

## Wonderful! 188: Don't Kiss the Brachiosaurus, Jeremy

Published July 7, 2021

Listen here at [themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[theme music plays]

**Rachel:**

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:**

Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:**

And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:**

I'm feeling very peaceful today.

**Rachel:**

Oh, I'm glad. What, uh, what changed? [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Well, I've been chewing echinacea.

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. I f-

**Rachel:**

What does echinacea look like?

**Griffin:**

A... plant.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative]. And so you just put that plant in your mouth?

**Griffin:**

Found some wild echinacea in the yard-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... while I was doing my gardening.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Dug it up or perhaps snipped it off the tree that it grows off of.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Popped it in my- popped it in my gob. [munching noises]

**Rachel:**

Ooh. Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

That's the sound of the echinacea.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, okay.

**Griffin:**

And it's... giving me lots of... calmness.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Centeredness. [inaudible 00:01:08].

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative]. Er, you're on my level now.

**Griffin:**

I'm y- you- and you were always so calm and centered.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative], yeah.

**Griffin:**

That's the two words I would use to describe you all the time.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

And no- i-... Wait a minute.

**Rachel:**

Are you... Wait, are you being sarcastic? [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Are you being sarcastic? And also... are you on the echinacea and have been since as long as I've known you?

**Rachel:**

Um... no, this is just who I am, babe.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

I... This is my level, just all the time. Sans echinacea. If I took echinacea-

**Griffin:**

You would be dead.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Your heart would stop. You would still be living and walking, but your heart would-

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... be at like two BPMs.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Isn't it wild that we measure our heart-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... rate, and the tempo of songs-

**Rachel:**

In beats per minute?

**Griffin:**

... with the same measurement?

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

That's beautiful, isn't it?

**Rachel:**

That is beautiful.

**Griffin:**

It's like our bodies are always making music and these are the kinds of observations-

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... that I can make now that I'm on the echinacea I found in our yard.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

It could have also just been some roots of a plant or a bush-

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Griffin:**

... that I looked at and I was like, I don't- I-... That seems like echinacea to me. Chewed it up.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And it gave me calmness. So, here's... that's what it is. Could it have been toxic? Some sort of toxic plant? That I'm sl-... I have been poisoned by?

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

I'm worried about that a little bit, I think.

**Griffin:**

For sure. For sure. But all I know is I love you, I love our-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... family-

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... and I love this show.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And I'm excited to do it with you. I think I am deeply addicted to echinacea.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:**

Oh, you gave me so much time.

**Griffin:**

I did.

**Rachel:**

And I was sitting there-

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

... I mean, obviously listening to you intently.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

Uh, but also trying to come up with something to say right now.

**Griffin:**

Yes. Mmm.

**Rachel:**

Mmm.

**Griffin:**

Mmm.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Why don't you go first? [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Why don't I go first? I-

**Rachel:**

This is nice. This is nice for the listener because, they think we're probably, like, generally positive, upbeat people that don't have any trouble thinking of positive, upbeat things. But hey, turns out...

**Griffin:**

Well, it's-

**Rachel:**

This is a muscle.

**Griffin:**

We've been-

**Rachel:**

This is a muscle, guys.

**Griffin:**

It is, um, it's a big muscle and we've been doing this show for three or four years now.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:**

So it's a question of, like, I could t- I could say, just, jelly beans.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

But you know this. They know this already.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Yeah, they know jelly beans.

**Griffin:**

I-... Have we talked about Gushers?

**Rachel:**

Probably.

**Griffin:**

I got Gushers from a grocery store and I brought them home and I was like... What are these like?

**Rachel:**

It was actually more like you had to break off a piece of the brick of Gusher.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

The Gushers fused together, but we like that about Gushers. We love the gooey mess they make.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Griffin:**

So there it is, Gushers.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

You happy now, America?

**Rachel:**

Uh, I came up with my small wonder.

**Griffin:**

Good.



**Rachel:**

In your... rant. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Good.

**Rachel:**

Um, I'm gonna say the vacuum.

**Griffin:**

The vacuum.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

We got a good one.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, uh, it was-

**Griffin:**

We've done dust busters. This is big v-... This is not dust busters.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

This is tall vacuums.

**Rachel:**

Everybody, stop writing that complaint email.

**Griffin:**

Please.

**Rachel:**

We know-

**Griffin:**

We know.

**Rachel:**

... we've done dust buster. Uh, I am surprised, continually, how when you vacuum a carpet, all of a sudden it's like-

**Griffin:**

Clean?

