

## Wonderful! 160: That Stinky Tree Blood

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[theme music plays]

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

**Griffin:** [imitating saxophone]

**Rachel:** And that sound you hear is Griffin McElroy.

**Griffin:** And this is Wonderful, nights. That was the sound of a sultry saxophone steam on the streets of this city, coming up from the subways. [imitates saxophone]

**Rachel:** When we took last week off—

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** We thought, "It's a holiday week, let's treat ourselves."

**Griffin:** "Let's treat ourselves so right."

**Rachel:** And then the week that followed, we, uh, lost our childcare.

**Griffin:** Had a b-b-b-brush with COVID.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So far, everybody's fine.

**Griffin:** Everything's okay. Everything's alright. But we're in love lockdown over here, and it's uh...

**Rachel:** So, our recordings got a little more....

**Griffin:** A little more...

**Rachel:** A little more night time.

**Griffin:** Little more night time!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** A little more anxiety! A lot more exhaustion! A lot of just, sort of, like, existential dread and also just more exhaustion. And it's like, will it— is this all gonna be... like, are we almost finished? No? Aw, shoot! Lot of those vibes. But also, the saxophone and the scene from the city subways.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Fuuuuck.

**Rachel:** The music of the night.

**Griffin:** Love it. [vampire voice] "My children," you're doing a bit of a dra— you took it in a bit of a Castlevania direction. I'm not hating it.

**Rachel:** Oh, see I was thinking, like, Phantom.

**Griffin:** Phantom was based on Dracula and the Castlevania series of video games.

**Rachel:** Oh...

**Griffin:** Not a lot of people know that. Yeah. It's just, IP theft, is what it is. So, anyway, this is Wonderful, talk about things that we like, things that we're into, small wonders now. Do you have them?

**Rachel:** I do, actually.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** I wanted to talk about the difficult-to-find but worth the watch movie which is Muppet Family Christmas.

**Griffin:** Yeah! Ooh, you can only get this one basically on the dark web. We traded some... I won't be specific because I don't wanna get busted, but we traded some pills for this Muppets Christmas special on the dark web.

**Rachel:** [laughs] And they were just fiber gummies, so we're... lucky.

**Griffin:** It's just— yeah. The real ones. Do you know what I mean? Not the ones you an get at Walgreens. The ones that'll hollow you out.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But anyway, this Muppets movie is great.

**Rachel:** Yeah. And I don't even wanna say where we found it, because if too many people go to the same place, it'll get taken down.

**Griffin:** Wasn't it just YouTube?

**Rachel:** ... [sighs] maybe.

**Griffin:** [laughs] okay.

**Rachel:** Um... so, the thing that's great about Muppet Family Christmas— and I'm not talking about A Very, Very Muppet Christmas, which is a different film.

**Griffin:** Or the Muppet Christmas Carol.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Which is, again, a third film.

**Rachel:** Muppet Family Christmas is literally across the Muppet continuum.

**Griffin:** Right. The Hensonverse.

**Rachel:** The Hensonverse. And so you've got, I mean, you've got your Muppets from, you know, The Muppet Show. You've got your Muppets from Sesame Street, you got your Muppets from Fraggle Rock. Everybody's together.

**Griffin:** I think that's it. You don't get that, you don't get that Dark Crystal.

**Rachel:** No. [laughs]

**Griffin:** You don't get the, uh—

**Rachel:** I think you get some Labyrinth Muppets, though.

**Griffin:** Oh, you think?

**Rachel:** I can't— I can't be 100% on that. Maybe Bunny Picnic Muppets?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** There's a fair amount. But, um...

**Griffin:** Bowie shows up for like a second.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And is like— his hog is just showing and Gonzo's like, "That looks like my nose!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But anyway.

**Rachel:** But anyway. [laughs] Aw, now I can't—

**Griffin:** You forgot what you were talking about.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, so the reason that this is not available, you know, for example, on the Disney app, is that they did the thing that a lot of programs did from that time period where they did not license the music in perpetuity, and so we are not able to see it now, uh, officially.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** But it is so nice.

**Griffin:** It's a breath of fresh air. It's very nice.

**Rachel:** So charming.

**Griffin:** Um, I just wanted to talk about an extended, like, half-hour long conversation Rachel and I had last night. This is my small wonder. Where we basically wrote up a whole business proposal for a sausage restaurant here in Austin.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I've been very much craving German food since last night, when we started talking about German food. And I realize that there is a, just sort of a gap, a gap here in Austin where there's just like, two German restaurants. There's lots of places that have certain things, but there's only, like, two restaurants that do German food. But nothing that's like, that I could get right now if I needed to.

**Rachel:** And we should say that this came about because we have been watching the recommend sausage videos from our previous episode.

**Griffin:** Oh my God. Whoever suggested Ordinary Sausage, thank you, thank you, thank you. It's filling the gaps. I am down to clown with whatever they wanna stuff inside a sausage. Rachel is a bit trepidatious.

