

Wonderful! 225: Our Favorite St. Louis Stuff, Live!

Published April 22nd, 2022

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[theme music, “Money Won’t Pay” by bo en and Augustus plays]

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: Hi, I’m Rachel McElroy.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: Hey, I’m Griffin McElroy.

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: [quietly] Yeah, it is.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: Wow, that goes down smooth.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: This is uh this is a show we do where we talk about things that we like, things that we’re into, uh and today we’re gonna focus mostly in on a location that has, I would say, a um wonderful stuff density that is not measurable with the tools that science has developed so far.

[Audience chuckles]

Rachel: It’s Des Moines. It’s Des Moines.

Griffin: It’s Des Moines—

[Audience laughs, cheers]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I— Is it I— Iowa?

Rachel: Iowa, yes.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: We're gonna talk about St. Louisssssss.

[Audience cheers, applauds]

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: Now who's fishing for applause.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, right.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] I shouldn't have said shit, 'cause that's all this episode—

Rachel: That's all this is.

Griffin: — is gonna be, yeah.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Um as you all know, or maybe you don't, I don't know you. Um Rachel was... created here in St. Louis.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: That's a... unfortunate way to talk about it.

Griffin: It's a beautiful—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's a beautiful thing that happened.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And uh... it's— How is it performing in your hometown? So far, I know we've only been going about 90 seconds.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Um—

Griffin: It could— And let me tell you, 'cause I've done this a lot, it can turn on a dime.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This crowd will eat. You. Up. And spit you out.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: At the first sign of weakness.

[Indistinct shouts from the audience]

Rachel: I feel like I really specifically should have invited the teachers I had that didn't believe in me.

Griffin: Yeeeee.

[Audience boos]

Rachel: Um— [laughs]

Griffin: Are there any— Sorry, are there any teachers here that didn't believe in Rachel, in the audience tonight?

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Well, that's a shame.

Rachel: [chuckles] No, it's incredible. This is the best thing ever.

Griffin: Okay, good. I'm so glad.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh this is— Yeah, we talk about this stuff on the show. Do you have any small wonders bef— about St. Louis specifically?

Rachel: Mmm...

Griffin: Mmm... 'Cause we've got a pretty whirlwind tour of good stuff.

Rachel: Oh, I have one.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I have one. So we went to the Blues game last night.

Griffin: Yes.

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: And it was incredible, uh...

Griffin: Yes. Rachel got me front row seats for my birthday.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: It was... intense.

Rachel: Which was kind of a gift for me, if we're being honest.

Griffin: Yeah.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: And I really like how they let everybody sing the national anthem together.

Griffin: That was—

Rachel: I got a little choked up.

Griffin: You got weepy, which like, I've never known—

Rachel: I got a little choked up at the end. [laughs]

Griffin: Whenever I— Whenever I talk about you, I don't—

Rachel: You don't say "patriot"?

Griffin: I don't say "my patriot wife".

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's typically not what I think of. That's not what I leap to.

Rachel: It's just very lovely.

Griffin: Yeah, I'll tell you what's lovely is David Brawn's incredible straight teeth.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That man's teeth—

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: — belong in a museum.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, I'm gonna say the City Museum. That's not on your list, is it?

Rachel: No.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I have— I have been there exactly once, uh like five years ago or so? Like during a— Oh, even longer than that.

Rachel: Longer.

Griffin: Since before Henry was born. Uh and it was during an "adults only" time, which meant that I could have some beers.

Rachel: And partial nudity.

Griffin: And partial nudity.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And one... f-word. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, and I remember thinking "This building's so wild! It's so cool! Look at all those tiny holes! I'll never go in those."

[Audience laughs quietly]

Griffin: And then we took our kids to it today, and they were like "We're goin' in those tiny holes".

Rachel: [laughs quietly]

Griffin: And I was like "Oh, shoot". Um...

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: 'Cause it's the City Museum, you might come out like a mile and a half away.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: You might climb out of like a— a— [chuckles] a toilet at some apartment building.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: In another zip code. Like I have to go with you there.

Rachel: I also felt it really necessary to make sure that our son understood that it was not like a boring museum, you know? Like—

Griffin: There was no convincing him until he walked in. He was like [in an incredibly astounded voice] "This is it?!"

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Like you're not gonna have to learn anything here if you don't want to.

