

Wonderful! 175: Virtual Live Show!

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[theme music plays]

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is Wonderful.

Griffin:

This is the show that we talk about things that are good, and things that we're into, and things that we like, and us being sort of side by side not looking at each other is a vibe that I've never experienced and I don't necessarily love.

Rachel:

[laughs] We're like morning news anchors.

Griffin:

We are kinda like morning news anchors. Did you see this story about the little dog and he had a zebra friend?

Rachel:

[laughs] I love that story. Tell me more.

Griffin:

It ended... it ended in tragedy for both.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um... this is a... this is... this is fun. This is a fun thing that we get to do. Uh that we are doing in, in partnership, in, in-

Rachel:

In support of-

Griffin:

In support of the uh...the uh Austin bat cave. Which a lot of our fans and listeners we learned when we announced this show... big into bats-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And were maybe even a little disappointed or even hugely disappointed-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That, um-

Rachel:

I was not anticipating the, uh, the backlash for this not being a bat organization.

Griffin:

A bat or- I have things to say about that later on.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Oh, bats are gonna get theirs.

Rachel:

Okay good.

Griffin:

But, I'm just saying an organization called Austin bat cave which is not *the* Austin bat cave-

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Which is all about encouraging youth creativity and, and writing and all that jazz. Um the idea of just um this one cave needs money-

Rachel:

[laughs] People are on board for that.

Griffin:

We got... we're gonna get new stalactites in this one. The best stalactites that money can buy.

Rachel:

How many bats can I support with five dollars?

Griffin:

I'm gonna send a bat to college.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, this is, uh, if you've never watched our show before we really do just kinda talk about whatever.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

We used to talk about the bachelor but that, that turned sour, um in the, in the harsh light of day. We usually start by talking about small wonders. Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel:

Yeah, I wanted to give a shout out um I... first of all thank you everybody for purchasing a ticket and attending this, this viewing that we have created.

Griffin:

Unless you received the YouTube link from a friend.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I'll be honest. We didn't lock this one down super tight. This is not a, uh, a pay per view sort of MMA match experience.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Its' entirely possible somebody sent you the link and you were just like, "Mm, don't mind if I do."

Rachel:

Mm-hmm Ahhh, but I wanted to thank... there was a particular member of the Facebook group. The Wonderful Facebook group, uh, Corey Lee Taylor, uh, Kuhn, uh, who organized a spread sheet of donations so that people that could not afford tickets right now-

Griffin:

Oh that's awesome.

Rachel:

Would be able to attend, so I wanted to give a person small wonder to that.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Because I recognize it's not easy to-

Griffin:

God no.

Rachel:

Scrape money together, especially after the holiday season so thank you all.

Griffin:

If you did just stumble in here and you are able to donate, uh, you can support Austin bat cave by going to Austinbatcave.org/donate. Uh, its a really cool program. We'll probably talk a lot about it during the stream.

Rachel:

Yeah, will tell you a little more.

Griffin:

Rachel's on the board and has been for a little over a year now?

Rachel:

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

I've done work with their DND workshops and-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Stuff like that with kids, uh, it's, it was really, really wild. I don't know if I've ever talked in length about it-

Rachel:

No, yeah Griffin had the opportunity, they have summer programming and Griffin had the opportunity to spend the day with summer campers and teach them how to design a dungeons and dragons campaign.

Griffin:

Yeah, well I sat in on theirs and it was so fun. Like there was... somebody was playing like a Hansel and Gretel DND campaign.

Rachel:

[laughs] That's incredible.

Griffin:

That were kind of... pretty young kids-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

There was one that was like a, uh, uh, House Hunters, but with dungeons. Anyway-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, the children are the future and, um, I was just... you kind of put my small wonder to shame, I was just gonna say ham. We've had-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

We got a big ham for Christmas, a sweet Christmas ham that we ordered from central market and, um, it was for six to eight people-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And we're just two people and one sort of ham adverse child, so really it was just up to me and Rachel to tear this ham down and we're not-

Rachel:

Yeah, but you can put ham-

Griffin:

We are not even close-

Rachel:

You can put ham in a lot of things.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

I mean, we have had ham sandwiches.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

I have put together a ham omelet-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

That I was quiet proud of.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Um-

Griffin:

Straight ham.

Rachel:

Just straight ham.

Griffin:

Just straight ham in the dome. Can't beat that. Can't beat that. Um, thank you ham. Thank you-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Central market. We have... so we usually will talk about a couple things each that we, uh, enjoy, that we wanna highlight, but before we started, Rachel sort of... okay, Rachel was an incredibly, and remains a very talented writer. Um, but that goes all the way back to the, the cradle, honestly.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Rachel has always been an incredibly good-

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

Uh, uh, writer of words. Um, and so we have some, some material from young Rachel that we're gonna show in a moment that, uh, everyone should

be very excited for, but we also talked about, um, some of my, my young writing, and so we wanted to just sort of showcase-

Rachel:

Yeah, so-

Griffin:

Our youth writing works.

Rachel:

Since Austin Bat Cave focuses on children age six to 18-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Uh, they go into the schools, they do out of school time programming as well, uh, to support not just, you know, poetry as, as I was comfortable with, but also screen writing and, uh, journalism, uh, song writing. They've given kids locally tremendous opportunities to develop their writing skill and so we thought we would share some of our own youth writing-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Kind of in support of their mission, uh, and you know, to show kind of how we had got our start.

Griffin:

Yeah, if only I had had those resources-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Sort of available... no, I'm not gonna bring shame to, uh, to Ms. Bentley, the, uh, the teacher of my, uh, talented and gifted program where, uh, this journal was authored. I found four journals last night, so if you're a fan of the show, please look forward to-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

A lot more of this potential new segment, um-

Rachel:

Yeah, Griffin found so many promising pieces of writing.

Griffin:

Oh my god-

Rachel:

That he thought he could potentially have his own poetry corner going forward.

Griffin:

What you, what you have to understand is that I kept journals apparently through pretty much all of elementary and middle school, which is... we're talking about turn of the millennium-

Rachel:

That is kind of incredible.

Griffin:

Which... hey fam, some stuff happened around then-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That my child brain was not ready to write words about and yet-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

My teachers were like, "Tell me how you feel about, uh, uh, the war," and I'd be like, uh, uh, uh-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, so, I wanted to start... this is my second grade journal.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, I have a first grade journal that, uh, not a joke, I was tearing up a little bit last night reading because a lot of the entries were about how much I like playing with my brothers-

Rachel:

Aw.