**Rachel:** Yeah, they get pretty gross. Because he will take items and grind them up and then put them in that sausage casing and eat them.

**Griffin:** Which is a lifestyle I really wanna be a part— I really wanna be a part of that community.

**Rachel:** No, I understand that about you. Uh, it can be a little grotesque, but charming and also has made us crave sausage.

**Griffin:** Yeah, would love some sausage. So, we came up with, like, several names, one of which I can't remember because they probably weren't very good, but like, business plans about, like, how we could get the word out, what kinda like combo meals we could offer. There was something about schnitzel bites?

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, and there was a lot of plays on, like, wurst and brat.

**Griffin:** None of those were good. None of those were good. But we did get, like, schn—pretzel and brats, which now, saying it out loud, makes— does sound like Wetzel's Pretzels.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So, we would bump into some stuff there. But yeah, just doing a long sort of imagination scat with my wife.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** In bed. Was a fun one, it was fun. Imagination scat with my wife in bed sounds...

**Rachel:** Yeah, don't google that.

**Griffin:** Not great.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hey, you go first this week.

**Rachel:** Oh, hooray! My first thing is journalism.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs] You're welcome.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs loudly]

**Rachel:** It's a big topic.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** I'm gonna do just kind of a crash course through some big milestones in the history of journalism.

**Griffin:** Sure, mm hmm.

**Rachel:** This is something that I had wanted to pursue, uh, and truth be told, didn't largely because I was not allowed in. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Huh. Well Mizzou's journalism school is no fucking joke.

**Rachel:** So, at the... at the Mizzou journalism school, your freshman year, you apply and you have to have taken, like, the introductory course, which I had, but you also had to have a certain GPA which I did not have. And there was an appeal process, but I was too proud to do it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And very quickly discovered that being an English major was a better fit for me anyway. But—

**Griffin:** And easier, right?

**Rachel:** [laughs] Well... papers are longer, I have to imagine.

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

**Rachel:** Um, I— I have always really respected journalists, I have always loved just kind of the art of the interview. I love the, kinda, the curiosity that comes with the profession, and what you can accomplish in that position. And also, I feel like there are so many people, uh, that are important that become so removed from your access. You know? There are people in politics, there are people, you know, in movies and music that you will never meet, you will never talk to. And I always really respect the, like, really great journalist that gets this great story that gets you access to information you wouldn't get otherwise.

**Griffin:** Yeah, of course.

**Rachel:** Um, and, I mean, especially now, when everything feels so crazy, to have like a really thorough investigative journalist look into something, it gives you such peace of mind. It's like the opposite of being gaslit, you know? You're just like, "Oh. Oh, there's real information and out there and you got it, and now I feel safer because of it."

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** So, I wanted to talk a little bit about, like, newspaper and television. Um, cause I think part of what really inspired me initially when I wanted to be a journalist was 60 Minutes. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay...

**Rachel:** My family would watch it every Sunday night and it just, like, some of those pieces really, like, stuck with me and made me feel like, "This is kind of a rock and roll job."

**Griffin:** You watched 60 Minutes with your parents growing up?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's kinda— you understand that's a bit wild?

**Rachel:** Well... I don't think it's that uncommon.

**Griffin:** I don't know. I mean, well, we watched Rescue 911. That's different.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That had a number in it?

**Rachel:** Well, how did you decide to be a journalist? Was it just like a practical, "this is a job I could do," or... ?

**Griffin:** Uh, it was mostly a fascination with the radio station, because my dad had done radio and I'd been around it my whole life. And Marshall had a great radio station. And Justin, at that point, Justin was writing for the Ironton Tribune and I dunno, I had done, like, some of it in high school and kinda enjoyed it and also, the track I was on before that was to be a theatre major, which I also realized was not the right one. But I dunno. Some of those skills proved useful, so I think I chose correctly.

**Rachel:** Yeah, people don't talk about that enough, you know, how lack of exposure to certain careers will prevent people from pursuing things. But like, it's so clear in your family, like, you all were like, "Well, these are the jobs there are."

**Griffin:** These two.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So, newspapers, as we kind of know them today, really took off in the 19th century thanks to high-speed printing presses, the expansion of elementary education, which meant more people were reading, and also, the sale of advertising. So, all of a sudden, the newspaper thing became a thing that you were trying to get the biggest circulation so you could get the most advertisers so you could make the most money, which is where you get people like Pulitzer and Hearst and the incredible musical Newsies.

**Griffin:** Oh, God yes.

**Rachel:** [laughs] This is in, like, the 1840s, 1850s.

**Griffin:** Not much to report on back then. Quiet times.

**Rachel:** Famously with Pulitzer and Hearst, this is where you get this, like, muck-raking yellow journalism, which is both exposing corruption but then also creating these sensational news stories just to sell papers.

