

Wonderful! 171: Butt Warfare

Published 3rd March 2021

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](#)

[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: Been a week of no natural disasters, in our place, at least. There's been some in other places, but that's just kind of par for the course at this point. But I feel like we got our hand firmly on the rudder. I've got one on the rudder, you got one on the big—

Rachel: Other thing.

Griffin: The other— The big sail. What's the— Cross sail rigging? And I have got another hand on the steam lever that chooses how many knots the ship moves at.

Rachel: Foot on the pedal.

Griffin: So, yeah, you've got a foot on the pedal and you have one hand on the topsail rigging.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: I've got one on the rudder and the steam power. That leaves you with another free hand, so do you think that maybe you could— I mean, have the map? You can have the map in one and the topsail rigging in the other.

Rachel: Is this still a metaphor or are we actually piloting a boat?

Griffin: I think we're piloting a big boat at this point.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: With just two people, which is not enough people for the type of ship we're talking about.

Rachel: I will say that we have running water now.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: So, if we—

Griffin: [loudly] Glow up!

Rachel: [laughs] If we wanted to have a little bathtub boat, we could do that.

Griffin: Oh, sure we could. Oh, yeah. Running water opens a lot of doors for you, uh, vis-a-vis nautical play.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's *Wonderful*, a show where we talk about things we like, things that we're into. Thank you all so much for the very warm reception to the last episode, I know it was a break from our usual formula, but—

Rachel: Yeah, so many folks, like, encouraging us to feel our feelings and I think Griffin and I, just because of our upbringing and our temperament—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... have a tendency to be like, "Oh, but you know, we're really fortunate because, you know, we're still alive and breathing."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And everybody was like, "Hey, things suck and it's okay to acknowledge that they suck." And I appreciate that reminder.

Griffin: Yes, I will champion that for you and our listeners at home, but I had this sort of gene imprint of southern Baptist upbringing for, you know, 18 years or whatever. It's a tough code to crack.

Rachel: I know. I know. Well, I think, too, it's— You know, when you're surrounded in Austin by people, you know, living in an apartment complex who still do not have running water...

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: It's easy to be like, "Well, we're fortunate," you know, in that sense. But I appreciate people giving us space to kind of ride it out.

Griffin: Yeah, it was very nice. But I'm back on my bullshit over here...

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: ... with some more lightweight topics, but hey, do you have any small wonders? Before we get started in earnest?

Rachel: Uh, you know, we just finished the second season of *Blown Away*.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: And I, as Griffin knows, kind of went back and forth on it.

Griffin: There is an insufferable personality on this show the second season.

Rachel: Yeah, it's— The show is obviously focused on people who blow glass and there is a professor... of glass blowing, I guess? On the show who has quite the ego and it was difficult to watch him.

Griffin: He like, wouldn't do— They'd be like, make a cartoon thing. And he wouldn't do it. He'd be like, "I don't know if you know this about me yet, but I kind of don't like to follow the rules." And it's like, then fucking leave!

Rachel: He, uh— It didn't help that he had, like, not only like, taught some of the guest judges, but like, had established himself so much in the community, that I think he came in with the sense of like, "This is my show to win."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So I had some difficulty with it, but the last episode they really— They had to put together their own little gallery exhibit and it was beautiful.

Griffin: Yeah. Man, I should have thought of something while you were talking about that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm just gonna say, like—

Rachel: You wanna talk about, uh, the cookie? The little cookie snack you got?

Griffin: The Nilla wafers?

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, I guess. I don't know—

Rachel: Last night you were so enthusiastic, you were like, "This is a cookie that has been with me my entire life that I have always enjoyed."

Griffin: Yeah, we— Henry got, uh, sick and so I had to go to the grocery store to, like, find sick food fare that he could eat and Nilla wafers were like, a staple for me growing up.

But I also like, realize I have very strong memories of eating Nilla wafers, like, off a paper plate in daycare or something like that and thinking, "Man, I'm still crushing these bad boys. Nilla wafers hold it down." I do appreciate the Nilla wafer.

I go first this week!

Rachel: 'Kay.

Griffin: And I wanna start out by talking about the porcupine. Been a while since we talked about an animal, I feel like. And I don't know why mine always focused so firmly in the world of rodentia, but um...

Rachel: Yeah! There's something about the snout and the low to the ground, I think it appeals to you.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I get it.

Griffin: Yeah, I've talked about the capybara on this show and what is a porcupine except a dangerous capybara?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like a cool, edgy capybara. They are fairly similar in size, only obviously the porcupine has the big quills.

Rachel: The wombat, too!

Griffin: Wombat, too, also! Yeah. I forget, I think the porcupine is the third largest rodent on the planet, the only ones bigger than it are the capybara and I believe the badger? Is the badger a rodent?

Rachel: Mm. You're looking for Mickey Mouse.

