

Wonderful! 132: FARMER, FARMER

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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: Sorry that I'm practicing good mic technique by trying to get my body... it's all about getting the waves... of your cords. Let me tell you 'bout your cords that you got in your throat.

Rachel: I—I was more reacting to the wingspan you have right now on those knees.

Griffin: Yeah, there's a—listen. It's not manspreading if you're by yourself in one chair. Then it's just expressing yourself.

Rachel: Just spreading.

Griffin: Then it's just spreading. Then it's just a comfort-based sort of...

Rachel: Which, as humans, y'know, we have a right to do in our own chair.

Griffin: We have a right to spread in our own homes and our own houses. And the government? Who? I mean, the government... and that's all I'm gonna say about that.

Rachel: Yeah, no, that was enough.

Griffin: Sometimes, the government... mm-hmm.

Rachel: Yeah. No, stop now. That's enough.

Griffin: Don't get me started on the government.

Rachel: I know, right?

Griffin: When the government... ooh, man! I get so... I get so... [grunts] ... that I can't even finish... urgh! About the government.

Rachel: And that's—y'know what? That's not what this show is about.

Griffin: It's not, but it's hard. You get me started on government, it is hard for me to focus on the good stuff happening in there.

Rachel: [laughs] This show is about wonderful things.

Griffin: The show is about wonderful things, so government? [blows raspberry]

Rachel: No, not government.

Griffin: [scoffs] Take a hike, gov'nt!

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: That's the way I shorten the word 'government,' 'cause I don't respect the word! Hey, do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do have a small wonder. And that small wonder I am formulating right now as I am talking.

Griffin: Ohh, here it comes.

Rachel: So maybe you should go first.

Griffin: Uh, my small wonder is, I have had the same... literally the first thing that I saw with my eyes when I was pressed to discuss it. I have had the same bottle of glasses cleaning solution, uh, for... easily two years now, right?

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: I got it from an optometrist visit, I want to say, in 2018. Early spring, 2018. Using it and cleaning my glasses, I feel like I have super vision. It's like a whole new set of glasses, 'cause we have a child who likes to play with the glasses. They get smudgy, dirty, I can't see very well. But I'm not very good at like, realizing that. And then I'll be like, "Hey, I'm gonna treat myself by cleaning my glasses with the fluid." And then it's like, I can see through walls. Like, I can see super, super good.

I've had this same bottle of this cleaning fluid I use to give myself a real touch up for two years.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's that bottle right there. Look at it. What percentage—

Rachel: It's—there's—yeah.

Griffin: What percentage empty do you think it is?

Rachel: That's like, two percent.

Griffin: It's like, forever! It's like forever, this bottle! It's so dope.

Rachel: Yeah. It's your forever bottle.

Griffin: I love cleaning my glasses. I love what it's like to look through clean glasses.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Surely, that was enough time for you.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, I am going to give credit to the four pound bag of Easter candy...

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: ... that we received from my mother approximately two weeks *after* Easter...

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... which was exactly when we needed it.

Griffin: Right. It was—it landed perfectly in the sweet spot.

Rachel: I believe it was intended to be for our son, but he does not know about that bag.

Griffin: No. We did steal, basically—

Rachel: That's a mommy and daddy bag.

Griffin: That's a mommy daddy bag of Easter candy. Listen, he's a... he's a little tike. We don't want him to have four pounds of—if I were to space it out, I would want our son to eat four pounds of candy over the span of, oh, 11 years?

Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Griffin: But me? I'm a big, adult man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: My metabolism can handle four pounds of candy. Although, it's really down to about three quarters of one pound of candy at this point.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, it's been good. Been gettin' us through the hard times. I believe you go first this week.

Rachel: My first topic...

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: ... is the lava lamp.

Griffin: Oh, shit! Yeah!

Rachel: The lava lamp.

Griffin: You ever make one of them? By yourself?

Rachel: *Make one?*

Griffin: Well, I mean, make a... like... y'know, low budge' water and oil lava lamp situ—

Rachel: No!

Griffin: Really? Oh man. I—

Rachel: Was this a science project?

Griffin: It was a science project. I feel like I made one at church? I feel like there—why did I make a lava lamp at church?

Rachel: Yeah, was there like a STEM education component of your church?

Griffin: Absolutely not!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Oh no, there wasn't!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: No. There was not.

Rachel: Was it like a camp? Was it like a...

Griffin: Maybe. It was like a vacation bible school project situation. But you could do like, food coloring in the water, and then you'd put the oil in, and it would like—blobs of it would float around.

Rachel: Was there a light component?

Griffin: No. Again, a very low budget—I guess it was just a—

Rachel: So not really a lava lamp at all.

Griffin: No, just a lava... bottle.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I am excited to hear about the history of the lava lamp.

Rachel: Yeah. So I... um... I would say, mid-'90s, particularly while I was in middle school, became very interested in owning a lava lamp.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: 'Cause I had seen them at the Spencer's Gifts.

