

Wonderful! 129: Burning is Anxiety Leaving the Body

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Take a deep breath. [inhales] No, not—no. In your mou—big, in your mouth breath.

Rachel: Oh, okay. I didn't want to make too much noise, but here we go. [inhales loudly through mouth]

Griffin: That's perfect! That's how they say to do it! Now, hold it for seven minutes. Like Harry Houdini. And we'll wait. There's gonna be seven minute—and maybe I'll play some gentle, Brian Eno music. And then you'll know when to exhale.

Just kidding. Do it now. We don't want to be responsible for people's... accidental podcast asphixi... asphixi... that's a tough word. This is Wonderful.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: How are you doing, babe?

Rachel: I'm pretty good.

Griffin: I'm glad to hear it.

Rachel: Getting into kind of a rhythm, I think.

Griffin: Good, good. Um... I'm—I'm not—this has been a weird—I feel like this has been a weird week. I feel like this week, uh, is where it's just kind of—it's hitting hard for a lot of—maybe it's the one month mark.

Rachel: It was so interesting, because a couple days ago, you were telling me that a lot about your life has not changed all that much.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Because you are a man that has worked from home for a long time. And so, you were kind of telling me...

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: ... that it wasn't that bad for you.

Griffin: Yeah. But then like, y'know, anxiety doesn't need... doesn't need an invitation. Anxiety was just like, "It's been a month! It'll always be a month! Forever! Many months!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which is not true. But anxiety's such a bad friend. He swoops in, he's like...

Rachel: Yeah. He really is. [laughing]

Griffin: He's like, "Hey, there's something you're forgetting!" It's like, "Oh, what's that, anxiety?"
"I don't know!"
"Ah, shit. You got me again, partner."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, do you have any small won—I'm—I'm doing okay, though. Do you have any small wonde—I put on some facial rejuvenating hydration cream last night.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And it really... it vanquished... anxiety. It—like they do in the Mucinex commercials. Those little green boogers. And then they like, get killed by the Mucinex, I guess. That's what the facial cream did to my anxiety.

Rachel: Yeah, it did burn though for a bit there.

Griffin: That was the anxiety leak—

Rachel: [laughs] Just melting.

Griffin: Burning is anxiety leaving the body. And I always say that. Uh, do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I was gonna say – because I knew you weren't gonna say – your upcoming birthday!

Griffin: Oh yeah, man.

Rachel: I'm excited to celebrate you this weekend!

Griffin: Me too, man. We're throwing a fuckin' huge rager. Bounce house. Petting zoo. Clown.

Rachel: Game of spin the bottle.

Griffin: Spin the bottle.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Whole, big block party. Uh, got a big, big bottle. Uh, I'm excited—no. We're going to spend it indoors.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Um, thinking about inviting... a little guy named Henry to the party. But... he's so hard to...

Rachel: He's hard to get.

Griffin: Nail down, yeah. Uh, yeah. It's a—it's 33.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That's a—I guess it's a big one. I don't know. Still can't run for president, so who fuckin' cares, man?

Rachel: Well, I mean, you could. You could start an extended campaign now.

Griffin: I guess that's true. I guess next time it would be relevant, I will be in, uh...

Rachel: For 2024.

Griffin: 2024, man. Alright. Yeah. So this is me actually announcing my campaign. That's my small wonder, is the—

Rachel: For the green partyyy.

Griffin: For the... [snickers] Wait, that's an actual thing.

Rachel: Yeah, I know. [laughing]

Griffin: Okay. You said it euphemistically.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: I—

Rachel: What's your small wonder?

Griffin: My small wonder is, uh, not gonna be particularly relatable to you, but um... there's a game called Final Fantasy VII that came out, I believe, in 1998. I got it for Christmas, as our family got a PlayStation that Christmas. It was a hugely exciting Christmas, and that was like, one of the first games that I, like, owned, that was mine, and it was so good and big and cool, and they just released this like, wild remake of it.

Rachel: Wild! I can't believe they're still makin' those games!

Griffin: I know, yeah. I mean, they've been slowly kind of rolling out new Final Fantasy games. But like, Final Fantasy VII is so widely beloved, 'cause it was the first like, 3D Final Fantasy game, and had this like, huge, epic, sweeping, ambitious story. And this remake is like, so bizarre and strange, and uh, I can't stop playing it. Can't stop thinking about it. It's good. It's bringing back a lot of uh, late '90s nostalgia for me, which was a great...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: It was a great period. I really thrived in those years.

