

## Wonderful! 150: Fireball Dance Energy

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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:** Comin' at you hot. Comin' at you, straight shooters. That's right. Everything we've said so far has been... a lie.

**Rachel:** Oh, like in all our previous episodes?

**Griffin:** Yes. Every episode we've done, including Rosebuddies. It's all been lies, and... it's time for us to just fess up. And I think it's time that we start being straight shooters, and not the kind of curvy shooters that we've been. So let's—I guess let's do, top three lies that we've done on the show that we want to try and make up for.

**Rachel:** Okay. Uh, Griffin and I are not actually married.

**Griffin:** No. In fact, y'know what? We're the same person.

**Rachel:** Oh. Yeah, that sounds right.

**Griffin:** This whole time, we've just been one person doing... it's actually a ventriloquist situation, but you'll never guess which one of us is the dummy!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's me.

**Rachel:** Okay, what's our second one?

**Griffin:** Well, the second one is that... this is a podcast. Is a big one. Lot of people listen to this, they think it's a podcast. It's not! It's a very long movie.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** With no pictures.

**Rachel:** That's experimental, guys.

**Griffin:** And they release it in parts, like Kill Bill. Y'know?

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** How Kill Bill, they were like, "This movie's too long, Quentin. You need to break it up into two movies." And he was like, "Okay." We did that, but we've done it now 150 times.

**Rachel:** It's like a Boyhood, but in real time.

**Griffin:** It's like a real time Boyhood. Like if Boyhood was... instead of, it was a movie, it was 150 little movies. And the boy—and each one was a year in the boy's life.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. [laughs]

**Griffin:** So he lived to be 150 years old. And then, the final lie is...

**Rachel:** Oh, can I... can I...

**Griffin:** Yeah, please.

**Rachel:** Uh, my name is not Rachel.

**Griffin:** Nope.

**Rachel:** Gertrude.

**Griffin:** Gertrude. Yes.

**Rachel:** We thought Rachel was like, sexier for today's audience, y'know?

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, there's probably a lot of Gertrudes listening to this who just got their feelings very hurt. I think Gertrude is a very attractive name.

**Rachel:** I'm just saying what our market research says. That is not my opinion.

**Griffin:** Sure. Um, when you said that we weren't married, it made my heart... shrivel—shrivel up and get very cold.

**Rachel:** [laughs] You started this premise. I was just trying to—

**Griffin:** Yeah, but I didn't say we weren't married!

**Rachel:** I was trying to 'yes and' ya a little bit.

**Griffin:** Instead, you were saying 'no, but' to our whole deal.

**Rachel:** No, we are very happily married.

**Griffin:** You broke my heart. Made my—made me sad. We are—

**Rachel:** Comin' up on seven years!

**Griffin:** Comin' on up. Wow, jeeze.

**Rachel:** This winter.

**Griffin:** And what's the seven year anniversary? What is that? That's like... meat?

**Rachel:** Uh, Slurpee.

**Griffin:** Slurpee. That's right. It goes... paper, copper, onyx... light, is four. Number five is diamonds. Every five is diamonds. Six is... uhh... six is, uh, I think...

**Rachel:** Rubber band?

**Griffin:** I think it's cork wood?

**Rachel:** Cork wood. Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Number seven is Slurpee, number eight is meat. Eight is the meat anniversary. Can't wait for that.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Um... I do. Well, this isn't totally above board, but we have found episodes never before seen of people baking, uh, in the Great British style... that have...

**Griffin:** [laughs] Did you forget the name of the show?

**Rachel:** [laughs] No, 'cause it's not technically Great British Bake Off!

**Griffin:** It's the Great British Stand Up to Cancer Bake Off.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** It's their celebrity edition.

**Rachel:** They did a series of episodes that feature celebrities, comedians, just general personalities, that do not have baking experience.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Uh, and it is very enjoyable, and not widely available. So good luck. Good luck out there, guys.

**Griffin:** Good luck finding it.

**Rachel:** We had to do some digging.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Um, yeah, I don't feel as guilty about that, because it's literally impossible for us to watch those. And there are some genuine treasures. That was going to be my small wonder, too. I will do a side pivot and just say, in general, James Acaster.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** 'Cause his performance in, uh, Great British Bake Off is like, the best. It is—that show is so gentle, and uh... sweet, and straightforward, that you'll almost never see anybody truly catastrophically fail.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And so it is like, delightful to watch comedians like, catastrophically fail. Or, in Terry Hatcher's case... catastrophically succeed. She has a... whatever the baking equivalent of a green thumb is. A golden brown crusty thumb.

**Rachel:** Yeah. We did some research. Apparently, she's like a real baker, now.

**Griffin:** Very talented baker, Terry.

**Rachel:** That's her thing.

**Griffin:** Good—good on ya.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** I think maybe you go first this week.

