

## Wonderful! 158: The Red Big Barn

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[theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Hello, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** This is the show that, um, you've decided to listen to, today. And thank you so much for joining us! We appreciate that you could be listening to any podcast right now.

**Rachel:** We know there are a lot of choices when you podcast, and we appreciate you.

**Griffin:** We appreciate you sticking with us.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** And we'll make it worth your— we'll make it worth your while. Please don't leave. Please don't go.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Please don't go away, even if it gets a little boring. Or like, you've heard us—

**Rachel:** Wow, alright. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Well no, I'm not saying it will, but if it does... please don't turn— please don't turn us off.

**Rachel:** Maybe the spark is starting to go, but we urge you... there's still spark left.

**Griffin:** You never— you— finish what you started! You never stick with anything. So listen to our—

**Rachel:** [laughs] Wow!

**Griffin:** You started listening to our podcast. Quitter. You don't want to be a quitter, do you? Um, this is a show where we talk about things that are good. Things that we're into.

**Rachel:** And we casually neg our audience.

**Griffin:** And we, just a little bit. Uh, I think uh... this— hopefully, the tone of this episode will be a little bit different than the sort of wild, panicked energy of our last installment.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Although, hey, guess what? Things are still weird out there.

**Griffin:** Things are still weird! Things are weird, gettin' weirder. Some things are gettin' a little bit better, but still pretty— pretty wild. But we're still here, and we're still talking about shit, so um... do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Do you want to go first?

**Griffin:** I'll go first, sure. Uh, I'll say that Queen's Gambit show on Netflix got me real hard back into chess again.

**Rachel:** Ohh, yeah!

**Griffin:** Got back on the chess.com app. My rating was in the toity. But I've been bumping him back up. Few games. Lot of puzzles. Gotta love me a chess puzzle. Oof! I can really sink my teeth into a good chess puzzle. Uh, yeah, I've been really enjoying chess lately. I'm learning new things still,

about chess. Of course. There's an infinite number of things to learn, which is what is so appealing to me.

That had to have been enough time, certainly.

**Rachel:** [laughs nervously] Um... I mean... so, we— we slept with the window open last night.

**Griffin:** Oh yes.

**Rachel:** I feel like this is something we talked about before.

**Griffin:** Sleeping with the window open, almost certainly. Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah. But the weather's gotten cooler, and I, like— I finally got to pull up that down comforter.

**Griffin:** Love it.

**Rachel:** Cover my body with it.

**Griffin:** Love it.

**Rachel:** Just the best.

**Griffin:** I think people who don't live in a warm climate, like, don't necessarily appreciate the sweet release of fall and winter. Uh, like, if you live in Chicago, it's like, that's your life. But when it finally— in the middle of fucking November, starts to get a little chilly, it's like, the jam.

**Rachel:** [laughs] It is finally fall here, which is ridiculous, because many places throughout the country have had several inches of snow at this point. And we are like, "Oh, wait. Is it fall now?"

**Griffin:** Yes. Um... I think I go first this week. Can you confirm or deny that?

**Rachel:** I don't think that's true.

**Griffin:** Oh, it's not?

**Rachel:** No. If you look at the website, it says that I go first.

**Griffin:** Aw, shoot. Aw, shoot. You caught— you caught me.

**Rachel:** Which is another reminder to me that we really are completely dependent on this website. [laughs]

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

**Rachel:** Uh, I wanted to talk about... eye contact.

**Griffin:** Oh! Okay. This is, as you know, a struggle for me.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I— I realize the thing that is really missing from this, y'know, like, Zoom, Web X culture...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like, you are able to have meetings where you can see faces. You don't get that eye contact.

**Griffin:** What? Don't you? Don't you? I guess you get webcam contact.

**Rachel:** You can't confirm that they are looking into your eyes. They may be looking at the camera.

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting.

**Rachel:** But if there are multiple participants in said call...

**Griffin:** I guess you can only look at one pair of eyes at a time. Wow, babe, that's true. That's so beautiful.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I, um... it does make me a little bit nervous, but I am, like— I'm pretty into it.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna try and keep constant eye contact with you this whole segment.

**Rachel:** Nope.

**Griffin:** And there's no way I'm gonna be able to actually accomplish it.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, it's a very intimate thing. It really increases your connection with somebody. It inspires a lot of confidence. There's been a lot of research on it, and I wanted to share some of that.