**Griffin:** I would love to do a side-by-side comparison with some of the stuff that comes out today with that stuff.



**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** Would it be like, “And this man, this scoundrel—” it’s like, “You! You’ve lost your ethics!”

**Rachel:** [laughs] Television news kind of became what we know in the 60s, specifically with the assassination of JFK.

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:** So, CBS news was the first to report it and then CBS and then the other station at the time, which was NBC, were just covering it, just the entire, start to finish, just 24-hour-a-day coverage of everything associated with the assassination. Uh, which kind of created this demand among people of like, if something’s happening, I wanna know about it as its happening. And then the kind of, the news man, uh, that we kind of think of today from that time period, was the 1950s. Murrow, Edward R Murrow was a radio man.

**Griffin:** Fuck yeah. God I love— have you seen Good Night and Good Luck?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** that movie rips, man. My man Strathairn in the mix, crushing it.

**Rachel:** I know, so good. He was primarily radio, and then in the 50s started becoming a television man. And Good Night and Good Luck is all about the Joseph McCarthy series that he did.

**Griffin:** If you have not seen it, I cannot recommend it highly enough. Everybody is putting in some work in that movie, it is good.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Although George Clooney... I mean, obviously...

**Griffin:** George Clooney is George Clooney in the movie.

**Rachel:** Instrumental in the creation of the film... his role...

**Griffin:** It’s alright. It’s whatever.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah. [laughs] Uh, and then I wanted to talk about 60 Minutes just a little bit, just because that was kind of my inspiration for this. So, that’s been around for over 50 years now. It has won more Emmys than any other Prime time program on US television. It’s over 130 Emmys. And what happened

was the producer of CBS evening news with Walter Cronkite wanted to spin off a show that was supposed to be kind of like a life magazine, that was a mix of serious and light stories. Uh, which it took him a while to kind of get support for that, because everybody was holding up Edward R. Murrow and like, investigative journalism, and he's saying like, "Let's make stories that are a mix of both, that are more accessible and more engaging for a wider audience." And, uh, yeah, it obviously was a huge hit. I was a big fan of, uh, of the orig, you know, Morley Safer, Mike Wallace, Ed Bradley, and of course the late, great Andy Rooney.

**Griffin:** Oh.

**Rachel:** Maybe not great.

**Griffin:** Late, definitely.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Definitely late. Um, yeah, it just, it's a profession that I think is really respectable, and obviously there are people that don't do it well and there are problems with it, but I think the intent of it and when you see somebody do it well, can be a real inspiring, important thing.

**Griffin:** Yes. I agree. I wish I had been better at certain parts of it. It was just the confrontational aspect of it that I was just not— I mean, you know me as a person. I love talking to, like, artistic people and people making shit that I was interested in, and getting to like, interview them in a way that I felt like, "I can get some stuff out of you that will be interesting to people like me reading this," I loved that part.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** But anything more sort of like, extra than that, anything more, like, "Hey. Hey, you! Get your damn hands off her!"

**Rachel:** [laughs] Of course, the great journalist from Back to the Future.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, I mean it takes curiosity, obviously, and like, tenacity. But also, I think that thing that you bring to the table is the enthusiasm.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know, like—

**Griffin:** But it's a separate— it's like two separate— and it's a whole conversation that is easy to be like, condescending either way about, but it's just like—

**Rachel:** Well, I don't want you to sell yourself short, Griffin.

**Griffin:** That's fair.

**Rachel:** I think you did good work out there.

**Griffin:** Then I'm gonna prove my journalistic chops by talking about my first subject.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Which is Ramune, the Japanese soda, uh, that is— and this is hard-hitting stuff, babe, I took it all the way to the top. And I was slamming my hands on a lot of desks.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I threw my briefcase and I was like, "It's time to stop lying! You've been lying for so dang long!" It's a good soda. Have you ever— actually, I know you've watched me drink it before.

**Rachel:** I have tasted it, and I have to admit that the other day when you drank it I did look at the bottle to see how much sugar was in it, just out of curiosity.

**Griffin:** Oh, what was the— where did we land on that?

**Rachel:** 18 grams for that little bottle.

**Griffin:** That doesn't seem like a— I guess it is quite a bit.

**Rachel:** I mean, for context, Henry's child Z bar has like, 12 grams, so.

**Griffin:** It's more than a child's granola candy bar. Okay, well that's not great.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Ramune has a ton of different versions, but the original was a lemon lime-adjacent flavored bubbly soda that was first sold in Japan in 1886. It was created by a Scottish pharmacist named Alexander Cameron Sim. And I didn't

realize this, and maybe I should have, but the name is actually a Japanese borrowing of the word lemonade. Which I find strange, because holy shit, it doesn't taste like lemonade. It is not like lemonade even a little bit, I feel like.

**Rachel:** I mean, it's sweet and citrusy.

**Griffin:** I don't find it citrusy very— the best way that I've heard it described it like, if you took Sprite and then you put some ice in it and you let that melt a little bit, and then you threw a bunch of bubblegum into the liquid.