**Rachel:** I do!

**Griffin:** Okay, what do you got?

**Rachel:** I want to talk about the grandiose music videos of the 1990s.

**Griffin:** This... you sent me a particular sort of reading aide for this topic... that uh, I watched this morning. And it is...

**Rachel:** [laughs] Did you watch the whole thing?

**Griffin:** Watched the entire, front to back, and I'm so glad I did, because it might be the best... piece of... media? Ever created? And I don't know if it resonated with me because uh... well, I guess this video came out in '88, so I was one years old.

**Rachel:** Oh, no, this one's '91. The one I'm featuring.

**Griffin:** Okay, so four years old, then. Still not old enough to really appreciate its art.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, and I don't know—y'know, with some of these lengthy music videos, I don't know that they were aired in their fullness consistently.

**Griffin:** No. No.

**Rachel:** I imagine not. I was looking at uh... some of these videos. Um, and y'know, I mean, music video heyday really was like, around this time, late '80s, early '90s.

**Griffin:** What do you mean by heyday? Like...

**Rachel:** Like, when it was like, starting out. Becoming like, Music Television was a thing. VH1 was a thing. Y'know, like, this was like, if you were gonna put out an album, everybody wanted to know what your video was gonna be.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** So I was looking at the most expensive videos of all time, and ten of the 15 on this list were from the '90s.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, the most expensive was Michael and Janet Jackson in Scream, which came out in 1995, and cost, at the time, seven million dollars.

**Griffin:** That's quite a bit.

**Rachel:** Yes, that's quite a bit. Um, the one I wanted to feature, though, is 2 Legit 2 Quit by Hammer.

**Griffin:** Is—sorry, quick sidetrack. Is Jamiroquai's Virtual Insanity on the most expensive—'cause how did they even build that room with the moving floor? That must've cost a pretty penny, huh?

**Rachel:** [laughs] A lot of money you'll see spent on these videos are like, special effects. Like, CGI stuff.

**Griffin:** Right, okay. Yeah, okay.

**Rachel:** Uhh, which is, for example, why Scream was so expensive. There are a lot of videos from that time period that got really excited about the like, "Let's make everything look like water and morph into everything else!"

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think that movie, The Abyss, came out. That was the one that had like, the...

**Rachel:** Well, and The Matrix for example, too, right?

**Griffin:** Well, The Abyss, I think, predated The Matrix by a significant amount. And it was like, the underwater water ghost monster thing. And people saw that technology like, "How can we use that?" I think Busta had a video that very prominently featured, like, that Alex Mack technology.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** God, how many people do you think haven't understood a thing we've said in the last two and a half minutes?

**Rachel:** [laughs] I know, we're using a lot of '90s slang. Um, so, the thing that is exceptional about this video for 2 Legit 2 Quit. Uh, it's 14 minutes long. It features a tremendous number of cameos.

**Griffin:** Cameos makes it sound like they just kind of wander into frame. It features a lot of starring roles from a lot of unexpected individuals.

**Rachel:** So the first eight minutes is just like, narrative setup for this video. And this is the thing I really like about these kind of epic music videos of the time period, is they... they are telling a whole story, start to finish, that may or may not really be related to the song.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, but this one in particular... you can tell pretty quickly how it's gonna relate to the song. The song is called 2 Legit 2 Quit, and the premise they start out with is that Hammer has quit. Uh...

**Griffin:** And I know you're thinking! I have been made certain assurances by Mr. Hammer, that this is an activity he will never engage in. And yet, here we are!



**Rachel:** So, prior to the video's release, Hammer had over 14 million in sales of Please Hammer, Don't Hurt Him. He had also produced and starred in his own movie called Please Hammer, Don't Hurt Him, the movie, in 1990. He was ridin' high.

**Griffin:** Yep.

**Rachel:** And this kind of reminds me of that, like, Eminem thing, of like, telling your audience like, "You thought I was going away, but here I am!" Uh, and Hammer's kind of doing that with this, of like, can you imagine if Hammer quit and what would happen in the world?

So, it's Jim Belushi as a newscaster.

**Griffin:** [laughs] I imagine a lot of people just got like, whiplash from like, "Whoa, whoa whoa."

**Rachel:** [laughs] He is announcing that there are rumors that Hammer has quit, and then we get a lot of reactions from celebrities of the time period.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Including, uh... Queen Latifah, Danny Glover, Tony Danza... and then a series of athletes? So, I didn't realize this, but Hammer was a bat boy for the Oakland As.

**Griffin:** Oh, I had no idea.

**Rachel:** So he had a lot of like, sports connections from that?

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Which I guess is a possibility, if you are a bat boy?

**Griffin:** You also get to watch Jim Belushi have a full blown panic breakdown.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's a strange...