**Griffin:** Just boosts... the libido.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Doesn't it? The intimacy of it. The libido goes wild.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Is that what—

**Griffin:** I can't do this, babe! I frickin' can't— I was getting like, weird tunnel vision. Like the rest of my office was like, starting to blur, and my eyes started to hurt. I guess eye contact doesn't necessitate, like, a staring contest. That's a different thing.

**Rachel:** Uh, yeah. There was a— a study where a psychologist tried to establish the preferred length of eye contact, and they concluded, on average, it is three seconds.

**Griffin:** Yeah, anything longer than that seems transgressive.

**Rachel:** He said that no one in the study preferred gazes that lasted longer than nine seconds.

**Griffin:** Of course not!

**Rachel:** So that is why you are feeling the discomfort you are feeling.

**Griffin:** When we were in the middle of our wedding ceremony, delivering our vows, I couldn't look at you for longer than nine seconds in the eyes.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's— that is a confrontation at that point.

**Rachel:** So I— so I thought there was just a lot that was very interesting about this. A lot of studies. So, I looked at this article that BBC put out in 2019 that kind of combined a lot of these studies, and said that, uh... in these studies, people who are rating strangers, when they are rating strangers with whom they've made eye contact, they rate them as more similar to us in terms of their personality and appearance.

**Griffin:** Whoa.

**Rachel:** And it... it creates this process that they call pupil mimicry, or pupil contagion.

**Griffin:** Whoa, what?

**Rachel:** Where your eyes will dilate if somebody else's dilates when you look at them. It's this like, subconscious social mimicry is what they said.

**Griffin:** Whoa, that's buckwild!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So, if I just went and got an eye exam at the eye doctor, and I come back looking like I'm wearing those, like, weird, uh, like, incubus eye contacts... that's— your eyes will try and get there too?

**Rachel:** I guess so.

**Griffin:** That's— that's out there, man.

**Rachel:** Um, the— the pupils dilating is a big thing of interest, because it is a way that people show that they are more aroused or stimulated.

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm?

**Rachel:** Uh, and that there was actually a plant extract that people used to deliberately take. These women would take, uh, this plant extract called belladonna to deliberately dilate their pupils, as a way to make themselves seem more attractive.

**Griffin:** Wow!

**Rachel:** Isn't that fascinating?

**Griffin:** That's really fascinating!

**Rachel:** Yeah, I know. I didn't do a whole lot of research on that, but uh... I think that's kind of cool.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** Um, so... it does make people uncomfortable. We, uh— I've actually talked about this with some of our friends, 'cause we have a friend who is known for making very intense, deliberate eye contact.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, and I personally like it. I think it's really engaging, I feel really connected, but...

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** But we have friends that are like, "I can't. I can't look. It's too much."

**Griffin:** It's very intense.

**Rachel:** Um, and so, there was a suggestion, actually, like, when working with children in particular, uh, to look away. Because it interferes with working memory. A lot of times, people have trouble holding information...

**Griffin:** When they are being eye—

**Rachel:** When they are getting that kind of eye contact.

**Griffin:** Wow!

**Rachel:** Yeah. There's a suggestion from psychologists that, if you are having trouble getting a young child to answer questions, that you could look away and make them feel more comfortable.

**Griffin:** Wow. Okay.

**Rachel:** But yeah, there has been research to say that people that make more eye contact have been perceived to be more intelligent, more conscientious, and sincere. At least in western cultures.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** And that you are more inclined to believe somebody when they make eye contact with you.

**Griffin:** Okay. Well, I'll try and be better about it, but I probably won't.



**Rachel:** [laughs]

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

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** This is a very— I feel like this episode is like, a real, uh... brain games, like... isn't that— isn't that interesting? Because uh, my first thing is absolutely that. It is the, uh, arbitrary, but seemingly iron-clad rules that govern adjective order.

Are you aware of this? Have you heard of this?

**Rachel:** I don't know if I know...

**Griffin:** [impersonating Jay Leno] You ever seen this thing? [normally] That's my Jay Leno.

**Rachel:** I don't know if I know what you're talking about.

**Griffin:** Okay, so it's one of those like, weird language things that you don't learn, really, in school, unless you are learning, basically, English as a second language. Like, you kind of have to do it. But it is this weird osmosis thing that, uh, determines when you are describing something with multiple adjectives in a sentence, the order in which those descriptors have to be used.