Griffin: I was just about to ask if that was a Spencer's Gifts situation.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It is weird to me. I know our listenership across all of our shows skews pretty young. I don't know if Spencer's Gifts... it's not still a thing, is it? Spencer's Gifts?

Rachel: Who knows?

Griffin: Who knows?

Rachel: I mean, I haven't seen one.

Griffin: I mean, malls aren't a thing, necessarily, as much as they were.

Rachel: Yeah. We have a mall that we have frequented, and I do not recall ever seeing a Spencer's in it.

Griffin: No. So it's wild to me that like... there's a lot of stuff that I only knew about because of Spencer's Gifts.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, Hot Topic still exists.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess Hot Topic supplanted—

Rachel: They might have lava lamps.

Griffin: Yeah, maybe.

Rachel: I don't know. Uh...

Griffin: It was a novelty—it was a novelty shop. They sold, uh, rude greeting cards. They sold, uh... if you wanted some sort of Austin Powers memorabilia, they would have it at Spencer's Gifts.

Rachel: [laughing] Yes, mm-hmm.

Griffin: They would have like, uh... if you wanted like, uh, a walkie-talkie fart machine, you would get that at Spencer's Gifts. If you wanted a plasma ball, they're gonna have that right at Spencer's Gifts. I'm pretty sure plasma ball was the like, fuckin' foundation of their...

Rachel: [laughs] That's what the store started with. Just one plasma ball.

Griffin: Yeah. Just one plasma ball, yeah.

Rachel: Uh... in the like, mid to late '90s, there was a real resurgence of like... I don't know. Like, '60s and '70s nostalgia.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Not just because of Austin Powers; although, it didn't hurt. Um, a lot of the fashion of the grunge era was like, very thrifty.

Griffin: Ohh, interesting.

Rachel: Y'know, there was this idea of like, y'know, gettin' that polyester shirt from your local Value Village. Uh, and I feel like that kind of jumpstarted this idea of like, I want my whole life to be groovy.

Griffin: I would say that went all the way up to early aughts. You think about that Britney, uh, that Paris Hilton... there was for sure, a like, bell-bottom, hippie jean resurgence.

Rachel: Ohh, yeah yeah yeah. Okay. I didn't know where you were going with that.

Griffin: No, I'm saying like, this aesthetic, I think, carried over into uh, well—well into the aughts.

Rachel: Yeah. So here's what's interesting about the history of the lava lamp. There are a bunch of surprises.

Griffin: Oh boy.

Rachel: Okay, so it was created in 1963 by a British accountant named Edward Craven Walker.

Griffin: Okay. Cool last name.

Rachel: And originally, it wasn't marketed as this like, psychedelic thing. It was actually advertised in the American Bar Association journal.

Griffin: Wh—for lawyers?

Rachel: Touted as an 'executive model.' [laughs] And it could be mounted on a walnut base alongside a ballpoint pen, in the ad.

Griffin: Okay...

Rachel: Yeah. But then, of course, the big psychedelic movement happened, and it was like, "Oh, this would be good for that."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, so, this guy... this Edward Walker gentleman, who, as I mentioned, British accountant... also had a history of creating naturism films, which was, uh, nude films.

Griffin: Oh—oh!

Rachel: Yeah. He—

Griffin: Not—not [enunciates strangely] pornographic. Why did I say that word like that?

Rachel: No no no. [laughs]

Griffin: Did you hear that?

Rachel: Yeah, I did! I mean, sometimes you say words funny, so I didn't like, think anything of it.

Griffin: That wasn't one of them. Porno—pornographic. Por—pornographic.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh, he went under the pseudonym, Michael Keatinger, and directed several films in the late '50s and early '60s.

Griffin: These are just nude people films?

Rachel: Yeah. So one, for example, Travelling Light came out in 1959, and it was filmed off the coast of Corsica. Uh, and it was just an underwater ballet of nude people.

Griffin: Hm. Alright. Cool.

Rachel: Yeah. Uh, anyway. He got the idea for the lava lamp. He was at a pub and noticed a homemade egg timer created from a cocktail shaker filled with different liquids bubbling on a stovetop.

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: And he thought... that's pretty cool.

Griffin: I'm gonna steal that.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. So, he used a light bulb as the heat source, and used a bottle which previously contained a beverage called Orange Squash.

Griffin: Hmm.

Rachel: Which was a drink in England that was apparently pretty gross.

Griffin: Yeah, it sounds bad.

Rachel: But came in that—if you think about a lava lamp, like, it is basically in like a glass... bottle.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Uh, it is... both water, and then, wax. And included in the wax is something called carbon tetrachloride, which adds the weight to the wax, so that it moves when it heats up. It moves kind of more, uh... y'know, I don't know what the word is.

Griffin: Weirdly.

Rachel: Yeah, weirdly. [laughs]

Griffin: I recognize the name of that chemical, and I think it might be from all the fucking slime videos.

Rachel: Oh, maybe.

Griffin: Maybe.