Griffin:

And walking home to, from school with them. It was very, very sweet, but not particularly-

Rachel:

So I have not heard these pieces of writing.

Griffin:

No, you haven't. This is just a nice picture of a, a mountain and there's a guy with a pink shirt. Love that. That's not what I wanted to show everybody.

Rachel:

Did that count for your class? Were they like, "That's enough for today, sir."

Griffin:

I don't know, that may have been an extra credit drawing.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, so some good stuff, but we're gonna kick things off at, uh, September 16th, 1994. There's a series that date kicks off and I'm just gonna read it as, as best I can. I love baseball. It's my-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Favorite sport. No offense for bowling and golf and other sports, but I've hit some out of the park. This is my favorite sport.

Rachel:

That's beautiful.

Griffin:

September 19th, golfing. Golf is really, really, really, really, really fun. I was gonna make it number one, but I didn't have room because of all the reallys. This is my third favorite sport.

Rachel:

[laughs] Now, just to get some context here-

Griffin:

[laughs] The next page is from when Austin Saint John, uh, the red ranger from the Power Rangers came to our school to do back flips off the stage and so I did, I guess, draw a crude Power Ranger and write, "Sign here, Austin Saint John."

Rachel:

Oh, Griffin.

Griffin:

Didn't get that signature. The man was too busy doing flips. That's awesome though.

Rachel:

Were... so were you big into sports?

Griffin:

Um, in reading these pages, I thought I was-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

But I wicked wasn't. September 23rd, bowling. I love bowling. It's very fun. My highest score is 363.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

My lowest is 142. This is my fourth favorite sport. September 26th, soccer. Soccer is very fun. I've had a couple of tournaments with my friends. This is my fifth favorite sport and the rest are sixth. So that's just a sort of... listing of my favorites. Um, have I awoken our child with my yelling?

Rachel:

I don't know, I was concerned about that.

Griffin:

I was, too. This is another thing we probably should have mentioned at the top, we just put our child to bed and sometimes that doesn't work out so well. So we do have like a technical difficulty slide-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Prepared to throw up, I'll try to watch my, my volume in the future.

Rachel:

No, I mean, you were excited about bowling, honey.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

I can't fault you.

Griffin:

Here's the best thing about computers. I think a computer is like a friend.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

The screen is the head, the keyboard is the body and the wires are the feet. I have Prodigy and Windows. My favorite thing is you can talk with the computer.

Rachel:

[laughs] Oh, Griffin. There is some sadness in that one I think.

Griffin:

But I would be very... um, I really liked sports a lot so don't get too sad about it. This is a quick one, February 13th, 95. When I'm in college, I'll look big and strong and old. My brother would be afraid of me.

Rachel:

[laughs] I wonder which brother you were talking about there.

Griffin:

Probably Travis. This one's probably the choicest nug, and this is my final entry that I'm gonna share on this particular episode and this gets back to what I was talking about news, uh, of the, of the mid 90s. The Oklahoma bombing is very sad. I would repay him and send him to death on the electric chair.

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

Wow. Wow.

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

I wa- was apparently all about that life back then.

Rachel:

I didn't know you loved our country so much.

Griffin:

I loved our country, loved capital punishment-

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah, I guess so.

Griffin:

Hated the Oklahoma bombing dude.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

No thanks, I said.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I was like seven years old. Why did they ask me to write about this?

Rachel:

Yeah, that's true.

Griffin:

Why did they ask me to write about this? I was seven. What does a good journal entry from a seven year old about the Oklahoma City bombing look like?

Rachel:

Plus, at this point they should be familiar with your work, which is primarily sports based.

Griffin:

About sports and how a computer's my friend 'cause you can talk to it and it has Prodigy.

Rachel:

So they should have known that this isn't exactly your, your genre-

Griffin:

Not my forte, no.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, yeah, those are just some choice, some choice cuts. Um, but what we have for Rachel is not on the, on the page.

Rachel:

Not on the page.

Griffin:

Do you wanna set this video up before we throw it?

Rachel:

I would like to.

Griffin:

Okay, please.

Rachel:

Yeah, so, uh, the clip I'm sharing with you is also from me as a second grader. Uh, my teacher was part of this curriculum in the school district that was called Success in Reading and Writing and they put together an instructional video for all the teachers in the district. And so what they would do is they would bring a video camera to different classrooms to show different creative ways you could teach, uh, reading and writing in the classroom, depending on the age of your students.

So, we, uh, had the opportunity as a class to eat ice cream together and then described, you know, developed a list of descriptive words to talk about our experience eating the ice cream, uh, and then write a poem on an actual little piece of paper that we had made to look like an ice cream cone.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

And my teacher was very excited about my poem and the camera man had left our classroom and had gone to the third grade room down the hall. And she sent me down there, she's like, "Go, go, go, go. Go read that in front of the camera." And so I just dutifully walked down the hallway into the third grade classroom, and quickly became kind of the star of the show, kind of-

Griffin:

A place, a place where you really shined in second grade.

Rachel:

Kind of against my will. I was not, uh, a McElroy at that time.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

I was not a performer, I did not like the spotlight. Uh, and I was not prepared for a bunch of students to be sitting around staring at me as I read this poem.

Griffin:

Yeah, so my exposure to this video was we had-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

An incredible birthday party, I forget who's it was, but the theme of the party was claim to fame, so everybody brought like a newspaper clipping of something they had done when they were younger. Uh, Rachel brought this, this tape and said, "Yeah, here's this thing, like I don't know, I didn't wanna do it-"

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

"But, um, I'm gonna play it now. It's just like my poem about ice cream." And me and my friends and Rachel's friends-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

After the video had aired were in, were on the floor-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, in stitches, uh, because Rachel hadn't realized the sort of extremely suggestive nature of the poem-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That she had written.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And, and, and-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

The inherent humor of that is only compounded by the fact that as you watch seven year old Rachel deliver this poem, um, you've never seen somebody-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

So hugely sad. Like so hugely upset with the world and they are delivering this very suggestive ice cream poem and-

Rachel:

I don't wanna say too much more.

Griffin:

Every moment of it is a treasure and, uh, I think we have it ready if, uh, Amanda, if you can play the ice cream video.

Speaker 3:

Okay, read me your first sentence.

Little Rachel:

I'm staring at the tempting top of the ice cream cone.