Griffin: No.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: Instead, you're gonna challenge your dad to fit in the smallest holes...

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: I got in one that looked like a good— a Gri— a Griffin-sized hole. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: This hole was made for me.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And I— I wiggled down into it, and then I realized that it had sort of an elbow curve into a much smaller hole. So I got down there, I was like “Oh, actually, no”. And then I realized “Oh no, I have to hoist my body weight back up onto a surface for the first time since, mmm, middle school?!”

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And it sucks!

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Anyway. We did [chuckles] rock, paper, scissors backstage to decide who goes first, and I won, so uh... I’m going to start out by talking about one of the best things I think to come out of St. Louis, an— kind of. And that is kindergarten. Kindergarten. Kindergarten was a thing before it came to St. Louis, uh obviously. The— The— The word translates in German to “garden of children”.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Which I thought is what it would be, as like a joke, like “And that of course means ‘child garden’”, thinking there’s no way it mean— It means “child garden”.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: Um, early aged school that focused on like practical kid stuff and not math, which is not practical in any way whatsoever, I think we can all agree.

Rachel: Do you, um—

[A few audience cheers]

Rachel: Do you wanna talk about the Griffin McElroy kindergarten experience?

Griffin: It was dope! It was awesome.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I had some trouble with tying my shoes. We got graded on tying our shoes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I really struggled with it, but it's always nice to kinda have like a goal? Like a target.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Um, but like I also got graded on skipping and galloping, and I beat ass at those.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: So I feel li— I would get an "M" for mastery of— I won't do it now, no matter how hard you cheer.

Rachel: Nah, see, I thought— [chuckles]

Griffin: But if— I could gallop a hole through the wall.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I'd like to walk everyone— I'd like to walk everyone through a brief history of me trying to stunt on stage at live shows.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I have beefed it no less than three times on stage.

[A few audience cheers]

Griffin: So, uh, it was a thing, right? This like practical learnin' for youngsters uh existed like all the way back in like the, the 18th century in like Bavaria and France and Germany. Uh there was this dude named Friedrich Fröbel who was uh a big like influencer on— on [chuckles] social media.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Uh specifically about kindergarten and— and early education, and he was like “What if we did school where you got graded on tying your shoes instead of math?” and everyone was like “Yes, please”. Uh and it spread like wildfire, 'cause kindergarten's great. Uh but it wasn't standardized in the United States like at all.

Um the first U.S. kindergarten opened in Wisconsin in 1856. It was taught in German. Uh and then there were a couple of— of other ones. There was one free kindergarten that was pretty cool, uh I don't know where it was, but that doesn't matter.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because in 1873, uh St. Louis's own Susan Blow was like “Let's do this shit right”.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And she was the daughter of this like turbo-rich family uh that was like really into education, and so she liked focused all of her education about that. Uh, she went to Germany to study the transcendentalists, and then met some folks who were like “Hey, we're over here [chuckles] grading kids' shoe-tying abilities”.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "You gotta check this out."

Rachel: This is— Is this— This is what you think kindergarten is. Is just shoe-tying and skipping.

Griffin: And learning how to sing "Row, Row Your Boat" in a round, yeah!

Rachel: [laughs] Yes, okay.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: That's more or less it. Uh and she was like "Wow, these kids singing 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat' sound amazing!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Uh, I gotta bring this to St. Louis", and uh she did. Her dad offered to pay for a private kindergarten and she said "No, we're goin' public with it. Daddyyyy."

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Woo!

Griffin: And she paid out of pocket. She uh, paid out of pocket for it, to pay all of the— the people who volunteered their time. She volunteered all her time.

Rachel: [imitates a documentary narration] Which teachers still do today.

Griffin: Which teachers— yes. [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Yes.

[Audience claps]

Griffin: Uh and they— After like a couple years, like the school board wanted to like shut it down because it hadn't uh, you know, it wasn't proving to be the most stable thing, but more and more and more people came out to volunteer. And within 10 years, every public school in uh in St. Louis had a kindergarten program. Uh and that seed sort of spread like very, very quickly across the whole country and now we have kindergarten everywhere, uh, and that's just amazing.

I think it's— As somebody who, you know, our oldest son is gonna start kindergarten next fall, uh and knowing that he will have a year that's like "Hey, here's how school works".