Griffin: Mickey Mouse is also tall. He wears human clothes and that's fucked up.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So yeah, they got these big long defensive quills all over their body, which is great for them but bad for anybody who might want to, you know, give one of these bad boys a big hug, which maybe by the end of the segment might include you. I didn't really understand porcupines.

I didn't really know that I liked porcupines until I saw this video, or I guess it was a series of viral videos, of a delightful big boy of a porcupine named Teddy Bear. And he eats a variety of [throaty] gourds, mostly.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The way I just said the word gourd was Oscar worthy. They were gourds and he just gobbles them down and he makes the sounds that are—

Rachel: Oh, the *sounds*.

Griffin: I actually have pulled a clip from the video of Teddy Bear eating just a bunch of little tiny pumpkins out of a bucket so you all can fall in love with Teddy Bear all over again.

[audio playing]

Speaker 1: What is it, Teddy? [porcupine noises] Pumpkin? [porcupine squeaking] Can you say pumpkin? [more adorable squeaking]

Griffin: So good. It almost sounds— It's one of those things where if you listen, you can hear human words like, "Yeah! Mm-hmm!"

Rachel: Yeah, I found myself— 'Cause I don't know, with these videos you never really know, like, why you're watching it. Like, is it just cute or does something incredible happen? And I swear I thought he said, "pumpkin."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because she was encouraging him to acknowledge that it was a pumpkin and I swear he said, "pumpkin."

Griffin: But he didn't, he is still a porcupine and it's fine. We like to play here and we like fun things, but, you know, magical thinking can get you in trouble sometimes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So, there's two main flavors of porcupine which are actually, like, pretty different.

There is— and I don't know why they're called this— the old world porcupines who live in southern Europe, western and southern Asia, and most of Africa, and the new world porcupines who live in North America and

northern South America. And old world porcupines are, like, purely terrestrial. They are purely nocturnal.

Rachel: More conservative in their views.

Griffin: They're very conservative. Hugely conservative. Um, no, they are a bit bigger than new world porcupines. And what makes new world porcupines stand apart is, obviously, they're a little bit smaller, but also they climb trees. They live in wooded areas.

So they will climb trees and spend most of their time up there. And they are not, like, strictly nocturnal. They can party in the daytime a little bit, too. So, yeah. I mean, an ocean apart, these two different types of porcupines are actually quite different.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: But both of them do have the quills, which is part of a suite of defense mechanisms that it employs against predators. So, when someone steps to a porcupine, they flare out their quills to look bigger, in the night time especially, because they're, you know, usually fairly monochromatic or, you know, just black and white.

Their appearance is sort of disguised by their big, big quills now. But also they sort of simulate the skunk stripe. So, like, there is a coloration thing there. This is all part of what are called, and I've always thought this was very fascinating, but I didn't know the word for it, aposematic defenses.

Which are just visual warnings against predators, like certain certain types of frogs that have, like, bright red and, you know, black coloration, as if to say, like, "Hey, check this color out. I am poisonous. Do not— you do not want to mess with this." Porcupine's have that, like, all over in their colors.

The fact that they have quills, the fact that they make their quills larger, they rattle their teeth together and their quills together to make a, like, pretty loud noise actually.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That can be kind of scary. And they rely on that coloration a bit to make, you know, predators think they're a skunk, but they can also make a smell. Their smell comes out of their, like, skin all over. And it's not like skunk strong, but it's like enough to make a predator go like, "Oh, okay, never mind."

And if all else fails, they will run backwards or swing their tail into a predator and get them with these big barbed, so good luck pulling them out, quills.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: They are serious, serious business.

Rachel: Yeah, I didn't know about the smell.

Griffin: I didn't either! One other, like, misnomer that I don't know how it went on this long, as like a thing that people just assumed about porcupines. I had always thought that they could project out their quills.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Like, they could fire off their quills, and it's not true. Like, they just don't— Forever, everyone just thought, oh, well, they can just blast out their quills like they're a, you know, a superhero or something.

Rachel: Yeah, I think, well— Because, primarily, your exposure to porcupines is like, cartoons when you're a kid.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I feel like there's a lot of Bugs Bunny cartoons where you're like, "Uh-oh, look out! They're gonna shoot those at you!"

Griffin: Yeah, that's not— That's not how they do it. They will just sort of run their ass back at you. Much like the wombat does, when he crushes you with his big, big powerful butt. Rodents have figured out butt warfare.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And that's— And we, you know, us humans, we think we rule the roost, but we can do great things with our butts. Great things with our butts. We can make history with our butts, but we haven't quite cracked the rodent code of how to use the butt to smash the bad guy.

Rachel: Do you think there are military personnel in a lab watching, just a series of twerking videos, thinking, "How can we weaponize this?"