Speaker 3:

That's very good, the tempting top, that makes it sound really tasty, doesn't it. That's a very good opening sentence.

Little Rachel:

I'm starting at the tempting top of the ice cream cone and working my way down to the cone. I hope it lasts a long time. It's so creamy, phooey, I'm at the cone. Let's see if I can eat slower. Oh no, it's starting to drip. Well so much for eating slower. Brr, this ice cream is cold. Boy, was that good.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

There's... there's... it's probably... I don't know if you caught it, you can rewind it after the thing is done, but at the very end of that video, you can actually hear her go aw.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Like a moan escaped, a moan of-

Rachel:

The ice cream like-

Griffin:

Like impotently flops over-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Ugh.

Rachel:

So I, I-

Griffin:

Yeah, put-

Rachel:

Watched that a few times. You know, my mom because she was a teacher in the district had a copy of this tape in our house-

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

And so I had watched it a few times and remembered that I looked sad.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

I remembered that part of it. It was only when we watched it maybe a year ago or two years ago with our friends that I realized how suggestive the language was.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

And that is... that brought a new level of discomfort. [laughs]

Griffin:

It's, it's so good, our friends still reference it. Um, once they realized that we've ripped it off a VHS and now have it in a very shareable-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Digital format, it's gonna be our Christmas present to them, um, I'm very excited.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Anyway, that's our, our youth writing, uh-

Rachel:

That's our youth writing.

Griffin:

Experience.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, do you wanna go first? Do you want me to go first?

Rachel:

Yeah, I just wanted to, briefly before we really got going, talk a little bit more about Austin Bat Cave.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Um, Griffin, could you give them the, the web address again?

Griffin:

Again, if you want to donate it's austinbatcave.org/donate.

Rachel:

Uh, so Austin Bat Cave is almost entirely volunteer driven. So they have a very small staff of, of less than 10 people, and what happens is they send qualified volunteered that they train themselves out into the schools to offer these different workshops and these volunteers are primarily working artists themselves.

So they, they'll be journalists, musicians, novelists and they're spending a lot of time both in small groups and individually working with students and, and some of the writing is creative and some of it is focused on like college essays, so it's tremendously powerful organization and, uh, and is really kind of empowering students all over, all over the region. Uh, not just in Austin proper, but in the more rural surrounding counties as well, so-

Griffin:

I like the idea of them being a tremendously powerful organization-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Like they run, they also run the government and the banks.

Rachel:

I mean, you know.

Griffin:

They might, no, if they ran the banks, I don't think that we would be doing this fundraiser stream for them right now.

Rachel:

Some of the students that go through the programs-

Griffin:

Will end up working for the banks.

Rachel:

Right.

Griffin:

It's an upside down pyramid scheme.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Cool. Um-

Rachel:

So yeah, I'm, I'm happy to have an opportunity to support this organization, uh, and, and I hope that you all will spend a little more time looking into it, now that I've told you about it.

Griffin:

Especially with a lot of sort of school going, uh, by the wayside this year-

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

They're doing a lot of work too, to fill in the gaps.

Rachel:

And the other thing, the other thing I should mention too is that they are offering online adult, uh, courses right now. So if you're, if you're somebody who's interested in, in kind of building your own poetry or short fiction or personal essay skills, they have online instruction for that, too.

Griffin:

Yeah. Um, okay, now we're gonna start doing the show proper.

Rachel:

Now.

Griffin:

Everything else has been prelude. It's about to get really good.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That's not true, it's not gonna get better than the ice cream poem.

Rachel:

No, it's not. We can't, we can't top that-

Griffin:

But we are going to continue talking for another... for, for a while still. So, um, would you like to do your first thing, please?

Rachel:

Yeah, my first thing is, uh, kid's jokes.

Griffin:

Kid's jokes?

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Did you try to connect both of yours at least tangentially to the Austin Bat Cave theme?

Rachel:

Well, I wanted to focus on the youth I guess.

Griffin:

Okay, that's, that's fine. Yeah, kid's jokes. Uh, boy howdy, we've been hearing a lot of these lately.

Rachel:

The magical thing about it isn't necessary the words that, that are, are said, but, but the way that we watch our son figure out how to really sell a joke.

Griffin:

Mm.

Rachel:

Um, he, he has learned punchline and he has learned that he really has to lean into it and he really has to emphasize it-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, and it has, has become quite charming. [laughs]

Griffin:

Yes, very much so. To us, only.

Rachel:

To us only. Um, and, and so much so that he understands the construction now, and this is something that happens to a lot of kids where they like start to understand how jokes work and then they try to make their own jokes and they get the intonation right, but there's actually nothing funny about it-

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

And then you have to kind of be like, ah, ah, ah [laughs]-

Griffin:

Yeah. Which is hard for us, specifically us, it's very hard for.

Rachel:

Because he's still at the age where he will just say it again. He will think they didn't hear me.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

I'm gonna-

Griffin:

Now, in his defense, I also do that now, at 33.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

There's no way they could have not laughed at this intentionally, so there must be some mistake.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, yeah, we've heard, uh, what do cows do for fun, go to the moooo-vies.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, a lot-

Rachel:

Why did the banana go to the doctor?

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Wasn't peeling well.

Griffin:

Gotta love that one.

Rachel:

Very good.

Griffin:

And that's it. Those are the only two.

Rachel:

Yeah, those are, those are the two... oh, and then something about there's, there's a, there's a booger joke in there too about picking-

Griffin:

Uh, what did the... what did the nose say to the finger, stop picking on me.

Rachel:

Something [crosstalk 00:20:32]-

Griffin:

Something like that, yeah, I mean, it's not, it's not good.

Rachel:

He doesn't lean on that one a lot.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

I think he knows it's his weakest.

Griffin:

He knows the banana peeling well is the best, best joke, and he's right-

Rachel:

He's right.

Griffin:

It's the best of the three.

Rachel:

Uh, so to kind of give some context, I wanted to talk about kind of the origin of the knock knock joke.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Because I thought, like, that's, that's kind of the formula that kids start to pick up on really early. Um, the knock knock joke... people site the bard himself for introducing the knock knock joke.

Griffin:

They always do.

Rachel:

Uh, in Macbeth, uh, Shakespeare as a line in act two where somebody says knock knock, who's there and then they say is it the name of Beelzebub, here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

So, [laughs] you really couldn't call it a... I mean, Shakespeare he, you know-

Griffin:

Got me again.

Rachel:

Sometimes you don't always catch the joke, but I don't think that was a joke.

