, I just didn't know what the word was that went into... [singing] "Gloria!"

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Uh, it is so good. It is such a fun song!

Rachel: Yeah! It was nominated for a Grammy, went platinum, and spent 36 weeks on the Billboard Top 100 chart, back in 1982! [laughs]

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: And here it is again.

Griffin: I love this! This is so good. This is very good.

Rachel: For those of you—I think a lot of people are maybe surprised that suddenly, I've started really talking about hockey, and I realized that, when I did my episode of Wonderful St. Louis Blues hockey...

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: It was when we were still under our other name.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Is that true?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Oh wow, okay. Yeah, Rachel likes—

Rachel: So I actually—yeah. I'm a big hockey fan.

Griffin: Rachel, uh, has been her whole life. Her father owns the—*the* most memorabilia.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Like *the most* Blues memorabilia.

Rachel: Growing up, we had like, the seven foot tall, like, cardboard cutouts in our house. Um, we had the like—we had some seats from the original St. Louis Blues arena.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: We had several cereal boxes with hockey players on them. We had one of those—you know, the dome-top pull... like foosball, but for hockey?

Griffin: Oh! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Rachel: We had one of those in our basement, too. Um... any number of pucks and sticks and helmets.

Griffin: Your mom also just loves how much stuff there is.

Rachel: She *loves* it!

Griffin: It's her favorite!

Rachel: She adores that we have those things. [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, can I do my first thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: It is The Green Wave. The Green Wave.

Rachel: I don't know what this is!

Griffin: It's the name for a phenomenon that I am familiar with, but I didn't know it had sort of a, uh, a proper name.

Rachel: Is this about the Green Party? [laughs]

Griffin: It's about—and I'm so glad that I have this platform fin—no. It is about when you are driving, and you go from one place to the other without hitting a single stoplight.

Rachel: Oh my gosh, I did this on the way here!

Griffin: Uh, see, I wanted to talk about this, because I had the worst drive home from Henry's daycare this morning.

Rachel: Oh, really?

Griffin: On a good day, I can get home... On a, like a great day, I can get home in like 13, 14 minutes. That is like, ideal. No traffic on the highway.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: All green lights. Just like buttercream. I don't get stuck behind the

train. There's a—I have a lot of obstacles, potential obstacles, between me and home.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: On a bad day, it can take me like 35, 40 minutes to get home. [laughs] So there's a huge variable in there. So when I get that good day, when there's no traffic on the highway, and I don't have to like, step on the brake pedal at all, until I pull into our garage, like it is—I am so blessed.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: On those days. Um...

Rachel: I didn't know there was a name for this, I'm so happy!

Griffin: Yes, it is the name for this sort of mythical incident, where you get all green lights on the way home or on the way to where you're going. It's like the universe smiles on you. Um, I get really frustrated at like, human-caused impediments to travel. Um... I had to—I got IBS, so especially if I need to like, get home in a hurry, and I'm stuck behind somebody going like... 20 miles under the speed limit?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, I get so angry. Or if I get cut off, or somebody's just like, being a jerk on the road. And also like, traffic, I—I have very little patience for. Which makes it even all the more miraculous, when you just get this nonstop, no-break ride.

Um, so I tried to learn more about like, the odds of getting a Green Wave, and actually, that's kind of impossible to calculate, because there are so many variables in how signal timing works, which is like, how stoplights run their pattern of letting their uh, you know, two different intersection paths go through.

Traffic engineering is a super complicated subject that I'm going to like, barely scratch the surface of here, um, but basically, traffic engineers have all kinds of way of controlling the flow of traffic through an intersection using signal control. Um, so there's one like major factor of how the signal works, which is if it is either timed, or actuated. So timed stoplights are basically—they do what you would assume, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They—they run on a certain pattern.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, if there's one sort of, uh, channel through the intersection that's, you know, more trafficked then the other, maybe they will get a longer green light, but it is set to a like, specific pattern. You know, allowing each zone different times, and making it so that they never, you know, intersect at the same time, because that would be very, very bad.

But more modern stoplight systems, more modern signal systems, can be actuated, uh, and in an actuated intersection, they can actually like, take a look at what the actual traffic is, in that moment and change the pattern based on that.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Uh, and so, if there's like one channel that is like, especially busy, like one main road that intersects with like a very, very small, you know, dead end road? Uh, that main road, they can tell how many cars are on it and favor them with a longer green signal.