**Rachel:** [laughs] See, I was gonna say it's more like Sprite resin.

**Griffin:** Sprite— it's Sprite leavings. It's a very popular drink that you'll find at like, any Japanese import shop, like, it is for sure going to be something that they carry, because it's a beloved beverage over there. Especially in summer, it is like a sort of Japanese staple.

**Rachel:** Is this the one with the marble in it? Or is it only sometimes?

**Griffin:** This is the one with the marble in it, and that is the most interesting thing about Ramune. Folks also call it marble soda. Um, and the bottle that Ramune comes in, if you've never seen it, has a chamber inside the neck of the bottle, like a second interior chamber that you can see through the clear glass, and it contains a small, clear glass marble. And when you buy the bottle of Ramune, the reason why that sort of shape exists is that the carbonation is powerful enough that it just pushes the marble up into the top. There's like an o-ring on the mouth of the bottle, and so the marble is pushed up into that by the carbonation. So, it's like holding its— the carbonation is holding itself in because of the way that this bottle is designed.

And that's why when you wanna open the marble soda, you twist off the cap and there's a little plunger inside the cap that you have to pop out, and then you push that down into the marble to give way for the carbonation to shoot out. And then the marble falls into the neck and then you can drink it. And it's kind of an— it's— it is novel and it is cool and it's fun and it's satisfying, but it's also kind of annoying to drink out of that bottle, because if you're really tilting it up and ripping it, then the marble just pops back into the o-ring and then it seals back up again and you can't really chug it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. You know, I have tasted this soda before. I don't think I've ever witnessed the process of opening it.

**Griffin:** Oh, really?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's like, so fun. It's like a fun thing to do. It is— it keeps the soda bubbly as hell. Like, it is an extremely carbonated beverage. And what I found extra surprising is that it wasn't— Ramune did not invent this bottle design. In fact, it used to be, a long time ago, like, a fairly common way of keeping bottled sodas or bottled beers or any sort of carbonated bottled beverage carbonated. It is a style of bottle that was designed by a guy named Hiram Codd in 1872. And they're called Codd bottles. Which sounds... nasty.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And lots of soft drink makers in Europe and India and Australia used the bottle design to keep their drinks fizzy back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the design was replaced with other technology that was a little, I guess, cheaper to use, probably? And also because it's a little bit annoying to drink out of the bottles.

**Rachel:** I think Codd bottles sounds like the name of a villain in, like, an old Batman TV show.

**Griffin:** Yes, I mean, I think Oswald Copperpot is the name of The Penguin.

**Rachel:** Maybe that's what I'm thinking of.

**Griffin:** So you're maybe not that far off. Another thing is that kids used to just smash the bottles to get the marbles out.

**Rachel:** That's— I mean, I wondered that, right? Like, to me, I'm so used to a child's product that comes with a toy that I assumed like, am I supposed to be able to keep this marble somehow? And is there a—

**Griffin:** You can. I'm an adult man. And we got Ramune, like, I think we got it with some delivery earlier last week, and I was just looking at that marble like, "That's a nice— that's a good marble. I mean, we should recycle this, but..."

**Rachel:** Are you supposed to smash the bottle?

**Griffin:** No. Are you supposed to smash the glass bottle?

**Rachel:** How do you get the marble out?

**Griffin:** You don't, you just recycle it. See, that's what I'm saying. You and I are both operating from this place of just like, "Well I can't leave the marble! That's a perfectly good marble!"

**Rachel:** Yes!

**Griffin:** And kids in the fucking, like, early 1900s were like, "I want to play marbles."

**Rachel:** "Of course, marbles is a game that I play."

**Griffin:** Fucking free marble, are you kidding me?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's like if I got a Josta and there was a pog that was instrumental in opening the soda, but then they were like, "Oh but don't— you can't get the pog out without destroying the Josta." It's just, I don't know. Kids were—

**Rachel:** Maybe it's like one of those Cracker Barrel puzzles where if you turn the bottle just right, the marble pops out.

**Griffin:** Ah, maybe.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Today, there's really only two main soft drinks that use the Codd bottle design. One is Ramune, the other one is an Indian beverage called Banta that I had never heard of before. Um, that's it. They're the only ones that use it. And that is, to me, I think, pretty delightful. Because it is such a— I remember the first time I saw Ramune, I was like, "What the... what the fuck is going on in there? Like, what is this space-age bottle technology?" As it turns out, it's from 1870s and, uh, is not the most practical thing. But it's charming as hell.