Griffin:

My ribs have been thoroughly tickled.

Rachel:

But because of the knock knock who's there-

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Format, they kind of thought well oh, there it is, he started it.

Griffin:

Okay, but also, somebody once got their door knocked on and they answered, you know, who's there.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Were they the first ones to invent the joke?

Rachel:

Uh, so knock knock jokes as we know them really took off in the 30s. Uh, they became really popular, like, swing orchestras would do little knock knock jokes in between their sets.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

The, they were on radio shows a lot, businesses would stage knock knock, uh, contests and, uh, knock knock clubs formed in the Midwest, which I guess was-

Griffin:

What does that... what could that possibly mean?

Rachel:

I have to assume that it was like comedian, like, comedy clubs.

Griffin:

Just going back and forth with, with just bars-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Of knock knock jokes? Where's that? Where's that, Eight Mile? I would watch that film in a second.

Rachel:

And I can't imagine wanting to do an hour set of that.

Griffin:

Of just knock knock jokes? The audience would get tired-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Of just going, "Who's there?"

Rachel:

Who's there?

Griffin:

Who's there?

Rachel:

Uh, there was actually, there was also a knock knock song, uh, that became a favorite of some big bands and was just, you know, kind of over and over again.

Griffin:

Let's hear that right now.

Rachel:

No, I don't have that. [laughs]

Griffin:

I know we don't have it.

Rachel:

Uh, so, near the end of the 30s, there was kind of a, an outpouring of, uh, professionals who thought that people that incessantly punned and did knock knock jokes were exhibiting signs of, of mental illness, uh, and thought that knock knock jokes were, uh, representing kind of like manic behavior and, and that they were, uh, similar to the other crazes that would obsess people at the time.

Griffin:

Knock knock jokes?

Rachel:

They were very concerned about it. Uh, there is... so this is actually funny, so there is, uh, D.A. Laird, who was the director of River Crest Psychological Laboratory at Colgate University-

Griffin:

That sounds chilling.

Rachel:

[laughs] I know.

Griffin:

That a- that along sounds chilling. The fact that they were doing knock knock experiments like puts it on a whole 'nother level, but the name itself is rough stuff.

Rachel:

So, so he suggested that they were catch question games and saying that people that were likely to take up knock knock jokes was just a way for them to appear smart and bright by exhibiting a pseudo-intellectual activity since no one could possibly guess the right answer to these games.

Griffin:

This person hates jokes and riddles.

Rachel:

You say that, but here's the other thing, he was the faculty advisor of Banter, the campus humor magazine at Colgate. So he wasn't, it wasn't that he hated jokes, he was a comedy snob.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Like, way back in the 30s was just like I'm sorry, I know what funny is, and it is not that.

Griffin:

But a comedy snob wielding the hammer of like-

Rachel:

[laughs] I know.

Griffin:

Psychological language is like on a whole `nother level.

Rachel:

Um, I also just wanted to say, this is, this is something that may exist nationally, but when I was researching kid's jokes, there is something called The Gotham Comedy Club in Chelsea that has, uh, kids in comedy shows.

Griffin:

Ooo.

Rachel:

So it's like summer programming, like a camp structure for kids that are interested in stand-up comedy.

Griffin:

But like can we go watch it or is it like a closed-

Rachel:

I mean, they have videos online.

Griffin:

Oh that's awesome-

Rachel:

And-

Griffin:

I love good kid stand-up-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It's like legitimately incredibly good.

Rachel:

And, uh, in, in the age of online instruction, they are offering online classes, too-

Griffin:

Oh good.

Rachel:

So if you have a child much like our son, uh, who is over six, uh-

Griffin:

Aah.

Rachel:

Yeah, I know, he's not there yet.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

But, uh, they offer programming for kids jokes.

Griffin:

That's very good. Um, can I do my first thing?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

I'm gonna sing a je- a jingle, the theme song, and see if you recognize it 'cause this may be another sort of age gap issue between the two of us.
[singing].

Rachel:

That's not Home Improvement? [laughs]

Griffin:

It's, it's the, it's the theme song to the Goosebumps TV show.

Rachel:

Oh, I didn't watch that.

Griffin:

Okay. But I'm not gonna talk about the TV show, um, because it was inferior in every way to Are You Afraid of the Dark. What wasn't, was the Goosebumps books series.

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

The Goosebumps books series was a huge gateway for me into, uh, what I read in one of my journals, I referred to as, uh, recreational reading-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Which is reading not, uh, required by school.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, which I never, ever did. It's the second best selling book series ever, right behind Harry Potter.

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

Sold 400 million copies worldwide. Uh, 62 books have been published under the Goosebumps umbrella, uh, and they were of course written by R.L. Stine.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, who... I, I read some fun quotes from, when writing about like the success of this book series, um, because he sort of stressed that like he wasn't trying to make it so scary and serious and he credited the success of the series to like it's the, the lack of, uh, what was the, the words he used? Drugs and violence and depravity.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Which like in Say Cheese and Die, someone does die.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It's there in the title, Mr. Stine. Like, I don't like the idea of R.L. Stine saying, like, "They're not that scary," when like I'll decide actually what gives me ni- nightmares, 'cause it's Monster Blood.

Rachel:

No-

Griffin:

Makes me very... did you read any Goosebumps?

Rachel:

I didn't, no. I had friends that did. I'm not sure why I never got into it. It might have been just the spookiness.

Griffin:

It was very... yeah, maybe. You... that's never been your sort of, your, uh, literary flavor I would say.

Rachel:

Yeah, not particularly, no.

Griffin:

I think what helped me get over the fear factor was the fact that the books were incredibly formulaic.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, where there was a, uh, a child who was displaced in some way staying with relatives in the country, or at a camp somewhere or et cetera, and they encounter something scary and it troubles them for a while until they seemingly beat it, but then there's always a twist ending. They always get you with the twist ending in Goosebumps.

Rachel:

So it's, it's not like a group of Boxcar children or, uh, like a, a detective-

Griffin:

It's not the same-

Rachel:

Consistent-

Griffin:

It's not the same kids ever.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Except for when they do, like, they go to Slappyland a few times. You know what I mean? Like they... there's a few entries in the Monster Blood series. There's probably some continuity there. Um, I wanted to talk about my favorite twist, it was from Welcome to Camp Nightmare, which was the ninth book in the series, still pretty early on.