Or alternatively, if there's no cars in the other channel at all, they just won't switch the signal. It'll just always be green, until a car pulls up to the signal, and then they will go about changing the pattern.

And it can do that with a number of different ways. Like, you see those cameras up on the uh, stoplights at certain intersections. Major intersections

here in Austin, you can see them. Those are able to, you know, look at the traffic and change the signal patterns, based on that. Some of them are used, um—

Rachel: I thought they were just designed to give you red light tickets.

Griffin: [laughs] I—that probably, too?

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, there are these things called induction loops, that you can actually just build into the ground, that can tell like, when cars are there and change—

Rachel: Yeah! I'm always obsessed with that, where I'm like, do I need to inch forward? Like, what—what's gonna set this thing off, so this light will change?

Griffin: So that's like, one reason why the Green Wave is actually more likely than you would think, but there's another reason that is like, uh... so like, apparent that I didn't realize until I learned about it—

Rachel: The existence of a god?

Griffin: Existence of God, yes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] If you wanna lean that way. Uh, and also the existence of, uh... traffic signal networks. So there are—you can network these traffic signals, these actuated traffic signals, um, so that, uh, you can actually let an entire, like, battalion of cars drive through without having to stop at a red light. You can actually network them so that—

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: —you create a sort of chain, where you—you know, they—they

change in pattern, so that they can let huge amount of cars go through without any sort of interruption. And doing that is like, so good for traffic on a macro level. It's also great for like, reducing pollution, and...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: There's all kinds of reasons why it is like such a great idea. Of course, it's not gonna work for you like, 100% of the time, and it's not going to, um... you know, it's only gonna be for sort of the major roads. But if that's all you drive on, if all you do drive on is like the major roads, the highly trafficked roads, you're actually *more* likely to catch a Green Wave, just because of the way that the signals are set up by traffic engineers.

Um, and... there's sort of... future tech being developed, that sort of takes the onus of catching the Green Wave off of traffic engineers and onto the individual. Audi in particular, uh, has been working to facilitate this.

In 2016, they partnered with a traffic signal tech company, and they made it so that, if you're within 13 major metropolitan areas, there's over 4,700 signals nationwide that this works with. In your Audi car, your car can speak to those signals and tell you, like, on your dashboard, how long you have before the signal changes.

Rachel: Oh, wow!

Griffin: That's wild, right? And then, just this week, the week that we're recording this, they announced this new thing that's gonna be coming in their new cars, where not only will it show you that data, it will show you on your dashboard a suggested speed to drive at to catch a Green Wave.

Rachel: I was hoping that was where you were going!

Griffin: So it would say like, you know, drive at like, 26 miles an hour, and based on how we are timing this out and how we have these traffic projections—

Rachel: Whew!

Griffin: —and how these signals are timing out, you will catch a Green Wave.

Rachel: The future is here!

Griffin: The future is radical! The future's the coolest ever. Um, so yeah. I uh, I drive so much more than I used to these days, because when we moved, we moved pretty far from Henry's daycare, and I make that drive twice a day, and it can be very long. Uh, and so, I was interested to learn, like, just how much stuff goes into like, not making it a complete disaster, and finding out like, why kismet happens so often when you're driving in a car.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Uh, hey can I steal you away?

[ad break stinger plays]

[advertisements play]

Rachel: Do you want to hear some personal messages?

Griffin: Absolutely!

Rachel: This one is for Ann, it is from Nathan.

"Ann, you beautiful being. I love you so much, and I'm so incredibly proud of you and how far you've come. Marsha, Mr. Kitty, and I are all rooting for you. Here's to another year of incredible adventures together. And to Micha, Chelsea, and Ben, and maybe Stella – let's get that game of Dungeon World going."

Griffin: Hell yeah. Let us *do* get that—I heard that, and I got excited, like I was gonna play.

Rachel: What is Dungeon Worlds? Is that the same thing as... D&D?

Griffin: Uh, it's kinda like D&D. It's like D&D but with less, uh, rules and more sort of uh, storytelling. This is very dry, but... [laughs]

Rachel: [laughing] Well, I was curious!

Griffin: Well, it's—okay, so it's Powered by the Apocalypse, um... Anyway, can I—here's the other Jumbotron. We'll talk more about Dungeon World later.

Rachel: Yeah. I want—I want you to read this one, Griffin.

Griffin: This is uh, for 'my fourth favorite brother,' and it's from McKenzie, who says, "I just want to tell you how I'm feeling. Gotta make you understand. Never gonna give you up, never gonna—" Aw, they got me!

