

Wonderful! 66: The Mallpisode

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hello, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: Sure is, ain't it?

Rachel: Did you enjoy the little, uh, cadence I did there at the beginning?

Griffin: That's the intro, is you did a little sing-songy voice?

Rachel: I said, "Hello, this is Rachel McElroy!"

Griffin: Oh, like a— like a— you know, a robot, or a broken Teddy Ruxpin, or something.

Rachel: I like to keep it spicy.

Griffin: You did. You did. Uh, I burned my ears on how good and hot the introduction was.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So I'm feeling it. I'm *feeling* this.

Rachel: [laughs] This episode?

Griffin: Do you ever have recordings where you're like, "I'm fucking *feeling*—" like, I've—

Rachel: Usually, I wait for it to get going before I declare it a victory.
[laughs]

Griffin: No, no, I'm not saying like it's already good, though your introduction was so choice. It's uh, I'm just feeling— like, I feel it coming in the air tonight, a good episode. Dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, jokes, jokes.

Rachel: You know how I do. I crack under pressure every time.

Griffin: No, you're gonna nail it. You're gonna nail this shit to the floor.

Rachel: Hoo! Okay.

Griffin: You're gonna kill it.

Rachel: Actually, I feel really good about my small wonder. Can I tell you what it is?

Griffin: Please tell me now.

Rachel: Do you remember what I told you? Was— I decided earlier this week what it was going to be, and I declared...

Griffin: Oh, yeah. You were like, "I have to write this down, because I always forget."

Rachel: And I put it in my phone, 'cause I didn't wanna forget.

Griffin: Ah, it's a good thing you did, because I have forgotten what it was.

Rachel: So you know when you get, like, a pair of jeans out of the wash...

Griffin: Oh, yes.

Rachel: And sometimes your pockets are all kind of crinkled up in the jeans.

Griffin: Oh, I— I hate when they're crunkled. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] And you slide your hand in, and you straighten that pocket right out.

Griffin: Oh, nice, yeah.

Rachel: That's my small wonder.

Griffin: You did that to me while we were sitting on the couch.

Rachel: I did.

Griffin: I had— my pocket was out of my pocket, and then—

Rachel: Uh huh, it was crunkled.

Griffin: It was crunkled, and then Rachel reached out and stuck it back into my pocket, which could also be a small wonder for me.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, yes, I remember now. It is a pleasant— a pleasant feeling.

Rachel: I love that, man. Like, sometimes I'll do it halfway through the day, and I'll be like, "Oh, gosh, I've been sitting on this all day."

Griffin: But then you have to confront, like, "How long has my pocket been all goofy like that?"

Rachel: Crunkled.

Griffin: "Crunkled", I'm so sorry.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't know why I keep for— brain fart, right?

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah. What's your small wonder?

Griffin: Tuesdays. Uh, my small— I mean I do it twice a year, but Awesome Games Done Quick is happening right now...

Rachel: Hey, Griffin... [laughs]

Griffin: ...and I've just been, like, watching speedruns.

Rachel: You're stuck in a loop.

Griffin: I'm stuck in a six-month loop. Uh, if you're new to our programming, it's an annual charity marathon where people just, like, speedrun games for, like, eight or nine days? And it's been good. It's been good this year. Having a Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze run I very much enjoyed. Somebody ran the Splatoon 2 DLC. Really liked that one. Uh, I think they're starting the Mario Block, like, right now. Excited to just dip right into that.

Rachel: Will you let me know when and if they do the Sonic?

Griffin: Uh, they did today. And you missed it.

Rachel: Aw...

Griffin: But you can all watch that shit on Video on Demand.

I've been really, like, having a retro sort of week because I downloaded on my phone Old School Runescape, is what it's called, which is like a retro version of this old online game, called Runescape, that they've, like, remade and remastered and then they just rereleased the very first, old version of it.

Which I played a little bit when I was younger, and it's been very, very nostalgic for me. I've just been playing this game in the background while watching, like, classic games getting speedrun. It's been a real blast from the past.

Rachel: You wanna know something I've realized about you?

Griffin: I'm a huge fucking nerd, with nerd glasses and a pocket protector, and a permanent wedgie...

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: ...that bullies come down— bullies come to our house, and just kick in the door, and give me a wedgie, and there's nothing I can do about it.

Rachel: I wasn't gonna say that at all.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: I was gonna say you really like video games.

Griffin: I do.

Rachel: Like, really, really do.

Griffin: [laughs] I really enjoy them.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I enjoy them quite a bit. I mean, it's been like... uh, it's just been my hobby my whole life. Like, I— it's hard to escape the fact that I know more about them than virtually any other topic on the planet.

Rachel: [laughs] It's true.

Griffin: And I wrote about them for a decade— is this really new information for you?

Rachel: [laughs] I mean, I was being a little... a little tongue-in-cheek there.

Griffin: I ache to talk about them sometimes, I realize.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, not writing about them for eight months or so? I've been kind of, like, itchy.

Rachel: Yeah, that makes sense. This is kind of your only place to do it now.

Griffin: Kinda. We did Besties, revived that. We did, like, a three-hour-long episode.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: That was a nice sort of— I caught— I was relistening to it, and I was like, "God, I talked so much," and it's just because I have a lot to say about video games, but yes.

Uh, hey, what's your first thing?

Rachel: Okay, so my first thing...

Griffin: Yeah. I'm real excited. You've been talking a big game about—

Rachel: I just feel good about my things!

Griffin: Yeah! I'm excited!

Rachel: Meeting your partner's friends.

Griffin: Hey, alright!

Rachel: I love it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I love it, especially meeting your friends.

Griffin: Yeah. This one makes me kinda sad, though, 'cause you're not gonna do it again with me. I don't have any other secret friends that you haven't met, I don't think.

Rachel: But I still reap the benefits!

Griffin: You do.

Rachel: The reason I was thinking about it is that, you know, we go to West Virginia every Christmas, and I get to see some of your friends and I like them all so much.

Griffin: They're very good.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yours are as well. I get— we don't go to St. Louis, I feel like, as often. And when we do, it's usually, like, very fly by night, but sometimes we'll do big gatherings with your friends in St. Louis, and I am so delighted by all of them.

Rachel: It's like— it's so affirming, first. If you like your partner's friends, it's really, like— it's reassuring, and it's affirming, because it's like, "Oh, this person that I like has good taste, and picked good people to be around them. And I like them too, and you know, that means maybe that we're extra compatible, because we have similar qualities that we look for in people."

