

Wonderful! 173: Bip Bippadotta

Published 17th 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: Coming down the home stretch! [imitates car] That was the car that we're in, coming down the home stretch of the Indie...500? What's the number?

Rachel: That sounds right.

Griffin: 'Cause they go— Do they do it 500 times, they go around the lap 500 times?

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That seems like way too many times.

Rachel: Uh, sure? I don't know, maybe?

Griffin: You're telling me you've never watched NASCAR?

Rachel: Does this really surprise you?

Griffin: No, it doesn't.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I maybe have only watched it a couple times, but that didn't stop me from having, like, a Jeff Gordon Fathead on my wall growing up. I don't know why. I think my dad just really wanted to buy a Fathead and he saw one with Jeff Gordon, and he was like, "I bet Griffin likes cars."

Rachel: And/or, and this is something I'm finding that the McElroys perhaps didn't realize a lot as children, this is perhaps something he received for free through the radio station.

Griffin: That's another thing, that is definitely actually, definitely what happened. Of all the racers, though, why Jeff Gordon? That, you know, that Papa John's looking little guy.

Rachel: I suspect he was very good.

Griffin: He was quite good. He may still be good, I don't know anything about NASCAR or who's still doing it, but Jeff Gordon just always seemed like kind of a narc to me, but—

Rachel: [laughs] This is our NASCAR podcast.

Griffin: This is our new NASCAR podcast. It's called... Well, it's still called *Wonderful!* We can't change the name of the show again.

Rachel: Checkered Flag!

Griffin: Ooh, that's not bad. They only let you change the name of your podcast once and we already did it. So, um, yeah. This is *Wonderful!* now and it's a show where we talk about things that we like, things that we're into, and sometimes we start out the show by talking about a small wonder! You got any of those?

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: Whoa!

Rachel: You really tapped into that radio voice.

Griffin: Yeah, well, here I am thinking about getting a free Jeff Gordon Fathead from TCR and it's got me in the zone.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, I'll say, just having places where you can donate items.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Um, we have recently, as we have mentioned perhaps on the show, undergone some transformation in our house due to significant flooding.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And have had to kind of reevaluate what we want to keep, given our smaller amount of space available.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it is nice to know that instead of just putting something in a landfill, I can perhaps give it to somebody that needs it, which makes me feel a lot better. Uh, and you know, hopefully help somebody out.

Griffin: Sure. I want to piggyback off that with my small wonder, which is the decision we finally made to get rid of our DVDs. We finally like, and I say we, you've been on, you've been ready for a long time...

Rachel: Thank you, thank you.

Griffin: ... but me, I'd be like, "I don't know, man, maybe I will want to watch, you know, the recent *Star Trek* movie on Blu-ray."

Rachel: You can't get the bonus features necessarily. This is a concern, I know.

Griffin: This is important. Yeah. I'll be honest. There's a few, like, box sets that I don't— Like, uh, the *Lord of the Rings* box set with, like, the enhancement. Like I'll hang onto those, but like... I don't need physical media anymore.

We haven't had a Blu-ray player or a DVD player hooked up to a TV. I guess we had the PlayStation, but like, what am I going to do with this stuff? It's, uh, having a significant portion of your house flood, it really kind of forces your hand. Vis-à-vis, like, making those tough Marie Kondo decisions.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, the argument is always there that they don't take up a lot of space...

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: ... and they do have those little, you know, special guys that makes you think maybe I shouldn't. I shouldn't give this up because what if I can't find it digitally?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: But that's not— Everything's digital now.

Rachel: But I've never, like, at nine o'clock at night thought like, "Oh my gosh, if I can't watch the director's commentary on this film..."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: "... I'm going to lose my mind." You know? And that lack of urgency suggests something.

Griffin: It says a lot.

Rachel: So yeah. I am also excited to have that space back.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm excited to talk about my first thing, if I may.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: My first thing is the first time Tony Hawk hit the 900.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which we all remember where we were. What's your Tony-Hawk-hit-the-900 story? Because we all have one.

Rachel: Oh, man.

