

## Wonderful! 152: Air Milk

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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:** Just two autumnal sweethearts over here.

**Rachel:** Aw, yeah!

**Griffin:** Crispin' it up with a... this podcast episode's gonna be like a nice... cold apple cider... dumped... in your lap... and you're on a hay bale ride, and I spilled my whole cold apple cider right on your freaking lap.

**Rachel:** Is that a thing people like? [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's the official kick off to fall! I feel like it ain't fall until you've had somebody spill a cold apple cider on your lap on a hay bale ride. Am I wrong? Is that just me? Is that maybe an Appalachian thing?

**Rachel:** I think you might be wrong.

**Griffin:** Shoot. Wow.

**Rachel:** I think you might be wrong. I mean, usually, this time of year, you serve it warm.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Um, it may be because we've been watching a lot of PEN15. Which uh, is one of the best shows on television right now. Exceptional show. But I've been thinking about middle school a lot lately, and I have this

very vivid memory of being on a hay bale ride with like, a sweetie, and listening to um... uh, Sugar Ray's 'Fly' on the radio, in like, seventh grade.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** I don't know why that is like, so ingrained in my mem—I guess it was like, a dope night.

**Rachel:** Were you like, "I'm gonna remember this forever"?

**Griffin:** Apparently. And guess what? I did. I did, and I am.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I don't know that I have a lot of fall memories. I mean, the big thing for us was ice skating rink.

**Griffin:** Oh, see, we didn't do that. We weren't, I guess... hockey enough. Our town wasn't hockey enough for that.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, hey, do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Uh, my small wonder... y'know what? I'm gonna say fingerless gloves.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** Y'know, like, you can do your stuff, but you can have your comfort. Um, a lot of times now, you can get the gloves that have the little touch screen sensitivity in them.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Witchcraft.

**Rachel:** I say... if you can afford it, just take those fingers right off.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Just pop 'em right out. Yeah. Living in Chicago, it's sort of essential to have a sort of fingerless glove strategy. And I had, and still have, the ones with the cap that like, flip up over your fingers. But you can flip 'em off when you need.

**Rachel:** Sometimes you gotta get in your wallet and get that credit card out.

**Griffin:** You gotta get in there! Um, I'm going to say, the bust cakes that were created in the first episode of the new season of Great British Bake Off.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Uh, Eater wrote an article about it, if you need to see an image of those and don't watch the show. There is a—somebody made a cake that was supposed to look like Tom DeLonge, the front man for Blink-182, that is... I think about it all the time.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** I think about cake Tom DeLonge *all the time*. Every day since I've seen him. He is a—he is a grim mask of pain, and it is so fucking funny to me. It made me think—wasn't it Eddie Murphy... what was the SNL where they did like a bake-off sort of parody, and somebody made a cake that was like, alive?

**Rachel:** It was Eddie Murphy.

**Griffin:** Holy shit. Like, we are trending towards that direction. Which is funny, 'cause it's not Nailed It. Great British Bake Off isn't Nailed It.

**Rachel:** I know! I know!

**Griffin:** But for one challenge, it was Nailed It, 'cause everybody—a nightmare David Attenborough. Like, everybody made—David Bowie cake that looked like it had been like, fucking stomped on. It is so funny and good and weird and pure, and uh...

**Rachel:** I can't imagine the kind of person that wouldn't like Bake Off. But if you are somebody that has found that show perhaps too soothing in the past...

**Griffin:** Oh my goodness.

**Rachel:** This is a laugh riot.

**Griffin:** This is a hoot and a holler. Uh, you go first this week. What's your first topic?

**Rachel:** My first thing... is a organization called Pizza to the Polls.

**Griffin:** Never heard of this one.

**Rachel:** I just found out about it!

**Griffin:** Okay. Let me... hm. Are they sending pizza to the North and South Pole?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. [pause] I don't know. There's a—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I was just trying to guess based on context clues, that it was like a scientific organization of just like, let's see how far we can get this piece of pizza.

**Rachel:** Uh... [laughing]

**Griffin:** Can we get it up to Santa Claus or Evil Santa Claus? Does Krampus live on the South Pole?

**Rachel:** Oh man. That is a whole... a whole different show, right there.

**Griffin:** It is.

**Rachel:** Um, no. This is a nonpartisan organization that started in 2016, in response to long lines during the election.

**Griffin:** P-O-L-L-S. Polls!

**Rachel:** Yeees.

**Griffin:** Now we're talking.

**Rachel:** Y'know, it could've been like telephone poles, too. It could've been line workers. Y'know, it could've been a lot of things.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** That is the wonder of the English language.