Rachel: Ooh, okay.

Griffin: Uh, I believe I go first this week. I want to talk about, uh, a weird sort of sub-genre slash franchise slash, uh, media property, called the Super Sentai series. Or, specifically... the motherfuckin' Power Rangers.

Rachel: Oh, man!

Griffin: I am gonna talk about them Power Rangers. I mostly want to talk about this genre, because I adore the fact that this genre, the Super Sentai genre, kind of exists in the first place. For context, we dipped into this over the past few days, 'cause there was just an unconscionable amount of Power Rangers on Netflix.

Rachel: Yeah, somehow Henry was really excited about them, and I don't entirely know how he knows anything about Power Rangers.

Griffin: Well, I don't think he needs to know anything about Power Rangers, but he loves super heroes, and uh, bright colors.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And that's sort of what these guys are all about. We mostly dipped into the green Ranger arc of Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers, which... despite the fact that it is pretty ancient at this point, uh, being from the early '90s, like, it is still a very watchable television program.

Rachel: Also, when it came out, it felt ancient. Right? Like, there was something about it where, I saw it on television, and I thought, like... this is a current show? This is a show being made now? 'Cause it felt so, like, behind the times, I guess.

Griffin: Well, it's because the special effects that were being used, that were sort of like, the big, important thing for this show and this genre, were a little bit low 'budge. I would liken it to like, Doctor Who, when that first, uh, came out.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Even when they brought it back. Like, it was very dependent on low budget special effects.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But it's still, like—I don't know. It's still very, very entertaining to watch. Uh, I will say, it's tough to view it through, uh, the modern lens, where it is like, uh... it's kind of a—it's a pretty problematic show, I think, in general. The way that there is like, racial color coordination in the uh, the Rangers' designated, uh, y'know, mecha colors. And apparently, it was also like, a fuckin' horrible show to work on. Like, it was a like—

Rachel: Oh, really?

Griffin: —a really, really, really shitty work environment. But there is a— there's something about the genre that I think is so, uh, kind of genius, and so straightforward, and powerful, and clean. It is... this formula, it also like, predates the Power Rangers, and is pretty time tested. And uh, the—so, the Super Sentai series. It is this sprawling, pseudo-connected, uh, intellectual property created by the Toei Company and Bandai.

Sentai translates in Japanese, specifically, to 'task force' or 'fighting squadron.' And this series, this idea, was created by a guy named Shotaro Ishinomori. And he had made a couple successful shows for Toei before. He sort of birthed this genre. But then, in the mid-'70s, he kind of came up with this, uh... two series, actually. Concurrent series of a team of super fighters, all, y'know, color coordinated, with wrist worn or handheld devices that transformed them into superheroes.

So it was a team of, y'know, red and blue and pink and green and yellow and orange and... I mean, I don't know if those were all specifically the colors. But all of them had, y'know, signature weapons and signature fighting styles.

And these two series, they didn't like, necessarily blow up right away. And so, Toei sidelined them, because they got a partnership with Marvel to make a Spider Man live action series, which I did not know. And this Spider Man live action series is actually kind of important to like, the Power Rangers, uh, history, because it kind of branched away from the comics in that there were giant mecha... in Spider Man.

Like, Spider Man had a big mech that he rode around in called Leopardon that he would use to fight big kaiju monsters.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Which is fuckin' rad. And I think could be, like, a major improvement to the next Spider Man movie.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: If Tom Holland climbed up inside...

Rachel: Love it!

Griffin: ... a big robot leopard of some sort. Um, so, that sort of got added to this Sentai formula. And that's basically carried it through to the day. A team of colorful superheroes have devices that transform them into these rangers of power, and they all have individual mecha that they can ride around in and fight, uh, big monsters when they transform.

So, in 1993, a company called Saban Entertainment, which was an American company, wanted to bring it stateside. And so, what they did is, they took the like, combat and action footage from a 1992 Sentai series called *Kyōryū Sentai Zyuranger*, uh, and took—so, they took like, all the mecha combat, and some of the martial arts combat of them in their costumes, and then, also filmed, like, American actors, for the, y'know, more narrative parts of the series, and then they just combined them. And that is where *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* came from.

Rachel: Okay, okay!

Griffin: And it is because of that, that formula and that form of adaptation, that there is a fucking billion Power Rangers spinoff series. Because every single Sentai series that came out in Japan from that point on, pretty much without fail, became a Power Rangers series using this exact sort of translation formula.