**Rachel:**

... oh look, look at this room?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Look at this room now. Look at this house I just moved into yesterday.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, we've been having to do that a lot 'cause we are finally-

**Rachel:**

That bathroom.

**Griffin:**

... finally getting our house fixed.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

From when it froze in February.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, when you make a bathroom-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... you need a lot of different people in the village. Uh-

**Griffin:**

Oh, it's like pizza pie, isn't it? The bathroom.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] And so, we've had a bunch of different people coming through and everybody kinda has a different policy on, uh, what-

**Griffin:**

Shoes.

**Rachel:**

... they w-... Yeah, what they will an- and won't track through your house.

**Griffin:**

And it's... They're doing hard work, they're working their butts off.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

We're not ones to complain. Luckily, we have vacuum.

**Rachel:**

Uh, in order to get to our bathroom, you have to go through our bedroom.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

And that is where we sleep and where our baby sleeps.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

And it's very important to us to keep that clean.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, and so-

**Griffin:**

It's our temple.

**Rachel:**

... we've been doing a lot of vacuuming and it- it just works. It just works.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It just- it just works, folks. Um, hey, you go first this week, can you believe it?

**Rachel:**

Th-... Yes. [laughs] Uh, my first thing is field trips.

**Griffin:**

Oh my god, this is a good'n.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

What is the best field trip you ever went on? Or the most memorable one, at least?

**Rachel:**

I was thinking about this, and it's kind of a toss up. 'Cause when I think of fields trips, uh, two things come to mind. First, I think when I was in first grade, we went to the Hostess factory.

**Griffin:**

What? Are you kidding?

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's the best field trip... Is that in St. Louis?

**Rachel:**

I mean, we went to... Yes, yes. I don't know if there are multiples. I don't know, I didn't do any research on Hostess to answer this question. But, I know that we went to a place where Snowballs were made.

**Griffin:**

That's sick.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

That's so awesome.

**Rachel:**

I remember that being really cool. Although, at the time, we were operating under the false, uh, notion that I was allergic to chocolate, so that was kind of a challenge.

**Griffin:**

Ah, bummer. You could still Twinkie it up, right?

**Rachel:**

But yeah, I could- I could Twinkie the hell out of that field trip.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, and then, and this... I can't remember what grade this is, this speaks to the power of field trips, because I cannot remember when this happened. But there was a period when we were doing weekly field trips to the art museum.

**Griffin:**

Weekly?

**Rachel:**

Yeah eth-... it was-

**Griffin:**

Were they getting a lot of new art every week?

**Rachel:**

No, it was part of this, like, uh, educational series they did where you school could sign up and they had a curriculum, and you would go and t- go to different wings of the museum and study different time periods and make little artist representations of the things, and... I don't remember when I did it.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

But I remember it being really cool, of like, oh we're going again, and then like-

**Griffin:**

That sounds cool.

**Rachel:**

... I'm gonna get to y-... make something.

**Griffin:**

Once we got to go to the Huntington Tri-State Airport and go up in the air control tower. Can you imagine?

**Rachel:**

Whoa.

**Griffin:**

Can you... this eh-... yeah. And this would have been, like, 1995 or something like that.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] yeah.

**Griffin:**

Before, mmm, let's say, they got a little bit more strict-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... about airport stuff. In the-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... wake of a certain event. Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, but it was sick. It felt like I was... I- I... The entire time, I felt like I should not be here. There are probably buttons in this room-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... that I could bump up against, and really make a mess of things.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

They do not do that anymore-

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

... I guarantee it.

**Rachel:**

I'm sure there... Yeah. I'm sure there was a-

**Griffin:**

Frickin' 25 d- you know, t- first graders just, like, running-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... around this room where people press buttons to make sure planes don't run into each other, holy shit.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Sure there was, like, a last class that didn't know they were the last class-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... to get that privilege.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Also, I will say, and this says a lot that this wasn't my first, uh, field trip. But, uh, we also went to Six Flags.

**Griffin:**

Mmm.

**Rachel:**

It was senior year, and it was, like, physics day at Six Flags. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Oh, get... Oh, come on. Okay.

**Rachel:**

And so our physics teacher gave us this worksheet that we were supposed to complete.

**Griffin:**

Nobody did it, I bet.



