

## Wonderful! 63: Goin' Potty Backwards

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[Theme music plays]

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

**Griffin:** What's up? It's Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is *Wonderful!*

**Griffin:** I'm sitting backwards in my chair. How casual this is. How casual am I, right now with my backwards chair?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Pretty good. So [sighs] we should address the elephant in the room.

**Rachel:** Hello elephant.

**Griffin:** Okay. That's good. Um, we got a new sort of member of the studios staff here at, uh, *Wonderful!* Industries. From the makers of new lamp and, uh-

**Rachel:** New chair?

**Griffin:** Bro-brother printer and, uh, the Target chair, we have exercise bike. Welcome, exercise bike. Here to get sort of the show's, um, motivation game on track, and, uh, folks, don't worry. It's a Schwinn.

**Rachel:** [laughs quietly] I have my back to exercise bike right now and I feel rude.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you are sort of shutting exercise bike out of the conversation. Uh, exercise bike, what do you think is wonderful this week.?

“[high pitched, hesitantly] Um, I’m into sweatbands.”

Took me a lot to think of something that exercise bike would be into.

**Rachel:** Which shows how devoted we are to exercise.

**Griffin:** I've ridden it once for ten minutes but that's okay. I'll get there, and did I mention... it's a Schwinn?

**Rachel:** Is that a thing?

**Griffin:** Have you seen that commercial where the guy is like- he buys the woman an exercise bike and then she's telling all her friends like, "Don't worry, it's a Schwinn."

**Rachel:** I don't remember this.

**Griffin:** I'm thinking of the Jared commercials.

**Rachel:** I thought maybe, yeah.

**Griffin:** So, do you have any small wonders this week?

**Rachel:** I do.

**Griffin:** Okay. Oh, you've written them down. Well, small wonders are usually so, like, scat, they're so scat-jazz.

**Rachel:** Oh, I knew I would forget. Uh, the holiday episodes of *Nailed It*.

**Griffin:** Those have been very, very fun so far. We've watched what? Three? But we've watched them in a row as you are wont to do with Netflix programming sometimes.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um-

**Rachel:** It's nice it like, you know we were always looking for new stuff at this time of the year to get us in the spirit-

**Griffin:** It's doing it.

**Rachel:** And, uh-

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It's really working.

**Griffin:** Weirdly, it's the thing that's doing it. Also just sort of the- the extreme bounty of *Great British Baking Show* that we have gotten.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I feel like Netflix deployed, like, five different sort of chunks of baking show greatness.

**Rachel:** We toured through the new season-

**Griffin:** We did.

**Rachel:** And the holiday episodes.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Um, yeah. God, that was good stuff.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Just sort of watching *Final Table*, it's not sort of giving me this same sort of feel-good feeling. It's a little more cutthroat but, um, you know, you need a little bit of that too. A little spice in the sugar.

You know how they say you should always put a little bit of chili powder in your sugar when you store it?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, I got- oh, our fireplace. We got our fireplace fixed up.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, and just lit it for the first time today, and holy crap is it cozy as heck, y'all.

**Rachel:** It's real nice.

**Griffin:** I think I go first this week.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** My first thing is "[Principal Skinner impression] The Aurora Borealis."

"[Gary Chalmers impression] The Aurora Borealis, at this time of day, at this time of year, localized entirely within your kitchen."

**Rachel:** You already did steamed hams. You're just talking in general?

**Griffin:** "[Principal Skinner Impression] Yes."

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** "[Gary Chalmers impression] Can I see it?"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "[Principal Skinner Impression] No." Uh, no, the literal Abora-Aurora Borealis.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I wanna talk about that. The phenomenon known as the Aurora Borealis. How much do you know about the Borealis?

**Rachel:** Very, very little.

**Griffin:** How much do you know about David Boreanaz?

**Rachel:** Oh, way more [laughs].

**Griffin:** [laughs] It's funny. They're both caused by solar flares bouncing off the Earth's electromagnetic field.

**Rachel:** Both have strong brows.

**Griffin:** Both have strong bow- brows and appear mostly around the Earth's poles. No, I've always thought the Aurora Borealis is super pretty. I've always wanted to see it. When we were up in Minneapolis our friend, um- or not in Minneapolis, in- in northern- northern- far northern Minnesota, our friend said, "Hey, while we're up there we may see the Northern Lights." And I was like, "Oh, fuck yeah." I got so stoked. Didn't happen for us.

**Rachel:** Is this the same— okay I was gonna ask you the question are the Northern Lights the same thing as Aurora Borealis?

**Griffin:** Yes. So, Aurora Borealis is commonly sort of known as-

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** The Northern Lights. However, there is also a Southern Lights. I learned a lot about Aurora Borealis today. This is probably the most I've ever learned about a topic that I've, like, been researching for *Wonderful!* and it's very, very exciting. I mean, the term Aurora Borealis is great. It's very phonetically pleasing. Can I tell you all about, though, about Aurora Australis, which is the Southern Lights?

