

Wonderful! 149: Grandpa Discus

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hello, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: [sings] Let the rain fall down, and watch my... face. [normally] I've done this before.

Rachel: Have you?

Griffin: I think I've done this exact thing before.

Rachel: We're getting some April showers right now, here in September.

Griffin: We are. Uh, here's the problem, is that I think I always talk about the weather on this show whenever it rains. And maybe that's just because it doesn't rain that much here in the wastelands of Texas, but I feel like that's pretty basic, huh? Like, who does that?

Rachel: No, we know our listeners better than that. We don't have to make small talk.

Griffin: Okay, let's try—then let's do it again. Aww, boy! It—it sure is hot today! Damn it!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's like I'm talking to them like they're complete strangers, and we're talking at like, a business conference...

Rachel: You could ask them about their Labor Day activities.

Griffin: How was your Labor Day activities? I hope non-eventful. Because the alternative would be somewhat irresponsible.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But this is Wonderful. It's a show where we talk about things that are good. Things that we like, things that we are into, and um... man, usually, I have one like, in my holster, ready to pull out and just fire away.

Rachel: Just ready to go? You could talk about your new, um, culinary adventure, which is...

Griffin: The adventure I went on last night?

Rachel: ... putting peanut butter on everything.

Griffin: Yeah, putting peanut butter on everything. Rachel got apple hand pies, and put a little bit of ice cream on it. The only ice cream we had was chocolate ice cream, which is not typically the flavor you would blend with an apple pie experience. So I was like, as long as we're doing this, put some fuckin' peanut butter on there!

Rachel: [laughs] I introduced Griffin to putting a spoonful of peanut butter on ice cream, and now it's...

Griffin: Yep. And it's all I think about.

Rachel: It's what he has to do.

Griffin: Day in, day out. Again, I feel like talking about putting peanut butter on things is up there with saying, "It sure is raining outside."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I promise, we're gonna get into some pretty heady shit here in just a second.

Rachel: Are we?

Griffin: Some heady, controversial materials. Uh, do you have a small wonder?

Rachel: Have I talked about putting ice in water? [laughs]

Griffin: Yikes. Is this really where we're at? Come on, give me that hard shit. Give me that confrontational, like... say something that you wouldn't—people would be like, "Wait. You think—"

Rachel: Oh, that Rachel brand that you're used to? Gettin' in there, and...

Griffin: Yeah! Really get real, and get like, visceral!

Rachel: What won't she say?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Yeah. Um... I'm not wearing my wedding ring right now.

Griffin: What the fuck?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: What?

Rachel: In these hot days, I get a little rashy under the ring, and sometimes I have to take it off.

Griffin: Oh man...

Rachel: Put some Vaseline on there, just so the rash gets better.

Griffin: But that—then, that—the curse imbued in that ring...

Rachel: So I guess my small wonder would be to put a lip balm on your finger. [laughs]

Griffin: Wow! The curse that is put on wedding rings by the officiant at the ceremony is the only thing that keeps you honest. And this is—I'm not just saying just for Rachel. This is the thing. If you've not been married, this is your thing that your married friends won't tell you, is that the officiant puts a curse on the rings. And that's what—that's what keeps the wedding so tight, y'know what I mean? It's what keeps the marriage goin'. Lot of people don't know that.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I didn't. I guess I should put it back on?

Griffin: You should! Or else you're gonna start aging rapidly, like at the end of The Last Crusade.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, I think I go first this week.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, both of mine are fairly, uh, lightweight. I feel like I've had some, uh, lightweight ones. And what could be more lightweight than the, uh, delicate, lovely arc of a Frisbee flying through the air?

Rachel: Ooh!

Griffin: A Frisbee is a miracle. I love a Frisbee. This may come as a surprise, that I'm choosing this topic, to my wife. It may be a surprise, because I uh...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Not one to actively seek out Frisbee throwing opportunities.

Rachel: That's true. We know some people who really like to, quote, "sling the 'bee around." And... that is not us, as frequently.

Griffin: I think I appreciate the Frisbee aesthetically. And I appreciate gettin' a good Frisbee throw out there. But I am not one to plan a day around rockin' that scoober.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I've never played ultimate Frisbee, because it seems like—

Rachel: Oh, you've never played?

Griffin: Maybe once or twice, but like, it is never, uh... it's not my jam. It's not my speed. It's a lot of running. They don't tell you that about ultimate or freestyle. It's just mostly, you're just running around a lot.