Griffin: I think there's— I mean, that's definitely true, right? Like...

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: 'Cause I think about a lot of my friends, and there were a lot of my friends who made friends with, like, real shitheads.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That then I did— I was never— like, our relationship was not the same after that. And I've had a lot— I had some relationships in the past where my partner's friends I did not care for...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: ...and they did not care for me. Uh...

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: And it really sort of broke the core Spice Girls rule uh, where you are legally not allowed to be my lover at that point.

Rachel: Yeah, 'cause— you wouldn't want them to get with your friends.

Griffin: The cops will come. The cops, for sure.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: For sure not.

Rachel: Just wanted to close that loop.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So, I've talked about friends before on this show.

Griffin: Great show. Like, Ross always cracks me up.

Rachel: I feel like you made that joke last time I talked about friends, too.

Griffin: I do, and it's always Ross that's the only one I always speak about, and it's not because he's the first name I remember. It's because I think he's so *fucking* funny.

Rachel: Okay. Uh, so I was reading this article from *The Atlantic*, and they had this professor of interpersonal communication from Ohio University. And he talked about the different types of friendships you have.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So he said they generally fall into three categories by the time you reach middle age. Active, dormant, and commemorative.

Griffin: That last category just set my mind on fire...

Rachel: Isn't it perfect?

Griffin: ...because it's so good.

Rachel: So most— the active and dormant are pretty obvious.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Friendships, if you keep in touch regularly, if you call them for emotional support, if you know what's going on in their life, that's an active friendship. A dormant one is one you maybe haven't talked to in a while, but you still think of that person as a friend.

Griffin: I have lots of those! I feel like, as— I feel like most people these days have most of those.

Rachel: I know. Yes. A lot of my friends are dormant.

Uh, a commemorative friend is not someone you expect to hear from or see maybe ever again, but they were important to you in an earlier time in your life, and you think of them fondly.

Griffin: Holy shit.

Rachel: Isn't that the perfect way of describing it?

Griffin: This is like a lot of the people I did theater with, who like, moved away from Huntington, so like, I will almost certainly never see you again.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, not like, my core group of theater friends, who I do expect to see many times throughout the rest of my life, but you know, people I maybe did one or two shows with, and we became show friends, and then their family moved away, and it's like they're just gone.

Rachel: Well, you know what I think, is... might be different for you, is I feel like you have a surprising number of old friendships for somebody at our age. You know? Like, when I— when we go back to Huntington...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ...I am surprised by the number of people that you've been able to kind of keep close to you. And I realize a lot of it may be because you went to college in your hometown. So any time anybody would come home, you would be available to see them.

Griffin: There's— yes.

Rachel: Whereas, I feel like a lot of my friendships from high school are now restricted to seeing once a year, and have been for a very long time now.

Griffin: I think that's, like, probably the biggest contributing factor?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think it's also because I go home pretty, like— I mean, at least once a year, uh, and a lot of my friends, like, didn't leave Huntington. A lot of my friends didn't leave the tristate area, and especially a lot of my friends' families just, like, had— just didn't bounce, and so they are all still there, so they're kind of like the anchor.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think there's a lot of anchors in Huntington, so people just all sort of gather up.

I get so excited to, like, see all my friends. We only saw a couple of them this year, but like, I get so excited to catch up with my friends.

Rachel: I know. It's gotten to the point now where I will, like, ask Griffin about some of his friends. I'll be like, you know, "Is so-and-so gonna be there?" Because I really— I like 'em. I'm attached to 'em too.

Griffin: Which is hard to reconcile, right? Because I'm *really* bad at keeping in touch with them throughout the year. But like, the term of "dormant friends," I feel like, it maybe sounds bad, but there is also something kind of comfortable about knowing, like...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ...these people I can call up when we're all in town, and we can all hang out at somebody's house and drink wine and catch up. And it's like, well, that, and it's still comfortable. There's no judgment, like, "Hey, what the fuck, man?"

Rachel: And that's specifically what, you know, this article said. Was that you maybe haven't talked in a while, but you still think of that person as a friend, and you'd be happy to hear from them. If they were in your city, you'd definitely meet up.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure!

Rachel: Which I feel like is a really good example. Um, the other thing I like about meeting friends is that I get to learn things about you.

Griffin: Oh, boy!

Rachel: I don't have a big reveal here.

Griffin: I thought you were gonna say, like, you started messaging my friends on Facebook.

Rachel: You had this look on your face. [laughs]

Griffin: Like, give me the scoop. Give me that dirt.

Rachel: Although Patrick Stanley is really good at unearthing some gems.

Griffin: He sure is. You can't say that, though. He's in the fucking group, babe. Patrick, you keep your fucking mouth shut. I will come for you.

Rachel: [laughs] So, I was reading, um, this article about the friendships you make during young adulthood. And when they talk about young adulthood here, they're talking about literally in your, like, 19, 20, 21 years old. But they talk about how that's a big time period of self-disclosure and support between friends.

And they talk about, specifically, if you're fortunate enough to go to college, that can be kind of a golden age of friendships, because you have a lot more available time to spend with people.

Griffin: Absolutely. I feel like it's also when, like, the core of your being, more than any other time in your life before that, is starting to really firm up, and so the friends you have *then*, it would make sense. Like, it would be kinda tougher to outgrow them.

Rachel: So according to the encyclopedia of human relationships, which is a thing, apparently...

Griffin: Alright.

Rachel: ...young adults often spend between 10 and 25 hours a week with friends. And people between 20 and 24 years old spend the most time per day socializing on average of any group.

Griffin: Uh, yes. That all tracks.

Rachel: So— so that's just all to say that, like, part of the reason I also like meeting a lot of your friends is that they have spent more time with you than almost anybody, besides your brothers.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so, like— you know, a lot of times they, like— I don't know, they like the same things about you that I like.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And it's fun to be around people that are kind of in the same fan club as you.

Griffin: Yeah. And I mean, from— also from more, like, a practical standpoint, when I moved to Austin, obviously, I had a couple friends here, but it was... it was, you know, mostly your group of friends that I was moving into. And then it was like, instantly...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: ...like, "Oh, I've got a bunch of friends!" Like, that part kicks ass. It was a good subject, babe.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you!

Griffin: I get why you're excited about these.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Um, my first one's not as special by comparison. I'm almost embarrassed by it.