There's a boy named Billy staying at this weird camp and all these scary things keep happening and his fellow campers keep disappearing, seemingly killed, and he finds out it's this evil camp counselor that's doing it so he confronts him and like fights him and the camp counselor has a gun and he gets it from him and that's when the camp counselor reveals the whole camp has been a test because Billy is being tested to go and confront this alien species on their alien world and that alien world is earth.

Rachel:

[laughs] I should have seen that coming.

Griffin:

But you didn't, and that's how R.L. Stine gets you!

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

When I, like, me reading that as a child was like this is the best... that's the best thing I've ever... nothing is going to be better than that.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That was such a wild surprise. Uh, there was a series of Choose Your Own Adventure Books, uh, called Give Yourself Goosebumps, which is really good. Uh, and, they didn't really necessary reinvent the wheel for choose your own adventure, but they were genuinely scary. There was one called Escape From the Carnival of Horrors where one of the, like, wrong turns was you had to choose which of two slides to go down and if you went down the wrong one, the slide kept going forever-

Rachel:

Whoa.

Griffin:

And you were just eternally trapped on this slide, and that gave me like my first sort of-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Moment of existential dread in my entire live-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

So thank you. Uh, they were of course published under the Scholastic brand. Uh, so like, every Scholastic book fair-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I would roll in, I would get my new Goosebumps, I would get my new Animorphs, I would get my new Dinotopia, I would be in there for three minutes. I would just be like bloop, bloop, bloop! Bye.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That's all I need. Um, and, I really didn't give it much credit until I looked over the list of titles while preparing for this segment and I have read so many of these books.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I severely underestimated my exposure to the Goosebumps brand, um, because I didn't like reading. Um, so to wrap up this segment, I've prepared a game for Rachel that I told you about earlier and I'm very excited about. Uh, it's called Goosebumps or Goof Bumps.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And in it, uh, I'm gonna tell you the title of a story, I have a lot of them, and you're gonna tell me if it's a real Goosebumps book or something I just made up. Are you ready to begin this incredible game, Goosebumps or Goof Bumps?

Rachel:

Yes. I am.

Griffin:

Okay. How sc- how worried are you right now?

Rachel:

Well, when you prepared this game, did you realize that I hadn't read any Goosebumps books?

Griffin:

I did realize that.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

I assumed that.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Are you prepared?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Attack of the Goey Ghost. We gotta go fast, these are... there's a lot.

Rachel:

Oh, so you're not gonna give me a synopsis?

Griffin:

No. Just a title.

Rachel:

Oh-

Griffin:

Attack... just the title. Attack of the Goey Ghost.

Rachel:

Goof.

Griffin:

That's... your right. Piano Lessons Can be Murder.

Rachel:

Uh, that's real.

Griffin:

Correct. The Cuckoo Clock of Doom.

Rachel:

That's real.

Griffin:

Yes. My Harriest Adventure.

Rachel:

[laughs] That's fake.

Griffin:

That's real. Zombies Ate my Homework.

Rachel:

Uh, fake.

Griffin:

Correct. One Day at Horror Land.

Rachel:

Real?

Griffin:

Return to Horror Land.

Rachel:

Real?

Griffin:

Escape from Horror Land.

Rachel:

Real?

Griffin:

The Curse of Horror Land.

Rachel:

[laughs] Is that fake?

Griffin:

That one's fake, wow, how did you do that?

Rachel:

I read a lot of books as a child.

Griffin:

Dracula Stole my Bike!

Rachel:

Uh, real?

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Legend of the Lost Legend.

Rachel:

[laughs] Fake?

Griffin:

That's real. My Best Friend is Invisible?!

Rachel:

Real?

Griffin:

Real. I Live in Your Basement.

Rachel:

Real.

Griffin:

Real. Be- [laughs] Beware of the Purple Peanut Butter.

Rachel:

[laughs] Fake?

Griffin:

Real. Scary Birthday to You.

Rachel:

Real.

Griffin:

That's real. Principle Frankenstein.

Rachel:

Fake.

Griffin:

Correct! Frankenstein's Dog.

Rachel:

Fake?

Griffin:

Real. Frankenstein's Dog Bites Back.

Rachel:

[laughs] Real?

Griffin:

Fake. I am Slappy's Evil Twin.

Rachel:

Fake?

Griffin:

Real. Are You Terrified Yet?

Rachel:

Real.

Griffin:

Real, you did really good at that game.

Rachel:

Thank you. [laughs]

Griffin:

You got most of them right. I can't believe you caught my, my horror land quartet trap, that was, um-

Rachel:

I also, uh, have become familiar with-

Griffin:

With my brand if-

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah.

Griffin:

Yeah, that's, that's fair.

Rachel:

With like the, the scientific work you do to construct a joke.

Griffin:

Of those real titles, which one is your favorite? 'Cause I find My Best Friend is Invisible to be so power- like, you don't have to read that book-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

You know everything that's gonna happen in that book.

Rachel:

What is the purple peanut butter one?

Griffin:

I didn't read Beware of the Purple Peanut Butter, but it's a, it's a, it's a real-

Rachel:

That sounds more like Seussian.

Griffin:

It does, it sounds-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It sounds... is it Shel Silverstien-ian? Yeah. Frankenstein's Dog. I was surprised by that one, that they got the Frankenstein license.

Rachel:

That's what I was thinking-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

That's why I thought they'd be fake. Like, I don't know what hoops you have to jump through but I can't imagine it's easy to just be like, uh, I'm also gonna have a Frankenstein in mine.

Griffin:

Yeah. And My Harriest Adventure I feel like is an early book.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It's like an early in the series.

Rachel:

It's like a puberty book. [laughs]

Griffin:

Yeah, it's just... there's no supernatural element in that one whatsoever.

Rachel:

It just teaches-

Griffin:

It's just whoa, whoa.

Rachel:

Kids how to really explore their bodies at that time.

Griffin:

Yeah, um, listen, it was the 90s. We didn't have access to a lot of helpful tools to teach us about the changes of our bodies. We relied on R.L. Stine for that.

Rachel:

R.L. Stine. [laughs]

Griffin:

His books didn't have depravity in them, but this was the next, next best thing.

Rachel:

Yeah.

[ad break]

Griffin:

Oh, here, right here, right now we got a dumbo blomb and this one's for Theo and it's from Prox who says, happy birthday and happy anniversary. I'm so glad to have moved states so we can wake up together each morning. You make the world less terrifying. I love cooking for you, playing video games together, laughing at your good, good jokes and overhearing you listen to this podcast in the shower. Every week, you're my small wonder.