Uh, disc golf, I do appreciate a lot. I really like, uh, throwing a Frisbee, and trying to do it hard and accurately. It's like, my favorite thing.

Rachel: When have you disc golfed?

Griffin: I've done it here in Austin a few times.

Rachel: Oh yeah.

Griffin: Austin has quite a few, uh, disc golfing spots for you to do it. Um, but I think I just appreciate the Frisbee sort of conceptually. If you were going to an outdoor place, you can just grab a Frisbee. Like, there was a time where I just had a Frisbee in my car, so that if I went to the park with my friends or whatever, we would just... as long as I knew I had a Frisbee on hand, I knew that we had some sort of outdoor activity to take part in.

And that's very, uh, reassuring, and very satisfying to me. It took me a very long time to learn how to throw a Frisbee.

Rachel: It's all about the release time, man. So many people don't release at the right time.

Griffin: No. And it also is the type of thing where like, if I go a few months without throwing a Frisbee... next time I throw a Frisbee, it's gonna take me like a half hour to really dial in exactly how to throw a Frisbee again.

Rachel: Yeah! It gets awkward to figure out where to put your hand, y'know? Like, what your technique is gonna be.

Griffin: When I was a kid, we grew up a few blocks away from Ritter Park, which is Huntington's big, nice park. And we would take the Frisbee there and just throw that thing around for... a very, very long time, because uh, in the summer, there was not a whole lot else to do when you were, y'know, nine years old.

Rachel: Did you guys do some cool catches?

Griffin: I could do a few cool catches. I could never do a cool throw. Um, like the people who can sort of do it backhand, or like, sort of y'know, do a spin.

Rachel: Yeah, they like, snap their fingers. Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, or they jump in the air, and they do like, three summersaults, and they like, run up the side of a tree a few steps, and like, flip off a bird's nest.

Rachel: Which, to be clear, you can do.

Griffin: I can do that.

Rachel: Not while...

Griffin: But then I can't throw a Frisbee at the end of that.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um, I always really had a lot of fun... just throwing Frisbee. It made me realize that like, the game of catch is a good game.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh. It's true.

Griffin: You don't think about that. You think about catch as being a sort of, um, very, very basic activity that you do with ball. And you throw ball and catch ball. But it's a lot of fun when you do it from very far away with an object that hovers as if by magic.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: The physics of Frisbee is basically the same physics as an airplane, in which lift keeps this bad boy off the ground. There's higher pressure underneath it than there is above it, and so it... whoop! Goes up. Or rather, stays on the level. If it goes up, then it comes right back down. Ooh, that's fre—ooh, I love Frisbee! When you throw Frisbee and it goes straight up, and then it comes right back down at you? Oh, you stinker!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: He can be kind of a rascal, Frisbee can, can't he? Uh, Frisbee is, of course, a registered trademark. It's like Kleenex.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah yeah.

Griffin: It's used colloquially, but it is a—the name of a product. Um, and the history of the Frisbee is uh—has some fun facts in there that I was not aware of. So, I mean, people have been throwing discs for... a very long time, both from an Olympian aspect, and as a just sort of recreational aspect. But as a toy, the Frisbee came about when Walter Frederick Morrison and his wife, Lucille, were tossing around a cake pan on a beach in 19... uhh, I didn't write down the exact year. It was like the early 20th century.

Rachel: Oh my gosh. I love that idea, of this couple being like, “Is this something? Is this anything? Should we tell people about this?”

Griffin: It was the 1930s when they were doing this, I know now, because then, World War II happened, and Walter was in World War II and was a prisoner of war. But when he got back, he had Frisbees on the brain. And he was like, “I gotta do this thing.”

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: And he started designing like, a better design. A more sort of, uh, aerodynamic design for this disc. And uh, started selling them at fairs, where they started to take off. And throughout its history, the Frisbee had a lot of different extremely fun names. Uh, the first was the Whirlo-Way, which I guess was named after a very famous racehorse back in the 1950s.

In 1955, they were called Flyin’ Saucers, because UFOs started to be like, a thing that was on the mind of every God-fearing American. And then, the name that he landed on, that was gonna be really, really, just like, what took off was the Pluto Platter. Rolls right off the tongue. The Pluto Platter.

Rachel: Oh man.

Griffin: It would have like, little planetary designs all over it. It was very, very cute. But then, he sold the rights to Wham-O in 1957, and Wham-O was like, “Pluto Platter is nothing.” Uh, the name Frisbee... Wham-O changed the name to Frisbee like, right away, because college students, unsurprisingly, were the uh, the target demographic for the Pluto Platter, and it started to really find purchase in their crunchy soil.

