

## Wonderful! 153: Oops! Ope! Whoopsie!

Published October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
[Listen here at TheMcElroy.family](https://www.themcelroyfamily.com/)

[theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Hello! This is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** [sighs distantly] This is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** I've started doing a sort of... a purging of the toxins before we start recording. 'Cause I've been listening back to the last few episodes after I've edited them, and you can just hear the toxins.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** All the buildup in my muscles and my bones, and my humors aren't balanced, are they?

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** I've got the black bile, and my yellow humors... are just not in perfect equilibrium.

**Rachel:** And I've been noticing that your humors tend to go a little blue sometimes.

**Griffin:** They do, if you know what I'm saying. [laughs] Talking about sort of—I can do... what? Erotic humor?

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Crass...

**Rachel:** That are *Sex and the City* humor.

**Griffin:** *Sex and the City* humor. I can also do bathroom humor.

**Rachel:** Yeah you can. [laughs]

**Griffin:** So I'm just basically listing off my CV right now.

**Rachel:** A lot of times Griffin will go in the bathroom, and he'll close the door, and the humor that is comin' out of there is just incredible.

**Griffin:** Yeah. You just hear me laughin'.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Through the—[laughs quietly] from the john. This is Wonderful, a show that we... like doing.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And it's a show that is about stuff that we really like.

**Rachel:** And a lot of podcasts don't say that at the top, so you have to wonder, do they like doing it?

**Griffin:** No. We are not held hostage by the concept or continuity of our podcast—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —and that is a—a real treat. Uh, and my humors are balanced, and do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Small wonders. That is a segment we do at the beginning—

**Griffin:** We do, and we like doing it!

**Rachel:** —of every show.

**Griffin:** I don't want people to think I'm sarcastic. I really do enjoy doing this—this here podcast.

**Rachel:** [pause] Uh, why don't you go first?

**Griffin:** Uh, I'm gonna say makin' beats. I've recently started makin' beats in Ableton, and I've always—I've been making music for a long time now for *Adventure Zone*, but it's all been more melodic in nature, and all the beats I've used have been, like, premade loops. But now I've been gettin' in to those, you know... the—the—gettin' down on that... [beat boxes] Gettin' down on that... [beat boxes quietly] You know?

**Rachel:** Uh-huh?

**Griffin:** And it's fun! I have this board that has all these little buttons on it that you can, like, program the timeline of beats into. It feels—it feels good! It feels fun and fresh. And you can make something that's just, like, four bars that you put a lot of work into, and then it's done! There's my beat. I like it.

**Rachel:** That is good.

**Griffin:** Uhh, okay. That was certainly enough time.

**Rachel:** I'm ready. I'm ready. Uh, so I am gonna say that the McElroy family, uh, in this house, has finally started watching *Schitt's Creek*.

**Griffin:** Yes, yes, yes yes yes.

**Rachel:** Um, we had a lot of friends that suggested it to us, and they told us something that we found to be true, which is that the first season, you really have to put some time in.

**Griffin:** It's not bad.

**Rachel:** It's not bad. It's just you have to get to know the characters. There's a lot of, like, eccentricities in the show, and it—

**Griffin:** Well, and it's a bit one note. Where it's just like, "We're rich in a poor town."

**Rachel:** Yeah. Uh, but by the end of the first season, we were really invested, and now we're in the second, and I'm really grateful to have so much good show in front of us.

**Griffin:** It's full steam ahead. I would liken it to *Parks and Rec*, where the first season is just kind of, like, there?

**Rachel:** And then suddenly you're, like, super charmed by everyone on the show.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah, it's a good one.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

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

**Rachel:** Okay!

**Griffin:** I'm gonna talk about hot springs. I really like 'em.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** I like, conceptually and aesthetically, hot springs.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** I like that nature makes little hot tubs for us to get in. That's pretty choice. Or sometimes it makes hot tubs that you absolutely should not get in, because it'll burn all your skin off. And you'll—you'll die. [holding back laughter] Because apparently hot springs can get, uh, *quite* hot! Uh, I think—

**Rachel:** Did you have hot spring exposure before our big trip to Japan?

**Griffin:** No, I didn't. There are obviously lots of places throughout the US that has hot springs. I think West Virginia does have some, um, but they—

**Rachel:** Arkansas does for sure.

**Griffin:** Arkan—I mean, yeah. I mean, they have a town called Hot Springs, yes?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yes. [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** Uh, Georgia also has a town called Warm Springs. I'll get into the delineation there.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I was very interested in it. Uh, but hot springs—they're all over the US but they're also all over the world, and they occupy, like, different sort of cultural places for those countries. Uh, like Rachel said, we went to Japan for our honeymoon. We've talked about it a ton, and we stayed in Hokone, which is this, like, hot spring resort town, and we were fortunate enough to stay in, like, a pretty nice hot spring resort where we could just go and just dip in.

