

Wonderful! 231: Corn Tag

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[Theme Music, "Money Won't Pay" Plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: I just took a nap, and I'm feeling... buttery. You ever get like that? You wake up from a nap and you just like, drip out of bed?

Rachel: I... I haven't really had a successful nap lately.

Griffin: So luxurious.

Rachel: I mean, it's successful in that I lose consciousness, but I never regain consciousness and feel like that was—

Griffin: Oh, no. Yeah. that... nobody does that.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Nobody... There are people out there who are, you know, big nap fans. I would consider myself, I guess, among their number.

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: But I never wake up from a nap like, "Hah! That was the sleep I needed."

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: "I was missing that sleep, and now that I have it I've got everything I need to tackle the day the way I need to." I more just kind of, um, pour

out of bed into a Griffin-shaped mold, and I'm ready to... to very slowly trudge—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Maybe I'll... pour hot water on my body in the shower and then I'll be wet and tired.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Which is better.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: In some ways.

Um, I'm sorry you haven't been having good naps, though, lately honey. You need them more than anyone I know, I think.

Rachel: What happens a lot of times is I will lay down in bed and I will just kind of fade in and out until I look at the clock and feel like that's been enough time to fade in and out.

Griffin: Oh, that's too bad. You gotta get into... You gotta get into some mantras—

Rachel: It's such a luxury. The fact that I can even do that at all—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ... feels good enough to me, honestly.

Griffin: I guess so. Yeah, it's better than nothin.'

Rachel: I'm used to working in an office where you can't sneak a nap in.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so this feels like a real treat.

Griffin: You should let me, next time you do a nap, let me do sort of bespoke white noise for you.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Just sort of a Michael Winslow sleep experience.

Rachel: You think that's what I need?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Plus, I know that you like train... being on a train, falling asleep on a train.

Rachel: Fall asleep on a train.

Griffin: Chug-a-chug-a-chug-a!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [scatting] "Apples and pears! Apples and pears!" That's the people talking on the train. "Apples and pears. Apples and pears."

Rachel: [laughs] that would really direct my dream in a certain direction.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. But it would knock you out, definitely, for sure.

Rachel: And I would definitely dream about fruit.

Griffin: And... Well, the fruit train. Choo-choo, baby! Hey, do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: I do. I don't think I've said this before, and the fact that I'm not sure says a lot about our podcast.

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: And that is bulk trash pickup.

Griffin: I think you have talked about bulk trash pickup.

Rachel: For real?

Griffin: I think so.

Rachel: I... See, I feel like this is the first time we really leaned into it.

Griffin: Yeah. I guess so.

Rachel: Umm... We just have a lot of, uh, kid stuff.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Let's say. And uh, it's kid stuff that I don't think anybody else would want.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: It has been well-used. And somewhat broken.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it's on our curb.

Griffin: And people— And some—

Rachel: And at some point, somebody's gonna take it.

Griffin: Yeah. the city. The city gonna take it.

Rachel: And if not, maybe somebody else will. We've definitely put stuff out there earlier in the week that is not there anymore.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I hope found a good home.

Griffin: Yeah, it's uh... It's clutch. And I don't... I've never lived in another place that did it. That did that style of thing. I don't think they did it in Chicago.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: Or at least maybe not on the street that I lived.

Rachel: Well, that's 'cause you just like put your stuff in the alley and just hoped for the best. [laughs]

Griffin: That is what I did when I moved away, is I—

Rachel: I mean, that's how I got like, my couch when I lived in Chicago.

Griffin: You got a alley couch?

Rachel: Uh, the first place I lived, yeah. We got an alley couch.

Griffin: Alright. I mean, I put a mattress out there that was pretty good, and then I went back inside and I packed up a box, and then I took another bag of trash out, and by that point the mattress was gone.

Rachel: [laughs] It's incredible.

Griffin: Miracle Alley. Chicago Miracle Disappearance Alleys.

Rachel: My roommate got our kitchen table and he may or may not have accidentally stolen that from somebody who was moving.

Griffin: Oh dear.

Rachel: Because it was not next to a dumpster, and he was like, "I'm pretty sure they were throwing it out. It was in the parking lot."

And I was like, "But was it next to the dumpster?"

And he said, "Well..."

Griffin: It was a table?

Rachel: No, it was a table and chairs.