**Rachel:** Yeah, as evidenced by the fact that you can get a can of soda and you just...

**Griffin:** Just pop it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** And just drink it. Like, if it's a hot— I think every time I've been to Japan it's been pretty hot, and I always reach for a fucking dripping, glistening

bottle of Pocari Sweat. You don't have to fuck with any marbles with Pocari Sweat, you just rip that shit—

**Rachel:** Or a C. C. Lemon.

**Griffin:** C. C. Lemon I— C. C. Lemon's a little too sour for me these days.

**Rachel:** Oh...

**Griffin:** Pocari Sweat? Oh my God.

**Rachel:** It's good.

**Griffin:** I should 'a just done— what am I— this is a fucking joke.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I shouldn't have done Ramune when I could'a talked about Pocari— next week, look forward to Pocari Sweat. I'm gonna do a whole thing on Japanese beverages. Also, Ramune has been produced in 55 different flavors. I'm gonna— and this is not like a, isn't Japanese food so weird segment, because most, I think, is really good. They make a melon flavor that I genuinely very much like. It's radioactive, fuckin' ecto-cooler green, and I think it is super, super tasty. But there are some more, I would say, novel flavors. Those include champagne, chili oil, curry, kim chi, octopus, takoyaki sauce, teriyaki and wasabi. And one that's just called Disco Dance.

**Rachel:** Ooh... that sounds fun!

**Griffin:** I would be surprised if Disco Dance was still in circulation. Might be wrong on that. I'm sure I'll get fact checked by our audience. I do wanna drink a Disco Dance marble soda.

**Rachel:** I like thinking that maybe Disco Dance is just all of the flavors combined.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That may not be— that probably wouldn't be good. I think you could probably have all the, like, fruity flavors of Ramune, and then have like, a little bit

of chili oil and a little bit of curry in there, and you would know what was up. Hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[ad break]

**Griffin:** We have two bumbobobs and I would love to read one of them, and then I think maybe you should read the other one of them?

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Are you okay with that?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Well, here's the first one. It is for Sarah, it is from Gary, who says,

"Dear Sarah, you are the most wonderful person in my life. These last two years have been amazing, you are my good, good girl. Love your boyfriend, Gary."

Love your boyfriend Gary.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah, it's a command, really.

**Griffin:** Love YOUR BOYFRIEND— that wasn't part of the message.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is me suggesting...

**Rachel:** Hey, love that boyfriend.

**Griffin:** Love your boyfriend. Garyyy. Love *your* boyfriend, Gary.

**Rachel:** I've got a concise message here for Cookie, from Remy.

"Cookie, you're a good friend. Thanks."

That's the message.

**Griffin:** I appreciate that. I also appreciate in the 'pronunciations you need to clarify' segment of the message they're just written, "No, but I love you guys."



**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's nice. Maybe, cause I don't know if it's kooky or cookie, the field could have been used to better effect. But we appreciate the admira— we appreciate that love. It is hard out here.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, speaking of personal messages, we have an announcement, and that is... if you wanna get a personal message, now's your— now's your chance.

**Griffin:** Yes. If you wanna get your very own blumbojob on the show— blumbojob is too much.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Blumbojob, again, sucks.

**Rachel:** Yeah, you have to stop. You have to stop. Especially when we are telling people how to do it.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** We should probably use the right—

**Griffin:** It's important that we say the word correctly.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** If you want to get your very own junkotran message on the show, then the way that you do that is you head to [MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing](http://MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing) and then you can sign up for a slot.

The way it works is there is a lot of demand for this, uh, this service, and we only do two an episode, so we don't have enough to fill the demand, but if you wanna try and get a message on the show, just go to that link, [MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing](http://MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing). You have until Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup>. The message are 100 bucks a pop. You'll have the option to buy one if your name gets drawn. And we're only doing personal messages at this time, no more business ones. And we can't guarantee the airdate of those messages, but we will do our dang best.

**Rachel:** If you have any questions, you can reach out to Daniel at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

[Maximum Fun ad plays]

**Griffin:** Lemme get that... second one!

**Rachel:** Uh, my second one is... pine smell.

**Griffin:** [whispers] pine smell.

**Rachel:** Mm hmm.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Rachel:** It's that piney smell.

**Griffin:** That piney, piney smell. God. Don't you sometimes wish we lived in the Pacific Northwest?

**Rachel:** I mean, I have never been, so it's difficult for me to say that confidently.

**Griffin:** Ah, shame.

**Rachel:** But it looks very pretty.

**Griffin:** It's great up there. God, my second home.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah?

**Griffin:** Uh huh. The whole region.

**Rachel:** So... where does that put West Virginia?

**Griffin:** First home.

**Rachel:** First home. And then where we are now?

**Griffin:** Uh, first— that's first home, actually.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** You can have more than one first home.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** Yeah, no.

**Rachel:** Ohh...

**Griffin:** Yeah, no, everything is— it's part of a sort of tiered, sort of pyramid system.

**Rachel:** Oh.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Your cup overfloweth.

**Griffin:** It does. Got a lotta homes.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** In different area codes.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, I love this piney smell. I, uh, I've had many conversations with people about the perfect pine candle.

