

## Wonderful! 185: Pink Fink

Published June 17, 2021

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[theme song plays]

**Rachel:**

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:**

Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:**

And this is *Wonderful!*

**Griffin:**

This is a show where we talk about things we like and that are good and that we're into right now.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

And I'm getting choked up already, and I'm not sure why. This show brings out all the emotions in me.

**Rachel:**

Wow.

**Griffin:**

You know how I don't show any of my emotions—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... except for when we're doing this show?

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And I just kind of dump them all out.

**Rachel:**

True.

**Griffin:**

[tearfully] You remember that week we watched *Jerry Maguire* for the first time?

**Rachel:**

Can I tell you I've never seen *Jerry Maguire*?

**Griffin:**

I haven't either. Babe!

**Rachel:**

Oh, date night!

**Griffin:**

Date night. I bet it holds up, as most movies and TV from that era definitely do.

**Rachel:**

All, all I know is, there's a "Show Me the Money—"

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

... and there's a "Had Me at Hello."

**Griffin:**

Yes. And the end of my knowledge of the film.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Alright. And the boy, the boy with the—

**Rachel:**

The boy.

**Griffin:**

The boy!

**Rachel:**

Lipnicki.

**Griffin:**

Lipnicki boy.

**Rachel:**

And Cuba.

**Griffin:**

And Cuba's in it.

**Rachel:**

And—

**Griffin:**

Everyone's in this one!

**Rachel:**

Tom and Renée.

**Griffin:**

And Tommy and Renée.

**Rachel:**

So what is, yeah, what is there left to know? [laughs]

**Griffin:**

What else do we need to see? There's a lot of films... I haven't seen *Erin Brockovich*. I feel, like, if a film was released—

**Rachel:**

Oh, I have seen *Brockovich*.

**Griffin:**

... that had just a first name and a last name on it, I was like, um, skip.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It took me a while to see *Michael Clayton* and that one was like, had Osc— all the Oscar buzz and stuff.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

I was like, yawn-zos!

**Rachel:**

Yeah, you need, like, a verb in there.

**Griffin:**

I need a verb.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Griffin:**

Michael Clayton—

**Rachel:**

Does Dallas...

**Griffin:**

... stunts, does Da—

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:**

I'm going to come up with one right now and that is going to be one that I say out loud, uh, in just a moment. And the out loud word that I will say is—

**Griffin:**

You sound like Perd Hapley right now.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Oh, no. I mean, let's just say doulas.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:**

Let's just put it out there.

**Griffin:**

We, uh—

**Rachel:**

We are—

**Griffin:**

We've been having such a hard time.

**Rachel:**

We have reached out to the village of service workers that support parents with difficult babies. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

And we have had a sea of people, all trying to help us and, uh, we had a great doula come by and give us some tips on how to get our baby to sleep.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. It was pretty, pretty choice. We hit a point where he was sleeping in bed, less than five hours a day, on average.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And it was, uh, that, if you've not had a child, not sustainable, that.

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

And so, uh, it's been, it's been rough, but yeah, that was very helpful and it was nice.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, and I appreciate how much these, uh, individuals that are professionals in the field, are concerned about our wellbeing. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

'Cause I am completely focused on keeping that baby alive.

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

And they are very helpful in reminding me, "Oh, you have to stay alive, too."  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

You also— that's why that have you put the mask on. If you're dead—

**Rachel:**

I know.

**Griffin:**

... you can't do the mask.

**Rachel:**

What's your small wonder?

**Griffin:**

Um, there, uh, there's a podcast I just started listening to, called *Welcome to the OC, B—* [hushed] B-word.

**Rachel:**

B-word. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And it's hosted by two of the stars from *The OC*, Melinda Clarke and, oh my God—

**Rachel:**

Rachel Bilson.

**Griffin:**

Rachel Bilson. Thank you. That was embarrassing.