Griffin: Yeah, that's not the sort of thing—

Rachel: And it looked—

Griffin: ... you just leave outside without intent.

Rachel: It looked good, there was no noticeable flaw to it.

Griffin: How good?

Rachel: [laughs] I mean, I would take it home.

Griffin: Yeah, you would.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You'd take any table and chairs home, babe.

Rachel: What is your Small Wonder? [laughs]

Griffin: I'm just gonna say all of our reality TV competition shows are really good this season. And I wanna say everyone is doing a pretty good job with it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Who's makin' `em.

Rachel: We just finished *The Circle* and we—

Griffin: Bonk— Bonkers how good that season was.

Rachel: And we are getting caught up on *Survivor*.

Griffin: Bonkers how good this season is.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The game? Elevated to a really fun place. Uh, *Top Chef*, pretty fun this season. It's just good... It's a good... It's a good time of year for—

Rachel: We are super far behind in *Top Chef*, though.

Griffin: We are. But... And it's good that we have this reality competition to entertain us, because the reality competition that is hockey is, is now over.

Rachel: It is over. Yeah.

Griffin: Maybe the most heartbreaking ending to a game, definitely to a season—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... that I've ever experienced since watching hockey.

Rachel: It was literally, they lost in the last five seconds of a game.

Griffin: Yes. Um, it was—

Rachel: And you can't even try and convince yourself they're gonna catch up when there's only five seconds left.

Griffin: Yeah, they were really scrappy and like, fought their way back and it was a really intense game and then the Colorado Avalanche scored, it was, I think six seconds left on the clock.

And it's like, "Well. Fun... Fun sport. Fun sport and game. Glad we watched it."

Rachel: Now it's gone.

Griffin: Now it's gone. I mean, there's other teams still playing, but...

Rachel: Colorado for one.

Griffin: Colorado is one of them.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, we are spiteful, I would say, sports fans, in that now we... We will simply root for anybody who can... We have a bounty out on the Colorado Avalanche.

Rachel: Yeah, I don't know much about Edmonton but best of luck to you.

Griffin: Good... Get 'em Oilers. Get oily, in there.

Rachel: Get super oily.

Griffin: I go first this week.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And mine... This is... This is one of my more, I would say, lightweight topics.

Rachel: Ooh, I like... I like when you do those, honestly. It's like a little treat.

Griffin: Yep. Well, this one's gonna be a treat for you, then, because it is when a baby stares you down on a airplane.

Rachel: Oh, I know what motivated this one.

Griffin: I saw a Tik... A Tikky-Tok. And I showed it to Rachel, uh, and it is of just a very round child, very spherical sort of infant, uh, just staring at the videographer catty-corner on a airplane, just like, eyes bulging out of their—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: — head like, “I know what you fucking did, dude.”

Rachel: [laughs] I know. It’s not even like a passive, “I’m staring off into space.”

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like a, “Hey, I see you.”

Griffin: It’s like, “What’d you say to my wife?” Like that level of, [aggressive] “Oooh!”

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It’s a very... That’s a very good Tik Tok, one of the best.

Rachel: Do you... This may just be me, but do you, when you see babies that are that round, get kinda jealous?

Griffin: Yeah, we never had... I mean, Gus is gettin’...

Rachel: Well, mostly in the—

Griffin: Gus is filling out nicely.

Rachel: It’s mostly in the belly, though.

Griffin: That’s true.

Rachel: Like, he doesn’t carry it anywhere else. And sometimes—

Griffin: But that’s a good place for a baby to carry it.

Rachel: I mean, it's a good place... Yeah. But the head, when the head is big—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: — and the cheeks are big.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And then you can't even see their neck?

Griffin: When Gus was born, that boy's head was a... a like, regulation-sized softball.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like it was perfectly—

Rachel: Well, and you couldn't even... He has a birthmark on his neck and you couldn't even see it, the skin was so folded over.

Griffin: Yeah, he's a real chonker.

Rachel: [laughs] I remember taking him to his first appointment, and the pediatrician was like, "Oh."

And I was like, "Uh, we had not even seen that yet. I didn't know that was there."

Griffin: And then he... we were like, "Alright man, time to... time to breastfeed."

And he'd be like, "Okay. Like this? [attempting to breastfeed noises]"

And it's like, "No, dummy. Come on, dude!"