And the Pluto Platter, uh... the college students just called it the Frisbee, because they resembled pie platters from a pie manufacturer in Connecticut that sold a lot—apparently, it was like, a thing at Yale, was pies from the Frisbie Pie Company.

Rachel: Ohh! So we’re back to the pie!

Griffin: So we went right back to pie.

Rachel: All those years later.

Griffin: It brought us right back home. Um, and y'know, it was a big thing for college students. But the real reason that the Frisbee became a big deal is because of how it was sort of positioned as an athletic sort of, uh, device.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And a lot of that positioning came from the general manager of Wham-O, whose name was Ed Hedrick. And Ed Hedrick wanted to popularize the Frisbee as like, sports equipment. And so, he participated in like, developing standards for golf—for Frisbee sports. So, like, freestyle. Like, he created the organization that like, was the sports organization for freestyle Frisbee, and also, uh, developed like, the rules for disc golf.

So like, he is the reason that he took off. He was this hugely influential figure for disc-based sports. And then, uh, he died in 2002. And after he died... his request was to be cremated... and his ashes turned into... discs.

Rachel: Whoaaa.

Griffin: That would be distributed amongst his family, or auctioned off for charity amongst disc golf enthusiasts.

Rachel: That's incredible.

Griffin: That's so amazing! That's so good. Who does that? That's such a rad, powerful thing.

Rachel: Yeah. I love that.

Griffin: I love that. Except for like, y'know, you're his grandson or whatever, and you're just tossing around your grandpa disc on the beach,

and then a crosswind catches it and takes it out to sea. And you're like, "Aw, man!"

Rachel: Well, it's what he would have wanted.

Griffin: That's what he wanted. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, to Frisbee, back to the ocean.

Rachel: Grandpa's stuck in a tree.

Griffin: Bye, grandpa. I love you, grandpa. Anyway, that's the Frisbee. I like a Frisbee. I feel like, uh... I feel like I would love to throw a Frisbee. I mean, I would love to do anything outdoors with a friend right now.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I feel like a Frisbee would be a lot of... a lot of fun. Not in this rain, though! Cats and dogs out there! Right? Whoop!

Rachel: Speaking of which, you didn't even talk about dogs catching Frisbees, and I feel like that's a big benefit.

Griffin: Dogs catching Frisbees is very, very good. I didn't realize that like, for events, like, y'know, actual competitions with dogs, there is like, a special type of Frisbee that they use that is a bit more pliable, so it's not as rough on the poor pupper's teeth. I appreciate that. Got a think about the pupper's teeth.

Anyway, what's your first thing?

Rachel: Uh, my first topic is also kind of a light topic.

Griffin: Fun.

Rachel: It is a topic that I appreciate, uh, a lot in the summer months. And that is the pineapple.

Griffin: Pineapple! Yes!

Rachel: Not gonna talk about the symbolism of the pineapple. Obviously, a pineapple, very cool looking fruit. I am talking specifically about eating pineapple.

Griffin: Eating pineapple is really good. It's my favorite thing to do with a pineapple, I think.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah. Not like, scratch your back?

Griffin: No. I mean, cutting it up with a big sword feels cool. Uh, making— oh, you can do rings around the eyes, and you can say like, "I'm the fruit raccoon!"

Rachel: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Griffin: That can be really fun. Uh, smash it like a Gallagher.

Rachel: Oh! Man, I don't know if that would be as satisfying as a watermelon. I think there's a reason that Gallagher chose the watermelon.

Griffin: Oh no, yeah. But like a big pineapple would probably be pretty good.

Rachel: Like a really big one?

Griffin: Like a really big one.

Rachel: Like a man-sized pineapple?

Griffin: Like a dude-sized pineapple. Yeah.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Um, pineapple is super associated with Hawaii. Um...

Griffin: Yeah. It's not where it's from, though.

Rachel: No, no. It's actually indigenous to South America. Since the 1820s, it has been commercially grown in greenhouses and many tropical plantations. The Spanish introduced the pineapple to Hawaii in the 18th century. Um, and this is where we get Dole food company.

Griffin: But from what I understand, that was sort of a weird sort of colonialist marketing ploy to like, position Hawaii as the land of pineapples, when that is not like, their... not their original jam at all.

Rachel: Yeah. Hawaiian production started to decline in the 1970s because of competition, and the shift to refrigerated sea transport. And so, Dole left Honolulu in 1991, and in 2008, Del Monte terminated its pineapple growing. Um, so... the remaining Dole plantation on Oahu grew pineapples in the volume of 0.1% of the world's production.