Rachel: "Here's how you tie your shoes."

Griffin: "Here's how you tie your shoes." He's gonna be good at skipping and gallop—

Rachel: Yeah, that's true. [chuckles]

Griffin: Like he has the blood in him.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah!

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Um but yeah, I just like— there was— It was the last time I learned practical stuff in school [chuckles] was kindergarten.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And it was very practical. I don't know where I'd be today. I would be shoeless on stage. Or with cool Velcro shoes.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Or crocs.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Which says a lot.

Griffin: Which says a lot. It's the only thing keeping me from wearing crocs is how proud I am—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: — that I finally mastered tying my own shoes. What's your first thing?

Rachel: Alright, so I wanna talk about, uh, somebody that is not exactly a hometown hero, but is associated with a hometown... uh beverage.

Griffin: Okay...

Rachel: And that is one Spuds MacKenzie.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: S— Wow. You know, you know this city.

Rachel: [chuckles] I do.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: You know what they need!

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, do you have— Do you have any connection to Spuds?

Griffin: Uh, it's a dog.

Rachel: Yeah.

[pause]

Rachel: Done. [laughs]

Griffin: End. End of list.

Rachel: Uh yeah, so this was, this was maybe a little before your time.

Griffin: Yeah. What was it, like 1975?

Rachel: [laughs] No.

Griffin: 'Cause do— I'm sorry, this is gonna get a boo from the audience, but dogs only live so long.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] So Spuds retired in 1989.

Griffin: Okay, so two years ou— Yeah, I was watchin' a toooon of beer commercials when I was two.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Uh Spuds started in 1983 on Bud Light posters in Chicago, uh specifically aimed at beer-drinkers aged 21 to 34, 'cause you know—

Griffin: [amused] It was a cute dog!

Rachel: Yeah yeah yeah.

Griffin: They were probably shootin' for the [chuckles] 12-year-old market too.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: No. [laughs] Well, that was definitely a criticism when the like the t-shirts and the stuffed animals started to come out. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. He was basically a cute Joe Camel.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Then nationally, Bud Light first introduced a quote “super party animal” named Spuds Mackenzie during the Super Bowl, in 1987.

Griffin: Okay. What made this dog a super party— Did the dog— Did— I’m sorry, I don’t know. I’m not familiar with uh Mr Mackenzie’s work, um.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Did he drink? The beer?

Rachel: Uh, more of a, like a lifestyle influencer.

Griffin: Okay.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Um...

Griffin: He was around the beer and you wanted to be around Spuds Mackenzie, so—

Rachel: That is 100% correct. [laughs]

Griffin: Via transitive property. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: “If I buy this beer, cute dogs will like me more.”

[Audience chuckles]

Rachel: So, this is the bull terrier uh that was bred to be a show dog and was scouted from a competition, um—

Griffin: I would love to be that talent scout.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: “That dog looks like it knows how to party.”

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh Spuds’ uh birth name was “Honey Tree Evil Eye”.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: [in an exaggerated, monstrous voice] Why did they change it?!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This would be a Bud Light right now!

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: If there was a dog repping it named— What is it, “evil tree”...?

Rachel: “Honey Tree Evil Eye”.

Griffin: Wow!

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Called “Evie”.

Griffin: That sounds like a *Warrior Cat* name.

Rachel: I know, it does! [laughs]

[Audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: Uh so the dog, called “Evie” by owners, uh was invited for a photoshoot, uh and then Spuds Mackenzie debuted behind a goblet of Bud Light while wearing a Delta Omicron Gamma fraternity sweatshirt.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: There's so much rich lore!

Rachel: I know— I know! [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: In this dog beer poster. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: So there— So there was this kind of like macho association with Spuds, so much so— So Spuds was actually a female dog, but they worked so hard to build this image that when the dog was out in public, they would cover it with a coat so that people wouldn't see it urinate.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, so they couldn't get suspicious. [chuckles]

Griffin: They made a dog— Sorry, hold up. [muffled behind hands] They made the dog piss all over its own clothes.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: To obscure its genitalia.

Rachel: Uh-huh, exactly.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: That sucks. That— Hey.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: If you were tryin' to figure out when the point is where it stopped being fun, it was the point where they made the dog piss on itself, so that it—

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: — didn't reveal its genitalia.