**Rachel:**

That was, but you got Melinda Clarke, no problem. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

I know. And they are, they were both on the show. They played Julie Cooper and Summer, and, uh, uh, it's got me re—watching *The OC*—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... which is a true, a m— a, a, a crystalline, sort of millennial—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... kind of... And it summarizes a lot of... I was talking to Rachel about how it sort of made me realize that, uh, and when I say the show has helped me realize, I mean all of the many ways that Gen Z is fully, fully dragging us right now—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... has made me realize that the early 2000s is our '80s.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. It's true.

**Griffin:**

Like, it is our... There's so many fashions back then that, uh, 'cause I definitely started to model my kid after Seth Cohen and there were some mistakes made there. Uh, and that, that show is still, you know, probably my favorite—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**



... scripted drama ever and the, the podcast it's really cool hearing people who are in the show as guest stars, um, talking about it.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, the episode, I listened to part of an episode with you, and they talk a lot about the chemistry, and I think that it's undeniable.

**Griffin:**

It's undeniable, the chemistry. Um, yeah, I, I don't know if it's a, a show that people who weren't there—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... who lived it—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

It's preposterous, otherwise. And there's a lot of things they do not hold up to a lot of, sort of, uh, the scr— scrutiny, uh, this, this day and age, but, uh—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

I don't know, it, it... Man, I watched it at 2:00 AM when I get up with Gus at 2:00 AM—

**Rachel:**

Comforting.

**Griffin:**

... and it's, it is quite comforting.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

I go first this week.

**Rachel:**

Alright, hit it.

**Griffin:**

I'm gonna talk about the ultimate summertime friend, the nice cold treat, the ultimate summertime cold treat.

**Rachel:**

Bud Light Lime?

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I already did... I think I, did I already d— It's kind of wild that I've talked about Bud Light Lime on this program before.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] It was a different time.

**Griffin:**

I guess it was a much different time.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I had my first beer in maybe 18 months.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Uh, 'cause I was having a big hamburger and French fries, and I was like, "Let's try one of these bad boys."

**Rachel:**

I know, I, I bought beer and I brought it into our house like some kind of 21-year-old. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's weird. I know. No, I'm gonna talk about the Slurpee or the ICEE, if you want.

**Rachel:**

Ahh!

**Griffin:**

Ah, the, the— You like one these?

**Rachel:**

I was just thinking about this the other day. I didn't have one really until high school.

**Griffin:**

Well, you were denied many of life's greatest—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... by your...

**Rachel:**

We were not a sugar household.

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

But, uh, my friend lived near a 7-Eleven.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

And I used to kind of coerce her into going to get Slurpees with me any time I would go to her house.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I dated a girl at the Marshall Dorms, and they were across the street from the 7-Eleven, and we used to go there a bunch. And we went there one time, and the guy who worked at the counter looked at us as was like, "Oh, are you guys brother and sister?"

**Rachel:**

Oh, no. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And we were like, "No." And he felt, he felt so uncomfortable that he gave us both free Slurpees.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's pretty tight.

**Rachel:**

Can you see why he made that mistake?

**Griffin:**

Absolutely not.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

No, I cannot. Uh, it was, uh, Slurpees were, like, the thing, that when I moved away from home and, like, was living, like, in my own place with my friends, uh, in college, it was like the big, like, freedom I'd unlocked. Was, "Hey, whenever I want to—"

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

"... I can just go get a fucking Slurpee—"

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

"... and nobody can stop me."

**Rachel:**

Yeah. You know, I, I'm not a huge snow cone fan.

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

But I will tell you that texture of a Slurpee is—

**Griffin:**

Hits the spot.

**Rachel:**

... perfection.

**Griffin:**

Well, you know why it's different? The difference between... A snow cone is shaved ice with the, the juicy juice dribbled on it. A Slurpee is carbonated, it's a carbonated beverage.

**Rachel:**

Oh, that makes sense.

**Griffin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Rachel:**

I haven't had one in so long, I kind of forgot.