"Never gonna let you down. Never gonna run around and desert you..." It's the song! It's the song you play to make a person feel like a goober, when they did it! You got me again, McKenzie. "P.S. Please pet Cobra Kid and Party Poison for me, and it's probably time to change the litter box. Cowabunga."

What a savage message this is.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It burned me up, and then it sent some sort of like, uh... you know, splinter-agent activation code there at the end. Thanks a lot, McKenzie!

Rachel: For those of you born in the past five years, uh, he's referring to the phenomenon of 'Rickrolling.'

[Maximum Fun advertisements play]

Griffin: Hey, what's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing is Nutella!

Griffin: Is what?

Rachel: Nutella.

Griffin: Nutella?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I know about this creamy brown stuff!

Rachel: Me too! That's why I brought it! [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: Uh, Nutella was actually created during ration times to make chocolate go further.

Griffin: Oh god, that explains everything.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Cause they call it a hazelnut spread, but gang... hazelnut is just a friend that chocolate brought to the party.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. So back in 1806, Napoleon tried to freeze out British commerce, as a way of taking over the world. [laughs] The result was a disastrous continental blockade that caused the cost of chocolate to skyrocket, and left Piedmontese chocolatiers in the lurch. Chocolatiers in Turin started adding chopped hazelnuts to chocolate to stretch the supply as much as possible.

Griffin: God, what weird future could we have gotten, if they had chosen some other thing. Some other thing to chop and screw in there. Like a—like eraser bits or something. [laughs]

Rachel: Or like cheese goes up, and so they start adding um, leeks.

Griffin: Leeks. Well, that wouldn't—all of this would be good, actually.

Rachel: Is that a good idea? Should I write that down?

Griffin: I think we should probably get going on that. Leek cheese.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, so at the time, it was called Gianduja.

Griffin: That was beautiful, baby. That was so syrupy, what you just said.

Rachel: [laughing] It's named after a character from commedia dell'arte, named Gianduja. He is depicted as a smiling Piedmontese peasant, with a three-point hat who rides around town on a donkey, uh, clutching a duja, which is a dialect meaning 'container.'

Griffin: [laughing] Okay!

Rachel: You can't find this on the Nutella package now, I looked.

Griffin: So it's like a little—like a silly man—

Rachel: A little guy—

Griffin: —riding a donkey, holding a container?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And that's just a character in commedia—I don't think I understand what commedia dell'arte is. 'Cause I've always heard it's pretty high-brow, and if this is the heat that they're bringing to the table...

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: That does sound pretty high-brow, cause I do *not* get it.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, yeah. So it was... It was re-named Nutella in 1964.

Griffin: When commedia dell'arte *finally* fell out of fashion.

Rachel: [laughs] Well, so over a century later during World War II, chocolate again became expensive and scarce due to rationing in Europe. And so, an Italian pastry maker named Pietro Ferrero in 1946, created 'Pasta Gianduja'...

Griffin: Wait, what?

Rachel: I think pasta must mean something else, in this case.

Griffin: Sure, but we went back to the old container-man name?

Rachel: Oh, it didn't change until 1964.

Griffin: Oh, okay. Okay.

Rachel: So in 1946, still Gianduja.

Griffin: Still crazy for container-man.

Rachel: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Griffin: Love container-man. Love his work.

Rachel: It wasn't until 1964, where they started spreading like, all over...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That they changed it to Nutella.

Griffin: By which you mean all over every food imaginable.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: A blanket that surrounds the earth and protects it.

Rachel: Well, and I thought it was interesting, because I—do you remember your first Nutella experience? `Cause I do.

Griffin: It was like, college. I was—I was up there in age.

Rachel: I was in—I didn't realize it was an Italian thing, because the first time I had it was in my French class.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: Uh, we made crepes in my French class and she brought in Nutella and—

Griffin: [whispers] That's a fucking cool class...

Rachel: We were all like, this is the best thing in the world.

Griffin: You made crepes in your French class?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: We watched Finding Nemo in my Spanish class. That's like a—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's like as far—but with the subtitles on.

Rachel: Yeah, we had like, a French food day, and we all made crepes. It was wonderful.

Griffin: That sounds good as hell!

Rachel: Uh, so in 1965, Nutella moved to Germany, and then in 1966, it was in France. In '78, they opened a production plant in Australia. And then

in 1983 is when you started being able to find Nutella in the northeast part of the United States.