Uh, they were indoor springs, but you had a nice little, like, outdoor view from it, and—

**Rachel:** Yeahhh, it was really surreal.

**Griffin:** It was really surreal, and, like—

**Rachel:** Like, oh, in the basement, there's just... water.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And, like, when people talk about the sort of rejuvenative effects of it, like, that's not a bunch of BS. Like, it felt—I felt very, very fresh getting out of that, because of the—I don't know, the minerals. The chemistry.

**Rachel:** Did you know that I, like—I told you, right, that I, like kind of passed out? [laughs quietly] 'Cause I stayed in too long?

**Griffin:** No!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You didn't tell me that!

**Rachel:** When—when it was, uh—it was separated by gender, and I went in and sat by myself, and I really had no concept of time. And I sat in there until I basically couldn't stand it anymore, and then got out to, like, shower off. And when I was in the, like, changing room I just, like, had to sit down for a long time, 'cause I just—I really overdid it.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow. Well, I'm glad you're okay.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** I was—I had one road dog in there with me.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, we did not speak, but we gave each other a nice nod.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, and that was it. So, yeah. I mean, it feels—it feels super, super nice. It's not just a hot tub. Like, the water feels excellent, because it's coming from a—you know, a special place. Uh, we also went to Yunessun, which is a, uh, hot spring water park. Which is not, I would say, a traditional hot spring experience—

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh, yes.

**Griffin:** —but they do have a water slide, and that's pretty excellent. There's a few different things that can cause hot springs, and in researching hot springs, I finally kind of understood why people get into geology and

want to pursue that as a scientific discipline and career, 'cause it's really very interesting.

Uh, the mantle of the Earth contains a lot of naturally radioactive elements that, as they decay, they give off a lot of heat. So that's why the deeper you go into the Earth, the hotter it gets. Uh, it's not just because the center of the Earth is a big, hot ball, which is what I always assumed. No, no, no.

The mantle is also giving off a significant amount of heat, and when water comes up through there and it touches up against that hot rock, it keeps on comin' up, and that is—that's hot water, and that's what makes a hot spring. Also, in volcanic areas, that water can brush up against magma, which is basically just rock that got so hot that it was like, "Fuck it, now I'm goo."

Uh, and then that water is typically far too hot for you to get inside.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, water can be boiling in volcanic areas, and so if you try to get into it, uh, obviously that would be, uh—that would be a big RIP. That's also how you get geysers and, uh, fumaroles, which are geysers that are just steam when it comes up. Uh, and Yellowstone is obviously, uh, a big one for this.

Yellowstone also has the biggest hot spring in the United States, and the third biggest hot spring in the world. Uh, and it's one of my very favorite geographic features, like, ever? I don't know if you've ever seen it before, but it has what's called the Grand Prismatic Spring. Isn't that a dope name? Isn't that so choice?

**Rachel:** It is nice, yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, it is 370 feet wide, 160 feet deep, and it, uh, gooshes out 560 gallons of 160 degree water every minute.

**Rachel:** Whoa!

**Griffin:** Um, it is a big blue pool. You've probably seen it before. It is, like, a very, very famous sort of, like, national park thing. But it has—it radiates out this ring of, like, microbial, like, rainbow material that's, like, yellow and green and orange and red as it, like, emanates out. So it looks like a—a cross section of, like, a crystal geode. It looks so cool, and it's so big. Uh, and it's this perfect, like, deep, deep, deep blue color. Uh, because of the depth of the pool. Uh, it looks so, so cool, and it's—

**Rachel:** I don't know that I have seen this.

**Griffin:** —it's illegal to get into it, because it's also—I mean, 160 degrees Fahrenheit. That's not pleasant. That's not gonna feel—

**Rachel:** Yeah. That's too hot.

**Griffin:** That's too hot to get in, folks. Uh, so there's a third type of, like, hot spring cause, and that is when this hot water's coming up from the surface from the—the radioactive decay of these things in the mantle, and then it mixes with cold water under the surface, and then it creates warm springs.

And, uh, the town of Warm Springs, Georgia has so many of these that they just went ahead and named the damn town that. Uh, and that is where FDR convalesced when he, you know, when he was convalescing with polio and seeking treatment there when he was governor of New York. Before he was even President. He built a house there, because he liked it so much.

Lots of people would come there from Atlanta just, like, to get away, but also, like, it was a rejuvenative town where people would just come and, you know, soothe their ailments in these warm springs. So, he built a house there. FDR built a house there that was where he died, uh, when he was President, in his fourth term. Uh, and he would just go there and chill out in the warm springs, and somebody was doing a painting of him, and he had a stroke. And, uh, that was it.

But they have what's called the Little White House there, which I think is a fun name.



**Rachel:** So, what—what—what's the temp of a warm spring? Do you know?

**Griffin:** I mean, I assume not 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, I assume it is pleasant, like a nice warm bath. I did not look up the specific temperature of the warm springs.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, I just like—I really like the aesthetic. Like, I really like the idea of just out in nature, just a rocky pool of hot water that you could potentially bathe in just, like, givin' off steam, and maybe there's some buckets and towels. Just the look of that, the idea of that is, like, pretty cool to me. It's pretty choice.