**Griffin:**

It is a carbonated drink, uh, and, uh, that, the, it... honestly, there's not much else to it than that. Uh, a guy named, uh, Omar Kned— Knedlik—

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

It sounds like "kinetic," but it's not spelled that way.

**Rachel:**

It is really happening. I was really hoping his last name would be Slurpee.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Uh, no. The name Slurpee is onomatopoeic, unsurprisingly.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that makes it... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

It was, he owned a soda shop in the '50s and his soda fountain broke down, and to keep the soda cool, he put it in a cooler, like in a—

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... and it turned into slush. And he was like, "Hey, wait a minute. This is very good."

**Rachel:**

Aah, frozen Coke.

**Griffin:**

And it all sort of c— Oh, frozen Coke, frozen Mountain Dew, forget about it. I've, like—

**Rachel:**

Never had a frozen Mountain Dew.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

I think that would be good. Bet it would be better than a regular Mountain Dew. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

It is. It is in every, every way you can measure it. Uh, this, this... So, Omar, he went to his pal, Ruth E. Taylor, who came up with the name ICEE and came up with the logo of the white letters with the icicles hanging off of them, in front of the alternating blue and red—

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... red flags, that is still the logo today. Crush it. Ruth got it in one.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh. This is all I want. This is all I want right now.

**Griffin:**

Is the, is the Slurpee? We can get that. We're grown up, we can do it.

**Rachel:**

Icy beverage.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, for sure. Um, so 7-Eleven approached the, this new ICEE Company in 1965 and they worked out a licensing deal where ICEE was like, "Yeah, you can sell ICEE's at 7-Eleven and have them in all 7-Elevens, no matter what, but you gotta call them something else—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... so that we don't— we're not, like, competing with our other ICEE interests.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And thus the Slurpee, was, was born. Named for the slurping sound that you make when you drink it. I didn't write down the name of the fella at 7-Eleven who was like, "Hmm, yeah, slurp it up."

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

'Cause that's a wild pitch, isn't it?

**Rachel:**

What do you—



**Griffin:**

“What's a pleasant word for consuming this fluid?”

**Rachel:**

Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

“You slurp it up like a dirty dog.”

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Just trying to think of an alternate name for the Slurpee.

**Griffin:**

It's a Lappy. You lap it up—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... with that sick, dog mouth of yours.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah, I don't know, it's hard to come up with a, a preferable name that also gives you such as, like, a strong sense of what it is.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I mean, I can, I can pick apart the Slurpee name, but it's, it is strong, and it has worked out for them a, a great deal.

**Rachel:**

Slushy. I mean, Slushy is a thing on...

**Griffin:**

So, there's Slushy—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, in the world.

**Griffin:**

... and then, uh, in Huntington, there were places that carried... Did, did you go anywhere that had Slush Monkeys?

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

That was like its own, that was like its own derivative. That one was, like, super juicy.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That one was, like, mostly liquid. Um, the Slurpee, you know, it's, it's, it's this carbonated bev— beverage that gets frozen in one of those, like, margarita mixer—

**Rachel:**

With the long straw and has the little spoon on the end.

**Griffin:**

You're remembering great things about Slurpees as we do this segment completely, like, independent from my own notes, and I'm [McDonald's jingle] ba-da-ba-ba-ba loving it.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Um, so there's an ingredient in the Slurpee that not a lot of people know about in the United States.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

And it is, uh, y—

**Rachel:**

Adrenaline. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Adrenaline. No, it's yucca extract.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Y-U-C-C-A, how do you pronounce that?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that sounds right.

**Griffin:**

I've always said yucca. Uh, and that is a foaming agent, so that's how you get that—

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

... the Slurpee has a sort of dry finish.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Uh, you know what I'm talking about, though.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, no, I do.

**Griffin:**

Uh, and that comes from the, the yucca extract, which is not present in the territory where, uh, the Slurpee is most frequently consumed. It is not America. Can you guess where, what, what country it is?