Griffin: "How can we turn this into a weapon?" If us human beings had quills or just, like a firm carapace, like a— You know, or a keratin hide around our, just, butt, I don't know what it looks like, but if someone breaks into my house...

Rachel: [giggling]

Griffin: ... and wants to hurt my family? I wanna do a big butt smash on them with butt warfare, learned from big rats.

Rachel: The hard thing about butt warfare is you have to turn your back on your opponent, you know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that's a dangerous maneuver.

Griffin: But not if you have a huge, strong butt back there with, I don't know, like, horns coming out of it. Do you know what I mean?

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: I don't want to, you know, violate the sanctity of what we have already accomplished with butts. I don't want to, like, rob Peter to pay Butt-Paul. I want to just keep it— I want to keep my family safe.

Rachel: [indulgent] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Anyway, uh, porcupines are great. Props to the hedgehog, too. It's basically like a little porcupine, it's a lot easier to hold.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But, uh, today we're talking about porcupines. It's so cool. They're a very cute, cute guy with a lot of aposematic defenses that I find really fascinating.

I love shit like that, where it's like, this guy was cute and delicious and getting gobbled up all the time, so he was like, "What can I do about that?" and evolved quills. And he's like, "Okay. That'll do for now." Love it.

Rachel: That's really good.

Griffin: I'm wondering if we could make a pin out of butt warfare. Like, how one would even represent that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Just, maybe it's a porcupine eating a pumpkin, but looking over its shoulder at you looking at its butt, like, "Try it. Try something." I don't know if that would read on a pin or not.

Rachel: Well, it's not our job.

Griffin: It's not! You're right!

Rachel: We're not the artist, here.

Griffin: We are word artists and joke artists and fact artists, which is to say liars.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, my first thing is something I've really been missing lately and it is the king-size bed.

Griffin: Oh. Yeah. I mean, that's a brag. This is a brag. We have a king-size bed.

Rachel: We have a big bed.

Griffin: But that's just because we *cannot* touch each other at night.

Rachel: [giggling]

Griffin: That sounds much dire that what is the actual— We are not night snugglers, we don't fall asleep cradled in each other's arms. We need space.

Rachel: No, and I like— I am very skeptical that there are people that really do that, consistently.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because I am like a wild animal in that if I am pinned under anything...

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... I immediately just start thinking, like, "How can I get out of this?"

Griffin: Yeah, we were spooning once on the couch, and I noticed that you had gnawed through my wrist to free yourself.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: It was kind of cute!

Rachel: So, right now, because of the destruction in our home from the plumbing disaster, we are sleeping upstairs on a trundle bed. We each have our own twin. Uh, it is fine. It is comfortable, but we, um, are not enjoying the comforts of our large bed.

Griffin: Yes. A trundle bed, if you don't know, 'cause I don't think I knew until we had one, is like a bed, but then there's another secret bed that you pull out underneath it. So we're kind of stair-stepped.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm on the lower bed, just always looking up at my beautiful, 17-month pregnant wife, up on her beautiful, soft, Casper pedestal.

Rachel: [giggling]

Griffin: Yeah, it's a trip.

Rachel: Yeah, I, uh— The interesting thing, too, so when I— When Griffin and I first started cohabitating, I believe we were sleeping on a full-size bed?

Griffin: Full-size bed, yes.

Rachel: Yeah. I was living by myself and got a full-size bed for me and then we moved in together and we weren't ready to purchase a large bed together.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And so, we just skipped the queen entirely, went straight to the king.

Griffin: Went straight there.

Rachel: Uh, partially because we were expecting Henry and everybody had told us, "You need a bigger bed." And it changed my life.

Griffin: Changed everything.

Rachel: Yeah. This, like, king-size bed thing is a relatively new phenomenon. I mean, it's not new in that, like, it's existed since, like the 60s, the 50s and 60s. But the increase in interest in it has gone up significantly.

Griffin: Why is that? Just people are getting bigger?

Rachel: People are getting bigger, that is 100% true.

Griffin: Oh! I was goofing. Okay.

Rachel: Yeah, no. I mean— So here's the thing. So, in 1900, only 4% of adult men in the United States were six feet or taller.

Griffin: Whoa.

Rachel: And then, by 1959, that number was 20%.

Griffin: [more enthused] Whoa!

Rachel: And then women were growing taller at similar rates. So, people just got bigger.

Griffin: They got milk! That milk makes us big, didn't it?

Rachel: Are you talking about cow's milk or some kind of human milk?
'Cause I don't really want to...

Griffin: I'm not talking about getting, like, human growth hormone through breast milk, no! I'm saying we drank our milk and got our bones bigger. Fuck, yes. Are you kidding me? I didn't realize we got that much bigger that fast. That's great.

Rachel: Something I didn't know, is actually a queen and a king size bed are the same length.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And the California king is actually not as wide as a king, but it is longer.