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, that's very serene.

**Griffin:** I wish we had—I don't think we have a lot of them in—we certainly don't have them here in Austin. I don't know that we have a ton of them in Texas.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean, not a—not a lot of water out west, really.

**Griffin:** That's a good point.

**Rachel:** Is the problem.

**Griffin:** What's your... first thing?

**Rachel:** So, this is a musical artist that I have thought about bringing basically ever since we started the show, and I was hesitant because it is difficult to find a lot of the music.

**Griffin:** It's Uncle Cracker.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And it's like—it's maybe a surprise that Rachel's such a big fan, but you're just wild about Uncle Cracker.

**Rachel:** Actually my uncle. Nobody knows that. Just a little—

**Griffin:** Nobody knows that about Rachel!

**Rachel:** —piece of trivia.

**Griffin:** It's not just a real—it's not just a fun name!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, no. The artist I wanted to talk about is Ron Fountenberry of Incredible Moses Leroy.

**Griffin:** Oh, I thought his name was just Moses Leroy.

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Well, isn't there egg on my face.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that was his grandpa.

**Griffin:** Aw, shoot.

**Rachel:** Um, this—Incredible Moses Leroy is a band that I found when I was, like, sophomore year of college, thanks to my friends at the time. Uh, and very much, like, rooted in that time period. Like, the albums for Incredible Moses Leroy range from, uh, 1998 to 2003, so very kind of—

**Griffin:** Oh, that's good.

**Rachel:** —limited window, basically right around when I was entering college. Uh, and it's difficult to find that music now. Um... Ron Fountenberry went on to do other bands beyond Incredible Moses Leroy, including a band called the Soft Lights, uh, which I am not as familiar with. Um, but now he is the owner of, like, a—like, a music production studio, so he does, like, sound mixing and recording for commercials and companies and stuff.

**Griffin:** The song you had me listen to, which I just kind of knew about through osmosis, I know the Soft Lights version of it, but the Incredible Moses Leroy.

**Rachel:** Ohhh.

**Griffin:** But that's why it sounded so familiar.

**Rachel:** Interesting!

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so this is music that you'll find on a lot of, like, you know, television and movies of the time period.

**Griffin:** [through laughter] Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, this was on *Scrubs*.

**Griffin:** Oh, for sure.

**Rachel:** Um, there was also a movie that came out more recently, a movie called *This Film is Not Yet Rated*, uh, that has the song "Fuzzy," which is also the song that was on *Scrubs*.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Man, *Scrubs* is a little time capsule, I feel like, for music.

**Rachel:** Yeah, for sure.

**Griffin:** There's so much music on that show. I think—there was, like, a special Polyphonic Spree episode where, like, they all got sick and had to—had to go in?

**Rachel:** Well, that's all Zach Braff, right? Like, that was his whole thing. Like, same thing with *Garden State*. He was big on—

**Griffin:** Yeah, I think you attribute that to—to Zach Braff. All of his movies are, like... you know, notable for their soundtracks.

**Rachel:** Uh, so Moses Leroy, the inspiration for the name of the band, was Fountenberry's great-grandfather. He was a Texas union leader and civil rights advocate at the turn of the 20th century! Uh, and he fought against segregation and the poll tax in Houston. Uh, so that, in combination with Ron's personal interest in comic book and, like, superheroes, put together kind of The Incredible Moses Leroy.

**Griffin:** That's a great name.

**Rachel:** He got started kind of late making music. Uh, he didn't really get into music until he was in college. He just taught himself guitar when he was at UC San Diego. And then, you know, joined a bunch of, like, grunge influenced bands around college for a long time. Uh, and then self-produced his own 18 track debut in 1998. Uh, *Bedroom Love Songs* was the name of the album.

Uh, and just kind of used that to shop around, to kind of get an album produced. So, I wanna play a song from the album *Electric Pocket Radio*, which came out in 2001, which is the one that kind of got me interested in this band. Uh, the song is "1983."

["1983" by The Incredible Moses Leroy plays]

**Griffin:** Not to be confused—it's sort of a spiritual sequel to "1979" by Smashing Pumpkins.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Is that the year? I can never remember the year that's in that song.

**Rachel:** Yeah, 1979. That's right.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. Uh, so, there have been a lot of comparisons. When I was reading about Incredible Moses Leroy, a lot of people made comparisons to Beck, just because it was this indie rock artist that was kind of combining genres, you know? And using a lot of electronic elements. Um, also kind of experimental.

Um, Ron Fountenberry has said that he was influenced by Pavement and The Beta Brand, and The Strokes, but then also, like, you know, Michael Jackson and, uh—just, like, different '80s artists, you know? He is of an age—he was born in 1972 so, like, the music of the '80s was very influential to him.

