

## Wonderful! 164: God Knows, Davey

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[theme music plays]

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

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

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** Who's feelin' fuckin' funnyyy?!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Who's feelin' like recording a podcast, talkin' about the good stuff goin' on in the world?! You?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Nope? Me? Uh-uh! But here we are! You're listening to us, which means we must have recorded this at some point today.

**Rachel:** Griffin, like a real soothsayer, said, "Y'know what? I don't think we're gonna get an episode up on time. And I said, that relieves me a little."

**Griffin:** It was Tuesday night. We were sweating the Georgia election results, and like, glued to it. And so, I was like, "I know we've been late lately because of the holidays, and because of all the like, COVID stuff that's been sort of in our sphere, and uh... y'know, that's not great. But I know we're stressed about these Georgia election results, so let's hold this baby off 'til Thursday, when we're in a better headspace."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So now it's Thursday morning, and we are recording this. I don't know how—this is a show where we talk about good things that we like, and that we're into. And that is a service that we... understand, we provide, folks, of positivity in a nice, positive space. And I don't know how necessarily to be a good steward of that today, and I ho—I'm sure our listeners understand that. But it would be fuckin' buckwild for us, the day after a... like, attempt to literally overthrow the government, we were like, "But fuckin' Combos are pretty cool."

**Rachel:** I know. It does. It feels like we are, uh, sitting at a news desk, and somebody is giving a report, and then they cut to us, and we say, "Hey, Froot Loops, though, guys."

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's like we had a feature about the kitty fashion show happening at the mall, but also, there's like, a... there's a coup happening outside.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I... we're gonna do the episode. And we have things to talk about.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And things that we are positive about. But I am fully cognizant of the fact that, uh... incredibly scary and important things that nobody should stop paying attention to are also happening out—y'know, outside of our windows.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I think it's important to take breaks. This is something that I try to do as a partner, is I'll try and remind Griffin, like, you need to take breaks. And so, maybe if you have scheduled a break, and this is what you're doing, that feels good to me.

**Griffin:** It is also maybe after or before or in the middle of this episode – won't stop you – a really great time to call your elected officials. Call five of them. Email them. Y'know, do whatever you can to tell them that, uh, what

happened yesterday was a... a terrorist attack, and that there should be consequences for that, fucking obviously.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And then, do whatever you can in the following, y'know, days, weeks, months, elections, to just fuckin' unseat everybody responsible for it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** The thing I felt yesterday, in addition to the fear and righteous anger, was this like... level of determination to just fuck Ted Cruz's whole shit. Like, his whole life up in a way that I haven't necessarily experienced before.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I mean, we were fans of Beto. It wasn't like we were...  
[laughing]

**Griffin:** I—listen—

**Rachel:** ... uncertain.

**Griffin:** Everything up to this point, Ted Cruz has been my road dog! No. Fuckin—

**Rachel:** [laughing] Wasn't like we were like, "Wait, is he a bad guy?"  
[laughing]

**Griffin:** I know we're preaching to the choir. I know that like... whenever we talk about stuff like this, we do get tweets and messages and emails from people on the other side of the aisle from us, talking about how disappointed they are. And like, if there are any of those people still listening to this show... if—I am, like, begging you to really put what happened yesterday in the correct perspective, which was that Ted Cruz, at all, uh... participated in a coup of the government. And like, you have to not be okay with that.

I don't know. This is a futile effort. I recognize that, and a bummer way to start out the show. But like, I don't—I don't know what to do with this energy right now, because it's, uh... it's all I've been able to think about, and I'm sure everybody else has, too.

So, like, let's just—let's do our show. Let's do our episode. I think if we hadn't missed so many episodes lately, we fucking definitely for sure would not be doing one right now.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But we are—we are here, and please enjoy it, and let it give you a moment of levity, if that is something we can even provide right now. But holy shit, don't stop, like, staying alert for what is happening right now.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um... okay. So... do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Uh... I wanted to bring up fudge.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh baby.

**Rachel:** [laughs] So as a pregnant woman, some of my options for relaxers are gone. But uh, I looked up fudge, because I was like, "How does one make fudge?" It's incredibly easy. Now, I say all this – I have not tried what I made yesterday, so I do not know if it turned out good. But it's just like, you melt chocolate and butter and condensed milk, and then you put it in the fridge, and I had no idea it was that easy.