**Rachel:** They really gave him some rope on that performance.

**Griffin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Rachel:** Uh, but so, Roger Clemens, Jose Canseco is in it... uhh, and there is just—and there's a lot of repeat. There's a lot of bouncing like, "Okay, let's talk to Eazy-E, and let's go back to Danny Glover. And now, let's go talk to the actor that played Bud Bundy on Married With Children, and then let's go back to Danny Glover again." [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. And then back to Jim Belushi, doing a like, bizarre Hammer dance grotesque parody in the studio.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Jim Belushi, at some point, seems to be mocking Hammer for quitting at his peak, and suggests that maybe Hammer's fame was too much for him, and then he starts doing impressions of Hammer related...

**Griffin:** Not great.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Not great.

**Griffin:** Not great, Jim.

**Rachel:** Uh, so then... kind of inexplicably... and this is where some of the cost came from on this 2.5 million dollar video. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** We go to James Brown, uh, who was in this like, palace. And he is presenting himself as the godfather, and Hammer is going to him to get power... in the form...

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** ... the form of fireballs.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** This is kind of a fun fact of the video. So, James Brown was in jail, and was set to be released the day video production began. So Hammer arranged for a private jet to pick up James Brown from the South Carolina prison to bring him to LA the day he was released. Uh, and then, I guess in addition to that cost, there were two extra days of private jet time so that James Brown could go to Vegas. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So the originally planned 18 day shoot turned into 30 days. And these were like, 18 hour days.

**Griffin:** Jesus Christ.

**Rachel:** Just filming all of this. Because in addition to this James Brown scene, there's scenes of what looks like to be some kind of industrial fire factory. There's like, a city street. There's like—

**Griffin:** You know, the industrial fire factory that every single music video of the '90s had to incorporate in some way, even when it wasn't, like, part of the narrative. I think Fast Car, like, very briefly jumps to the fire factory.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Madonna did a lot of factory work, too, in her videos.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Lisa Loeb, in the middle of Stay, like, runs out of that apartment that she's just kind of walking all around, and is like, "Hold up. I gotta go to the fire and sparks factory real quick. We'll make a quick one there, and then we're coming on back to the sad apartment."

**Rachel:** Uh, there are countless dancers in this video. There's also an auditorium scene. So after James Brown gives Hammer the fire power...

**Griffin:** And tosses him around the room telekinetically.

**Rachel:** Yes. Yeah. And suggests that Hammer get the glove, which we find out later about in more detail... uh, we cut to an auditorium that is just packed with fans, waiting for Hammer to come out.

**Griffin:** Or come down? Come through the nexus portal that James Brown summons? It's in the shape of the earth for some reason?

**Rachel:** Yeah! There's a globe that spins around, like a screensaver.

**Griffin:** And the globe sucks up MC Hammer and all of the dancers'... souls?

**Rachel:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** And sends their souls through the globe, sailing around—

**Rachel:** See, I wasn't sure how to interpret the globe.

**Griffin:** I think the globe is about... I think the globe represents mortality. I've got a whole—we can talk about it afterwards.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, at which point, the music, as I mentioned, eight minutes in, finally starts. 'Cause Hammer does come out on stage and perform 2 Legit 2 Quit.

**Griffin:** 2 Legit 2 Quit. Not just a fun name. It is a six minute long music song. Uh...

**Rachel:** Yeah. There's a hand gesture that goes along with it.

**Griffin:** 2 Legit... 2... Quit.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Exactly.

**Griffin:** That must've been really great for the audience.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, this song, I think, was also featured in The Addams Family movie, if I remember correctly?

**Griffin:** Yes!

**Rachel:** Um, the hand gesture... you get confirmation on the glove. Because at the end of the video, we cut to a booth... uh, like a video production booth, where we see a, uh, impersonator of Michael Jackson wearing the one sparkly glove, doing the 2 Legit 2 Quit hand gesture.

**Griffin:** His agent is like, "Oh no! He's coming for us! MC Hammer! Did you see this guy? He's so skilled, but he's got nothin' on us! Isn't that right?" And then the Michael Jackson glove does... I didn't realize there was beef there, but okay.

**Rachel:** Yeah, they were both kind of vying for... y'know, peak sales at that time period.

**Griffin:** And y'know what? Let's call it a tie.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] We'll go out—y'know what? Let's call it a draw. Who can tell?

**Rachel:** Uh, some of you may know this about Hammer. Um... five years after this video was released, he filed for bankruptcy. But he's doing okay now.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** He just kind of, y'know... I mean, if you release an album, and you get 14 million from it, he just—he went a little wild with his purchases.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** Has since kind of gotten his finances in order. Everything worked out okay for Hammer in the end.

**Griffin:** It is a truly bonkers... of this genre of video that you are talking about, I cannot think of one that is better than this. Like, this is all—this is all time, like, most representative of like, that wild '90s creative ambition that like, people who didn't necessarily know how to channel it the best could do. But what comes out of that is so, so pure, and so strong.

Like, you're watching James Brown throw fireballs at MC Hammer and levitate him all around his room, and you're like, "I don't know what the fuck is going on, or who thought of this, or who thought this was a good idea, but I'm so glad they did."