**Rachel:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** It's very cool. Um, so Earth isn't also the only planet that has, like, a Borealis affect, or actually an Aurora is what it's called. Uh, Jupiter has one. Saturn has, uh, one. Uh, Uranus can- can also have it.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Um, so what causes it is super neat. Uh, solar flares come out of the sun. Right?

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** The sun is, like, doing this nuclear fusion, creating all this energy. And sometimes it toots it out, and that's a very, very rudimentary way of explaining it, but they let out this powerful toot that is made up of these super energized particles. They shoot that at Earth. Earth would be destroyed by this, uh-

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** By this exhalation. Uh, when it reaches us it scatters and disperses it's called a solar wind at that point. If that hit Earth without any sort of protection that would be pretty much ball game Earth, game, set, match, sun. Sun wins this round, but we got this electromagnetic field. It surrounds our Earth, the solar wind hits it, it disperses all around the Earth and we live to fight another day to keep recording podcasts for our friends at home, but there's two places where the electromagnetic field is weakest-

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And that's at the poles of the Earth. The North Pole and Southern Pole.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And so that is why in the Arctic and Antarctic is why, uh, that is where you usually see the Aurora Borealis or Australis. Now, it *can* happen anywhere in the world. I guess like if, uh, if the solar wind is strong enough or maybe the electromagnetic field isn't feeling it that day, it- it can hypothetically happen anywhere. It's extraordinarily rare for it to happen, you know, too far south-

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** But uh, famously, once the Aurora Borealis once appeared in Honolulu, which is pretty- pretty far down south from the Arctic.

**Rachel:** This adds some depth to the steamed hams bit.

**Griffin:** Yes, absolutely.

**Rachel:** Because it could have possibly been in his kitchen that day.

**Griffin:** Uh, it- it- the whole phenomenon kind of works kind of like how neon signs work. Basically the solar wind brings all this super energized, uh, like, particles into the atmosphere and then it hits, when it- when it pierces into the poles, it hits the oxygen and the nitrogen in the atmosphere and those get, like, super charged with energy, and as they shoot electrons out to try to normalize, that is what sort of create the effect, and depending on, like, what the mix is of the elements in the atmosphere that are affected that sort of determines what the color is.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I was gonna ask about the colors.

**Griffin:** The shapes are, like, very specific, right? Because it moves in, like, streams almost.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** The streams are, you know, strips of- of color and light. Uh, what causes the shape of it is literally you are seeing the shape of the

effect of the electromagnetic field. You are see— it- it is like you are sort of, uh, like, rippling a sheet and pouring sand on it-

**Rachel:** Oh.

**Griffin:** And all we see is the sand, but you can see through the sand, like, what the shape of the sheet is underneath it. I think that's fucking radical because-

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I- I can't stress this enough, the electromagnetic field is essential for Earth's, like, whole thing that we're trying to go for down here.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** And occasionally the right parts of the world when the right sort of ingredients from the sun, the powerful sun toot hits us in just the right way, you can see it. Like, you can see this thing that keeps us all sort of- keeps us all safe and cozy in here.

**Rachel:** So, it could- it could feasibly happen during the day, we just wouldn't be able to see it?

**Griffin:** I don't think you'd be able to see it. I mean, yeah, I mean this- the- it's not like the sun waits until it's nighttime. Actually, it takes about two days for the- the solar wind to reach us from the sun anyway-

**Rachel:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** But, uh, yeah, I guess it just doesn't— I don't know that actually. I don't know if it would show up during the day. Um, but I- I think it's really fascinating. I also think it's, like, the prettiest thing Earth does. Like-

**Rachel:** Yeah.



**Griffin:** I feel like sunrises and sunsets, like, went at it for a while and rainbows were like, "Whoa, what about me?" And double rainbow.

**Rachel:** Double rainbow, yeah.

**Griffin:** You remember that meme? But then Aurora Borealis I think is just beating the crap out of all of them.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Hey, what's your first thing?

**Rachel:** My first thing is 90's commercials.

**Griffin:** Fuck yes! This is all time.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm so excited. Can we- oh god- oh god, I don't wanna cut you off at the pass, but, like, are you gonna talk about Crossfire?

**Rachel:** Uh, let me see.

**Griffin:** Is Crossfire on the list?

**Rachel:** It is on the list, yes.

**Griffin:** Fuck yeah! All right.

**Rachel:** Uh, but in a very small way.

**Griffin:** Okay. Well, when you say the word Crossfire I am going to just scream sing the theme song for that.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I'm gonna wake up our son and the sons of all the people living on our street.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So many sons will be awoken by my Crossfire.

**Rachel:** So, one of my— I'm not a big YouTube person, uh, but one of my favorite things to do is to watch old commercials on YouTube. Uh, I noticed that I was not alone in this when last year we tried to find Christmas commercials to watch.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** In an act of desperation, I think.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, and so I, uh, part of this you can just explain as just nostalgia.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** Uh, but part of it is kind of just the unique time period that was 90's commercials.

**Griffin:** Yeah there's- there was sort a loudness to it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** There- there was- like the 80's we were kind of calibrating like, "How loud can we be?"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And the 90's it was like, "[distantly] Maximum!"

**Rachel:** Yeah [laughs].

**Griffin:** And then it was like, "Oh shit," and then 2000 came around like, "Okay, hold on. Let's- let's rethink this."