Uh, so when he put together *Electric Pocket Radio*, he worked with a producer from The Flaming Lips. He worked with a drummer—

**Griffin:** Jesus.

**Rachel:** —from Beck and Elliot Smith, he worked with an engineer mixer from The Eels, uh—

**Griffin:** Good lord! What a fu—what fucking, like, stew this is! [laughs] It's like every artist from that era.

**Rachel:** I read an interview from him and everybody was like, "Oh, wow, that's a pretty impressive lineup."

And he's like, "You know, I did—honestly, I did a lot of the work myself, but I would just kind of share my music with them and say 'Hey, do you wanna help me out?'" And he was just lucky to just find a lot of—a lot of interested parties at the time.

**Griffin:** God, I have not thought about The Eels in so long.

**Rachel:** I know!

**Griffin:** I was obsessed with them.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I know! And you know, that time period is really, like—you know, it was kind of a transition out of grunge into something, like, a little poppier.

**Griffin:** A little more, like, sin—sincere?

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, but a lot more, like, electronic, too?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, and so it's really fun. I would really recommend... It's—you know, it's an album. Um, Electric Pocket Radio, that's kind of hard to find. There's a lot of really good jams on there that are all over the spectrum. I mean, he has a song called "Anthem" that really sounds just like a—like a... like a power ballad kind of song, and there's, like, "Fuzzy," which is, you know, very kind of Motown influenced. There's a lot of really cool songs on there.

Uh, so yeah. So in 2003, the last album was called *Become the Soft Lights*. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] And then he evolved like a Pokémon!

**Rachel:** [through laughter] Yeah.

**Griffin:** What a called shot.

**Rachel:** [through laughter] I know!

**Griffin:** That's wild.

**Rachel:** I know. My guess is that that transition had been happening for a while and they were like, "Well, this is gonna be the last one put out. Let's just get people introduced to our new project."

**Griffin:** It's like if the last Beatles album was called *Here Come Wings!*

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** *Here Go the—Here Go Wings!*

**Rachel:** Um—yeah, you can find—you can find some of this music. You can still buy, like, a—like, a CD on Amazon or, you know, wherever you're interested in getting this music. But I would recommend you check it out, because I feel like... I don't know. For me this was, like, the album that, like, I had in my car when we would go on drives and stuff. And so, like, listening to it is very—I mean, you know, kind of in the same way that, like, Smashing Pumpkins had kind of transported it for me.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Hey, can I steal you, uh... away?

**Rachel:** Yes!

[ad break stinger plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Uh, we have a couple of Grambobrams here, and I wanna read the first one... if that's okay.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Because the first one's for Elizabeth, and it is from Harry, who says:

"Thanks for two fantastic years together, Elizabeth, and here's to many more. I love you and our beans—" and then in parentheses (doggos) "—very much. Happy late anniversary, love Harry."

Now... do you—and this might be a silly question. But they don't have pet beans, [shakily] do they?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Do the people—

**Rachel:** People love using beans as just kind of, like, a...

**Griffin:** A catch-all pet sort of phrase.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Just, like, a—like a sentimental way to refer to a loved one.

**Griffin:** I mean, I hear it in terms of toes of animals, but never just the animals themselves. Which has brought me to the conclusion that these two have just pet beans.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Cooked or uncooked, I don't know. I'm still trying to figure that out yet. Probably uncooked. It seems like they would keep longer.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm gonna keep workshopping this.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I'll let you know what I come up with.

**Rachel:** Drawing little tiny faces on 'em?

**Griffin:** That's fun. See, that's good stuff right there. You could get one of those people that, like, draw your name on a grain of rice as the boardwalk.

**Rachel:** Yesss.

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

**Rachel:** So good.

**Griffin:** What is, uh—wanna read the other one?



**Rachel:** Let me tell you the next one! This is for Future R. It is from Past R.

"Hi, Future R! It's Past R! I know it's hard being alone in quarantine, but hey, maybe you're home by now. Just know that even with the brain sads, you are worth more than your anxiety would let you believe. Get out your skates! Try new hobbies and let yourself be bad at them! For now, you've got those good, good McElroys and the [hesitantly] Ma'am Damn Fam to make you smiley. I love you."

**Griffin:** I think "get out your skates" could be a powerful call to action to everyone to help get through quarantine.

**Rachel:** It's true. I don't know if anyone's holding on to their rollerblades, but now would be a good time.

**Griffin:** I think if someone stands on a mountaintop like, uh, like Moses—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —and shouts "get out your skates," I think everybody would just find skates. Like, we don't have skates at the house, but if somebody—if that became the new marching orders—

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, it's true!

**Griffin:** We would find a dusty pair—two pairs of dusty skates like Jumunji... in the creek.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I love the way you say Jumanji.

**Griffin:** I said Jumunji.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

**Rachel:** What is your second thing?

**Griffin:** Carvin' a jack-o'-lantern. Carvin' up a pump—

**Rachel:** Ohhh.

**Griffin:** —carvin' up a pumpy to make a jack-o'-lantern.

**Rachel:** I am glad that you like this, because this will now always be your task.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, just a bit of history. We were all excited—Henry was excited for—Henry is excited for Halloween, because he's old enough now to, like, kind of grasp conceptually, like, object permanence for holidays? Like, "Oh, it's coming up."