That is how we get the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*, the *Power Rangers Zeo*, *Power Rangers Turbo*, *Power Rangers in Space*, *Power Rangers Lost Galaxy*, *Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue*, *Time Force*, *Wild Force*, *Ninja Storm*, *Dino Thunder*, *S.P.D.*, *Mystic Force*, *Operation Overdrive*, *Jungle Fury*, *RPM*... all of these start with *Power Rangers*, obviously, but that was getting a little, um...

Samurai, Super Samurai, Mega Force, Super Mega Force, Beast Morphers, Super Dino Charge, and regular Dino Charge, and Ninja Steel and Super Ninja Steel.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: It's just a lot.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And all—I mean, we watched—we hopped around the canon a little bit. Each one, they got colorful superheroes with mechs that they transform into.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: And that's fuckin' good. And I'll watch it. Every single time, no matter what.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Also, shout out to the Big Bad Beetleborgs, which was another creation of Saban that was, uhh... it had a terrifying, blue-faced Jay Leno ghost genie man, who gave kids these superpowers to turn into robot bugs, but it was also kind of a sitcom. Holy shit. What a wild one.

This was like, a thing. I feel like, um... and obviously, I was too young to know sort of like, the origins of where it came from, but like, man. VR Troopers was another one that came out.

Rachel: Yeah, I remember all of these. Like...

Griffin: It just—yeah. They were really striking while the iron was hot, and uh, they are still strikin'. So...

Rachel: Never really like, in my pocket exactly, but I remember the phenomenon.

Griffin: Yes, of course. Boy howdy, was I into it. When the movie came out, ugh. With They Might Be Giants on the soundtrack? Fucking forget about it.

Hey, what's your first thing?

Rachel: Uh, my first thing is also kind of a little retro.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It is The California Raisins.

Griffin: Okay! Hey, babe! That's profoundly strange.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's quite weird.

Rachel: I went on a little journey today, just kind of looking at spokesmen from the grand hay day of animated spokespeople.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Uh, and then I kind of... really spent a lot of time with the California Raisins today.

Griffin: That's good. Sometimes you really need to center yourself. Close your eyes, light a candle, a votive, and maybe just spend some time... with the California Raisins. And what does that mean to you?

Rachel: I don't know if you're really aware of the phenomenon that was the California Raisins. I mean, obviously you are somewhat, because Justin and Travis did... and you, right?

Griffin: Right. No, not me. I was too lit—I was too little. Um...

Rachel: The Halloween costume.

Griffin: They did, which, essentially, was garbage bags.

Rachel: Yeah. Which is forever commemorated in your photos.

Griffin: Which I adore. Um... yeah, no. I mean, I was alive during California Raisins, but I do not—and we had California Raisins toys. But I don't think I knew a lot about them.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Um, so, California Raisins... part of the reason you may not be as familiar is, this is 1986 when they... when they started.

Griffin: Yeah, I wasn't even alive then.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I was still up in the baby factory in the clouds.

Rachel: [laughs] The stork was still circlin' around.

Griffin: The stork was in a holding pattern, waiting for Clint and Leslie McElroy to... I don't want to finish that sentence.

Rachel: Yeah, let's... let's...

Griffin: Let's move on.

Rachel: Yeah. Uh, so, this is a ad campaign. The legend has it that a man—

Griffin: [bursts into laughter] They unearthed scrolls...

Rachel: [laughs] A man named Seth Werner was working for an ad agency, um, and he was looking for something. The California Raisin Advisory Board had put together, um, a bid for a multi-million dollar campaign to combat slowing raisin sales. Which... okay.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Alright. Doesn't sound like... doesn't sound like an emergency. But that's a big—I mean, California... there's a big industry there for grapes.

Griffin: Sure. Sure. Grapes and grape byproducts.

Rachel: [laughs] And they depend, y'know, on the sales of these grapes.

Griffin: Yeah, these great grapes. Or... their old, sort of desiccated husks. Which is what raisins are. And that's what they used to—they used to call them California Desiccated Grape Husks.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah. Which is hard to sell, if you think about it.

Griffin: It's hard to sell, hard to say...

Rachel: Uh, so the legend is that Seth Werner, who was the copywriter at the ad agency, uh, began dancing across the room to the old Motown hit, I Heard it Through the Grape Vine. Which apparently...

Griffin: He just... did that? In the middle of business?

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin: He was in the middle of business office...

Rachel: That was his pitch.

Griffin: And that sounds like a—like a skit or a sketch of some sort.