**Rachel:** So, the other thing that I thought was interesting is- is, you know, the presence and role of commercials has kind of lessened-

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Since everybody's watching stuff on platforms now.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, apparently, and this is a goal that was released from Fox, uh, the network will aim to snip the time given over to ads in each prime time hour down to a total of just two minutes by 2020.

**Griffin:** For the whole hour?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** What the fuck!

**Rachel:** Last year ads took up over thirteen minutes each hour.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, and so they're shooting for two minutes by 2020.

**Griffin:** Why? Is it just because of, like, the changing nature of, like, everybody streaming-

**Rachel:** They're trying to compete.

**Griffin:** And everybody's streaming and subscribing. I mean, we subscribed to Hulu Plus because, I mean, I can't—we have saved literally days from not watching commercials. Uh, that's wild to me.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** That means, like, TV shows that air on Fox are going to have to change.

**Rachel:** Exactly. I know they're gonna give more- more time to the shows.

**Griffin:** Right, you can't just get away with forty-seven minutes' worth of content. Now it's gonna be fifty-eight.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** That's fucking wild.

**Rachel:** Uh-

**Griffin:** I can't think of actually a single Fox show that I- I want [laughs] you know, another eleven minutes out of now that I think about it, but...

**Rachel:** Uh, so, they talk about- you know, I read some articles. A lot of people have written books too. Um, there was a book called *The Sponsored Life: Ads, TV, and American Culture*. It talks about how now- we're now living in a post slogan era and the memes have overtaken slogans.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which I thought was kind of an interesting thought.

**Griffin:** No- no slogans, instead we get Logans like Logan Paul [blows raspberry]. I'd rather have slogans any day of the week, but nobody asks me [laughs].

**Rachel:** [laughs] Who is this Andy Rooney character you're doing?

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** [laughs].

**Griffin:** Can we mention, the first thing I thought of when you mentioned this is our friend had a party where we watched like- he just had 90's commercial up on the TV-

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And it was impossible for me to communicate with anybody else.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The reason he had it up on the TV, and I can't believe we never talked about this on the show before because I think they came up with it and it's such a fucking brilliant idea, it's a small wonder. I'm cutting in with an unofficial small wonder, they do- we've done a claim to fame party twice.

**Rachel:** It was actually, uh, Justin got that idea from his friend Scott.

**Griffin:** Oh it- it's so good. Just get all your friends together and everybody bring, like, a claim to fame, like some time they made the local newspaper or, like, clips of their dance recital or something. It is- it is- it is— you will learn things about your friends you would never imagine.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

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

**Rachel:** Uh, so another, um, kind of cultural critic at Duke University talked about how, um, when the cable revolution happened, we moved from three major channels to a hundred overnight, um, the communication became super fragmented and suddenly you had, like, certain types of ads appearing on certain types of channels-

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Depending on what they were.

**Griffin:** Wow, that's a good point.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Didn't think about that either, but, like, channels become specialized.

**Rachel:** So, like, you and I were watching Nickelodeon, we were just getting, like, slammed with all those toy commercials that we now love so much.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Uh, also a lot of brands have- have shifted to social media to kind of promote their message.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** They have many ways to get at you, which is part of the reason.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I mean, teens today are gonna think about like, you know, the funny Arby's Twitter in the same way that I think about Crossfire.

**Rachel:** I don't- I don't actually know that theme song.

**Griffin:** [singing] Crossfire. You get caught up in the crossfire. Crossfire!

**Rachel:** Oh, I remember that now that you're doing it! Wow.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you remember it? Have you ever played the game? That's it. I think only, like, two hundred-

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

**Griffin:** Two hundred people in the fucking world did.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** My uncle Josh had it and we played it once, and it's actually pretty fun. You shoot marbles at, like, a small little disc in the middle and you try to knock it in each other's goal. It's kind of like hockey but with guns.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [singing] Crossfire!

**Rachel:** So, uh, so the nostalgia thing.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, a lot of- and this is an article in Ad Week in February 2018, they talk a lot about how the- during the Superbowl a lot of brands were leveraging the nostalgia for, like, previous commercials.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, and, uh, the article said, "Nostalgia creates a story where a brand can be the hero. Uh, a spot that harkens back years or decades demonstrates an idea of trust while simultaneously showcasing a brand's longevity. If you can show that a brand has always been a part of culture it shows how it's still relevant."

**Griffin:** Hm.

**Rachel:** Uh, "Nostalgia is a way to do compacted storytelling, which is especially useful in the Superbowl."

**Griffin:** Sure, but it's not like Crossfire had built in nostalgia when it first aired in 1996 [laughs].

**Rachel:** [laughs] No.

**Griffin:** It's not like they capitalized on virtually anything.

**Rachel:** No, I'm talking more like Pepsi and Coke-

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** And, like, McDonald's.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah. I mean how many times have they done like, the share a smile with whatever the fuck.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And when I say that I don't know which one of the two big brown soda companies it is that did it, but you know what I'm talking about.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm. Uh, so there was a study published in the Journal of Consumer Research that suggests that people spend more money when they're feeling nostalgic.