**Rachel:**

I think we all did, but then, like, he didn't even collect it.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Ya know, it was like of those things of like, here you go, you have to figure out the velocity. And we were like, okay, and we just came up with some stuff, and then I feel like you didn't even turn it in. Like, it didn't even get graded. It was just like-

**Griffin:**

God, that's so good.

**Rachel:**

... we all know why we're here. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

God, that's good.

**Rachel:**

Um, yeah. I- I couldn't find a lot of, like, when the first field trip was, obviously.

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

Because, like, you know, who- who would- who would categorize, like, we went to my uncle's farm?

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

Fed the pigs. Uh, but, I did find a lot about the educational value of field trips.

**Griffin:**

Oh, for sure. I bet there's a lot on that.

**Rachel:**

I will say, and so the article I found is old. It's from 2013.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Which doesn't feel like that old to me, but I know is-

**Griffin:**

Almost-

**Rachel:**

... objectively old. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

... it's e- like, eight years old, yeah.

**Rachel:**

Um, but the article was from a- a journal called Education Next. And it said that at one time the Field Museum in Chicago was welcoming more than 300,000 students each year. Uh, and that number has dropped by 100,000-

**Griffin:**

Oh, bummer.

**Rachel:**

... as of this article. Um, also the Cincinnati Arts Organization saw a 30% decrease in student attendance, uh, between 2002 and 2007. Uh, more than half of schools that took this American Association of School Administrators survey, uh, had eliminated planned field trips in 2010 and 2011.

**Griffin:**

Huh. Is that- is that a, like, a enba-

**Rachel:**

Some of it's budget.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Some of it's, like, no child left behind, um, stuff. Right?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, some of it is teaching to the test.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Like, their whole focus is improving test scores.

**Griffin:**

That sucks shit.

**Rachel:**

And so they don't have time for field trips.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Uh, which is real sad.

**Griffin:**

It is extremely sad. I can't remember a lot of things from school. I remember most of the field trips I went on.

**Rachel:**

I know.

**Griffin:**

Which is saying something.

**Rachel:**

Did you guys ever, like, go outside of the city?

**Griffin:**

Did we ever go outside of the city? Probably.

**Rachel:**

'Cause the big thing with field trips is, like, going to, like, museums and zoos and stuff. And I know Huntington is not-

**Griffin:**

No, but we would go to f- factories. We went to the Heiner's Bread factory. We went to, um... There is a series of lochs and dams on the Ohio River-

**Rachel:**

Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:**

... that we got to, like, go inside of and, like, see all the machinery inside of that. I remember that very well. Um... yeah. I- I- I remember I-... just, I remember a lot of stuff. One day we just went to the rose garden at Ritter Park, and just, like, walked around and talked about all the different... flowers-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... that were there. It was super cool.

**Rachel:**

Now, and that's a cool reminder too, because, like, when I think of field trips I I- I do tend to think of, like, museums and historic sites, but, like, y- you can just turn-

**Griffin:**

Look around you.

**Rachel:**

You can turn a lot of stuff into a field trip.

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so, there was a big study done. There is a museum in Arkansas called Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. And it just opened in 2011.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

And so that gave, uh, these researchers and opportunity to, like, really get in there at the ground floor, and, like, study the impact it was having on people. Uh, it is the first major art museum to be built in the United States in the last four decades.

**Griffin:**

What?

**Rachel:**

Uh, yeah. I mean, if you think about it, like, most art museums have been around for a long time.

**Griffin:**

I guess so, yeah.

**Rachel:**

Nobody's out there, like, building a new art museum, necessarily.

**Griffin:**

And nobody's making new art.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah, it's a shame.

**Griffin:**

All the art got made already, not it's just a question of how many Indianas Joneses-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... we can get out there to find it all inside the mummy's crypt.

**Rachel:**

I really appreciate how you pluralized that.

**Griffin:**

Thanks.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so, this is a- this is a big ol' art museum. I'm not super familiar with it, but apparently it has more than 50,000 square feet of gallery space, and an end- endowment in excess of 800 million dollars.

**Griffin:**

Ooh.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so they administered over 10,000, uh, surveys to students, uh, and 489 teachers, at 123 different schools to kind of look and see the impact that... the-

**Griffin:**

This incredible museum on their sweet brains.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, so students would literally, they'd an hour tour of the museum, and they'd discuss about five paintings, uh, and then they would follow up with them and find out kind of what the impact was. And a lot of students, like, we're talking between like 70 and 80 percent of students could remember, like, stuff about the paintings they saw when they followed up with them later.

