

## Wonderful! 186: Arboreal Childbirth LARPing

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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:**

[singing] I got no kids to hold me down...

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

[singing] ... I'll do podcasts while they're out of town! Just kidding, they're both at school in this town 'cause it'd be inconvenient if it weren't. Hey!

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Hey! You know that song.

**Griffin:**

[shouting] Let's get loud!

**Rachel:**

Poof.

**Griffin:**

No baby's napping in [altering voice] here!

**Rachel:**

Uh, Griffin is very excited that we went through the somewhat emotional, somewhat traumatic drop off—

**Griffin:**

Love these babies.

**Rachel:**

... of our baby at daycare.

**Griffin:**

I love our baby. I love our big child too. Big son, small son, love 'em both—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... to the ends of the Earth and back. Yesterday, I took a nap for an hour and a half—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... and I turned into a sort of primordial slime inside of a chrysalis and I emerged a new, well-rested—

**Rachel:**

I am hoping—

**Griffin:**

... gentleman.

**Rachel:**

... that I will get there.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Right now, I am just, like, bouncing around the house like a nervous pinball.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

I am hoping eventually I will become used to not having a child attached to me.

**Griffin:**

Yes. Uh, love these babies though, love these babies. This is *Wonderful!*

**Rachel:**

Super cute.

**Griffin:**

Super cute and, uh, you feel the— the fulfillment and—

**Rachel:**

But they're somebody else's problem right now.

**Griffin:**

Oh man, they sure are.

**Rachel:**

[laughing]

**Griffin:**

Um, this is *Wonderful!* It's a show where we talk about things we like, things that we're into, things that are good. Do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:**

I do, actually. I've thought about this—

**Griffin:**

Okay, okay.

**Rachel:**

... just a moment ago and that is expiration dates. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

Uh, so, uh, loyal listeners of the show will remember that our master bathroom flooded in the great freeze of February. Uh...

**Griffin:**

Flooded is a, is a, not a, like, accurate way of describing. I mean, it did flood—

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

... but it also kind of exploded.

**Rachel:**

Exploded.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, we have not been able to do anything because of earlier mentioned babies in the house, but now that they are off-site, we are able to get everything ready, and I have been going through so many bathroom products and so many of them are expired—

**Griffin:**

Yeah...

**Rachel:**

... uh, in the great year of 2020. And, uh, those dates are really helpful when you're thinking, like, "Should I maybe take this medicine?" No.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

No, you shouldn't. It won't work anymore. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And lemme fill... I'm— I'm. It's so good that you brought this, because let me fill you in on something else. They also put those on food and sometimes you will pick up the food—

**Rachel:**

Oh, here we go.

**Griffin:**

[snorts]

**Rachel:**

Here we go.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Can I tell you how many expired bottles of mouthwash I found? Which says a lot about us. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

[bursts out laughing]

**Rachel:**

But also made me think, does it really, you spit it out. Like, you're not drinking it. Is it okay? Like, I don't know.

**Griffin:**

Okay. D... Yeah, this milk went bad in 1994, but as long as I don't swallow it—

**Rachel:**

No, this is not the same.

**Griffin:**

... it should be okay.

**Rachel:**

This is not the same. This is, like, a lot of alcohol. It's probably okay.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:**

Anyway, what's your small wonder?

**Griffin:**

It's this, it's this big, beautiful whiteboard you got me.

**Rachel:**

Aw.

**Griffin:**

It's my Father's Day present. Rachel got me a big, beautiful whiteboard to hang up on my wall to help organize, uh, Ethersea stuff, um...

**Rachel:**

Yeah!

**Griffin:**

... and I'm so excited about it. It's got all these magnetic tiles and so many markers of different colors and organizational systems and—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... and just so satisfying.

**Rachel:**

I didn't know if you were really into organization.

**Griffin:**

I am, specifically for DM-ing.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like, it's kind of necessary.

**Rachel:**

And I know you put a lot of stuff in a document, but when the document is not open, you—

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

... are not able to access it, so—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... I thought this might be better.

**Griffin:**

It's one of those things where, like, handwritten notes also kind of, like, lodge into your brain a little bit better—

**Rachel:**

Yeah, no, I feel that way.