**Rachel:** Yeah, he gets the accouterments. Like, he understands now that certain things go with certain holidays.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And so he's able to be like, "Oh, this is the pumpkin and skeleton time."

**Griffin:** Fortunately not old enough to realize, like, we ain't trick-or-treating this year, but that's fine, 'cause we're still gonna dump a bunch of candy in his face. Uh, but we did—he did want a pumpkin. He did a jack-o'-lantern to carve a pumpkin, so we went and got a pumpkin. And he picked it out, and he was so excited. And then one afternoon, one weekend afternoon, like, we didn't have anything to do so I was like, "Let's carve the pumpkin."

And he was like, "Hell yes. Let's do it. Let's go."

**Rachel:** He very—he very much wanted to see what was inside.

**Griffin:** He really wanted to see what was inside the pumpkin! He kept telling me that, so I did the pumpkin thing where you cut the top off, and I pulled it out and I was like, "Okay, so, the first thing we do is we scoop out all the insides."

And he was like, "Oh, actually? No."

**Rachel:** Yeahhh...

**Griffin:** "'Cause it's g—that's gross, and slimy, and I don't want that." And we've raised an almost four-year-old boy now who just, like, doesn't like messes. Doesn't like getting messy at all, and so he is—

**Rachel:** He just got comfortable with dirt, because dirt is—is soft and dry.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** But slimy...

**Griffin:** Slimy's not—and—and there's part of me that's like, "Great!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Because I don't want slime to enter our house in the way that it has entered the house of, like, every other child.

**Rachel:** True.

**Griffin:** Uh, so we are fortunate in that regard. But I was like, "Yeah, you just get in there and you grab the gooshy seeds. It feels so good!"

And he was—he was not—he was not havin' it. So I went on sort of a solo carving mish. Uh, and that's fine with me, 'cause boy oh boy, do I like carving, uh, up a pumpkin. It is, like, the only time of year where I, like, allow myself to get real sticky and yucky, make a big sticky mess. I have no other occasion to really do that purposefully, do I?

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's true.

**Griffin:** Uh, and there is something so, like... so weird about that, 'cause I don't like gettin' nasty, and there's a lot of nasty stuff inside a pumpkin, and I like how nasty it is.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I like reaching in—we got a fairly small pumpkin this year, so I couldn't really get in there with my instruments, so I had to do sort of a scraping with my own fingernails, the inside of the pumpkin, and man oh man, it's, like—it's so visceral. You get the texture of the goo, and the seeds?

**Rachel:** I feel like the seeds are critical, right? Like, if it was just goo, I don't know if it would be as satisfying. But the seeds give you, like, very clear objective. Like, "Well, I gotta get these seeds out."

**Griffin:** Yeah. When you cut off the top you pull it out and it's got the goo *and* the seeds just, like, hanging down? Oh man, that's good stuff. And the stabbing of the pumpkin—when—you get to stab a pumpkin. I guess in the summer time when you carve up a watermelon, but that's just a one and done like, "Schwoop!" The—the pumpkin stabbing is so purposeful and, uh—and violent, in way that's, like, I would never be interested in doing that to any other vegetable or fruit.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, but where I am, doin' it to a pumpkin. Uh, it's just, like, a—it is texturally... it has a good hand feel to it.

**Rachel:** It also feels like you're really connecting with history when you do it.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** You know? There is something about carving a pumpkin that makes you feel like—people have doing this for, like, a very, very long time.

**Griffin:** A very, very, very, long time. Uh, I didn't really realize the, like, etymology of jack-o'-lantern. It's another name for will-o'-the-wisp. Do you know what will-o'-the-wisp is? It's like a—it's like a phenomenon, folklore-y thing of just, like, lights in the woods over a peaty—a peaty stump. Uhhh...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's a—so, jack-o'-lantern was, like, one name for that. It's also tied to, uh, Stingy Jack, which is another sort of tale about a guy who got tricked by the devil. Uh, and so he couldn't go to heaven or hell, so he just walks the Earth with a hollowed out turnip lantern.

**Rachel:** This is all new to me.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I—it's—[stammering] I would think—so, I knew that it had something to do with Samhain, right? The—the, like, harvest festival that is, uh—but it was brought here—the, like, jack-o'-lantern was brought here by Irish immigrants. And, like, carving vegetables is a thing that people have been doing for a—you know, a very—for literal millennia.

Uh, but folks in Ireland in the 19th century started carving super scary faces onto turnips for lanterns on Halloween or Samhain. Uh, and I would encourage everybody to look up, like, traditional turnip lanterns, 'cause they're scary as fuck. They put our pumpkins—the pumpkin is so round and pleasant. The carved turnips that they were submitting for this holiday were some real "*Are You Afraid of the Dark?*" quality—

**Rachel:** Whoaaa.

**Griffin:** Yeah, bud.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah, no, this is very scary!

**Griffin:** It's not even reali—they're not hyper-realistic. They're just, like, Tim Burton level upsetting, like, masks of—of—of death.