Griffin: That's wild!

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: It was here before I was even born, and I didn't know about it until... like 30 years later.

Rachel: Mm-hmm, yeah. Uh now, if you happen to live in a—one of these lucky cities, in Chicago there is a Nutella Café.

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: Where you can get crepes, gelato, oatmeal, granola, cookies, croissants, all with Nutella on it.

Griffin: That sounds really nice.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: What's wild to me, is that it was designed as this thing to make chocolate last longer by chopping and screwing in hazelnuts, and yet today, it is like significantly more expensive than just like some regular non-hazelnut-y chocolate spread.

Rachel: I know. Well, hazelnut I think is a pretty... you know.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Fancy nut.

Griffin: Now we're mixing chocolate in to make the hazelnut last longer!

Rachel: [laughs] You can buy—so the reason I brought this up is, you can buy little individual serving, like little individual 80 calorie servings of Nutella?

Griffin: Mmm.

Rachel: So I've been doing this little hack at work, where I take half of a sandwich thin, which is like 50 calories, and then some 80 calorie Nutella... I give myself a little treat.

Griffin: It's 180 calories of good, tasty desert right there.

Rachel: No, I—it's 50—

Griffin: 180 great calories.

Rachel: 50 plus 80! [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] You're talking to the math wizard, over here. You're talking to the number cruncher over here. The math-blasters.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um, you mentioned Ferrero, we didn't—I didn't know the connection between—

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: These two things until we watched that, uh, most recent—

Rachel: Bon Appetit!

Griffin: Bon Appetit video, where Claire remakes the Ferrero Roche?

Rachel: She makes Ferrero Rocher, it's delightful.

Griffin: It's really, really good, but I did not know that like it's basically—the stuff in Ferrero Rocher—

Rachel: Is Nutella. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: —is basically Nutella, because it's the same folks.

Rachel: She didn't realize it either, and she Googled and was like "Oh! Yeah, okay. Same company."

Griffin: "Oh. Okay. Makes sense!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, man. Nutella's really, really good. I have not had it in a while.

Rachel: So good. I used to think it was healthy, because it was hazelnut...

Griffin: [snorts in laughter]

Rachel: Um... not especially, no. [laughs]

Griffin: No. Quite the—Quite the opposite, I would argue. Uh can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Wind farms! Wind farms.

Rachel: Oh, wind farms! You mentioned this the other day, and how beautiful you think they are.

Griffin: I think wind farms look super, super neat!

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: We've been watching more, uh, Hyori's Bed and Breakfast on Netflix because it's just a—it's a salve.

Rachel: We kinda dipped out for a while, as we had other shows to watch,

and then we had this pleasant reminder that there are two seasons on Netflix.

Griffin: True. It's—it is just genuinely the most peaceful show to watch.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And JeJu Island, where it takes place, looks gorgeous uh, and... uh, there are frequently like, parts of episodes where there's just like wind farms in the background? 'Cause I guess it's a—it's a pretty big spot, and so they got, uh, lots of—

Rachel: And a windy spot, they have.

Griffin: And a windy spot! So uh, they harvest that good wind. Uh, but I've always thought it like, looked cool, especially if like I'm on a long drive, and I'm just sort of going through a, just, plain where there's not much stuff to look at, and then just like, over the horizon you see these huge turbines, like, spinning? I always thought it looks really, really neat.

Um, I should mention at the top though, there's like... you know, they can be uh, exploitive of people living in rural sort of environments, because it is not unheard of for—especially like, private places, like private companies, to build their own wind farms to either like, power their stuff, or sell that energy for a profit, and put that basically right in the backyard of these people who live in rural environments, without like, getting any kind of blessing from them to do so?

Uh, I read a report of a farmer in Minnesota who had a wind farm built 1,100 feet from his property, and it like, casts like flickering shadows on his house—

Rachel: Oh gosh, yeah. I could see how that'd make you crazy. [laughs]

Griffin: He talks about how through the window of his office, he's like, in there trying to do like their financial stuff, and just like blades of a gigantic—

Rachel: Strobe. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Like this strobe-light effect. There's also like, um... uh, people who live like within a certain amount—like a slightly larger distance away from them, have complained about like the noise that they create, this like low-level constant vibration, like, frequency. And there a people who like, complain about like health problems that that causes?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But there have been a lot of, uh, studies into that and they can't really find a physiological link.