Rachel: Well no, somebody would hold the coat. It wasn't like they made Spuds—

Griffin: Ohhh! Like for courtesy. Oh, okay—

Rachel: — urinate through the coat.

Griffin: Now it's normal, yes.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: It was— [laughs]

Griffin: You're right.

Rachel: It was a team, really.

Griffin: Yeah, it was a team effort to hide this dog's... privacy. [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs quietly]

Rachel: Uh so the whole thing with Spuds, so I mentioned the macho image. There was also a group of models that were called "The Spudettes", uh that would accompany Spuds.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh in limousines, uh as the dog was dressed in a tuxedo.

Griffin: And what's the fiction there?

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, the—

Griffin: What's the fiction there? Were they di— Sorry sorry sorry. When you said models, do you mean dog models?

Rachel: I do not.

Griffin: Human models, huh!

Rachel: I mean human models, yes.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

[Audience laughs quietly]

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: That's good.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: Sure. Why not?

Rachel: So I guess the— the idea was that uh—

Griffin: This sexy dog drinks cool beer.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Right? Like "If this dog can attract these beautiful women—"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "There's hope for me."

Griffin: Yeah.

[Audience laughs quietly]

Griffin: This— This strong, macho— [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Virile dog.

Rachel: Uh there was a lot of branding built around this. So FleishmanHillard, which is also local...

Griffin: You— what—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You were waiting for an applause break—

Rachel: [through laughter] I don't know!

Griffin: — for Fleish Millard?

Rachel: FleishmanHillard. It's a PR firm.

[A few quiet cheers from the audience]

Griffin: Oh, yeah. You all are familiar with every PR firm, huh.

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Now, that's—

[Indistinct shout from the audience]

Griffin: Okay, someone actually works there in the audience. Okay.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: No, their dad.

Griffin: Oh, their dad works there. Fine.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, [in a mocking tone] I have a uncle who works at Nintendo.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Um. So one of the PR reps at the time was interviewed uh about the experience of branding Spuds, and he said “The first question we’d always get would be ‘What kind of dog is Spuds?’, to which I would reply ‘He’s not a dog, he’s an executive.’”

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: And then he would go on to insist that he— “Spuds was a human man, a senior party consultant, to be specific”.

Griffin: That’s extremely great, actually. I loved every second of that.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Well done.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I hate telling PR firms that they’ve done an incredible job, but that’s incredible. To just live in that world.

Rachel: And yeah, and so that was— that was the whole thing. They would never acknowledge that it was a dog, even though it was very clearly a dog.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The idea was that like, I don’t know.

Griffin: “Did you see the babes he was with?”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: “That— That can’t be a dog.”

Rachel: Uh, so the mascot, as I mentioned, was retired in 1989. The rumors spread about what happened to Spuds. [laughs] There was a article in *People* magazine that debunked that Spuds did not die in a limo crash. Or—

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Or while strapped to a surfboard. [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: That’s how I wanna go out. Strapped to a surfboard inside of a limo that is driving irresponsibly.

Rachel: Uh, in— in fact Honey Tree Evil Eye died in 1993, after four years of retirement, at 10-years-old, due to kidney failure.

Griffin: But okay, four years of retirement for a dog is a l— a nice long time.

Rachel: I know, I know.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Um, can I do mine second thing? `Cause I’m— I’m shifting my order around to really dovetail.

Rachel: Ooo, okay! Alright.

Griffin: Because I’m also talking about beer animals. It’s the Anheuser Busch Clydesdales.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Are. You. Kidding me with these guys?

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I— Okay, I brief history lesson for the one of you who doesn't know all about the Anheuser Busch Clydesdales. So after prohibition ended, back in, you know, whatever. Grandpa times.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um August Anheuser Busch Junior bought some big ass horses, as a gift for his dad, August Anheuser Busch Senior, as like a fun present. He told him like "Hey, come outside. There's a cool car waiting for you". And he was like "Woah!" and he came outside, but it was...

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: A grip of horses instead.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And he was like "This is a kickass gift, son. I love you so much. I'm gonna use these big horses to sell beer now". And so... [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: He arranged this great beer tour, starting in New York, where a team of just these [in a grunty voice] absolute units!