**Rachel:** Ohhh.

**Griffin:** It's this intuitive, like, largely unwritten rule that is weirdly, like, unbreakable. And it's on— it's something that has only been like, a subject of study and categorization over like, the last couple decades. Um, it went viral, this rule did, back in 2016 when somebody tweeted out, uh, an excerpt from this book called The Elements of Eloquence. And I'm going to read it now, verbatim.

"Adjectives in English absolutely have to be in this order: opinion, size, age, shape, color, origin, material, purpose, noun."

**Rachel:** Whoaaaa!

**Griffin:** So you— "So you can have a lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife, but if you mess with that word order in the slightest, you'll sound like a maniac. It's an odd thing that every English speaker uses that list, but almost none of us could write it out. And, as size comes before color, green great dragons can't exist."

I'm looking at Rachel's mind just slowly start to seep out of her ears as it has been exploded.

**Rachel:** Well, y'know what I'm thinking about, is that— that sentence... what is that sentence? I may have to look it up, that people use so they use every letter on the keyboard.

**Griffin:** Oh, the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's—

**Rachel:** I know that's not a great example, but...

**Griffin:** But it is that, 'cause you can't say the brown, quick fox... jumps over the lazy dog.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like, to use this sentence in this excerpt, like, you can't say a rectangular French old little lovely silver green whittling knife. Like, that sounds wrong and bad.

**Rachel:** It's confusing. It's hard to keep your brain on anything.

**Griffin:** And there's so many phrases that, like, try and break this rule, and it sounds wild. The one that I loved in an article from the guardian was, uh, My Big Fat Greek Wedding. Like, you can't— it can't be My Big Greek Fat Wedding. Like, it cannot be that. You can't have, uh, leather walking brown boots. Like, it just doesn't—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** It just doesn't work. Uh, and it gets a little bit more complicated, the more you sort of dive into language, which I'm going to do a little bit, and our listeners are gonna fall asleep. But there's two broad categories of adjective, like, use cases that can like, affect that rule a bit. There's correlative adjectives that sort of fall into similar categories in that list, and they can be kind of interchangeable in how you use them in order, because they're broken up by commas a lot of the time.

But then, there's cumulative adjectives that change the meaning of the noun that follows it. So things like former, or fake, or alleged. Like, if you switch around the order of those adjectives, it actually transforms the meaning of the sentence and what you are trying to say about the noun. But most of the time, that doesn't happen, and that's where this word order, like, absolutely comes into play.

And I called it arbitrary in the intro to this segment, and I think it is largely arbitrary as like, defined as it is. Uh, but what defines this list, what defines this order, people, at least, assume, is... the more specific and concrete and permanent the descriptor of the noun, the closer it has to be to the noun.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay. Okay.

**Griffin:** So like, a whittling knife... whittling knife describes the purpose of the knife, and therefore, is like, inherent to the knife. Something like green is like, important, right? But it's not as important as the whittling knife. So, as you move further and further back, calling it lovely is opinion, that is the least important thing, because it is your own shit. It is like, so far removed from being integral to the existence of the item itself.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** Isn't that fucking bonkers?! Like, there have been, uh, a lot of like, studies using these, uh... y'know, crawling programs that like, scan through... centuries, millennia of literature in English, and... it always follows this. Like, it has always followed this example, even though it is not like, a... again, a thing that we are properly taught. Not only that, it's a thing that we don't even know about. I did not know that we followed this order until I saw this tweet, and it sort of opened up my eyes to this hidden, y'know, 99% invisible truth of language.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, no. I'm thinking a lot about... about learning another language. Y'know, and I remember like, y'know, in like, French and Spanish, the adjective often follows the noun. And hearing that English is a very hard language to learn, but not really understanding why, but it is. It's rules like that.

**Griffin:** It's this! Yeah.

**Rachel:** That are so different.

**Griffin:** And we take that for granted, because this is an outrageously— [laughs] I read one of these articles like, just try and make a, uh... oh, god, what's it called when you try to, uh, come up with a device to remember a thing?