Rachel: Is it, like, Fritos or something?

Griffin: No, it's a— it's a nice mechanical keyboard.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I have written down here.

Rachel: [through laughter] I love that I was talking about human relationships, and then—

Griffin: And I'm talking about a nice mechanical keyboard.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I use my compu— I've been sort of reinvesting in my computer, sort of, ergonomic sort of computer usage setup. My station, my hub, my terminal. And it's because I came to this realization that, like... I'm on this thing 60 hours a week, maybe? Including night times, when I'm like, on my computer, watching video game speedruns. Like, I'm on this thing a lot, and I'm always typing on this thing.

Like, I want, like, a nice sort of setup. So, I got a nice, new curved monitor, and a nice, new wireless mouse, and then I was like— I've been using the same gaming keyboard since 2014, and it served me well, but then I was like, what if I invested in, like, a nice, you know, mechanical keyboard? And I did, and ooh, it has done all the difference.

Rachel: What makes something a mechanical keyboard?

Griffin: I'm so glad you asked, 'cause I'm about to teach you a lot of things.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

Griffin: More about keyboards than you probably wanted to know.

Rachel: Well, not too much. [laughs]

Griffin: A mechanical keyboard is essentially, like, an old-school keyboard with, uh... elevated plastic keys that activate actual switches underneath the keys.

Rachel: Oh, and it makes that satisfying clicking noise?

Griffin: Yes. Uh, to varying degrees. I— I have been doing most of my work, like, really since I've been doing podcasts, on a laptop, which that is not really a mechanical keyboard. On the MacBook, it's just kinda like little

clicky keys in there, fine. But really, it hasn't been since I started using a mechanical keyboard again that I started to realize, like, how much more satisfying it feels, and how much better it feels.

And I just think that, like, finding the right keyboard for you is such a memorable experience. It's like, you know, Ollivanders Wand Shop, like, finding your thing in there.

Rachel: [laughs] For you.

Griffin: For— well, I think for—

Rachel: I don't know if you can generalize and say most people are searching for the right keyboard.

Griffin: Well, it might just be because you haven't found the right one yet.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: And I wanna help you get there. I wanna take you on that journey. So yeah, I got a new keyboard. It's a Leopold keyboard. 87 keys—

Rachel: Do you wanna click it into your microphone?

Griffin: No, 'cause I'm worried it'll stop the recording.

Rachel: Oh, okay. [laughs]

Griffin: But just take my word for it. Well, it's also got fairly sort of quiet switches inside of it, so I don't necessarily know that you would get— it makes a sound. It's very tactile, and it's nice, but...

Rachel: Can I go touch it? You've made me want to touch it.

Griffin: Uh, I guess. What button won't— press the tilde key. I don't think the tilde will do anything bad.

[faint clicking noise]

Rachel: That was nice.

Griffin: Okay, see, right?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so there is a wide, wide world of keyboard specialization out there that I did not know about until I started shopping around for keyboards, and I thought it was, like, fascinating that these things we use every day have all of these fucking microscopic customization points that you can do to make it the perfect keyboard for you.

Which may not be, like, as important a thing for a lot of people, but I think for like, writers, and for— especially for programmers... I actually got inspired to do this because I still follow a bunch programmer people from Vox, that I worked with there, and they post pictures of their setups with their keyboards sometimes...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm like, mm! Damn, those look really good.

Rachel: Hey, is there a subscription service where I could get a couple keyboards every month, and then I could find the right keyboard for me, and then return the ones I don't want?

Griffin: [laughs] Uh, that might me cost prohibitive.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because they're kind of— this one was actually fairly affordable, but they can get up there in price. There's a lot of— there's a whole, like, community of people who just build their shit from scratch also.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh.

Griffin: But you don't have to get that buck wild on it.

Rachel: Can you use like, little Skittles for keys, or like, what do you...

Griffin: You can. You just—

Rachel: How do you build a key?

Griffin: Well, most of the time, you buy keycaps. So the thing on the very top, the thing that you press, is the keycap. The literal, like, the Q key there is like the plastic part.

Rachel: Okay, like that— okay.

Griffin: I can pry that off with a little tool, and then that's just the keycap. And those can be different thickness, they can have different textures. These have kind of a chalky texture to them that I kind of enjoy.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The gaming keyboard I was using started to get a little bit oily, but that's just because I used it for five years, and my gross human oils were just getting all over it.

So that's the keycap, and then underneath that is the switch. And that's what actually, like, tells the— you know, sends the signal over.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's what, you know, you activate the switch, and that says, "Okay, you've pressed the Q key," and then it, you know, gets sent to the computer.

Those switches, there is an infinite array of variation out there. I learned about the most, like, common form of switches are from a brand called Cherry MX. Um, and then the Cherry MX brand has a bunch of different colors, and that's how they sort of like, um, that's how they identify the different tactile feel of each switch.

So this is a Cherry MX red, which is the most lightweight one. It doesn't take a lot of pressure to activate, and in fact, I think it takes the least amount of pressure to activate out of all of their switches, and it's fairly quiet. This keyboard also has a sound-dampening pad in it, so that it's not, like, super, super loud when you're typing, which is good, because I am the type of person that does not necessarily enjoy that.

And then there's a bunch of different colors moving upwards. There's Cherry MX brown switches, which are still linear switches – which means you just press them down, and then at some point they activate, and don't make a lot of noise – but this one takes a little bit more pressure. So, if you're the type of person who like, your fingers are constantly pressing the wrong key just because they're like, landing on them? You may need a higher-pressure key.

Rachel: This is like picking, like, a piano! Like when you went and picked up your...

Griffin: Oh, for sure, yeah!

Rachel: ...your keyboard, or whatever, for your piano.

Griffin: Yeah. I took that process also very seriously.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But that was a *much* more expensive purchase than this was, obviously.

Rachel: Now I just kinda wanna look at pictures of keyboards. I bet there's all sorts of YouTube videos.

Griffin: Honestly, look at pictures of keyboard switches, because they're fascinating. So there's linear switches, which uh, most computer switches are like that. You press them down and there's not much, like, tactile feedback? I think brown ones actually— Cherry MX browns, like, you get a little bit of a tap as you reach the bottom that lets you know you've hit it.