**Griffin:** Huh-huh.

**Rachel:** The authors conducted six experiments that looked at how much people were willing to spend, donate, and value money when feeling nostalgia evoked social connectedness.

**Griffin:** Yeah, let's talk about my Super Nintendo game collection that I've been acquiring over the last decade.

**Rachel:** Yes [laughs]. Exactly. Yeah, and one of the things I read was talking about how Nickelodeon, like, has capitalized that on a big way.



**Griffin:** Oh shit. Yeah, I mean for sure.

**Rachel:** Like releasing all those, like, DVDs of their previous series, except for *Pete and Pete*.

**Griffin:** Except for— well *Pete and Pete* is out a couple seasons of it. Right?

**Rachel:** But-

**Griffin:** It's just not-

**Rachel:** Not the whole collection.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, I mean this is what Nick Gas is all about, the games and sport channels which, like, when that dropped on my cable box when I was, like, twenty years old, I was like, "Oh shit, stop everything."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I don't think I went to class that week.

**Rachel:** I think, I mean a lot of- a lot of, um, heat gets put on our generation, but I think if this kind of medium existed for the older generation they would be all over it too. You know? Like, they don't have that experience that we had-

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Where our whole childhood is like a little time capsule that you can get at your fingertips all the time.

**Griffin:** It- it's very like, uh, it- it's done to death. Right? The "Only 90's kids," but there is a part of that where, like, I remember when it wa- when I was like, you know, in my early teens, and that's when you first start to find out about, like, the time period that your parents

grow up in. Not find out about, but, like, give a shit about, like, learning about what the 60's and 70's-

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And early 80's were like. And for me, I remember hearing that shit and thinking, like, "Well that sounds awesome. When we landed on the moon for the first time, I bet that was pretty fucking sick."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "Man, I wish I was around then." Now that I'm thirty-one looking back, I'm pretty fucking stoked I got to be in the 90's.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The 90's were such a buck wild fucking time of shit that, like, as far as I know just kind of stopped happening December 31st, 1999, uh, and- and then nobody wanted to talk about it for a long time. And now we're here and we're like, "Actually that was pretty tight what happened in the 90's."

**Rachel:** So, let me give you a list I got from Mashable of The Best 90's Ads for Kids.

**Griffin:** [clapping] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Rachel:** Number one-

**Griffin:** Oh-

**Rachel:** Or should I go backwards?

**Griffin:** Yeah, don't start with number one!

**Rachel:** Okay, it goes all the way to fifteen. Do you wanna hear all fifteen?

**Griffin:** Maybe start with ten.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay. Uh, so ten. Well, I'll just go very quickly.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Because I don't wanna leave any of these out. Number fifteen, Mousetrap.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah, god.

**Rachel:** Number fourteen, Fisher-Price Triple Arcade and Tournament Table.

**Griffin:** Yes. Clint Wilson had one of those, it was fucking legit. Made me an athlete.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Thirteen, Stretch Armstrong.

**Griffin:** Ah yeah.

**Rachel:** Twelve, Polly Pocket.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Eleven, Socker Boppers.

**Griffin:** I don't-

**Rachel:** Remember those?

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** They were the big inflatable, like, punching gloves that you can put on your fists.

**Griffin:** Oh.

**Rachel:** You can hit people with them.

**Griffin:** No, we wouldn't do that in my family.

**Rachel:** Hm. Ten, Zoobooks.

**Griffin:** Mm-hm.

**Rachel:** Nine, Super Soaker 100.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Eight, Talk Boy.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Seven, Skip-it.

**Griffin:** "Hold on, come down for dinner kids, it's ready!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] What was that commercial? Do you remember?

**Rachel:** Yes. No, you're exactly right.

**Griffin:** [laughs] "Go on down Kyle, dinner's ready," [wheeze-laughs]. Oh, 90's kids will remember this.

**Rachel:** And then— okay so this gets— the list gets confusing here because number six is just McDonalds [laughs].

**Griffin:** [laughs] Okay.

**Rachel:** Five is Crossfire.

**Griffin:** Oh yes.

**Rachel:** Four is Bubble Tape.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh shit! With, like, the weird, like, painted up, like, teacher lady that looked-

**Rachel:** Yeah, that animation.

**Griffin:** Like an absolute ghoul.

**Rachel:** And it was very much like, you know-

**Griffin:** It was very Monty Python in a way?

**Rachel:** Well, six feet of Bubble Tape for us, not them.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It was all like-

**Griffin:** Fuck the police [laughs].

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** They can't have my Bubble Tape. It's too long for them.

**Rachel:** Three is Gak.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Well, wait. I don't remember so much Gak commercials.

**Rachel:** I mean-

**Griffin:** I remember it made rude noises-

**Rachel:** Exactly. That's what I remember too.

**Griffin:** And I think they had some fun with that. Okay. Yeah. Sure.

**Rachel:** Number Two, Mister Bucket.

**Griffin:** [singing] Mister Bucket, you put the balls in my mouth. Mister Bucket, I spit them right back out.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I thought this would be a fun game to play with you because the McElroys have an encyclopedic knowledge of television commercials, but here-

**Griffin:** I think Mister Bucket is like Crossfire. I'm pretty sure a hundred and fifty people around the world have ever played Mister Bucket. I am one of them. It's a pretty bad game.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's kind of chores.