**Griffin:** Mm.

**Rachel:** Used to go over to my aunt's house at Christmas, and she would make an assortment of fudge, and I thought, "This woman is a magician." And turns out, nope. Sorry. Sorry, Aunt Sydney.

**Griffin:** Not that crazy. Yeah.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uhh... yeah. I'm gonna say...

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** ... uhh... te—text message pharmacy services. I appreciate—I appreciate that.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that is nice.

**Griffin:** Last week, I was runnin' low on my... brain fuel. [laughs] The gas that makes my brain go right. And I was like, "Oh man, I'm not gonna be able to get ahold of my psychiatrist on such short no—" But then I just got a text message from CVS, like, "Hey, do you want more of your brain medicine?" And I was like, "Yeeeaahhh?" [laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs] What's the catch?

**Griffin:** It was almost like CVS was like, "You are wicked gonna need it next week, my man. So do you want us to send a text to your psychiatrist to get a refill?" And I was like, yes. And that was it. And it showed up, and I got it. I know this isn't—they haven't reinvented the wheel here, but I freakin' appreciate it!

**Rachel:** It's handy!

**Griffin:** No one—I have no other sort of facet of my health life that other people are thinking of me like that.

**Rachel:** It used to like, call the pharmacy, and they'd ask you for your prescription number to refill it, and I'd be like, "Shoot, I don't know what that is."

**Griffin:** Yeah. But now I get like, y'know, six eggplant emojis.

**Rachel:** Now they're like, "You up, Griffin?"

**Griffin:** With some prayer hands. "You up? How's your brain?"

Uh, you go first this week.

**Rachel:** I go first. So this is something I thought, for sure, we had talked about. But I did not see it on the website, and so, I think it is untrod ground. And that is claymation.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Are we talking like, uhh... Aardman? Is that the name of the studio?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, among others. But yeah. It's one of those things that, uh, it just instantly grabs my attention.

**Griffin:** Cannot think of anything other than, uh, Parks and Rec. The episode where Adam Scott's character... oh, god, what was his name? He gets like—

**Rachel:** Ben Wyatt.

**Griffin:** Ben Wyatt gets very depressed when he, uh, gets fired.

**Rachel:** [laughs] And does his own video.

**Griffin:** And so, he makes his own four-second video to Shiny Happy People.

**Rachel:** Uh... [laughs] Yeah, that is really good. Forgot about that.

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

**Rachel:** Um, so... everybody, I'm sure, knows what this is. But just to give some context, um... shooting a 30-minute claymation movie, potentially requires making approximately 21,600 stops to change the figures for the frames. A full-length 90-minute movie, 64,800.

**Griffin:** Good lord.

**Rachel:** And possibly more, because y'know, you get a hair or a smudge in there? Y'know, you gotta—

**Griffin:** I guess I haven't thought about it. Are claymation movies shot at 30 frames a second? It would seem excessive to do anything—or, what, like, movies are some weird, like, 27...

**Rachel:** So, normal film runs at 24 frames per second.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I'm thinking of elite gamer shit right now.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** I can't watch Wallace and Gromit at anything less than 120 frames per second on my 4k monitor. I need a wide field of vision if I'm gonna no-scope fools in my Wallace and Gromit movies.

**Rachel:** There are a lot of tricks of the trade now. Feature-length productions have generally switched from clay to rubber silicone and resin-cast components. So just the idea, like, it is... it's not gonna get like, a piece of dust stuck to it the way clay would.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Um, but there's just something about it that really grabs me. I definitely love the Wallace and Gromit films. And it—there's just something more endearing about it. I don't know, I can't really explain why a cartoon doesn't, like, captivate me the same way claymation does. But it is definitely the case.

**Griffin:** There's something about the physicality of it. There's something about the... and maybe this didn't like, resonate with me as much when I was younger, but the... with claymation, you can sort of see the amount of effort that went into the thing on every scale. Whereas, with like, a 3D CGI movie, that is... unless you kind of know how 3D animation works, you cannot imagine the work that goes into it.

**Rachel:** That's true. The limitations are so clear, right? Like, with Wallace and Gromit, it was really just like, on Gromit the dog, there were eyes and a mouth. And then, just the little eyebrow fold did like, so much work. And you realized, like, this is what they have. It's kind of like, y'know, puppeteering in a way, of just like a... the face is set, and you are just moving the tiniest part of the face to communicate emotion.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** It's fascinating.