Rachel: Maybe. Um, so, the heat source at the bottom liquefies the waxy blob. As it expands, its density decreases and rises to the top, where it cools, congeals, and begins to sink back down.

Griffin: Mmm.

Rachel: So it gets far away from the heat source, and then, y'know, the process continues over and over again. Uh, this became popular, partially because it had cameos in the hit shows, Doctor Who, and The Avengers.

Griffin: Oh yeah! I think, uh... I think this was like, part of the TARDIS aesthetic for a season. Right? The uh, can you see—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I may just be pulling that out of my ass, but I can see, like, one of the... 'cause each Doctor has a new, like, sort of TARDIS design. I could see that being the... the aesthetic for one of them.

Rachel: Yeah. So, originally, it was called an astro lamp.

Griffin: Okay. I like that.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, so the phenomenon, as I mentioned, kind of cooled in the '70s.

Griffin: And sank back down to the bottom of the trends.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughing] Where it heated up again.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Um, it... they were only manufacturing about a thousand lights per year.

Griffin: Oh my god.

Rachel: But then, in the Austin Powers era, as I mentioned, the public, again, warmed to the lamps...

Griffin: And then it started to float again.

Rachel: And then, in 2000, Mathmos, which was the name of the company now, sold 800,000.

Griffin: Oh, man.

Rachel: Um, and you can find them now at like, Target and Wal-Mart. Like, it's a part of the culture, and it doesn't seem to entirely disappear. Granted, it's not as popular. Like, in the '90s, everybody had a lava lamp. Everybody I knew had one.

Griffin: Yeah, we had one. Um... and it broke, at one point. And that wasn't good. It wasn't on when it broke, which is cool, 'cause it probably would've started like, an electrical fire in our house, but it for sure broke, and we lost...

Rachel: I took it very seriously, because I remember the package said not to leave it on for longer than like, two hours.

Griffin: Mmm.

Rachel: And so, I felt very strongly about that. But then I would go over to people's houses, and they just had 'em on 24 hours a day.

Griffin: Those things got fucking hot.

Rachel: Very, very hot, yes. [laughing]

Griffin: It was like the uh, the corn baller from Arrested Development. Like, you would go over to a friend's house and like, accidentally brush up against it, and suffer a serious, serious burn.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Um, boy howdy. My first topic really dovetails, I think, pretty nicely with your first topic, because my first topic is laser tag.

Rachel: Ohh!

Griffin: So we're kind of like, hitting a very specific sort of time window.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: For me, laser tag had sort of like, two implications to my youth. And the first was like, the more exciting one. It was like, the, like... in the pantheon of vacation activities at like, tourist trappy places, it was like, *the*

shit. It was like, *the* thing I looked forward to. It was that and mini golf. Whenever we'd go on vacation to, um... y'know, Myrtle Beach, or uh, y'know, somewhere in Florida where my nonny was livin', or uh... the big one was Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Oh, shit.

Rachel: Yeah. Now, did your parents play with you guys? Or was this just a brothers...

Griffin: I think so, yeah. No, I think they would probably play with us. It would be—I remember playing at Q-Zar. You ever fuck with Q-Zar?

Rachel: I don't know what that is, Griffin.

Griffin: Q-Zar—well, it's a pretty major like, chain of, uh...

Rachel: Is it?

Griffin: Of laser tag places. Yes. Q-Zar is probably, arguably, the biggest chain of laser tag places. Quick history lesson – it, uh, opened in... it was developed in 1987 in uh, Perth, Australia. And it was called Quasar, but because of trademark concerns when it came to the US, they had to change it to Q-Zar. But it was in like, the UK, and it was in uh, like, Ireland and...

Rachel: Oh! Okay, so this isn't just like, a regional thing.

Griffin: No, this is like a huge, huge thing. And Q-Zar kicked ass, man. It was like laser tag, which... there were laser tag places that existed, uh, all over. There was, uh... I think in Dallas? What was it? Uh, Photon was the name of a place. I think in Dallas. It was like, the first major, like, laser tag establishment, opened in 1984, from this dude named George Carter III who saw Star Wars, and was like, "Let's just do that."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But Q-Zar was like, this idea refined, because you had teams, and everybody had the vests and the blasters, and the blasters had like, ammo.

Rachel: Was this like—my experience with laser tag is, it is always a room within a much larger arcade.

Griffin: Yes. Well, no. Q-Zar was like, its own deal.

Rachel: It's just laser tag? Wow!

Griffin: Yeah, and it was huge. It was like, this multi-story battlefield installation where there were like, bases, and outposts that you had to capture by going inside and like, shooting specific disks. And if you got blasted, you had to go and recharge your ammo back at your home base.

Rachel: Yeah, see...

Griffin: There were different game modes. It was like, so much stuff.

Rachel: This is not an experience I had. Ever.

Griffin: It was, uh—it was so sick. It was like, the thing that uh, I would like, look—if we went to the beach, and I knew that Q-Zar was also in the future there, fuck the beach. They don't got sand at Q-Zar.

Rachel: [laughing] You're like, "How do I get indoors again?"