Rachel: Well, if you're a man that has sat down to come up with an ad campaign for raisins, right? Like, that's—that's a challenging thing, 'cause y'know, if you think about Sun-Maid raisin lady...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Y'know, that's nice. But it's not hip the way...

Griffin: No, that's my grandpa. Eats her old raisins.

Rachel: Yeah, right? The way the '80s demanded... '80s demanded hip.

Griffin: '80s demanded cool, hip, desiccated raisin husk people.

Rachel: Uh, so, this first aired September 14th, 1986. Of course, this was claymation.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: So it took a very long time to create.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: But... [laughs] Werner has been quoted as saying, "We decided that we wanted the raisins to be cool, and a bit intimidating."

Griffin: Whoa! Hmm. Okay.

Rachel: They hired Will Vinton, who was an Oscar-winning animator, who would later trademark the term 'claymation.'

Griffin: Ohh!

Rachel: So like, they used that—that money, and they got themselves a big name.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In the claymation, um...

Griffin: The biggest, and possibly only, it sounds like.

Rachel: Apparently, they hired human dancers to make the raisins' dance moves look realistic.

Griffin: Okay. Sort of a claymation rotoscope, which is, uh, silly, but I'm into it.

Rachel: [laughs] So, for those of you that aren't familiar with the California Raisins, they were like, anthropomorphic raisins that had like, sunglasses, and they would do cool dance moves and sing I Heard it Through the Grape Vine. Which a lot of people—

Griffin: And you saw this, and you went, "Boy howdy, I want to eat those anthropomorphic raisin people. Yum, they look delicious. I will go buy a box of them immediately."

Rachel: You're saying that, but this did actually increase raisin sales by 20% after the first commercial.

Griffin: Good lord.

Rachel: So people—and people were like, "Hey, you remember raisins?"

Griffin: Can I say something? Maybe—I think they could've just put a picture of an actual raisin up on the screen and been like, "Hey, everybody. It's us, California Raisin Society or whatever. Remember... I just want you to think real quick. Raisins taste pretty good."

Rachel: "Did you forget about raisins?"

Griffin: Did you forget about raisins? 'Cause you saying—this segment right now makes you want to go eat the hell out of some raisins.

Rachel: Really!

Griffin: 'Cause I'm remembering like, hey, wait a minute... raisins kind of kick ass a little bit. They taste good.

Rachel: I mean, I love a raisin.

Griffin: I like a raisin too, and I haven't eaten one in this millennium, I feel like.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: I know. It's been a minute.

Rachel: Uh, okay. So, the thing about the California Raisins... so that song, I Heard It Through the Grape Vine... I think a lot of people associate with the Martin Gaye version, which came out in 1968. Actually, the first recording was produced for Gladys Knight and the Pips.

Griffin: Oh! Interesting!

Rachel: Yeah! Uh, so, anyway... here's the phenomenon that happened. California Raisins went on to release four albums.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: For these commercial fruits!

Rachel: They did versions of Lean on Me, and You Can't Hurry Love. More than two million people bought their albums.

Griffin: Fuck! Wow!

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughing] Who's your favorite band right now, Griffin?

Griffin: The California—thank you for asking. I can't stop listening to the California Raisins.

Rachel: [laughing] Um... not only that, uh... they scored a billboard hot 100 hit. They earned an Emmy nomination, because they did several television programs.

Griffin: [strained] Okay. Did the sale of raisins just continue to grow in—in lock step with these huge, uh, entertainment success stories?

Rachel: So this—this is basically—this is the '80s, right? Because the—the kind of the swan song of the California Raisins was a 13-episode, Saturday morning cartoon show in 1989, called The California Raisins Show.

Apparently—now, I haven't seen this. The program that won the Emmy was a Christmas celebration that was just all claymation. Um... there is apparently a mockumentary style show called Meet the Raisins, which created a full backstory. And the raisins were given names, including AC, Beebop, Stretch, and Red.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I gotta—I gotta find this program.

Griffin: We need to find it, locate it, watch it. Tonight.

Rachel: Um, there's merchandise. I had the little figurines. There is plush—plush toys, lunch boxes, air fresheners, a series of comic books...

Griffin: Garbage bag costumes...

Rachel: [laughs] Garbage bag costumes. Uh, fast food chain. Hardee's bought a license to produce the incredibly popular collectible raisin figures, which I think is what I had.

Griffin: Oh, that's probably what I had as well, yes.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, and they—if you—those that look back in history on the raisins kind of credit them for the beginning of like, the M&Ms. Like the little M&Ms guys, if you think about it.

