

Wonderful! 168: Frasier Force

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hello, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: Sorry, I was silencing my cell phone. Just something I like to do so I can really dial in with you. And I just saw, you know, funny joke, some memes and it caught me off guard a little bit when you got started.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: Bernie sad, in a funny way. And people are still just...

Rachel: [laughs] Still talking about it.

Griffin: Wild about it. I don't necessarily— Look, I love me some Bernie Sanders. Big, big fan of the gentleman and his work. But I don't understand why that picture has become the biggest thing since, you know...

Rachel: I bet there were a lot of people, you know, sitting funny at that inauguration.

Griffin: I guess. You know— I think— Was it the mittens? Was it the sort of casual dress? I mean, my man is advanced in age, has to stay warm, protect himself from the elements. I don't know if there's anything funny about that.

Rachel: Can I tell you something that I really appreciated? So supposedly, Bernie was carrying a manila envelope that somebody said contained the tickets for the inauguration.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: And I just thought that was big dad energy.

Griffin: Oh, that's huge dad energy.

Rachel: Just like, "I got the tickets in this envelope. So I am bringing the envelope to the event."

Griffin: Did the envelope also include printed out MapQuest to direct us?

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

Griffin: God, that's choice.

Rachel: Oh, it's good.

Griffin: Anyway, I'm dialed in now. I'm going to talk with our listeners and with you, my wife Rachel, about things that are good, things that we like because this is *Wonderful*, a show about things that are good that we like. Do you have any small wonders please?

Rachel: All right. This is kind of basic. This is kind of like hashtag pregnancy, but through the various services where people deliver food to your house...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ... you can get pints of ice cream. [laughs]

Griffin: I'm pretty sure we've talked about this before.

Rachel: Did we talk about it?

Griffin: Maybe, yeah. We've done this a few times from a few different services and ice cream vendors, and I'm not complaining.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, I go to the store, I go to the grocery store, I have started venturing out to the store.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is not something I did at the beginning of the pandemic. But I have felt that I have found ways to do it safely.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But whenever I'm buying groceries for the week, I am all business.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And then I get home and I think man I should have gotten myself a treat!

Griffin: Should have been naughty, huh?

Rachel: And I realized that there are ways to get treats now without leaving your house. And this is a revelation.

Griffin: My small wonder is *In & of Itself*, it's on Hulu. It's a magician named Derek DelGaudio and it's a live stage show that was performed in New York like 500 times that I heard, like, a lot about from a few different people. And now it's televised and you can watch it.

Rachel: I was watching an interview. Stephen Colbert and his wife produced it and I was watching an interview and they didn't want to say anything about it.

Griffin: No, nor do I. That's all I'm going to say about it.

Rachel: They were like, "We cannot give you more of a description. It is important you go in knowing as little as possible."

Griffin: It mainly— It's incredible. And it's like a really profound special. I found myself, and maybe this says more about, like, sort of my personal inclination towards FOMO, but it mainly made me like, really bummed out that I didn't get to see it in person.

Rachel: I know!

Griffin: Because I think it hits hard watching it on Hulu, but I don't— [laughs] There's weird celeb cameos, just like in the audience. And Derek DelGaudio does something to Tim Gunn that leaves him visibly shaken. And I was like, "Fuck, I wish I was Tim Gunn in that moment!" But that was powerful. That was some church camp stuff happening in that room. Yeah. It's very, very cool.

Rachel: It's very good. And if you are not like a magic enthusiast, because at first I was like, I don't know if I feel like watching magic. It's not really about magic.

Griffin: No! There's like four quote-unquote "tricks" for— Yeah.

Rachel: He has the training to do some illusions, but that is not the focus.

Griffin: It's not even illusions, it's just card work that is, like, the best sleight of hand I've maybe ever seen. Okay, anyway, that's all we should say about it. You go first this week!

Rachel: I do.

Griffin: What do you got?

Rachel: I wanted to talk— Today, things just came to me when I was preparing. And one of the things that just came to me was driver's ed.

Griffin: You like that?

Rachel: I like it.

Griffin: Was your driver's ed— Did you take driver's ed?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Was it taught by a coach?

Rachel: I assume so.

Griffin: You don't remember?

Rachel: Well, it wasn't a person from our school.

Griffin: Oh, fascinating.

Rachel: Uh, it was at the junior high and you would show up at night like twice a week in a classroom. And this guy got up front and he taught people, not just from my high school, but from like the region.

Griffin: At night? Like it wasn't part of the high school curriculum?

Rachel: No!

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: You had to, like, sign up and attend at night and I'm guessing pay for it, I'm assuming.

Griffin: That's bonkers, babe. That's—

Rachel: We did not get part of the school day to do it.