Griffin: How do I get back to Q-Zar? Uh, so, the history of laser tag is fairly interesting. It was, uh... it sort of developed out of a combat training sort of program for the army, called the MILES system. That's an acronym, but I didn't look up what it stands for. So let's just say... major... intelligent laser... execution... system.

Rachel: System. Yeah.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: Of course. Yes.

Griffin: Yeah, that sounds really cool. Uh, and so, the technology kind of came out of that. It's not particularly sophisticated. It's just infrared technology that you might have in a remote control, as evidenced by the fact that, if you had laser tag toys at home, you could just use a remote control as a blaster. That was something that I would do from time to time, if I wanted to get tricky. Like, "Oh, I don't have a gun! But wait, I do! Channel five? Pschool!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so, the home toys... Photon, the establishment I mentioned earlier, the first sort of major laser tag establishment, released their own, uh, like, line of home toys in 1986. And nearly at the same time, a company called Worlds of Wonder released their trademarked lazzzz... with a Z... Lazer Tag set.

And uh, they would both shut down. Both companies would shut down within the span of the next couple years. But the Lazer Tag brand would go—would bounce around all kinds of different companies. Uh, I think right now, I want to say Ha—no, Nerf has it right now. And they're still making stuff from time to time.

But in the like, late '90s, there was like, this swell of Lazer Tag toys, where you could get the dopest shit. Like, we had a set of pistols with the vest that you could wear. You could get the bazooka that would like, launch in like, a different pattern.

Rachel: Oh my gosh.

Griffin: You could set like... I feel like there were like, mine traps. There was this whole set of toys. Uh, and we would play... *constantly*. Like...

Rachel: Now, it—you have to play at nighttime, right?

Griffin: No, no.

Rachel: 'Cause it seems like... my experience with laser tag is that there's like, some kind of, y'know, like... pointer, like, red dot sight thing that helps you... aim.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And you can't really see that in the daylight, I thought.

Griffin: No, it didn't really have that. Again, it was essentially a pistol-shaped television remote control that would just send our like an IR blast. Almost like a um... uh... well, no, not a light gun. I think a light gun, like, the Nintendo Zapper was like, a different thing.

Rachel: So accuracy wasn't particularly important?

Griffin: Not the strong suit of this thing, no.

Rachel: Okay, okay.

Griffin: Uh, there was also like a target practice set. There was all kinds of stuff. We would mostly play indoors, so your concerns about the sun interfering are, uh... were not a concern of ours.

Rachel: [laughs] That is true. When I think of children's toys, I usually think of a child being outdoors, and then I remember... that was not exactly what you did, per se.

Griffin: No, not especially. Uh, this was—I think we got a set for Christmas. And like, for the next like, two years, like, we just played all the time. Our friends would get like, other, like, toys in the set and just bring them over, and we could have like, laser tag wars in the... I was about to say backyard, but that would be a falsehood.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Obviously, have not played in a long time. But here in Austin, there is an establishment called Blazer Tag.

Rachel: Oh my gosh.

Griffin: That was so fuckin' fun. I think I've only been to it once or twice, and whenever I've gone—

Rachel: I think it was just once.

Griffin: Maybe it was just once. Uh, and we played, and it was the most fun. It's in the Q-Zar family of just like, there's, uh, objectives, and a bunch of different stuff.

Rachel: Multiple levels.

Griffin: Multiple levels.

Rachel: We all came out the sweatiest we'd ever been.

Griffin: I came out thinking my heart was about to fucking explode in my chest.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was one of those things where I was having so much fun that I did not realize I was... essentially full-blown sprinting through this place for like, a half hour. And then we got outside, and I like, could not breathe.

Uh, but it's still so fun. I like laser tag a lot. I like the idea of laser tag. The idea of... laser games.

Rachel: It has always thrown me a little bit, because the accuracy kind of eludes me. I have never really been particularly good. 'Cause you'll aim at something in those little arenas...

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: ... that's like, 100 feet away. And it's like, am I hit—I don't know. Did I hit it? Am I hitting it? [laughs]

Griffin: You're more into the paintball scene. The airsoft scene.

Rachel: No, see, I hate that too. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I—I have nothing against laser tag. I just—I have no idea whether I'm good at it or not. My instinct says no, that I am not. [laughing]

Griffin: I believe the opposite. I think you're good at everything you try to do.

Rachel: Aw, thank you, sweetheart.

Griffin: You're welcome.

Rachel: Hey, can I steal you away?

Griffin: Yes. Except making the air horn noise. That's like the one... that's like, the one skill that eludes you.

Rachel: Oh, you mean... boop boop boop booooo!

Griffin: Yeah, that exactly.

[ad break stinger plays, but made of Rachel's air horn noises]

[advertisements play]

Griffin: Hey, I got a gumbotram here, and this one is for Amanda, and it's from Dee, who says, "To my beloved Amanda, you are the greatest and the center of my world. You make every day wonderful, from your awesome attitude to your gorgeous smile. You are brave and courageous. Thank you

for marrying me and making our wonderful babies. I love you so much, Dee.”