**Rachel:** It is! It's like I was telling Griffin, it's like a time capsule. I mean, not only does he get a lot of the like, notable personalities of the decade, but the special effects, and his approach... it's very representative of the time.

**Griffin:** It's so good.

**Rachel:** Uh, it is not a video I had seen in its entirety until very recently.

**Griffin:** Nor I. What was the other one you were telling me about? Oh, November Rain.

**Rachel:** November Rain. Yeah, so that's what kind of got me on this track, is November Rain is a Guns and Roses video that follows Axl Rose from like, falling in love and marrying a woman, to her untimely death, and there is a lot of... lot of set work. A lot of—there's actual drone footage in there.

**Griffin:** Whoa, what?!

**Rachel:** Of Slash playing his guitar solo. Uh, another very expensive video.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** Uh, Guns and Roses did quite a few. As did Madonna and Michael Jackson, as I mentioned.

**Griffin:** I imagine Meatloaf probably clocked in some high budget...

**Rachel:** Y'know, I didn't do any research on Meatloaf.

**Griffin:** Hm. I mean, just by nature of the fact that his songs are these nine minute long, extremely dramatic ballads. God.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I get—November Rain is one of those weird songs that like, I cannot remember anything about the song, except for... the ending lick, which is like, iconic like, best guitar lick ever. But I can't remember like, how the actual verse goes. Is that weird? It's kind of weird.

**Rachel:** It's a little weird.

**Griffin:** Um, can I do my first thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Uh, my first thing is pretty quick. It is geocaching.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** Uh, it's something that like, I feel like I was super into for like, a year. Uh, and then, haven't really done that since. Because Austin has like, a pretty decent geocaching scene, but it's all like, weirdly concentrated, and we don't live anywhere near the geocaching hotspots.

**Rachel:** We used to.

**Griffin:** We used to. Yeah, when we first—or when I first moved to Austin, I lived in a neighborhood that was like, in the shit. Um, geocaching is an activity where folks hide caches all around the world, and they leave clues and coordinates that folks can follow to hunt down those caches, using a GPS device or an app on your phone.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I was gonna ask. Like, that's the thing. How do you access this?

**Griffin:** There's an app called Geocaching, that now, uh, unfortunately, has a subscription fee attached to it.

**Rachel:** Aw, that's a bummer.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I know. It used to be free, but I think, uh, for whatever reason, it costs money now. But I think there are other free geocaching apps, it's just that this one has the most caches registered. 'Cause anybody can like, create an app and then it's kind of—or, can create a cache, and then it's sort of like, peer reviewed, and gets like, bumped out of the list organically, if it's not a good one.

So, caches typically include like, a log that people can sign when they find the cache before replacing it. And my favorite kind of caches are actual containers that include little trinkets, or doo-dads that you're supposed to take one and replace it with something else.

**Rachel:** Yeah, do you remember our sad story about being out in... I believe it was Driftwood?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And we found that little spoon?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And then, what was it replaced with?



**Griffin:** With a Lick card that had all the holes punched in. That's not a sad story, that's a great story! I got a fuckin' rad spoon! That's like, one of the—I have that listed here in my notes as one of the best caches!

**Rachel:** No, I think the spoon was great. I think leaving a discount card for an ice cream store—

**Griffin:** It's not a discount card, it is a free ice cream! And it didn't expire! I checked. I was very careful about this. It was fully punched out. So like, what I put in there was a ticket for free, good ice cream from Lick. Like a pint of ice cream. If anything, I got ripped off with my spoon. I loved that spoon. It was like a state spoon for like, Alaska or something like that.

**Rachel:** Yeah! Like, that's charming.

**Griffin:** So is free—a pint of free ice cream!

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** I can't believe you came after me for that. Uh, anyway, geocaching is, uh... it was originally sort of developed and became a thing that you could do in 2000, which was well after the invention of GPS. What I didn't realize is that, before the spring of 2000, GPS utilized something called selective availability. So if you were a civilian who was using GPS using civilian data, it would be purposefully thrown off by up to like, 100 meters. Like, there was a programmed-in inaccuracy to keep people from using, y'know, civilian GPS data for nefarious purposes.

But because of that, it made geocaching more or less impossible, because that inaccuracy kind of just... y'know, 100 square meters or whatever is like, a huge area of—a huge margin of error to try to like, find things in. Um, but then they turned that off in 2000, and geocaching became possible.

The first geocache was hidden in Beaver Creek, Oregon, and it was made of a big, black plastic bucket that was filled with, uh, software, videos, books, money, a can of beans, and a slingshot. Pretty fuckin' cool treasure chest to unearth.