**Griffin:** Oh, where are you at on that?

**Rachel:** Well, I'm still not 100% sure, you know?

**Griffin:** Oh, wow.

**Rachel:** Um, you know, obviously the Yankee Candle really sets itself apart from the rest, but I've experienced many, you know, many positive, positive variations of the pine candle.

**Griffin:** We've been sent some fine holiday-themed candles. I can't remember specifically if we've gotten any pine ones.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, you know, I mean I will seek them out every season.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** Because we, you know, we do that artificial tree.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it has no stink.

**Rachel:** No. [laughs]

**Griffin:** It has the stink of plastics.

**Rachel:** Uh, and so I did a little research into what it is about that smell.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** This is from a website that I assume is reputable, but it is called EarthSky.org.

**Griffin:** Okay, that sounds right.

**Rachel:** I mean it seems like that, I mean, that's what we're talking about here, right?

**Griffin:** If I wanted to know what a good pine smell is and what makes it, I think Earth Sky is where I would turn to for that news

**Rachel:** Uh, so that pine smell is due to chemical compounds called terpenes. Terpenes are carbon and hydrogen atoms and they are made up of... pinene, which is a monoterpene that have the piney odor, and limonene, which is another monoterpene that has the citrusy odor.

**Griffin:** Are all terpenes so explicitly named, or is one called, like, caramelene, and this one smells like caramel?

**Rachel:** [laughs] You know, I didn't go to school for terpenes, but I'm sure somebody out there did.

**Griffin:** How do you say that word? C-A-R-A-M-E-L?

**Rachel:** I say 'car-mel'.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Mm hmm. I'm a very busy woman.

**Griffin:** [laughs loudly]

**Rachel:** [laughs] So, many types of organisms produce terpenes, including insects, marine algae and sea slugs.

**Griffin:** You telling me there's bugs out there that's like, [sniffs]"Is that Christmas time?" "No, it's just that ant."

**Rachel:** [laughs] I think pine odor, it's those combinations of terpenes that give you that smell.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But I haven't ever, you know, smelled a slug. I don't know, maybe it's pleasing.

**Griffin:** Hey folks, it's 2020. Smell a slug.

**Rachel:** [laughs] You got a little time left to smell a slug.

**Griffin:** You got a little bit of time left to smell— wait, what?

**Rachel:** I—

**Griffin:** Cause in 2021, no more slugs?

**Rachel:** Well, if 2020 is the year you're gonna smell a slug, you've only got a few weeks left, is what I'm saying.

**Griffin:** That's true. This year's been a real fuckin' shithole. May as well give yourself one positive memory to go out on. Send 2020 out on a high note, go smell a big, fat, stinky slug and report back, please.

**Rachel:** So, the reason we get that smell from the Christmas trees are that you can find a lot of terpenes in a conifer resin. So, when a tree's bark is damaged, the resin flows out, hardens and actually protects the tree. So, it's like when you chop that boy down, he covers himself in this resin and smells real good.

**Griffin:** And he's like, "Ha ha ha, enjoy my stinky blood! And it's like, "Joke's on you, bro. I actually love the smell of your— the smell of your stinky blood is bringing my family together."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "We are watching Home Alone 2: Lost in New York right now, and we are enjoying it extra because of the smell of your stinky tree blood. Thank you."

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, the amazing thing about trees, especially these conifer trees, that I didn't realize, is that that smell is actually deterrent to bark beetles, and also when it is released into the atmosphere it can play a role in cloud

seeding. So, some scientists think that the clouds that cover a conifer forest have actually been created to block sunlight and cool the forest.

**Griffin:** That's wild!

**Rachel:** So, the trees release this compound and they get some shade.

**Griffin:** Man, I like that.

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

**Griffin:** That's cool!

**Rachel:** Mm hmm. There have been a lot of, like, claims about terpenes, too. Uh, they're used for a lot of purposes. They are used in turpentine, which is that solvent that thins out the paints.

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:** They're also used in fragrances and cleaning products and in medicines. They have started to explore whether it could be a replacement for a petroleum-based chemical for things like plastic and fuel.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But the problem is that trees don't produce a lot of terpenes, so it's not really economically feasible.

**Griffin:** Just use more trees. We got a lot of them, right?

**Rachel:** [laughs] You kinda solve one problem by creating another with that one.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I watched FernGully. I think the message of that movie is there's always more trees? [laughs] Did I watch it right?

**Rachel:** Did I take that away?

**Griffin:** I don't think so.

**Rachel:** So yes, so pine, spruce and fir trees all produce these terpenes, and there is— there is also, apparently, some vitamin C in that pine bark and needles, too. So, there's a lot of stuff going on there.

**Griffin:** I used to chew pine needles. I remember very clearly, they were like on campus at Marshall and there was a big one growing out right behind the theatre, and so just like, green room breaks, you know, get back, hit up that tree on my way out, grab a needle to chew on on my way home. It's nice. It was very rustic.