Griffin: This was a, to help you jog your memory, this would have been the summer of '99. June, 1999.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: So, uh, do you remember? Like you were sitting, I guess at a friend's house watching TV or...?

Rachel: Gosh. Well, I was, I was going into my senior year of high school...

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: ... I was probably at band camp.

Griffin: Yeah. Oh, they let you watch it—

Rachel: We all would have been huddled around the TV, I'm sure.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Maybe somebody was tuning their clarinet.

Griffin: ... and you were like, "Keep it down!"

Rachel: [laughs] No, I don't even know what you're talking about. I know who Tony Hawk is, which makes me unique because he's always talking about how people don't recognize him.

Griffin: I love this. I've been thinking about Tony Hawk a lot lately, because it's the kind of brand that I find desirable. When I enter my fifties, I would love to have the sort of, uh— he is like a forgotten legend warrior. Nomad.

Rachel: He has the most charming stories of going to various skate parks and having kids roll up to him and be like, "What's your name?" And he's like, "Oh, Tony." And they're like, "Ha, ha, like Tony Hawk?" And he's like, "Yeah."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: They like, have no idea who he is.

Griffin: [crosstalk] ...his best, when he was like, somebody mentioned skateboarding. And the guy I was talking to was like, "Oh, like Tony Hawk." And Tony was like, "Yeah, that's me." And the guy said, "I wonder what Tony, Hawk's up to right now." I bet he was like, "This. Right now. I'm talking to you right now."

Okay. Anyway, so it was the summer before the first *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* out. But I remember being like, sort of into skateboarding as a concept back then, even. I feel like this was the era where, like, skateboarding was starting to be a thing that, uh, you know.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Colt had made sort of broader cultural, uh, footholds. And everybody was talking about this *X Games*, 1999, and how Tony Hawk was going to finally do the 900. The 900 is two and a half rotations. Right? One rotation in the air is 360. Two rotations is 720. 900 is plus 180 onto that.

Rachel: So, the idea is, when you say the rotations, they go up a ramp and then they spin around...

Griffin: They spin around two and a half times.

Rachel: And then they land.

Griffin: They have to land it and stay on the board.

Rachel: Okay. Okay.

Griffin: Um, up to this point, up until 1999, the history of the 900 was hotly debated. There was a skater named Danny Way who had apparently landed it about 10 years prior in 1989. But the video that, like, showed it was kind of, uh... The authenticity was debated.

And after the *X Games*, Tony Hawk had a quote where he said he was shown in a video almost 10 years ago. He was really close, but he didn't make it. He came the closest by far, but they cut the video before he fell.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So, it may have misled some people.

Rachel: It went into like a Happy Meal toy commercial, and they were like, "Wait a minute. Did he finish? Did he not finish?"

Griffin: He said, there are only four people who have been able to spin completely. And he's one of them: Taz Papas and Rob Boyce have also spun it, but they haven't landed it. So like, even turning two and a half times in the air is hard enough, let alone trying to land it. And nobody had, like, done it publicly.

So this *X Games*, like, people were going wild. It was the biggest trick competition on the vert ramp and he, you know, went down and like, the crowd was huge. Like it was standing room only. Like, everybody was there to see this historical thing happen. Most of the skaters there were like, totally amped for him.

Like there's videos of them all like banging their state boards against the halfpipe, like, in unison, just like a war drum. Uh, and so he goes down and he goes up and he gets the rotations, but he can't land it. And then he tries again and gets very, very close, but he can't land it. And he blows past his regulation time limit.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: And they let him keep going.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Which, there were some skaters who were not wild about that. But he tries and fails to land the 900 ten times...

Rachel: Oh, my God.

Griffin: ... chomping it, every time, until finally he goes up, spins two and a half times, lands down, like, windmills his arms, barely grazes the ramp, like with his fingertips and stays upright. And everybody just like loses it. Everybody just explodes.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: And I remember watching it, I saw it live on TV.

Rachel: You did! Okay, I wasn't sure if that was a goof or not.