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Pulling a beer wagon made a trip, just a whistle-stop tour, of all the spots— the hot spots in New England.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: First, they stopped by Gov— Uh Former New York Governor Al Smith, who helped end prohibition. Delivered [chuckles] a couple cases of some cold ones.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Which I'm sure he appreciated. At one point, they did stop at the White House, and were like "FDR, do you wanna partyyyyyy?"

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: "Spuds Mackenzie's not invented yet, but—"

Rachel: So—

Griffin: "Let's workshop this."

Rachel: So they were like "Hey, here's our beer and look at these horses". Is that what you're saying?

Griffin: Uh, they we're like— uh yeah— No, it was more— No, the other way around. It was like "Hey, come check out these horses. And while we've got your attention..."

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I don't know how one develops the mindset of— that looks at their big horse gift and thinks like "I could se— sell beer with these very easily".

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And— But that is exactly what happened and it was... pretty successful, considering that there's a Super Bowl commercial every time

that's like "Are you gonna get emotional about these big horses this year, Griffin?"

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And— [chuckles] Whimsy is an emotion, I suppose, so yes, they always make me whimsical, but I don't get teary-eyed, and I don't know if that is a St. Louis tradition of [in a weepy voice] "There's our big horses!"

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs, cheers]

Griffin: There are currently three teams of eight Clydesdale horses, with two alternates with each team in case one breaks down, which is not—

Rachel: Ooo.

[Audience audibly winces, then chuckles]

Griffin: I'm— I'm delivering some harsh truths about animals.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Tonight. Uh just travelling internationally, just slingin', slingin' brewskies. Uh and... Here's some stats of what's required to earn a spot as a Budweiser Clydesdale uh team member.

Rachel: So those of you in the audience that are interested in bein' a Clydesdale.

Griffin: Yeah.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Let me know when you've been disqualified. Uh...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "To qualify for one of the hitches, a Budweiser Clydesdale must be a gelding, castrated, uh, with an even temperament." I wouldn't be. Uh—

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: "And strong, draft horse appearance." I'm out a lot at this point.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: "Must be at least four years old." Check.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "Stand at least 18 hands," 72 inches high, "at the withers." Your shoulder-blades. Horse words are good!

Rachel: Yeah, they are.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Uh, "18 hands at the withers when mature and weight between 1800 and 2300 pounds." I'm shy of that. "In addition!"

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: "Each horse must be bay in color, a reddish-brown coat with a black mane and tail, have four white stocking feet, and a blaze of white on the face." There's... Who is the evaluator for this?

[Audience laughs quietly]

Rachel: You know what it reminds me of is The Rockettes.

Griffin: The Rockettes. I think this is even probably a little bit more specific than The Rockettes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because it— do they look at the horses and they're like "Okay, okay. 1900 pounds, 19 hands tall, castrated. Loving it." Um.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: "White stocking feet, loving it so far. Oop! No white blaze on the face."

Rachel: "Out."

Griffin: "Destroy him!"

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: They breed like a million horses a year, just trying to get these—the Chosen One to come out. Anyway, none of this makes any sense to me, uh but I guess that's why it's good commercials. Um...

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Because man, I do love a cold— cold Bud. Do you like the horse beer or the dog beer better? Which one's your favorite?

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Oh, man. That is— You know, do I have to choose?

Griffin: You don't.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I choose neither pretty much every day of my life.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: That's very— That's fair.

Griffin: Every day of my life, I open the fridge and confront the Budweiser and Bud Light waiting for me there, and I say "Not— Not—"

Rachel & Griffin: [simultaneously] "Not today."

[Audience laughs]

[ad break]

Griffin: What's your second thing?

Rachel: D'you wanna hear me next thing?

Griffin: Yes, please. Please.

Rachel: Alright, this is one of those things— For those of you that have, have left the city of St. Louis, I imagine that you've had the experience of realizing that certain things are regional. Uh and one thing that I did not realize was regional was Wehrenberg Theatres.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I have fucking no idea.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: What that is.

Rachel: Uh... So, hopefully this will be exciting to you all too. I have asked uh Paul to cue up—

[Audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You could— You could play literally anything right now.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: You could play all of *Live Aid* right now, and I'd be like "Oh, yeah! This is good!".

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, when one attended a Wehrenberg Theatre in the 90s, one heard a very powerful song at the beginning of the film, and I would like... Paul.