So there's all these escalations, right? There's Cherry MX black, which is kind of like a hybrid between red and brown. And that goes all the way up to Cherry MX's like, most buck wild one, which is Cherry MX blue. And this is, like, a click-activated key. Which means that when you press down, you feel the click. Like, you feel it sort of click into place, and it makes a *very* loud— like, it is—

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Compared to that, it is much louder, and there's a lot of people— it requires more pressure than most key switches do, but there's a lot of people who... dig that. Like, there's a lot of people who...

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: ...who prefer sort of this loud, tactile feel.

Rachel: How do you know? Like, how do you know...

Griffin: So they actually sell— Cherry MX will sell these little pads, and they have, I think, a dozen different keys on them, and they're all different key switches.

Rachel: See, that's my— that's my subscription service there. That's how I could—

Griffin: I mean, you don't need a subscription service. I think you just need the one.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so— so like, there's lot of— and that's just the Cherry MX brand. There's a lot of different types of brands also. And then there's different key profiles? So, the Cherry profile is fairly standardized, and then I think it's OEM, is a different type a profile. And that just literally means a taller key.

So like, if you're the type of person who prefers that— or prefers more sort of distinction between the different rows, the elevation of the keys on the different rows.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh.

Griffin: And then of course, like, keycap aesthetics. I've actually, like— I've been looking for some more colorful keycaps, because Rachel walked into this office, and was like, that is an old-ass looking key—

Rachel: [laughing quietly]

Griffin: It looks like it fell into my office through a time hole...

Rachel: [laughs] Yes.

Griffin: ...from like a 1991, like, IBM array.

Rachel: Yeah, like, a Ridge computer, like, home computer...

Griffin: I kinda like it, I kinda dig it, but that's just because my last one was like a backlit gaming laptop that I never really cared for.

Rachel: Well, and it's— your whole setup is so modern, and then that looks like...

Griffin: I know.

Rachel: You know? You got it at a thrift store.

Griffin: I wanna get some— and that's what I'm shopping around for, some stylish keycaps. Like, a nice color gradient going across it.

Rachel: I am kind of nervous now.

Griffin: Why?

Rachel: Well, I'm worried you're gonna get some, like, I don't know, flames on it or something.

Griffin: I'm not gonna get flame decals on it, babe!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Although you can get buck wild. Like, there are three-dimensional keycaps. Like, if you wanted— I actually saw a really great one, and the escape key, they had just turned into this sort of... it was like a seascape scene? They had used, like, blue resin and there was like a fish swimming in it and like a little beach— like, a little sand underneath the water. And it was a very, very detailed little diorama that lives in the escape key, so you put that on.

I don't know, I like that. I like that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You press the escape key, 'cause it's time to go. Go hit the beach. There is—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There is— this is, like, my thing of the week, this has like been the thing I've been, like, really looking into, because I think it's really fascinating! And it's— it is a— I think, if you look at it based on how much I have used any object in this house, like, a keyboard is it for sure. A keyboard is it by far.

And so, like, I had never really appreciated the fact that, of course, there is a million different ways to tweak it in all these, like, really, really, really subtle ways, to just make it the perfect sort of thing for you. I'm really attracted to that idea, sort of in general, across all disciplines. Like, finding the right uh, chef's knife. That like, really— that feels good in your hand, and you're gonna use a lot.

Like, the thing you're gonna use a lot, finding the perfect one just for you, I think that's a really, really compelling sort of process, and I've enjoyed sort of getting into it this week with keyboards.

Rachel: It's kind of interesting to watch you kind of do that... throughout your life, you know?

Griffin: Oh, yeah, sure.

Rachel: 'Cause like, I mean, there's me, first.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: You know, like, you spend—

Griffin: You were the gateway that made me realize I need good things.

Rachel: You were like, "Maybe all things in my life could be this satisfying."
[laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, sure! No, I mean, you're not wrong, like, I never...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] I— I am putting away my childish things, I feel like.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: By which I mean my 2014 Razer BlackWidow gaming keyboard...

Rachel: And your cargo shorts.

Griffin: Which is— which is fi— yeah. Oh, God, my cargo shorts have been gone a long time.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, yeah. Keyboards.

I'm curio— I'm genuinely into keyboard modder culture, now. Like, I think it's a cool— I've seen so many wild keyboards, and I covet them. But anyway, can I steal you awaaay?

[music plays]

Rachel: Do you wanna hear some Jumbotrons?

Griffin: More than anything I've ever wanted in my life.

Rachel: This message is for May. It is from Kevin.

"Hello, May! These six-plus years with you have been the greatest, and I'm happy to be able to announce we're finally engaged! I'm immensely proud of you. Salem, Charles, and even Susie said hello, and that they like you."

Griffin: Woo, you got a Susie in there, wow.

Rachel: "This is my way of writing your name in the stars. I love you so much. Your best friend, Kevin."

Griffin: [laughs loudly] Kevin, first of all, are you announcing to May that you are engaged to them? Because that's what it read like, and if so, that's the wildest and most presumptive...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ...sort of proposal I've ever read.

Rachel: I assumed it happened before this was read.

Griffin: They are announcing it to us. Okay, I get it now. Um, second—

Rachel: Or it was a called shot. It was like, "You know what, I'm gonna do it."

Griffin: Oh, dang.

Rachel: "I never know when this ad is gonna air, and this is putting pressure on myself to get it done."

Griffin: Yeah. I hope it worked out. It definitely did. And I also love the idea of our podcast being sort of this eternal monument, this undying flame.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I mean, it's not true.

Rachel: They'll always have this podcast.

Griffin: Unless... EMP. Solar flare wipes it out.

Rachel: Hoo.

Griffin: Shoot it into space with a big laser, maybe now we're talking.

Rachel: That's fun.

Griffin: But then we hit the alien planet, and they're the bad ones, and it's our podcast that made 'em come get us!

Rachel: This is fun.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: I'm enjoying this. Do you wanna hear the next message?

Griffin: I guess so.

Rachel: It is for Kyle. It is from Scoobs.

Griffin: Hell, yeah.

Rachel: "Hey there, li'l boo/Kyle. I reveal my trap card. It's a Jumbotron."

Griffin: I'm gonna need to stop and explain what *Yu-Gi-Oh!* is to you, aren't I?

Rachel: Yeah, I don't know what "trap card" is.

Griffin: Okay. It's a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* thing.

Rachel: Okay. "Now you're trapped with me for the rest of 2019. That's how *Yu-Gi-Oh!* works."