**Rachel:**

Um, and these are, like, no super f-... like, obviously one of them was, like, Rosie the Riveter, like, yeah, you-

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:**

... could maybe remember that. Um, but then there was also, uh, an Eastman Johnson painting called At the Camp Spinning Yarns and Whittling, which I've never heard of.

**Griffin:**

No.

**Rachel:**

Um-

**Griffin:**

Fun name, though. Sounds like a Sufjan Stevens track.

**Rachel:**

But, weeks later, students were followed up with about that painting and- and they said, "oh yeah, that- that's the painting that depicts people making makeable syrup."

**Griffin:**

Makeable syrup?

**Rachel:**

Maple syrup.

**Griffin:**

Oh. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I thought you were talking about syrup that can be made.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] No.

**Griffin:**

Makeable syrup.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

That's amazing.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Um, there's also- there's also a lot of research to talk about how it increases critical thinking.

**Griffin:**

Mmm.

**Rachel:**

Uh, because, when you- when you study art, or, you know, any kind of sculpture or painting or whatever-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... you know, you're- you're learning about, like, what your impression is and also what the artist's intention was, and what historical influences there were. I mean, it teaches you to look at something, and to think about all the different components of it.

**Rachel:**

And so, uh, it improved critical thinking, historical empathy, was another thing they studied.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Of- of looking at how early Americans thought and felt, and imagining what life was like for those people. Uh, which you know, you can do a lot of when you study historical art.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure. Like, reading that out of a history book, you don't... it's not easy to connect the dots, especially based on where you live and what the curriculum is of, like-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... oh, those were real people as real as I am-

**Rachel:**

Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:**



... living in a different time, with, like, a completely different set of challenges and shit.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, and I think, uh, you know, uh, that- that is really the power of a field trip, you know? It's very easy when you sit in a classroom all day long, with a textbook, and every class is just sitting and textbook and sitting and textbook. To like go somewhere, it kind of like, jump starts your brain of like-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... oh, this is different. I should pay attention. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

I think the reason I remember my field trips so well is because they... how- how the contextualize all of the stuff that I was learning in the- in a- in a classroom. And, without that contextualization, like, it would just... I would- I... my eyes would glaze over eventually-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... and not, sort of, absorb the information. Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, when I was in eighth grade, we had this opportunity. And of course, this required an additional investment. So not everybody did this, but we got to go to Washington DC for, like-

**Griffin:**

What?

**Rachel:**

... two or three days. It was like a standard eighth grade opportunity. And your-

**Griffin:**

Jesus.

**Rachel:**

... parents had to, like, go to a meeting, and pay this money for your flight, and your lodging. And then they had, like, two buses that would, like, drive around these kids. And I got to go on that and it was-

**Griffin:**

Ga-

**Rachel:**

... very cool.

**Griffin:**

I never got to do anything like that. That-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... sounds awesome.

**Rachel:**

We also went to Jefferson City, which is the state capitol-

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:**

... of Missouri. And I remember this very specifically, because one of my [laughs] classmates in third grade, uh, dropped an ice cube down the rotunda and got in a lot of trouble. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Oh no, you're not supposed to do that.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Somehow we all knew about it. I mean, this was one of those kids that, like, always got in trouble.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

So it was always, like, what's he gonna do this time? And that- that was the thing he did. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Well, I mean, if that's the kid that always gets in trouble and all they did was drop an ice cube down the rotunda-

**Rachel:**

That's true, it could have been worse.

**Griffin:**

Could have been way worse.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Um, and I will just say the other thing is that you know, of course it, like, it increases a student's interest in places like museums.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

You know, like... when we are looking for things to do with our son, we are always thinking about, like, super fun things we know he'll be interested in.

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

And... and I understand why a lot of families could get in the routine of, like, uh, I, um, if I'm gonna spend money, if I'm gonna spend time, if I'm gonna drive, I don't know that I necessarily want to take my kid to a place that they are potentially going to hate. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

But like a school field trip is like a, hey this is what an art museum is like, and maybe your kid comes home and is like, wow.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

This- this is not boring. I thought it would be.

**Griffin:**

No, for sure.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Uh, and so yeah. So I- I don't know if this is a thing, like, among kids today. Like, if- if I were to sit down with a fifth grader and as them, like, tell me about the field trips. And then if they would be, like, what's a field trip?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Like, I don't know if this is really going out of fashion. I mean, I imagine this past year... [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it certainly went out fashion this last year.