**Rachel:** That does sound like some people have toothpicks and you're like, "Nah, I'm more earthy than that."

**Griffin:** I like it. Tasted good as hell.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Sometimes you'd get a sappy one and they didn't taste especially good. I get why those beetles are like, "[chomping noise] Nope! Next tree. The pointy ones, guys, are gross."

Can I do my second thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** My second thing is a game called Settlers of Catan. Actually, these days it's just called Catan. I think they dropped the 'Settlers of'. But the traditional title was the Settlers of Catan. Or maybe Catan [pronounced Kattan]. Again, depending on... but then you start thinking about Chris Kattan. And then you start fucking laughing so hard that you can't focus. You think about Mango and it's like, "Oh no, I lost control of my body."

God, I miss playing Catan. Our friends here in town are not big, like, gamers, especially like board gamers, but for whatever reason, Catan, for a long period of time, was like the thing we did when we all got together.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it surprised me, because I feel like we had a lot of games that I think were faster-paced and more accessible, but for whatever reason, Catan was the one that really took off.

**Griffin:** We would have game nights with like, me and some of my buddies, where we would go over and just play one game of Catan. And that's it. That's like all we did. But for whatever reason, like, everybody was so into it despite the fact that they didn't really touch other board games. They just got really into Catan.

**Rachel:** You know, I heard you can play that online. I wonder if that would be a fun solution for our friends.

**Griffin:** Oh, that's not a bad idea, yeah. I think there's a board game version—or like, an app that you can play. Anyway, I just sounded like I was 400,000 years old.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Catan is a German resource management board game where if you're playing the basic version, you and two to three other players sort of vie for control of an island that is made out of these little hex-shaped pieces. Apparently on the new version—traditionally you could pop the hexes in and out so every time you played it was like a different board, but I think the new versions of Catan just have a static board that is like, designed for optimal fairness? Which is interesting. I dunno, I have to do more research into that.

Basically, the different hexes have different resources on them and you build little cities on those hexes to gather those resources and build more cities and roads and things like that, to try and accomplish different objectives and collect victory points to win before your opponents.

**Rachel:** Yeah, and there are all these different strategies that I witness people use. I don't particularly have a favorite. Do you have a favorite go-to?

**Griffin:** I usually will try and be a little bit flexible for the first few rounds. So, to give you an example, you could get victory points for building towns and then you can get more victory points for upgrading them to cities, and then you get victory points on these little basically chance cards that you can spend resources on. And you can build roads—you have to build roads to connect your cities and then whoever has the longest road gets victory points, but you can try and steal that from other people. So, like, I kind of watch what everybody else is doing, and then see, like, if there is a way for me to snake one of the things that nobody's going for very easily.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That is what is so brilliant about this game, right? I know what I said earlier sounded complicated, but that's it. Like, there's a robber you move around to screw people over. Like, there really isn't much to the game other than that, and there are a million different ways that you can try and play it to win. And because of the way that, like, you build your first cities, like, every time you play



everybody's gonna have a different arrangement of like, "Okay, well this time I have a lot of access to sheep and ore. I haven't had that before, starting to play a game, what is that— what does my optimal way to victory look like?"

**Rachel:** Well, and it does become kind of a group game in a way, because at a certain point, if you realize somebody is poised to win, you can all kind of work together.

**Griffin:** And that is what is so— the other sort of fascinating heat to the game is that in order to— realistically, in order to win, you have to trade. There's a part of the round for every player's turn where everybody can trade with that player. And you have to do that, right? You are not going to be able to have a monopoly on every resource in the game, and you're gonna need something from somebody at some point.

So, then it's a question of just like, "Well, I really need the thing that you are offering me, but I also know that the thing I would give you in return would perhaps win you the game," so that social aspect is, like, kind of integral to the game and adds, like, a huge layer of complexity to it. Because now not only are you playing your game, you have to sort of mentally play everybody else's game too, to make sure that you don't end your game by trading away the wrong thing.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's so, so, so, like... it gets at these primal board game concepts, and a lot of them, too, without getting way too complicated about them. There are a lot of different expansions to the game. The main one, I think, is 5 to 6 player expansion that makes it so you can play with more people. We typically play that every time we play. But then there's like, Seafarers and like, uh, what are the other ones? Knights and Cities, and Traders and Barbarians. Like, there's all kinds of different flavors that add things or add different sort of like campaigns and scenarios.

But just the basic Catan is not that complicated. The rules aren't complicated, but like, the mental calculations you have to do while you are playing it and paying attention to having, sort of, situational awareness is, like, super, super complicated. There was a— the game was created by Klaus Teuber, who released it in Germany in 1995, and it birthed sort of this huge wave of German boardgames that went global. Like, this genre of game was, like, huge in Germany, but it wasn't until Catan that it sort of had broad crossover appeal when it reached the states and everywhere else and became, like, this huge, huge thing.