Griffin: Okay, and it goes on— okay.

Rachel: [laughs] "Today, you are my small wonder, because you are very small, and very wonderful. I can't wait for more fun trips, dumb bits, and rad hikes with you in 2019. Love you more than Yoshi in a skirt, a lot. Scoobs."

Griffin: Damn. Ain't—[laughs] Ain't nothing wrong with that.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I think we can all agree.

Rachel: There's a lot I need explained to me. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Why don't I—

Rachel: What— how do you trap— what's the point of trapping, with uh, the cards in *Yu-Gi-Oh!*?

Griffin: You wanna start with that, and not the Yoshi... in a skirt?

Rachel: I wanna hear about that, too, but I want to start at the beginning.

Griffin: Okay. I'm just gonna load up Tumblr, and let you sort of get on it for about a half hour.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

[instrumental music plays in background]

Speaker 1: If you're looking for a new comedy podcast, why not try *The Beef and Dairy Network*? It won Best Comedy at the British Podcast Awards in 2017, and 2018. Also, I—[distortion]

Speaker 2: There were no horses in this country until the mid to late '60s.

Speaker 3: Specialist bovine ass vet.

Speaker 4: Both of his eyes are squid's eyes.

Speaker 5: Yogurt buffet.

Speaker 6: She was married... to a bacon farmer... who saved her life.

Speaker 7: Farm-raised snow leopard.

[distortion]

Speaker 1: Download it today. That's *The Beef and Dairy Network Podcast* from MaximumFun.org. Also, maybe start at episode 1, or weirdly, episode 36, which for some reason requires no knowledge of the rest of the show!

[advertisement ends]

Griffin: Hey, what's your number two? [British accent] Who does number two work for?

Rachel: Oh, gosh, Griffin, this was such a good episode.

Griffin: [laughs loudly] Yeah, now it's a great episode.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughs]

Griffin: This one's worth shooting into space at the alien planets.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: What's your second—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing is having short hair!

Griffin: Okay! Short hair, don't care! I love it.

Rachel: I realized recently, I've got my hair cut again, and I have been wearing short hair more or less my entire life.

Griffin: Is that true?

Rachel: Well, so there was a period of time in college where I just didn't get a haircut.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so that carried on, uh, from, I would say, 2000 until about 2007. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So I had hair down past my shoulders.

Griffin: You did.

Rachel: And it looked kinda messy, and I thought, "I can't be a business professional with hair like this."

Griffin: I do wanna say, and we should say this up front.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: There's nothing wrong with long hair.

Rachel: No!

Griffin: There's lots of people with beautiful, long, lustrous hair.

Rachel: I— my wonderful thing is having short hair myself.

Griffin: Yes. This is not a— this is not a judgment of our long-haired friends and listeners.

Rachel: Of course not! [through laughter] The majority of my friends have long hair.

Griffin: That's a good point.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, I— I just realized that this is— this is the length for me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? And throughout history, when short hair started appearing on women, it was like— it was a powerful statement!

Griffin: Absolutely!

Rachel: And so I kind of researched the history of the bob.

Griffin: Okay. [laughs]

Rachel: Which is the haircut. Which is where you kind of, you have hair kind of above your shoulders.

Griffin: Right, and it's kind of bouncy at the bottom.

Rachel: Kind of a swingy, flirty 'do.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: You know? Uh, so... this... short hair used to be really, like, super controversial.

Griffin: I don't doubt it.

Rachel: So much so that in 1920, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an F. Scott Fitzgerald piece called "Bernice Bobs Her Hair."

Griffin: Uh-oh.

Rachel: "A short story about a sweet, yet socially-inept young woman, who is tricked by her cousin into allowing a barber to lop off her hair."

Griffin: F. Scott Fitzgerald, who was that again? I know the name.

Rachel: *Great Gatsby*.

Griffin: Oh. Is that a good— I never read that book.

Rachel: It's very good!

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: You didn't read it in high school? This is another one of those books you missed out on in high school.

So the story says that, you know, with her hair short, she is castigated by everyone. Boys no longer like her. She's uninvited to a social gathering. And it's feared that her haircut will cause a scandal for her family.

Griffin: Uh, I mean, sucks, F. Scott, but I guess also sucks, society, sort of, in general.

Rachel: Yeah, it's more a story about the time period that F. Scott Fitzgerald, I'm sure, expressing his...

Griffin: His personal preference.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: I don't know. I haven't read it. It might end with, like, "And me? Me also feel this way."

Rachel: So, kind of the first big foray into short hair was in 1915, when fashion-forward ballroom dancer, Irene Castle, cut her hair off as a matter of convenience. So she was a ballroom dancer in Broadway and in silent films.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: And everybody saw her as this fashion icon. So when she cut all her hair off, everybody was like, "Me too!" Uh, and then it just kind of became a huge... trend. There was a 1925 story in *The Washington Post* headlined: "Economic Effects of Bobbing."

Griffin: [laughs] Okay.

Rachel: Which talked specifically about how bob hair did wonders for the beauty industry. In 1920, there were 5,000 hairdressing shops in the United States, total.

Griffin: Woah!

Rachel: And four years later, there were 21,000 shops established.

Griffin: Now, hold— that's— hold on. That's wild to me.

Rachel: Well, people just grew out their hair as long as it would go, and that was it.

Griffin: Until they died? [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Well, long hair was a thing! Like, in the Bible, they talk about the hair...

Griffin: For sure.

Rachel: ...being...

Griffin: But you still gotta cut that shit at some point, right?

Rachel: Yeah, but you don't have to pay somebody if you're just doing a little trim.

Griffin: Huh.

Rachel: You're cutting it all off, you probably want a professional.

Griffin: Interesting. I never thought about the fact that, like... the short hair sort of phenomenon— not phenomenon, it's of course like a thing that people should do, uh, is what sort of sparked this industry. That is so interesting.

Rachel: I guess— so I think you made a good point. I'm not trying to say that there is a superior to wear your hair.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: I'm saying, for me...

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Any time I get my hair cut and have kind of a short, fun 'do...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I just feel— I feel a little empowered! I feel a little like, "Hey, look at me! I'm doing something— something different, and it makes me feel powerful.

Griffin: Yeah! I think it makes you look powerful.

Rachel: And there's a big history of women kind of taking a stand with short hair, and I feel a kinship to them in that moment.