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: To play that song now, in its entirety. [laughs]

[Audience cheers]

[Song "Wehrenberg Feature Presentation" from 1995 stars playing]

Rachel: [laughs] Oh. It's just starting.

Griffin: It's not gonna get better than tha—

[Music ramps up]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience begins clapping along in time]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience cheers]

[Song ends]

Griffin: My life is...

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Divided into two very distinct chapters.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: That was... incredible.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: So like you would roll up to see like *The Lion King* or whatever.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And you would be greeted with that— that—

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I'm going to call it what it is, which is a hymn.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I felt... Christ move through me.

Rachel: [cackles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: I don't know if that's what they were trying to accomplish with that arrangement, but.

Rachel: I don't know if you, if you noticed at the end, 'cause everybody was pretty hype, um but there is a moment at the end where uh you just hear the whispers.

Griffin: [laughs] No, I didn't hear that!

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: What do they— What do they whisper? Whisper it to me now.

Rachel & Audience: [whispers dramatically] Wehrenberg.

Griffin: Holy shit. Wait, hold on.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Wait. Absolute silence. Everyone do that again.

Audience: [whispers] Wehrenberg.

Rachel: [giggles]

[Audience laughs, cheers]

Griffin: Wow.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: So I didn't realize that was regional. [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Do you realize how much better the world would be?

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: If every theatre opened with that, for every movie, until the end of time.

[Audience chuckles]

Rachel: So Wehrenberg Theatres, uh prior to being sold to Marcus Theatres in 2016.

Griffin: Boo!

[Audience boos]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This theatre's like [sings in a gruff voice] "Marcus Theatres, you get what we got. Fuck you!"

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, the Wehrenberg chain was the oldest family owned and operated movie operation in the U.S.

Griffin: Okay. Did they have like one very, very, very, very, very cool grandson that was like "Yeah, let me just lay somethin' down for you".

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: This—

Griffin: [quietly imitates the Wehrenberg song]

Rachel: This is what's so frustrating. Like I would do a whole segment on just that song.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I could not find who sang it, when it was recorded, where it was recorded. I couldn't find anything about that.

Griffin: Aw, that's tragic.

Rachel: I even—

Griffin: This is—

Rachel: I even went into some like Reddit feeds, like to get around tryin' to—

Griffin: Is that what you were doing on Nexus Lexus the other night?

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Searching for [chuckles] peer reviewed Wehrenberg Theatre history.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: So Wehrenberg, not just St. Louis. It started in St. Louis, but it also had theatres in Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: But had nine theatres in the St. Louis metro area.

Griffin: Sweet.

[A few quiet cheers from the audience]

Rachel: Uh Fred Wehrenberg was inspired to start the movie house by— after attending the 1904 World's Fair.

Griffin: Okay...

Rachel: So he rolled up, he was like "Oh, hey. There's theatre stuff happening now". That's, you know.

Griffin: [chuckles] I'm just imagining—

Rachel: That's a Fred impression that I do. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, I'm imagining thought there was a performer in 1904 World's Fair that was like "Hey, check this out." [imitates the Wehrenberg song]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And he was like "Woah, I gotta make a theatre to go with that".

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh so he wanted to— he wanted to bring that to the public, so he rented the bakery next door to his saloon.

Griffin: [wheezes] Okay.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Bought a piano and 99 kitchen chairs, and launched the Cherokee Theatre in 1906.

Griffin: That's all it takes! A piano and 99 kitchen chairs, and a dream and an electric guitar.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: I will say, if— if you are interested in Wehrenberg history, uh... which it sounds like you are.

Griffin: It sounds like tough shit.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: There is—

Griffin: 'Cause it's not out there.

Rachel: There is an earlier them from the 60s and 70s. Uh—

[A few audience members cheer]

Rachel: It is not nearly as jazzy.

Griffin: Okay. Well then—

Rachel: It's still great. It's still great.

Griffin: Well, I mean, what counts as great for music has changed for me in the last four minutes.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Oh, were you— Is there more about Wehrenberg?

Rachel: Oh, I just wanted to ask a question. I'm gonna ask the audience. So, when Marcus Theatres bought Wehrenberg, the CEO told the *Business Journal*, "I'm always asked two questions; is the Wehrenberg name going to stay, and is the whisper going to stay?" And he said yes. Is there still whispering?