Griffin: Uh, and it was so cathartic because you really wanted to see it, but after 10 failed attempts and him going past his time limit, you think like, "Oh, well, this— Okay, well then it's not going to happen." So much that it almost, like, took us by surprise when finally managed to stay upright.

Rachel: 'Cause that's the thing, I mean, that's the thing. Anytime like an athlete of any kind gets repeated attempts...

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: ... you think like, it's just got to be getting harder the more times that you put your body through this.

Griffin: But here's the thing. He didn't win the event because he was past regulation time. So he did not win the biggest trick, the best trick event. Uh, and you know, that was how this history got made.

He's only been able to land this trick publicly a few times. Uh, one of which, I think, was back in 2014, there was a game that came out called *Tony Hawk Ride* that had, like, a board peripheral that you stood on to, like, do the— It was a mess.

It was, uh, it was not a great game, but in the promo, like promo for that game, he managed to do it again. And then his most recent one, uh, in 2016, he posted a video of him landing a 900 the age of 48.

Rachel: Wow. Oh my gosh.

Griffin: And he said, "That's it. Like, this is my last; I'm not going to be able to do this trick again. That was my last 900."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, and only like, it's not a trick everyone can do even to this day. Like, it is still an incredibly rare trick to see executed.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I don't know, it was— It's rad seeing a, like, sports barrier or really any kind of barrier, broken like that in such a singular, like, crystallized fashion. Like, that trick hadn't been done before and everybody wanted this one guy to do it and then he fucking did it.

And then it had been done before and watching that, I mean, it was, you know, in a very, very niche way, like a historic thing. And it just so happened that that historic thing was also a badass skateboard trick.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, that was, yeah, it's just a very, very, it was a very cool moment that I was glad I got to see.

Rachel: That's so wild to think about like, of somebody who reaches a level of ability where they're like, "This thing doesn't exist..."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: "But I'm gonna figure it out."

Griffin: Right. No, it was debated whether or not he could even do it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. And of course, like this was summer of 1999. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, the first one, launched in September, 1999. So this just fucking launched it into space. There's a reason why there've been 50 *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* games, because I feel like this one *X Games* helped, sort of, put it over the top.

Rachel: Yeah! No, this of course makes me think of figure skating.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And you know, the triple axel and right now the people going for it and it being like the big thing that you were trying to do, and there are only a certain number of people who could do it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But like, you can get real momentum on ice.

Griffin: Yeah, sure!

Rachel: It seems like it would be harder to do that, you know, on a ramp.

Griffin: Hey, what's your first thing?

Rachel: Uh, my first thing is the, the Muppet classic performance of *Mahna Manha*, uh, dated 1969.

Griffin: I feel like our Muppet media consumption has kind of skyrocketed lately.

Rachel: Oh, yeah? Well, I guess, yeah. I guess that's true. Uh, Henry really enjoys the song *Rainbow Connection*. Uh, and he enjoys Kermit.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: He's watched a little bit of Muppet babies. The Muppet movies themselves move a little slow for his taste.

Griffin: Doesn't care for that bit, no.

Rachel: We have been, like, every once in a while, we kind of sprinkle a little Muppet consumption in to see if he's ready. Uh, and he's still kind of the person who only wants to watch the, uh, you know, the musical performances.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I don't know that we've shown him *Mahna Mahna* yet. Have we?

Griffin: I don't think so, no.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I sing him rainbow connection. I say, I sing him. We sing it together at this point, because he's heard it so many times before bed every night. And it's so cute. 'Cause my favorite line in that song is also his favorite line because he always sings it twice as loud as the rest of the song.

And it's in the second verse where he goes, "What's so amazing that keeps us [much louder] star gazing!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: He's like really like, "It's a good rhyme."

Rachel: We have to record that, by the way.

Griffin: We have to, yeah.

Rachel: Like, I can hear it sometimes through the ceiling and it's, it's just the most charming thing ever. So this *Mahna Mahna* is a performance that, uh, kind of exists on its own. It's not like in a Muppet film. It first appeared on *Sesame Street*. And then they kind of went on to repeat it, uh, in, you know, *The Muppet Show* and the, and then an appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*.