**Rachel:**

Oh, I feel like I've heard this before.

**Griffin:**

It's wild. It's wild how much Slurpee they drink.

**Rachel:**

I feel like somebody mentioned this on a different podcast, and now I can't remember what it was. Maybe I w— wha— I'll just say Canada.

**Griffin:**

It is Canada.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, see? I think I heard it on *Stop Podcasting Yourself*. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah. They, Canadians purchase an average of 30 million Slurpees each year. I think that means total for the whole country, not each Canadian drinks 30 million Slurpees.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Um, and there I— uh, oh, the 7-Eleven company, uh, for their Slurpee capital of the world, they named Manitoba the Slurpee capital of the world in 2019.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And also 2018, and also, like, the 20 years prior to that.

**Rachel:**

Wow.

**Griffin:**

Manitoba has been, like, keeping it, keeping it very real.

**Rachel:**

You think that a place that was so cold would, would not tend towards a cold drink, but here we are.

**Griffin:**

I could, I could see that. I could get, I could get in on that. I mean, I don't know.

**Rachel:**

I mean, it's an exceptional beverage.

**Griffin:**

It's a really phenomenal beverage and, um, the flavors are pretty tame these days, they aren't prone to a lot of experimentation. But back in the day, 7-Eleven used to throw some pretty wild flavors in the mix. Um, I remember when it was, like, an event. When they were like, "Now we have orange—"

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

"... orange soda Slurpee." And I was like, "Yeah, that's pretty good."

**Rachel:**

And the McElroys all loaded into the family vehicle.

**Griffin:**

Uh-huh [affirmative], uh-huh [affirmative].

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

But, the naming conventions are pretty, pretty boring now. It's like Blue Raspberry, right? And Coca-Cola. Let me hit you with some real actual names for flavors of Slurpee that existed in the past when things were a lot more fun.

**Rachel:**

Wait, let me think of the time period and say the Tub Thumper.

**Griffin:**

No, no, no, no. We're talking about, like, uh, like, '70s, '80s.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, no. This is, it's way wilder than that.

**Rachel:**

Okay. Uh, Disco Fever?

**Griffin:**

Uh, you're, you're getting closer.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

How about Pink Fink? How about Moonshine? That seems like false advertising.

**Rachel:**

That's, yeah, that's confusing.

**Griffin:**

Uh, Kissing Cousin is one of them.

**Rachel:**

Ooh.

**Griffin:**

Probably my personal favorite, Gully Washer. How about, I would, I don't even know what flavor that would approach? "I'll go for a Gully Washer."

**Rachel:**

Sounds like a drink you would get at a college party. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it does. Uh, how about this one? Hey, and this may be, and, uh, hey—

**Rachel:**

Hey.

**Griffin:**

Let's cut him some slack because maybe this meant something else back then.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

Sticky Icky.

**Rachel:**

Wow.

**Griffin:**

I'm not clearly—

**Rachel:**

Do you have any descriptors on what these flavors are?

**Griffin:**

I don't know.

**Rachel:**

Or just the names?

**Griffin:**

No, just the names.

**Rachel:**

Hmm. Sticky Icky. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Sticky Icky, it clearly refers to the, the, like a marijuana cigarette, um, but that, I guess back then, they wanted people to know that this fluid is sticky and it's icky?

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's not a good name for a flavor.

**Rachel:**

And I would say that all Slurpee are sticky.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. That is, uh, only, it... Sticky Icky is second only to a flavor called Adults Only.

**Rachel:**

Oh my God. [laughs]

**Griffin:**



Adults Only Slurpee.

**Rachel:**

Did it have alcohol in it?

**Griffin:**

I don't know.

**Rachel:**

See, you really, you need to, you can't tease me with these names and then not deliver.