**Griffin:**

... and I, I had, um, a, a wall covered in post-it notes. I talked about post-it notes but they all, like, very slowly eroded and fell off the wall, so this is a nice, more permanent solution.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Stoked for it. I'm also stoked to hear what your topic is for this episode of *Wonderful!*, a podcast.

**Rachel:**

My topic—

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

... and we're only doing one still, right?

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

Okay. [laughs] My topic is Cabbage Patch Kids.

**Griffin:**

Oh my gosh!

**Rachel:**

You ever have these guys?

**Griffin:**

In, at some point in the, like, we had all that shit. Like, we had a Teddy Ruxpin and—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... we had a like, this, this, but God. Okay, that was so long ago now, huh?

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Wow.

**Rachel:**

I didn't know, I mean it was, it was a huge craze.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

It was arguably the first big Christmas toy craze ever.

**Griffin:**

Uh, yeah. Of, of, of a certain scale.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

For sure.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Uh, prior to this, the only competitor was really the Etch A Sketch, apparently. [laughs] Like, the, the, uh, industry was making Etch A Sketches, like, on Christmas Eve to try and, like, meet the demand, but—

**Griffin:**

My God.

**Rachel:**

... but yeah.

**Griffin:**

The Etch A Sketch?

**Rachel:**

The Etch A Sketch.

**Griffin:**

It's not a very g— good device.

**Rachel:**

Well, people didn't have computers back then—

**Griffin:**

I guess so.

**Rachel:**

... you know? So this was your own little way to... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

This was your old computers.

**Rachel:**

This was your own, your own way to make documents.

**Griffin:**

Let me check my email.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Well, I made a square.

**Rachel:**

[laughs harder] Um, yeah, I had, I had two Cabbage Patch dolls.

**Griffin:**

Wow.

**Rachel:**

One was given to me by my parents.

**Griffin:**

One per—, one-percenter much?

**Rachel:**

I know. One was given to me by my parents, and one was given to me by, um, my mom worked in an elementary school, and I spent a lot of time at that school as a kid waiting for my mom to be ready to go home and the very sweet custodians gave me a Cabbage Patch doll—

**Griffin:**

Oh my God!

**Rachel:**

... 'cause, eh, this may not surprise anyone to know, uh, very close with the school personnel. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Not surprising, even a little.

**Rachel:**

One of those kids, one of those only children, one of those rare only children that, uh, had profound relationships with adults. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, wow.

**Rachel:**

Um, Cabbage Patch Kids uh, first produced by Coleco Industries in 1982. Do you remember the name of the guy? It was written on every butt of every Cabbage Patch doll.

**Griffin:**

I— So, I don't think I ever had my own personal Cabbage Patch doll.

**Rachel:**

You had a family doll that was shared.

**Griffin:**

It was a sort of communal...

**Rachel:**

[laughs harder]

**Griffin:**

No, I don't remember, I don't know.

**Rachel:**

Travis, I would like to hold the doll now. [laughs] Travis, your turn is up. It's my turn to hold the doll. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Don't smell it so deeply. You're taking all the good smell away. Leave some of the vapor for me!

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Those were the original vape rigs, were a Cabbage Patch doll.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

No, what was the name on the butt?

**Rachel:**

Xavier Roberts.

**Griffin:**

Why did he put his name on the doll butts?

**Rachel:**

Oh, Xavier, he—

**Griffin:**

Okay. Wow. I'm putting my phone down and getting ready.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] So, when he started, so this was, uh, 1978. He called them The Little People—

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

... which once they wanted to do wide release, if you all know Fisher-Price has their own TM Little People... Uh, but he more or less stole it—

**Griffin:**

Oh?

**Rachel:**

... from a craft artist named Martha Nelson.

**Griffin:**

Sounds about right.

**Rachel:**

He was a 21-year-old art student at the time. He, uh, discovered Martha Nelson's Doll Babies and they came with a birth certificate and adoption papers—

**Griffin:**

That's the thing, right?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that's the big thing.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So, Roberts cleverly modified the look of her dolls, uh, to get a copyright and told potential customers his little people weren't for sale, but could be adopted for prices ranging from \$60 to as much as \$1,000.

**Griffin:**

So that was, that, it was all, like, thef—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like, it was a way to sidestep? Wow.

**Rachel:**

She ended up, like, suing him and got a settlement, uh—

**Griffin:**

Good. Good.