Griffin: Interesting! The king is a square, right?

Rachel: Well, it's 76 by 80 inches.

Griffin: Essentially a square.

Rachel: Yeah. And then, uh, when you get to the California king, you get 84 inches, which is 7 feet long.

Griffin: Woof!

Rachel: California kings were made popular by, kind of, celebrity mansions. In the early 1960s, the Los Angeles Furniture Company started making oversized beds for celebrity mansions and this is kind of how this became a thing.

Griffin: That's too much. I love a big bed. I have always been a proponent of you spend so much time in a bed, it is, like, the first thing I think I spent a lot of money on, was a good bed.

Rachel: No, it's true.

Griffin: Because I realized that I am, first of all, a fucking precious *Princess and a Pea* situation, literally.

Rachel: But this is not always true, though! Okay, so, this is the thing that, I don't know if you just became a man that appreciated the finer things or if something changed about your body, because when I met you—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ... you had been sleeping—

Griffin: On a busted-ass hoopty of a mattress. No, for sure. But I think it's because I slept on that mattress for so long that my— that I really fucked myself up.

Rachel: You also started travelling a lot more and I think that influenced your decision of like, when I sleep on a bad bed, I feel bad.

Griffin: That's true.

Rachel: So, yeah. So, in the 60s is when they started encouraging people to upgrade to larger bedding. And in 1953, king-size bedding represented less than 1% of overall bedding sales. In 1961, this has risen to 5% and then in 1962 it was 10%.

Griffin: Okay, so. We knew right away, this is a good bed.

Rachel: Started skyrocketing. Um, I obviously, I— You know, I picked the king because that is what we have. I don't feel particularly strongly about a king versus a queen bed.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I just miss being able to lay on the same level with you on the same structure. [laughs]

Griffin: True! True. It's a strange situation, but I mean, we have beds and that's fantastic.

Rachel: That is fantastic. Um, I will say, so, when you look at like, a full-size mattress, which is what I used to have, that is just four and a half feet by 6.25 feet.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Which is kind of crazy to think that we slept on that as long as we did.

Griffin: Yeah, as two lovers. Well, we would spend our nights entwined in a passionate embrace.

Rachel: [laughs] A standard full bed only provides two feet, three inches of space per person.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So, you basically have enough room to kind of turn from, like, your one side to your stomach.

Griffin: You and me are *big wigglers* at night, I feel like. We do a lot of tossing and turning. We really explore the space.

Rachel: So, yeah. I appreciate having the extra space. I don't know that I would need a California king, that's the thing. Like, neither of us is particularly tall. I mean, me, not at all. And you—

Griffin: I'm huge.

Rachel: You're not six feet.

Griffin: I'm huge, I'm basically six feet.

Rachel: You're not yet six feet.

Griffin: There's a bunch of weirdos on the internet who want to know exactly how tall I am and I will not give— I will not give in to that. So I will say almost six feet and I will leave it there. You could comfortably round up to six feet.

Rachel: [considering] Well...

Griffin: [firmly] You could comfortably round up to six feet.

Rachel: But, yeah, we've had a particular mattress that we've had for years now that has our little divots in it and we should probably get a different mattress, but I feel so...

Griffin: I can't. I'm too old to start working on a new divot.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That trench— I put a lot of sweat equity into that trench. I'm not just gonna give that up.

Rachel: Uh, yeah. So, beds are good.

Griffin: [loudly] Can I steal you away?

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

[music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: We have a couple jumpy-ponts here, and I would love to read the first one.

Rachel: Please do.

Griffin: The first one is for future Lydia and it is from past Lydia who says, "Hi, you! I know sometimes it's hard to see that you're doing great, but trust me, you are. You've got a lot of good things ahead of you, like moving to Austin with your best friends and writing a whole-ass book for your thesis. Take a breath, kiss Titus on his little doggie head, maybe get some more sleep. And remember, you've got this in the bag."

Welcome to Austin!

Rachel: Welcome!

Griffin: [singing] You picked a great time to be here.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I— For a second I was going to make a joke about a message for future Lydia from past Lydia, and I was going to joke like here's the scores to the big sports game. Make sure you bet on them. But that was backwards from how it would work.

Rachel: [giggling]

Griffin: If past me was like, "Let me tell you about the final score of the Buffalo Bills/Atlanta Falcons Super Bowl!" I would be like, "No. What? No! They weren't the ones. And why would you know that?" Anyway...

Rachel: Can I read this next one?

Griffin: Oh, yes.

Rachel: It is for Ed, it is from Dressler. "Ed, I love you more than the moon and you know how I feel about the moon. You're the best vampire screenplay writing partner, the best virtual cow co-parent, and the best maybe future husband I could possibly hope for. You already know all of this, but now you extra know it."