Wanted this one close to Mother’s Day. Comin’ in pretty close, I think. Comin’ in pretty close to that one. It’s uh, it’s this Sunday, folks. Get—get a card. Get some uhh...

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Get some chocolates. Y'know what I mean?

Rachel: Uh-huh. As you say this, I just assume that I am getting all of those things.

Griffin: [high-pitched] Mmmm...

Rachel: Mmm...

Griffin: Mmm...

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: You got other things. Not chocolates. Because we do, again, have a four pound bag.

Rachel: Four pound... [laughing]

Griffin: It would be irresponsible to bring more chocolate into this house. Uh, can you read the second message?

Rachel: The second message is for Future (Now Present) Allison, from Past Allison. “Hey there, beautiful. Here’s hoping you're making good choices and living your truth. Remember that shining bright helps others see, so pass that confidence around like a blunt... ”

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: "... and let that vibe waft like thick cotton. Breathe deep. We've got this." [laughing]

Griffin: I like that! I don't think I've ever heard an inspirational message be so sort of, uh, married to sort of weed, uhh, language. But I—it excites me.

Rachel: I like "let that vibe waft."

Griffin: Let the vibe waft. Everybody's checkin' the vibes. Everybody's doing vibe checks these days. Don't check the vibe. Just let it waft like thick cotton.

Rachel: Let it waft.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

Griffin: I need to hear your second thing. I need it.

Rachel: My second thing is very specific.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It is using Google Earth to visit places you used to live.

Griffin: Oh... okay.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That is the most specific... that is the most specific.

Rachel: I don't—I imagine a lot of people haven't lived as many places as we have.

Griffin: Mmm. Real world travelers. Well, there was that one season we spent in Prague.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: You remember? You remember the wildflowers?

Rachel: Yeah. What did we do in Prague?

Griffin: Ohh... we marched... in the great rebellion!

Rachel: And had the traditional food in Prague, which is...

Griffin: Oh, schpetzel.

Rachel: M'kay. [laughing]

Griffin: Cake. Schpetzel cake.

Rachel: Yeah. Ooh.

Griffin: I'm sorry, I've said it wrong. Special—special cake.

Rachel: There you—[laughs]

Griffin: In Prague, they make a special cake. What's in it? [laughs] You're gonna have to go to Prague to see!

Rachel: Uh... [laughing] Like we have.

Griffin: Like we did.

Rachel: Like we have gone to Prague.

Griffin: And lived there for a season.

Rachel: As lovers.

Griffin: Which season? Did we spend in Prague as lovers?

Rachel: The... let's say it at the same time.

Griffin: One, two, three. Fall...sing.

Rachel: [simultaneously] Spring. [laughs] Uh, again, I haven't lived—I've lived in a total of three states. And um, most of the places I lived, I lived for like, a year, in like an apartment complex or something.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Um, but... a lot of the places I've lived have developed significantly since I have lived there.

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: And so, it is interesting to enter an address – which I remember, because I lived there – and see how it looks.

Griffin: Ooh, that's a fun game.

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: That's a fun game, is trying to remember my addresses.

Rachel: You don't remember your addr—[laughs]

Griffin: I could probably... okay, I remember my address from when I lived in Chicago.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: I remember... I think I remember all our addresses here in Austin. I do *not* remember my Cincinnati address.

Rachel: I—I should say that one of my Chicago addresses, I remember the street. I don't remember the exact number.

Griffin: I can't remember... gun to my head, any other place I lived in Huntington except for my house that I grew up in. And I lived in like, five different apartments in Huntington. I cannot remember a single one of them.

Rachel: I just—so, especially, I would say, especially in Chicago, I have found this feature exciting.

Griffin: Yeah! I've done this before also, with the—

Rachel: Yeah! With Google Earth. Like, it's satellite images, and a lot of times, it's like...

Griffin: Street view.

Rachel: Yeah, street view. And so, you—especially in Chicago, where you walk around a lot, you can like, walk through your old neighborhood and be like, oh hey, that Walgreens is still there!

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs]

Rachel: But oh, that Chipotle is not.

Griffin: Oh no, what happened?

Rachel: [laughing] Um... it's shocking to me. There is an apartment complex I lived in when I was in Columbia, Missouri, in college, that looks exactly the same! And keep in mind, this is... 15 years ago?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it's kind of like... oh, that must have the same owner, and they must definitely not have painted it ever.

Griffin: The place I lived in Roscoe Village has not, uh, changed. Because we actually visited there, I think, last year, when we did a show in Chicago.

Rachel: Oh, yeah?

Griffin: It was some recent tour we did. We stopped in Chicago, and I caught a train and like, walked through my old neighborhood, 'cause it was really nice outside, and I wanted to see, like, what was different. And it was just exactly the same. Roscoe Village, man. It's a... y'know, it's a—we move—we go—things go a little slower down here.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, see, meanwhile, my apartment in Chicago, um... when I was in graduate school, has changed dramatically. Uh, they've done a lot of development, a lot of condos. And so, it was like, difficult for me to find my bearings. Because what used to be like, y'know, a... shopping plaza is now a huge, like, ten story condo situation.