**Griffin:** I think Kubo and the Two Strings is not claymation, but uh... I forget the name of it. I remember watching a behind the scenes, like, making of, of just like, one shot from Kubo and the Two Strings, and being like, "Holy god, how does anybody do this?"

**Rachel:** Yeah, and Aardman did start moving away. So, the movie Flushed Away was a CGI replication of clay animation.

**Griffin:** Oh, right.

**Rachel:** So there are definitely some changes being made. But the big starting point... so, the first, like, claymation film, uh, was done back in 1908. This is like a silent film. And it was like... it was a spoof of the presidential election with Roosevelt.

**Griffin:** Oh, I bet that was funnyyy.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I watched it!



**Griffin:** Oh, you can watch it?

**Rachel:** Yeah, it's on YouTube. And it's just a bunch of men getting in a fight in a bar, and then one man goes to jail, and he goes to sleep, and while he's sleeping, these busts of the presidential candidates appear. And you can see them, like, slowly be pieced together into who they are. Like, which candidate they are.

**Griffin:** Dang, that sounds... that sounds like biting criticism.

**Rachel:** But these like, clay busts, they don't like, talk. They're not animated. It's just like, you see the clay make it, and then you're like, "Oh."

**Griffin:** "Oh, I get it." You know there's people who watched that back in 1908 like, "Oh, he didn't! He did not!"

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** "Oh my god!"

**Rachel:** Um, claymation as, I think, we know it, really took off with like, Gumby.

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm.

**Rachel:** And Davey and Goliath.

**Griffin:** Oh, sweet Davey and Goliath.

**Rachel:** Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

**Griffin:** God knows...

**Rachel:** Frosty the Snowman.

**Griffin:** I just remembered that my dad used to quote that all the time. Like, as a joke, not in the manner that it was intended. But like, if one of us did something wrong, he would always go, "God knows, Davey."

**Rachel:** [laughs] That's really good.

**Griffin:** I guess there's an episode where Davey was just bein' a real rascal and being like, "So what? I didn't get in trouble." "God knows, Davey."

**Rachel:** [laughs] That was actually when I was looking at this, the... Davey and Goliath was something that was given to the networks for free.

**Griffin:** I remember! No, I've watched a making of Davey and Goliath, I think partially because... how did that happen? How did somebody make a free claymation show for networks to use?

**Rachel:** I mean, it was paid for by the church, as I understand.

**Griffin:** Imagine, yes. I imagine that.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Um... but Gumby and Davey, same creator.

**Griffin:** Oh, wow! I don't think I knew that. Or remembered it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So, the Aardman that I'm familiar with actually started back in the '80s. Nick Park joined Aardman in 1985. And the first, uh, film they put out was Creature Comforts in 1989.

**Griffin:** I've never heard of that film.

**Rachel:** Oh, it's very good. It's filmed like documentary style, and it's, uh... speaking to animals in captivity.

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

**Rachel:** Yeah. It's—I mean, it's not exactly lighthearted.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Because it is a lot of animals kind of...

**Griffin:** Y'know what, I do—we watched a documentary about Aardman.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I remember, because—

**Rachel:** There's a lot of animals kind of complaining about the zoo conditions.

**Griffin:** I remember that their studio burned down, and my mind could not process the amount of like...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... film history that was probably lost in that event. Wow, this is a fun—this is not a bummer episode at all.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, but uh... Nick Park, since joining Aardman, they've received a total of six academy award nominations, and have won four.

**Griffin:** Wow.

**Rachel:** With Creature Comforts, as I mentioned. A Grand Day Out was nominated. Wrong Trousers, Close Shave, Curse of the Were-Rabbit, uh... and there—y'know, they're still doing stuff today. Shaun the Sheep.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah! That's huge.

**Rachel:** Is really, hugely successful. Um, and uh... there's been any other number—I know Tim Burton did like a... like a pirate one.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah!

**Rachel:** That they were involved with. They've done commercials. You can always kind of recognize it.

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** I feel like there's something about the style that you're just immediately like, "Oh, that must be Aardman."

**Griffin:** If they have tall heads with two sort of conjoined eyeballs, it's an Aardman feature.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs] That's true. Um, yeah. I—this is the kind of thing that will probably—I mean, y'know, I mentioned that the Flushed Away film was moved to CGI. I imagine claymation is not something that will, y'know, have a huge boom anytime soon.