Griffin: Okay, maybe Huntington High was the exception, but like driver's ed was an elective that you took and the cars were, like, there at the high school and you got in and I think the volleyball coach, Coach Willie Wilson—who also taught me about anatomy, multidisciplinary.

Rachel: [laughs] Here was the thing from my experience. Not only did you do evenings, but then if you wanted driving practice. So evenings was going to classroom watching videos. Weekends was when you got your driving practice.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And so he would, like, show up at your house, the car full of kids, and you would all, like, drive around for a while and take turns.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it was, I mean, it took a lot of outside effort. And part of that is because a lot of states, mine and yours included, do not require driver's ed.

Griffin: No, I don't think, uh...

Rachel: West Virginia— I looked it up. West Virginia doesn't, Missouri doesn't.

Griffin: No, I— There's some, like, shortcuts. Like there's, like, a ladder that I remember you work up where you get like a piece of paper if you complete driver's ed where then like, you don't need to get your permit.

Like, you can skip the permit if you take driver's ed and just go straight to the license. Otherwise you have to have your permit for a year before you can get your license, which makes sense, I guess.

Rachel: A lot of this stuff has changed, you know, since like— When I was sixteen, you didn't get a provisional license. You got like your real deal license. But they have changed that. Yeah.

Griffin: Wow, that's— Wow.

Rachel: I think that changed shortly after me. But yeah, no, there was no like, at eighteen you get your real license, there was just like sixteen. You're done.

Griffin: Were you in a hurry to get your driver's license?

Rachel: Oh my gosh, yes. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, I was not. I'm curious to hear why.

Rachel: I know we talked about this before because you had, like, dedicated chauffeurs that would take you places.

Griffin: Well, that...

Rachel: And older siblings and...

Griffin: I had friends who had cars. I didn't have dedicated chauffeurs.

Rachel: So, part of it, too, was that I did not attend the school that was associated with my neighborhood because my mom was a teacher in the district just outside of where we lived.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So all of my friends would grouse like, "Oh, 15 minutes to get to your house." You know? Or, "10 minutes or whatever to get to your house, can't you just be dropped off?" You know, like there was a lot of that.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I didn't have a car or anything waiting for me. I was just anxious to have that ability.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So the majority of states do require— Actually, 32 states require teens take driver's ed. It just so happens that West Virginia and Missouri were not one of them.

Griffin: I feel like our driver's ed classes— I took it my first semester, my senior year. And that summer, before then, there were like three or four fatalities of students at my school who just, for whatever reason, like that summer was really bad for it.

Rachel: My school, too.

Griffin: And that driver's ed class was harrowing because of what that— Like, I feel like that's an old joke, is that they show really gruesome videos and shit like that. They were trying to put the fear of God and also fast cars in us.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it worked.

Rachel: That first year, I mean, that's the thing like teens hugely are more likely to get into accidents and they're more likely to be fatal. And that was the thing at my high school, too. There were a lot of classmates I had that got in terrible car accidents.

In the 70s, 95% of students in the country had access to public driver's education.

Griffin: How many? What percent?

Rachel: 95%.

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: Everybody was doing it.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It was like a brand new thing. Like, there was budget for it. Everybody was doing it. Now, that is not the case. Everything varies state by state.

So Missouri, their workaround is that you have a guardian who certifies that you have received 40 hours of driving instruction, including a minimum of 10 hours of nighttime driving. So, they don't require you to take driver's ed, but you have to have somebody that takes care of you that says, "Yeah, they did it."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that's kind of their workaround. In West Virginia, it is 50 hours of supervised practice.

Griffin: I didn't get that.

Rachel: And, well, that's the thing. So there was a survey done by Volvo and one in three licensed drivers said they had spent less than twenty hours behind the wheel prior to taking their driver's test.

Griffin: Absolutely. Yeah, no, I wasn't particularly interested in driving for partially for the reasons you outlined, but also, like, I had a lot of shit going on my senior year of high school. So it wasn't until the summer after I graduated that I was like, okay, I took driver's ed. I need to just go to the DMV and take this test.

But at that point, it had been a while. So our friend, Justin, let me drive his car around for a bit just to get practice. I'm pretty sure that's what I took the test in, which is a wild story that I hadn't thought about in a while.

Rachel: Yeah, I guess it could be any car.

Griffin: It can be anybody's car, yeah. And we went to Dairy Queen afterwards.

Rachel: Aww!

Griffin: It was a nice day.

Rachel: A big driver boy.

Griffin: Big driver boy.

Rachel: Uh, in this survey, the vast majority of parents, 80%, indicated they are seeking additional driver education measures to help educate their child because there's just not a lot available.