Griffin: I love that. I love an aspirational Jumbotron. It's empowering.

Rachel: You also made, like, a little noise of recognition about the moon.

Griffin: Love the moon. Moon's great. Talked about the moon on this show. Did a whole set about the moon. Governs the tides. Love that. Big.

Rachel: Bright sometimes, too.

Griffin: Werewolf.

Rachel: Real bright. Different colors.

Griffin: Love that.

[MaxFun ad plays]

Griffin: Can I do my second thing?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: My second thing is a drum break from an old song that has been sampled in thousands of pieces of music and has gone on to define entire, sort of, subgenres of music. And that thing that I'm going to talk about is called the Amen Break, which I feel like I had heard about it before.

I had definitely heard about sort of, you know, drum samples that had been, you know, at the core of certain hip hop movements in the 80s and 90s and, you know, British dance music movements. But I don't think I knew specifically the Amen Break was, like, *the* sample was, like, *the* loop.

Rachel: Yeah. This was— I mean, it was something that when you sent it to me, it was familiar.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But I had never heard of it as a thing.

Griffin: Yeah. That's what I find really, really fascinating about stuff like this is that you don't have to possess, like, a categorical, like understanding of music history or theory. You hear this drum loop and then you realize that you've heard it in so many songs.

And it's like learning this secret language that like underpins a lot of music just like, oh, my God, like— It's like the Wilhelm Scream. Do you know about that? The, like, sound effect that's in, like, every movie of a guy, like, falling and going like, [imitates the Wilhelm Scream].

And it's in everything. They sneak it into every movie, it's almost like an Easter egg for, you know, sound mixers and editors and stuff like that, but I feel like this is kind of like that. So I'm going to play the Amen Break, which is essentially a four bar drum solo that is taken from a 1969 song called *Amen Brother*, which was a B side from a soul band called The Winstons, and it was played by a drummer named Gregory Coleman.

[music starts in the background]

And it's six seconds long, but when you hear it, you're going to realize that you've heard it everywhere. So here is the Amen Break.

[music plays]

It's just this unassuming thing and it's so short, but it has been just absolutely everywhere. So, in the 80s, it started to appear on these bootleg compilations of famous beats and breaks for DJs to use because sampler technology kind of came up in the early to mid-80s, and that's when people started to really seek out these really incredible drumming performances from the past, from the 60s and 70s and earlier, even in some cases.

And the Amen Break, for whatever reason, just like— I think you can probably think about it, is just like, it went viral and started to go just absolutely everywhere. So, Salt-n-Pepa were the first big mainstream artists to sample it in a song called *I Desire*, which came out in 1986.

But where it really, really, really, like, took the main stage is that it is the backing drumbeat for *Straight Outta Compton*.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Just like, front to back, like, that is the drumbeat behind *Straight Outta Compton*. It is pitched down, I think, and slowed down a bit because when it is sampled, you know, it's usually pitched up in the tempo's kicked up for, you know, techno music when it's used in drum and bass loops.

But in a lot of hip-hop of that era, it was slowed way down. But it's still the same. It's still the exact same sample. It's just, like, been processed differently.

So, it became sort of more ubiquitous in hip hop in the late 80s and early 90s, but I think the bigger, kind of like, impact that it had is how it created this entire breakbeat dance genre, which, like I said earlier, was kind of the purview of British DJs who were messing around with these old breakbeats to create like the drum and bass sample, a lot of techno music, the jungle genre, a lot of industrial dance music at that time.

There were just so many different, tiny little subgenres of dance music that had this six seconds of drumming, like at the very core of it. It is a seed that, like, branched out into all of these different places based on this one four-bar performance that this dude laid down on a B-side track back in 1968.

Rachel: Yeah. This is fascinating to me, because as somebody who doesn't make, you know, music or, you know, has experience, like composing music, I don't always hear, kind of, the individual pieces of the song. So it's always interesting for me to hear like, "Oh, yeah, this is used all over the place. You never noticed."

Griffin: It's everywhere! So, outside of like hip-hop and drum and bass, you know, dance music. Bowie sampled it, Oasis sampled it. The *Futurama* theme song. It's the backing drums for the *Futurama* theme song, front to back, like you hear— You really will hear it everywhere now, which is kind of awesome.

What is significantly, hugely less awesome is that because it was sort of propagated through these compilation albums which credited the performers and artists behind those beats, sort of, not uniformly, let's say, the artist who actually played the drums, Gregory Coleman, never got a penny. He died in 2006.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh.

Griffin: He was, like, impoverished. He died in Atlanta in 2006. And the bandleader for the Winstons, a guy named Richard Lewis Spencer, said that he was pretty sure that Gregory Coleman, like, did not know. Like, had no idea that this beat that he had made had changed music forever, which is heartbreaking, which is very, very sad.