**Griffin:** Could've been giving free pizza to Polish people? I don't know if they go by that, but...

**Rachel:** I mean, what else could it be? Let's keep going. This is great.

**Griffin:** I don't know. I don't know.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, they offered a simple service. Free pizza to voters waiting in line, regardless of their political affiliation. Uh, in the four years since, the group has continued to provide this service. They delivered nearly 11,000 pizzas to voters at 611 polling locations across 41 states in 2018.

**Griffin:** Fuck yeah! What's the opposite of voter intimidation? 'Cause that's what this is, it feels like.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, they started out in just Ohio, Florida, and Illinois. And then it became a nationwide effort. They take donations year-round. And basically, what they do is, they invite donors to just give \$20 here and there, uh, and then you can be eligible if you're standing in line to get the benefit of that.

What you do is, you go onto their website, and they will ask you a series of questions if you are interested in receiving one of these pizzas.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, you have to provide a link to a report on social media, saying like, "This line's super long!"

**Griffin:** Okay. And then they swoop in like pizza Batman?

**Rachel:** [laughing] Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Rachel:** You provide your polling place address, and your phone number or email address, so they can follow up when the pizza's on its way.

**Griffin:** Okay. Do the people in line get to choose toppings? Depth of crust?

**Rachel:** [laughing] It's a very long form. It's like, "Alright, I want one that's half Hawaiian, half cheese... "

**Griffin:** And you have to put—you have to collaborate with everybody else in line, regardless—again, regardless of political affiliation. So like, you look, and somebody who you are so opposed to—

**Rachel:** Oh, that's beautiful.

**Griffin:** —and you're like, "Listen, you fuckin' jerk. What do you want on your pizza? Pepperoni? Me too!"

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh, we have something in common!

**Griffin:** But also, really, really wicked important stuff, super-duper not in common.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Um, it also lists upcoming deliveries on the site, too, so you can kind of see where these pizzas are going out. This is, of course, on an election day. Right now, if you go, there's nothing there.

Uh, and they also try and order local, which I appreciate! There is a website I didn't know about called Slice, where you can enter in an address, and they will give you a list of pizza places. And so, they try and... they try and purchase local. And none of this money—so, if a polling place, or a election has passed, they will use this money to support other hungry people around the country in a variety of lines.

**Griffin:** That's radical! That's, uh—that's very cool.

**Rachel:** They have a treat... uh, they have a team of volunteers across the US, England, and Australia to help coordinate these deliveries. Um, and it's a really cool location!

**Griffin:** Um... do you think... I know it's like, a big, uh, fight to try and get election day to be a national holiday, to encourage, y'know, more people to go vote. If we could get it... on the calendar as 'Pizza Party Day'...

**Rachel:** Oh, that's fun.

**Griffin:** I think we would have 98% voter turnout. And the two percent would be people who just don't really like pizza very much.

**Rachel:** [laughing] I think, um, y'know, Texas is a place that does not allow mail-in ballots, except for extreme circumstances. So, it's gonna be kind of crazy at those polls. We are fortunate to have early voting, so hopefully that will help a little bit.

But I was just excited to know about this, and think like, this is a nice way to spread good will. Especially for people who aren't able to vote until they get off work. And if I'm standing in line, hungry, I'm really debating getting out of line. But if there's pizza there, maybe I'll stick around.

**Griffin:** Hey, go to Vote.org. Just make sure that your shit's up to date, and that you're good. Voting registration cut off is, for most places, like... now.

**Rachel:** Very soon, yeah.

**Griffin:** For Texas, I think it's October 6<sup>th</sup>. Even if you're registered to vote, go check and make sure that you are. And if you're not registered to vote, please fucking register to vote, and vote for Joe Biden in the election.  
[laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm not sure who watched the debate last night. Wouldn't recommend it. We made it about—

**Rachel:** We did not—

**Griffin:** We made it about four minutes in, and then we had to go to fuckin' Sports Center for the highlights, so uh... hugely anxious, it made us. And uh... yeah. It's a nightmare.

**Rachel:** Oh, and just to clarify, this website that I was talking about is Polls.pizza.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Good web address! Good job, you've done it! Um, hey, can I do my first thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** My first thing is darts. Darts is fun. Uh, darts is tough, by the way, to like, prepare this segment without getting the Brian David Gilbert darts song. Have you seen that? It's Time to Get Good at Darts video?



**Rachel:** Ohh! You've showed it to me!

**Griffin:** [sings] It's time, it's time to get good at darts! [normally] It's like...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Sort of permanently stuck in my head.