Griffin: I totally get it. I also prefer short hair, both on myself and on— on you. I— I like— I like your short hair very much.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, yeah, that was a good one. And interesting.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: I'm gonna be thinking about that, the hair salon thing.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: How many are there now? Probably more than 21,000.

Rachel: Probably more. I wonder— well, so I think they're drawing a distinction, too, between hair salons and barber shops.

Griffin: I see. Okay. Yes.

Rachel: It's not like men didn't have an option.

Griffin: No. God knows, we probably had like 100,000 options.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And we demanded it, so— and we cried if we didn't get our [childish voice] 100,000 barber shops, Daddy!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I want my 100,000 barber shops, Daddy! They have 21,000, Daddy! I want 100,000, or I'm going to cry.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Say all men.

Rachel: [laughs] What's your next thing?

Griffin: My second thing is... going to the mall!

Rachel: Woah.

Griffin: Going to the mall.

Rachel: When were you at the mall?

Griffin: Uh... 1995?

Rachel: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: This is more of a... rather than, like— I'm not talking about going to the mall. I'm talking about *goin' to the mall*. You know what I mean? Like, I'm not talking about "I am excited today to go to the mall." The act of going to the mall is something that I *loved* as a kid, and honestly, still, thinking about going to a mall right now? You could get me into a mall. It's not my first thought. It's not the first place I wanna be.

But if you said, "Hey, I'm going to a mall. Do you want to come with me?"

I'd be like, "Yeah, I wanna see what that mall looks like."

Rachel: This is interesting. We were talking about this a little bit, me and some of our friends. We were talking about how, like, there's all these memories associated with it because when you're younger, you know, and there aren't a lot of places you can go...

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: ...the mall is the place! And it's like, you get some of that feeling still when you go now.

Griffin: For sure. I am mostly talking about this in the past tense, where going to the mall was the most exciting thing for me in Huntington.

Rachel: Yeah. Well, 'cause you guys had to go pretty far. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, so it's funny. The Huntington Mall is actually in Barboursville. It's a ways away, because Huntington, like, didn't want it, and then it turned out to be, like, a big, successful thing, and it was... a good, like, half-hour away.

Rachel: Yeah, I was gonna say—

Griffin: Not a half hour, like 15 minutes away, maybe.

Rachel: But like, on the freeway. Not like...

Griffin: Yes, you do have to drive quite a ways away from the city.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: But still, that was the place to be. Like, that was the most exciting place for me to go. I loved going to the mall so much not because, like, of shopping. Like, I really did not have, like, enough money to go shopping when I was a youth, up until basically, like, I had my first job. We didn't get big allowances or anything like that.

It was just sort of going to the mall, just sort of being there, that was so exciting in a way that I can't really quite put my finger on. Like, there were definitely things to do, right? There was a movie theater and an arcade at the mall, and, you know, I could scrounge up some quarters to play some arcade games, and DDR and what-have-you there.

But a lot of the time, it was just sort of looking around at all the different shops.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And uh, just seeing what was going on.

Rachel: Did you ever— did you ever go with a romantic interest?

Griffin: Oh, my God, yes. Oh, my God, yes!

Rachel: Did you ever, like, hold hands and walk around the mall?

Griffin: Oh, my God, yes!

Rachel: I never— I never...

Griffin: Aw, babe!

Rachel: I never got to do that, and I always longed for it.

Griffin: Aw, man!

Rachel: I always wanted to be one of those couples, but...

Griffin: Let's go to the mall, and let's—

Rachel: It never happened for me.

Griffin: So here in Austin, we have The Domain, which is sort of our outdoor shopping complex?

Rachel: Yeah, but outdoor is different.

Griffin: It's different, isn't it?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: It's different from the indoor-mall experience.

Rachel: You need that mall smell. [laughs]

Griffin: You need that mall smell! For me, it was like the fountain outside of the Sears store, the smell of that, the smell of the Babbage's, which was the games store that was—

Rachel: You talk about Babbage's more than any human I know. [laughs]

Griffin: I mean, it was an— it was a very important store for me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I would go in there, and just sort of like, see what games they had. I would play the demo, like, shit that they had set up, and then if I had old games to trade in, that was the *only* way that I could afford to get new games, and so that was my main reason for going there.

There was also a Babbage's *and* an EB Games in the same, like, mall. Which I thought was very strange, like...

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Now I think they're part of the same— I think they're all GameStop now.

Justin worked at the Toys "R" Us. I would go hit that up. That was very exciting. They had a couple Pokémon tournaments there, no big deal. Uh, Travis and Justin both worked at the Best Buy. When that opened up, the Best Buy? Are you kidding me?

Rachel: That was part of the mall?

Griffin: Uh, it was like, in the same sort of mall zone.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: It was like, right next to it. Same for Toys "R" Us.

It was just such an exciting place to be, and it was like, this place of tremendous possibility, and I don't know. It was just a— it was a really exciting place for me when I was younger.

So I did some research on the history of mall. Uh, which I'm— there is actually a lot of history of mall.

Rachel: Yeah, I bet!

Griffin: Uh, obviously, there are roots back in, like, ancient times, like bazaars. Ancient Rome has, like, lots of great examples of these big trading houses. In recent centuries, you have things like shopping arcades, covered markets, and things like that.

But things started to really take off post-World War II, early 19th century— or early 20th century, when these sort of, like, real estate developers started to open up suburban shopping complexes, where they had more room to stretch their legs, and make bigger and gaudier things.

In the 1950s, there were big suburban shopping centers, which is what they called them, and also, like, what a lot of places across the world call malls. They just call them shopping centers, they don't use the word mall.

Rachel: Yeah, that— no, that makes sense. 'Cause if you think about it now, like... there are still those shopping centers...

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: You know? That still exist, that seem a little outdated now.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I bet that was— I mean, you can see that's kind of where it began.

Griffin: Yes. But that's not true in like, you know, Europe, or Australia. Like...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They— they just call them shopping centers there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They just don't use the word "malls". I think. I may have just made that up.

Anyway, there were shopping centers— suburban shopping centers in Seattle, Lakewood in California, Framingham in Massachusetts, San Francisco, uh, Southfield, Michigan... and there were spots in Canada and Australia, and all over the globe. Like, these bigger sort of out-of-the-city shopping areas started to get developed.