**Rachel:** Mnemonic.

**Griffin:** A mnemonic device for this. You can't. It's like, an impossible thing to mnemonically— it's a huge, wild, important rule that like—

**Rachel:** Well, more often than not, you're not using a whole lot of adjectives to describe something.

**Griffin:** No. Most of the time, it is like, the... a big, red barn. You can't say a red, big barn. Like, it's a— but even that is two adjectives, and if you switch

the order, it doesn't sound good!

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs] No, that's true.

**Griffin:** Isn't that the— it's— anyway. I saw this, like, I don't know, earlier this year, and this week when I was trying to come up with stuff, I was like, "Hey, I remember when this life changing sort of bit of errata came into my life." And so, I wanted to share that with...

**Rachel:** So, is there a name for it? Or it's just— this is just a phenomenon?

**Griffin:** Just adjective order. There's not like a— not like a proper name for it. So, anyway... uhh... I'm— we can keep doing this show, this episode, but I think there's probably a large chunk of our audience that's just going to be thinking about this, and like, trying to run the math on it in their head.

**Rachel:** Yes. Yes.

**Griffin:** But for those of you who are still with us, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Oh, we do have some jumbobombs this time. We do have some. Lot of people were wondering. We do have some. And this one is for Josh, and it's from Erica, who says, "Happy birthday to my wonderful boyfriend! Not really a pun, but I bet you hate it. I'm so thankful for everything we share, from the McElroys to 90 Day Fiancé, and I feel so lucky to have found a partner in you. I'm so proud to be your girlfriend, and I'm so excited for everything we have coming for us in the future. I love you, Josh."

This is, uh, for November 13<sup>th</sup>. So we sort of slam dunked this one.

**Rachel:** Yeah! Uh, congratulations on finding a guilty pleasure TV show to share as a couple.

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

**Rachel:** I feel like that is an important step in any relationship, and it really unites you in your shame.

**Griffin:** Is that American Ninja Warrior for us? It sure feels like it.

**Rachel:** I think it would be generous to assume we only have one. [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's fair. That's fair.

**Rachel:** This message is for Jake. It is from Greta. "Dear Jack Lahore, surprise! I love you! Trying to think of new ways to tell you how wonderful you are is hard, so I am telling the world. You give me tea when my tum hurts, poems when I'm sad, and tolerate my chaotic playlist of Joanna Newsom, Pink Panther, X-Files theme."

**Griffin:** [snorts]

**Rachel:** "Let's go play Fallen Order. I love you forever and more each day. Love, Grubby Grouper."

**Griffin:** This is, uh... I wish you all could see. It's funny – we did E. E. Cummings last week. The efficiency of language, uh, that Greta has used in this message... a lot of ampersands, a lot of just very, very good use of the characters in this message.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, no. There's a point in the message when she just eliminates spaces entirely, and I like that.

**Griffin:** It's so powerful. And I will say, though, that the Joanna Newsom Pink Panther X-Files theme sort of playlist is the wildest shit I've ever heard in my life.

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

[Maximum Fun advertisement]

**Rachel:** Can I tell you my second thing?

**Griffin:** I wish you would!

**Rachel:** It is... the drive-thru.

**Griffin:** Okay!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Gettin' through it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We had a little drive-thru adventure the other day.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it was not pleasant. Uh, but... I will say that, normally, this is a very efficient, valuable aspect of a restaurant these days.

**Griffin:** Yes. For sure. I wish every restaurant did it. I wish I could get like, drive-thru Outback Steakhouse or whatever.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Really?

**Griffin:** I don't know why that is— I don't know why that's where I went.

**Rachel:** I appreciate that you were looking for like, a national, relatable restaurant across this country, and that is— that is where you went.

**Griffin:** Yep. Just give me a big steak, and uh... some cellophane.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, this is something that, uh, y'know, a lot of restaurants are pivoting to, and a lot of restaurants have been doing for decades, and they are really thriving, I think, in this economy.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The articles I read specifically called out these like, frontline workers and emergency responders that are working at all hours, and have very little personal time, really jumping on these options.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it's something that's been around, uh, forever. The first drive-thru opened in 1947, and was not at McDonald's.