None of the artists, none of the Winstons got, like, a dime from this, didn't even know that it was a thing until, I think like, 1997, a record label came to Richard Lewis Spencer was like, "Hey, can we have the masters for the Amen Break?" And he's like, "What are you talking about? What do you mean?"

And that's when he found out that it had been in all of these songs and taken off and established all these new genres. And he was fucking pissed. Understandably, it had gone on to be in so many songs that it made so much money and they hadn't seen a dime of it.

He eventually would go on to kind of recognize that it is rad that this thing that they made had gone on to be so important to like, capital M, Music. And in 2015, some British DJs, like, wanted to right this wrong. So, they launched a Go Fund Me campaign and raised like \$40,000 that they then sent to Richard Lewis Coleman. But he passed away last year, sadly.

So like, it's very messy, clearly, the lack of rules for how to credit and pay royalties to these artists. But it is, like, it is fascinating to know that these sort of like Rosetta Stones exist out there that are just everywhere. The Amen Break is not the only one of these. There's something called the Think Break that is also very memorable, like a...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ...a break like this. There's a James Brown, like, drum break that is also super ubiquitous, although I imagine he probably got more credit for it.

Rachel: You kind of wonder what comes first, like whether somebody's sitting down and they're putting a song together and it's the only thing they can think about while they're doing it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Or if it's like a little nod to, like, history more than it is a, like, inspiration point.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean I think it is mostly— I think it is mostly that, like a nod to history. The other thing I find really fascinating about stuff like this is, like, it ties two time periods together. Like, when I think about music being made in 1968, I do not think about British drum and beat bands that I was, like, listening to on Winamp in 1999.

To me, like, that music was this own thing that was very, kind of, futuristic and, like, industrial in a way that the Soul Movement 1968— Like, I did not think about it like that. And yet, this drum performance that informed all of this, like, what I thought of as futuristic music when I was listening to it happened in 1968.

That's awesome. That means that, like, music doesn't have a— It's not crystallized in time, necessarily. Like, there are— I had this thought, like when I finally, like, got into the Beatles in my teens I was like, wait a minute. Like a lot of this sounds like music that I listen to today that I think of as only being possible in the era that we live in now. Like—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: There is something inherently futuristic or at least, like, present about the music that's being made now. But you go back and listen to older songs and it's like this could be recorded today or not only that, this made music what it is today. So it's not like, oh, that's just old stuff.

I think that that's amazing. I think that's, you know, super cool. So that's the Amen Break.

Rachel: Yeah, it's cool.

Griffin: I apologize for if I did sort of poison everybody's brains who are now going to, like, hear this stick out like a sore thumb anytime they hear it in a song. But there it is. What's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing, I thought about being more specific than this, but then I decided the category itself was really something I wanted to talk about. And that is just generally funny women.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Just women that are funny.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: I think it's something that I realized just not too long ago that was very important to me, because I think when I was a kid, you know, my kind of, like, comedy influence or whatever, you know, what I thought was funny was mostly male dominated because that was what I had exposure to.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I realized just— The reason this came to mind was because of Amy Poehler and Tina Fey just recently hosting the Golden Globes. And it's just this reminder that, like, the power of seeing a woman on stage, you know, and on stage because she is funny and being funny, because it is still something that feels a little subversive.

Griffin: I mean, in our lifetime, the— and obviously, clearly this conversation is still happening, but, you know, hopefully relegated more to the shithead contingent of people on the Internet. But like, I remember conversations, like hearing conversations, like in the media, just like, "Can women be funny, too?"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's— And again, like people are still assholes about stuff like that. But it used to be so matter-of-fact.

Rachel: This was, like, not long ago. This was like less than ten years ago, Christopher Hitchens wrote that article of, like, *Why Women Aren't Funny*. And I'm sure he wrote it largely to be inflammatory. but it definitely—

Griffin: [loudly] Hitchens!?

Rachel: [laughs] People were like, "Yeah, why aren't they? That's so strange." And I feel like it is something— So I grew up just in a house with a lot of very funny women, and I didn't realize that that was particularly unique until I got older.

But I always found being funny to be something really important and really interesting. And I found myself drawn to having that community, like, among all my friends, all the time. And it was strange to me as I got older and I realized, like, that that is not typically a priority for women.

And if you think about, like, you know, fairy tales and stuff, like, you know, the focus is on being attractive and desirable. And that is not always the trait that people go to right away.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But then you look at like, you know, obviously Saturday Night Live is kind of the easiest thing to point to. But I just remember, like, finding, like, Gilda Radner and realizing like—

Like, there is a way to do this that is so, like, intoxicating, you know? And exciting and interesting and important, and that made a big difference for me.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: And it is something like— I don't know. I'm not like, I don't know. I never really fancied myself, like, a comedian, you know? Or somebody that, like, wanted to make comedy. But I always found, like, being funny to be like the most interesting quality.