Griffin:

Oo, this is weird knowing that right now Theo is hearing this in a shower. I feel like maybe we shouldn't be aware of that fact because now I feel like we're like, in there. And that's a private place.

Rachel:

But I will say, if you're gonna put the conditioner in-

Griffin:

Yup.

Rachel:

Give it, give yourself a little time for that conditioner to sit.

Griffin:

Oh sure, oh sure-

Rachel:

You know?

Griffin:

That's the first thing I do, I get the hair wet and then I put the conditioner in and then I wash the rest of my face and body and my butt and stuff.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

And only then do I do the, do I do the rinse-a-roo. I try to give it at least five minutes.

Rachel:

Wow, five minutes?

Griffin:

If I can, if I can, yeah. If I got nothing else going on that day. Hey, how about this next one?

Rachel:

This message is for Nicole, it is from Jessica. Thanks for being the first adult I talk to each day and the last when the melatonin takes too long to kick in. Thanks for always returning the giant thumbs up emoji my butt sends and never picking up when I accidentally video chat you. Thanks for having three awesome kids that I love and for loving mine in return. Having you as a BFF is wonderful.

Griffin:

That is so sweet.

Rachel:

That is so sweet.

Griffin:

Uh-

Rachel:

I love that never picking up when I accidentally video chat you. I feel like that is... that is an underestimated, undervalued-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Quality. [laughs]

Griffin:

I always know when I get a video chat from one of my brothers or my dad at, like, I don't know, 2:30 on a Monday-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I'm like that's not real. That's unintentional.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

We just spoke, earlier. This is not real. That's your butt.

Rachel:

I will say your dad does always pick up and he is always driving.

Griffin:

Yeah, he is.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And this one's for Beth and it's from Bri who says, "I'm so glad I was such a class A nerd in college so we could bond. Through asexual epiphanies, retail horror stories, nano-ryhmos and fan-fic freak outs. Thank you for being my roommate, hive mind, honey nut queerio soul sister. My bad for making food

with so much cumin when you moved in. I never realized you didn't like it. Love always, Cheese."

Rachel:

Oh my gosh.

Griffin:

Who doesn't love cumin?

Rachel:

Wow. Well see this is like when we first got together-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And I made a lot of soups.

Griffin:

You did.

Rachel:

And I put peas in pasta and you very politely ate it for a long time.

Griffin:

That's true.

Rachel:

And then you were like hey, by the way, I don't actually like peas.

Griffin:

Well, it's because when you say you don't like peas, people assume certain things about you, that you're like a ve- a veggiephobe, which I'm not, I enjoy a vegetable, but just not peas or li- Limer beans.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That's it, just those two.

Rachel:

So maybe this person feels that way about cumin.

Griffin:

Okay, no judgment, it's just that counts out a lot of incredible sort of food categories-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That sort of bums me out, but I mean, I could just like, I could pour taco seasoning like on, into my open mouth-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And just like make a, make an afternoon of it.

Rachel:

That's true.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, can I read this next message?

Griffin:

I wish you would.

Rachel:

This message is for Jeff, it is from Clarice. Thank you for being my best friend and a memory keeper with me. I wrote you this poem eight years ago and it's still as true married as when we were falling in love. You put stars in my eyes, and life's greatest surprise, finding you light up my heart like it was waiting for you to start. I love and adore and admire and look up to and dream about you, babe.

Griffin:

That's so sweet. And also-

Rachel:

Very sweet.

Griffin:

Very, just, duplicitous to get a back door Rachel's poetry corner in here.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

You know what I mean? Like typically people have to pay [laughs] quite a bit for a, uh, you know, uh, uh, uh a Rachel's Poetry Corner.

Rachel:

Yeah, no, the estate of Wallace Stevens-

Griffin:

Yup.

Rachel:

Uh, paid for my car.

Griffin:

That's true. And Rachel does go to birthday parties and will just do a po- will read poems there for you.

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

And I'm saying that you got-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

You doubled up on this service is what I'm saying.

Rachel:

It's very popular. You know, they'll be somebody making balloon animals and then I'll be over in the corner with like a very large book of Emily Dickinson.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Kids always choose me.

Griffin:

They always choose you.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, what is your second thing? I just saw it and I'm so disappointed in you.

Rachel:

[laughs] I wanted to have my computer up. Usually Griffin and I do not share our topics in advance.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

Um, my second thing, see, I feel like you're preparing for a spit take right now. [laughs]

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

My second thing is comic sans.

Griffin:

There it is. I'm not even, I'm not even in that, I find the stuff like battling over the oxford comma or like really any sort of grammatical, like, snobbery like very exhausting, but man, I-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I mean, I wouldn't use it.

Rachel:

I, I have had some experience picking, like, a type face, you know, when I have, have done creative writing before-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, and there aren't restrictions around what size and type of font you have to use, but I don't have a lot of strong feelings about it. Uh, the thing that I think is wonderful about Comic Sans is kind of what the intention behind it was initially.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, and kind of the unintended benefits of it, I guess.

Griffin:

Was it like a youthful rebellious, like-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Times New Roman? Ugh.

Rachel:

A little bit.

Griffin:

Who am I? My dad? Look at my silly font.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I don't take anything seriously.

Rachel:

So there is, there is a man behind Comic Sans. His name is Vincent Connare, and he designed it for Windows 95 when they were putting together Microsoft Bob.

Griffin:

Microsoft Bob.

Rachel:

Does this sound familiar to you?

Griffin:

Was it like a text to speech helpful friend?

Rachel:

This was like a desktop interface that was supposed to look like a living room and it, there was a, a dog on there, uh, and the idea was that it was supposed to be more like friendly and welcoming to younger people.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

So when you would open up the desktop, you could choose this option and then kids could kind of more intuitively navigate the computer.

Griffin:

I mean I must have... like, we had computers early, I would be surprised if we didn't have this.

Rachel:

It didn't hang around.

Griffin:

I would not be surprised.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I think people probably... what font is this dog speaking in? Get him out of here.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I need a serious Helvetica dog, please.

Rachel:

Uh, well, and that was part of his thinking. So he [laughs] he said in an interview once, this is Vincent Connare, quote, Comic dogs don't talk in Times ne- Times New Roman.

Griffin:

[laughs] I can't believe it. He actually said something like that.