**Rachel:** I told Griffin, just some context for where I'm coming from, uh... I don't really know how darts works. I know there are numbers on there and colors, and I know that you are trying to get the harder...

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting.

**Rachel:** The harder stuff? Like, the smaller, y'know, spots are worth more.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And so, whenever I have played, I've always been like, "Well, I should probably try and get it in the center." But I don't know how anyone keeps score.

**Griffin:** So there is optimal aiming strategies, depending on how good you are at darts. So, uh, yes. If you have never, like, played darts and don't really know anything about the board, you got the bullseye, which has the inner circle, which is worth 50, and the outer circle, which is worth 25.

And then, there's, y'know, different scores between one and 20, all around the circle. And then there is a ring on the far edge of the dart board that is double points. So if you hit, y'know, double 18, it's 36. And then there's another smaller ring, sort of halfway in the circle, that is the triple.

So, the highest score you can get with a single dart is triple 20, which is 60 points.

**Rachel:** How did you learn how to play darts?

**Griffin:** By going to bars with people who play darts.

**Rachel:** Okay. So it wasn't like, something you knew as a young child.

**Griffin:** No, no. I didn't really get into darts until I was like, old enough to go to bars. Because like, I am not—I've never been like, a huge drinker. Uh, and I'm also like, not particularly adept socializer. And so, if darts is there... darts allows you to, y'know, have an activity to do, but it also allows you to kind of like, peel off people into a smaller group.

Like, I find it easier to talk to one person than I do to talk to like, four people. And darts is like, "Hey, one at a time, please. Single file." And play a game that I think is really very, very fun.

**Rachel:** I thought darts was something kind of like pool, where like, people came fully formed to these games, because they had somebody that knew somebody that had a basement that had pool or darts in it.

**Griffin:** I mean, I feel like I knew a lot of people who had dart—we had a dart board.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, they're like fuckin' five dollars at Target. Like, you can get a dartboard for pretty cheap, especially—no, y'know what it was? The first dartboard we ever got was in Justin's room. I remember this very vividly. We bought it from our neighbor at a garage sale, and it had like... the normal dart board on one side, but it had like, weird baseball scoring? There was like, a weird baseball game—

**Rachel:** Yeah, I've seen those things!

**Griffin:** We never used that. Um, but the problem with having darts at your house is that, if you have darts at your house, you also have holes in the drywall at your house.

**Rachel:** Yes. Yes.

**Griffin:** A real issue. Um, but... anyway, we've digressed like, almost instantly. Uh, darts is just super fun. We keep saying darts, but there's, y'know, a few dozen actual games that you can play with darts, the most common of which is 301. Which is, you have—you want to count down from 301 by throwing the fewest number of darts. You get three darts in a round, and you and an opponent go back and forth.

If you go past that number, you bust, and have to go back to where you were at the beginning of the round that you busted. And that's it! There's also 501, which is a common way of playing it, because uh, if you're really good, you can finish a game of 301 in five rounds, I think?

Uh, so, anyway. That's the main game. The game I really like is Cricket, which I think I've tried to teach you the rules of Cricket a couple times. That's the one where you have to shut down zones.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** So, 15 through 20 are these zones, and you have to get marks in them, basically, three times to shut them down. And once you've shut them down, your opponent can't score on them, but you can. So there's like, an offense defense push and pull to Cricket that I like, love.

**Rachel:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** There's an element of strategy to it, because you—the point of the game is to shut down all the zones and bullseye, and have the higher score. But you can only score on zones that you've shut down that your opponent hasn't. So like, if your opponent has shut down 20, you want to shut that down as fast as possible, because they can start scoring on that, and like, get a lead that you will not be able to make up.

**Rachel:** How do you keep track of like, what's been shut down? 'Cause you're taking the darts out, right?

**Griffin:** Yes. Usually, there is a chalkboard with a—

**Rachel:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** Or if it's like, an electronic game, it will keep, y'know, track of that stuff for you.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Cricket, once I discovered Cricket, that's when I got really into darts. Because it is a—it's, again, a game of strategy and risk, where like, if your opponent shut down 20, but you're really close to shutting down 19, maybe you go for that before you make the defensive play to shut down 20 as well. Uh, it's, y'know, maybe a bit complicated to hear out loud, but it's a fairly simple game to understand, and it's a very, very fun game.

So, anyway, darts evolved from archery, naturally. And when people were first playing darts, it was essentially like, broken arrows and crossbow bolts. The first intentionally made darts were made of wood and a strip of lead and split turkey feathers. And then, in 1906, folks started using like, actual metal barrels, which is like, the part of the dart that you hold when you throw it, and...