Um... yeah. No, I get... I do feel a little bit jealous, but mostly I feel just a great joy.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: A great joy well up inside of me. I've been talking about this with Rachel a lot lately, in that, like—

Rachel: In that we are done having children and will never have another one?

Griffin: Well... Oh, for sure!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But also that like, I was wicked not a kid person, especially a baby person, before we had a baby—

Rachel: I didn't see—

Griffin: And now that we have kids, I am like wicked a kid person.

Rachel: I don't know that you were like, particularly not a kid person.

Griffin: My—

Rachel: It wasn't like you disliked kids.

Griffin: No, it's not that I would dislike them, it's that I was constantly worried that they disliked me.

Like I was so... I was so uncomfortable about how to appeal to a child—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Or how to, you know, brass tacks stuff like how to hold a baby, right?

I remember the first time I held Charlie, I was like, [singing] "I am going to drop her, and she'll die and it will be the end of our family."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, but... I don't know. You get over that pretty fast, but it takes a little bit longer to get over the like, "What am I doing? Like, what do you want? What do you need from me? Can I provide it? I don't think so."

Rachel: Yeah, no. I think... I think part of the reason you're so good is that you commit.

I feel like this is true of a lot of things in your life, but I will say particularly when dealing with kids, there is no like, half-assed like, "Ugh, I'm a pony and yeah, I guess you're in charge of me as the knight or whatever."

Griffin: I mean... anyone I think could tell you that that's just bad play.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's just bad imagination right there.

Rachel: Griffin... Griffin is the character. He has a backstory, he has a voice, he has motivation.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: It's incredible.

Griffin: Costumes, sometimes.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Makeup.

Rachel: An arc.

Griffin: An arc. A hero's journey.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But man, the highlight of any sort of child experience for me is when a baby stares you down on an airplane, because it's just like... it's just a highlight of the travel experience.

Because sometimes they're just like, across the aisle from you, just like staring you down.

And then you can have a moment with the parents or guardian—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — who are just like, looking down at them and then looking at you just to make sure that you're cool.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin: And you can smile and be like, "Yeah, I'm cool. This is fucking great."

Rachel: I will say, as the parent of a baby that often engages with strangers on an airplane, like, I do enjoy when the stranger is into it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I'm like, "Yeah, that's right. You play with my kid so I don't have to." [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. and when they "Ooh" and they "Aww" at them, it's like, "Yes little guy! You're fucking slaying right now! You are crushing it! You have them in the palm of your hand!"

Uh, it's very, very gratifying as a parent. It's less good, but still pretty good when they're in the aisle in front of you and like peeking at you in the cracks between the seats.

Because you can't interface with the parents—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — and let them know like, "This is— I'm okay with this. Are you okay with this? Because I'm okay with this."

And you feel like, you know, "I shouldn't get this little baby too riled up. Maybe they're trying to get him to sleep."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like, you can't get that... that communication going. But the fat face squishing between the two chair seats? Still very good.

Rachel: Still pretty good. I will say, and this is probably true of every parent, like, time goes so slow on an airplane when you have children with you.

Griffin: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Rachel: You are just desperate for anything that will keep your child occupied for more than five minutes. And I don't know that you can get five minutes of staring at a stranger, but if it's possible, I would be on board.

Griffin: Yes, absolutely.

We are... I would say you and I are very polite people, in general? Like we are— etiquette is a... if not etiquette then just being considerate is a priority for us, I would say?

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: In all things. We never want to be, uh... we never want to.... offend isn't the right word, because obviously, like, we're not out there trying to do that.

Rachel: Disrupt?

Griffin: Disrupt, yeah, somebody's experience.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And bringing a child on a plane is the absolute fucking psychic crucible for that sort of personality trait.

Rachel: Yeah, 'cause you're trapped, right? Like, if you bring a kid to a restaurant there is always the like, "You know what? We can just get out of here."

Griffin: Yeah. My feeling about being inconvenienced on an airplane because of a child has been reversed since we have become the people bringing children on a plane.

And I think that that is, hopefully, a universal thing. Where—

Rachel: Although I will say—

Griffin: Uh-oh. Here she goes. Go off. Go off.

Rachel: [laughs] You gotta bring something for your kid to do.

Griffin: That is— yeah, a rookie move.