Griffin: Oh yeah, sure.

Rachel: Um... super interesting, great phenomenon.

Griffin: I like that they sort of broke the seal on making it okay to have the spokespeople for your product...

Rachel: Be the thing you're eating.

Griffin: Be the thing you're eating.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They made it okay. It made me feel comfortable, now, when I see the M&Ms, and they're like, "Ah, they're gonna make a joke! Ha ha ha!" And the whole time, I'm thinking like, I'm gonna fucking eat you guys.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: And it's gonna taste really—you guys are so big. It will be so awesome to eat you, 'cause it would take forever.

Rachel: Ohh. Yeah, like an everlasting M&M.

Griffin: Mm-hmm. I don't even need them to say their funny jokes. They can just, again, stand on screen and model for me.

Rachel: [laughs] Dance.

Griffin: Sweet, candy sh—dance.

Rachel: Dance for me.

Griffin: [laughing] Dance for me, yellow M&M!

Rachel: [laughing] Um, I just—one last thing. So, the person singing on the, uh, California Raisins commercials was Buddy Miles, who was a Carlos Santana collaborator and drummer for Jimi Hendrix.

Griffin: Wow, okay!

Rachel: Right? They spared no expense with these raisins.

Griffin: Yeah. Some real—some real cred, there. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[ad break stinger plays]

[advertisements]

Griffin: Hey, can I read a couple gambotrams here for ya? Or maybe I'll just do one, and you'll do one, 'cause it's nice to share.

Rachel: It is nice to share.

Griffin: I learned that from Daniel Tiger. Here's a message, and this one's for Alex, and it's from Leah, who says, "To my baby sister, Alex: You gave me the best gift in the world, not only by being my sister, but also by being my friend. Even though we don't say it enough, I love you, and I'm so proud of the adult you have become. Keep crushing grad school, and come to Boston once we can leave our homes and be within six feet of each other. Love you like a SpongeBob." And there's no sign off there, but I don't... it's probably not the SpongeBob. Right?

Rachel: What other SpongeBob might it be, Griffin?

Griffin: Well, there's SpongeBob TriangularPants.

Rachel: Yeah, mm-hmm. Love those spinoffs.

Griffin: SpongeBob CircleShirt.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Love him and his funny stuff that he does.

Rachel: Can I read the next message?

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: This is for Zander, and it is from Past Zander. "To future Zander, from Past Zander... surprise! I got you a Wonderful jumbotron. Here's a special message from your favorite podcast to remind you of some wonderful things. Elephants are beautiful, painting is fun, trees are joyful, and water tastes great. Shout out to my family who's spectacular, and hey, Jensen, I love you. Zander, you are wonderful."

Griffin: Hell yeah. Oh, Past Zander is such a sweetheart.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Past Zander is always trying to lift us up, aren't they? Always trying to reach us up into the clouds.

Rachel: Always popping over our shoulder and saying, "Hey!"

Griffin: "Heyyy!"

Rachel: "Elephants!"

Griffin: "Elephants! Water! Drink it! Touch the clouds! Go!"

Rachel: [laughs] Thank you, Past Zander.

[Maximum Fun advertisement]

Griffin: Hey, can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: [wolf whistles] It's whistling.

Rachel: Okay! [laughs] Hoo, I got nervous there for a second!

Griffin: What did you think I was gonna—like I was gonna talk about, like... some like, sexy stuff?

Rachel: Cabooses, maybe?

Griffin: Today is fannies.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: What's up? No, I'm talking about whistling. Uh, and I'm not even necessarily saying that I love hearing people whistle. But I enjoy whistling a lot. I do it sort of absentmindedly, quite a bit. And also just sort of conceptually, whistling... I like that we can make this sound with our bodies. Like, our bod—

Rachel: Well... some of us.

Griffin: Some of us can make that sound with our bodies.

Rachel: Some of us can.

Griffin: I'm sorry that you're—

Rachel: I'm not the—

Griffin: You can kind of whistle, right?

Rachel: I can.

Griffin: You can create a tone, but you just like, can't control the pitch.

Rachel: I can't modulate it at all. Yeah.

Griffin: Um, just sort of like, our bodies can make a lot of noises, and some of them are musical in nature. And I like that we just have this like, powerful woodwind instrument sort of built into our face.

Rachel: That is pretty cool!