**Rachel:** I thought for sure you were gonna say bones. Is that weird?

**Griffin:** No, I mean, I'm sure somebody has a bone dartboard set. So, the dartboard has this wild circle of numbers that appear to be like, placed somewhat randomly. The like, placement that we all use on dartboards was set by a carpenter in 1896, and it was supposedly – this may be like, apocryphal – there to prevent—to penalize inaccuracy. Uh, by the way that the numbers were arranged.

By which I mean, to understand like, the dartboard arrangement, no two, like, high value numbers are right next to each other. If you're throwing for 20, if you miss, you're gonna hit one, probably. So, that is—that is why dartboards are the way they are.

**Rachel:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** So there is a cluster of numbers at the bottom left of the dartboard that are kind of middle of the road. So if you are a player who has a huge element of randomness where your darts actually land, that's where you actually want to aim, is the bottom left of the dartboard.

**Rachel:** Ohhh!

**Griffin:** If you're an incredibly skilled player, you want to aim for that triple 20 every time. So yeah, there's an element of strategy to it, even if you're not great at darts. And what I love about darts over a pool is, I feel like darts has an element of, y'know, a great equalizer. Where, if you're not great at darts, you can still have that game where you crush it.

**Rachel:** That's a really good point. The thing that always tripped me up about pool is I could never really pick a way to hold the cue that felt comfortable to me, and that was just a total hurdle that I could never get past.

**Griffin:** And if you're bad at pool, you're gonna be bad every time. Like, you're gonna be bad every shot. If you're bad at darts, sometimes, you'll still hit the double bullseye. Like, sometimes you'll still hit triple 20. Uh, but there is like—there are strategies for every skill level that can kind of work for you. Uh, that I didn't know about until I was prepping for this.

It's also a game that you play with one hand, right? So it's like, perfect for when you're at a sort of drinking occasion, and you have a beverage in one hand, and you're throwing darts with the other one.

It also feels good. Like, I love a—you know me. I love a good tactile feel to things, and darts like, feel fuckin' great.

**Rachel:** And it's very satisfying, the way it like, sticks in there.

**Griffin:** Yeah, and the way that you throw it. Like, it feels like—it's just a very satisfying motion. Uh, I just really like darts. I wish we had a place to like... I guess we could set up like a dartboard outside, in an area where like, the siding of our house is already kind of fuckin' trashed anyway. [laughs]

**Rachel:** Yeah! Or we can get some hay bales, and make like a real big...

**Griffin:** At that point, let's just get a crossbow.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Yeah! Let's get really into crossbows during quarantine! Uh, yeah. I've also never been injured by a dart, but I bet it's... I bet it feels pretty bad. Never been hit by a dart. Never seen anybody get hit by a dart, but...

**Rachel:** Was that in your notes?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You were like...

**Griffin:** "I bet it hurts to get hit by a dart."

**Rachel:** "I should really end this with talking about how it hurts to get hit by a dart"?

**Griffin:** I actually end it with uh, professional dartists, which is what... what actual, like, professional dart players like to be called. Uh, they have the best pop offs of like, any sport. Like, when somebody nails like, a perfect round of 301, like, they pop off in a way that like, football players don't pop off. Basketball players don't pop off. Like, they go wild.

**Rachel:** There's like, celebration dances?

**Griffin:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

**Rachel:** Oh, that's nice.

**Griffin:** Uh, it makes me think—actually, wait, was that darts, or—I think it was bowling. There was a bowler who very famously like, scored a perfect game, and then like, in his pop off, just screamed, “Who do you think you are? I am!”

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** “Who do you think you are? I am!” I think The Verge wrote about it like, “Who is this dude, and why is that the thing that he shouted?” It's on like, that level every time. Like, they go wild. They go wild. Anyway.

Can I—speaking of going wild, can I go wild and steal you away?

**Rachel:** Woo!

**Griffin:** [pause] Is that—legally, you have to say yes.

**Rachel:** Yes. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay.

[ad break stinger plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Hey, I have a grambletram here. Can I read it, please?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** This message is for Allie. It's from Alan who says, “Hey Al! I know I often tell you how proud I am of you for everything you've accomplished in the past few years, but I figured it would be even better coming from our fave chill out podcast. Two time zones and several thousand miles has

nothing on our friendship. You're the best day one ride or die this queer gremlin could ever ask for. I love you!"