Griffin: Yep.

Rachel: So it's still associated—I mean, you hear a lot about the Hawaiian pizza, for example, with the pineapple.

Griffin: Right, but it's like, not their—yeah. It's a weird, bad sort of deal. Yeah.

Rachel: Um, production of pineapple is led by Costa Rica, the Philippines, Brazil, and Thailand.

Griffin: Keep it up. Y'all are crushin' it.

Rachel: Um, pineapple... I... it's just—it's just kind of the best, most reliable snack. A lot of times, you get like, a fruit, and it's not right where you want it to be. But I feel like pineapple is always good.

Griffin: If I crack open the crisper, and we have small fruits in there, usually for Henry... if pineapple's in there, it's unfailingly, it is always the one I reach for. It may be, pound for pound, my favorite fruit.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: I just like it a lot. I like artificial pineapple flavors in anything, I like a pineapple upside down cake...

Rachel: Here's the thing, though – you don't like pineapple in a savory.

Griffin: No, god no. But nobody really does.

Rachel: [whispers] I do.

Griffin: Oh man...

Rachel: Y'know what I used to get in college? I had a coworker at Sally Beauty Supply that turned me onto the idea of pineapple and artichoke pizza.

Griffin: Mm.

Rachel: Man. Incredible.

Griffin: Maybe I should give that a chance. I feel like I was spoiled on it, because I don't enjoy pineapple and ham together. And uh, I also don't enjoy a honey ham. But I do love ham. And so, whenever a sweetness was applied to ham, I feel like, "Aw man, you've ruined that good ham. I really like that ham."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I know it's a lot of people's jam, but it is not my jam.

Rachel: Uh, pineapple also has high levels of vitamin C, and um, manganese. A lot of those things are associated with, y'know, just good health, generally. Um, if... it also—I've read about, pineapple has like, melatonin in it.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: So if you're getting ready for bed, pineapple's not a bad snack.

Griffin: What's the thing? Pec... pectin? No. What's the—

Rachel: Bromine?

Griffin: Bromine?

Rachel: Bromalane?

Griffin: Man, this is so rough, because there was that Breaking Bad... what was the Breaking Bad movie about Jesse that came out on Netflix, and there's like a flashback scene where he's talking about pineapple?

Rachel: Oh. El Camino?

Griffin: Yeah, El Camino. But he's like, talking about the good things that pineapple has in it, but he's saying it wrong. And now I'm actually, unironically doing that.

Rachel: [laughs] I will also say, we haven't talked about the piña colada.

Griffin: Uh, that's not true. We have talked about it during our cruise show.

Rachel: No, but I mean, in this moment.

Griffin: In this exact moment, yes.

Rachel: In this moment, associated with the pineapple.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: It's just... it's just incredible. Good way to like—just, a tropical drink, always a treat in the summertime.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um, I... I love pineapple.

Griffin: I mean, do we want to talk about...

Rachel: [laughs] I couldn't find a way to research that aspect of pineapple.

Griffin: [laughs] It's not—I'll say this. Probably not on brand for our show.

Rachel: Yeah. So, the manganese is associated with male sexual health.

Griffin: Okay, okay.

Rachel: I don't think they were talking specifically about... the flavor it might add to... your sexual health.

Griffin: Yes. Yes.

Rachel: Um...

Griffin: And let's just—maybe we just walk away at that. Maybe we just—maybe we just drop that in there. We plant that seed in our listeners' minds' eyes. Ears.

Rachel: I have also heard this, this thing that you're referencing.

Griffin: Everybody's heard it, and they do not—I cannot possibly comprehend... who started it.

Rachel: I've never, um, really play tested this...

Griffin: Nor I. Nor I. Never done a double-blind... [laughing] ... sort of study on it.

Rachel: Hey, we're not scientists.

Griffin: We're not scientists!

Rachel: No.

Griffin: No! We just like pineapple. And that's... and that's my story. And I'm stickin' to it.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Man, pineapple and Frisbee. Who are we?

Rachel: [laughs] Something has happened to us.

Griffin: Something has definitely happened. Um, and I'm all about it.

Rachel: Next thing, we're gonna be talking about straw hats.

Griffin: How did—no. That's not it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[ad break stinger plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: Oh, we have jumbotrons!

Rachel: We do!

Griffin: Um, do you want to read this first one?

Rachel: Sure! Uh, this message is for Mom. It is from Mia. I bet a lot of moms got excited out there.