**Rachel:**

... because he, you know, went on to make a lot of money from this, um...

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

This was in Georgia. He took a medical clinic and converted it into a toy store, calling it Babyland General Hospital in Cleveland, Georgia.

**Griffin:**

Yes. So, this is what I know about Cabbage Patch dolls and I don't know how I know about, but that there was, like, it was essentially, like, uh, arboreal childbirth LARPing.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yes. Yeah, so I'll talk a little bit about Babyland later.

**Griffin:**

Y'all. I— I know we have lots of younger listeners who listen to this show who probably don't know any of this shit. Buckle, like, think about how you spend your day. Think about what you like to do on the weekends and then imagine deciding to go to Babyland General Hospital USA and experiencing this because this is what it was, because this we were fucking up to.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so, Xavier Roberts. What's interesting about these dolls is they're not particularly cute.

**Griffin:**

No

**Rachel:**

And that was kind of minute one of the design. So, I wanted to show Griffin on air—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... the earliest designs.

**Griffin:**

Oh boy.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so here's 19—

**Griffin:**

Oh my God. What the fuck?

**Rachel:**

... 1976, uh, he had an interest in sculpture and quilting, uh, and so these were soft sculptures. Here's 1978, still not a very cute creature.

**Griffin:**

Um, no. Uh...

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

We're talk—, this, we're talking about one pound of face in a 100-pound head bag.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It's all, it's, it looks like a, it's a, like, a six-inch-wide circle with about a half inch worth of face right in the center of it.

**Rachel:**

So, he won a first place for sculpture at an art show in Florida—

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

... uh, based on this doll—

**Griffin:**

Cool.

**Rachel:**

... um, and then came—

**Griffin:**

Someone saw that and said, "This is the best, this is the best thing here."

**Rachel:**

... and then came home to Georgia with his friends and started mass production of these guys.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, here's the gentleman, by the way, um, on the cover of a magazine with his early creations.

**Griffin:**

Holding all these, these large-headed...

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Alright.

**Rachel:**

So, it was not his idea to really build the Cabbage Patch myth. That was a designer and licensing agent named Roger Schlaifer. He was the one that created this idea of Cabbage Patch Kid and him and his, uh, partner at the time wrote the "Legend of Cabbage Patch Kids" to make sense of how cabbages gave birth to babies.

**Griffin:**

Do we have... Is that, like, a thing that is written out—

**Rachel:**

Oh, yes.

**Griffin:**

... that, can we, can we read that?

**Rachel:**

I mean, it's quite lengthy, uh, but here's a summary. So, if you go, I'm getting a lot of this information from [cabbagepatchkids.com](http://cabbagepatchkids.com).

**Griffin:**

Are they still making 'em?

**Rachel:**

Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:**

Oh, okay. I didn't know.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, no. It's changed hands a lot, so—

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

... like, a bunch of different companies have tried to kind of regrow the brand—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... after Coleco lost it, then it was Hasbro, then it was Mattel, then it was Toys "R" Us, like, everybody's, like, trying to get a hand on that early success. Um...

**Griffin:**

It's weird that that hasn't come back in fashion.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

These big ugly babies with names on their butts.

**Rachel:**

So, the legend, uh, if you go to the website, uh—

**Griffin:**

What am I fucking looking at?

**Rachel:**

Xavier Roberts insisted that he get connected into the story, so when he was working with Schlaifer, he was, like, "Alright, if you're going to create a legend, make sure I'm in there." He—

**Griffin:**

He wanted a self-insert in his fucking doll fiction?

**Rachel:**

So, once upon a time a young boy named Xavier Roberts was playing in the woods near his home in the Appalachian Mountains of north Georgia.

**Griffin:**

He saw a woman making folk art dolls and said, "I will steal those."

**Rachel:**

[laughs] He saw a curious creature, uh, that looked like a bunny but flew in the air and buzzed like a bee. He tried to catch it and flew into a waterfall. Uh—

**Griffin:**

Oh shit. What?

**Rachel:**

And there was a cave behind the waterfall—

**Griffin:**

O— Okay.

**Rachel:**

... [laughs] and the BunnyBee led him to the cabbages and the cabbages were sprinkled with magic dust by the BunnyBee. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Okay, and the—, and so he fertilized them?