Is this a chill out—I always think of this podcast as being pretty fuckin' high octane.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah? [laughs]

**Griffin:** I always think of it being a pretty high octane thrill ride.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. Is that—that's what you tell people? You say, "I do these things with my brothers and my dad, and then I have a super intense podcast you should check out."

**Griffin:** Yeah! That's the tags I gave it on iTunes when I put it up. "This is a high octane thrill ride." Huh, I guess I'll have to return to that.

**Rachel:** Can I read this next one?

**Griffin:** Please.

**Rachel:** It is for Noelle. It is from Kaylee. "Hey, Noelle! Surprise! You're wonderful! I'm so glad that we decided to grab a campus apartment together last minute when we worked on RNG. Our friendship is something I treasure, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I can't wait to see what you knit next! Let's go watch more baseball anime. Smooch Edwina for me. Also, you whip ass, dude. Love ya."

What's RNG, do you think? Do you think it's us? Do you think they worked on Rachel and Griffin?

**Griffin:** Rachel and Griffin, yeah. Or maybe Romeo and Ghouliet? And it's like, Juliet's a... like a ghost or a zombie of some sort?

**Rachel:** [laughs] Oh, I love that!

**Griffin:** It's like the sequel. It's like the sequel to Romeo and Juliet, but—



**Rachel:** Or Gnomeo. Right? Isn't that a children's program?

**Griffin:** It is—it's a movie. Why did you bring the gnomeverse into our house? Dang it.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

**Griffin:** Hey, what's your second thing? Wanna go ahead and tell me your second thing?

**Rachel:** This one's gonna be really controversial.

**Griffin:** God.

**Rachel:** So get ready.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** And I've thought about how to package it so that it is concise. But I will say, um... when packaged dessert treats get stale, and they taste better.

**Griffin:** I will cede... Nilla Wafers.

**Rachel:** Oh, that's a good one! I don't even have that on my list!

**Griffin:** But that's—really? 'Cause that's all I can—that's the only one that I can—

**Rachel:** Oreos?

**Griffin:** [sighs]

**Rachel:** You don't like when Oreos get soft?

**Griffin:** Okay, this is a wild segment. Let's—I'm gonna just back off and give you the room you need to do your work. Your grim, dark work.

**Rachel:** So, this started for me with Oreos. And then, in doing research, I found some other ones that I also prefer.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But we, uh, have taken... and when I say 'we', I mean 'I', to buying very large packages of Oreos. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, and I kind of cooled on them for a little while. And then, the other day, I was like, "Y'know, I'm just gonna dip back in. Oh, they're so soft. So soft and tasty when they're stale."

**Griffin:** And you like that?

**Rachel:** And I like that.

**Griffin:** See, I find that—y'know, Oreo's a milk's favorite cookie. And I find that the—when they are—when they get like that, they are not as easy to saturate with the precious milks.

**Rachel:** Oh, see, a lot of—this may be the difference, 'cause sometimes I'm just like, poppin' an Oreo and goin'. I'm not getting out a little dipping station.

**Griffin:** Maybe. Yeah. Maybe.

**Rachel:** [laughs] You're so angry about this.

**Griffin:** I'm not angry, I'm just conflicted. 'Cause I really like stale Nilla Wafers. Like...

**Rachel:** Yeah, 'cause they're soft, right?

**Griffin:** I want barrel-aged Nilla Wafers. Like, I really wanna—I wanna sundry them on our roof, and then eat them. I wanna bury them in a jar like kimchee underground for six months.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, well, that wouldn't work. Because they would be air tight, right?

**Griffin:** Oh, shoot, maybe. I guess I was assuming fermentation happened at some point in the Nilla Wafer process. [laughs] Maybe I'll put them in there with some banana pudding, and then just see what comes out.

**Rachel:** Well, so let me tell you. I did some research, because the question that I have was, why does stale bread become hard, but why do these little packaged cookies become soft?

**Griffin:** Okay... was there an answer for this on the internet?

**Rachel:** There is!

**Griffin:** There's an answer for fucking everything.

**Rachel:** I know! The example I found was actually bread and chips. Um, as the two opposites. But I feel like the logic is probably the same.

Okay, so, both those foods have starch. But when bread is baked, the addition of heat and water weakens the attraction between the molecules. As bread goes stale, the water in the starch moves to other parts of the bread, such as the crust, so that the starch returns to a dense, hard state, like it was uncooked flour form, which gives stale bread its crunchy texture.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But when you talk about something like chips, the water clinging to the starch evaporates when you make it crunchy. And then, as the water,

um... as the water in the air binds to the starch, it makes the chips pliable again. So what you're getting is water from the air is making it...