Rachel: So potentially, better than like a black-smoke factory, but still...

Griffin: Absolutely better than a black-smoke factory.

Rachel: Side effects. [laughs]

Griffin: But there's no—there is no like, proven link between the like physical side effects, but um... I mean, that doesn't discount the fact that people are sort of the main reason—the main sort of “opponent,” the human factor, to these wind farms. But, environmentally speaking, they are a just an increasingly reliable source of renewable energy, uh, which makes them, I think, a very important thing.

Uh, back in 2009, which was ten years ago – so obviously, things have evolved since then – uh, there was a report that found that wind power had the “lowest relative greenhouse gas emissions, the least water consumption demands, and the most favorable social impacts” among like, sort of uh, any energy source, including other renewable stuff like hydro-electricity. Um, and these turbines have gotten just like, more sophisticated and more productive.

Obviously, like, windmills and turbines have been around for... I mean, forever, right? Like, uh, around like 70 B.C., the first windmill was invented?

And for over a century now, farmers and people living in rural environments have used their own, like, private windmills and turbines to power, you know, on a very small scale, operations at their ranches.

But the first wind farm was built in 1980, in Southern New Hampshire. It had 20 turbines, which is a decent amount of turbines.

Rachel: Yeah, to start out.

Griffin: To start out with. And it produced 0.6 megawatts of energy. Uh, which is not very much. Just as a point of reference, the average American home consumes 10.76 megawatt hours in a year. So like, not even enough to like... [laughs] Really give a house power.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um... But obviously, like, things have expanded. They have become more efficient. Today, the biggest wind farm in the world is in China. It's called the Gansu Wind Farm. It has hundreds and hundreds of turbines, and it produces 6,800 megawatts, which is a lot of megawatts, um, and it's actually just a fraction of its hypothetical capacity right now, which is ever expanding. It's hypothetical capacity is 8 gigawatts, which is a... fuck-ton of energy.

Um, there are efficiency issues—

Rachel: You know how I know that's a lot?

Griffin: Because of Back to the Future.

Rachel: Back to the Future. [laughs]

Griffin: I think he says "jiggawatts," which I don't even know what the exponential scale of that is.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, but they're hoping to like get it up to like 20 gigawatts by the next decade, which it would be like, a profound amount of energy. Um, there are some efficiency issues, because like it's a—you can't really put it on a schedule, and so there's some energy loss, especially because you have to generate this energy in big, wide open plains, not close to cities. So in just like, transferring that energy to cities, there's a natural amount of loss.

But still, like, it is—it is growing. China has like, lead the charge, uh... among like, the whole planet. Eight of the ten biggest wind farms in the world are in China. They had this huge push to like explore wind energy, not only like as a uh, environmentally kind of sound energy production method, but also like economically beneficial, uh, energy method.

And a recent study—actually no, a study I believe around the 2010, the year 2010, was done by Harvard and Tsinghua University, and found that China could supply all of its power from wind energy by 2030.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Which is like kind of—kind of remarkable!

Rachel: There's a lot of people in China.

Griffin: Yes, there are quite a few people in China! [laughing]

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, and... Like, individual turbines are getting better at producing energy, which means you, y'know, hypothetically need fewer turbines to produce the same amount of energy at your farm, which makes them easier and cheaper to build. Reduces their footprint, meaning you need like uh, a smaller space. You don't have to find these huge, open plains, with like, perfect, ideal wind conditions.

And again, like, it's not just like the technology of the turbines that is improving, like, there's other stuff, too. Just this week, there—actually,

yesterday, from the day we are recording this, Google announced that—Google has its own like, private wind farm that they use to like power their headquarters, um and they have learned...

It was like, the big problem with wind turbines is it's the wind, and you can't really always count on it? Because it—it's different, and so like—but energy, like you kind of need it to be stable, right? If we had an uneven amount of energy coming into this house, shit would just like break down all the time.

Rachel: Yeah, makes sense.

Griffin: Um, and so, they can't predict the wind, right?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: But, Deep Mind can, which is their like adaptive, sort of machine-learning AI.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Its machine-learning AI can like look at all of the conditions of all the turbines, and kind of predict like, what the energy output of them is gonna be. And they have claim that it is made just like, overnight. The energy that they produce, uh, "20% more valuable." And nobody seems to know what that means? [laughing]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But it is like a—it's like a... It's a cool thing that just like, instantly overnight... just the whole idea of wind energy became better and more efficient.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Because of this other sort of ancillary technological improvement. Um... so, I mean, all that other tech stuff aside, like—and I think it is like,

important. I think that anything we can do to get away from fossil fuels is a good step in the right direction. Um... but I just think they look cool, man.