**Rachel:**

From the nearest cabbage, a little boy came toward Xavier and offered to shake his hand. He introsel— introduced himself as Otis Lee, one of the Cabbage Patch Kids, uh—

**Griffin:**

The way you are reading this is wil... Like, I don't know if you hear—

**Rachel:**

[laughing]

**Griffin:**

I know your mind is kind of racing in a way to, like, summarize this in a way that is palatable—

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... for our audience but your intonation is, [awkward enunciation] "He got a doll from the Cabbage Patch Kids."

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Trying to read it like a news story.

**Griffin:**

It's great. It's good. I love it.

**Rachel:**

Uh, Otis Lee, the Cabbage Patch Kid that Xavier Roberts met, uh, explained that the, uh, babies of all sizes and shape are born in the secret cabbage patch.

**Griffin:**

Great.

**Rachel:**

The BunnyBees sprinkle a magic crystal and the mother cabbages—

**Griffin:**

Wait, what?

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

They sprinkle a magic crystal—

**Rachel:**

[laughs] They pollinate, yeah, they, like, pollinate the cabbages.

**Griffin:**

And the mother cabbages do what?

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Uh, they have the babies.

**Griffin:**

The mother, are there—

**Rachel:**

The babies come out of the mother cabbages.

**Griffin:**

And then, what do we do with the cabbages after the baby comes out of them?

**Rachel:**

Oh, I don't know. I mean, it's probably, like, placenta encapsulation. You can... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Right. Are the mother cabbages... Can I buy a mother cabbage and then have my own sort of, like, factor—, I guess I would need to [crosstalk].

**Rachel:**

I mean, if you think about it, that's kind of what Hatchimals are, right? Remember Hatchimals?

**Griffin:**

I mean, on—, in name only...

**Rachel:**

You could get the egg and then you'd, like, rub the egg and then the little thing would come out.

**Griffin:**

So, the mother cabbage... Let's tal—, let's get into this. Once the mother cabbage has produced one Cabbage Patch child, it withers away and is in, and passes awa—, passes on?

**Rachel:**

I don't know. So this would be a good question for Babyland.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh—

**Griffin:**

It is a great question for Babyland.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

What happens to the mother cabbage after the Cabbage Patch child comes out? Can it—, can a mother cabbage make more than one Cabbage Patch doll?

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Is there just one BunnyBee fertilizing all these things and where's he getting these crystals from?

**Rachel:**

I don't know.

**Griffin:**

Does his body make the crystals? Do they come out of him? You know what I mean?

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Is there some sort of genetic material inside of the crystals? 'Cause if so, where are those genes coming from?

**Rachel:**

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know, these are all good questions.

**Griffin:**

Why was it behind a waterfall, is my next question. Why did it have to be behind a waterfall, 'cause when I think of a lot of sort of, like, common agricultural—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... hot spots, behind a waterfall is not usually—

**Rachel:**

I think the idea is that Xavier had to discover it. Like, there had to be a reason that people didn't know about this and Xavier had to happen upon it.

**Griffin:**

Right. So, okay. Yeah, no, okay. He was the first one to see this flying bee rabbit—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... and to follow it because everybody else who saw it was like, "I don't, I'm too busy."

**Rachel:**

Uh, so yeah, so Babyland.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Um, let me pull that up for you.

**Griffin:**

God, I can't believe we haven't even gotten to Babyland General Hospital yet.

**Rachel:**

[laughing]

**Griffin:**

The thought of me going to a place called Babyland *now*, knowing what I know, seems, seems bonkers.

**Rachel:**

So, it is situated on 650 acres in the north Georgia mountains, uh, and it is a big Southern style home, uh, where you can go and visit and witness the birth of a hand-sculpted Cabbage Patch Kid.

**Griffin:**

Yep. Like, you see it pop out of a cabbage and, and there's people who do a whole skit.

**Rachel:**

So, can I tell you, I have had friends who have visited.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, I texted my friend Amy when I was going to do this segment and she said, when they announce a Cabbage Patch doll is about to be born, they tell you that the cabbage is dilating. [laughs hard]

**Griffin:**

Hands up. What?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] It's apparently, like, a big ceremony where they, like, dim the lights.

**Griffin:**

I don't care—, I, I, of course it's a big ceremony and I'm glad they dim the lights to give the fucking cabbage mother a little bit of modesty—

**Rachel:**

And then... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

... a little bit of dignity.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I don't imagine that there are groans or noises emitted from the cabbage, but they do make it—

**Griffin:**

You don't know... You cannot say that for sure.