**Griffin:** Interesting!

**Rachel:** Was at a place called Red's Giant Hamburg on—

**Griffin:** [snorts] Oh, sure, yeah!

**Rachel:** [laughs] On Route 66 in Springfield, Missouri.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** This, uh, location closed in 1984. So, the current award for the longest-running burger drive-thru goes to In-N-Out, which opened in 1948.

**Griffin:** Interesting. See, I got the impression... we watched that— the founder movie about the guy who founded McDonald's, and made it seem like they were the first ones to do fast food.

**Rachel:** McDonald's didn't do it until 1975.

**Griffin:** What a joke! What a joke.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, the first drive-thru focus chain was Jack in the Box in 1951.

**Griffin:** Okay. Okay.



**Rachel:** Um, most Jack in the Boxes now have indoor dining areas, but 85% of their orders are either drive-thru or to go.

**Griffin:** Not especially shocking.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah. I will say, I don't know which came first, the minimization of the indoor dining, or if just the realization, "Nobody's eating in here, why would we make it a nice place to be?"

**Griffin:** I'd have to imagine that the drive-thru made the in-room dining experience obsolete, instead of it being an answer to people not eating inside the...

**Rachel:** Like, the fact that most of these places don't even have discreet chairs; a lot of times, it is just like, a booth bench attached to the table...

**Griffin:** Okay, but we're talking— I would ar— I'm talking completely out of my ass, but anecdotally, I feel like that's a fairly recent phenomenon. Because like, we used to go to McDonald's and eat... when I was like, a kid, we would like, eat in the McDonald's. Like, we would go to Burger King and eat in the Burger King.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And just like, kick it there. It wasn't—

**Rachel:** Was that because they had like, a little kid's... a kid's vibe?

**Griffin:** That is actually exactly it. Like, they had the Play Place and shit. I don't think we ever ate inside a Taco Bell. They had nothing for us there.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Oh my gosh, I never thought about the fact that a Taco Bell has never had like, a play structure.

**Griffin:** Maybe they have. I'm sure there's one outside case where they had like, the Taco Bell fun zone.

**Rachel:** Uh, roughly 70% of sales at most fast food spots take place through the window. Some new kind of comers to the drive-thru scene... uh, Starbucks.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The majority of Starbucks now have drive-thru. They actually have like, relocated a lot of Starbucks, specifically to have that capability.

**Griffin:** Huh.

**Rachel:** And moved to kind of off-highway locations, because it's become such a successful model for them. A long-time holdout, but recent joiner on the drive-thru scene... Chipotle.

**Griffin:** Wow! I didn't know this!

**Rachel:** They have just started doing this. They held out forever, because they really saw a lot of value in the like, face-to-face, y'know, Subway kind of experience where you talk to somebody, and they make your food in front of you. Their new goal for, uh, 2020 is to have 60% of new Chipotle restaurants to have drive-thru, and 70% in 2021.

**Griffin:** Huh.

**Rachel:** I think they have realized that they have to adapt to this new climate.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And they're doing the same thing Starbucks did, where they are looking for locations that have that capability now.

**Griffin:** It's so wild. We're talking about so many places that we like, occasionally would go to pre-Covid that like... it's weird to me, I haven't had any Starbucks coffee. I mean, I wasn't getting Starbucks on the daily, but

sometimes I'd drive by one and be like, "Well, I'll get a little special something."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But it has been now... what, eight, nine months since we last did it?

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah. I feel like... I mean, what is tricky about drive-thru, and the reason a lot of people... like, Panera, for example, did a lot of research on drive-thru before they started doing it. Because it's associated with food that, y'know, like, is more, like, shelf-stable.

**Griffin:** Right, yeah.

**Rachel:** And a lot of restaurants like Chipotle and Panera that prioritize this like, "We have these, y'know, nice, fresh ingredients!" How do you translate that to like, putting it in a bag?

**Griffin:** But that's what's so wild. Putting it in a bag and handing it through a window is essentially the same thing as handing it over a cash register and then you eating it right in front of them. Like, it's just an optical concern, and I feel like maybe this is the perfect time for us to transition, because the alternative is, I guess I'm not going to eat Chipotle for...

**Rachel:** Yeah. Exactly. Uh, yeah. And I think drive-thru used to really prioritize speed as their thing, which is why I think a lot of restaurants think, well, that's not gonna work for us. But the time for drive-thrus has actually gotten slower over the years. Like, the average wait time. Like, it used to be like, around two minutes, and now it's like, doubled since then.