Griffin: Not really any recognizable characters, right?

Rachel: No, it's not like Grover's in it or anything, you know? It's like, it's characters designed specifically for this sketch and that wasn't too uncommon. You know, Jim Henson's early staff was usually just, like, little sketches on talk shows. Uh, I didn't realize it is an Italian song.

Griffin: *Mahna Mahna?*

Rachel: Yeah! Uh, it was actually by Italian composer, Piero Umiliani, uh, who was—

Griffin: Oh, that sounded really authentic, babe.

Rachel: [laughs] He was a Tuscan musician, uh, he composed scores for exploitation films in the sixties and seventies, including spaghetti westerns and, as this article states, softcore sex films.

Griffin: Okay! And! And *Sesame Street*!

Rachel: [laughing] Um, the song appeared in an Italian film called *Svezia: Inferno e Paradiso*.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Uh, which was *Sweden: Heaven and Hell*. And it's the scene where Swedish models crowd into a sauna wearing bath towels. Uh, and it appeared in the soundtrack for that film. Uh, so this was, uh, this was the origin of *Mahna Mahna*.

Griffin: That's wild. I thought for sure—

Rachel: If you think about it, it's got kind of a jazzy...

Griffin: Sexy.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: No! It doesn't! Have a sexy! It's *Mahna Mahna*!

Rachel: In the version— And you can find this too, by the way, this original version. It's got that kind of time period, you know, jazzy quality, but I was hoping you could play a little excerpt.

Griffin: Oh, of course. Well, do you want the *Sesame Street* version?

Rachel: I want the Muppet version.

Griffin: Okay. Well, here it comes.

[*Mahna Mahna* plays]

Rachel: Uh, so the, the one I am familiar with, um, actually came later. The original Muppet version involved a character named Bip Bippadotta, uh, which first aired on *Sesame Street* in 1969.

Griffin: It sounds like some George Lucas bullshit, of like a character that's in, like, the cantina band.

Rachel: [laughing] It does. I don't know if it was like a nod. It was like an oversimplification of a, like a nod to its Italian origins, but it was just like, it was these two little girl Muppets. Uh, Frank Oz was involved, Jim Henson was involved and, uh, the male character is more of, like, a beatnik type.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, and the female singers are kind of like less...

Griffin: They're like aliens— They're kind of like the aliens.

Rachel: No, this is the first one. This is the first one. The first airing is just like, two little girls and this guy, and they just all want to sing a song together. It's less disruptive.

Griffin: [laughing] Okay.

Rachel: Uh, the one that we're familiar with, yeah, is like the two alien puppets called snowths.

Griffin: Snowths? Are they the same ones from the, like, that— Oh God. Oh no. I'm thinking of, like, the little fuzzy aliens that go like, [imitates Meep].

Rachel: They look very similar.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So that's the 1976 version we're the most familiar with. Twin monsters called snowths [pronounced like growth]. A combination of "snout" and "mouth."

Griffin: Okay. So snowths [pronounced like mouth]. Snowths.

Rachel: Snowths. Yeah, probably snowths. Um, and that's more disruptive. The male singer, who is not named, now known affectionately as Mahna Mahna, uh, appears to kind of run in and disrupt the Snowths singing.

Griffin: Okay. I see.

Rachel: But yeah, this something they've actually— Like they've referenced on like an old episode of the UK version of *The Office*. Um, also Wynton Marsalis, uh, did a live cover at Lincoln Center.

Griffin: That's great.

Rachel: Which is pretty good. Uh, Cake, the band Cake has done a version of the song. I just, I don't know. I remember kind of rediscovering it in high school and just being kind of delighted by it. It's super catchy, um, and charming. And I wanted to talk about it.

Griffin: I'm glad that you did. I wonder how many of our listeners, like haven't ever heard *Mahna Mahna* before? I imagine there's some of them, at least, right?

Rachel: Yeah, it just feels like one of those things that people just know about. Um, but I may be wrong about it.