**Rachel:**

It definitely did. Um, but I hope- I hope it continues.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. There's... I talked about this, I think, early, early, early in this podcast when I talked about VR. How, like, the potential for that as, like, a virtual field trip opportunity-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... where you can, like, hey now we're back in dinosaur times. Check out that brachiosaurus.

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Touch him. Smell him. Feel him. Love him.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I... th- th- the potential for that.

**Rachel:**

Don't kiss him, though.

**Griffin:**

Don't kiss him. Come on, Jeremy.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Bad kid. That always does one bad thing.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Always kissing the brontosaurus. Hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

Thanks.

[ad break]

**Griffin:**

Got a couple jumpy jobs here. Can I do the fir-

**Rachel:**

Oh, I'm always excited to hear what- what word you say.

**Griffin:**

The first one here was sent in, uh, from Red Erin, and it's for Starman Seth, who says, "Hey there, happy birthday, bud. Thank you for always being there for me and inspiring me to keep my heart open to the world. You're part of the reason I smile every day, and the world is so much brighter with you in it. You are my every day big wonder. Take on the world, Starman."

**Rachel:**

See, this is why we do Jumbotrons.

**Griffin:**

This is it.

**Rachel:**

This is it, right here. Just people sharing their enthusiasm for other people.

**Griffin:**

People-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... loving people.

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

And that's what it's all about.

**Rachel:**

That is. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And if we did that a little more-

**Rachel:**

Oh no.

**Griffin:**

... would we even be here? Be in this mess?

**Rachel:**

You know, we sound very altruistic right now, but we do get paid. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

We get the money. Hey, do you want to read this next one?

**Rachel:**

Yes. Uh, this is for Scoots. It is from Boots.

**Griffin:**

Love it already.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] "Hey Scoots, I just wanted to have our favorite small wonders wish you a happy birthday and tell you how ultra badass you are. In these last eight years, you've made me a dog person, a wine bar owner, and a Splendor champ."

**Griffin:**

Whoa.

**Rachel:**

"Wink. Wink."

**Griffin:**

What is... what c-... Okay, finish. Sorry.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] "You are the snug champ of the world and I love you all the loves and stuff. Thank you for letting me be your person. Happy birthday."

**Griffin:**

That's a-... you have an awesome life. Let me just say.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Do you know what kind of w-... I wish I had a wine bar. And also was good at Splendor.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Splendor's a do-... We've talked about Splendor.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, the wink, though. What does the wink mean?

**Griffin:**

What does that mean? Maybe the cheat. They b-... always got some gemstones up their sleeves-

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

... before they even start. I'm... and, you gotta keep an eye on that. What are we teaching our-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... young [laughs] people?

**Rachel:**

What?

**Griffin:**

I don't know.

**Rachel:**

You're very principled today. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

I really am.



[MaxFun ad plays]

**Griffin:**

Can I do my thing?

**Rachel:**

Yes, please.

**Griffin:**

My thing is [sings] The Mole. Talking about The Mole, baby.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Oh, I'm so glad.

**Griffin:**

I'm glad, too. Rachel makes fun of me a lot.

**Rachel:**

I do.

**Griffin:**

Because I am convinced that everyone's got Mole fever right now.

**Rachel:**

The Mole is on Netflix.

**Griffin:**

It's on Netflix, you should watch it.

**Rachel:**

And- and we have been watching it.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

And I have been enjoying it, for sure.

**Griffin:**

No spoil- no spoilies.

**Rachel:**

For sure. Griffin, I feel like, really over estimates the cultural significance of this show.

**Griffin:**

It's a zeitgeist.

**Rachel:**

Because he's like, man, n- maybe now that everybody's watching it again, you know, like, we'll- we'll see a reemergence of... And I'm like, o- do you think everybody's watching it?

**Griffin:**

There's never been a better time to catch Mole fever. Except maybe in the early aughts when the show originally aired was arguably a better time.

**Rachel:**

I am excited, 'cause I did watch the first season.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

Uh, there was a second season I have never seen. So I'm excited to dip into that. But we are still on the first season right now.

**Griffin:**

Yes. So, compared to, you know, the big dogs, your Amazing Races, your Survivors, your, uh, Big Brothers, which we- we do not watch the latter of.

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

The Mole was very short lived. It had two sort of regular seasons, the second of which had a subtitle, which I can't remember.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It was like, The Next Betrayal.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

The Mole, The Next Betrayal. And then there were two seasons of Celebrity Mole, uh, I believe hosted by Ahmad Rashad. And then there was a fifth season that just, like-

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

... came back and I don't remember anything about that one.