Rachel: I do get a little judgy sometimes if a parent doesn't have a— something for their kid to do. 'Cause I'm like, "Hey, dude, c'mon."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, "You gotta pack like a backpack full of things."

Griffin: Yeah. Or if not that, at least a crinkly paper bag.

Rachel: Yes! A crinkly paper bag.

Griffin: Our jam with Henry when he was a baby is we would sit down and pull out the in-flight magazine and hand it to him—

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: — and he would tear that shit up like the fucking—

Rachel: Like, literally rip it up.

Griffin: — Taz, the Tasmanian Devil.

Rachel: And now we can't do that.

Griffin: Now we can't do that. Wait, why can't we do that?

Rachel: They don't have the magazines anymore because of the germs.

Griffin: Oh, yeah. Thanks for nothing COVID.

Rachel: [laughs] This— This was the final straw.

Griffin: This was the big thing for me. Um, even like, I would say major breaches of etiquette, like the kicking of the back of my chair, it's borderline for me.

But also like, I know that the parents are probably, if they are decent human beings, like, also uncomfortable with that? Like also wish their kids weren't doing that. And also felt guilty for that.

And so the last thing I want to do is ever make it harder—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — for another parent to be on a airplane.

I will never forget, it was after Henry was born, I think, we were flying. And we were seated next to this very young couple—

Rachel: Is this the vomit story?

Griffin: — that had a little girl, who was just screaming.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Literally wheels up to wheels down. And right as they were coming in to land, she... she vomited like, everywhere.

Rachel: All over the mom.

Griffin: And the mom was bawling crying.

Rachel: Yeah, just burst into tears.

Griffin: The dad was like, frantically trying to clean it up. And she was apologizing to everyone.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I was like, "Dude. You are so good. Like, you're so money right now you don't even know it."

Rachel: Yeah. I remember that. Like, I almost started crying I felt so bad for that woman. Because you could tell like, they were genuinely worried about their child, because this child would not stop screaming.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then the vomit and then she was fine.

Griffin: But there's no way to like, really sort of like, let it— tell them in that moment like, "Hey. Don't worry about us. You worry about what's going on over there."

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: “We can handle screaming and puke smell. Like, we’re— we are totally good right now.”

Rachel: I don’t think we had Henry yet.

Griffin: Maybe we didn’t.

Rachel: Because I feel like that informed my parenting in a big way.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. I think so too. I think that it— also the first time we took Henry on a flight we were like, fuckin’, loaded up with—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — with things. We had— we were like, backpacking from one flight to another.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But yeah man, I just... I tried to do a little research on why babies stare at you, and the results were... inconclusive.

Rachel: [laughs] Ah...

Griffin: Because it could also— It could just be like, “Your hair is a strange color.”

Rachel: I really wanted you to crack that for us, Griffin.

Griffin: Well, sometimes, the one thing that I did find is that... okay, you look fascinating and the baby’s brain is like, developing rapidly, and so they just get easily enchanted by you.

Or, they’re very tired.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Because when babies get tired they just do this hundred-yard stare. Which I also, I would say, do that.

And also I would say that pretty much any time I'm on an airplane you can almost guarantee that I am tired, because I've probably woken up at an odd hour or I am touring and therefore just constantly chronically tired.

And so I'm sure I probably have given folks a few uneasy staredowns.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: On airplanes before. And I'm an adult man. It's not cute when I do it.

Rachel: No, it's creepy. [laughs]

Griffin: It's creepy and weird and bad.

Um, I just love it. I love when babies do these like, these breaches of etiquette that are— when you look at how just spherical and audaciously they are doing this thing, it just like, amplifies it to—

Rachel: [laughs] How spherically they're doing this thing?

Griffin: How spherically they're doing it. It just amplifies— it's just an audacious degree. I just love it. I love it. It's so comical.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I like a big baby.

Rachel: Were you going to talk about the history of babies staring or...?

Griffin: So, the first baby to ever stare, his name was Big Richard.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Big Richard was born in 1907. And his took-a the first airplane—

Rachel: [laughs] There's a big painting of him and he's just got big bug eyes.

Griffin: Big bug eyes.

Rachel: But he looks like an adult man—

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: — because they didn't know how to paint babies back then.

Griffin: And the flight attendant on that first flight is like, "What is that... What is that little gremlin doing?" because they didn't know babies like to do a stare-off.