**Griffin:**

I'll do some, we'll do some googling afterwards.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Well, I don't know if I want you to google "Adults Only Slurpee."  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I wanna, uh, I might google "Adults Only, Kissing Cousin, Sticky Icky" and see what sort of list I end up on. Uh, it's just man, when it's hot outside—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... it goes down so smooth, uh, it is a, it is a pleasure to, to consume it. I wish you didn't have just five minutes before the flavor kind of concentrated at the bottom of the, uh—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... cup. Uh, we, I took Henry somewhere that had ICEES for sale, and I was like, "Hell yeah, let's introduce my son to this beautiful, new world." So I got

one and I showed him how to mix up the red and blue, and I was like, "Tell me when to switch." And we made a little red and blue one. And he took a sip of it, and he was like, "That's gross." And I was like—

**Rachel:**

Oh, no!

**Griffin:**

I was sad at first 'cause I was like, I want my some to like good things, but then I was happy because hey, I got a whole—

**Rachel:**

True.

**Griffin:**

I got a whole ICEE just for me.

**Rachel:**

True, and that is a lot of sugar for a four-year-old to consume.

**Griffin:**

Oh, I was, it's a lot of sugar for a 34-year-old to consume.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I was bouncing off the walls. A lot of go-go juice in me that day. Slurpee, ICEE, it's, damn, this is probably the most I've ever wanted something I've done a segment on, immediately as I've done it.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Okay. Well, we'll, we'll, we're grownups, we can do this.

**Rachel:**

We can do it, yeah.

**Griffin:**

We can do this.

**Rachel:**

DoorDash, right?

**Griffin:**

Yeah, or something, yeah.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:**

Yes.

[ad break]

**Griffin:**

I have grampa John here and this one is for Essie, and it's from SJ who says, "To my good, good Essie, this is a short message to let you know how amazing you are and how happy I am that we get to be parents together. Now, let us eat some ramen and/or cake. From SJ."

**Rachel:**

Mm.

**Griffin:**

That's, uh, that's that kind of life of, uh, we're grownups, we can have—

**Rachel:**

Exactly.

**Griffin:**

... ramen and cake now. Let's live our dreams, achieve it, accomplish it, grab your goals.

**Rachel:**

I love parents coming together against the common enemy, which is...

**Griffin:**

Your children? [laughs]

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I just, there are times when I look at Griffin as my husband and co-parent and say, "Thank heavens it's you."

**Griffin:**

Yeah, yeah.

**Rachel:**

And it sounds like they have found that as well.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it's special. You wanna read this next one?

**Rachel:**

Yes. This is for Grace, Stella and Harper. It is from Mom and Dad. "To our oldest, middlest, and littlest beautiful daughters. Every day with you three is truly wonderful. You are the coolest babies. Grace, you make the best big sister and it's going to be so fun when your little sisters are old enough to play D&D, enjoy all things McElroy and all the other things we love as a family. We love you three so much. Love, Mom and Dad."

**Griffin:**

I mean, they're gonna have to wait until they're 18 years old because [softly] all of our podcasts are adults only.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's not true.

**Rachel:**

That's not true at all!

**Griffin:**

No, lots of young people listen to it.

**Rachel:**

I would argue that a lot of, uh, young people play D&D.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. No, for sure, um, but the, it's just, I, the, we say s— we say so many foul words.

**Rachel:**

I know, I know, I know.

**Griffin:**

And I d— d— d— I don't talk about this on the show, but I don't cuss at home in front of the kids.

**Rachel:**

It's true!

**Griffin:**

I really don't. I don't know that I've, I, I, but a handful of times—

**Rachel:**

It's kind of remarkable, actually, uh, because, you know, I, I mean, I don't, you know? Everyone knows that, but, like, uh, I never said like, "Griffin, don't you dare."

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

But we just don't.

**Griffin:**

I think it's because I just don't want my child to say a bad word in daycare and then I have to hear about it.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And feel, feel ba— feel bad. I mean, I don't care about the words, but I do care about being pressured as a parent. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

[laughs] That is relatable content.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

[Max Fun ad]

**Griffin:**

Hey, what's your thing?