Audience: [shouts] No!

Griffin: Bullshit! Tear it down!

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: [sighs] Well, that's disappointing.

Griffin: Thanks c— Thanks again, capitalism. You did— You did it!

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Go ahead.

Griffin: Yeah, you wanna hear my last thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Tums.

Rachel: [giggles]

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: Tums. Tums were invented, which is already wild, that someone was like "I'm gonna make Tums".

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: I— By a dude named James Harvey Howe in 1928. That is... a serial killer name, but we're gonna move right past that.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And he was a pharmacist? Which I guess meant back in the 1920s, you could just... freestyle some drugs together and be like "Let's see what this does, boop!"

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: Uh, [chuckles] here's the history of Tums. James Harvey Howe's uh wife got chronic indigestion, and so he was like "Let me see what I can do", and he made fucking Tums.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: He just invented Tums for his wife, as a favor. [chuckles] Because she kept getting sick to her tummy so much. So he went down to the lab and made Tums. And then he was like "Try these", and she ate them, she was like "Wow. That fixed me! That's crazy!"

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: And then they— it spread like, everybody was like “We gotta get our hands on these Tums”.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I’m sorry, no. That’s the greatest love of all. If you—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: — had some sort of pa— Well, okay. In the inverse, this would be like if you invented Tums. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: For my chronic stomach issues.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: It’s the sweetest thing I’ve ever heard. Anyway.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Uh, he used to work at this pharmacy that was owned by his uncle when he was a kid, so they went into uh business together to manufacture and sell Tums. Uh, there was a radio contest to name this incredible substance, uh and a— a nurse called in and came up with “Tums”, specifically with the catchphrase that would later become the commercial tagline for a long time, which was “Tums for the tummy!”.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: So basically everybody involved with this project was firing on all cylinders.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: From the start.

Rachel: Like six months, just sitting around like “Oh, god. What could we call it, what could we call it? Let’s— Let’s leave ‘Tums’ on the board”.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: “And let’s see if we get anything better”, and then—

Griffin: I think they heard “Tums for the tummy!”, and they’re like “Yes”. But—

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: The fact that some— somebody was like “My tummy hurts”, and he was like “Okay, I have invented Tums for you now”, that’s the first wild thing. The second thing was “Hey, we’re having a radio contest for— to pick a name”, and somebody hear that and generated not a name but a whole brand.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: “Tums for the tummy!” Uh it is not uh owned in St. Louis no more. It got bought out by like four different companies before becoming a proud member of the GlaxoSmithKline Conglomerate, but damnit, they are still pumping out those chalky beauties right here in St. Louie, and uh I think that’s beautiful. I used to eat Tums like they were a food group, when I was a child.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: ‘Cause I’ve always had the stomach of a 70-year-old, uh but I don’t mess with it as much anymore, because you know I like to purify my body sort of through natural means. Um, but if I’m ever, you know, having a rough time down there and somebody’s like “Hey, you want some Tums?”, the answer’s always gonna be yes. If they say Roloids, I’ll say—

Rachel: You’re gonna say “For my tummy?”

Griffin: "For my tummy? Yes, absolutely. Get those Roloids and put 'em back in the dumpsters, where you fished them out of."

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: Last time your parents visited uh our house, your dad asked if I— we had any Tums, and I said "Oh no, actually. We don't have any Tums", and I felt like it had been an enormous failing on my part.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And it created a rift.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: [exaggeratedly imitates getting choked up] Between me and your parents, that I don't think will ever be repaired.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: What's your last thing?

Rachel: Uh, my last thing is Vess Soda.

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: Are you familiar?

Griffin: Vest soda?

Rachel: [laughs] V-E-S-S.

Griffin: Oh, okay. I thought you were talking about soda that you would take into a Wehrenberg Theatre, snuck in your vest.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, another thing didn't know was regional.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Left this city, can't find it anywhere anymore. Uh one of those great sodas that has like a hundred flavors.

Griffin: Oh yeah, sure.

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: All, I'm sure, equally delicious.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience chuckles]

Rachel: We've got Cherry Cola, Black Cheery, Pineapple, Peach, Pina Colada, Strawberry, Grape, Blue Raspberry, and Kiwi Strawberry, and the original—

[A single cheer from the audience]

Rachel: Orange soft drink called "Whistle".