Griffin: Yeah, it's so— It's like one of those logistics things that I feel like should have a bigger emphasis in middle school and high school, especially, of just, like, here's how— I guess this is kind of what home ec was, right? In a manner of speaking, I think a lot of home ec was antiquated, but things like, here's how checks work, here's how bank accounts work.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Here is how insurance works. Here's how all of these different things work. Driving is one of those, I feel like, where I knew nothing about it. Then I took driver's ed and I was like, "Okay, now I grasp the

fundamentals." And that may have saved my life, essentially. It's wild that it's not required.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, there's any number of reasons, like, your guardian may not be the most appropriate person to teach you how to drive.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Whether it's just, like, a stressful situation for them or they don't have the time or availability to do it.

Griffin: Clint McElroy was stunting. He would always— That man would hit the noss any time we hit Third Avenue, he would blaze it. He got in more sort of impromptu drag races than I care to admit because somebody would drive up next to him on a red light and be like, "Hey, race me chicken!" And my dad would go off! Clint McElroy would go off.

Rachel: Well, you know, he was radio's Clint McElroy. You know, he was the bad boy of radio. He had to... [laughs]

Griffin: [simultaneously] Yeah, he had a reputation. Yeah, that's true. And he did say on the radio, "I will race anyone in this city!"

Rachel: Get a T-shirt. He had a little T-shirt cannon he kept in there, just if you beat him.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. So Texas, just so we know, you have to complete a 32-hour driver education course.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So we'll have to face that—

Griffin: Henry will never drive.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's it.

Rachel: It's hard to imagine him driving.

Griffin: The next baby, maybe. New baby maybe can drive. Henry, I don't—
[sighs]

Rachel: We'll see, we'll see.

Griffin: That kid has not shown me the spark of safe driving.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, and just so you know, like, there are states that have absolutely nothing at all. Arkansas, nothing.

Griffin: Go for it, Arkansas.

Rachel: Yeah. Like, no previous experience required. Just go in there and get it.

Griffin: Get wild.

Rachel: I think it's a good thing. I think for me, I mean, understandably, my parents were a little afraid, I think, when I was driving.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so the driver's ed teacher, there was something comforting about somebody who had been doing this and did it all the time and knew, kind of, how bad somebody could be.

Griffin: Yeah. If memory serves, my driver's ed teacher was bored when, like, somebody was getting on the highway for the first time, they were like, "Yeah, go ahead. Use your blinker." Like? [fearfully] "Okay. You sure?"

Rachel: I remember I turned the wrong way down a one-way street. It was like one of those streets that had like a median in the middle.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And you had to kind of know, like, which side of the median you should be on.

Griffin: Traditionally, right.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: In America. Did you get confused, maybe and think you were back—

Rachel: It was, like, a very residential area. So it did not end up being particularly dangerous. But he was very calm the whole time, he was just like, "All right, now this is not— This is not where you're supposed to be."

It's nice. It's nice to have that experience and I'm grateful for it.

Griffin: Yeah. My first thing is, uh, I feel like peak Griffin topic on *Wonderful* is air hockey. I feel like I have a type and it's, like, benign entertainment activities that I do a little bit of research into and find that there's, like, a

scene around, like a group of extremely hardcore professional air hockey players— [crosstalk]

Rachel: [simultaneously] God, I love air hockey.

Griffin: I do, too. It occupies such a special place in my heart because my exposure to air hockey came mostly through arcades because—

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: So why? I don't know. I feel like there's some bars that will have air hockey, but I guess it is, sort of, mainly the dominion of Dave and Buster. But any time I would go to arcades, I was always on my grind for tickets. Like—

Rachel: I believe that about you.

Griffin: Yeah. I would like try— We would go to the Pub, which is the name of this, like, pizza place in Huntington, and I'm almost certain I talked about before that had this huge arcade and we would go there and after a while, like I knew which arcade games gave out the easiest tickets and I would just pour all my money into those.

But air hockey represented kind of the exact opposite thing where there was no incentive to play it except for the spirit of competition against another person. And that was always kind of, like, novel to me. That was always, like, really refreshing.

And it also helped that, like, the main things that you need to be good at air hockey are, like, hand eye coordination and reflexes, which have always been like, two strong suits of mine. Like, I've never been one to boast about

my, sort of, physical capabilities. But those are two things where I feel pretty confident in.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So air hockey was always like a place that I could go to, you know, hold my own. People don't need me to explain what air hockey is. There was some debate in some of the research I did about—

There are cheap air hockey tables that don't actually have the air coming up that creates the cushion under the puck that, you know, eliminates friction. Sometimes it's just smooth plastic. People like— That's— I think we can all agree. That's not air hockey.