**Rachel:** Oooh, this one has teeth!

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's really, really, uh—it's really out there. And they serve two purposes. The first was to ward off evil spirits, I guess just by being spooky and lit from within by a candle, and the other purpose was to just look very scary for the—for the holiday. Uh, yeah. Uh, play along at home. Look up some old—old Irish turnip lanterns—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —because they are really, really out there. Um, so Irish immigrants brought this to the US, but obviously it popped off, went very, very viral with *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, which was published in 1820, and had the headless horseman with the jack-o'-lantern head, and sort of—it was, uh, a more common tradition here in the States ever since.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, man, I just really like it. When you carve the—I'm—we just did straight triangle eyes this time, right? We weren't gettin' fancy. You can get fancy, I like that, but when you carve the triangle into it, and then you put your hand inside the pumpkin and just, like, [makes a "pop" noise] pop it out—[loudly] oh!

**Rachel:** Oh, and that little piece comes out. That's really good.

**Griffin:** It feels so good. We did our pumpkin so early this year that I am almost certain we're probably gonna have to do a second one, 'cause it's going to decay. Boy, that looks even spookier, doesn't it?

**Rachel:** That—that is the tricky part, is that a lot of times, you try and time the carving with the weather, 'cause a lot of times, like right now, it is very, very hot, and you cannot put a pumpkin outside in this weather.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** But I found in Texas, you really—no matter what, you've got two days. [laughs]

**Griffin:** You have about two days before it becomes just a—

**Rachel:** We've been keeping ours indoors, which has, like, been helping its longevity. But as soon as we put that thing outside, it's over.

**Griffin:** Rachel and I live in a part of town that has some wilderness nearby, so we are—uh, I have become weirdly o—like, comfortable around seeing bugs in the house, because it's just a fact of life. Like, I saw a huge-ass centipede in our bathroom yesterday and I was just like, "Huh. I'll get him. I'll get him outside." [laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, but... yeah. Seeing, like, fire ants swarming all over a pumpkin is—

**Rachel:** Well, and we would definitely get deer.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah.

**Rachel:** We would have, like, a little—a little deer on our front porch.

**Griffin:** [getting more distant from the mic] I bet there's deer outside. [normal volume] The biggest deer ever ran through our yard yesterday, and I had my window open, and it scared me.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm not scared of deer. I love deer. I've talked about deer on this show. It's great. We get to see deer all the time. But this was an absolute fucking unit.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Anyway, carving pumpkins is good! What's your, uh—what's your second thing?

**Rachel:** This'll be interesting to talk about with you, because, uh, this is something that I didn't realize was identified as regional, uh, until recently. And then my research indicated that maybe it isn't regional? But it is the expression "ope."

**Griffin:** "Ope!" I mean, it's a very Midwestern—

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** —that's, like, the—the meme, is it's, like, Midwestern catch-all for, like, any—anything. Are we spelling that O-P-E—

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** —exclamation point? Okay.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Is this something that you've ever found yourself saying.

**Griffin:** "Ope!" Yeah. I mean, yeah. Not, like...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It is not—for me, it was never the catch-all, like, phrase that it is for some in the northern Midwest, but, you know, if I ran into anybody or was about to run into anybody—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh, exactly!

**Griffin:** —you gi—you give 'em a "Ope! Ope!"

**Rachel:** Yeah. This happens to me a lot if I am in public. You know, like, if I am in a grocery store or somewhere where there is the possibility that I will turn a corner and someone will be there—

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** —it will come out of my mouth just instinctively.

**Griffin:** Yes.



**Rachel:** Uh, that's—that's what's made it actually really hard to trace. Like, I was doing research on kind of the etymology of ope, and it's difficult to find because it's, like—it's an unconscious reaction from a lot of people. Just because you've absorbed it, you know?

**Griffin:** I'm trying to think of if it's—and maybe you found this in your research. Is it short for something?

**Rachel:** Yeah. So, there—so, there are people that kind of suggest that maybe it is a way of saying "Oops."

**Griffin:** Okay...

**Rachel:** Uh, but kind of shortened, like yep instead of yes.

**Griffin:** [laughs quietly] I'm thinking about oops now. I've never said oops in my life.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I know!

**Griffin:** I've never, like—[through laughter] I've never—[stammering]—I'm gonna start incorporating that into my lexicon just to see, like, how it treats you. But, like, if I spill a glass of water and I go, "[loudly] Oooops!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It feels so Dennis the Menace. Like, "[loudly] Oops!"

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "[loudly] Aww, oopsie!"