Griffin: Yeah. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Even? Please? Thank you.

[music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: Oh, my gosh. We have Lumbo-brahms here and I'm going to read the first one! Because the first one was sent in, uh, by Whitney S. and it's for Lauren W.

Whitney says, "Happiest of birthdays to my favorite, for all intents and purposes, sister-in-law. Hopefully hearing happy birthday from these good, good people will make up for not spending your 30th on a private island in Belize. We will celebrate big time soon. I couldn't come up with anything particularly funny to say, so I'll just say cheers to a great year."

Rachel: Mm.

Griffin: Hey.

Rachel: You and I have a particular sympathy for these spring birthdays that are going into round two.

Griffin: Going into round 2 of Covid. Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Where you're like, ah, I really thought by this year, I'd be able to do it up wild. But here we are.

Griffin: That just means that birthday season 2022, we're going to go triple in the pain. Like, we're going to go really— That one's going to be unsurvivable. That one's going to be some deep impact level, like, cataclysmic birthday event. It's gonna be—

Rachel: There's going to be a new leading cause of serious illness. And it is going to be birthday parties.

Griffin: It's going to be this— Particularly speaking, our birthday party. Our joint, three-years-saved-up birthday party.

Rachel: Uh, can I read the next message?

Griffin: Yep!

Rachel: This is for future Kaylyn from past Kaylyn. "What up? I know when this airs you'll be living your best life, hopefully in a much better place than before. Remember those who love you and give yourself a little bit of that love, too. Kick some serious butt, please!"

Griffin: So polite.

Rachel: I like that please at the end!

Griffin: It is— Yeah. When you're asking anyone, even yourself, to do something as important as kicking a serious butt, use manners. There's no reason not to.

Rachel: I'm grateful that Max Fun gave enough characters that they could slide that in at the end.

Griffin: Yeah, me too. They're generous, aren't they?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[Max Fun ad plays]

Griffin: Hey, I'm gonna talk about my second thing and it's, uh, it's going to be pretty fast because, uh, it's a very visual thing and I'm not great at

talking about those, because hearing somebody describe visual things on a podcast is not the most fun thing in the world, but I want to talk about Photoshop whoopsies.

Photoshop— I don't want to say Photoshop fails, but there's not really a great— It's like a pretty succinct way of describing. It's like codified. That's what you say when you mess up a Photoshop or you more specifically, you catch a Photoshop that has been altered in some way, either, you know, by a person who's just trying to stroke their ego a little bit, or by a company who is trying to sell you goods and services, uh, by way of altered imagery.

Uh, I just love this shit.

Rachel: It's very, very good.

Griffin: It's intoxicating. I think maybe it's because editing photos is inherently a bit deceptive, especially when used for, sort of, commercial purposes and catching someone in the act like that has a feeling.

It has like a sense of justice to it. Like, "Ah! You thought you could lie to me, but you can't because I saw through it." And also, I guess just sort of as a visual humor, like mechanism, it can be extremely good to see how badly, uh, editors can truly up the human form, uh, by way of editing.

Just like thinking about somebody opening up their computer, like Snidely Whiplash, like "I know, I'll use computers to make myself seem like I have a six pack." So there's a few different, sort of, broad categories I feel like, of these kinds of Photoshop whoopsies. And the first one is just like where, uh, an editor drags and drops something into a photo where it wasn't before, like a credit card that just kind of like hovers over a model's hand because they wanted the credit card to be bigger in the photo.

Or there's a great one I saw today of a car driving down this windy road, but the car is clearly taken from like a very high resolution indoor, like stock photograph and doesn't look anything— It doesn't look like it's in the same dimension as the road that it is driving on in the background.

Um, those are great to me because sometimes also you can get fucked-up senses of scale, which is very funny to me. I saw one of a party of people holding a selfie stick to, like, take a picture of themselves, but the selfie stick was going in. Like, they were holding it towards themselves, but the photo you could see on the camera was still far away.