Rachel: Yeah, there's no air.

Griffin: You've got to have the air in order to have air hockey. I was— Though I was pretty good at air hockey, I was hampered. I probably didn't go pro because I was afraid of being hit by a wayward puck.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which I don't know if that ever actually happened to me in, like— You definitely have some intense games where the puck goes flying off the table and you're like, "Woo, if that had hit my face..."

Rachel: Yeah, but it's not like the puck weighs, like, the weight of a real puck.

Griffin: Yeah, but when your youth pastor blasts it at you at what feels like 90 miles an hour, it carries a, I would say, deadly ballistic force.

Rachel: I hope nobody takes that sentence out of context.

Griffin: Yeah. I guess that would also be bad. So, the game was invented by designers at Brunswick Billiards who made a ton of stuff.

Rachel: Yeah, okay!

Griffin: The name is very familiar. And basically they were, like, trying to develop a game that could take place on a frictionless surface. So, like, the first thing that they sort of worked on was this frictionless table, which, you know, pumped up air through the bottom of it.

And then, like, once they started to move stuff across that table, they were like, "This looks like hockey!" And so, air hockey was born.

Rachel: [cackles]

Griffin: It seems like every description I've read made it seem fairly, like, formulaic after that.

Rachel: Like they backed into it.

Griffin: Like they backed—

Rachel: "Alright, we know that we want it to be frictionless. So let's get to work and then see what it becomes."

Griffin: Right. And so there have been, unsurprisingly, sort of professional air hockey leagues that have come out of that. There are some international competitions that are governed by two different bodies, the U.S. Air Hockey Association and the Air Hockey Players Association.

And I was reading about the scene and the scene is a little too dry, I feel like, to be interesting. But I did read about, like, the strategies that are employed in high level air hockey.

Rachel: Yeah, I would like to know what it is, because in my head, it's just try and hit the puck.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, that's important for sure. The biggest thing that I learned about is called the Triangle Defense, and it's that the, like, hands down optimal defense when the puck is, sort of, about to come at you is to keep the striker, which is the name of the thing that you actually keep your hands on, which you're supposed to only use your fingertips, because then it's easier to, like, move it around faster.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: I always like, death-grip that thing. Apparently, that's wrong. You keep it eight inches directly in front of your goal. And if you do that, any straight shot that comes at you is so easy to block, right?

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

Griffin: And then, if one comes at you with a bank shot, which is like so often the case, you pull the striker back to the corners of your goal and then that way you have more time to, like, work the angle and figure out exactly how to intercept it.

So you draw literally a triangle, you know, from the corners of your side of the table to eight inches in front of the goal. And that's your defense zone. And then there are different— What are they called? There are different drifts, which are sort of the patterns that you hit the puck in, which includes center, diamond, diagonal and L-shaped trajectories.

And the big thing with air hockey is basically deception, like making it seem like I'm about to hit this in an L-shape to the left, but really, it's coming at you in a, you know, a diamond pattern to the right or a center shot or something like that. Which isn't so surprising, I guess.

Rachel: This does make me want to see, like, if there's videos on YouTube of pro competitions, because it's kind of like ping pong where you, like, you don't really know what's possible until you've watched somebody do it.

Griffin: [simultaneously] Until you've watched pros play. I guarantee you that that exists. I mean, there's— Everything's on YouTube. But, yes, my strategy is just traditionally, like, hit it sideways in a way that I think is going to be really clever.

That's always the most embarrassing part of ping pong— Not ping pong, air hockey, is you're like, "I'm going to put some real stink on this." And you, like, slap it to the side. And it just, like, impotently bounces between the left and right walls without actually moving forward at all.

Rachel: Or it, like, hits the end and immediately comes back into your goal.

Griffin: Yeah, that's always bad. Especially, I always try to put a little bit of that triple deke on it. Where I'm like, [imitates hitting the puck]. Like just bouncing around my side, like, "You don't know which way it's going to—" Bang! And it hits the back wall and immediately goes right back into my goal.

It's easy, I feel like, to just completely show your ass in air hockey, but I really like it. Anytime I go somewhere and there's an air hockey table, which I feel like is pretty rare these days, it's always like a little, "Ooh!"

Rachel: I will say, like, 50% percent of the time it does not work.

Griffin: Most of the time, yeah.

Rachel: A lot of times it's just unplugged and you put money in and you're like, "Oh this is— Well, okay."