**Rachel:** What... how did those items come to be together, I wonder?

**Griffin:** Just the one dude hid this cache, and posted about it on some web forum. And then folks went and found it. Uh, it was tragically destroyed in a lawn mowing accident, this first cache, but now there is a plaque that sits where it was hidden, because it was the first geocache ever hidden. And apparently, the can of beans survived the lawnmower accident.

**Rachel:** Whew!

**Griffin:** So the can of beans is also like, a geocaching treasure.

**Rachel:** Old Grandpa Beans. Still there today.

**Griffin:** There are over three million caches hidden all around the world today. They've been discovered over 640 million times. So there's like, a lot of people doing this. Uh, and they are hidden all over the globe in 191 countries, and even Antarctica. That is not the wildest place that a cache is hidden. For nine years, from 2008 to 2017, Cache GC1BE91 was hidden on the International Space Station.

**Rachel:** Whoaaa!

**Griffin:** Good luck logging that one. I cannot think of many other caches that have been clocked fewer times than the ones hidden—

**Rachel:** What was it? Do you know?

**Griffin:** I do not know.

**Rachel:** Some astronaut ice cream?

**Griffin:** Probably yes. Uh, so, uh... what I like about geocaching is, one, the people who hide them can be like, super clever about it. The containers themselves are oftentimes like, pretty clever. A very common one is a film

canister with like, a magnet glued to it, so you can stick it to the underside of like, a metal table or something like that, and it blends in so well.

So you have the coordinates on your phone that will get you in the general vicinity of where the thing is, and you will have like, a clue that will tell you where the thing is. But it's up to you to actually find it. And sometimes, they're like, really, really, really well hidden.

**Rachel:** So a long time ago, when people used to put film in cameras, it would come in a little pill-type container. And that is what a film canister is, for our young listeners.

**Griffin:** Yes. Um, the geocaching like, app that is the like, main one, has a bunch of different sort of like, ratings that you can do. So it lets you know how many people have found, uh, a cache, and then you can rate it for difficulty, or accessibility, if it's like, hidden in a wild hike that you have to do, or climb a tree, or something like that. Like, I never fucked with those.

What I really liked doing was just kind of like, walking around the neighborhood, opening up the app, and seeing if there was anything close by that we could go find. And I feel like, when I first moved to Austin, and you and I started dating, and we would like, go around walks around the neighborhood, it was kind of a cool way to get to know the neighborhood.

**Rachel:** Yeah. This was like, pre-Pokémon Go for us.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And so, it was like an activity you could do out in your own community, uh, that didn't cost you anything, and had kind of an adventure element to it.

**Griffin:** And that adventure element made it like, my favorite thing to do outdoors, for the year or so when it was like, a thing that we were actively doing all the time. Maybe when Henry gets a little bit older, we will uh, do it again. But I feel like once you reach a certain age, then you just want to play Pokémon Go.

But like, it's where we—it's where I found out about Sparky Park, which is just like, this cute little art park.

**Rachel:** Yeah! That's where we took our engagement photos.

**Griffin:** It's where we took our engagement photos, yeah. And there was also a very well-hidden cache there that took us a very long time to find.

**Rachel:** That's true! Yeah.

**Griffin:** There are also virtual caches, where people will plant, uh, like, QR codes that you can scan, and then sign the virtual log on the app. There's also a whole game called, uh, Munzee, that is basically geocaching with QR codes that you can print out and do the same thing. But it's like, scored. So like, uh, if you hide one of these little QR codes, if someone finds it, you both get points. And the points differ, depending on how difficult it is. It's like, a whole thing.

But I just—I like—I like the idea of geocaching. Me and my family do a, uh, a walk on Christmas Eve every year, where we kind of just reflect on the events of the past, uh, the past year. And the year where we were all super into geocaching, that walk went for like, an hour and a half.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** 'Cause we ping-ponged all around Ironton. At a certain point, we just like, got in the car and started to drive around. We like, rooted around a graveyard for like, a half hour, trying to find—

**Rachel:** I do remember that. That was before, I think, any of us had children. And so, there was no urgency to the walk. [laughs]

**Griffin:** There was very little urgency to the walk. Now the walk is quite brief, especially when children are taken, and get cold instantly. Um, but yeah. I just think it's a cool—it's a fuckin' cool activity. Like, it is something that I think about occasionally, even though we don't do it that often.

But like, if we're at a playground or... y'know, it's not like we're going out to, uh, various public events at all these days. But uh, back in the day, y'know, it would be any time we were out in a park or anything, it would be just cool to open up the geocache app and see if we could find a treasure real quick. There's something very appealing about that.

**Rachel:** Yeah, for sure!

**Griffin:** Um, y'know what else is a treasure? Is when we do advertisements, and we are paid. For them.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Can I steal you away?

**Griffin:** Yeah!

[ad break stinger plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Oh, the jumbotrons are here.