Griffin: [sighs] [sings high-pitched] And don't it always seem to go... you don't know what'cha got—[normally] I've had that song stuck in my head. We were trying to figure out what it like, impressions we could do, and Rachel said I did a pretty good Joni Mitchell. Which I don't. But I have had that song stuck in my head, specifically, actually, the Vanessa Carlton, uh, version of it that she does with the Counting Crows lead... Adam Duritz?

Rachel: I don't think I know... well, maybe I do know this.

Griffin: It was the version that most people know. It was the version I knew before I knew that Joni Mitchell did it. And there's a verse where Adam Duritz comes in so fuckin' hard, and he's like, [sings intensely] "Farmer, farmer, put away your DDTs!"

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: [singing intensely] "Leave me worms in my apples, leave me the words and the bees!" He like, fuckin' hits it so hard. [yell-singing] "Farmer, farmer, put away your DDTs!!"

Rachel: [laughing] Uh... I don't remember how we started talking about that.

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: Oh, because I was talking about condos.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Yeah, we went on a whole journey there.

Rachel: Anyway, can I quickly tell you about Google Earth? [laughing]

Griffin: Sure. [laughing]

Rachel: Uh, in... 2005, is when it was launched. Google purchased Keyhole Inc., which became Niantic, the Google subsidiary responsible for Pokémon GO.

Griffin: Yeah! Yeah, Niantic made another game that was like, the precursor to Pokémon GO, whose name escapes me at the moment. I didn't know that they did Google Earth as well, though. That's wild.

Rachel: Yeah. So, they use, um... satellite and aerial imagery, which is a partnership with NASA and National Geographic and others. Google Earth digitally stitches together billions of images taken by satellite and aerial photography. I guess when you open Google Earth, what you're looking at is, uh... a springtime in every area of the planet.

Griffin: Whoa!

Rachel: They call it, quote, "pretty earth." [laughs] So they just use a composite all around the world of every area in springtime when you open it.

Griffin: That's wild! I did not know that. That's so cool.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Make it look extra lush, I guess.

Griffin: But even in like... but there's certain places, like... you think of like, uhh... I don't know, like, Nagano. Like, places where like, the winter is like, the pretty... the pretty area. The pretty times.

Rachel: True.

Griffin: Snowshoe in West Virginia I think probably looks better with snow on it.

Rachel: Well, it—when you zoom in, right? Like, that's the thing.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so.

Rachel: Like, obviously, even at street view, like, you zoom in, and it may be like, Christmas time, depending on when they did that image capture.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Google Earth has also been used for a lot of productive purposes. This is something I didn't know about. There was, uh, someone named Saroo Brierley who was an orphan from India who was raised in Australia. This person was able to reconnect with their birth family after being separated for 25 years by following geographic markers on Google Earth.

Griffin: Hm!

Rachel: These experiences were detailed in a book called A Long Way Home, which was turned into a movie called Lion in 2016.

Griffin: Ohh, yeah!

Rachel: Sounds fascinating though, right? Like, if you think about it, you can approximately remember where you grew up, then you can kind of identify a lot of landmarks and kind of relocate yourself where you were.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um, there's also been positive results for tracking climate change.

Griffin: Hm!

Rachel: Through this product. They've been able to, in Indonesia, a conservation group was able to view illegally fished and overfished areas of the coast. They've also been able to identify uncharted, untouched rainforest in Mozambique. You've been able to do a lot of modeling, because you can track it over time.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You can see like, the impacts over years. Um, this is something I didn't know about – Google apparently partnered with Sesame Street and Carmen San Diego to develop interactive games.

Griffin: [gasps]

Rachel: Each region of the world has its own unique Sesame Street characters, and you can do guided tours of different regions led by the associated character.

Griffin: Fuck yeah! I'll say the most important contribution that Google Earth has given the planet is, how Jon Bois uses it in all of his videos for uh, for SB Nation. Like uh, the Pretty Good series in 17776. If you have not read that or watched that, he like, makes videos—

Rachel: I don't know what you're talking about.

Griffin: Oh, I've shown you Jon Bois' stuff before. He did Breaking Madden, which is like, the series where he like, fucks up, uh, seasons of Madden, the video game. But he also like, uses it in all of his videos, as like a visual aid for all kinds of different cool things. It's inspiring.

As somebody who likes to... or used to like to make videos without learning really high touch techniques, seeing Google Earth be used to really enhance a video is exciting to me.

Rachel: Yeah, so I um... this is really nice. I really enjoy it. It's fun to kind of see when the photo was taken and be like, "Oh, hey, that's my car!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But they do, y'know, protect your privacy to a certain degree, so it's not like you're able to read license plates. So, nobody steal my car.