Griffin: Ah, shoot.

Rachel: Sorry, this one's from Mia. "Hi Mom! I just wanted to say that enjoying the McElroy family of podcasts with you is my wonderful thing! It's been a hard year for a lot of reasons, but nothing has stopped you from being the strongest, most kickass mom on the planet. I can't wait to make even more goofs and desserts than usual with you, now that I'm stuck in Texas. I love you."

Griffin: That is so nice.

Rachel: That is so nice!

Griffin: There are worse states to be stuck in! Isn't that right? We got barbeque! We got horses! [inhales] You got boots! Big hats and boots! We looove big hats and boots. Did I say barbeque?

Rachel: You did. Tacos? Tacos?

Griffin: Horses? Oh yeah, we love them. Uh, here's a message for Savvy, and it's from Savvy! "Hey, Savvy. It's Past You. I just want to say, you are amazing, and the coolest person I know." And that's all that Savvy says, and what I really like about what they said here, is that they didn't use all of the characters that they are allowed to use in the message.

Rachel: I know!

Griffin: But Savvy was like, "I know exactly what I want to say to Savvy. And it's true and powerful and strong, and I don't want to waste Savvy's

time, by which I mean my time. I'm just gonna tell them what they need to know."

Rachel: Uh-huh. Love it.

Griffin: Love it.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

Griffin: Can I do my second thing?

Rachel: Yes, please.

Griffin: I've realized now that I haven't sent you my second thing to listen to. But I think you've probably heard my second thing a bit. It is the French electronic new disco house duo called Justice. You know Justice?

Rachel: Oh! You introduced me to Justice! I had no awareness prior to Griffin McElroy.

Griffin: Justice is like an alternate universe Daft Punk, uh, that just goes a little bit harder, and is a little bit less theatrical about it. Um, they are... y'know, a French electronic duo, much like Daft Punk, that came about in the early aughts. And they first hit the scene with their debut album in 2007 called Cross, which just shreds, absolutely, from front to back.

They never really had the huge, I would say, like, mainstream success of a Daft Punk, despite like, their similarities. But I feel like their music can very, very easily hang with Daft Punk's music.

Apparently like... I don't remember this, 'cause I, I think, came to them a little bit after they debuted. But they were kind of controversial, because there was so much buzz around Justice when they dropped this first album. Uh, because they came together in 2003. The duo is Gaspar – I'm gonna say their names incorrectly. I apologize. Gaspard Augé and Xavier de Rosnay.

These two got together to submit songs to this concept album of electronic tracks that were meant to sound like they were Eurovision entries, that this like, group was putting together.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Yes. It's very, very esoteric. Um, and sort of launching off that, they started to do remixes of... everyone. They were like, known as a duo that just did remixes of a bunch of different groups, including Britney Spears, Nerd, Fatboy Slim, Daft Punk, Franz Ferdinand, like... was doing pretty huge remixes, like, pretty popular remixes of all these songs, before they released their first album in 2007.

So, when they released this album, like, they were kind of a household name among like, people who liked electronic music. And the similarities to Daft Punk led to them being fairly like, controversial, because everybody wanted to compare them to Daft Punk.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: And Daft Punk was, and to some extent, like, still remains this like... deified group, where like—Beatles-like, right? Where like, every single album they've ever made is this like, uh, sort of very important canon. And for somebody to step to them was kind of a big deal, even though that was not really what Justice was actually doing.

But their music was a little bit harsher than Daft Punk's was. Not quite as like, straightforward danceable. There was a lot of sort of like, heavy metal influence in a lot of stuff that they made. There was a bit of horror influence in some of the music that they made.

And to sort of uh, give an example of that, I want to play Cross's opener, the first track on Cross, which I absolutely love, which is called Genesis.

[`Genesis' by Justice plays]

Griffin: This song, like a lot of the songs on this album, is just this like, wild fruit salad of samples and genres. There's, y'know, funk, and disco, and heavy metal, and house music, and... uh, just a lot of different things that they are—pretty huge palette that they're painting with. And I think that's what spawned a lot of sort of the online arguments around them when they first came out, because Daft Punk was doing a somewhat more straightforward, uh, extremely good, like, extremely skillful thing. But like, not—their music was a little bit more confrontational, and a little bit sort of like, rough around the edges.

Rachel: Yeah, I had no idea there was such a like, uh... uproar.