Rachel:

[laughs] He said my original idea was it was going to be used for kids and it wasn't made for everybody to like it.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

So he was inspired by comic books, which is how he kind of developed this style, which was him basically drawing intentionally sloppy letters, uh, and he did not expect it to kind of take off and become this font that is used for everything in all environments.

Griffin:

Right. I wonder if he would be saddened by sort of the constant derision that the-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Comic sans font now is the recipient of.

Rachel:

Well, and so that, that is kind of his point, so a lot of people picked it up, so at the time in the 90s, notable companies like Disney and Apple and BMW were all using this font in their, in their materials and people, you know, were kind of getting used to this very accessible, like, kind of goofy font. Uh, and it wasn't, it wasn't ever supposed to be like in, in formal-

Griffin:

Yeah, sure.

Rachel:

Context. Uh, and so, so his point, still to this day, so in the early 2000s, there were all these movements against it, like-

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

There was a, a group of Canadians that campaigned to ban the font in 2005, uh, there were-

Griffin:

This is all very ironic though, right? Like it's not like people were trying to-

Rachel:

I don't-

Griffin:

Actually-

Rachel:

I mean, I didn't see any like legislation that was put forward. [laughs]

Griffin:

Okay, cool.

Rachel:

Uh, there were typographers in 2002 that, that gained momentum and kind of saying this font is terrible, will you stop using it. Um, and it actually had a lot of benefits for a lot of people. So it is, obviously it's, it's good for kids, you know? It's like it's big, it's loopy, it's engaging, there's more space in

between the letters. Apparently it's also really helpful for, uh, individuals with dyslexia because the letters look so distinct.

Griffin:

Huh.

Rachel:

So if you're, if you're somebody who's potentially gonna reverse letters or have difficulty with words, the letters look, like, a B and a D look very different.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

And, uh, I... the argument I read, and I thought it was interesting, there was, uh, somebody in, uh, Wichita State University that did a study of how people perceived type faces and categorized the responses of people's perceptions into three categories. Uh, either a font was characterized as having, uh, a rugged masculinity, uh-

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

Perceived beauty or excitement.

Griffin:

Okay. Where on God's green earth did comic sans land?

Rachel:

[laughs] Well, and that was the suggestion is that some type faces are just distinctly inappropriate. Like they would have the people in the study rate the suitability of typefaces for formal documents.

Griffin:

Right.

Rachel:

So the idea was like look at this resume, which font seems more appropriate for the resume. Uh, and so there's just kind of a suggestion that people are

just generally good at, at looking at, at typeface in kind of an artistic way and saying like-

Griffin:

Hm.

Rachel:

This is not the right medium for what you're [laughs] communicating.

Griffin:

That makes sense.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It's letters.

Rachel:

I found, so I'm not, I'm not super familiar with this, but there was a tumblr called the Comic Sans Project where they would take, uh, corporate logos and redo them in Comic San.

Griffin:

I think I've seen some of these.

Rachel:

It's very entertaining.

Griffin:

Yeah, it is.

Rachel:

It really kind of communicates that point of like this font is not suitable for, for more [laughs] serious products.

Griffin:

Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel:

Um, but yeah, I, you know, like I, I wouldn't use it for a wedding invitation necessarily.

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

But I appreciate, you know, if I'm gonna sell ice cream, you know, after reading that poem [laughs]-

Griffin:

Right.

Rachel:

Let's say I open my own franchise of ice cream. [laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, and you could.

Rachel:

I would want a little sign in comic sans I think.

Griffin:

I think that would... I think you could do much worse.

Rachel:

[laughs] Thank you.

Griffin:

I think you could use any of the cursives.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I still feel like they haven't made a good cursive type face-

Rachel:

That's true.

Griffin:

That I've seen. 'Cause I got so excited, my cursive was garbage that-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

In school when I realized I could just type cursive and save myself a lot of time, I was so stoked-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That I ran home to the computer and tried to do it, but it's a huge disappointment.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I wanna talk about bats.

Rachel:

Oh good.

Griffin:

I wanna talk about spe- specifically the bats that do live under the South Congress bridge.

Rachel:

There are a lot of people that probably came here for some bat content and I'm glad-

Griffin:

Well, here you go, folks.

Rachel:

That you are delivering.

Griffin:

These are very specific bats, there's a lot of them. If you're not familiar, uh, Austin is, uh, six months out of the year, home to a great deal of bats. 750,000 to one and a half million bats. Uh, they, they live under the South Congress Bridge, which is a big bridge that connects downtown to the south part of Austin, and every dusk a, uh, a biblical plague-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Swarm a... I should have looked up what a, uh, a, a... what's the name of a, like a proper noun of a group of animals? I used to know this. I think I've done a segment about it-

Rachel:

I think you have. [laughs]

Griffin:

But I already forgot it. Um, a lot of bats, like a big, uh, a conflagration of bats-

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, comes out of the bridge and it's this huge, you know, tourist attraction now. People will come out and camp out on the bridge.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, but it happens from March to September, uh, and then they scoot, scoot on down to Mexico. They are Mexican Free Tailed Bats.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

That is the type of bat they are. They are also almost unanimously, uh, female bats.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

And they, they, uh, come to our beautiful bridge and then in June, they pop out a baby bat, a cub, right there, under the bridge. I guess that's why the number doubles-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, over time. Um, so, for a long time, we love these bats now, oh, we love them, uh, but for a long time, Austin did not care for these bats. They were seen as something of a blight. Uh, and-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

There was a bat conservationist, uh, who's name was Merlin Tuttle, which is the, if you told me-

Rachel:

That's good.

Griffin:

Name a bat conservationist-

Rachel:

It's perfect.

Griffin:

I would say just off the top of my head, uh, Merlin... Tuttle.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And he, he moved to Austin in 1986 after hearing that we had the, the biggest urban bat population in the country, uh, and when he came here, he realized that everybody hated these bats and were talking about like exterminating this huge bat colony under the bridge.

Rachel:

Yeah. Wow.

Griffin:

Uh, and so he kicked up this huge public, uh, education campaign-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

To say like, hey, they're not gonna bite you or turn you into a Dracula. Like, I know that every town hall meeting this dude went to-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

There was always one person like, "hey, yeah, I've lived in this town for 25 years, I have kids here, I put down roots here, and I'm not trying to turn into a Dracula, thank you very much."

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, but he just stayed this staunch advocate for bats. Uh, something I learned, Texas Monthly does a feature called the Bum Steer awards. Have you heard about this?

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

It's like their Razzies.