Griffin: It is very cool. Um, I also think it's like a genuinely sort of pretty sound. Um, I like whistling in places that are sort of like, have interesting reverb sort of patterns to them. Um, and... obviously, like, whistling has been a part of music since music has been, y'know, recorded and performed. And there's a lot of different ways to whistle, using, y'know, your lips, or your tongue, or your fingers, obviously, for a more sort of shrill, powerful whistle.

The most prominent whistler in music, in my opinion, is Andrew Bird.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Who uh, I have been looking—I've been listening to him so much lately, and I've been looking for a way to sneak him back into the show again.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And it's sort of been a staple of his music forever. He was in like, a sort of like, jazz folk group called, uh, Bowl of Fire, I think? I'll have to double check that.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: And like, ever since then, all the way up to today, whistling is just sort of a frequent thing in his music. He's very, very, very good at whistling. He's an incredible whistler, and I remember reading an interview of him like, sort of expressing his surprise at how like, obsessed people were with his whistling, because he's like this Suzuki-trained violinist who's been like, training to play the violin since he was a baby. But people just want to talk about his whistling.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But he's a good-ass whistler, which... he's a good whis—he doesn't whistle out of his ass. That was a terrible, terrible way of phrasing that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, and you can hear how good he is in the climactic song for the 2011 Muppets movie, uh, where he...

Rachel: Oh, that was him!

Griffin: That was him! It's the sort of climax of the movie, where the sort of meek, uh, star of the film stands up and does something for the talent show where he whistles. Uh, it is Andrew Bird performing it. The song is called The Whistling Caruso, and I'm gonna play it right now.

[‘The Whistling Caruso’ from The Muppets plays]

Griffin: So I was like, looking into whistling for its musical applications, but obviously, it can be used for a sort of communications purpose, as well. And so, it was going down that rabbit hole, that I learned about Silbo Gomero. Uh, which is one of a handful of whistling languages that have been sort of devised across human history.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: And it is still used in some regards today. It is a whistled variation of Spanish, who... and it's used in a place called, uh, La Gomera, which is in the Canary Islands. And La Gomera has all of these, um, like, beautiful valleys and deep ravines and stuff. And so, they have devised Silbo Gomero to communicate messages to each other from a distance of up to five kilometers.

Rachel: Oh my gosh!

Griffin: Because the sound carries through the canyon so clearly. I tried to figure out like, an easy way to explain how they adapted Spanish into this whistling language, uh, but... it was way beyond my pay grade, so I'm just gonna read what it says, based on various studies in Wikipedia.

“According to different studies, the Silbo Gomero Language has between two and four vowels and between four and ten consonants. The language is a whistled form of a dialect of Spanish. Silbo replaces each vowel or consonant with a whistling sound. Whistles are distinguished according to pitch and continuity. As with other whistled forms of non-tonal languages, Silbo works by retaining approximately the articulation of ordinary speech, so the timbre variations of speech appear in the guise of pitch variations.”

So, it's an incredibly difficult language to learn.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I would encourage you to just go listen.

Rachel: I would like to!

Griffin: Look up Silbo Gomero and listen to it, because it's fuckin' cool and wild, and it's like some... it's extremely talented whistling, uh, that is... I don't know. I just love that it, like—it is this like, uh, super power level ingenuity of like, having a conversation five kilometers away by whistling down these deep canyons is like, some actual, magical realism level fuckin' cool stuff.

Rachel: It makes me wonder about growing up in that community, and like, how you... teach... that's been the hardest thing for me. Like, no one can teach how to whistle. I feel like people will describe to me what whistling is, and I will try to do it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But I feel like it's really something you have to figure out on your own. And to be a kid in that community...

Griffin: Well, I'm a—it is not, exclusively, I imagine, the only language spoken in this community.

Rachel: Yeah, but clearly, it still has value, y'know? It would be a useful thing to have, and to like, feel the pressure of like, trying to make that happen... [laughs]

Griffin: It's still—it's so rad.

Hey, what is your second thing, huh?

Rachel: My second thing is the song Outside from the television program, Bubble Guppies.

Griffin: You... are... all... about... this jam. These guppies.

Rachel: I love it so much.

Griffin: What is up with us bringing child's aquatic-based songs to this show?

Rachel: [laughs] What?

Griffin: I mean, I brought Underwater Rainbow that one time.

Rachel: You did.

Griffin: There's something about—there's something about—

Rachel: But you also brought the Lion King song, which was not aquatic.

Griffin: I guess it was not aquatic in nature. But folks, listen... a lot of you aren't watching kids' programming. There's some motherfucking slaps out there. There are some slaps and a half.