So like, that's impossible that that could work like that. There was one of a family watching a movie on the console of a car, but they seemed like the family was like 14 inches tall sitting in this monstrous vehicle, uh, or like an outdoor grill that is sold on Amazon, where the grill is bigger than the family trying to use it. And it's like—

Rachel: This is something I always assumed didn't happen as much, you know? Like it felt really excusable, kind of, at the beginning of photo editing, but I kind of figured this didn't really happen anymore.

Griffin: No, it happens so much.

Rachel: Clearly, it still happens a lot.

Griffin: Because I think folks try to do a lot of promotional materials themselves because they feel cocky. I can use Photoshop. If I tried to Photoshop a promotional material, it would look like this. It would look very bad. It's just that I don't have the kind of hubris to think I could do this, not, "I should pay somebody who actually has the skills to do this right."

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. It is a little prohibitive, you know, like I think these companies probably reach out to like, quote, "experts" in the field, not really having any understanding of what's involved. And they're like, "Well, that's probably what it's supposed to look like."

Griffin: Yes. Uh, the second sort of broad category is typically it involves like models and it also involves the complete either removal or duplication of their limbs, uh, which I think is satisfying to catch those because of the sort of way that Photoshops have been used to maybe paint an unrealistic, uh, standard of beauty that has been detrimental, let's say, to the fabric of society.

So seeing a whoopsie like this is pretty astonishing and incredible to me. Uh, there's a *Vanity Fair* series of photo shoots that they do with just, like, a bunch of celebrities wearing nice clothes, just kind of piled up together.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: And I feel like those, you can always find like, "Whose ankle is that?" There's a great one that Annie Liebowitz actually shot. I don't know if she, you know, I don't know how the post production on photography like that works, but there's, uh, a couple of photos of, and for whatever reason, it's always Reese Witherspoon, has just like...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... eight legs. Like, so many legs, too many legs. Uh, there's a great poster from the movie *Ready Player One* of, like, the protagonist and he's climbing down a ladder on the side of the photo and one of his legs stretches down like two rungs. And it's longer than the rest of his body, like twice as long. He has this one monster leg. Those are more rewarding to me, I think. Cause they're harder to spot.

Rachel: Yeah. It's kind of fun what happens in your brain...

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... because you always feel that very specific, like, "Wait, that— no. That isn't the— It's a light— Proport—?" You're like figuring it out. You're like doing the calculations in your head. Like, is that possible? I don't think it is.

Griffin: I feel like the poster of *My Brother, My Brother & Me* that Seeso put together, my arm looks a little bit— My arm looks a little bit wild. Justin's head looks a little bit—

It was definitely Photoshopped. Like I have my arm on Travis's shoulder and it seems like a pretty wild angle, but Justin's head. I mean, Justin's head, doesn't look like that. Fully doesn't look like that.

Rachel: Yeah. Y'all have had a number of, like, kind of professional photos taken. That has to be one of the worst.

Griffin: Yeah. It's— I mean, the photo is great. It's Justin's head is— Anyway, the last camp is what I call dad's first Photoshop, which somehow just gets published for everybody to see. And it's just like, "What— It's so bad. What were you thinking?"

How could any— I want to be in the room where that got approved to go. I feel like college admission, uh, like brochures always have like copied and pasted crowds of people.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Like, they're in the background of like a *Madden* video game or it's just like the same 10 people over and over and over again. Uh, there's one

that I saw today while I always just, like, looking up the best sort of Photoshop mistakes.

And there's one of a, uh, a book that I guess you can get on Amazon called the *Ultimate Guide to Dog Breeds*, which has just this blue sky background on the front. And then this just really dopey looking golden retriever, like looking up and at an angle into the sky and they've just sort of copied and pasted that exact face on that exact dog, like three times side by side.

It's really, really incredible. And it's like, it represents a level of confidence in one's technical, like, skills and one's computer skills that just doesn't reflect what is reality. That's just— Oh, my God.

Rachel: It is very nice.