**Rachel:** They are!

**Griffin:** Do you want to read the first one?

**Rachel:** Sure! Uh, this message is for Evan. It is from Sarah. "Dear Schmev, I love you with all of my heart, and I can't wait to marry you in May. You are smart, funny, enthusiastic, caring, and the best partner anyone could ever ask for. I am so lucky to have you. I've been really nice to you throughout this message, so I'm'a roast you now. Your farts smell like swamp cheese. Love, Scarah."

**Griffin:** Yeah, um, that's gross.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I don't know what to say else about it. I'm trying to picture what swamp cheese is.

**Rachel:** I mean, somebody else in this world got me to say 'fart' on a recording, and that is an accomplishment in itself.

**Griffin:** I guess so. You really don't like that, huh?

**Rachel:** Y'know, I uh... I grew up, y'know, uh, in Downton Abbey. So that's...

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** That's what informs my word choice.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess so. Here is a message for Edina. It's from Mike, who says, "Edina! You are the most wonderful thing in my life. Every day I spend with you just gets better and better. I love you so, so much, and I am so happy that we are building this life together. Love, Mike."

Can't help but notice there was no mentions of farts or... stinky cheese in this one.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Some people, y'know, they love out loud, and they keep that love... free of bodily functions.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Y'know. Almond Joy's gots nuts. Mounds don't. Y'know? Something for everybody. Different strokes.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

**Griffin:** Can you tell me your second thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay! Let her rip!

**Rachel:** My second thing is a ball python that is 62 years young at the St. Louis Zoo.

**Griffin:** You love this snake.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Sure. [laughs]

**Griffin:** This big snake you love.

**Rachel:** There is a story attached to this snake that I find particularly charming.

**Griffin:** Snake got a name?

**Rachel:** Uh, y'know? Didn't find it. Didn't find the name.

**Griffin:** Almost certainly has a name.

**Rachel:** I would assume so. I assume the zookeepers have an affectionate name for this snake. Uh, but that is not what I am featuring today.

**Griffin:** Okay. [laughs]

**Rachel:** Uh, this 62 year old snake laid some eggs this summer.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Uh, this snake hasn't been in contact with a male python in decades. And at 62 years old, may be the oldest snake to lay eggs on record.

**Griffin:** So wait. What?

**Rachel:** Mmm!

**Griffin:** How did it happen?

**Rachel:** So, there are some animals that can do asexual reproduction. Not as common in snakes, but it does happen. Sharks, birds, and lizards are the only vertebrates capable of reproducing this way. They have not figured it out yet. They're doing some testing to find out how this came about. They just—they showed up, and there were some eggs in there. And two of the eggs were not viable. Two were taken for genetic sampling, and the remaining three are being kept in an incubator and expected to hatch.

**Griffin:** That's—that's pretty cool!

**Rachel:** Uh-huh!

**Griffin:** Like, I knew that that was a thing that could happen, but I guess I didn't assume that like, a thing as big as a ball python could do it. Like, I've always thought about it being like, weird amoeba... amoeba stuff. Amoeba level shit.

**Rachel:** [laughs] They say it's possible the female snake was storing the sperm and waiting to fertilize the eggs with it.

**Griffin:** Wowzers!

**Rachel:** There is one male ball python at the zoo, but is kept in a separate enclosure, and the snakes have not had physical contact since the 1990s!

**Griffin:** What happened in the 1990s when they were like, "We gotta get these two fucking snakes apart!"

**Rachel:** [laughs] It's possible the snake has been holding the sperm for decades. Just waiting. Waiting until she felt ready, y'know, to be a mother.

**Griffin:** Right. Yes.



**Rachel:** And I respect that.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** Uh... but also, how incredible! [laughs] It boggles the mind, doesn't it?

**Griffin:** There's so much about this that boggles the mind, right? Like, if that is the thing—we are no scientists or biologists, and I think that is fucking abundantly clear at this point. But like... sperm... doesn't stay... living. Like, viable... very long.

**Rachel:** Maybe—maybe in snakes, it does. We don't know.

**Griffin:** But like... there are certain environments... if you just like, drop some sperm on the ground, like, it doesn't—that sperm is no longer good.

**Rachel:** Well, true.

**Griffin:** But if you like, put it in a special container...

**Rachel:** Or a snake.

**Griffin:** Or a snake, I guess, it can just keep on...

**Rachel:** For decades. [laughs]

**Griffin:** For decades. That, or this is an immaculate snake conception, which is even more exciting.

**Rachel:** So I was nervous about bringing this story. So I saw this story a few days ago, and I thought, "Oh, no." Has this been a hoax that has been uncovered, and there is gonna be a zookeeper that says, 'Oh yeah, no, I got those snakes together all the time.'

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I don't know. It may still come out. As of recording, I have not seen an update to the story.

**Griffin:** Okay. I just Googled the snake, if it has a name. And it doesn't. She is identified by the number 361003. Give the fucking snake a name—this snake is—this snake just did a pretty remarkable thing. I think if you can either immaculately conceive, and/or hold some sperm in your body for 30 years... you get a name.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You get to have a cool snake name.