**Rachel:** [laughs] Well, and that's what—so, I found this great article. There are—you know, when I was researching ope, everything was, like, from a regional newspaper in the Midwest. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Uh, this is from Chicago magazine. Uh, they were talking about ope. And they were suggesting that oops does sound kind of childish, and ope—

**Griffin:** [laughs] Is the cool older brother of oops?!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah! Well, ope—ope is a way of, like—you're not quite saying you are making a mistake, because it's a very, like, minor, inconsequential social breach usually. And so, ope is a way of being like, you know, I didn't really make a mistake here, this isn't really a mistake situation, but this is an accident?

**Griffin:** I acknowledge something not ideal has happened.

**Rachel:** Well, and in this article, that's called The All-Purpose Expression of Midwestern Politeness, they reference the linguist Ben Zimmer, who is the language columnist for Wall Street Journal and the former columnist for the Boston Globe and The New York Times Magazine, and he is the one that makes the connection to oops, which he says comes from whoops, which comes from upsa-daisy.

**Griffin:** I say upsa-daisy more than I say oops.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, and he was the one who was cited a lot—do you remember when Rick Perry said oops?

**Griffin:** Mmmm... you'll have to remind me what—what of the many fuckups Rick Perry has done that merited an oops.

**Rachel:** He was talking about the agencies of government that he was gonna do away with—

**Griffin:** Oh, right.

**Rachel:** —and he was trying to name them, and he forgot whatever the third one was and said "Sorry, oops," at the end. [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's so—what a space alien that dude is. Who says that?

**Rachel:** And at that time during that debate it was just like a, "Oh, this guy's not ready." [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Um, but I kind of agree. I don't like oops as much as ope.

**Griffin:** No, yeah, it's—you feel like a real goober. I have never really sort of, like, identified why I don't say oops, but it's—it is—it is quite childish.

**Rachel:** I think the reason it's associated with the Midwest—so, a lot of people say it. Like, there are people all over the country and all over the globe that will say ope. Uh, but Midwestern people tend to get focused on for just their unnecessary politeness.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Uh, and this article cited a bit from John Mulaney's standup special *Kid Gorgeous*, where he says, "My wife said that walking around with me is like walking around with someone who's running for the mayor of nothing."

**Griffin:** [wheeze-laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs] Which I think is a very perfect way to describe that kind of unnecessary politeness of, like—you know, there are no stakes here. You're not trying to form a relationship with this person. Uh, but you want to acknowledge that you have good intentions, uh, and I feel like ope is kind of a—it's kind of a charming thing! And I have—I have zero control over it.

**Griffin:** It feel—that feels thoroughly baked in to me. Like, West Virginia is not necessarily Midwest, but there are some—that Venn diagram I feel like overlaps quite a bit in Appalachia. And it's always so jarring when I am sort of, like... behaving with that standardized level of over-politeness and, like, over-apologetic sort of thing. I remember I was at the grocery store—the turning the corner at the grocery store is, like, *where* this phrase—

**Rachel:** Yes. [laughs]

**Griffin:** —where the rubber really meets the road. And I was coming out of an aisle while a woman, probably in her, like, 60's, was coming the—you know, the other direction, and we almost collided, but we didn't. And I probably let out an "Ope! Scuse—excuse me, sorry!"

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** And she said, "[angrily] I hope you don't drive like that."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And I wanted to be like—

**Rachel:** Wait a minute!

**Griffin:** "Wait a minute! But that's not right! We don't do it like that!"

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah, the grocery store is kind of like the quintessential place, 'cause it's—it's, like, the only time where you are, like, essentially competing with other people to get resources. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Doesn't happen anymore now. The—the handful of times I've gone to the grocery store, it's—no two human beings have even come close.

**Rachel:** Uh, other examples Chicago Magazine gives is accidentally pulling on a push door, realizing a car is coming when you're about to cross the street.

**Griffin:** Ope—ye—[laughs loudly]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I just reflexively ope'd!

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. The article suggests that where they Italians have 'prego' as their kind of linguistically fluid go-to word, that is what ope can become.

**Griffin:** Interesting.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. Uh, yeah! I—you know, not a lot—not a lot of science out there about ope. Uh, not a lot of history associated with it. I don't know that there is a first usage... available.

**Griffin:** Maybe it's—maybe it's short for Oprah. And it's like when you're—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —when you are endangered in some way, you are calling out for aid.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like, you're coming out of the grocery store aisle and you see your cart's about to run into somebody else's cart, and you get, like, that fight or flight response, and your heart starts to, like, palpitate, and you just wanna be like, "[loudly] Oprah! Help!"

**Rachel:** [sighs]

**Griffin:** And you just get out ope.

**Rachel:** I wish I had enough control over it to change that for you.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I could—I can—I can work on it, but it's probably not gonna happen. Again, I—if I've bumped into anybody these days, I've made a critical error at some junction.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I wonder if it's—if people have stopped saying ope and have started saying just full out sorry, because, you know, of the concern.