**Rachel:**

None of that is on Netflix.

**Griffin:**

Uh, the... Yeah. Uh, it's not. The f- only the first two seasons are on Netflix. So like, it didn't- it didn't go very long, uh, season one aired 2001 and then it, yeah, it got a few seasons after that.

**Rachel:**

I imagine it was- it was a pretty expensive show.

**Griffin:**

I don't believe that that was tr-... I mean, not compared to, um-

**Rachel:**

Well, here's the thing, like, obviously, yeah, Amazing Race, similar. Right?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

You're traveling, you're going to historic sites, you're doing tasks. But-

**Griffin:**

But.

**Rachel:**

... The Mole, like, has all of these, like additional players that, like, are- are trying to attack the team. And all those people have got to get money. Unless maybe they're production crew people. Like, the boom mic guy.

**Griffin:**

Probably, just like a... [laughs] Yeah. A-

**Rachel:**

Also had to hold a paintball gun. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

A key- a key grip with a s- uh, sniper paintball rifle. Okay, anyway. There- there... We gotta remember there's people listening to this who don't know anything-

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay sorry.

**Griffin:**

... about what The Mole is.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

And explaining the premise of The Mole, I'd feel like doesn't really capture what I adore about this show, but, basically-

**Rachel:**

Not a dermatological show.

**Griffin:**

No. It is a- a- i- you got contestants. Like, 10, I think. One season had like 13. A group of contestants, around a dozen. Uh, every episode they collaborate to try to complete a couple of these missions. And if they can do that, if they complete the missions together as a team, they add money to the prize pool that one player will win at the end of the game.

**Griffin:**

The whole time, though, there's the mole.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

One of them is secretly the mole. And the mole is a operative working for the ABC corporation.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

And possibly Anderson Cooper. He possibly works... they possibly answer to Anderson Cooper, who hosts the first two seasons. Uh, and they sabotage those missions-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... as best they can. As secretly as they can. Uh-

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

... and, and the end of every episode, everybody takes a 20-question quiz about the identity of the mole, and it's super granular stuff, like-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... what did the mole wear for lunch on Tuesday? Uh, what... has the Mole had their heart broken before? Like-

**Rachel:**

How tall is the mole?

**Griffin:**

How tall is the mole?

**Rachel:**

Like, stuff that you, like, couldn't just intuit.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

And, whoever scores the lowest on the quiz gets... booted out. Gets-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Sorry, they call it executed. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

Executed.

**Griffin:**

Which, if they did start doing the mole again, I have to think that they would soften some of the language.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

'Cause I don't think you can say, "You've been executed."

**Rachel:**

And what I will say, and this is very much of the time period, is that Anderson Cooper sits in front of a computer and very slowly types in the letters of somebody's name, and if they are executed, the screen turns red.

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, it's very, like, uh-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... late 90's hacker UI-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... style shit. Anderson C-... I- I'm gonna take a brief... t- u- c- sidebar to say, Anderson Cooper is all-time on this fucking show.

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

It's as if the director came to Anderson Cooper and was like, "Okay, you are the coolest human being that's ever lived-"

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

"... and you need to assert that energy in every breath that you breathe-"

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

"... every word that you say, every look that you give these contestants-"

**Rachel:**

Also, like, the- i-... what typically exists in a reality program is a lot of separation between the host and the contestants.

**Griffin:**

Yeah

**Rachel:**

In The Mole, An-

**Griffin:**

He, like, has dinner with them.

**Rachel:**

Every night. He like-

**Griffin:**

Every night.

**Rachel:**

He is always with them, and he, like, socializes with them, and when a contestant has to leave and he says farewell, it seems very sincere.

**Griffin:**

Yes, but he always still has this air of, I'm smart than you are. And cooler than you are.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And that's my energy that I have to give off as the host of The Mole. Okay, so, anyway, that's the premise of the show. The biggest thing, and it's something that not a lot of r- reality shows can boast, is that it's interactive for the viewer. Because this whole time you're watching these challenges, and you know, saying, oh, I wonder if they're going to succeed or not.

**Griffin:**

But also, you're watching the whole show like a hawk looking for these signs of sabotage and trying to figure out the whole time who- who the mole is. Which, fortunately, it's been long enough that I know I watched this first season when it first aired. I do not recall-

**Rachel:**

Yeah, I know.

**Griffin:**

... who it is.