**Griffin:** You say that.

**Rachel:** But I don't think it will go away, either.

**Griffin:** You say that, but then you do get the like, uh... Coraline, Kubo and the Two Strings... you get the—I mean, technically, like, Lego Movie is not that far out. Like, obviously, they used a lot of sort of CGI post-production stuff, but a lot of that was stop motion as well. Yeah. I think—I think there's enough of that stuff going on.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

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

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** My first thing... I don't know if you've ever had any exposure to my first thing. I'll be curious to see. But my first thing is Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

**Rachel:** Oh, so, I played the computer game.

**Griffin:** I love that about you.

**Rachel:** I had a lot of people recommend the book to me. I never read it.

**Griffin:** I did. I did read it when I was in, I think, like middle school, and it was uh...

**Rachel:** I had a friend in high school that was a drummer in a band called The Hitchhikers, and used to carry around a copy of that book.

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

**Rachel:** Was very much his aesthetic in high school.

**Griffin:** I get it, for sure. Uh, so, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is a sort of multimedia franchise. The books, there were, I think six of them, that I've only read, I think, the first two. And from what I understand, there's a sort of decline in quality as they go along. And most of them, though, were written, and the whole sort of series was created by Douglas Adams.

And it's a science fiction series, but it's a like, very comedy-forward science fiction series about sort of a group of misfits traveling around the galaxy, uh, which ends up being a much stranger galaxy than you would assume.

And... what I didn't know is that, before the books, it was a radio series. It was a comedy radio series on BBC Radio 4. Um, and then, the book was adapted from the radio series. I thought, for sure, that it was the other way around, 'cause that seems like a weird, like, direction for the adaptation to go in.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, you don't usually hear about it happening that direction.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But after being a BBC radio series – that was 1978 when it first aired – uh, I think a year later, the first Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy book adaptation came out. And since then, like, there have been books, there have been comics, there have been stage shows. The TV series is actually the first time I... I think it was like '83 that the TV series came out? That was my first actual exposure to it, and then I read the book after that.

**Rachel:** Oh, wow.

**Griffin:** The TV series, I love. There was also a movie that came out in 2005, with uh, Zooey Deschanel, and Martin Freeman, and... it was fine. Mos Def, I believe, played Ford Prefect.

Um, so, the books are mostly about this guy, Arthur Dent, who is on Earth with his friend, Ford Prefect, who turns out to be an alien. And an alien race called the Vogons come to demolish Earth, because it's in the way of a planned highway. The interspace highway they're planning to build. But Ford Prefect helps Arthur Dent hitchhike off of Earth, so he is the last living human man.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And to get—he gets picked up by, uh, the president of the galaxy, Zaphod Beeblebrox, uh, who is traveling with a human woman named Trillian.

**Rachel:** The comfort with which you said that name blew me away.

**Griffin:** Zaphod Beeblebrox? Yeah. It's, uh... he is a major character. He's a two-headed alien president of the galaxy. Uh, who is played by Sam Rockwell in the movie, which is really good—really good casting.

**Rachel:** Ohh, see, this sounds like charming casting.

**Griffin:** The—well, I think it helps that the books themselves, like, the story itself is so... is so charming, and so dense and so exceptionally British. And that's what I think really, really works, and what makes it really stand the test of time is, there is a style of British comedy that was especially prevalent back then. Like Python, which was like... saying these completely nonsensical things, and these really irreverent things, in a really dry, matter-of-fact way. That is, essentially, what the titular Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It is a book that exists. Ford Prefect is a writer for this Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, and constantly throughout the book, the Hitchhiker's Guide will deploy these like, explanations of what this bureaucratic alien race is like. Or how this thing works in space. And it's always nonsense, delivered in the driest way.

Stephen Fry was the narrator for the movie. I forget who was the narrator for the other series. But it's just like, "Oh yes, the... this ship travels by improbability." Like, it's the wildest ideas that are delivered so scientifically and matter-of-factly.

**Rachel:** Yeah, see, that would've helped me, because when I tried to play that DOS game, I never got anywhere. Like, I didn't—I would play it for like 30 minutes, and I could never get past like, the opening moment.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Well, it helps that old adventure games were famously... completely bat-shit nonsensical, like... use this—use the—I think the famous example is like, in one of the Monkey Island games, you had to like, use a rubber pulley with a chicken to like, make something to cross a ravine.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Um, what—what kicks ass about Hitchhiker's Guide is like, you had this thing of dry, British comedy kicked up to unknown degrees, because then you start doing that with sci-fi, and really great shit happens. But while it is sort of a send-up of sci-fi, there are ideas in Hitchhiker's Guide to the

Galaxy that are really fuckin' cool, and really like, smart, and actually have been kind of foundational for sci-fi moving forward.