Griffin: 75 cents I'll never see ever again. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yeah.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a couple of scrumbo-dons here and I would love to read this first one, because it is for Sam and it's from Allie who says, "To sweet Sam, you're the most thoughtful, caring and all around wonderful interweb friend in the whole wide world. I'm so glad that we met on Twitch. I can't wait to watch you grow this year. And I hope we can meet up in London this May. I feel so lucky to have crossed your path in this life. I like you and love you. Your pal from across the pond, Ali." Or Allie. It could be either one.

Rachel: Mm, travel, Griffin.

Griffin: Travel, do you remember travel?

Rachel: Sort of.

Griffin: You would get in these sky cars, I think is what they were called, and on it— I don't remember much about these sky cars, but the food was not great.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I'd like to do ten minutes or so on that.

Rachel: [through laughter] No! Can I read the next one?

Griffin: Yes, please.

Rachel: This message is for Katie, Agnes, Quinn, Jade, Carly, my fiancé Nate, and my dog Charlie.

Griffin: They should have split this up over two messages. We are getting robbed right now!

Rachel: [giggling] This is from Ashley. "To my friends, every Saturday we play D&D, Jack Box, and chill fills me with the most wonderful feelings. You all bring such joy to my life. I don't know what I would do without you. You are extraordinary. All my love, Ash."

Griffin: That sounds like the best Saturday. I'm— You know where my head went immediately was Saturday mornings, not Saturday evenings.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: I don't know why. Like, every Saturday morning, I spring out of bed, grabbed my D20, grabbed my mobile device, and play games with my pals.

Rachel: That is the thing— People talk about the change in your life when you have kids. And that is my most jealous moment of my friends that do not have children is that Saturday morning where you just do whatever you want.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Where you just get up when you want and you're like, maybe I'll watch a movie right now at 9 A.M.

Griffin: Yeah. No.

Rachel: No, not anymore.

Griffin: Not anymore. But that smile. When they smile, it's like love and like, you deal with it, and like complete.

Rachel: [laughs] Every moment is so precious and it goes so fast!

Griffin: It's a precious moment, goes so fast. So don't blink or you'll miss it!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You're going to miss those poopy diapers. Oh, I'm so stoked to do this all over again.

[Max Fun ad plays]

Rachel: Can I tell you my second thing?

Griffin: I need it.

Rachel: Generic store brand items. [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, okay. Okay. I wager that the Weiner household dealt in these, sort of, contraband cereal bags.

Rachel: 100%

Griffin: Yes, for sure. As did the McElroy household.

Rachel: Yes. And I think, you know, when you're a kid, you're very susceptible to, like advertisement, you know? You'll see commercials and you'll think like, "I've got to have that very specific brand item." But I think as you get older, you realize it doesn't really matter and it is more affordable.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I am willing to make that choice.

Griffin: I'm trying to find the name— Where my head immediately went was Sam's Club sodas.

Rachel: Uh-huh. Oh, I have a whole segment.

Griffin: Oh good. Okay, okay, good.

Rachel: Specifically on Dr. Pepper generic versions.

Griffin: Okay. I think I remember what Dr. Pepper was called.

Rachel: I do remember, though, the version— I wonder if it was at Hy-Vee or Walmart, but the Lucky Charms that was called Marshmallow Mateys.

Griffin: Oh, that's fun. I like that better, I think.

Rachel: Yes. Specifically the names is probably what I find most delightful. But you know, of course there is research out there to suggest that most of the time it doesn't make a difference.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In the 70s and 80s, this is when it became particularly popular in the United States. There was kind of high price inflation and a lot of people were looking for a cheaper option. According to Consumer Reports, which, you know, I love.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Also had great prominence in the Weiner household. You can save an average of 25% by choosing the generic option. About 74% of the Consumer Report readers surveyed, and this was back in 2018, said they were highly satisfied with the quality of store brands. Most people are just like, "This is fine with me."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, Consumer Reports has a bunch of recommendations around, like, particularly good generic versions like Trader Joe's and Target, Costco, as we know, has Kirkland, Wal-Mart with their Great Value, and then even Whole Foods has a 365 Everyday generic version.

Griffin: Oh, yeah, sure.

Rachel: And most of the time, you know, once you find something that works pretty well, you get pretty loyal to it.

Griffin: Yeah! And it's so easy to convince your parents, I feel. Like, this enormous bag of Fruity Pebbles that costs \$1.15 is a good value.

Rachel: Uh, so I wanted to specifically talk about Dr. Pepper, just because, you know, a lot of times, like, ketchup is always going to be called ketchup. But when you talk about soda, a lot of times they have these kind of goofy names and Dr. Pepper is one of them.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So here are some of the other versions. Uh, Dr. Thunder, which I'm sure you're familiar with. It's Walmart. Dr. K is Kroger. Dr. Smooth is Harris Teeter, which I like a lot.

Griffin: The best! The best, the best, the best.