**Rachel:**

My first thing?

**Griffin:**

We're having a, we got a long Gus nap here.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Where, where, let's ride this bad boy.

**Rachel:**

Don't [crosstalk]...

**Griffin:**

Oh, Jesus. I always do that.

**Rachel:**

You addressed it.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so I wanted, I've been wanting to, ever since we switched to this more super-sized format, return to a larger, more spacious Poetry Corner. And surprise, surprise, that's what we're doing this week.

**Griffin:**

Oh, let me put some reverb on it. [singing far from microphone]  
[unintelligible, singing] in the poetry. It's Poetry Corner, yeah.

**Rachel:**

Is that suggesting that we're in a bigger corner?

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it's like it's far away.

**Rachel:**

Okay, okay, okay. 'Cause the corner is so large.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, the corner is bigger, so there's more reverb in the corner.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative]. Or maybe there's more corners.

**Griffin:**

Whoa, holy shit.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Welcome to, [action voice] welcome to the Octagon.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] The poetry Octagon.

**Griffin:**

Now, you're in the Octagon. Prepare.

**Rachel:**

Uh, i wanted to do a poet, uh, that I was only sort of familiar with, like I, uh, I had read some of the work and thought like, "Oh, it's pretty good." But I would never, like, list this person among my favorite poets. And then, I did some exploration, and it turns out, I really like the work of Sharon Olds.

**Griffin:**

Okay, okay. This is not, I'll tell you, this is one of the few I don't, I'm not familiar with.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] A rare occurrence in Poetry Corner.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, Sharon Olds, she is a poet that grew up in California, uh, and currently teaches at MYU in their graduate writing program. Uh, so she's born in 1942,



has received a lot of awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, which any time you hear that, don't you think like, "I should know who this person is"?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

"They won a Pulitzer Prize."

**Griffin:**

I mean, a lot of people have won [mumbling] Pulitzer Prizes.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, turns out, I guess.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

I guess so. She writes a lot of really, uh, personal, kind of intense poems focused on the body, and has gotten some criticism for that. Uh, the famous critic, Helen Vendler, have you heard of her?

**Griffin:**

No. That's one of the few famous critics I've never heard of.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I heard about her a lot in grad school 'cause she does a lot of literary criticism and, uh, she has disparaged Olds' work as self-indulgent, sensationalist and even pornographic.

**Griffin:**

Hello.

**Rachel:**

Noted prude, Helen Vendler. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Hello, yeah. I know that characteristic about her.

**Rachel:**

Um, but, uh, I would say, like, like, her work, um, is accessible and is beautiful. Um, she has been viewed in the tradition of Walt Whitman in kind of celebrating the body—

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

... and the pleasure and pain associated with it.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

So, I have two poems by her. Uh—

**Griffin:**

Ooh, a double, double corner.

**Rachel:**

We could potentially do both or we can focus on one, um, but I have a more erotic poem.

**Griffin:**

Oh, jeez. Are you gonna make me pick between—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Are you gonna make me, me decide whether or not we wanna go horny on main?

**Rachel:**

We could, we could potentially do both. Uh, uh, I mean, I will say the names of both poems, and if we don't get to both, then maybe the person—

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

... listening, that is interested—

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

... could seek it out.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, they're both publicly available by The Poetry Foundation. One, I'll let you guess if this is the erotic one.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

It's called "After Making Love in Winter." [laughs]

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

The other is called "The Cast." [laughs]

**Griffin:**

That one is the erotic one.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] No. It's this one.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

It's not. Um, uh—

**Griffin:**

Let, if you don't do the "Making Love in Winter" one—

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

... we're never gonna hear the end of it.

**Rachel:**

Okay. Uh, this poem, "After Making Love in Winter," uh, she wrote in 1987.

**Griffin:**

Cool, the year I was born.

**Rachel:**

Ooh. [gasps, whispers] Is this about you?