Rachel: Exactly! Well, you know, it reminded me. You know how I talked about how much I love kinetic sculpture?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: That's what it reminds me of!

Griffin: It looks like the future.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Exactly.

Griffin: Like it looks—they look futuristic in a way that I also find very aesthetically pleasing. And the contrast of like them being out in the middle of nowhere, and then like growing out... It's kind of like a, um... wWhat is it, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"?

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: But it's a huge, mechanical, uh, pinwheel that grows in the middle of like, uh, you know, old farm or something. I just find the juxtaposition, like, very aesthetically pleasing.

Rachel: Man, between the Green Wave and wind energy, like...

Griffin: Yeah, this is really my Al Gore episode.

Rachel: This is really your Al Gore episode!

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, it really is. Uh, let's close things out with some submissions from our friends at home.

Rachel: Did we—did we get one from Al Gore?

Griffin: We got one from Al Gore, and he says um, "The internet." Oh!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Emily says, "I take the train to and from work, and one of my favorite things is seeing a stranger on the train reading one of your favorite books. It's such a good feeling to know that they're getting to read a book that you enjoyed so much. Every once in a while, you get to have a little interaction with them, where you connect about the book. I've been on both sides of these interactions and they always make me so happy."

Rachel: Oh, that's nice.

Griffin: I've never had this experience, but when I was living in Chicago, I sat behind a woman who had a Zune, and I had a Zune, which was already very exciting.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: And she was listening to the same Wolf Parade album I was listening to, at like, the exact same time. And I was like, "Nice."

Rachel: Whoa! That is the most dated reference you've ever made!
[laughs]

Griffin: Maybe!

Uh, here's one from uh, Rhea? Uh, I believe I'm pronouncing that right, who says, "I know games to play in the car have been recognized as wonderful, but let me tell you about my favorite one: Wonderful. On road trips, my girlfriends and I cast ourselves as guest hosts of the show. It's been a lovely way for us to learn more about our person, like how she ironically enjoys the aesthetic of AppleBee's, or how I can speed-read Fox In Socks faster than even the great Seuss ever intended. Don't worry, no plans on going on air anytime soon."

Rachel: Aw, the at-home version!

Griffin: The at-home version, and there's a good thing you're not publishing those, because we're *very* litigious!

Rachel: [laughs] I encourage people to do this, cause I feel it's been really good for me and Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah! Sure.

Rachel: Griffin and I tend to be kind of, um... high strung people.

Griffin: Mmm.

Rachel: And this is required us to focus on the things we like, and usually they are like small things that you don't have to pay money for, and you can just kind of enjoy anywhere, anytime.

Griffin: It's true. Uh, thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, 'Money Won't Pay', speaking of money can't buy things. That was the original name of the song, I heard!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, it's a great song. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Uh, thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Like we said last week... we're recording all of these like really close together, so time is a flat circle for me, right now. But I think, last week, from the time you're are hearing this, we talked about this, but in two weeks, I believe...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The Maximum Fun—[laughs] The Maximum Fun Drive is gonna kick off. We are a pledge supported network, which means that, uh, you the listeners can help support the shows that you like on the network. Uh, and uh... We have gotten so much incredible support since we launched... Well, Rose Buddies, and then, since we switched over to Wonderful, and it means so much, and uh, yeah. That's coming up soon.

You'll have a chance to also get some cool rewards for that. Um, and uh, we have a bonus episode we recorded for this show, that we warned you about, I guess.

Rachel: Yeah, you already know about it, and it's available to the donors.

Griffin: To the donors.

Rachel: Ha ha!

Griffin: It's our Will Smith sort of review, and it was fun to record.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And think about—just think about Will Smith's career.

Rachel: Mm-hmm! [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, and thanks to Maximum Fun. They have all kinds of great shows. Um, and... that's it. How do you wanna close this one?

Rachel: Since you've been taking over the Home Improvement stinger?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I've really—I've missed out on an opportunity, I think...

Griffin: To do what?

Rachel: To do my own version!

Griffin: Oh, to do the—to sing it yourself?

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. Well, do you want to do that now?

Rachel: [pauses] No. [laughs]

Griffin: Well then, what—[laughing] Bye!

Rachel: [laughing]

[theme music plays]

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