Then in 1956, an Austrian-born architect named Victor... Gruen? How do you pronounce the name G-R-U-E-N? I— I— Gr—

Rachel: I mean, here in Texas, we say "Green". I don't know if that's the way you're supposed to—

Griffin: It could be wrong. It could be wrong. I'm probably wrong. But he uh, designed a regionally-sized fully-enclosed shopping complex in Edina, Minnesota, close to the twin cities.

Rachel: That makes sense.

Griffin: And it was called Southdale Center, and he basically sort of designed the... the shopping mall as we know it. There was a big, big parking lot, there were restaurants, there were sort of big chain stores, like big chain department stores that were a part of it.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Things that you expect to see in a shopping mall. This dude sort of— sort of— first sort of designed it!

The first place actually called "mall," like the first time one of these structures was referred to as a "mall," was in Paramus, New Jersey. Bergen Mall. Which actually started as an open-air shopping center in the '50s, and then it was enclosed in 1973. I don't know what *that* looks like. I don't know how you just say...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "You're indoors now."

Rachel: Just put a dome over it.

Griffin: And then in 1980, a developer named A. Alfred Taubman uh, added some more sort of staple features to the mall as we know it, namely like water features. Like, fountains. Tile floors instead of carpeting or anything else like that. And sort of the two-story structure that also was sort of built into a natural circuit, so you would have to walk through all of...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That was sort of his contribution to this. Also, he uh, sort of got rid of all natural lighting that could come into the building, and replaced it with electric lighting, to make the shopper feel like the afternoon was lasting longer, to keep them in the store for longer.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh, like Vegas.

Griffin: It's a lot like Vegas.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so. I thought this next part was completely buck wild. Mid '90s, malls are getting built left and right. In the US in the mid '90s, 140 malls were being built every year.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh!

Griffin: That's quite a bit, when you think about, like, how much actually goes into building a mall.

Then, in 2001, this firm called PricewaterhouseCoopers ran a study that found that underperforming malls were starting to, like, grow at an alarming rate, uh, creating these dead sets of real estate. They're called gray field estates. Just these huge, unused, sort of...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ...worthless places, and they were like, “Uh, this is starting to be a problem.” And then sure enough, it did become quite a problem. In 2007, right before the subprime mortgage crisis and the recession, no malls were built that year.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh!

Griffin: In 2007, no malls were built in America for the first time since, like, malls started being built.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: Which was sort of a sign of the times to come. And sure enough, a lot of malls— a lot of malls went under, and left behind these huge real estate tracks. These days, though, people are starting to find other uses for some of them, and...

Rachel: Are you going to tell the beautiful story of Austin Community College?

Griffin: The most notable example of that, like, one of the most notable examples of that in the country is Austin Community College.

Rachel: You have to go there sometime and actually walk around that campus. It’s incredible.

Griffin: I know. I went— actually, this is funny. I went to that one as a mall.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: I went to that one as a mall, like a couple times...

Rachel: When there was almost nothing left.

Griffin: When there was nothing left—

Rachel: I remember you told me that.

Griffin: It was a— it was crazy. There were, like...

Rachel: Like four stores in the whole thing.

Griffin: Four stores. I went there because they had uh, a GameStop there, and they had a used Xbox thing that I wanted.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And they were the only store that had it, so I went there, and it was like, them... a Bath and Body Works...

Rachel: Like, a candy store and a shoe store.

Griffin: A candy store and, like, a chef supply store. Like, and then the rest— the other 50 storefronts in there were just completely empty, chained-up. It was really, really wild. And now it is a huge campus for the community college that Rachel works at!

Rachel: Yeah! And the amazing thing about it, and it's really easy to find if you're interested to, like, find it on the internet, 'cause there are lots of stories about it, uh, is they retained a lot of the original stuff. So if you go to the Austin Community College campus now, and this is what I'm talking about, it still looks like a mall.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: They've just turned a lot of the storefronts into classroom space.

Griffin: It's brilliant. Like, I think it makes a lot of sense.

Rachel: So the fountain is still there. The escalators are still there.

Griffin: [laughs softly]

Rachel: Like, people will still refer to it, like, "Oh, where's the veterans' resource center?"

It's like, "Oh, well, you know where the Dillard's was?"

Griffin: [bursts out laughing]

Rachel: And it's frustrating to me, because I went to that mall half a dozen times, but I don't remember which department store was located where.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: So I'm like, "Where's the book store?"

They're like, "Oh, by the Sears!"

And I'm like, "I don't... remember where the Sears was." [laughs]

Griffin: Appropriately, though, the goth kids at the college can still hang out at the Hot Topic.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah. They left the Hot Topic.

Griffin: They just left that one as is. God, Hot Topic. When that one showed up, I thought it was the most scandalous thing. I was in there all the time.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Uh, so yes. That's— I thought the history of malls was interesting, and I have not been to a mall in a long time. We go to the Domain, you know, often enough, but...

Rachel: Yeah, the Barton Creek Mall is kind of the big flagship...

Griffin: Barton Creek Mall is...

Rachel: ...mall situation here.

Griffin: Yeah, it's a bit away from us, and I think it's fine. Um, but yeah, when I was a kid, this was the place to go to, and... getting in the car to go the mall.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, the food court!

Griffin: Yup.

Rachel: Um, the mall I used to go to was really, really close to my house. It was Crestwood Mall.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I— I would get a big slice of pizza...

Griffin: [softly] Ooh!

Rachel: ...from First Federal... Frankenco?

Griffin: Woah.

Rachel: It was, like, a New York-style pizza place.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And I feel like it had a very long name that started with a lot of F's. And then there was Exhilarama, which was the arcade.

Griffin: Ooh! Ours was called Tilt.

Rachel: [laughs] And then Spencer's Gifts, of course.

Griffin: Oh, God, yeah, Spencer's.

Rachel: And we would wait for someone to kick us out, because it seems so adult-themed.

Griffin: It's so naughty.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We had a shop called Excalibur, and it held only—

Rachel: [laughing] Is this—

Griffin: This is not a joke, it was called Excalibut and it dealt in, like, pewter figurines. Pewter—

Rachel: [laughs] Oh, gosh.

Griffin: So it would be, like, a wizard holding an orb.

Rachel: We—[laughs] We had a Wicks & Things that was just, like, a candle store.

Griffin: Yeah, that's pretty good.

Rachel: And like a nature company? They just had nature-themed things.

Griffin: Mm.

Rachel: Mall stores are really weird.