**Griffin:** Or just "[mock yelling] Get the fuck away from me! Six feet! Six feet!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

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

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Fiona says:

"I think Sohla's new show, Stump Sohla, on the Babish Culinary Universe Channel, is wonderful! I first saw her when I was watching Bon Appetit videos, but I am so happy she now hosts her own show. She only has two episodes out right now, but so far I've enjoyed seeing and laughing along with her approached to random cooking challenges. It's been a source of entertainment and helpful cooking advice, and I can't wait for more episodes."

**Rachel:** It is—she is so charming, because so many people in the world of cooking are a little bit cocky. And I'm not saying that she's not—

**Griffin:** She's super confident.

**Rachel:** —I mean, she's definitely confident. But she's so—she makes it so accessible, you know? You just feel like, "Hey, I am just trying things like everybody else is, and we'll see if this works."

**Griffin:** She is confident and self-deprecating in equal measures, which is a very tough balance. That show is really, really fun. Her second episode was using things bought at the bodega to create, like, high cuisine, and it is—it's cool! It's a cool—it's a great show. Um, and Darius says:

"This is going to sound like a weird one, but I really love pro wrestling tag teams that don't break up at the smallest sign of disconnect. In a 'sport—' in quotes, "—that's built in aggro, tough men, seeing guys like The New Day, who have been a team for six years with exactly zero fights between them has been a real treat."

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh, I love The New Day!

**Griffin:** I love The New Day so very, very much, because each of them is... so good.

**Rachel:** And they're just havin' fun!

**Griffin:** They have a lot of fun with it. The Wrestlemania I went to where they came out dressed up as *Dragonball Z* characters? Like, you really can't beat that. You really can't get any better than that. And it is weird! Like, I've never really thought about—I do not watch, like, really any pro wrestling these days, but I did watch enough to know that, like, you know, you could not keep track of the tag teams.

You'd be like, "Oh, Seamus and what's-his-face are together now." And then, you know, the next pay-per-view you watch, they're up against each other. It doesn't happen with The New Day.

**Rachel:** I'd like to think it was suggested to them, of, like, "[gruff voice] Alright, now you guys hate each other."

And they were like, "No, I'm sorry."

**Griffin:** "No. There's no way."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, hey, 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. Uh, and thank you to Maximum Fun for havin' us on the network!

**Rachel:** Yeah, MaximumFun.org is where you can find all sorts of wonderful podcasts—uh, like Wonderful!—

**Griffin:** [snorts]

**Rachel:** —but then, like, other podcasts that are also wonderful, but not named that!

**Griffin:** That's a really, really succinct way—

**Rachel:** [laughs] That's how Jesse Thorn pitches it.

**Griffin:** Uh, hey, me and my brothers wrote a book about podcasting called *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)*, and it's a guide on how to make podcasts. It's a very—

**Rachel:** Oh, and hey, like, a s—special secret hidden track in there—

**Griffin:** Oh yeah!

**Rachel:** —uh, me and Sydnee and Teresa are in there, too.

**Griffin:** Yeah! It is a pretty, like, technical guide on how to make a podcast from start to finish of, like, everything you need to know. And it's got goofs in it too, and you can preorder it if you go to [mcelroypodcastbook.com](http://mcelroypodcastbook.com).

Uh, and also, I do a video game podcast, I don't know if I've ever talked about it on this show, with Justin and two of our old Polygon coworkers, Chris and Russ, called *The Besties*. It's on Spotify for free. You can follow and listen there, and I would appreciate if you did that! Because—

**Rachel:** Griffin—Griffin still plays a lot of video games.

**Griffin:** I still play a great deal of video games. I think we talked about, uhh... *Spelunky* in our last episode? I can't remember. I play so many video games, I can't keep 'em all straight. I'm a real gamer. Uh, but yeah. Find that on Spotify, please.

Um, I think that's it. [pause] What if what—what if that was—like, what if that was the last thing we said—

**Rachel:** [laughs quietly]

**Griffin:** —and we just, like, walked? We just like, "[loudly] And that's it!" We've never dropped a mic before... but I don't wanna break these.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** What if I slowly and gently lower this sort of, like—



**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** —tripod mic stand to the ground, and we'll see if it makes any noise, and you tell me if it, like, comes through. Okay?

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** [distantly] I'll be like, "[loudly] And that's—and that's the bottom line!"

[soft thump]

**Griffin:** [very distantly] Aw, I still felt bad about that.

**Rachel:** No. Well, you know... it's an audio thing. I feel like dropping the mic is usually when you can perform it for people?

**Griffin:** [distantly] Yeah.

**Rachel:** It's a powerful thing to see.

[theme music begins in the background]

**Griffin:** [distantly] Yeah.

**Rachel:** Not to hear, I don't think.

**Griffin:** [distantly] What if—okay, so I have to be more literal. And let's just, like... [unintelligible]

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** [distantly] "[loudly] Now I—and then—and now I'm going to drop the microphone!"

[soft thump]

[theme music plays]

Maximumfun.org.  
Comedy and culture.  
Artist owned.  
Audience supported.