**Rachel:**

I don't totally trust that... 'cause I- I have an instinct as to who it is.



**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

But I'm not sure if this is just some, like, subconscious memory from the first time I watched it.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, but yeah, no, and- and the thing it, like, given the nature of the travel, and the various expertises of the contestants, like, people make mistakes.

**Griffin:**

That's right, yeah.

**Rachel:**

And so, you're watching it and you're thinking, was that mistake intentional because they're the mole? Or was that mistake just incompetence? [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Genuine? Yeah. Or was it- or was it intentional to make-

**Rachel:**

Or, yeah.

**Griffin:**

... everybody else think you're the mole so they'll fail the test.

**Rachel:**

That's the thing. Yeah. There is a benefit in getting people to think you're the mole, uh, because then they will do poorly on the final quiz and get eliminated.

**Griffin:**

Exactly. And from a game design perspective, the missions themselves are brilliant in how they incorporate dozens of little points of failure-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... throughout the whole thing. They are convoluted and they take place in, typically in foreign countries, where virtually nobody competing speaks the language. Right? And then it's like, okay, you have five hours to get to this library. And once you're there, you're gonna look inside of these books and find these maps and the maps will have tickets and then you have to take the tickets to these specific spots in the city.

**Griffin:**

It's like, there's a lot of place where s- b-... the mole could sabotage that. But there's also a lot of places where just, like, you make one mistake, and then the team doesn't get the money. 'Cause you pass or fail as- as a unit. As a team.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

It's really brilliant. It's really, really smart. It taps into that, um, that, like, Werewolf, Mafia, Among Us-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... energy. That is, like, big right now. So, in a lot of ways The Mole was- was well ahead of it's time.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Um... but ap- apart from just the game design, the whole aesthetic of the show is so fuckin' unapologetically cornball to the max.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like, it's like it was made by somebody who saw Mission Impossible-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... in the theaters 55 times and was like, I'm gonna do a show on that.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Every episode opens with Anderson Cooper in, like, all black and a black leather jacket. And he's standing in front of, like, a-

**Griffin:**

Standing in, like, Death Valley somewhere.

**Rachel:**

... like a cliff, or something.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

And he's, like, catching you up on all of the intrigue that has-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... happened so far.

**Griffin:**

"In the previous episode, Jennifer-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... was viciously executed by the mole. Now, our teams must go-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... to", um... It's just- it's just so good. There's also a feeling of... weirdly, and this is just a, uh, artifact of it's time watching it now, like, it feels weirdly under-produced compared to reality shows that are made now.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like, it feels un- unpolished, in a way.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

Like, the people on it are not necessarily reality show personalities-

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

... as they are kind of, uh, trained, and- and- and [laughs] bred these days.

**Rachel:**

And there's also, like, there is conflict that occurs between the contestants, but it is not played up in a way as to suggest, like, we know this is good television. Like-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... these two hate each other.

**Griffin:**

Well-

**Rachel:**

Let's- let's keep putting them in situations.

**Griffin:**

The dark cloud looming over season one, there's a dude on the season-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... who's, like, retired detective named Charlie. Who sucks the moon out of the sky-

**Rachel:**

Yeah, he's pretty awful.

**Griffin:**

... and is like a genuinely misogynistic-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... like, piece of shit. That, like, I don't know, would hope 20 years later that, uh, you know, th- they've gotten a little bit better about weeding out terrible agents like that, uh, from- from the casting process. But, uh-

**Rachel:**

Although, we know from our- [laughs] our forays into reality television, that's-

**Griffin:**

That's not always true.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:**

No, his is- is- his is a- it's- it is, uh, it's uncomfortable to watch at times. It is... I genuinely wish he was not on the show, because, uh-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... it is a- it's a n- it's a nice experience for me, watching The Mole. It's nice and nostalgic. And having this dude on there is like, "This- this broad over he-" like, is a-

**Rachel:**

Uh, that's like early Survivor too, right? Like-

**Griffin:**

That's... Yeah. I guess so, yeah.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. There's- there's- there's a... no perfect show. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

No. Cert- certainly not. Um, but The M- The Mole, man, it's just, it was too beautiful for this world. But, there are rumors circulating.

**Rachel:**

Ooh.

**Griffin:**

That a new season of The Mole is being-

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

... shot, right now, in Australia. Uh... that's just a rumor. That- th- the- there were, like, casting notices for some show and they didn't call it The Mole, but it sounded a whole like-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... The Mole did.