**Rachel:** Uh, these snakes are not on display to the public right now. So you can't go check out these old snakes.

**Griffin:** They belong in a museum!

**Rachel:** I know. Well, museums don't typically have living...

**Griffin:** Well, I guess not. No, probably not.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, but I love this. I love, y'know, those little miracles out in the world that you see. Even in these troubling times.

**Griffin:** Sure!

**Rachel:** You gotta love that!

**Griffin:** Got to! You are required to love that.

**Rachel:** I also—I just—I love... this old lady snake, just taking control of her body, and making a decision for herself and her community. When she's ready!

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm!

**Rachel:** [laughing] So that is my wonderful thing.

**Griffin:** Uh... my second wonderful thing is... I feel like I haven't done like, a part of a song yet. Or, in a while, which I want to rectify right now. I want to talk about a specific part of a specific song. The song is, *If You Want Me to Stay*, by Sly and the Family Stone, and the part of it that I want to really focus on is the bass line, which is the fuckin' freshest, best, uh... my favorite bass line in a song, uh, ever, ever, ever.

**Rachel:** That was so good. I did not recognize the song by the title, but then once we got a few seconds in, I did.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And I wish y'all could've seen Griffin's face as we were listening to it.

**Griffin:** Yes. I just played Rachel a little snippet so she would remember the song that I'm talking about.

**Rachel:** He made some real guitar face. It was lovely.

**Griffin:** It's a fuckin'—it's the best bass line...

**Rachel:** It is.

**Griffin:** In—I love a good bass line in a song. It's like, not an instrument that I think about. It's not one that I've ever had like, much interest in learning, which is rare, because I've had a lot of interest in learning a lot of other, like, weird instruments.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But the bass riff on this song is like... this is my favorite Sly song by a huge margin, and I think the bass line is the major determining factor for that decision. Uh, it was... If You Want Me to Stay was a 1973 single off of, I think, the fifth album? Sixth album from Sly and the Family Stone, called Fresh. And it's one of their most well-known songs, right? It's probably just below... like, Every Day People is probably the best known Sly song.

Um, and... Fresh, the whole album, was written by Sly Stone over like, two years. And apparently, at this point, he was pretty tough to work with. Like, he was very, um, perfectionist. This song, at one point, was pretty much done, and ready to like, go on the album. And Sly Stone trashed the master recordings, and like, started over with like, a version—a different version.

Apparently, that original version exists out there, and it's like, a very rare find. Uh, and there have been several albums that have had different versions of this song. But in every version, the bass line rips ass.

So, Fresh, and There's a Riot Going On, which was the previous album from Sly and the Family Stone, were these super rhythm-forward albums. Like, the drum and the bass line on these songs was like, the featured element. Which was kind of rare for funk—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Well, for really all, like, recorded music here in the early '70s. Um, and you get that like, rhythm-forward focus so hard on If You Want Me to Stay. The drum and bass is the first thing that you hear in the song, and it like, permeates the whole thing. It's like, smack dab right front and center. Every other sort of like, melodic element – like, there's some piano, and some organ, and some horns – those are all like, panned really far away, and much, much quieter.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, than this bass and this drum machine. Uh, and it is—it is—they just stay the stars of the song the whole time. And I think that that is very, very cool, and it gives this song its like, sort of memorable flavor.

I'm gonna actually like, put it in the show now so that our listeners at home can hear it.

[‘If You Want Me to Stay’ by Sly and the Family Stone plays]

**Griffin:** I feel like that bass line launched like, a million amateur bassists, like, into the profession.

**Rachel:** Yeah, of course!

**Griffin:** Uh, because even though I don't have any interest in the bass, you did see me tryin' to fuckin' lay it down, because this song is so fun.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The bass line is very, very syncopated. Uh, and that provides like, most of the rhythm to the song. But you do get like, in addition to that *bonk bonk bonk bonk*, there's like, occasional little funky, like, walking triplets that come in. Like, *bomp bomp bomp bomp bomp*. It is... uh, such a simple thing, right?

It's not like, the most complicated... it's not like, uh... what is it? Uh, You Oughta Know by Alanis Morissette has like, a wild, like—[imitating a bass] Like, all over the place bass line. This one is like, very, very straightforward, but it is also like... because of its simplicity, the little variations on it are just so fucking fresh and good. Maybe that's why they named the album that.

Uh, so, Sly Stone was this like, prolific multi-instrumentalist who, uh, put down the bass on most of the other songs on Fresh. But for If You Want Me to Stay, the bass was played by Rustee Allen, who was a newcomer to the band. He like, played around with and kind of trained under the previous bassist, who I can't remember their name.

Um, but he only played on like, two albums of Sly and the Family Stone, and really left a sort of indelible impression on the bass instrument in general, just with this one performance.