So like, the big—the concept that is brought up a lot is the Babel Fish, is like something that is explained very early on by the Hitchhiker's Guide, and it's a little tiny fish alien that you put in your ear, and then, anything that it hears, it automatically translates into a language you can understand. And so, just everybody in the galaxy has a Babel Fish in their ear.

**Rachel:** Ohh!

**Griffin:** So that gets around, like, "Hey, how come all of the aliens speak English?" And so, the book is kind of full—like, the series is full of stuff like that that's like, y'know, sci-fi is kind of obsessed with explaining things practically to you. Like, "And here's how this works. And here's what—here's how they travel through, uh, y'know, wormholes, and here's how they're all breathing, and here's what they eat." And Hitchhiker's Guide had answers for all that stuff that were... bonkers. But they were kind of cool from time to time.

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, I love that. I don't think I realized how influential that was until you said Babel Fish out loud, because I remember that being a... like, a search engine.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And the story—the story itself was so, like, weird but heady and cool. Basically, Arthur Dent learns that Earth was a supercomputer that was trying to solve the answer to life, the universe, and everything. That's where 42... do you know how like, 42 is like a thing people talk about? Like, a number that is brought up a lot as a joke? Like, 42 is the answer?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** That's where this comes from.

**Rachel:** Oh.



**Griffin:** This supercomputer determines that the number 42 is the answer to, "What is the meaning of life, the universe, and everything?" And then they have to go about figuring out what the actual question is that 42 is the answer to.

It's like, that's a wild idea, that the Earth is a supercomputer, and it is like, a cool sci-fi idea that's like... y'know, jokes aside, like just... I don't know, a rad concept. And that's what I really love about these books is like, they are funny, but they also bring up like, kind of thought-provoking sci-fi ideas. So, uh... and it's also just so charming.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** I just really like Hitchhiker's Guide.

Um, hey, can I hitchhike with you all the way to stealing you... away for the a—uh, ads?

**Rachel:** ... of course.

**Griffin:** Alright.

[ad break stinger plays, sped up]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** Got a couple jimbograms here. Do you want to hear `em?

**Rachel:** Please!

**Griffin:** This one's for Beth, and it's from Ryan, who says, "Beeeth! Thank you for being such a kind, patient, and wonderful wife! Your constant support means the world to me. I love you, and all our many pets. Wanna go out some time? Ryan, Goose, and the whole gang."

Is Ryan, Goose, and the whole gang asking Beth on a date? Is that's what's happening in the message?

**Rachel:** I think that's the pets.

**Griffin:** Are the pets—the answer stands. I mean, the question stands.

**Rachel:** Well, and I think, Ryan, you should've given yourself some space in that maybe Beth doesn't want all the pets there. Y'know?

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Rachel:** So I'm gonna say that Ryan would probably be okay if the pets weren't there.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And I'm also wondering if the Goose is a pet? Is it an actual graceful long-necked bird?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Graceful is not the word I would actually use to describe a goose.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's not something I typically associate with geese.

**Griffin:** Yeah. You want to read this next one?

**Rachel:** Yes. Uh, this message is for Maddie. It is from AJ. "Hey, Maddie! I just wanted to say that I'm so proud of you for making it through 2020. All the way from retail during a pandemic to brain surgery. I still can't believe you have a 3D-printed bone in your head now. We've had a great few years together so far, and I'm so excited to see what comes next. I love you so much. AJ."

**Griffin:** That rules. I mean, it's—I hope you are doing well, and brain surgery, obviously, is nothing to fuck with. But that's some—that is some cyberpunk shit.

**Rachel:** 3D printed bone! I love that!

**Griffin:** I do, too. I mean, what—

**Rachel:** I mean, Griffin, you've got a 3D printer now.

**Griffin:** It's true! Let me print out some bones!

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Is the bone their whole skull? 'Cause I would just go with the Dan Akroid vodka skull. The crystal skull, if I—

**Rachel:** How do you think a skull works?

**Griffin:** How do I think a skull works? I guess it's a few bones, huh?

**Rachel:** Yeah, there's more than one.

**Griffin:** That's fair.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

**Griffin:** Uh, you want to tell me about that there second thing you got going on right there?

**Rachel:** Yeah! My second thing is a musical group called Best Coast.

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah! I have been thinking about Best Coast for a while now as a topic. Uh, and was kind of not sure, 'cause it was one of those situations where you assumed, like, everybody knows Best Coast, right?