Griffin: Whistle.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I haven't heard of literally any of this before.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[Audience chuckles]

Rachel: I loved orange soda as a kid.

Griffin: Yeah. Do you wanna do the whole *Kenan & Kel* thing?

Rachel: [chuckles] No.

Griffin: Or— Do you have that prepared, or?

Rachel: No, no.

[Audience cheers encouraging]

Rachel: Uh, so Vess started in St. Louis. Its slogan was “The billion-bubble beverage”, which I—

Griffin: That sounds terrible! [wheezes]

Rachel: I find it really—

Griffin: That’s way too many bubbles, man!

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: — sonically pleasing though. “The billion-bubble beverage”.

Griffin: I thought you were talking about the beverage itself. You open it up and a— the sound of a billion bubbles—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: — all tryin’ to escape at the same time.

[Audience chuckles]

Griffin: Has a sort of concussive effect. [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Oh, did I mention the Cream kind? There was also a Cream kind.

[A few audience members cheer]

Griffin: Sorry, sorry. Cream soda? Or just... cream?

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Cream soda, and it was a deep pink.

Griffin: Alright! Okay. I've seen weirder colored s— sodas.

Rachel: Uh, I wanted to also mention the discontinued flavors. So in the 1980s, there was a uh a Yoo-hoo, uh, similar called "Vess Chocolate", uh...

Griffin: Was it— And did it ha— How many bubbles did it contain?

Rachel: [chuckles]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: It was also, and this was before my time, so Vess has been around since 1916. Uh but in the 1960s, there was Brocca Pop, which was based on St. Louis Cardinals' base-stealer, Lou Brock.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: I thought you were gonna say this was a... broccoli-flavored beverage.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: And— And the uh the whole branding around that was that it was Lou Brock's quote "favorite red pop".

Griffin: That's so specific.

Rachel: 'Cause when I watch a baseball game, I think "I wanna drink what they're drinkin'".

Griffin: Okay, did he have— [chuckles] Did he have a partnership with Sprite at the time? So he was like "I can do your red pop".

Rachel: [chuckles] "I can do a red." [laughs]

Griffin: "But. I have to be very, very careful."

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, there's also, and again, I'm not sure. I haven't lived here in a while. Is there still the big bottle?

Audience: Yeah!

Rachel: Okay, there was a giant bottle constructed in 1953, uh which was lit by 600 feet of neon tubing.

Griffin: Oh, so this was not a potable sort of—

Rachel: No. [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: — soda experience. Okay.

Rachel: No, no. It was— It was moved and then refurbished for \$50,000 uh when the company was bought by Cot. You know, I'm feelin' kind of sad that all of ours end with [chuckles] somebody else buying it.

Griffin: Um, that sounds— I would like a— Where can I acquire this? Just at any, any store in this entire city?

Rachel: Yeah, I looked online to see if I could get it nationally, and I do not believe that I can get it outside of the city.

Griffin: Okay. Does it have some stuff in it that...

Rachel: [chuckles] Can't travel—

Griffin: [chuckles] Can't go across state lines?

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, that's— that's it. Those are all of the si—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Only six good things about the— no.

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: I've been here a few times and I very, very much love this city a whole lot. And that's not pandering, I really do like coming here, but I will say that you all have created nothing... remotely as good as the Wehrenberg Theatre song.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: That I have seen.

[Audience cheers]

Griffin: So I'm saying that like, that spark of brilliance is there.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: They sold it on cassette tapes in the lobby. I didn't mention that, but you could own that. [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: I'm get— You close out the show, while I get on eBay.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Oh, he— Yeah, he's doin' it. Um.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: Thank you all for coming!

[Audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: This i— This was a, uh, 100% a dream that I didn't know I had.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh and I am really grateful to have lived it out.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So thank you all.

[Audience cheers, applauds]

Griffin: You always— You always wanted front row seats to see the Blues lose in overtime.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Audience laughs]

Griffin: And to perform in front of your hometown crowd.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And here we are.

Rachel: Here we are.

Griffin: Uh thank you all very, very much. Have a nice bathroom time, 'cause I certainly will.

[Audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Bye!

[Audience cheers]

Rachel: A nice bathroom—

[Wehrenberg Theatre song plays again]

[Audience cheers fade out]

[Song fades out]

[ukulele chord]

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