And one of the things that, like, really I feel like drew me to you, not just that you were funny, but you were quick. You know, like there are a lot of guys out there that are like, "Funny."

Griffin: Yeah. Dane Cook.

Rachel: [cackles]

Griffin: Your Dane Cooks.

Rachel: But I need that, like, quickness, you know? Like I need to be, like— If I'm having a conversation with somebody and they're being funny, it does not work for me unless they say something unexpected, like, in a very fast, off the cuff manner.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I appreciate that about the McElroys, I think.

Griffin: Yeah. Thank you.

Rachel: Um, so there have been a lot of studies on, like, male versus female, like, funny humor, like approaches to humor. Why, like, why men are seen as more funny.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean as long as we're arbitrarily, sort of, exploring the gender binary, let's add a layer of extra arbitrariness-ness to that.

Rachel: I know. I almost didn't want to talk about it, but then it was just it continues to be such a thing.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know? And it's hard not to, because generally, women will say, you know, when they are looking for a male partner, that they want that person to be funny. And that is just not as common when men are looking for female partners.

Griffin: I know a lot of people have a lot of feelings about Amy Schumer, but like the one of the things that stuck out the most to me in the documentary that we watched about her, sort of, I forget who made it. It's part of a series about her, like, childbirth experience was like, you really get

to see what it's like, being kind of the focal point of that conversation, currently.

Or not currently maybe, you know, five years ago, or something whenever the Amy Schumer Show was on the air when, like, she was the focal point for this conversation of like, "What does it mean for a woman comedian?" Which, like, ignores all of the women comedians that had come before and were also doing it at that time. But like, people just fucking hated her because she was a successful woman comedian.

Rachel: Yeah. And she was the first female comedian to do Madison Square Garden.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know, like she has definitely blazed a trail for a lot of other people. So, all of these studies kind of look at, you know, different traits that people say that they're interested in and how it actually stacks up.

There was a study actually at University of Missouri that I thought was interesting, that said men prefer women who are receptive to their humor, whereas women prefer men who produce humor, which I thought was very telling.

Griffin: What does it say about men who are looking for women who are just kind of patient with their humor?

Rachel: [laughs] In this study, participants were given an imaginary budget of five dollars to spend on a trait they want in their sexual partner.

Griffin: What the fuck?

Rachel: Isn't this kind of fascinating, though? So, the idea is, you get five dollars and you budgeted out for different traits you want, and you pay—

Griffin: What is this Weird Science, fucking Coldstone Creamery of a human being that you're doing?

Rachel: It gives you really interesting data, though. So the more they spend on traits, the more their partner would embody that characteristic. So women, she found, would spend just \$1.91 on a mate who laughs at their jokes. But men would spend \$3 on one.

Griffin: [laughing uncontrollably] We're fucking terrible. \$3! "I don't have enough food to eat this month, what happened?"

Rachel: "It's very important to me that she thought I was funny." There's also older studies where they look at— Here's one from 1998 where people were shown photos of people of the opposite sex, along with transcripts of interviews supposedly conducted.

In the interviews, the photo subjects came off as either funny or bland for the women. A man's use of humor in the interview increased his desirability. The women's use of humor, meanwhile, didn't make the men want to date them more, it actually made them slightly less alluring—

Griffin: Fuck. Aw, man.

Rachel: There's a lot to be said, too, just evolutionarily, about people that are funnier or are smarter and whether or not like there is a predisposition to be drawn towards a smarter mate, you know, for survival reasons.

Griffin: Oh, so like seeing humor as emblematic of intellect.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, that's not true. [cackles] Well, I can tell you that's not. No, no, no, no, no, that's not it. I know two state capitals.

Rachel: [laughs] The thing that I found, and this is something I've found true, is there was a 2001 study that analyzed casual conversations among young people, and it found that women told many more jokes when they were in all female groups, which I have found to be true a lot of times, too.

I'll be in a big room of people and I won't realize somebody is particularly funny. But then if it's just like, me and the girls, all of a sudden these people come forward and I'm just like, oh my gosh, I had no idea you were so funny.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it speaks a lot to kind of, just, what is and isn't encouraged, you know, and in kind of a mixed group. Um, but yeah, I mean, it's an awkward thing to talk about, I think, because there's a lot of, you know, outdated and kind of antiquated construction to this whole concept.

Griffin: The question itself is— Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: Yeah. And it is something that I have found personally. I mean, when we started this show as *Rose Buddies*, the majority of the reviews that, like, kind of commented on my kind of introduction to the podcast world were just kind of, like, "I didn't— She...? You know what? Funny. No idea. I didn't expect it."