Griffin: There was, but I mean, there was an uproar about fuckin' everything in 2007.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: And I don't know, it is... they're throwing a lot of spaghetti at the wall, but like, even people who thought that their music was, y'know, whatever, overproduced... I don't think anybody can deny that it's like, super original. Because each song on their albums, especially as time went on, they've released, I think, four studio albums? Maybe three studio albums, and a few live LPs.

Um, they touch on so many different things, right? So you get that—you get Genesis, which I just played, which has elements of like, y'know, Thriller to it. Like, danceable horror jams. Uh, but then you also get DANCE, which is probably their most well-known hit, because it's on like, every Just Dance, and every like, thing. Which I'm not gonna play that one. I feel like everybody's heard it, right? Like... [signs] Do the D-A-N-C-E, one two three four five.

Like, that is another sort of brush that they paint with. They paint with this like, sort of disco-inspired, '80s hair metal sort of lightweight thing, on top of the like, heavy sample wild house music that they do. So I want to play another track to kind of like, give an example of like, the other brush that

they paint with, off of their 2011 album, which was called Audio Video Disco. And this song is called New Lands.

[‘New Lands’ by Justice plays]

Griffin: I had this realization while I was like, listening to them, preparing for this segment today, that like... uh, it kind of put a face on the exact type of music that I find fun to dance to. Like, the type of music that I enjoy when I want something sort of upbeat, uh, at like a club, which is not a place that I have been, even before the pandemic started, in a very, very long time. Which is just like... wild mash-up-y sort of music that touches on the best parts of a lot of different genres.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like, when I think back to um... we used to go to this place called Club Echo every Friday night in Huntington when I was in college. Literally, every Friday night, every single week, because the DJ, uh... this dude named Jesse would just like, play a lot of different types of music. And he would play a lot of Daft Punk, and a lot of Justice, and a lot of uh, LCD Sound System, and stuff like that.

And I realized, only now, that like... I think I just like it when music is coming at you from a lot of different angles. Like, coming at you with like, a lot of different types of sounds, and a lot of different genres. And Justice is kind of like, one of the grand masters of that, I feel like.

Rachel: Do you—do you like dancing?

Griffin: I do enjoy dancing, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I mean, in the right circumstance. I don’t enjoy it when people are looking at me... like, focusing on me. Like, I never really enjoyed the dance circle at a wedding or whatever, where like, you would get in the middle and like, be the star player or whatever.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But just like, being with a bunch of people on a dance floor, and like, moving your body to some good tunes? I really like that. I really liked it at Club Echo, because it was very dark. And so, there was very little spotlight on you.

Rachel: I never knew with you, if dancing was like, a um... a side effect of alcohol consumption, or if you just thought like...

Griffin: It helps.

Rachel: "I want to go dance."

Griffin: It helps. It moves things in the right direction. But like, when I was like, going out to clubs in Huntington a lot, it was... it was definitely a piece of the puzzle, right? It was just like—it wasn't like, "I want to—I gotta—I just gotta dance!" It was like, "I want to go out and have a couple drinks, and like, y'know, dance with my friends."

It is a way of, uh... I mean, we're talking about a completely different thing now, but like—and I'm not saying anything revolutionary. But it's a way of sort of like, weakening the... societal barriers between people that are kind of like, agreed upon, in a way that like, I was incapable of doing in virtually any other way.

Rachel: Yeah. Justice is such a like... I mean, obviously, you pointed out, not all of the songs. But it's such a like... like a dance... a dance thing.

Griffin: It's an extremely dancey band. Uh, and... I don't know. It's funny. To like, wrap things up, it... there was so much, uhh... y'know, fervor around them when they first launched, because of the comparisons to Daft Punk. And I feel like now, 13 years after that first album came out, like... I do put them in the very same sort of pantheon of, every Justice album is sort of a—a canon that I think is really great, and uh, it's been a while since they put

out... I think their last album was 2016. They had a live album between then and now.

And uh, as far as I know, there's like, no plans for whatever the next album is. But y'know, Daft Punk also took however many years off before they did, uh, Random Access Memories. Uh, so like, who knows? But yeah. I am wild about Justice, and if you've never listened to them, but you enjoy a Daft Punk, you should start listening to them right away. 'Cause they're fantastic.

Um, hey, what's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing... I'm worried is going to empower you a little bit.

Griffin: Alright!

Rachel: [laughs] Um... I like when people are good at impressions.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Babe! Let's see how far I can go. How long I can go without actually doing one.

Rachel: I was thinking of this last night, and I was thinking about asking you what you thought your best impression was. But then, I thought I would save it for right now.

Griffin: Oh, interesting!