**Rachel:**

I know. Uh, and then the child that is, like, viewing can name the, the doll that is being born.

**Griffin:**

Okay. I would, I mean, I would leave that up to the cabbage mother or perhaps the BunnyBee who, um, fertilized it.

**Rachel:**

Um, but yeah, you can take a self-guided tour. Uh, you can play with the Cabbage Patch Kids and you spend, like, an hour just roaming around.

**Griffin:**

And, and probably \$305 at some point.

**Rachel:**

Oh, yeah, that's a good point.

**Griffin:**

I mean, it's a... You're not spending. It's an adoption fee. It's purely a formality. Um, it's all above board.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so in the '80s, uh, they set a industry record, 3.2 million dolls.

**Griffin:**

That's a lot.

**Rachel:**

Uh, between 1983 and 1986, um, Coleco [laughs] got into a bitter legal battle with Roberts when Roberts wanted to launch Furskins Bears, which was a collection of hillbilly bears that competed with the Cabbage Patch dolls. So, all of a sudden, Roberts was like, "Hey, I'm gonna get back in the game here and this is going to be my thing and this time they're bears."

And Coleco was, like, "Hold on a minute. We have a deal with you and now you're trying to compete." Uh, everything fell apart and that's when Cabbage Patch started bouncing around between Hasbro and Mattel and Toys "R" Us and the different...

**Griffin:**

Wow.

**Rachel:**

But yeah, they're still out there. You can still get 'em. Um, I mean, it's difficult. They've tried a bunch of different things. Coleco tried a talking Cabbage Patch Kid, uh, which was equipped with a voice chip and touch sensors and it could communicate with other dolls. Um... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

So, touch sensors in the hands enabled the toy to detect when and how it was being played with and responds, uh, and the doll might say, "Hold my hand," and give an appropriate response when the touch sensor in the hand was... And it, uh—

**Griffin:**

What's the, what's the response when the doll says, "Hold my hand," and you hold its hand, does it say, like, "Good"?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] "Thanks."

**Griffin:**

Thanks.

**Rachel:**

Kind of sweaty. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Alright. Well, we're doin' this.

**Rachel:**

It, it could also, as I mentioned, interact with other dolls, uh, and they could synchronize sing in rounds.

**Griffin:**

So, like Furbies then.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, basically.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Uh, and there's, yeah, there's been any number, they've come out in different sizes, there's been big and little ones, everybody's trying to, like, figure out what it's going to be to get these back in the public consciousness that is just...

**Griffin:**

We're do—, it is not going to, it is, I— I— I would go so far to say it will never happen again for you, Cabbage Patch Kids. I'm so sorry. We've, like, moved on. We're into slime, slime bags now. That's it.

**Rachel:**

Uh, yeah, in 2018, uh, Cabbage Patch Kids celebrated 40 years of adoptions in Cleveland, Georgia.

**Griffin:**

Congratulations.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. They did it.

**Griffin:**

They've really done it this time.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

So wild.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Can you imagine when they put LEGOLAND together, if they were, like, "Yeah, and then the LEGO brood mother, her, you, you, we ring a bell when her cloaca appears and from it, 100 mini-figures come spraying out."

**Rachel:**

It really does generate a lot of questions, right? Like, if you've taken your child to the Babyland and you have not yet told them how babies are born, can you imagine?

**Griffin:**

Well, I imagine there's lots of parents who do that so that they don't have to have that conversation.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] You know how you saw the doll come out of the cabbage? Well...

**Griffin:**

Well, it's like that.

**Rachel:**

It's kind of similar story to tell.

**Griffin:**

Sort of like that, um...

**Rachel:**

[laughs] You know the, the bee with the crystals, well... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Well, it was kind of like, if, it was sort of like that, if you think about it. Um, hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

Thanks.

[ad break]

**Rachel:**

Do we have personal messages?