Rachel: Uh, Bubble Guppies. Show on Nickelodeon.

Griffin: Yep.

Rachel: It's actually a Canadian-American program!

Griffin: I believe it, man. They've cracked the code up there.

Rachel: Uh, it has been around since January 2011. It is a show that we watch regularly with our son.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: He kind of... y'know, we have the like, Nickelodeon app on our TV, and we've just kind of been hitting programs based on the little square they have.

Griffin: They all have a little square, and it's like, "This one's got a monster truck in it. That seems like a good square."

Rachel: And he'll point at it. And so, after we watched enough Little Mermaid, he went through kind of a mermen phase and said, "I would like to watch that one."

Griffin: Then he went through an Ethel Merman phase, and that was like, wicked strange.

Rachel: [laughing] Much louder.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um... So, this is—this is a group of merpeople. They all have names. Not gonna... not gonna spend time on that. What I want is for you to play a little bit of the song, Outside.

Griffin: Should you set up what... it takes place in a school. And every episode, they do a little skit. But the skit takes place outside, and so, they all go outside.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. There's—y'know, like most children's programs, there's a routine to it. There's kind of—there's two songs besides the title song that you'll always hear. One is the song Outside, which I love. The other song, which is also kind of a bop, is um...

Griffin: Uh, it's Time for Lunch.

Rachel: Time for Lunch.

Griffin: But let's play Outside. Before we play it, picture in your mind what a song in a children's program about going outside might sound like. Go ahead and think about what that might sound like. You're fucking wrong, 'cause this one is... it slaps way, way harder than it needs to.

[‘Outside’ from Bubble Guppies plays]

Rachel: So this song gets me so hype.

Griffin: Mmm.

Rachel: It has an effect on me... a lot of times, when I look at Henry, I see a lot of similarities to Griffin. It's difficult for me to see myself in our son.

Griffin: Really?

Rachel: Yeah. I feel like he's—he's more your kid than mine.

Griffin: I don't think that that's true even a little bit, hun.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, but when this song comes on... he and I have a similar reaction.

Griffin: Oh, right.

Rachel: [laughing] And that is to wiggle. To, some might say, dance. Some might not call it dancing, what we do.

Griffin: Nnno, especially not him.

Rachel: [laughs] So, this song... uh, created by Michael Rubin, who is an Emmy award winning composer, lyricist, and producer. He has done songs not just for Bubble Guppies, but for Blue's Clues, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse...

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: He has also, uh, created songs for Ray Charles, Norah Jones, Patti Labelle, Macy Gray...

Griffin: Holy shit!

Rachel: India.Arie, Toni Braxton...

Griffin: What the fuck!

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: Does he do a lot—okay, a lot of the music on Bubble Guppies, like, the... every episode has like, original music in it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And a lot of it is really fucking good. Is it because—is it all—

Rachel: It's this guy.

Griffin: Oh, wow.

Rachel: He's the guy. He's actually—he has won an Emmy for a song on Bubble Guppies called Little Froggy, 2016.

Griffin: 20—I gotta check in on that one. I don't think I've heard that jam.

Rachel: I know! I know! He's—he's gotten, actually, a lot of Emmys specifically for Bubble Guppies. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Lot of Bubble Guppy Emmys out there. Listen, y'all...

Rachel: [laughing] I like the idea of going to this gentleman's house, and he's like, "This wall? This is my Bubble Guppies wall."

Griffin: This is where all of the gold Bubble Guppies records live.

Rachel: I love this jam!

Griffin: I love this jam. I love the one they got about kitties and doggies. [sings] "I don't care if you bark or purr..." That's a bop. I know my man Michael got up on that one.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh, there's a long, um, Bubble Guppies, like, almost feature-length film called The Puppy and the Ring.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Which we very much enjoy.

Griffin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Rachel: Got a... got an Emmy award for that, for Flutter Guppies Realm.

Griffin: Yeah, man.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: We should—it should be a recurring segment on this show of just us plumbing the depths of children’s programming and entertainment to find the gems. Like, the gems and the jams.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It’s Childhood Gem Jams, here on Wonderful!, a recurring—my favorite new recurring segment.

Rachel: Uh, I would recommend, y'know, any time you have to kind of work up the nerve to leave your house... maybe play this song.

Griffin: Yeah, which is probably—I mean, don’t leave your house unless absolutely necessary. Maybe sit on this. But if you do need to go to the pharmacy, or something like that, and you're feeling a little bit nervous, gotta—I feel you. I feel you. It’s a very, uh, anxiety-inducing thing for me. But when I hear this big fish... [choked up] When I hear this big fish, and he sings to me to go outside, and they hit on that, like, drum and bass beat in the background... I gotta—it just makes me strong. It makes me stronger.