**Griffin:**

Probab— probably not!

**Rachel:**

[laughs] "At first, I cannot have even a sheet on me, anything at all is painful, a plate of iron laid down on my nerves. I lie there in the air as if flying rapidly without moving, and slowly I cool off— hot, warm, cool, cold, icy, 'til the skin all over my body is ice except at those points our bodies touch like blooms of fire. Around the door, loose in its frame and around the

transom, the light from the hall burns in straight lines and casts up narrow beams on the ceiling, a figure throwing up its arms for joy.

“In the mirror, the angles of the room are calm, it is the hour when you can see that the angle itself is blessed, and the dark globes of the chandelier, suspended in the mirror, are motionless— I can feel my ovaries deep in my body, I gaze at the silvery bulbs, maybe I am looking at my ovaries, it is clear everything I look at is real and good. We have come to the end of questions. You run your palm, warm, large, dry, back along my face and over and over, over and over, like God putting the finishing touches on before sending me down to be born.”

**Griffin:**

Fuck yes!

**Rachel:**

A hot, isn't it a hot poem?

**Griffin:**

It was a hot poem, but it was also, like, incredible, incredible poem!

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah, I mean, like, you're there. You're transported. You're like, I'm like looking down—

**Griffin:**

Yes!

**Rachel:**

... at this woman lying in bed.

**Griffin:**

That was, that was wild. That was one of the more sort of like—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I don't know.

**Rachel:**

Well, it's been a while since you've been in the Poetry Corner.

**Griffin:**

That's true. I forget how visual it gets.

**Rachel:**

You may have forgotten the, the power.

**Griffin:**

It gets very, very visual in the, in the Poetry Corner.

**Rachel:**

That is—

**Griffin:**

There were so many parts of that poem that, like, like, really stuck out to me.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

That "This where questions end," line, I was like, "Hey, what does that mea—" And then we were already onto the next one.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I know. This is why I recommend, if you enjoy listening to poems on this podcast, like, seeking them out because one, I don't do any kind of analysis when I read them.

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, and two, like, you just miss a lot of stuff 'cause you're just like image to image, to image to image.

**Griffin:**

That was phenomenal.

**Rachel:**

I'm glad you liked it.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, when I was taking notes, is Sharon Olds, understandably, I guess is trying to be very humble about her work, but she said in a salon interview, "I think that my work is easy to understand because I am not a thinker. [laughs] I am not a, how can I put it? I write in the way I perceive, I guess. It's not really simple, I don't think, but it's about ordinary things, feeling about things, about people. I'm not an intellectual, I'm not an abstract thinker, and I'm interested in ordinary life."

**Griffin:**

That's, that is quite a, quite a big slice of humble pie.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

'Cause I would say, you would have to be a bit of an abstract thinker to generate some of the imagery that was, uh, just, just delivered, but...

**Rachel:**

She went on to say that she is "Not asking a poem to carry a lot of rocks in its pockets. Just being an ordinary observer." [laughs]

**Griffin:**

God, even that!

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I love that shit when just, like, even just talking—

**Rachel:**

I know.

**Griffin:**

... casually about this stuff is, like, "Oh my God, that's—"

**Rachel:**

I know. "Just being an ordinary observer and liver and feeler and letting the experience get through you onto the notebook with the pen, through the arm, out of the body, onto the page, without distortion."

**Griffin:**

Hell yes.

**Rachel:**

Isn't that great?

**Griffin:**

That is really good.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, a lot of people talk, you know, I mean, she has gotten criticism for her poetry, 'cause I guess, I don't know. There are these reviews that said, like, that they were too personal and too inwardly focused, uh—

**Griffin:**

That's seems like quite a subjective... I mean, it's—

**Rachel:**



Yeah, this, like, self-indulgent claim, which I think is ridiculous for poetry, like...

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Wri— the act of writing a poem, one might say, is—

**Griffin:**

Is, yeah.