**Rachel:** Number one was one that I had to find on YouTube and watch.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Because I didn't remember it.

**Griffin:** Gimme.

**Rachel:** And I don't know why it's number one.

**Griffin:** Gimme. Gimme.

**Rachel:** Rappin' Rockin' Barbie.

**Griffin:** No. That's a- that's a deep cut.

**Rachel:** It's like- it's a commercial Barbie's wearing a little, like, quote, unquote "rap outfit."

**Griffin:** Oh, that sounds great so far.

**Rachel:** And these two little girls are playing and were, like, hearing a rap about how cool Barbie's outfit is in that very 90's-

**Griffin:** I see nothing wrong with this.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is great. Sure. Nothing wrong with this Barbie.

**Rachel:** I don't know that- I thought- I don't know why that's number one.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Um, I did remember it when I saw it, but again it-

**Griffin:** I gotta watch it whole.

**Rachel:** It did not stick with me.

**Griffin:** Gotta at least look at what it looks like. [pause] Yeah. Not ideal.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hoo, hoo, hoo. Okay. Okay. Okay. We're done.

**Rachel:** Uh, yeah, so I was glad to bring that this week, uh, because I was thinking about, um, you know all the kids watch the YouTube and I don't even know, like, how to find the- the hip YouTube celebs, but I can tell you what, I know how to find the Socker Boppers commercials.

**Griffin:** Sure. Uh, I'm surprised that no, like, video game commercials made this list, because those really stand up to me. Because in the 90's there was this trend of no matter how hardcore a game it was, like, from *Doom* to, like, *Ocarina of Time* on N64, the theme of so many of those commercials were like, "This game will literally fucking kill you, idiot."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "It- you're too big a baby to play this game, you baby. It will kill— it will strip the skin from your bones, you fucking infant," and it's like, "Dude, it's *Pilotwings*. Calm down."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, hey, can I steal you away?

[Music plays]

[Ad break]

**Rachel:** Hey, I got Jumbotrons.

**Griffin:** Hit me with that Jumbotron stick!

**Rachel:** Ah so this next message is for Keisha. It is from Robert.

"To my wonderful wife, I don't know when this message will air, so I'm going to take a wild shot and say that I am so proud that you became the first kindergarten teacher to make a billion dollars a year and I that was able to quit my job to pet our dog full time. I hope that our robot butler is taking good care of us today. Love, your soup snake."

**Griffin:** Drag us. Drag us. Drag us through the mud!

**Rachel:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** Got us! I mean it's a good point. We are very tardy on these but, um, robot butlers do kind of exist. What is a Roomba but a robot butler when you think about it?

**Rachel:** Hmm.

**Griffin:** And I know what you're saying it's sort of relegated to just cleaning and sweeping the floors but I will say, first of all there's also mopping Roombas, and second of all you can balance a drink on it.

**Rachel:** Sure.

**Griffin:** Balance a drink on it and then send it-

**Rachel:** You can balance a lot of things on there.

**Griffin:** A lot of stuff on it.

**Rachel:** I've seen a lot of videos with cats on there.

**Griffin:** I mean you can—put my nice silver platter on there with, uh, nice china gravy boat full of champagne.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** Bring that right to me.

**Rachel:** Okay. Uh, this next message is for Josiah. It is from Heather.

"Josiah, you are my sweet and wonderful boy. Thank you for always being there for me. Never failing to make me laugh, and for putting up with our three gremlins disguised as cats, Margo, Pearl, and Tinks. You make every day truly wonderful. I love you."

**Griffin:** Good message. Good cat names. Good love. Had a good flavor to it.

**Rachel:** I really like the name Margo.

**Griffin:** I do too. Was it the cat or the person? It was the cat.

**Rachel:** Cat. [laughs]

**Griffin:** But I like it in either respect.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

[Ad plays]

**Griffin:** Can I tell you about my second thing?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Let's get the holidays going.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It's December.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I don't even think we did— did we do holiday shit in our first episode in December? I don't think we did.

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

**Griffin:** Shameful. Shame on us. The creep is coming a little late this year I guess, but it's here and in full effects. My second thing is The Vince Guaraldi Trio's *A Charlie Brown Christmas Album*.

**Rachel:** Have we never talked about this?

**Griffin:** Oh, I hope we haven't. No. [sighs heavily] Gosh, you scared the shit out of me.

**Rachel:** Sorry.

**Griffin:** It is unbelievable we haven't talked about this. This is— if I- if we had to throw away every piece of vinyl that we own save for one album, this may be a contender for that very album.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It is definitely the one that has gotten the most playtime on our turntable for sure without a doubt.

**Rachel:** Well, Griffin don't forget about Al Jarreau, *Breakin' Away*.

**Griffin:** Dammit, you're right.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's the second— that's not a joke. It's the second most played. It's beautiful. It's— the one we had is, like, a reissue. It's, like, translucent green?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** It's sick as shit.