**Rachel:** Like Don't Break the Ice.

**Griffin:** Yeah, uh, Yeti in my Spaghetti.

**Rachel:** Mhm. Jenga.

**Griffin:** Like, you know, these German classics. There's this prolific RPG designer whose name is Richard Dansky, who wrote about the game. And this quote, I think, really, really perfectly summarizes, like, what makes it so brilliant.

He wrote, "It's a resource management game defined by position and strategizing. It's a social game defined by horse trading of resource cards and 'sicking the Fritz', as my friends call the robber, with bloodthirsty bonhomie. It is a game of chance ruled by dice rolls and card draws. It's a hardcore game and a light social passtime and everything in between. A laboratory where I can test a hundred different play styles, and a genuine reason to invite friends over." Like, it ticks all the boxes of things that I like about playing board games.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And it does it in a package that like— I think is pretty well tested at this point, at least locally, it works for everyone. Which is so rare. It's so rare.

**Rachel:** Yeah. There's just enough luck involved that, you know, if you are somebody that hasn't won before, you know, it doesn't mean that you're never going to win.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I feel like that's what can be really appealing when you have a group of people who may or may not be board game enthusiasts. Is like, if you sit down with a bunch of people and you feel like, "Well, I'm never gonna win," you know, you're less likely to invest the time. But this one, I feel like—

**Griffin:** I feel like everybody has won. We have played dozens and dozens and dozens of games of Catan with our friends and I feel like everybody's won at least once.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It is, uh— it's pretty— I mean, it's probably the perfect board game. [laughs] I don't think you can do much better than it. And boy howdy—

**Rachel:** Except for The Adventure Zone Game.

**Griffin:** The Adventure Zone Game, which, yeah.

**Rachel:** Is perfect.

**Griffin:** Is really good. And God, I wish— I really wish I could memorize the URL for that.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But it's on McElroy Family. I think.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** McElroyFamily.com, you can probably find the link there.

**Rachel:** McElroy— no, McElroy.Family!

**Griffin:** McElroy.Family. I think we have a few hyperlinks that'll get you there.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Here's some submissions from our friends at home. Catherine says, "My wonderful thing is choosing the right kitchen tool to get the job done. My partner and I recently expanded our kitchen tool collection and there's nothing more satisfying than having the right flexible plastic spatula to scrape the sides of a bowl clean, or the proper sturdy metal spatula to get all the crispy bits off the bottom of a pan."

I forgot to tell you, that box right there does have a new set of wooden kitchen instruments that don't... add a crazy wood—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like, a crazy sandalwood smell to the food that we cook it with.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** There's like, 13 wood tools in there. I'm so stoked. God almighty, I love wooden cooking tools.

**Rachel:** Okay. Uh, yeah, you know what, when you started reading that submission I instantly thought of the spatula, because it's one of those tools that I almost never use, and then when I remember we have it I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this is the perfect thing!"

**Griffin:** "This is it. This is what I need right now." And Katie says, "Now that it's actually chilly outside, one of my favorite things is going outside real quick without a jacket, to take the trash out or grab something from my car, then coming back inside and feeling the very warm, cozy air."

**Rachel:** Mm!

**Griffin:** Mm, that's good too. Got cold here for a bit in Austin, it got warm again. Gonna get cold again soon, I guess. I had to run something outside and I was in bare feet and I came back in the house like, "That sucked!" And I just sat by the fireplace and was just like, "Ooh, that's good!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hey, thank you for listening! Thank you to Ben and Augustus for the use of our theme song "Money Won't Pay". You can find a link to that in the episode description. And thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network! Check out all the good shows on [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org)!

**Rachel:** Yeah, a lot of really good— a lot of really, really good stuff. I was excited actually, this week's Stop Podcasting Yourself has Rhea Butcher on it!

**Griffin:** Oh! Great!

**Rachel:** Yeah. Like, the nicest people, all on one show.

**Griffin:** I do love that.

**Rachel:** Um... and thank you all to be... hmm.

**Griffin:** Thank you all to be good.

**Rachel:** Thank you all to be good. Thank you all for being patient with us as we figure out a recording schedule that will work for us.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Each week. [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's, um... yeah.

**Rachel:** I think what we are experiencing is what a lot of people are experiencing, which is you have a very careful card house built right now.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And if one card comes lose, you realize you have nothing.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And so, that is what we are figuring out.

**Griffin:** And then it's like— and then all of a sudden you end up president. And then, like, I guess you have a— your Chief of staff is a real bad guy.

**Rachel:** Oh, House of Cards, I see. I see.

**Griffin:** And then... um...

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** And then I guess you die? But you didn't see...

**Rachel:** You didn't see. [laughs]

**Griffin:** You didn't see me. I can't start fucking thinking about Kevin Spacey's Christmas time video. I mean, we do watch it every year, because of just how fucking... just how sad it is. But also how buck wild it is.

**Rachel:** You gotta send that to Justin right now.

**Griffin:** I got to. We gotta go so I can send that to Justin. Bye everybody.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Bye.

[theme music plays]

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