**Rachel:**

I mean, it would explain kind of why it's on Netflix right now.

**Griffin:**

And why it's having its moment, and it's a cultural zeitgeist.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

I think it's great. I love reality competition shows, and I forgot... Wh- when we started watching The Mole, it is s- it is so rough the first episode or two, that I'm like, am i just, like, nostalgic for this-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... [inaudible 00:31:49]? But then, like, a few episodes in and you see how, like, complex the... like, how well they have, um, pursued the whole concept of the show, of trying to determine who a saboteur is-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... and putting them through this, like, you know, gauntlet of tests where they can gain information. Like, it's really smart. It's-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... really a brilliant concept.

**Rachel:**

It's very watchable. It goes very quickly, too.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

'Cause the tasks they give them... That is one problem, kind of, with The Amazing Race, is sometimes they will give them tasks that are intentionally tedious.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

And physically I- challenging, and- and as a watcher you are like, oh god I can't watch this person try and climb up this hill one more time.

**Griffin:**

I know.

**Rachel:**

Uh, The Mole isn't really way. The Mole is very, like, Mission Impossible, like, we need you to go get this file from this agent, m- in this town-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... and it's not, like, w- we want to see you shoot yourself in the face over and over again. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah, that's true. Hey, thank you so much for listening. Thank you to Bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay, and you'll find a link to that in the episode description. And, uh, thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. They got so many good shows that you should go listen to and check 'em out and listen to 'em.

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah, uh, Tights and Fights.

**Griffin:**

Tights and Fights.

**Rachel:**

Have a good time with the folks over at Tights and Fights.

**Griffin:**

Have a good time with them. Um, hey, our new graphic novel, uh, The Adventure Zone, Crystal Kingdom comes out extremely soon.



**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And we have an event coming up where we're gonna do, like, a v- a virtual, uh, reading of it. It's on July 13th, we're gonna have special guests. You can, uh, find out more at [bit.ly/tazgnlive2021](https://bit.ly/tazgnlive2021) for more info. Uh, we're gonna have partner bookstore who are gonna be selling books with the signed bookplates in them.

**Griffin:**

Um, and, also there's a pre-order gift you can get. And it's a lenticular laptop sticker of Kravitz, a beloved character from Crystal Kingdom. Uh, and you can find out more about that at [bit.ly/taz4preorder](https://bit.ly/taz4preorder). And, uh, we got a bunch of merch over at McElroy Merch. Uh, a bunch of good stuff. There's a new, uh, besties shirt. You can show-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... your besties love, finally. There's a- a stoneware mug with The Adventure Zone logo on it. There's a lot of good stuff over there. Oh-

**Rachel:**

There's that pin of you asking for a sword.

**Griffin:**

There the pin of me asking for a sword. There a, uh... we have a pin of the month that we do every month. This-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... this month it's for the Gooshie Wolves, from-

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... our new arc Taz Ethersea. And sales of that benefit, uh, the Innocence Project, which exonerates the wrongly convicted through DNA testing and reforms the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice. Really great cause.

**Rachel:**

Ahh.

**Griffin:**

Ah, yeah. There's a lot of good-

**Rachel:**

And also, uh, Ethersea.

**Griffin:**

Oh, yeah.

**Rachel:**

If- if y'all haven't checked out Ethersea, it's really great.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, we did a whole, uh, prequel thing. That was five episodes, that was a lot of fun. If you don't want to listen to that, I did a-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... short sort of summary thing that you can listen to, 'cause get what, I think the day this airs, the first episode proper of the season of us playing D&D and stuff starts tomorrow.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

So, good time to get on board-

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

... with that. Thank you all for listening, thank you.

**Rachel:**

Thank you, hey.

**Griffin:**

Aww, I'm so psyched now, the echinacea has completely-

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

... run it's course. And you know, I've been... how sweaty I've been over here this whole episode?

**Rachel:**

Uh-huh [affirmative].

**Griffin:**

I think that's my body trying to push out [laughs] the toxins of the echinacea.

**Rachel:**

Or it could be the 80 degree temperature that your office-

**Griffin:**

It could also be that it's a billion bajillion degrees in here.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

But, uh, this, uh-

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Griffin has, uh, a whole command center in here.

**Griffin:**

[inaudible 00:35:16] this, uh-

**Rachel:**

Emits a lot of heat.

**Griffin:**

[crosstalk 00:35:17] it's not my gaming rig, baby.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Griffin:**

It's this... body heat.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

[theme music plays]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.