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

**Rachel:** I don't think that's true, and also, they had a new album come out in February 2020. So almost...

**Griffin:** Whoa, really?

**Rachel:** ... exactly a year ago. Yeah. No idea. Uh, this happens to me a lot. [laughs]

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

**Rachel:** Where I'll like, have a band that I really like from like 2010, and then I kind of lose touch.

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** And then I'm like, "Oh yeah, hey, it's been a while, huh? Let me see." And then it's like, just so happens they had an album come out like, the month before.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Um, Best Coast is a rock duo that formed in LA in 2009. It is Bethany Cosentino on vocals, and Bobb Bruno is a multi-instrumentalist. And I saw Best Coast at South by Southwest!

**Griffin:** I feel like Best Coast is—I apologize for yawning. Uh, I feel like Best Coast is one of those bands that everybody in Austin knows about, because of the exposure we got through South by Southwest and Austin City Limits.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Although, I feel like... so, Crazy for You was the band's debut album, and it came out in 2010. And I feel like, for whatever reason, I think it was just the group of friends and the time period, like... I feel like I knew about that album, actually, before I went to South by Southwest. Because I remember intentionally going to a venue where I knew they would be playing.

So, they—after that album came out, they spent a lot of 2011 on the road for festival appearances and tour dates. The album I didn't know about was *The Only Place*, which came out in 2012. Totally missed that one. And then, when they did *California Nights* in 2015, back on board.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Aware of that one. Um, and uh... there's just something about... so, Bethany Cosentino has this voice and this energy that is just like... it is dreary and poppy at the same time? It's very Rilo Kiley kind of, in that you're like, like... it feels safe to be sad here, but also, I'm kind of havin' a good time being sad? [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's like a—it's like a kind of, uh... this is gonna make me sound kind of douchey, but sort of like that sort of washed-out southern California, like, dream-like sound that, uh, the kids are just goin' crazy for these days.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So, the guardian described the sound as a lo-fi '60s garage rock and surfing band.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which I thought was pretty apt. [laughs] So, Bethany started writing music at age 15. And her inspiration is kind of all over the place. It's kind of like this traditional, like, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and also Weezer and Blink-182.

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I feel like is a really good, like, amalgamation of influences that a musician would have in that time period. Um, but she kind of got her start uploading music to MySpace.

**Griffin:** Hm!

**Rachel:** Uh, and was in a band briefly called *Pocahaunted*, uh, which at one point opened for Sonic Youth. But then, she left that band to go to college in

New York, where she was pretty miserable, 'cause moving – and I'm sure this happens to a lot of people – moving from like, sunny California to like, congested, y'know, like, dark New York, especially those winters, was not a pleasant experience for her. So she dropped out of college, came back, got a part time job, and started working on music with her current music partner, Bobb Bruno.

She had kind of a hard time, because when *Crazy for You* came out in 2010, uh, it got some criticism. I loved it. I loved that album. Very, very poppy. Much poppier than her later stuff. But y'know, like, outlets... and I'm sure you've felt this when you were working at Polygon, but outlets like Pitchfork kind of gave her some criticism for, y'know, her like, more fundamental rhyme schemes, and the kind of like, these topics of like, y'know, being in love, and California, and y'know, just kind of—just a little bit of a critical eye at kind of the more simplistic aspects.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And she says openly, she's like, "I read everything. I read everything, and it was devastating to me, and it really crippled me for a while, and I had a really hard time moving forward."

**Griffin:** What's wild is like, now, though, like, that's the shit. Like, I feel like the albums that blow up now are not as sort of... I don't know, verbose. Like, it's, um... yeah, it's not all like, Joanna Newsom level, like, uh, poetic imagery.

**Rachel:** But y'know, when you're an indie rocker, and you're trying to do something—

**Griffin:** Absolutely, yeah.

**Rachel:** Y'know... and I think, also... and she has been kind of an advocate for being a woman in this position, trying to make rock music, y'know, is different. And that she was kind of given more scrutiny, perhaps, than she would've otherwise.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Uh, and... so, anyway, we've been talking a long time. I wanted to play a song off of California Nights called Feeling Okay, that I think will give a good kind of vibe for that music.