Rachel: When we're talking. You don't have to do it.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: In fact, I might encourage you not to.

Griffin: Nooo.

Rachel: Um, I'm just wondering... I think of you as somebody that's pretty good. I think it's—I think it's partially because you commit, but I also did a little research on like, why some people are better at it than others. Um, and I was just curious.

Griffin: It's one of those things where like, if you asked me to tell a joke, my mind immediately purges all jokes from the memory banks. So I can't do—

Rachel: I like your Michael Caine, for example.

Griffin: Yeah, but Michael Caine is also one that I think a lot of people think they can do.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Griffin: It's like a Christopher Walken, but then, when I try to do it, like, it doesn't come out good.

Rachel: I know. I know, I don't want to put you on the spot. That's not what this is about.

Griffin: I used to read Henry books in the voice of Michael Caine.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uhh... there was one Peep and Egg Halloween book that I would try and read to him entirely in the voice of Michael Caine.

Rachel: Ohh, yeah. I'm Not Trick-or-Treating.

Griffin: I'm Not Trick-or-Treating. And I would try and do it all in the voice of Michael Caine, and it was very satisfying. I'm not going to do it, but just trust that it sounds so good and funny.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, there are a lot of people... I mean, a large number of former Saturday Night Live cast members.

Griffin: Of course.

Rachel: Used to be a thing, for sure, if you were gonna be on the show, you had to come with impressions. Um, it was interesting. When I was trying to research this, I kept researching like, what makes a good impression, and I kept getting like, "how to make a good first impression."

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: And I was like, okay, I need... I need different search terms. So I looked up like, mimicry, and impersonation, which led me to a lot of research on Elvis Presley impersonators... This is what I thought was interesting. In 2019, there were 84,000 Elvis Presley impersonators. According to the IRS. Which makes me wonder, are people writing that on their taxes?

Griffin: Wow. I mean, somebody's gotta be writing it.

Rachel: On their occupation? Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I was just fascinated by that.

Griffin: I don't think the occupation codes on tax forms goes quite so granular.

Rachel: [laughs] Well, I think you can write in. I imagine that's what's happening.

Griffin: Right, but there's like, occupation codes, right? So it's like, live entertainer or whatever. But I don't think one of them is like, "I pretend to be Elvis. That's 08H31."

Rachel: Um, kind of the old school impressionists... uh, Rich Little. This is like—this is somebody who kind of made his mark impersonating Richard Nixon, which gives you a sense of the time period. Still alive, by the way, as of this recording.

Griffin: Oh wow! Nixon?

Rachel: No. [laughs] Rich Little.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, more modern... people like Jimmy Fallon, Bill Hader. When we were kind of watching Saturday Night Live, like, Dana Carvey, Darrell Hammond. Y'know, a lot of people, if they could do the president, they had a reliable spot in the weekly show.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But uh, this is not something I've ever... this is not something I've ever thought I was particularly good at. And so, I kind of wanted to figure out like, what is it that makes you good at it?

There are researchers at the University of California Riverside who said that people that have, uh, more musically minded strengths are more likely to pick it up.

Griffin: Huh.

Rachel: If you're able to carry a tune and tune into the sounds and rhythms of music, it's not dissimilar from being able to pick up intonations in language.

Griffin: That's interesting! I've never thought about that!

Rachel: Yeah, which I thought was interesting too! I mean, it makes sense. Y'know how people can like, hear a song, and sometimes replicate it on an

instrument? Or kind of pick out the notes when they hear something? Um, I feel like... and the research supports it, that those people are more likely to be good at impressions.

Griffin: I think I'm trying to remember, uh... yes. Okay. Ariana Grande, I think? Uh, does like, wild impressions of other singer—like, can imitate other singers and their voices. I feel like that is like, a genre of—she's obviously not the only person that can do it. There are a lot of singers out there who can recreate the singing performances of other singers, and I guess that those two skills are like, not dissimilar.

Rachel: Yeah, it makes sense. Y'know what's interesting, is that I read a lot, too, about people's ear for foreign language, and how, y'know, it gets worse as you get older, 'cause you get more entrenched in your existing language. Like, your native language. Um, and I always thought I was pretty good at foreign language, but I... y'know, can't do a good, like, Bill Clinton impression.

Griffin: No. I feel like you don't commit to your impressions.

Rachel: That's part of it, too, right? I don't have the confidence in my performance. Um, I was looking, too. There was research by the University of London in the Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience that looked, specifically, at people's brains while they were doing impressions. Um, so they gave people like, a list of celebrities, and asked them to commit to 40 different people. And then, they looked at them in an MRI scanner.