**Rachel:** It's lovely.

**Griffin:** It is so good. I don't think there's a lot of, like, overtly holiday-y stuff about it. Like, obviously it's playing, like, you know, pretty classic Christmas carols and there's a few, like, uh, original tracks on there as well, but really it's just, like, really good- like it could be released as not *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and it could still just be, like, a great album full of, like, new jazz standards, because that album is so iconic to me.

Uh, obviously it is the, uh, the instrumental and very occasionally vocal accompaniment for the, uh, *A Charlie Brown Christmas Special*, um, but I don't really have strong feelings about that special. I know a

lot of people very much, uh, like it a lot. For me the soundtrack is sort of is the bigger-

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** The bigger thing for sure. Um, it's a nice album to put on at a holiday party because it's- it's really nice, like, background music for, you know, a party, a gathering of friends of any sort, or, you know, doing dishes, or any sort of cooking. Cooking up a nice holiday meal in the kitchen.

**Rachel:** Mm.

**Griffin:** It's just smooth and fucking classy as heck, which is unexpected for a child's cartoon holiday special but, um- so I read a bit about Vince Guaraldi today, uh, which led to me, uh, for the first time in my life actually seeing what he looked like. Uh, my dude's style is very fresh. He's got, uh, he's got a fucking mustache you can ramp a bike off of. It is extremely good.

**Rachel:** He doesn't look like a *Peanuts* character? Because that's all I can picture.

**Griffin:** He doesn't. He looks like a young man with a big mustache. A big old mustache. Uh, just a really luxurious mustache, uh, and like I said, there's a few original songs on top of— you're googling him right now, aren't you?

**Rachel:** Yep.

**Griffin:** It's mostly, uh, Christmas carols that are sort of this mix of new arrangements and a *ton* of piano improvisation from Vince Guaraldi.

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh, what a big mustache!

**Griffin:** I'm not joking about the mustache. Uh, there's also a couple of original tracks on there. So, I wanna play one, uh, it- it's "Skating,"

which, like, if you ever see the special or, like, listened to the album, like, this one really stands because it's super upbeat. [music starts to play] It's swinging three-four-time song that, like, really kind of like when you listen to it it's like, "Yeah, I can ice skate to this."

[Music plays]

Uh, the other big original song on the album is "Christmastime is Here."

**Rachel:** Yes, I know that one.

**Griffin:** Uh, if you never listened to this album or watched the special, it's inexplicably the sad walking away music from *Arrested Development*.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which is, like, one of my favorite running jokes on that show. Um, there is an instrumental version on the album immediately followed by the vocal version. I may have actually switched that around.

Um, so originally, like, Guaraldi had written the music for the album and it was just instrumental, um, and then, uh, the- the studio, like, that was making the *Charlie Brown Christmas Special*, they needed a scene where kids were singing and they hadn't written lyrics to it yet.

So the story goes that um, uh, Lee Mendelson who was the TV producer behind that- that special who actually reached out to Vince Guaraldi in the first place and is kind of responsible for their, you know, union of Vince Guaraldi being, like, the official composer for the whole, like, Charlie Brown verse. [music starts to play] Uh, he in a panic wrote the lyrics of the song in fifteen minutes on the back of an envelope.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah. That's great.

**Griffin:** It's very good. Why don't- why don't I play a little bit of it right now?

[Music plays]

The- the story behind, like, the singing performance I also think is kind of great. They- they wanted, you know, real- real kids. Real kids like you might see at a store.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** A car wash or a pharmacy or-

**Griffin:** It's a- it's a children's choir from a church in San Rafael, California, um, and there are people who are, like, in that choir who now have spoken to, you know, different documentaries and people have written books about, like, the Charlie Brown specials and been like, "Yeah, it was pretty tight." Uh, the kids who participated were paid five dollars for their efforts.

**Rachel:** Aw.

**Griffin:** Not great probably in terms of labor laws and what have you. They also would take them out for ice cream after each session.

**Rachel:** Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:** Uh, so the vocals for the whole album, there's also a recording of— what's the other song [snaps fingers] that has singing on it? Oh, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

**Rachel:** Mm.

**Griffin:** Uh, also has the- the kids singing. Uh, so all that was recorded over three sessions over the course of two weeks, uh, and parents—the sessions would run, like, super long into the night and

parents of those kids were like, "What are you doing—like, my kid can't stay out until midnight recording your Charlie Brown album." So, they would pull them out and constantly cycle in new kids from the church.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** The cast and crew are constantly changing. Um, they were—the kids were directed by a guy named Barry, uh, Mineah, who uh—who- who wanted the choir to, you know, sound perfect. It's an album and you- you don't want a shitty take on there, uh, but Mendelson and Vince Guaraldi said that they wanted these kids to sound like kids, like on the TV special.

Are you supposed to expect that, like, these professionally trained vocalists just happened to be friends with Charlie and Pig-Pen and—and the gang? Uh, no. They wanted them to sound like real kids, and that's why like, uh, especially on "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," like, there's a lot of sort of flat notes in that song but, like, there's an authenticity to it that's very cool.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, I just- man, I just love this album. It guaranteed gets me in the mood and it does so in a way that is not, like, at all obnoxious.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So many Christmas albums are obnoxious.