[‘Feeling Okay’ by Best Coast plays]

**Rachel:** Uh, so there was a five-year gap in between the new album and California Nights. Best Coast toured with Wavves, I guess, for a while.

**Griffin:** Ooh!

**Rachel:** Bethany was dating the, um, front man at the time. And they also toured with Paramore. And – and I wasn’t aware of this – they released a children’s album called Best Kids. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hey, that’s great!

**Rachel:** Which I have not heard yet, but I was excited. Um, and then, there was a short-lived television show with Fred Savage called What Just Happened, which I never watched, but it was like a parody of those like, after shows.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And uh, they served as the house band on that show.

**Griffin:** I love it. That’s great.

**Rachel:** But she—she really spent the time. She developed these like, what she calls ‘destructive patterns.’ And I read this interview where she said, quote, “My self-care at the time was like, oh, I just get really fucked up and watch Bravo.” [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which is what a lot of us do.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's...

**Rachel:** But I think she realized that it was really kind of, uh, hampering her artistic output. And so, she has since, um, embraced sobriety, and spent a lot of time kind of focusing on being present. And that is what has led to the new album, which I listened to recently, and it was very good.

She said, traditionally, she would write a song, and then go to her band mate, and he would make the music. And during this like, period of extreme challenge for her, she basically just went to her band mate and said, "Can you write the music and I'll write the song?" Like, it took like a tremendous amount of humility on her part of like, I am not getting anything done. And that's what helped put this new album together, and it's great. I recommend it.

**Griffin:** That's cool. Uh, I'm gonna do my second thing real fast, 'cause I know you need to hop off here in a bit.

**Rachel:** Yep.

**Griffin:** Safety Town. You know it. You know it from the hip MBMBaM TV show, assuming... I mean, everybody was subscribed to Seeso, so like...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm assuming everybody knows about Safety Town. Uh, it is a thing in Huntington, but I came to learn while we were shooting that show that it is also a thing that is kind of everywhere.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it was a modular thing in my town. So, Safety Town was brought to you when I was a kid.

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting. They didn't have the installation?

**Rachel:** We did not have a fixed location like you did.



**Griffin:** Um, there's lots of places that have that fixed location. So, Safety Town is a—an educational facility for like, elementary school aged children to teach you about just sort of general safety, with a focus on traffic and sort of pedestrian, uh, best practices, let's call them. But also like, uh, fire, guns, drugs, poison, flooding, earthquakes, like, whatever.

**Rachel:** Whoa!

**Griffin:** Yeah. So the heart of Safety Town is like, there's an educational building where you go in and you get kind of briefed on all of this stuff, and then, y'know... then, once you're patient enough, you get to go outside to this mini replica city, with go-karts that look like service vehicles, essentially, where you learn how, like, traffic works. And you learn how to learn what the signs on the road mean, and you learn how to obey traffic lights, and y'know, walk—crosswalk signals, and like, all of that stuff.

Um, and... ours was like—Huntington's was *very* well-maintained. Like, our Safety Town was taken very seriously, evidenced by the fact that me and Justin and Travis got in a lot of trouble, because we did Safety Town wrong as adults, filming a comedy show.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's the level of scrutiny that's—

**Rachel:** To be fair, you did, in your adult body, climb into one of those vehicles and drive it around.

**Griffin:** I was allowed to do that. It was the stealing of the batteries and moving of the huge, expensive batteries, I guess, was what got us kicked out of Safety Town.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** But like, you'd go there on a field trip, which like, I want to do a whole segment about field trips.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's a good idea!

**Griffin:** I saw somebody tweet, like, why is it that the air on the morning of field trips, like, always hit different? And somebody responded to that like, it's like, kind of foggy and a little bit like, dewy outside. And I was like, holy shit, what's going on?! Yes, it was!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is probably what got me thinking about Safety Town.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** I always thought that like—I've talked about my weird relationship with school before, where like, I tested really well, and I was a terrible student. Like, I didn't give a shit about learning anything, but I was really good at like, kind of memorizing stuff just enough to get good grades and keep going by.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But anytime like, something practical came about, I was like, all about it. Because I was like, "Oh, I've always been curious about this actual thing that I experience every day." And so, as a little kid, you don't... that is not a part of the required education. Like, how do traffic do? How are you actually supposed to be safe on the streets? When you are in the car with your parents, your guardians, whatever, and they are driving around and stopping at certain points, and giving right-of-way, like... what does all that stuff outside the car window mean?