Griffin: I can drink it up. Um, yeah, that's it. I don't have much else to say. It's just one of those things. There are very few sort of internet, funny things that when I see them, I am tickled by them every time and I feel like Photoshop mistakes, because of the sense of justice you get, in pointing out these deceptions is good every time, always satisfies. What's your second thing?

Rachel: Um, my second thing is something that is relatively new to me and that is maker spaces.

Griffin: Yeah. I don't know that. Oh, like places where people go, get together and make stuff.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, it's—

Rachel: I mean it's pretty straight forward.

Griffin: Right what it says there on the tin, huh?

Rachel: Yeah, this is something I didn't really learn about until I was working at the community college I'm at now. And there began to be this, like, funding push of, like, people like faculty approaching me saying like, there is funding available if you want to start or support a maker-space and me having to kind of learn about what that is.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And what, you know, makes something fit that category. And so, I did a little research to kind of figure out, like, where this came from. You know, some of this came up in the TV show *Making It*, which we really liked a lot.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: With Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman. Uh, this idea of getting back to this, creating things with your hands, you know? And being completely creative and original and learning new skills to do something.

Because I think that that feels unique for our generation. Maybe not as much for the one after, because our generation's big push was computers. The big push was like, "You're not doing anything by hand anymore. Like everything is going to be on the computer, like feed these virtual fish."
[laughs]

Like you don't need a hammer. Get rid of the hammer, everything's on the computer now. And so we kind of learned technology and now there's this

push of like, well, let's still use technology, but let's use it to solve problems and work collaboratively and make things.

And this is something that is not that old. So, there is a magazine called *Make Magazine* that, uh, started in 2005 that kind of encourage people to gain new skills and start hobbies and build these communities. California held the first maker fair after that.

And then it's actually President Obama, uh, in 2009, started an educate to innovate campaign, uh, and where he said, "I want us all to think about new and creative ways to engage young people in science and engineering, whether it's science festivals, robotics competitions, fairs that encourage young people to create and build and invent, to be makers of things, not just consumers of things."

And that movement in 2009, the first maker fair at the White House was in 2014. And that's kind of when you started to see this, like, national push.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it was less in these like hubs of innovation and more like everybody can do this. Part of it too, was kind of the democratization of these cool new technologies that people didn't have.

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Rachel: 3D printers and workshops and labs in these open spaces so that people could come and use these tools that they couldn't afford on their own and kind of create things together. In 2014, there was a *Maker Movement Manifesto* which was published, that identified the nine fundamentals of the maker movement, which include: make, share, give, learn, tool up, play, participate, support, and change.

So it was just this idea of like, you know, you don't have to have this like, super fancy education or the income that will get you access to these things, you know? That there is an opportunity for people to come together regardless of, like, class or background and kind of create these new things that solve problems.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And kind of add value.

Griffin: That's awesome.

Rachel: This is also something, like— There are hackerspaces...

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Rachel: ... and something called fab labs, which started at MIT. It was actually in 2002, they opened the first fab lab, um, which is exactly what I said, is to democratize the tools for students, uh, you know, at a place like MIT like that, that would be a tremendous opportunity for a lot of people.

But the idea of designing, fabricating, testing, debugging, monitoring, analysis, documentation, the college I work at has started this whole kind of movement around this. And so at the college I work at, we call them incubators. And so they have like a biotechnology incubator and a fashion incubator and they're getting ready to open a manufacturing incubator.

And it's this idea that these startups that don't have access to the best equipment or the, you know, the commercial space can come use these places.

Griffin: So, let's get a big hen to just sit right on them.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Right? Until, um, technology comes out.

Rachel: I know. The incubator term, like, has become very popular and we have definitely run with it. But yeah, I think thinking about it as, like, a STEM opportunity is cool too. Because if you think about it, when you're a kid, you're doing more of the hands-on stuff, you know? Like you're making the Rube Goldberg machine, you know? You're, like, dropping the egg from the roof, you know, you're like trying stuff and doing it in a very accessible way.

And then I feel like by the time you get to high school, it's just like textbooks and memorizing equations and you kind of lose that connection to it. And the creativity that, like, gets people interested in science in the first place.