**Griffin:** Four minutes?! Who's got the time?!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, so, there— so, QSR Magazine, which is, I'm sure—

**Griffin:** Oh my god! I can't believe we're referencing QSR magazine in this show, and not MBMBaM.

**Rachel:** [laughing] So, they did a 2020 study of America's favorite drive-thrus. I didn't really want to talk about number one, 'cause number one is Chick-Fil-A, and obviously, that is not...

**Griffin:** Are you fu—

**Rachel:** ... great.

**Griffin:** Number-fuckin'-one?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Because— so, they rate on overall experience, speed of service...

**Griffin:** Okay, okay. It's not just popularity. Okay.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Friendliness of staff, cleanliness, menu item availability...

**Griffin:** Homophobia...

**Rachel:** Order accuracy... [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Number two... Arby's.

**Griffin:** Wow!

**Rachel:** Oft maligned Arby's. Number two.

**Griffin:** Okay. So we're talking quality control, right? We've had, uh, bad experiences with just like, waiting in line at McDonald's, and the line doesn't move for 15 minutes, and you just like, bounce. I'm thinkin' about it... I don't know that I've had too many terrible Arby's experiences, except how I feel after I eat the big roast beef sandwich.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah, and it's those categories. It's the like, y'know, speed of service.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Order accuracy. So, they— if you look at the little, like, table...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** They have like— it's like, consumer reports. They have like, different scores in each.

**Griffin:** Absolutely. Wow, I just saw what's next on the list. This list is wild, y'all.

**Rachel:** Yeah, Culver's.

**Griffin:** Never had it.

**Rachel:** No, me neither. I think it's a regional thing. Like, a lot of people that grew up around a lot of Culver's were more likely...

**Griffin:** Sure. That's chicken, right? Culver's? Isn't it fried chicken?

**Rachel:** I mean, I think that's one of the things they— it's like a chicken sandwich, I think.

**Griffin:** Yeah. 'Cause I hear that as one of the replacements for Chick-Fil-A, I feel like.

**Rachel:** The bottom three are, uh, McDonald's, KFC, and Popeye's.

**Griffin:** Hm. God, you gotta almost forgive KFC. That's a— that's a tough thing, right?

**Rachel:** A lot of those low scores come from cleanliness and sanitation.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh, okay. Well, that's a different... that's a different deal.

**Rachel:** Um, yeah. I don't know. It's... y'know, number four on this list is Panera. Like, there are some kind of newer hits on the scene, but a lot of these on this list are like, have been around forever. Y'know, and just year to year, they have variation in quality, kind of based on... y'know, whatever's happening at the time.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I don't know. This is kind of a complicated topic, because I'm not necessarily endorsing fast food. But I will say that there are a lot of restaurants that were kind of ready to go in this climate, and I really appreciated that, because they were just able to be like, "Yep, let's just do what we've always done, and be present for people who need food quickly."

**Griffin:** I'll endorse the fuck out of fast food. [laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** If you're coming back from like, the zoo, and it's like, 12:15, and your son is like, getting real hangry in the back seat...

**Rachel:** Immediately hungry. Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's— it is a nice thing to have in the ol' quiver.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, can I talk about my second thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** It's a song. It's one of the all-time power jams, I think. I've probably said that a lot, but... I think you can quality what is an all-time power jam by like... if it comes on the radio, if your response is always like, "Oh, hell yeah! Here we go!" Then it's an all-time power jam. I gotta say, Barracuda by Heart is...

**Rachel:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** Way up there! Way up there. Um, I think everybody's probably heard this song, because it's been licensed so much for TV shows and movies and everything. It was in, uh, Charlie's Angels, I, Tonya, Birds of Prey, Reno 911, Umbrella Academy, a bunch of video games. Most recently in Trolls: World Tour. It's one of the rock trolls songs that is performed.

Uh, and... it just has one of the most undeniable riffs ever, and the song actually opens up with it. So let's play a bit of Barracuda now.