Griffin: Please don't steal Rachel's car. I can't believe we have to keep asking.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Free. Restaurant. Bread. When the bread at the restaurant's free.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: When you're at the restaurant, and you get free bread. Especially when you don't expect it, right?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Especially when you're at like, a place, like uh, a non-chain restaurant, and you're just sitting there, and you've ordered your fancy entrée, and you're excited about that, and then just like, bread shows up? And you're like, "Fuck yeah! I didn't even know!"

Rachel: Oh, isn't it funny when you don't know that they give you free bread, and you ask for bread, and then the waiter is like, "Oh, bread's coming. Don't you worry."

Griffin: "You fucking idiot."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, you can pay for the bread. [laughing] Stupid. Uh, I love bread. Bread is good. Uh, I think it ranks up there with some of the best foods on the planet, and restaurants are just givin' this stuff away.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: And people complain. They're like, "Oh, you're gonna fill up on bread." And I'm like, "Yeah. Good."

Rachel: Yes I am.

Griffin: I am. That's the idea. And then I get leftovers! This is a win-win scenario for me, is I will fill up... I've had several times where I have fe— where I've filled up so much on bread, and maybe a couple appies off a platter, that then, the entrée shows up, and I'm like, "Just box it. I ain't touchin' it. That's a tomorrow meal."

Uh, you talk about like, a Texas Road House, where they roll up, and they got them biiig rolls with the honey butter? [sighs] Let's talk about Olive Garden, where they roll up and you do have infinite breadsticks.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Infinite breadsticks that you can use for dippin's, in your sauce.

Rachel: Olive Garden is built around the philosophy that they are *going* to give you too much food.

Griffin: Let's talk about nasty Olive Garden, which is what I call Fazoli's, where they roll up with their little, like, spicy bastards that you can have infinite of, and they just walk around and give it to you at the restaurants.

Rachel: Yeah yeah yeah.

Griffin: That's good. Let's talk about Red... [yells] Lobsterrr! Let's talk about those cheddar bay biscuits! You've never been to Red Lobster before, have you?

Rachel: Mm-mm.

Griffin: We've talked about this.

Rachel: No. I've had...

Griffin: This is unthinkable to me.

Rachel: I've had a biscuit from there, because you can easily recreate them, as I understand it.

Griffin: I mean, you can come close. You can come within striking distance, maybe. But there's nothin' like the genuine article.

Rachel: Hey, what is cheddar bay?

Griffin: Cheddar Bay is where these biscuits hail from.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Uh, it's off the Amalfi Coast.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, I... we've gotta go to Red Lobster. We gotta go. I gotta get you to Red Lobster.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: During like, fuckin' lobsterfest? Or shrimpfest? One time, I watched my brothers compete in a shrimp eating contest during shrimpfest at a Red Lobster.

Rachel: Oh...

Griffin: And it's the worst thing I've ever—it's the worst thing I ever saw. It's the worst thing I ever saw. They kept track by the tails that they left sort of...

Rachel: Eugh.

Griffin: Yeah, man. It was... grisly.

Rachel: Did you not participate?

Griffin: Fuck no I didn't participate!

Rachel: Good for you, Griffin?

Griffin: Did I participate?

Rachel: Uh oh.

Griffin: I don't think I participated.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, Texas. Here in Texas, most barbecue restaurants, like, they will give you fresh baked bread. That is a big thing at County Line, which is a chain here in Austin.

Rachel: Yeah, that's what I was trying to remember.

Griffin: Yeah, County Line is a place here in Austin.

Rachel: They give you like, a whole loaf of bread.

Griffin: They will give you a whole loaf of freshly baked white bread that is so good, and they have little cups of butter that you can spread on it, and it's just so dope, and it goes with barbecue so swimmingly. Any time you get a wet food, like a barbecue or a pasta, and then you get the bread for dippin's? Ohh!

Rachel: You came in like Adam Duritz on that wet food line.

Griffin: [singing intensely] "Farmer, farmer, give me the dip'em's, please!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, so I was curious why it's a common thing, and it's not like, especially surprising. Bread is kind of a edible symbol for hospitality, hence like, breaking bread. So its origins are sort of based in that. But also, like, not a surprise, at like, taverns back in the olden days, things like, uh, meat or certain types of produce, or cheese, or whatever, were the more difficult kinds of food to come across as opposed to bread, which was fairly easy. You just get some grain and mill it and whatever.

So, bread was cheaper and more plentiful, so there really was this concept of, we're gonna fill people the hell up on bread so that we can serve them less of the good stuff.

Rachel: [laughs] So we can bring them one apple.

Griffin: Um, and you may have had the thought of like, "Boy, how can they afford to just give away the free bread?" I mean, philosophically, the price is then elevated on every other object. It's tied into the price of other things.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I didn't realize that. I've never—maybe I shouldn't—y'know that restaurant I've been planning on opening?

Rachel: Uh-huh? [laughing]

Griffin: Maybe I shouldn't.

Rachel: Off the coast of Cheddar Bay?

Griffin: Off the coast of Cheddar Bay, in the Manchego Coast. Manchego Peninsula.