Rachel: HEB has Dr. B. Uh, Dr. Perky, which I was not familiar with.

Griffin: Don't like that as much.

Rachel: Dr. Chek at Winn Dixie. Mr. Pibb.

Griffin: Mr. Pibb is not a—? Mr. Pibb is a—?

Rachel: It's not really a generic, it's just kind of like an alternate.

Griffin: No, it's like a Sprite to Sierra Mist.

Rachel: But I wanted to give a shout-out to Mr. Pibb.

Griffin: Yeah, I'll give many shouts out to Mr. Pibb.

Rachel: And also two others I wasn't familiar with: Dr. Bob and Dr. Pete.

Griffin: Okay, a lot of, uh, unearned doctorates out there.

Rachel: Everybody understands it's important to the retain—

Griffin: The "doctor."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, if you don't have that, no one's gonna know what you're doing.

Griffin: Not Mr. Pibb, though.

Rachel: No, it's true. Mr. Pibb was like, "Let's not."

Griffin: "Let's not."

Rachel: "Let's not try and play in that league."

Griffin: "This is stolen valor for doctors."

Rachel: [laughs] "Our soda has not really committed the time and energy necessary to have that credential."

Griffin: No. This soda went to the school of hard knocks and not a fancy medical school. I couldn't think of one. That's not good, there's lots of them.

Rachel: Johns Hopkins?

Griffin: Johns Hopkins would have been a good one.

Rachel: [laughs] What were you looking up? What did you want to share?

Griffin: Oh, just the names of all the different ones. Like... [laughs] I love — Sam's Choice is the name of Sam's Club, like, brand. Uh, 'cause I remember, you go to Sam's Club, which we did. It's the only place where we got groceries.

Rachel: See, we never did that. Only child. But I can understand with three boys that would be ideal.

Griffin: Three very hungry boys. And they would have soda machines that just lined the front of the store that you could buy, like— Like, vending machines. But then you could also buy, you know, the 12-pack of cans of whatever.

Their generic brown soda Coca-Cola simulation was just called Cola. Love that. Twista was lemon-lime. Uh, Mountain Lightning was Dr. Pepper and then they stopped being interesting after that. There was one that was a red cream soda that I was very fond of called Red Tornado.

Rachel: Oh, that's fun.

Griffin: Strong is what it is. Uh, yeah. I think that's it.

Rachel: Wait, Mountain Lightning wasn't Mountain Dew?

Griffin: Mountain Lightning was Mountain Dew.

Rachel: Oh, okay. You just suggested it was their Dr. Pepper.

Griffin: Oh! Sorry, I misspoke. No, that would be wild. No, their Dr. Pepper you covered, was, uh— What was it? Dr. Thunder.

Rachel: Oh, okay. Yeah, 'cause Sam's Choice is Walmart.

Griffin: Is what they sell at Walmart, yes. Uh, hey, can I do my second thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: So excited for this one. Very excited, I cannot believe we have not talked about it before. I was going to do one on children's science museums, but then I decided I'm just gonna do one on COSCI. Because that is where it's fucking at.

COSCI is in Columbus, Ohio. If you live nearby and you have not gone— And when I say nearby, I mean within a five-hour drive. Six-hour drive.

Rachel: [laughs] Wow!

Griffin: You've got to get to Columbus and you've got to go to COSCI. It's been forever since I've been to COSCI, so I will put that stipulation down here. Uh, and I have a tendency to, uh, blow it out of proportion in my mind, like things from my childhood, I remember them as being, like, way cooler than they actually were.

But then when I was reading about what has happened in COSCI since I've last gone to it, it has only gotten way, way, way radder. COSCI stands for the Center of Science and Industry and it is one of the most renowned science and research museums, like, in the whole world.

Last year, USA Today named it the number one science museum in the country. It is a massive 320 thousand square foot facility that is built right on the banks of the Scioto River and it is all, mostly, interactive. They have over 300 interactive exhibits across all of these different themed areas.

I want to just talk about these areas, but first of all, look at a picture of the building, if you haven't seen it. It looks like a stretched-out eyeball. It looks like a wild, like, crashed blimp almost. It looks really, really unique. It was designed by a Japanese architect named Arata Isozaki who also designed the MOMA building in Los Angeles.

Rachel: Oh, wow!

Griffin: I don't know if you've ever seen it. He's, like, a very accomplished Japanese architect that built this science museum in Columbus, Ohio and it's just the coolest place ever because it's not like a museum that you go into and it's like, here's a wall that talks about fossils and then here's a—

It's like, you go through a mincart that leads you down into, like, this secret subterranean area. So some of the exhibits— I'll just outline some of the coolest ones.