[excerpt from 'Barracuda' by Heart plays]

**Griffin:** You know this song, right? You absolutely know Barracuda.

**Rachel:** Yeah! Yeah, I mean, props to Heart.

**Griffin:** Props to Heart.

**Rachel:** For making some real, real lady jams. Y'know?

**Griffin:** Yeah, they were huge sort of groundbreaking figures in women-led rock and roll groups. And actually, Barracuda is largely about the obstacles that they faced. Which is to say like, shitty dudes in, y'know, the record label and promoters. It came on, uh, their second studio album, Little Queen, in 1977. It was a big single for them. It stayed on the charts for like, half a year.

And Little Queen was their first, uh... their first album with this new label. Their first album that they ever released was with a company called Mushroom Records. So, uh, Ann and Nancy Wilson are the front people for

the band, Heart. They are sisters, and um, they were doing a tour. They were doing some shows while still under Mushroom Records, and this promoter, while they were on tour, came up with this completely fabricated bullshit story that Ann and Nancy, sisters, were in a relationship with each other.

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh. [laughs]

**Griffin:** And when they found out— they found out like, backstage at a show from like, some promoter who like, jokingly said it, uh, Ann Wilson got fucking furious, went back to her hotel, and wrote Barracuda.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** So, that is the— that is the story.

**Rachel:** That's nice.

**Griffin:** So it is— it's not just about that. It is also about just like, awful men who try to take advantage of them, or just stop their rise as they were like, comin' up. Uh, so, actually, they dropped their label. They dropped Mushroom Records. They had a complete album with them that is unreleased, because they were like, "Fuck this."

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** They were just trying to screw them over in contract negotiations, and this was like, the straw that broke the camel's back. So, this was on their first album with this new label, after they dumped this one.

The producer on Little Queen, a guy named Mike Flicker, has a quote where he said, uh, "Barracuda was created conceptually out of a lot of this record business bullshit. Barracuda could be anyone from the local promotion man to the president of a record company. That is the Barracuda. It was born out of that whole experience."



**Rachel:** I feel like that is every music industry experience, right? You work so hard to get signed and get an album, and you feel so accomplished, and like, alright, this is it. This is what I've been working for. And then you find out some garbage like that.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it's just like, this doesn't mean anything. Like, I am a commodity. So, I am glad that they got something good out of that situation.

**Griffin:** Absolutely. They had to like, push back against shit like that, like, their whole careers. And uh, like, I'm not one to glorify, like, suffering for art, especially if it's for something that like, I've never experienced, which is sexism.

Uh, but Barracuda is an absolutely incredible song that represents something that has kind of, uh— there have been interviews with Ann Wilson about like, in the Me Too era, this song has like— takes on new meaning, and is like, all the more relevant. And it was something that like, they were actively, y'know, singing about back in the late '70s when they were being kind of jerked around.

Um, the song absolutely just rips, too. Like, that riff is amazing. What's really interesting, and I didn't think about until I was like, researching it... compositionally speaking, the song is wild. Because if you really listen to it with like, a critical ear, it changes time signatures. A lot. Like, it goes from like, 4/4 standard time signature to like, 2/4 for a little bit, then back to 4/4. And then for like, a single line, it'll go to 5/4. Like...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I read an article about the song, and it was like, it's almost impossible to do unless you like, really, really know it, in karaoke. Because you're going to get off on the timing just all the time, because of these weird sort of swings in time signature, which I thought was—

**Rachel:** Yeah, it gives it like, a real chaotic energy.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** Which makes it like, real appropriate for movies like *I, Tonya*.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes, absolutely. And the vocals are just like, out of control. Another thing that makes it really, really difficult to do in karaoke, when you get the... [imitating high notes] I mean, I just did it perfectly and flawlessly with my incredible angel voice.

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, I mean, you're incredible. Yeah.

**Griffin:** But like, y'know. Not most people can—

**Rachel:** You can't expect, y'know, the... the novice to get up there.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And do it.

**Griffin:** The one thing I think that is impossible to recreate is the absolute stink that is put on the word "barracuda" every time it is sung. The... [imitating Heart's vocals] "Barracudaaa!" Like, it's so iconic and good.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I just— I think this is one— I love talking about songs like this that are, I think, iconic rock songs. And I don't... I just don't think you can do much better than Barracuda. Uh, it is such an exciting song. Man, Heart rules, too. God, Heart rules!

Anyway. Uh, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Daniel says, "My wonderful thing is skimming stones. I got really good at it during lockdown here in the UK, and nothing beats watching the stone skip a lot across the flat water." I'm glad that Daniel outlined that he lives in the UK, because I've never heard skimming stones. I've only heard skipping stones.