**Griffin:**

We have personal messages, A-K-A Grumple Pops, and here, this one is for future Chris and it's from past Chris, who says, "Dear Future Chris. You've always wanted someone to buy you a Jumbotron. Well, it's time to be the change you want to see in the world. I'm here from the past to say, 'You've worked really hard and you've come a long way to get your life happy, healthy and stable. Hopefully the insane housing market bubble will pop soon, and you can get yourself a house.'" Uh, that is from Chris, and Chris, not yet, from what I understand—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... it's still tough out there. Uh, houses are, uh, uh, I, I just, it's a wil— it's a wild time for homes—

**Rachel:**

True.

**Griffin:**

... in general.

**Rachel:**

But you have taken the first step to take care of yourself in purchasing a Jumbotron.

**Griffin:**

Yeah

**Rachel:**

Something you've always wanted.

**Griffin:**

That's it. It's the first stage of, um, acceptance.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. If you talk to a realtor, they'll ask, "Have you purchased a Jumbotron yet?"

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

And if you say no, then you're not even on step one.

**Griffin:**

If you're not even visualizing it, like what are you doing?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Uh, can I read the second one?

**Griffin:**

Yep, yep.

**Rachel:**

It's for Courtney. It is from Noah. "Hello, Courtney. It's your boy here. Just wanted a way to say I love you to you while you're working. Well, maybe you're listening to this at home. Either way, you're very special to me and I love you a lot."

**Griffin:**

[laughs] Working hard or hardly working. Listen to podcasts. You're not really, you're not giving 100% if you're listening to these two clowns.

**Rachel:**

Griffin has not had to make small talk in a very long time.

**Griffin:**

Hey!

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Hump day, huh? Aah.

**Rachel:**

Aah.

**Griffin:**

Thank God it— Thank God it is hump day. Did you see the, uh, boss is a real piece of shit, huh?

**Rachel:**

Oof.

**Griffin:**

I don't, I don't know, I don't know.

**Rachel:**

Oof.

**Griffin:**

I am sorry.

[Max Fun ad]

**Griffin:**

Um, my first thing is, uh, i— i— impossible to Google for. It's, and you wouldn't think it—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... uh, but, like, I'm not sure that there is a codified name for this thing and if there is, it, it has very little uh, SEO juice behind it. I wanna to talk about ho— home video—, home movies or home videos and I'm not talking about the animated show—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

*Home Movies* with, uh, H. Jon Benjamin and I'm not talking about *America's Funniest Home Videos*.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. You'd almost have to look for, like, a story behind the, like, home video camcorder.

**Griffin:**

That is the only way I can make any sort of, uh, progress in, in, in, like, looking for any sort of supplementary information on this because you could type in, like, "real home videos" and it's, like, "*America's Funniest Home Videos* is real funny," and it's, like—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... that's not what I, that's not what I wanna know about.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, it was, I don't know. So, I, you know, I don't have any of these.

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

But...

**Griffin:**

It, it depends on, like, how, uh, quick your family was to adopt—

**Rachel:**

Exactly.

**Griffin:**

... like, technology.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, because I think, um, also when you are an only child... I mean, I have dance recital videos—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... uh, that, you know, could be purchased at the event itself.

**Griffin:**

Right. That's how they get ya.

**Rachel:**

Um, and I think my mom would borrow a camcorder from the school she worked at—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... occasionally to make those videos herself [laughs] but I do not, I don't know, I don't think I knew anybody with a, with a camcorder.

**Griffin:**

Um, you didn't know Clint McElroy—

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

... who, uh, man, he, we went through a lot of different, a lot of different camcorders. Yeah, this is not something that I think is going to register with everybody, um, but boy howdy, Clint, Clint turned 'em out like he lived fucking Marvel cinematic universe.

**Rachel:**

Oh, and the commentary he provided.

**Griffin:**

The commentary he provided was very good and also, uh, kind of adult at times in ways that I did not appreciate until I watched them as an adult. Um...

**Rachel:**

[laughing] Yeah. They're, they're incredible. I think one year for Candlenights, I asserted a real desire to have McElroy home videos, uh, shared—

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... at the performance, uh, because they're just the cutest, most great, wonderful thing in the world.

**Griffin:**

Yes, uh, yeah, I mean it helps that [clicks tongue] you got this guy. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

A little Griffie.

**Griffin:**

A little Griffie in a basket maybe or, uh, you know, a tiny [crosstalk].