There's an ocean exhibit where you walk through a shipwreck into an underwater cave which leads to this, like, submarine research facility where you learn about, like, the development of underwater science technology. And then you turn a corner and you're in Poseidon's temple where you learn all about, like, the physics of water and why it has informed, like, folklore across all civilization.

Rachel: [simultaneously] This is incredible.

Griffin: Uh, there is a renewable energy exhibit where you, like, select an avatar and you go through, like, this series of panels where you make choices about, like, conserving energy. I remember there were a lot of cool ones like that, that were interactive in like, an ownership type of way.

Like, there was one that taught about, and I don't know if it's still there or not, but about, like, cameras and TV production, like switchboard operation in a TV studio. And so you and your friends would get up there and do, like, karaoke while somebody else worked the board and you would make a VHS that you could like, take home with you, which was so rad.

Rachel: Aww!

Griffin: Um, there is a big space exhibit with, like, all of these different pseudo-astronaut tests that you can do, but they also have a recreation of the Apollo-11 mission control, with like full, like, wood-panel old school-looking displays and stuff like that that you can mess around with.

There's a spaceship Earth-style simulation of a city called Progress where you, like, walk through it and it starts, like, kind of just a folksy main street, but then technology advances the further into it you go.

Rachel: That's so incredible. I feel like— So, St. Louis had a science center but when they opened, I'm pretty sure that they retained every exhibit the entire time. [laughs] And so, by the time, like—

The first year, it was, like, incredible, and the second year it was okay, and by the fourth year everything was broken.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You would just walk through these, like, dirty, mangled exhibits and be like, "Oh, this— Maybe it was a good thing at one point."

Griffin: I mean, I haven't been in a while, but COSCI was always very nice. It always felt sort of— I mean, living in West Virginia, there's not, like, a big city in the state, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like, you know, Charleston, Morgantown... I'm not shitting on West Virginia, like, I loved growing up there and, you know, love those towns very much. But like, if you wanted to go to a place like COSCI, you had to go to Ohio.

So when I went to Ohio, it was to go to an amusement park or a concert or insert recreational activity that I didn't necessarily have access to in Huntington. And to me, like, COSCI was just as exciting at going to Kings Island.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because it was, like, just as sort of a transformative, rad experience.

Rachel: Well, and you're describing, like, what sounds kind of like a theme park, this idea that you get into this immersive environment to learn about something.

Like, that is always the best theme parks, the ones where, like, before you get on the ride you walk through this whole, you know, environment that's supposed to get you hype for what you're about to do.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like it's cool that they created learning in such an interactive way that really, like, transports you, you know?

Griffin: I went there on a lot of trips with, like, my church youth group. Which, looking back on it, is kind of wild.

Rachel: Seems progressive.

Griffin: Yeah, it was fairly progressive, right? It was, uh, like they have a segment on life and one of the parts of that exhibit is about, like, birth and death about how different, like, societies have viewed those throughout human civilization and that's kind of a heady concept for any kid, especially one attending it with their Southern Baptist youth group.

Rachel: What was this drive like? How long did it take you to get to—?

Griffin: To get to Columbus from Huntington, like, I don't know, two and a half hours? It depends on if you take the double A. It's a complicated— Uh, you know, back when we were touring and we'd be with the kids, every city we went to we would either go to an aquarium or a science museum.

And I really love both of those. Uh, I really liked watching— I don't think we ever took Henry on one of the tours where we did this, but watching, you know, the cousins go around and play around with science is very fulfilling, as an adult, to see.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I've been to a lot of those science museums now and none of them are as rad as COSCI. I would love to get back there. Maybe next time we visit Trav in Cincinnati we can dip on over.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Dip on over to COSCI and check it out.

Rachel: No, that sounds really cool. I would really like to do that. I love— I mean that's part of the thrill of going to a place like DC, for example, is that, like, to take a museum seriously.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: To not just, like, put up a movie prop and say, like, "This is an exhibit on dinosaurs!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, that's a big pro for me.

Griffin: Also best gift shop, like, in the biz. I'm gonna start listing off things that I vividly remember purchasing and keeping with me from the COSCI gift shop.

Rachel: Astronaut ice cream.

Griffin: Absolutely astronaut ice cream. First and last, absolutely, alpha and omega. Uh, one of those, uh, plastic tubes that you'd swirl around and it would make a tornado. Absolutely got to have one of those.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: A pressure-sensitive mood stone that you would, like, squeeze and it would change colors. I remember I gave that to a girl in, like, late elementary school, early middle school who I was, like, quote-unquote "boyfriend-girlfriend" with and she gave it back to me when we broke up.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I went to Ritter Park and I ceremoniously threw it in the creek.