I did a bit of research on Rustee Allen. He started playing bass with bands, living in Oakland, when he was 12 years old. And he used to have to draw a mustache on his face with a pencil so that he could play in bars and appear older than he was.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which is, uh...

**Rachel:** That's like two kids in a trench coat.

**Griffin:** It very much—yeah. It's two kids in a trench coat, playing the bass guitar. And Rustee Allen would go on to play with like, George Clinton and the Temptations, and had like, uh... I think he had like, a jazz group of his own. But this is like, the best bass performance that he has, that is like, the most well-known.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I just think—I think the sign of a good bass line is one that sounds fun to play. Like, one that—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Griffin:** I spent a lot of time prepping this watching tutorials on YouTube, and it just like, looks—it looks fun to have your hands move across the instrument like that. I know that's like, a weird thing. But now, like, especially once I started doing like, research on this, I cannot hear this song anymore without thinking about like... what that bass line would be like to play. It's just so good!

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Um, yeah. I think maybe I should learn the bass?

**Rachel:** Ohh, good.

**Griffin:** Basically, this whole segment was a back door... uh, me, trying to like, make it sound okay for me to—

**Rachel:** I will let our listeners know that, after talking about a hurdy-gurdy, Griffin has still not purchased a hurdy-gurdy, and I am very impressed at his restraint.

**Griffin:** It's because it's a wildly expensive instrument.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Bass guitar, I imagine, I could get for a song. Uh, yeah. Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Hannah says, "My small wonder is Jelle's Marble Runs League. It's an Olympic-style event done entirely with glass marbles. There are 16 teams of different designed marbles who compete in relay slash endurance style events. You become so invested so quickly, especially when you pick a team to follow. More people should watch these. With the global pandemic, I would be okay if this is what sports became."

I watched a lot of these.

**Rachel:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** There is a three hour long compilation video of all the 2020 events so far in the season. And it's just like... races, and...

**Rachel:** So are these like, Rube Goldberg style setups?

**Griffin:** Um, partially, but most of it is like, racetracks with like, those little staircase things that—mechanical staircase things that carry the marbles back up to the top. Or there'll be like, a narrow track, and they'll send like, a team of marbles down it to see who can stay on the longest.

**Rachel:** That's fun.

**Griffin:** There's like, different events, but there's a commentator for the whole thing, who's like, talking about how these things are go—it is—I clicked into it like, "Oh, this sounds weird." And then I watched like, 40 minutes of it. And I was like, "Oh, shit. That was 40 minutes."

Uh, here's one from Daisy. "Something I think is wonderful is pictures of proud gardeners holding enormous vegetables they grew." Ugh!

**Rachel:** Oh, this, actually—I have a very specific family picture that I have kept for a very long time. Believe it is my... mom's grandpa, in overalls, in a field, holding a tomato the size of his head.

**Griffin:** Holy shit!

**Rachel:** And it's just this old black and white photo, and I am just so charmed by it.

**Griffin:** That's delightful. I was thinking more of the—I feel like there are a lot—I feel like gardening is top five things that people have gotten very into during quarantine. The others being like, baking sourdough bread, and like, skateboarding, I guess.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And it is cool to like, see people—even when it's like, people I went to high school with that I have not talked to in ten years, seeing them holding up like, a big eggplant, I'm like... fuckin' good on ya man!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Way to grow! That's a great eggplant, person I haven't talked to in ten years, who now harbors some troubling political beliefs!

**Rachel:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** That's a great eggplant! Credit where credit's due!

**Rachel:** Good eggplant, though!

**Griffin:** Good eggplant! I disagree with you and everything that you stand for, uh, and will not hesitate to let you know that, but that's a big eggplant, though.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Can I tell you, uh... about Bo En and Augustus, who let us use our theme song, Money Won't Pay?

**Rachel:** Please tell me about it!

**Griffin:** Which you can find a link to in the episode description?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I just did.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

**Rachel:** Yeah! Thank you Maximum Fun, for hosting our show, and so many great shows. Uh, I am going to recommend The Jackie and Laurie show.

**Griffin:** Yes. Uhh...

**Rachel:** But please, please check out anything you want. It's all free for your listening pleasure.

**Griffin:** You do not need our permission to listen to these shows. 'Cause that would be wild. Uh, anyway, uh, we're gonna... oh! Looks like James Brown is throwing fireballs at us, and we're levitating, so I do think we need to go do our concert. Um, and... I guess we'll—I don't know where tickets are. We probably shouldn't be doing a concert.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** In the—it'll be a virtual—we'll figure out the specifics a little bit later, but I'm floating away into the soul globe. So... uh...

**Rachel:** Bye Griffiin!

**Griffin:** [getting distant] Yeah, I'll see you next time! I'll see you next time!

**Rachel:** Byeeee!

**Griffin:** [distant] This really burns! Is it supposed to burn?

**Rachel:** I think sooo!

[theme music plays]

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