And this was a chance for you to actually finally kind of crack that code. And I thought that that was so huge, like, so revolutionary. And it's not like drivers' ed, right? 'Cause you're essentially driving a big box with a gas pedal and a hand brake. And also, wicked, there *were* accidents. Like, the other thing about Safety Town is that, when it is in use, it is explicitly *not* the safest place on earth, because you got a bunch of kids driving around big

go-karts while other kids are trying to cross the streets. And there's like, three adults trying to like, lock the whole thing down.

**Rachel:** See, we just—well, I'm curious about the age, actually. Because when we did Safety Town, it was like, elementary school, like, real early, kindergarten kind of age. And we were using tricycles.

**Griffin:** Oh. [blows raspberry]

**Rachel:** So—but you had powered—

**Griffin:** We were like, second and third grade.

**Rachel:** Okay. See, at that point, didn't you kind of already know, like, I should stop when the light is red?

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, I mean, the... the accidents mostly happened because of, uh, lack of knowledge about how to operate a go-kart.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So like, I ran a red light in the mail truck, and I got like, put in, basically, time out for like, ten minutes, where I had to get out of the car and I couldn't do anything. It was absolutely humiliating.

So, Safety Town kind of got started in 1937. There was a dude whose name was Frend Boals, which is... strong. My name is Frend—F-R-E-N-D. Frend Boals, B-O-A-L-S.

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** Uh, he saw a car hit a kid, and that like, really left an impact on him. And so, he started this sort of like, traffic education school, which grew. In 1964, there was a nursery school teacher named Dorothy Child, who was—which is also like, a wild name for a preschool teacher, who opened the National Safety Town Center in Cleveland, Ohio, and then I guess it just kind of franchised out from there.

Um, but yeah, it just kind of boggles my mind, the amount of like, important practical education I didn't receive growing up. And that was not prioritized at all on like, a state level. Uh, and so, I am genuinely glad that Safety Town was there to like, in a very fun way – 'cause driving go-karts is fun – like, teach me about safety. That's good.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that blows me away that they have this like, dedicated location in Huntington where kids get to go on field trips. Like, that makes it fun and like, it makes it seem like, relevant and important.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, okay. Submissions from our friends at home. Becca says, "Love me a casserole. That's lunch for the week, babyyy!"

**Rachel:** That is really nice.

**Griffin:** God, we never make—we never do a casserole.

**Rachel:** Well, here's the thing. We'll always eat it the next day, and then never again.

**Griffin:** That's true. Well, okay. You're giving yourself a lot of credit there. I don't really dig leftovers, like, after two days after the fact. Rachel will— Rachel is a staunch advocate for...

**Rachel:** Yeah, I will... I'll take a day off, and then I'll come back on day three, and be like, "Can I?" And Griffin's like, "Probably not."

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, Rachel – another Rachel – says, "Rosemary smells great and tastes good on potatoes. That's all I need." Agreed. Hard agree. Firm agree. God, I love rosemary. Throw it on some steaks, and sous-vide them? Sous-vide rosemary, like, imparts that rosemary stink in a way that is indescribable. I love rosemary.

**Rachel:** I just like walking down the street, somebody's got it in their front yard, you rub your hands on it, and it's like...

**Griffin:** That's good.

**Rachel:** Why even shower that day? [laughs]

**Griffin:** When you get, uh—when you fry something that has rosemary on it, and then like, you're eating it, and you get that little crispy, little crunchy little rosem—ooh!

**Rachel:** Ooh!

**Griffin:** Ooh! Okay, we gotta wrap up here. Thank you so much 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. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Go check out all the great shows there, like Stop Podcasting Yourself, and Story Break, and...

**Rachel:** One Bad Mother.

**Griffin:** One Bad Mother.

**Rachel:** And many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many...

**Griffin:** Many, many, many, many, many, many, many, many more. This was, uh—this was nice. Getting to do this with you.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm kind of not looking forward to stopping. Just knowing kind of what's, uh...

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, just don't get back on the internet.

**Griffin:** I got to. Uh, please, please hang in there. Please contact your elected officials, and...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, just stay safe, and uh...

**Rachel:** And take breaks.

**Griffin:** Take breaks, but also...

**Rachel:** Y'know, stay vigilant, but take breaks. You're a person, not a robot.

**Griffin:** You're a person, not a robot. Um... and uh, yeah! Hang in there!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Bye!

**Rachel:** Bye. [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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