Rachel: I wonder if you didn't ask for bread, if you said, "I'm not going to be eating bread. Could you discount three cents from each of my items?"

Griffin: From the price of all of my things? Uh, yeah. So, it became so commonplace that it became sort of unnatural for people to ask customers to pay for bread. And so like, that is why it is sort of a thing at restaurants. But man, I ain't complainin'. I ain't complainin'. God, I love free restaurant bread. Fuckin'... Spaghetti Factory? When they bring you that uh, the focaccia bread with like—and then you have a little—the little bowl with olive oil and cracked pepper inside of it? Fuck!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Man that's good!

Rachel: Yeah. I mean...

Griffin: What's your favorite bread? I feel like this is a one-sided conversation. I know you love free restaurant bread.

Rachel: Y'know, I've been trying to think about free restaurant bread. Sometimes they bring you like, a basket, and it has different types of bread in it?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: That's fun.

Griffin: Except sometimes it has like, those crispy cracker, like, breadstick things. Get those the fuck out of there. That's not really—that's a different thing. Bring me a cracker basket, and then you can put that in there. Give me some Chex Mix.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Anyway. Do you want to hear what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes, please.

Griffin: A lot of people wrote in about free restaurant bread. Just like, everyone.

Rachel: Oh, good!

Griffin: So like, everybody—every week, people write in a hundred times about free restaurant bread, and I have to just sort of... I have a filter for it now in our inbox. Which is what, WonderfulPod@gmail.com? Hit us up if you wanna submit... or is it WonderfulPodcast@gmail.com? Ooh, no one's quite sure, are they?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, it is WonderfulPodcast@gmail.com. So uh, if you have submissions, send it there. Just a sentence, please. Just one sentence. Please. Uh, like this one sentence that we got from... okay, actually, this may be multiple sentences. Michelle says, "Something I think is wonderful is chip clips. My husband and I recently bought a pack of rainbow magnetic ones, and we've been using them liberally. Cereal bags, frozen veggies, and occasionally, even chips. They're so satisfying to use, and when at rest, they decorate the side of our fridge with a cheerful pop of color."

Rachel: Oh, that is nice.

Griffin: We need to get us some chip clips.

Rachel: We do. What I use is, I use rubber bands off of other packages. And the rubber band isn't always a great sealer, because it'll scrunch up your chips if you're not careful with that.

Griffin: It's not ideal. Kevin says, "My small wonder is that extra little bonus sip you get when you're filling up a to go cup at the soda station. It's when you have to sip down the overflow, but then get it to fill back up before capping it and leaving the restaurant. The world's least consequential, but most thrilling crime." Oof.

Rachel: [laughing] I do like that. I think that's allowed. I don't think anyone's gonna prosecute you on that one.

Griffin: I think that—I don't know that it's a crime. Yeah. Um... man, I'm just—the first place that I remember there being like, a self-serve soda station... and that's a mouthful... in Huntington, was the Fazoli's that we would go to after church sometimes. And we would do the like, disgusting mixture of different soda flavors.

Rachel: Oh my gosh. You've really painted a picture of the McElroy family in this episode.

Griffin: I have, haven't I?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, 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. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you Maximum Fun. A lot of comedy and culture shows. They just recently announced that uh, Bubble is being optioned for film usage, which is exciting.

Griffin: That's extremely exciting.

Rachel: So if you haven't listened to Bubble, I would recommend you check that out. It's a good show.

Griffin: Uh, there's another new show on the network. Triple Click. It's a gaming podcast that's got some good folks in it. Kirk Hamilton, Maddy Myers, Jason Schreier, former Kotaku folk. It's uh... I'm very, very excited that it's a part of the network. They're all good, good beans. [pause] That's a thing that people say sometimes.

Rachel: Yeah, sure.

Griffin: Uh, and let's just sort of like, send them off with just like... how's your fiber intake?

Rachel: Oh yeah, this is a good...

Griffin: What's trendy—and let's talk about this.

Rachel: Yeah, please.

Griffin: It's so hip and so trendy to be like, "Your breathing's not right. Are you drinking enough water? Let's have a moment of contemplation for your mind." And it's like, that's all good. And you do gotta do that stuff. But how's your fiber doing?

Rachel: Do you want to tell them your fiber tip?

Griffin: I eat fiber gummies. But then we ran out, and I don't necessarily feel like exposing myself to the outside world for fiber gummies. So I was looking in our coffee cabinet, and what's there in the back? A big orange tub of Metamucil? You know I'm gonna dip into that. Hello.

Rachel: [laughing] Some people get their fiber, y'know, from like a leafy vegetable.

Griffin: Not me.

Rachel: Griffin says, "No thank you."

Griffin: I see a tub of Muce in the coffee cabinet, and I say, "Hello gorgeous!"

Rachel: How can it be orange flavored? That's what I want.

Griffin: Mmm, yeah.

Rachel: Without having to eat an orange. [laughs]

Griffin: [snorts]

[theme music plays]

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