Griffin: Mall stores were quite strange.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We also had a big, big Borders that actually I had a lot of friends that worked there and I could sort of get some free drinks there, if I wanted to, so I'd swing in the Borders, get a free drink, walk around the mall, see what KB Toys was selling for 50 cents, because they were going under. Like...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was a— I miss the mall. I think I miss the mall.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, damn.

Rachel: I used to spend *hours* there. That's crazy.

Griffin: I would spend days— the whole— my whole Saturdays!

Rachel: I remember thinking about that I got older, is that I would get dropped off at the mall, and I would be there for like three hours. And then as I got older, I was like, "How did I spend this much time at the mall?"

Griffin: Damn.

Rachel: It was crazy.

Griffin: Anyway, thank you so much for listening to *Wonderful!* Yeah, I hope you enjoyed this one. It was enjoyable for me to talk about the mall. And uh, I wanna thank 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.

Rachel: Can we hear—

Griffin: I still get that one that pops up, like, in my Spotify recommends playl—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: I still get it popped up, and I'm like, "Mm. This song is the jam." But I think I'd like to read submissions.

Rachel: Yes, that's what I was gonna ask about.

Griffin: I definitely— no, I didn't forget.

Julissa says, "One thing that fascinates me and sends me into a YouTube rabbit hole is art restoration videos. Something about the careful and meticulous work that goes into making sure they maintain as much of the original piece is awe-inspiring, and it's always so satisfying to see the artwork come back to life at the very end. I recommend Baumgartner Restoration. He's got ASMR versions, as well as narrated versions where he explains the entire process."

Rachel: I did not know that was a thing. I am definitely gonna check it out.

Griffin: I watched one of these videos that, like, showed up in my YouTube feed because it is so exactly my fucking aesthetic.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, watching this dude... uh, there was this painting that had this, like, gross dark varnish all over it that had, like, ruined it, and it was plastered to this huge chunk of wood, and that's how it had been displayed for centuries. And he got the varnish off, and he put in, like, putty in all of the little cracks, and then matched the paint color, and like the brush strokes...

Rachel: Oh, I wanna watch this tonight.

Griffin: And then he, like, found a way to shave off all of the wood to get the actual painting back, despite the fact that it was glued to this piece of wood for hundreds of years. Oh, my God, it's good.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's very, very good.

Uh, here's one from— here's one from Eli, who says, "My girlfriend loves calling into radio contests, and one time she actually won! We spent our fourth anniversary at a Green Day concert in the pouring rain, which is a date neither of us would've ever planned, but turned into a wonderful memory, especially since the tickets were free."

Rachel: Have you ever done— I mean, this is kind of cheating, 'cause your dad worked for a radio station...

Griffin: And it's for that reason I never did it.

Rachel: Oh, 'cause you didn't want people to be like, "Ugh, McElroy."

Griffin: No, we couldn't win. We were prohibited from participating in those—

Rachel: But there were more than one radio station, right?

Griffin: Yeah, but they were all part of, like, the clear-channel network...

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: ...at one point, so it was sort of— it was prohibitive. Also because like, I don't know, I was never the type of person to do sweepstakes or anything like that, 'cause I just figured that, you know, my vote wouldn't count. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And here's one more from Athena, who says, "I love when I'm vacuuming the house and I come across a little patch of crumbs. The satisfying sound of sucking up the crunchy mess makes cleaning even better."

Nothing is better than finding a big, nasty mess, and just getting it up there.

Rachel: This is— this is like our whole life now.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: Our son particularly loves things that crumble. And so I feel like we specifically bought a dust buster for this purpose.

Griffin: Yeah. I was getting him out of a car seat today...

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: And um... I like, picked him up, and as I did I caught an angle of underneath the car seat, there's a little bit of banana under there.

Rachel: Oh, no! [laughs] Did you get it?

Griffin: Uh, as best I could. It was disgusting. It was mummified at that point.

Rachel: [laughs] Oh.

Griffin: We don't have to talk about that, though.

Seriously, thank you so much for listening. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the Network. It's a great place to work. Great benefits. Um, and we just like it a lot.

Rachel: I know I talk about it all the time, but this week, *Stop Podcasting Yourself* is especially good.

Griffin: It's a real barn burner.

Yeah, that one's good. Uh, *Switchblade Sisters*. You got, uh, *Beef and Dairy Network* is very, very funny if you've never listened to that one.

Rachel: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

Griffin: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, can't beat the classics.

Rachel: Oh, and um, and of course, our dear friends at *The Flop House*.

Griffin: Yes! Dear, dear, beloved family friends.

Uh, yeah, I think that's it. Let's go ahead and— I mean, I know it's late. And we have a child sleeping in our house.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: But maybe we could just... drop him off at the neighbors', cut down to the mall, see what's going on at Gadzooks.

Rachel: Is the mall still open this time of night?

Griffin: [blows raspberry] We can sneak in. We can have a mallpisode!

Rachel: Ohh!

Griffin: Oh, shit!

Rachel: OC!

Griffin: Well, but other things did it too, other shows did it too, but we can do mallpisode of *Wonderful!* What would that look like?

I think it would go a little something like this! "Hey, hand me— hand me— is that a corndog from Auntie Anne's Pretzel Dog?"

Rachel: Do you really say "Auntie Anne's?"

Griffin: I think I do.

Rachel: Oh, God.

Griffin: I'm insufferable.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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[jazzy music plays in background]

April: Genre film fans, hear me. I know you're out there. Do not be ashamed of your love for gore, action, sci-fi, or fantasy. It's time to come out of the shadows! Because on *Switchblade Sisters*, we celebrate our love for genre films.

I'm film critic April Wolfe. Each week, I have a conversation with a different female filmmaker about their fave genre film, and we cover film craft, getting projects off the ground, working with actors, and our general love for genre movies.

I've had so many great guests, like Heather Graham.

Heather: In the past, it's like, so many films are made by men that the female point of view is not always respected, which is why all these stories haven't come out 'til now.

April: *Jennifer's Body* director, Karyn Kusama.

Karyn: I think there's a lot more fantasy, and a lot more expectation projected onto a woman director.

April: Comedian and actor, Kate Berlant.

Kate: I mean, it sounds so cheesy to talk about it in yourself, like, "You just keep going, you're—" "You know, I'm just a vessel. Like, I just do it, you know? I don't think. But like, that is what it is.

April: And many others! So check out *Switchblade Sisters* every Thursday on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.