**Rachel:**

When we watch footage before Griffin was born, he's, he's, like—

**Griffin:**

Boring.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Well, there isn't much of that 'cause my dad got this, like, big ass Hitachi VHS camera, uh, like, right before I was born. Uh, 'cause in that first home video, there's a little bit of him, like, in the office and there's a little bit of my incredibly pregnant mother, uh, and then there's like, li'l me, li'l me, just home from the hospital, uh, and I sort of, like, grew up on, on, on camera—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... like Kirk Cameron or something.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Uh...

**Rachel:**

So much brother love in these videos too. Like, like, I don't know if there is a, a dark cloud that we have yet to uncover about the young McElroys, but it seems like you all just got along famously from day one.

**Griffin:**

Um, yeah, until we all were, like, teens and then it got a little rowdy from time to time. Um, so, home camcorder technology started to become sort of commercially available in the early '80s. In 1983, Sony came out with the Betamovie BMC-110, which recorded Betamax format cassettes, which, well, it's not something that anybody really used or had, uh, and throughout the '80s, like, uh, media storage on cassette, like, evolved, like, *really* rapidly. Media storage, like, in general, evolved pretty, pretty quickly throughout, like the '80s and '90s and, and oughts and then now, it's just like, "Well, here's an even bigger SD card." Back then, it was, "Here is a Betamax VH—, a Betamax recorder, here is a VHS camcorder," we had one of those, "Here's an SVHS camcorder."

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Then you get into, uh, in the mid '90s, DV cassettes, which were, like, tiny cassettes that you couldn't put in your VCR—

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... without an adaptor and, uh—

**Rachel:**

Remember how if you recorded stuff at different speeds, you could get a longer tape? Do you remember that?

**Griffin:**

Yeah, yes.

**Rachel:**

It was, like, a four hour at this speed or eight hour at this speed, but if you do the eight hour speed, the quality wasn't as good, and—

**Griffin:**

Yeah, but from, from, like, probably from about 1987 to 1996, like, we went through, like, four or five different camcorders because the media kept chang— Like, the format of the thing, like, kept changing a lot and there was definitely, like, a dark ages period where, like, we couldn't watch that stuff, uh, because DVD players were, like, the only thing we had in the house, and so we didn't have a VCR, let alone a mini-DV adaptor, like, that you would need for all that stuff, but fortunately—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... like, now there are, you know, companies that can help you digitize all that.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, still to this day, look, I feel like every Christmas your dad will unearth some—

**Griffin:**

Something.

**Rachel:**

... VHS tape and turn it into a DVD and it's, it's just always a treat.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, so we have about, I would say 15 DVDs or so, covering about as many years of, of, of my life, starting from the year I was born and I just, like, I feel so grateful for that stuff. Like, I genuinely do because I, um, my memory is quite bad, uh, and so for, for that reason, like, I am very grateful to have these things that I can, like, look back on. But also, like, I have been wrestling a lot with, uh, like what I am nostalgic for now and where I'm at in my life and just how long ago those, those days were, which is, I think, something that everybody in their mid-thirties, like, starts to kind of wrestle with and having kind of a, you know, an omnibus of, uh, of McElroy events, of countless Christmases and birthdays and, you know, uh, Easter pageants and band practices and—

**Rachel:**

Well, yeah, not to mention the fact that you used to watch those—

**Griffin:**

... when my dad was still making them, yeah. And I hope that wasn't, like, a narcissism thing as much of it was, like, I've talked also a lot on this show about, like, how b— back in, in, you know, my childhood, I felt so empowered by being able to, like, create some sort of, like, media, right? Like, whether it was programming a really simple game in Qbasic, like—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... that was so cool to me, uh, all the way up to, like, uh, when I burned my first CD, I was like, "Holy shit. Like, I can make CDs now. There's no going back from this." And I was sort of empowered to do that from birth because we always had a camcorder in the house while I was growing up—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... and so I would make also very, very, very stupid, like, movies with my friends at my house after church and, like, uh, I, I, I always, I don't know. I

felt like it was just so cool that I could commit something to a cassette, like a video cassette.