**Rachel:** Yeah, y'know, I have, but I... [sighs] I'm a citizen of the world, I think.

**Griffin:** I see, I see, I see. Uh, I—

**Rachel:** This was a talent I thought that Griffin had.

**Griffin:** Thought so! Just, we were down by a lake...

**Rachel:** I don't know why I thought you did.

**Griffin:** We were by a lake with Henry recently, and I picked up some flat stones by the water and was like, "Come, son." Rachel, you're the one who like, actually made me do it! You were trying to get me on some fuckin' Normal Rockwell painting shit, and I was like, "Come, son. Come with me to the water."

**Rachel:** [laughing] We were having this wholesome time of family togetherness, and I thought, "Griffin, why don't you teach our son to skip rocks? It'll be just this beautiful moment."

**Griffin:** "Absolutely, honey." Sploosh! Sploosh! Sploosh!

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** And the son is looking up at me like, "Why, daddy? Why don't you— I can do this, daddy."

**Rachel:** "I can throw rocks, too!"

**Griffin:** "You are a failure."

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Uh, Luke... when you actually do it— we have a friend, who we went on like a cabin trip with, like, a long time ago, who, y'know, grew up in rural— in the wilds, I would say, visiting the wilds more often than I, who can just like, skip a rock across state lines.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it's not a question of will it skip. It's like, can I get over seven?

**Griffin:** How far. Yeah. Uh, Luke says, "My wonderful thing is Buy Nothing groups on Facebook. These are groups spread across the country and linked to specific neighborhoods where people post things for others to take for free, and if in a time of need, post requests for something before resorting to buying it. The term they use to describe this is a gift economy."

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh, Griffin knows—

**Griffin:** This is like, a big thing in Austin.

**Rachel:** Griffin knows my experience with this. It is— it is neighborhood specific, at least generally.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And in order to join, you have to kind of demonstrate that you are in that neighborhood. Because some neighborhoods are better than others.

**Griffin:** Absolutely. We have a friend who is very, very active in the Buy Nothing group.

**Rachel:** Yeah, and got like, a trampoline. Y'know, has received large pieces of furniture.

**Griffin:** And has given away a lot of stuff too— it's an incredible thing.

**Rachel:** It is, it's great. It's great.

**Griffin:** It's a great idea. Buuut...

**Rachel:** Buuut... [laughs] It just really depends on the culture that is created in your community. And in my community, uh, somebody... well. Several people have used it to just kind of give away their trash. There is a picture of something that is an old food item, and there is a suggestion of, "I'm not going to eat this. Would you like to?" And... [laughs]

**Griffin:** Well, even that, I think... I mean, that is, I think, also fulfilling the purpose of the group. The example that you told me is, somebody got a pizza delivered to their house...

**Rachel:** Yeah. This blew me away. Somebody, uh, woke up in the morning to discover two pizzas sitting in front of their house that they did not order. And it had been cold enough overnight that she assumed that maybe some other person might want this cold, 24-hour pizza.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And then, I've also seen an empty peanut butter jar as... but not cleaned out.

**Griffin:** That's the one... yeah.

**Rachel:** Just like, with 0.01% of peanut butter still in it. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah. I'm uncomfortable saying, like, food donation is... a bad idea through these groups, or a bad idea at all. But like, I don't think anybody can stand up for an empty peanut butter jar. I don't think— I think that's probably pretty indefensible. Yeah.

Uh, thanks 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. Um, and

thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. They have so many great shows there.

**Rachel:** Absolutely. Tons of great shows. And I would really encourage y'all to kind of expand your podcast repertoire. There's always new episodes up, so you can try something new anytime.

**Griffin:** Yep. Hey, if you listen to My Brother, My Brother, and Me, uh, we are doing a live streaming episode of the show with Sawbones opening next Saturday. You can find all the details and get tickets now at [McElroyFamily.com](http://McElroyFamily.com).

**Rachel:** Really been trying to talk Griffin into some visual gags for this, uh, virtual show.

**Griffin:** So funny. You were like, "What about a big bowtie?" And I was like, "Babe, babe, stop, I'm dying! My sides are splittiiing!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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