You know, and I feel like you find that a lot if you are somebody who is trying to make jokes as a woman.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it is, it's just— It's powerful. It's powerful to see people like Maya Rudolph on stage, you know, doing something that is just, like, feels, you know, radical still. Yeah. And so I just wanted to draw attention to that and say it's wonderful.

Griffin: Yeah. You're wonderful.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: You're so funny.

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: My favorite thing in the world is, like, late night, like slumber party levels of exhaustion after just, like, a long day with Henry and, like, one of us will pitch an idea, like different names of Jeff Foxworthy Ted Talks.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: And then we'll just fucking go and go, and you will just, like, lay there quietly for four minutes and then drop this bomb.

Rachel: [through giggles] I will get very quiet and Griffin will realize that I'm still trying to think.

Griffin: I, like, won't go to sleep. I'll be like, "I got to stay up to hear Rachel's next bon mot. Do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?"

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Here's one from Jessie who says, "The snow has melted here in Vancouver, B.C. and spring flowers are starting to pop up. Crocuses and daffodils and snowdrops are everywhere. And it makes me so happy to see that spring is coming and winter is over."

There's been a weird thing that has kind of happened in reverse here in Austin, and I'm sure all over Texas, is that our succulents turned into full blown Dali painting, melted, weird, abstract landscapes.

Rachel: Yeah. There is the suggestion that potentially you can cut some of these plants back and they will regenerate.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But it really looks like everything is just gone.

Griffin: One of our friends started an Instagram account called Flaccid Plants because it just— It really does look like somebody put a hairdryer on these bad boys for an hour and a half and just letted it melt.

Rachel: Yeah. I will say, though, I mean, like Texas, you get those huge swings. So we, after being like ten degrees, are now up in the like 70s and 80s. So it seems likely spring is coming, but...

Griffin: Maybe some of the— Some, like, forms of cacti have hairs, I guess, that grow out of it? Kind of wispy— what's the word? Like flaxen kind of hairs that grow out of it. And when the freeze happened, a lot of those plants ejected those hairs rapidly.

And so you just see these weird, like white like animal tails just drooping out of potted plants all over. It is one of the weirder, sort of, visual effects of what happened here in Texas. Anyway, here's another one from Quinten and

Melissa who say, "One thing we think is wonderful this week is the Danish concept of hygge." That's H-Y-G-G-E [pronounced 'hooga'].

"It's the Danish antidote to being forced indoors all the time. The perfect example is snuggling on the couch, reading a book, and drinking hot beverages with the soft light of candles nearby."

Rachel: This is something I just became aware of, like last year. It was like a phenomenon where everybody was talking about that, like, aesthetic.

Griffin: Yeah, I didn't know. Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. No, it is definitely like— It's not something we see a lot of in Texas, but in areas that have that kind of cold climate traditionally, you can get that real cozy vibe.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm sure if you're equipped for it, I'm sure it's dope. I'm not sure if what we had to do when our house was freezing, qualified as hygge. Like locking ourselves in a single chamber with all the candles we owned lit.

Rachel: Yeah. But like, you know, when you see an Airbnb and it's like...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's like a cabin.

Griffin: Cabin aesthetic.

Rachel: And they have a variety of throw rugs and blankets.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm into that. Hey, thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, *Money Won't Pay*. You'll find a link to that in the

episode description. And thank you so much for listening and thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

They got so many great shows at MaximumFun.org that you should go listen to. Can I interest you in a *Triple Click*?

Rachel: That's a good idea.

Griffin: May I interest you in one of our fine *Triple Clicks*? If you like video games, may I interest you in one of our *Stop Podcasting Yourself*s. We have many over here on this shelf.

Rachel: And what about *Dr. Gameshow*?

Griffin: We have a fresh batch of *Dr. Gameshow* for you. It is right here on the— It's a blue light special. I think that's it. I think we're— I think we're done. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. And—

Rachel: Oh, do you want to tell people about that rescheduled *Adventure Zone*?

Griffin: Hey, if you like *Adventure Zone*, we have rescheduled the live show that was originally going to happen a couple of weeks back. It is now this Friday, March the 5th. And I believe it's at 9:00 P.M., Eastern Time. And you can find tickets at mcelroy.family.

We're playing a game called Honey Heist where we are bears who are trying to steal things. We got Erica Ishii, who's going to be our guest, who I'm very excited to play a game with. And it's also going to be a choose-your-own-adventure interactive experience, which should be fun.

It's weird for me going into a live show without really knowing what to expect. I have no idea how this thing is going to go, but it's going to be a lot of fun. And it's this Friday. So go to mcelroy.family!

Rachel: And you make a really great bear.

Griffin: Thank you. I played a bear and I will be reprising the role, I assume, of the Thomas Crown Affair, the Polar Bear who is spectacular. Anyway, speaking of bears, I'm bear-y hungry and I would love...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... to go chow down on some, you know, some grub.

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.