**Griffin:** And I love, I love that stuff too. Right?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like I'll listen to "All I Want for Christmas is You," like the OG cut and still groove to it, but it can get grating after a while. This album I, I listen to constantly-

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** In the month of December and it holds up.

**Rachel:** I agree.

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

**Rachel:** My second thing is also a holiday album.

**Griffin:** Oh boy.

**Rachel:** Specifically, a song off of a holiday album.

**Griffin:** Gimme.

**Rachel:** So, the album is *It's a Holiday Soul Party*, uh, from Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings that came out in 2015-

**Griffin:** Ah Sharon Jones.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Sharon Jones's so good.

**Rachel:** I didn't realize— so I did a little research on- on Sharon Jones because, you know, she's got a very, like, deep soul voice.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** I assumed that she'd been around forever. Uh, but her first album didn't come out until 2002.

**Griffin:** Kind of like the Charles Bradley arc it seems like.

**Rachel:** Exactly. Yeah, she released her first record when she was forty years old.

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



**Rachel:** I know. Uh, so in 2014, Jones was nominated for her first Grammy, uh, and then unfortunately in 2016, she passed away from cancer. Uh, but before she did in 2015, she released the *It's A Holiday Soul Party* album.

And so there were, uh, eleven tracks on it, and it included a lot of holiday classics like soul versions of things like "White Christmas," "Silent Night," "Please Come Home for Christmas," "Silver Bells," "Little Drummer Boy." All awesome. The song I want to talk about is "Eight Days of Hanukkah."

**Griffin:** Hell yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, for those of you that celebrate Hanukkah, uh, like me, you may have grown up thinking that it was a little disappointing.

**Griffin:** That there weren't more sort of tunes?

**Rachel:** That there weren't more Hanukkah jams. Yeah, no, I mean it was-

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Just that Adam Sandler song, and, "uh, Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel."

**Griffin:** "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel" is great and there's been a lot of great versions of "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um.

**Rachel:** Eight Days of Hanukkah blows them all away.

**Griffin:** It's so fucking good.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm. Uh, so the Soul Group counts down the eight days and nights with catchy verses [music starts playing] that celebrates what's great about the holiday tradition, presents and yummy Jewish food. Uh, so if you can play a little bit of that song?

**Griffin:** Here we go.

[Music plays]

**Rachel:** So, uh, another thing that I recommend is that you check out the music video for it. They use this kind of animated *School House Rock* style video that makes the song also feel like from a very specific soul time period. And it teaches you a little bit about the history of Hanukkah.

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Rachel:** Like there- there's shout outs to, like, the Maccabees. Uh, you get a little bit of- of the foods in there. It's, uh, it's really ideal.

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

**Rachel:** I was excited to find it. I was not aware of it until very, very recently. Uh, and it- it really made my day to know there's something like that out there.

**Griffin:** And this was not a cover. Right? This was, uh, an original?

**Rachel:** Original.

**Griffin:** [whispers] So good.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Ah, yeah, Sharon Jones was an immense talent, and this song is very, very fresh. We can only play a little bit of it, but go listen to it in its entirety and also, happy late Hanukkah.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, folks who did celebrate it. We didn't shout it out in the last, uh, the last show. We had a- we had a nice- nice little quiet Hanukkah. A little- Henry enjoys the candles very much.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it was fun. I would say, "Henry, do you wanna do Hanukkah?" and he would say, "Yeah."

**Griffin:** And he would run over.

**Rachel:** And then I would light the candles.

**Griffin:** As you precariously lit the skinniest candles ever, our son would yank at your pants to add a degree of challenge to it.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, hey, do you wanna know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Here's one from Bob, who says, "I love finding the stuff previous owners have used as bookmarks in used books. Plane tickets, magazine subscription cards, old coupons. I enjoy picturing the moments of the last owner's life that led to the use of that scrap of paper."

**Rachel:** Yes! I used to love this when I spent a lot more time in used bookstores.

**Griffin:** Mm-hm. Uh, yeah. This- I- I wasn't a huge, like, reader but my dad was obsessed with used bookstores. Every time we went to anywhere on vacation, like anytime we left the city, the- the state lines of West Virginia, uh, we would go to a bookstore somewhere and- and peruse it for what felt like hours.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And seeing what I can get to shake out of books was very exciting for me. Not knowledge and stories but, you know, maybe a dollar's in there somewhere.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, here's one from Hannah who says, "My small wonder today is getting comfy after a fancy event. I just got home from a swanky office Christmas party and I'm flicking off my fake nails, pulling off my false eyelashes and swapping a spangly dress for a flannel onesie. It's a delicious feeling."

**Rachel:** That is so good.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean-

**Rachel:** Getting out of the shoes.

**Griffin:** Oh, the shoes. Gross.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, yeah, it's very nice. I- I don't know. I'm trying to remember— yeah, it feels nice. I haven't worn, like, formal wear.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I don't think I wore formal wear this year. I don't think I put a suit jacket on this year.