**Griffin:** Interesting.

**Rachel:** ... softer.

**Griffin:** It's drinking the air water.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So when you leave a package of Oreos open, for example, you're getting moisture in the air, which is making them soft.

**Griffin:** Huh. So it's like the air—it's like dunking them in water. But the air's doing it.

**Rachel:** Babe, you're blowing my mind right now! [laughs]

**Griffin:** I wish there was milk air. Do you know what I mean? Like, milk air. Like, there is—I recognize that there's like, y'know, whatever. Condensation, the rain cycles, all that shit. I remember that from elementary school. But I wish there was milk air. Where there was just kind of milk in the air. Do you know what I mean?

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. No, I don't think I do. Are you—[laughs]

**Griffin:** And I don't think I mean that, because I'm somewhat lactose intolerant. So if there was milk air...

**Rachel:** Are you wanting the flavor of milk, or just the experience of milk? I'm confused about what milk air, what its practical purposes would be.

**Griffin:** Calcium. For bone. Growth.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I am not—I have no calcium... source. At this junction in my life.

**Rachel:** That is not true. There's calcium in a lot of foods!

**Griffin:** Okay. But I'm not getting it from milk. Which is like, a calcium potion. So I would just love—it's like fluoride in the water. Put fluoride in the water, put milk in the air.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Griffin 2020. Uh, so here are some other foods that I've found that people have said are better stale. Uh, graham crackers.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh, hell yeah.

**Rachel:** Right? Okay!

**Griffin:** I'll get down with that. Yes.

**Rachel:** See, here we go! So, Nilla Wafers, graham crackers, you're okay with. Uh, ginger snaps.

**Griffin:** Mm, no. 'Cause they don't snap anymore, do they? They're just kind of ginger... ffts.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uhh, Pop-Tarts.

**Griffin:** Ehh, no.

**Rachel:** No?

**Griffin:** No. 'Cause I'll bake 'em. I like a baked Pop-Tart. And then it's gonna just get, y'know, whatever it is. Y'know what I mean?

**Rachel:** You actually cook Pop-Tarts?

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** I mean, I toast them. I said bake. I don't throw them in the fucking oven.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Like your brother used to bake, uh, Hot Pockets in the oven.

**Griffin:** Uh, yes.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um... this one I thought was interesting. Peeps.

**Griffin:** Mmm... I don't think so—wouldn't they get hard? Wouldn't Peeps—don't Peeps get—

**Rachel:** Yeah. People like the hard outside, with the marshmallow center.

**Griffin:** I don't really like Peeps in any sort of way, shape, or form.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** It's a marshmallow covered in sugar. It's like, I'm an adult.

**Rachel:** Here's the thing. This is what makes me think that you have a point. So, I don't like when cereal is stale.

**Griffin:** No!

**Rachel:** So I think, depending on proximity to milk, that makes a big difference for me.

**Griffin:** Sure, yeah.

**Rachel:** Like, if I were to dunk an Oreo in milk, I think I wouldn't like it.

**Griffin:** Milk as a moistening agent needs something to moisten.

**Rachel:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Griffin:** But if there was milk in the air, we wouldn't have this problem.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, can I do my second thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Alright, I really do got big fall vibes, and when it's fall time, there's an album that I always return to. Probably, uh... I was thinking about it while preparing this. Maybe pound for pound, my most listened to album ever?

**Rachel:** Very true.

**Griffin:** Uh, this album is Armchair Apocrypha by Andrew Bird.

**Rachel:** Now, I thought for sure you had talked about Andrew Bird, but I think it was in context of whistling.

**Griffin:** No, I think it was actually in the context of live looping? It may have been whistling. I think I definitely talked about—

**Rachel:** You did do a whistling.

**Griffin:** I did a whistling segment. Episode five or so. Like, a long time ago.

**Rachel:** So you've been dancing around.

**Griffin:** Dancing around Andrew Bird. But Andrew Bird is probably my favorite, like, living musician. And he made this album in 2007, after... I don't know if you were like, into Andrew Bird around this time, but he had an album in 2005 called The Mysterious Production of Eggs that was like, a big breakout album for him.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so I—'cause I remember, I was listening to a lot of Andrew Bird when I was in Chicago, and that would've been 2005.

**Griffin:** Yeah. For some reason, like, I think of him as being like, very Chicago-y. But maybe that's just because like, that was also when I discovered him.

So, Mysterious Production of Eggs was this big breakout album, because... he was doing the stuff that I talked about during the live looping segments. He is like, the master of this, of just like, playing a violin riff, and then looping with a pedal, and then playing something over it, and whistling over that, and singing over that. Like, people heard that on Mysterious Production of Eggs, even though he'd been doing it for a while, and were just like, absolutely gaga about it.