Rachel: I, uh... I don’t think we’re like... we’re not children’s programming experts, but we’re getting there.

Griffin: If we’re not—yes we are!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: If we are not, then who the hell is?

Rachel: Well, we've only been at this for a few years now, Griff.

Griffin: Yeah, that's fair.

Rachel: I think the more years, the more expertise. But I feel like this song will hold up just for years to come.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, hey, can I tell you what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yeah, please!

Griffin: Steven says, "I really enjoy restoration videos. There's something just so sati—" Stratifying? Oh, probably satisfying, "about seeing something that's really dirty and not working being restored to a near-mint condition."

Rachel: Ohh!

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, we're still into that Baumgartner art restoration. Still feeling that. But man, I'll watch somebody fix an old woodsman's axe or something.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Or um... the video that Steven sent in was an old Gameboy Color. I watched one of like, a Gameboy, uh, like the big, gray brick one that was in like, a house fire. But still worked. And them just like, fixing it and getting it, like, up and running again. I'll watch that all day, man.

Rachel: Yeah. No, that's nice. I mean, I think some of that is like, for me, what the appeal of infomercials was.

Griffin: Mm-hmm!

Rachel: There was like, a product that would like, clean or refinish or restore, and I would just love to watch that before and after.

Griffin: I get served a Facebook ad pretty much constantly now, every time I use that platform, uh, for a cleaning slime that you roll across your keyboard, and it gets all the gunk out of it.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: You just roll this goo across your keyboard.

Rachel: That's cool!

Griffin: And it's—it's visually, very gross, but also gross in a very satisfying way. I don't know.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, Aaron says, "You have already talked about the Bon Appétit videos on the show, but my wonderful thing this week has been, specifically, the working from home videos that BA has been uploading lately. I love the spice cabinet tours and the favorite kitchen tool testimonials, and just generally getting to see the good, wholesome BA buddies in their natural habitat. I always feel so warm and fuzzy and so much less alone after I watch them, which means so much during a stressful time."

Rachel: We did this. I actually—I pushed Griffin into watching the one where we looked at all of their kitchens.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And we—[laughs] We specifically fast forward so we could see Chris Morocco's kitchen.

Griffin: Yes. It is not—it was not nearly as sort of, uh, museum-esque as I assumed it would be.

Rachel: For such a like, exacting professional, his kitchen was just like anyone else's kitchen.

Griffin: Yeah. But some of them had like, some legit setups.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Some legit stuff. Um, yeah. The—I really—

Rachel: Especially because a lot of them reported from New York. And so, they have a very small space to work with, so it's interesting.

Griffin: There's a lot of uh, like, clever uses of space. It made me feel bad about our lack of bain-maries. We don't have any bain-maries. I guess we have the one that we keep all of our utensils in, like right next to the stove.

Rachel: Yeah yeah yeah, uh-huh.

Griffin: But we could use... these people were talking about fuckin' half a dozen bain-maries, just like, at—in reach. Like, at all times.

Rachel: It's smart, because those drawers get messy.

Griffin: Yeah. Let's invest in some nice, quality bain-maries.

Rachel: I mean, we could just... y'know, you could just use like, a milk—

Griffin: A cereal box.

Rachel: A milk jug. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so... that's rustic. Um... hey, I think that's it. Thank you 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. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you so much, Maximum Fun. And thank you for continuing to put out great content. I was enjoying an episode of One Bad

Mother just yesterday, and it's nice to hear from some people you really like, especially in these kind of isolated times.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. Um, we have other stuff at McElroy.family, if you want to check that out. We've been doing some streaming stuff that uh, you can find links to there. Um... yeah, I think that's it, though. What's our affirming sort of message this time?

Rachel: Mmm...

Griffin: Maybe it's just like... moist—moisturize. And that can mean any number of things.

Rachel: Yeah, I like that, Griffin!

Griffin: It doesn't have to be cream. It could just be water that you drink. And become—

Rachel: Moisturize your insides.

Griffin: Moisturize—just, "Moisturize!" with an exclamation point.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then it's anything. Moisturize! It could also sound like, 'moisten your eyes.'

Rachel: Moist... yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Your eyes.

Griffin: But maybe that's good, too. Have a good cry.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It works on so many levels!

[theme music plays]

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