**Rachel:**

I feel like there's a direct correlation between kids that had access to a video camera and, like, and how they become creators as adults—

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

... because you hear that over and over again about, like, kids making movies with their friends and now they do some kind of creative production in their lives.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I think about that a lot. We have a book that Henry loves and it's all about Jim Henson—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... growing up and like, how he made these, like, uh, like, old, old videos with his friends inspired by these old, uh, old, old movies and his grandparents would, like, make props out of their old clothes and stuff like that.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I think, I also think about that a lot. Um, the nostalgia factor is intensified by the fact that my dad would frequently record these home videos on VHS tapes that he had recorded TV shows on.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

So, you'll be watching, like, uh, an Easter pageant and then you'll get, like, a couple minutes of, like, fucking *Babylon 5*.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It'll jump to, like, a Halloween party that my school had, just swinging from vine to vine like that. I'd be like, "Oh damn, but what did happen in that episode of *Babylon 5*?"

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

"Now I need to go find it." Yeah, I just, wrestling with sort of where I'm at in my life and, like, how, how old I really am, I find myself also doing this a lot which is, like, thinking about if things will ever be like that again. Which is to say, like, I document Henry and Gus—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... just as much, if not more, than, than my dad did on our old camcorders, but, like, it's different now—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... because, uh, you know, I put that stuff in our, you know, family group and our, like, private group that I—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... share with our family and our, our cassette and, like, our VHS tapes, our old home videos were really just for us, until of course, we became internet— [laughs] internet-popular—

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... and started to share them with the world. Um, it was like our own sort of family history thing and that was, like, that's different than how, how it works now. And I'm not saying that, like, how it works now is better or worse or whatever, but that I don't know that Henry or Gus will, like, grow up watching old, old videos of themselves in the same way that I did because it's not as novel, like, it's just—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... how things kind of are now.

**Rachel:**

You would have to, like, compile them and put them in one file 'cause that's, that's the big problem, right, is that everybody posts things discretely and—

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

... so if you were to, like, sit down and try and watch for an hour—

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

... there would be a lot of scattershot clicking.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Sure.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, but yeah, I'm, I, uh, I don't know too many people that had as many of these home videos as we did, but it's, it's a thing that I am, uh, the older I get, and sort of the foggier my memory gets, like, the more and more grateful I am to, to have these.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. No, no, it's awesome. I, I don't know why I enjoy them quite so much, but I really do.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Uh, 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, uh, thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on their network.

**Rachel:**

Yeah! Thank you, Maximum Fun. Uh, if you are looking for a new show to check out, uh, I would recommend, um, *Can I Pet Your Dog?*

**Griffin:**

Yeah, you can. You can recommend it and you can, you can pet my dog.

**Rachel:**

Thanks.

**Griffin:**

I've kept a dog in this house, se— secretly, uh, without you knowing. Uh, he's very quiet.

**Rachel:**

Whoa. That's a really quiet dog.

**Griffin:**

He's a really quiet dog. He has no mouth.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

And he must scream.

**Rachel:**

God. [laughing]

**Griffin:**

And, um, I think that's it. Uh, thank you all so much for listening and, uh, we'll be back next week.

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

Oh.

**Rachel:**

We should mention—

**Griffin:**

Live show—

**Rachel:**

... your live show!

**Griffin:**

Got a live MBMBaM here in a little bit on Friday at 9:00 PM Eastern Time, June 25th. We're going to be doing a live MBMBaM. It's going to be a summer boy-becue.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, what does that mean?

**Griffin:**

It's like a barbecue, but with boys.

**Rachel:**

Are you guys going to do, like, stuff?

**Griffin:**

[laughs] Oh, we're gonna do... some *stuff*.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Uh, you can find links to that, if you go to [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family), you can find out all the deets. And, um, oh, the, our next, uh, graphic novel for *The Adventure Zone* comes out in a couple weeks also.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, summertime, y'all!

**Griffin:**

*The Crystal Kingdom*, yeah, uh, and you can find a link to that at [theadventurezonecomic.com](http://theadventurezonecomic.com). Please pre-order it. That would be so cool of you. And we're also doing a live event for that one on July 13th, um—

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And you can find details for that also at [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family).

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Okay, now for real... Oh, we have merch also at McElroy, mcelroymerch.com. Okay.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

For real, though.

**Rachel:**

For real?

**Griffin:**

We should go and, uh, we don't have the easy out of, like, "The baby's screaming. Bye!" Um, but what we do have is—

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative], is lunchtime.

**Griffin:**

Lunchtime. Ring-a-ding-ding-ding! That's the lunch bell. Not sure why it sounded like that. Bye!

[theme song plays and ends]

[chord plays]

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