And that style returns in Armchair Apocrypha; although, he uses a lot more sort of like, electric guitars in this one. I think, to great effect. Uh, I listened to this album just constantly when I lived in Chicago, and so, I feel like when it starts to get fally outside, I always come back to it and listen to it, 'cause I think every track on it is a... is an absolute bop.

It's—the opening track of this album is called Fiery Crash, and it's literally about sort of superstitiously imagining disasters before you like, encounter them. So, the title of the track is referring to somebody thinking about the plane crashing before they can even get on the plane. Uh, and... that is a weird idea, but I'm going to play the song now, because I think it rules.

[‘Fiery Crash’ by Andrew Bird plays]

**Griffin:** Every song on this album – and I don't know how familiar you are with like, the whole... the whole album. What's your—is your like, relationship to Andrew Bird like, mostly the like, y'know, shit that I'm—y'know, make you listen to on road trips or whatever?

**Rachel:** Mostly, yeah. So, my experience with Andrew Bird was like, a few songs here and there on my iPod Nano when I was in Chicago. And then, yeah, mostly listening to it in your car, when we have driven places.



**Griffin:** Um, I listen to it all the time. And I have struggled to sort of like, think about what it is that I really like about Andrew Bird. Like, the novelty of the live looping stuff, which is... not just live looping. As he experimented with that, like, it informed what this album sounds like, 'cause every song has these like, really rich layers of melody going on underneath them.

It's not just that, though. I think what makes this album so great, and what makes Andrew Bird so great is, Fiery Crash is like, a melancholy song. But it is presented in a non-emotional, non, like, dramatic way. And that happens in every song on this album. It tackles ideas of aging, and uh, illness, and uh, war. Like, these very, very serious subjects that could be very easily just sad bastard songs. Which was my chosen genre of music, like, all throughout college.

This bucks that trend, because it is very sort of contemplative, and very thoughtful, and a very interesting way of looking at these subjects, without being even remotely self-indulgent.

**Rachel:** Yeah! That's a really good way of describing it, because I feel like that is what I've always liked about Andrew Bird. I feel like the music tends to be suitable for any occasion, because you're not getting as bogged down in kind of the heaviness.

**Griffin:** Right, even though the subject matter is heavy. Dark Matter is about like, your soul. Like, your consciousness. And it never names it. It never names that, or applies any unnecessary weight to the concept. It just dances around it, and it dances around it in very, very clever ways.

There's a line, "Do you wonder where the self resides? Is it in your head, or between your sides? And who will be the one who will decide its true location?" This idea of just like, where are—where is—what in your body is you? Like what is—is like, a real sort of...

**Rachel:** That feels very They Might Be Giants for some reason.

**Griffin:** Absolutely! They Might Be Giants also do this. That's a great point. They're way more, I think, abstract in how they like, ask those questions. This is fairly like, direct and to the point, compared to that.

There's a song called Scythian Empires, which is uh—he talked about how he has a much easier time writing melody than he does lyrics. So to challenge himself, he wrote about like, a subject that was a seventh grade, like, book report for him, that he wanted to write a song about. But he then wrote a song about like, America's habit of uh, engaging in infinite, unending wars. Again, without necessarily like, naming it, or being like, particularly... I don't know, floral about it.

Uh, it's—there's a distance to it. There's an emotionlessness to it. But like, not in a bad way. I can't think of too many other artists who do that, because I think that there is a tendency...

And this is not like, a drag on people who write emotionally, right? Because that's beautiful in its own way, too. But I can't think of too many other sort of folks who write about things observationally like this, uh, and thoughtfully like this, without sort of falling into the trap of just like, being emotional about it.

Uh, there's a song on the album... one of the last songs is called Spare-Ohs, that I've never been able to like, really interpret. But uh, it is another sort of example of uh, just a lot of different life subjects written about very, very cleverly. I'm going to play some of it now.

[‘Spare-Ohs’ by Andrew Bird plays]

**Griffin:** I think that I like, owe Andrew Bird like, a debt of gratitude for sort of breaking me out of the sad bastard, like, rut that I was in. Because that is a—again, no judgment necessarily to like, people who are very into that style of music. But it was like, all I was listening to, and it's very easy to glorify just being kind of down in the dumps, whenever you're into stuff like that.

And Andrew Bird like, writes about the stuff that they were writing about, but in just a... just a way that makes you think, as opposed to like, makes you feel sad.