**Rachel:** I can't— yeah, because all- all of our friends that were gonna get married seem to have gotten married.

**Griffin:** Just did it.

**Rachel:** And so now we don't really have an occasion very often.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I'm okay with that.

**Griffin:** Me too. Here's one from Mitch who says, "A subtle but wonderful thing I found this week is restroom locks that indicate vacant/occupied. These are becoming increasingly popular in restaurants and bars and are wonderful because they remove the dreaded knock and response routine usually required to determine a toilet's occupancy." [sighs] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah th- this is Griffin's wheelhouse right here.

**Griffin:** You know what's the opposite of this is, uh, just the handle button locks, uh, wh- it's not even, like, uh, a, um, deadbolt. It's like the button, like, on the handle to the doorknob. I don't fucking trust those things as far as I can throw them.

**Rachel:** Well, you always have to test it to make sure it works.

**Griffin:** You always have to test- that's- and then you seem like- you're worried there's gonna be somebody outside who's like, "Somebody's trapped in the bathroom!" And then they kick the door down and they see your butt.

**Rachel:** [laughs] How would- uh, never mind.

**Griffin:** You don't know how I go. I perch up on the tank like an albatross. Like an albatross keeping a ship safe. I perch up on the tank backward.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Gargoyle would be a good-

**Griffin:** I sit on the toilet backwards like a cool teacher, like I've been doing this whole time [laughs].

**Rachel:** [laughs] What a fun way to potty train Henry. We should really think about that.

**Griffin:** He walks into the bathroom and he sees me sitting backwards on the toilet like a cool teacher. "Hey son, it's time. Come over here."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "This is the lever. It makes it go flushy-flush."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, so that's our show. Thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in the episode description. What else?

**Rachel:** Thank you to Maximumfun.org for hosting our show.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** You know what I listened to this week?, uh, *The Flophouse* has a new episode, and they were talking about a Christmas movie that I was not familiar with and it was very, very funny.

**Griffin:** What was the movie? You do not remember.

**Rachel:** Do not remember.

**Griffin:** Well, I'm sure it was a good episode regardless. Um, yeah, uh, thank you to you all for listening. Oh, we have a new website that has all of our stuff on it. I don't think we talked about this last week because it just launched.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, it is, um, mcelroy.family or themcelroy.family. All of the stuff that we make is going to be on there. It's-

**Rachel:** There's a Monster Factory up there.

**Griffin:** There is a new Monster Factory. We're gonna be, uh, doing those I think on a monthly schedule for, uh, the rest of time, uh, which is exciting.

It's also just the, uh, like the place to go. We're gonna be, like, putting our news and announcements and new merch and stuff. Um, and so yeah. We're- we're partnered with Vox on that website, which was my former employer at Polygon. They know how to make a fucking good website, so we teamed up with them and- and made one. Uh, so I hope you will check it out. There's a whole *Wonderful!* page on there.

**Rachel:** Oh and thank you to those of you of that obviously heard our most recent promo and went into iTunes and left positive reviews that said Amber is the color of our energy [laughs].

**Griffin:** Oh, good! Thank you everyone.

**Rachel:** There are at least a dozen.

**Griffin:** Thank you. Um, yeah, I think that's it. What do you say we... just sort of close it out with a little bit of our own little, like, improvised, like, holiday jazz.

**Rachel:** Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes.

**Griffin:** So, what song— do you wanna, like, vamp over an existing song or should we just make up our own?

**Rachel:** Uh, I- I, uh, I'll-

**Griffin:** We can do like "Silent Night." Like I- I've always wanted to hear what a jazz version of "Silent Night" would sound like. Do you want me to— I'll just sing, like, the— I'll do the melody of "Silent Night—"

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** As it traditionally is.

**Rachel:** Yeah, okay, okay, okay.

**Griffin:** Because that's what they do in the Vince Guaraldi stuff. Like, they'll play, like, you know, here's what "O' Tannenbaum" sounds like but then he'll come in like [singing] dittily dit de loo.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So I'm a just sing "Silent Night" and you just jazz on it.

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

**Griffin:** Do you get it? I'll sing it, you jazz right on me.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Okay.

**Griffin:** [singing] Silent night.

**Rachel:** [singing] Silent, silent night.

**Griffin:** [laughs] [singing] Holy night.

**Rachel:** [singing] Oh the holy, holy night.

**Griffin:** I thought it would be more instrumental.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Oh, oh, okay, okay.

**Griffin:** Why don't you give it to me and I'll- I'll jazz on you.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That expression is terrible.

**Griffin:** It's so good!



**Rachel:** [laughs] [sighs] Let's just try it again with you.

**Griffin:** Okay. [singing] Silent night.

**Rachel:** [scatting]

**Griffin:** [laughs] That's not really improvising as much as it's that one song.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay, I got it. Do it again.

**Griffin:** Okay.

[Theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Do it again. Do it again. Do it again.

**Griffin:** [singing] Silent night.

**Rachel:** [scatting]

**Griffin:** [singing] Holy- [stops singing] [laughs] You're just doing a deconstruction of the- we're done. Bye.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[Theme music ends]

[Chord plays]

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