And what they found is that the part of your brain that is associated with, um, y'know, just speech in general, is the same part of your brain that lights up when you do an impression. So it's not like you're using different skills. Which I think is interesting, because sometimes, if I'm sitting down to like, try and do somebody's voice... I feel like I'm like, trying to summon some part of my brain that I don't normally, and then I just realize like, "No, I'm pretty much using the same part." [laughs]

Griffin: That's just panic. That's just panic setting in.

Rachel: [laughing] Um... yeah, so the areas associated with planning and producing speech are the same that lit up in the MRI when they were trying to do their impressions.

Griffin: Hm.

Rachel: Uh... so yeah. I don't—it's like, it's always something I've really kind of delighted in. And I—I can't—I'm not buildin' it over the years.

Griffin: Well, I mean, you should put in the work, y'know?

Rachel: I know. I know, like you have. [laughs]

Griffin: Like I have.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Y'know, when I was doing ground links, under Fred Armisen, and just like, workin' on it.

Rachel: That's why your Borat has only gotten better with time.

Griffin: My Borat is... yeah. It's pretty—it's pretty incredible.

Rachel: I read a lot of research, too, that people that have this instinct to mirror speech in other people, it's like a... like an empathetic and like, social response. Y'know, if you're talking to somebody that has an accent. Like, sometimes you'll have that instinct to try and replicate it, and it's just a way of like, social mirroring.

There was a lot of like, research that suggests that people that have that instinct to do that are actually doing it from an empathetic place.

Griffin: That's so cool.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

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

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I went that whole segment, by the way. Without just like, busting like a... like a, "Yeah, baby!"

Rachel: I know. Well, I feel like I set the terms up front. Like, don't—Griffin, don't feel... don't feel inclined to...

Griffin: I appreciate it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, Therese says, "My wonderful thing this week is the game Spiritfarer on the Switch. It's like Stardew Valley meets Studio Ghibli, and it's so calming, relaxing, and satisfying! A main feature is hugging your friends to improve their mood. It's such a lovely game."

I just started playing this. I wanted to also highlight it, 'cause it's really sweet. You play the uh... you replace Charon, the ferryman across the River Styx, from like, y'know, Greek lore. Uh, and you like... you like build a little boat for these spirits to live on as you shepherd them from one thing to another.

Rachel: Aw! That does sound nice!

Griffin: It's really, genuinely a very sweet game. Uh, Julia says, "My wonderful thing is when you get your email inbox down from over one thousand unread emails to none. Seeing my inbox full of stuff I actually care about fills me with such deep contentment, and makes me happy during subsequent visits." That must be nice.

Rachel: Oh my gosh. I am a very active deleter.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: And y'know, now that we are in the Zoom age, where people are sharing their screens all the time in meetings, like, somebody's inbox will pop up, and I'm like, "Nooo! God! You have thousands!" Like, for me, if I see something I know I'm not gonna read, I just delete it.

Griffin: Yeah. I've gotten some shit before. I remember, I've done some like...

Rachel: You're... not very good at email.

Griffin: I'm not good at anything.

Rachel: [laughs] Aw, that's not true.

Griffin: I just—well, and it's the type of thing that it becomes so inoculated, too, that I just like, went to my home screen on my phone, and it's—I have 314 text messages... that I guess I just haven't read?

Rachel: Well, sometimes if the notification pops up, it doesn't count as read.

Griffin: That's true.

Rachel: It's possible you just saw "ok" and never opened the text.

Griffin: Yeah, a lot of them are from like... let's see... um...

Rachel: Lot of them political?

Griffin: Um, no, most of them are like, "Pizza Day has a new extra-large deal with free wings!"

Rachel: You gotta unsubscribe, dude!

Griffin: Come get your hair cut appointment for your child!

Rachel: Simplify your life, Griffin.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess that's true. Um, hey, thank you so much for listening. 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, Maximum Fun. Uh, there are a lot of great shows on the network that I listen to all the time. Let's recommend The Flop House!

Griffin: Yes. Here we go. You should listen to The Flop House.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Now the recommendation is done. Uh, and that's it. Rachel has to literally hop onto another call in like, 35 seconds. So... uh...

Rachel: I'm a working woman.

Griffin: Workin' woman. Not me. I'm gonna, y'know... heh heh. Go play some bocce... ball. With the boys.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Over at the club. The bocce club.

Rachel: What has happened to you?

Griffin: I don't know. I think it's this rain. It just gets me so silly! [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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