**Rachel:** Yeah! No no, it's very clever. It's very like, generative. Like, that's part of why I always liked Joanna Newsome.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** Is that when I would listen to it, it would inspire me to kind of be more creative, instead of like, in my feelings. Y'know?

**Griffin:** Yeah. And there's nothing wrong with being in your feelings, but I feel like part of a healthy, balanced diet is to like, get outside of it from time to time, and like, look at it from this third person perspective. And that is this album to a T.

Also, like, I kind of struggled with which album to bring. I feel like he had... Andrew Bird had like, four albums in a row in the aughts that was banger after banger after banger, almost on an annual basis. Mysterious Production of Eggs is amazing, came out in 2005. Uh, Armchair Apocrypha was in 2007. There's an album that followed that called Noble Beast that was, I think, 2008, that was also like, remarkable.

And all during this time, he was touring with these albums, and like, uh, playing on Letterman, and going on TV. Because again, like, the live looping thing is something that really should be seen to be believed.

**Rachel:** Y'know what? I saw him at Lollapalooza in Chicago, which was a weird venue to see him. But yeah, I just remember being like, "Well, this is different than what anybody else is doing."

**Griffin:** And hearing—I feel like seeing those live shows, and then hearing the albums, like... you figure out the symbiotic relationship between the two, in a way that like, just got me absolutely obsessed. And I still am obsessed.

Uh, he has a lot of sort of instrumental albums now that I—whenever I'm working, I just flip one of those on and go for it. But it's very fally to me! I think I get acoustic in the fall.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And there's a lot of that in his work. Uh, do you want to know what uh... do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** James says, "Being from Hawaii, hurricane-style popcorn is the king of movie snacks." Have you heard of this?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** I had not either. "It's just normal buttered with popcorn, but with furikake, toasted sesame seeds, and some small bits of Japanese rice crackers. It wonderfully puts every other preparation of popcorn to shame." That sounds good as hell.

**Rachel:** That sounds so good!

**Griffin:** That sounds good as hell, though. Like, I want to eat that for lunch today.

**Rachel:** Yeah, we should do that! We should try and figure that out.

**Griffin:** We have all the stuff. I don't know if we have sesame seeds. We definitely have the other stuff.

**Rachel:** We have the crackers?

**Griffin:** No, we don't have that.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** But we could mix it—listen. We do have like, weird Quaker Oats rice crackers. We could figure something out.

**Rachel:** Okay?

**Griffin:** Probably wouldn't be very good, but...

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Uh, and Jess says, "Joe Pera Talks with You is a wonderful show. It's like Mr. Rogers for millennials, and each ten minute episode is like a kiss on the forehead at the end of the day." This show is so good. If you've never seen it...

**Rachel:** I haven't.

**Griffin:** It's just a very sweet show about a very sweet man, who gets very enthusiastic about very specific things in each episode, and tells you about them. There's an episode that I feel like is essential, where he discovers the song, uh, Under Pressure, I think. Is that it? No, it's uh, Baba O'Riley. He discovers the song Baba O'Riley, and like, hears it on the radio for the first time, and calls into the radio station like, "Can you play that again?"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And like, gives a—speaks at a church about Baba O'Riley, and what a good, like, song it is. It's a very, very pure show.

**Rachel:** Aw, that is sweet.

**Griffin:** Uh, 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. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. They uh, have a lot of good stuff there.

**Rachel:** Yeah. And thank you to everybody who has been recommending our show on Twitter and Facebook. It always warms my heart to see people talking about this show as a way to kind of calm their anxiety in a very challenging time.

**Griffin:** Man, it is a very challenging time.

**Rachel:** I know that's kind of how Griffin and I use it when we make it. So it's always nice to hear that other people are finding value in that, too.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, I don't know. This may help... I don't know if this helps sort of folks relate or whatever, but like, I would describe my mental state as pretty fragile and bad right now.

**Rachel:** Yes. Yes.

**Griffin:** And I know that everybody else, most folks are there too. So, y'know... it may be little consolation, but you are not alone in feeling that way. And do what you can to help out other people who need it. Yeah. Let's end it. Let's end the show. Let's end the episode right now.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um, and... that's it. Uh...

**Rachel:** See you... next week.

**Griffin:** See you next week. And do your homework! We never give out homework on this show.

**Rachel:** What's the homework?

**Griffin:** Uh, math. Algebra.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Do some algebra before we talk next. And we will know if you don't do it!

**Rachel:** Yeah yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** Because of the chip that we asked Tim Cook to put in your phone.

**Rachel:** The algebra chip.

**Griffin:** The algebra chip.

[theme music plays]

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