**Rachel:**

... a little self-indulgent. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah 'cause otherwise you could just write, like, a few sentences and not worry about the rhyming—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Griffin:**

... or any of that jazz.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. So, I have another one. Do we have time, or should I just direct listeners?

**Griffin:**

Direct people to it? Yeah, I think we've got enough time.

**Rachel:**

It's not a long one.

**Griffin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Rachel:**

This is just another one of those, like, poems of the body, but it is not remotely sexual.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, this poem is called "The Cast."

"When the doctor cut off my son's cast, the high scream of the saw filled the room and Gabey's lap was covered with fluff like the chaff of a new thing emerging, the down in the hen-yard. Down the seam that runs along the outside of the arm and up the seam along the inside— that line where the color of a white boy's arm changes like a fish from belly-white to prismatic, the saw ranged freely— the saw that does not cut flesh, the doctor told us, smiling.

"Then the horrible shriek ran down in a moment to nothing and he took a sharp silver wedge like a can-opener and jimmed at the cracks until with a creak the glossy white false arm cracked and there lay Gabey's sweet dirty forearm, thin as a darkened twig. He lifted it in astonishment, like a gift.

"'It's so light!' he cried, a lot of light coming out of his eyes, he fingered it and grinned, he picked up the halves and put them together and gripped it and carried it out through the waiting room and everyone smiled the way you smile at a wedding, so deep in us the desire to be healed and joined."

**Griffin:**

[exhales joyfully]

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I love how delighted you get.

**Griffin:**

That last bit got me really good.

**Rachel:**

I know, that was that, that was why I wanted to read it, honestly. Like, that is always, in the times that I have written poems, I always strive for that. Like, and I mentioned this before, the, like, that last little, like, "And here's why the poem I'm writing means something."

**Griffin:**

"Here's why this exists," yeah. The, any— it wasn't quite as sort of, uh, uh, consistently, I don't know, like, transportive as the first poem was.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

But, uh, that last thing was so hugely, uh, so hugely relatable.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like, it even reminded me of, like, the first time I went to school after getting my braces off—

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... and feeling like. And, and everybody s— like, *everybody* said something.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative]. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

'Cause they recognized, like, "Hey, this is a big, this is a big deal for you."

**Rachel:**

Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:**

It's really nice.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I, I wanna encourage folks to check her out. Um, I, I was not as familiar with her work as I think, uh, I am now glad that I am.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Um, and she is a good poet. Sharon Olds.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Uh, hey, thank you to bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find the link to that in the episode description and, uh, thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. So many good shows on maximumfun.org that you should be listening to. I'm talking about shows like *Judge John Hodgman* and *Triple Click*, and—

**Rachel:**

*Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

**Griffin:**

... *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

**Rachel:**

And, uh, gosh, what else? *Flop House*.

**Griffin:**

*Flop House*.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

The whole dang yard of them. Um, and I think that's probably it. Thank you, thank you so much for listening, thank you for, for, uh, being here with us and supporting us—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... and, um—

**Rachel:**

And being patient with us when our episodes are late.

**Griffin:**

... being patient with us when our episodes are late. We had a com— a combination of, like, three different doctor's appointments this week.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It's been a, it's been a real fun one. Um—

**Rachel:**

Everybody's fine.

**Griffin:**

Everybody's fine! Well, I have some pretty severe psoriasis, so let's not, like—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that's fair. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

... go, "Yeah, I guess we're all, uh, fine."

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I guess we d— it's not a big deal, *I guess*. It's not like prescription shampoo is like that big a deal, *I guess*.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Ugh. Do you hear yourself sometimes?

**Rachel:**

I'm sorry, honey.

**Griffin:**

[quietly] It's so flaky. [normal volume] People don't wanna hear about my psoriasis.

**Rachel:**

No, I don't think so, but now they have.

**Griffin:**

And there's nothing we can do about it.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

[theme song plays, ends]

[chord plays]

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