Rachel:

Oh, that's fun.

Griffin:

It's like here's a Texan who has done something silly or bad-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, they had their work cut out for them in 2020. Uh, they are still doing this feature. In 1986, ol' Merlin Tuttle got himself a Bum Steer award from Texas Monthly-

Rachel:

Aw.

Griffin:

Because they all thought it was so silly that this bat enthusiast-

Rachel:

This bat guy.

Griffin:

Uh, the award was Guano to Texas, Dr. Merlin Tuttle of Milwaukee, the founder of Bat Conservation International announced that he wanted to move his organization and research to Austin which he called Bat Nirvana Land.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

What a, what a goof ball this bat scientist is, coming here and telling us about bat science?? Anyway.

Rachel:

He did incredible work because people, like, when I moved here, this was a thing of like have you gone to see the bats yet? And people will get their kayaks out under the bridge and they will camp out to watch these bats and people will take pictures-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And it is a whole thing. Uh, it is always on the list of like free low cost activities to do.

Griffin:

I can't wrap my mind around the head space that the, that the kayak people are in.

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

I've never actually... here's the thing. I love these bats. I've seen them from a distance. Like, it's kind of hard not to see them all the time.

Rachel:

Well, we've seen them because there are other bat colonies-

Griffin:

There are, yes.

Rachel:

Like I know on, on our way to Round Rock before to go to an Express game, we saw like a huge-

Griffin:

A huge, yes-

Rachel:

Cloud of bats.

Griffin:

But I've never gone to camp out on the bridge to watch them-

Rachel:

Oh yeah.

Griffin:

Because, uh, I don't want to be close to that many bats.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Like I like, I like bats from a distance and like if I'm outside and I see a bat fly by, I'm like, "Oh, cool." If a bat gets in my house, that's the worst day of my life.

Rachel:

Yeah, yeah.

Griffin:

I don't like that one bit, and being close to 1.5 million bats, I need a personal guarantee that none of them are gonna come into my bubble.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

And I, listen, Dr. Merlin Tuttle would be so disappointed to hear me say this-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I like the bats, uh, aesthetically, uh, but I've never gone to camp out on the bridge. Anyway, Dr. Tuttle didn't give up, got this, this razzzy, was like no, this won't stop me. Just kept trying to win folks over until eventually, he did and, uh, I think on the back of the fact that hey, this could be a tourist attraction, which it was. Uh, and then it was a big thing ever since. People like our bats.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I can't say our bats when I just said-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I don't wanna be close to the bat cloud. Um, anyway, um, so, the, the bats are almost entirely female, uh, and after they give birth to a pup around June, in, uh, five weeks, those baby bats are able to fly around at night and do, uh, this, this, the bat colony's noble service to us Austenites, which is they eat-a da bugs.

Rachel:

Yeah, see that, that is the thing that sold me on bats is that the-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

The mosquitoes-

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

Uh, really handled by the bats.

Griffin:

Oh, we grow 'em big down here in Texas, too. Big mosquitoes.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, each night, the bat-pocalypse, the plague, comes out, uh, devours anywhere from 10,000 to 30,000 pounds of insects, each night.

Rachel:

Wow.

Griffin:

And a lot of those are mosquitoes and, and harmful agricultural pests. Every night. 10,000 to 30,000 pounds. Thank you bats.

Rachel:

So they go out to feed and then they come back at the end of the night, they're like, "Thanks I'll see you tomorrow."

Griffin:

Thanks, yeah, make more bugs for us I guess.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Yup, that's what they do for six months out of the year.

Rachel:

I wonder, I guess if you live downtown you probably have a noticeable reduction in your-

Griffin:

No bug guarantee-

Rachel:

Your bug problem.

Griffin:

From the bats, yes. Anyway, bats are great. Um, [laughs] I actually learned that the Texas Department of Transportation started a program called, uh, I think it's just called Bats and Bridges, to sort of aid in the design of new bridges and like, uh, repairs for bridges or modifications to bridges to make them more bat colony, like, friendly to like aid in the construction of the underside of the bridge to make it more amenable for, for bats when appropriate. Like-

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

There are places where it is not a great idea in a small town to have, uh, uh, that many bats.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, but I thought that was so neat.

Rachel:

So there's bridge out there that have like little sofas and TVs and-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Like a little Central Perk for bats?

Griffin:

Yes. S, cute, babe.

Rachel:

A little like-

Griffin:

Let's just, just keep going.

Rachel:

Little Chandler bats, they're like, "Oh, could I *be* any hungrier for bugs?"

Griffin:

Yeah. Uh, I love it.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And it's like, "You don't Guano on the-" this is more Seinfeld now, but like-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

"You don't guano on the first date."

Rachel:

Okay. [laughs]

Griffin:

I don't know if they call pooping guanoing, I don't think you can make a verb out of guanoing. Anyway, uh, that's all that we have prepared for you. One last time, if you [laughs] have enjoyed our show-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Go donate to the Austin Bat Cave. If you enjoy the idea of what the Austin Bat Cave does-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And you should, go to-

Rachel:

I wanted to share, every year they give-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Students the opportunity to publish their work in these big anthologies, uh, which is a tremendous opportunity as, as a young writer to, to be published and to have the opportunity to share your work with more people than you know, just your second grade teacher.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh-

Griffin:

Who must have read that thing about the Oklahoma City Bombing and been like-

Rachel:

[laughs] Should I tell someone?

Griffin:

Whoa. Anyway, the link, austinbatcave.org/donate. Genuinely thank you to Austin Bat Cave for everything that you do and for allowing us to, to do this show in support of you.

Rachel:

Yeah, and this, this stream will be available after this evening.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Uh, so if you joined us late or you know, wanna, wanna revisit the ice cream poem, you have the opportunity [laughs] to do so.

Griffin:

Uh, that's it though, thank you for watching and um-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Thanks to Bo En and Augustus-

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

For the use of our theme song, uh, Money Won't Pay and, um-

Rachel:

Thank you to Maximum Fun for hosting our show. If you are not a regular listener of the podcast, you can find our show on Maximum Fun.

Griffin:

And thank you to Amanda who has, uh, st- stayed, stayed on late tonight to help us run this, uh, stream. Uh, 'cause I don't know how to do it.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I don't know how this works. Um, yeah, that's it. Thanks everybody.

Rachel:

Yeah, thank you.

Griffin:

Have a, have a good evening and we'll see, we'll see you next time.

[theme music plays]

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