And so, this idea that there's like this movement around this, and it's like giving people access to the tools and they can use the AutoCAD software and the laser cutter and they can, like, figure out what they want to make with other people that are equally excited.

Like, that's huge for STEM in particular. Uh, and so, yeah, there's a lot of— Libraries are kind of big locations for this, you know, anywhere like where the public can gather. I mean, you'll see a lot of them on college campuses, but the library thing is cool too, because it kind of removes that kind of, uh, gatekeeper, higher education element.

And I just thought it was cool. I wanted to share that because I feel like, you know, our education swung so far in the direction of like, "You're never going to have to use your hands again."

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Rachel: And so it's cool to see that kind of swing back of like, "Well, no, wait a minute. Like, we should probably still use our hands."

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, hey, can I tell you what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Lily says, "One thing I find wonderful are those Coke machines with the touch screens that you might find at movie theaters or fast food places, just the amount of drink options you have is so delightful. And the weird alternate flavors are so funny, like lime Fanta. Of course, I always use them to get Hi-C. They have them in every dining hall on my campus."

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: I do like those. I feel like I've had very limited exposure to them. I feel like it's mainly as, like the purview of, uh, you know, when you go inside a fast food restaurant or I don't even know that I've had access to it at the movie theater before.

Rachel: I feel like at Taco Bell is the first time I've ever seen it.

Griffin: A Taco Bell is definitely gonna have that.

Rachel: I always do get nervous if there's like a line of people in front of me, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, who knows how long this is going to take, because everybody wants to like..."

Griffin: Chop and— Everybody wants to be soft drink Picasso.

Rachel: [simultaneously] Scroll through. Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, Lindsay says, "Small wonder: when you pick the exact right size Tupperware for the amount of leftovers you have. I'm always tempted to pick a bigger one just to be safe. But when I pick the smaller one and it fits just right, it feels like a Goldilocks slam dunk."

Rachel: Oh my gosh. I've been meaning to talk to you about this Griffin.

Griffin: Uh-oh. What's wrong?

Rachel: Feel like your Tupperware choices are too large.

Griffin: Yeah. Well, we have a lot of large Tupperwares, but also I don't want to messy two small Tupperwares because I'm, you know, my spatial awareness skills are limited. You know what I mean?

Rachel: I guess I just want you to be better, I guess.

Griffin: I can't believe you—

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Elected to have this fight on the air. What's that say? About you? Golly. Hey everybody, thank you for listening to our show. Thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song *Money Won't Pay*. You can

find a link to that in the episode description and thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on their network. They got a bunch of great shows.

Rachel: Yeah! And new shows.

Griffin: New shows, yeah. *Depresh Mode*.

Rachel: I'm excited about that one. I actually used to listen to *Hilarious World of Depression*. And if you are a fan of that show, this is that same guy.

Griffin: Yeah. Uh, and, uh, yeah, I mean, we have other stuff at mcelroy.family. We got merch, we got all kinds of stuff. Uh, we are, what, two weeks out now from the delivery day of our new baby.

Rachel: You know, if— and to use an expression that you use, uh, you know, if the creek— the creek don't rise.

Griffin: God willing and the creek don't rise.

Rachel: Two weeks out.

Griffin: Two weeks out, but who knows? Henry wasn't on time, so.

Rachel: Creek seems to be rising a little bit every day.

Griffin: Creek is rising quite a bit. Um, so we've got some stuff prepared. We're going to do our best to keep the content flowing.

Rachel: Yeah. We have already recorded a few extra episodes. If you missed our live show, look forward to the recording of that too. We'll be sharing that.

Griffin: And, uh, yeah. So pumped for the future. It's going to be a new day around here, you know? And I'm ready to open my heart up to new possibilities, new adventures.

Rachel: We've been watching a lot of reality television lately.

Griffin: That's true.

Rachel: Which I think may explain your language choice right now.

Griffin: It's— I'm ready to open my eyes to the possibilities.

Rachel: To begin this journey.

Griffin: To begin this journey. We're going to have to do diapers again!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Fuck.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Listener supported.