Rachel: Oh, Griffin!

Griffin: To like, rid myself of this artifact of heartbreak. What's that do for you?

Rachel: There's so much about this story that is so on-brand, I can't even take it.

Griffin: [yelling] It's wild!

Rachel: [cackling]

Griffin: Yeah, I'm feeling confessional.

Rachel: You're just, like, walking away with your hands in your pockets and your head down, like, "Well, I guess that's love."

Griffin: I have a lot of memories of going to Ritter Park after a break up and trying to ceremoniously, like, make a fucking meal of it, all the way up through, like, college. I remember I got dumped in college and I went to Ritter Park in the middle of, like, a rainstorm and just sat on a bench.

Rachel: [laughing] Oh, my God!

Griffin: Got out, like, a clove cigarette that I borrowed from somebody. Lit it.

Rachel: "Is it raining? I can't even feel it."

Griffin: "Is it raining? I can't even tell."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I think I sat there, like, by myself in the dark and rain with my moist, yucky clove cigarette for like 10 minutes and then I was like, "What the fuck? This sucks! I'm out of here!"

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: John says, "The final bite of a cinnamon roll. The cinnamon roll core is unmatched in its beautiful gooiness." I almost can't with the middle of a cinnamon roll.

Rachel: Is it too much?

Griffin: It's almost a little bit too much.

Rachel: Wow, I don't know I've ever heard you say that about a sugary treat.

Griffin: I love cinnamon rolls. Everybody does. Especially if you get it from, like, a cinnamon roll shop, like, that makes the— Cinnabon is what I was thinking of. When you get to Cinnabon, it is more liquid than solid, I believe.

Rachel: Yeah, that's too much for me. Cinnabon is—

Griffin: I'll eat the outskirts of a Cinnabon, where they've operated like—

Rachel: Can I tell you something that may make me a psychopath...

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: ... is that a lot of times, I don't save the middle. I kind of go through horizontally and so my last bite isn't necessarily the center. Is that insane?

Griffin: No. Well, I mean, I don't wanna be normative. You can eat a cinnamon roll any way you want.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: It's not how I would have done it.

Rachel: No, I know.

Griffin: I would have done it a different way. Uh, Mercury says, "I think..." And I'm gonna not say this word correctly and I apologize. "...poffertjes are wonderful. I first encountered this tiny, one-inch diameter yeast pancakes when I was living in Amsterdam for graduate school. They are the perfect fluffy, chewy, powdered sugary, multitudinous little bites. At my favorite

Dutch pancake house, which serves pancakes 67 different ways, you can get 40 poffertjes for the equivalent of \$15."

Sent a picture of these little beauties. Just imagine— Just, like make a circle with your hand, just like one little one-bite powdered sugar thick chewy pancakes. Took me to the yum zone, just with a picture. With a JPEG!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, I think that's it. Thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, *Money Won't Pay*, 'cause you can find a link to that in the episode description, if you like it. And I'm sure you do.

And thank you to MaximumFun.org for having us on the network. They have so many great shows that you can just go listen to. There's no law against it. Rachel's gonna say the name of one of those shows right now. Brace your ass.

Rachel: *Jackie and Laurie Show.*

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: That's one of them.

Griffin: Yeah. *Triple Click.*

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Absolutely. Fucking...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: *Frasier*.

Rachel: *Frasier*!

Griffin: *Frasier's* not one of them, I'm sorry.

Rachel: I saw news of a *Frasier* reboot the other day, by the way.

Griffin: I felt a psychic— Like a disturbance in the fucking force and I was like, "What just happened?"

Rachel: You know everybody has that friend that really loves *Frasier* and I almost sent it to our friend that loves *Frasier*.

Griffin: Which one?

Rachel: I know, we have a few. But then I thought, like, they're probably getting it from somebody else. I don't have to take responsibility for this.

Griffin: I just knew— I think it's whenever Kelsey Grammer feels hope? I know.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Do you know what I mean?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Is that weird?

Rachel: No!

Griffin: Anytime Kelsey Grammer is like, "Hmm!" I feel like, "Oh, wait. Something's happening. Something's going on."

Rachel: You've always been very attuned to Kelsey Grammer.

Griffin: I don't— I fucking don't want to be.

Rachel: I know! Hey, you don't choose your gifts!

Griffin: I think it's because I watched him fall off the stage and I laughed so hard that I blacked out and in that unconscious state, he came to me like a phantom.

Rachel: [simultaneously] Yeah, you connected. Uh-huh. Thank you, Maximum Fun.

Griffin: Thanks, Maximum Fun! Bye!

[Griffin and Rachel laugh]

[theme music plays]

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[ad break]