Rachel: Well, and they didn't have airplanes either, so... [laughs]

Griffin: They didn't have airplanes yet. It was the first airplane.

Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Cool.

[*Home Improvement* Theme Plays]

Griffin: Got a couple Grandpa Bombs here and this first one I would love to read. It is for Anum and it is from Tyler who says, "Happy super belated six-year anniversary Anum. I love sharing every moment of my life with you and that absolutely includes listening to our favorite podcasting family together."

[sarcastic] It's the Greens. It's Hank and John.

Rachel: Oh, you think...

Griffin: [sarcastic] you would think it's us, but it says here, supplemental materials, "It's not you, you frickin' egotistical maniac. I'm talking— "

Rachel: Wow, they had enough characters.

Griffin: I know! Anyway, um, "Maybe we're listening to it together right now as we're brushing our teeth or taking a drive. But wherever we are, I'm just happy to be there with you."

Rachel: Babe, should we be listening to podcasts together, 'cause we—

Griffin: While we brush our teeth?

Rachel: Just ever. We never do that.

Griffin: Um, I mean, I don't listen to podcasts 'cause it's, you know—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's just like a bunch of just, talking.

Rachel: Nobody... nobody...

Griffin: Right? [imitates talking like an adult on Charlie Brown]

Rachel: Yeah. Why even listen to podcasts at all, really?

Griffin: It's like, "Wah wah Turbo Teen wah wah Pokémon cards."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [sarcastic] that's pretty much all it like... I've been doing it for a long time now, that's all it is folks.

Rachel: It is, yeah.

Griffin: And they give you money for it!

You wanna read the next—

Rachel: Who's they?

Griffin: The... um... Jesse... [snorts] Thorn.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, do you wanna do the next one?

Rachel: Yes. This is for Chloe; it is from Dustin.

"Hey Chloe, I am so incredibly lucky to have met you and wanted to let you know.

"And I figured since we met thanks to a certain ding-dong podcast, what better way to show it than through your favorite McElroy show, *Wonderful!?* Because no one is more wonderful than you.

I'm so excited to spend our lives together. I love you, Dustin."

Griffin: Were they the ding-dong podcasts being mentioned? It could have been any of our prior— actually, I think of all of the podcasts that I do, this one I think is the least qualified as a ding-dong podcast.

Rachel: [sarcastic] Oh, thanks honey! [laughs]

Griffin: I'm saying you really elevate it—

Rachel: [sarcastic] That means a lot to me.

Griffin: — to another level. And so maybe it's just a dong podcast, or a ding—

Rachel: What is your most ding-dong podcast?

Griffin: I mean... Probably *Hog Wild*.

Rachel: [laughs] Oh yeah? Tell me about it.

Griffin: You know that show, *Hog Wild*?

Rachel: No. I haven't— I haven't listened to that one. What's that one?

Griffin: It's the one— It's a— I mean it's a— you know, we play characters. Right?

Rachel: Yah huh.

Griffin: Like it's very like, accentuated versions of ourselves.

Rachel: You and your brothers or...?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: But we don't usually, you know— and we just talk about...

Rachel: Hogs?

Griffin: Hogs.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Porking.

Rachel: I gotta listen to this.

Griffin: You don't. Please don't. You'll leave me. They'll all leave me.

Rachel: [laughs] I think we have our bonus content for next, uh...

Griffin: Oh Lord.

Rachel: ... next bonus.

Griffin: You don't wanna be anywhere near that.

Rachel: [laughs]

[Ad Break]

Rachel: You wanna know my thing?

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Weather forecasting.

Griffin: You... love this stuff.

Rachel: I always have to know what the weather is and what it is going to be.

Griffin: Did you know that the Weather Channel just started a streaming network? This is not a joke.

Rachel: Isn't that what the Weather Channel is? Like what is the difference?

Griffin: I mean, the Weather Channel is a TV station. This is like a streaming, I guess on-demand situation where... Wait. I'm saying this out loud...

Rachel: [laughs] Like, how is it different? Is it just one is on the cable box and one is on the internet? Is it the same program?

Because as I understand it the Weather Channel is all weather-related content, all the time. What is the streaming platform?

Griffin: The Weather Channel dedicated— it launched a dedicated streaming service this month. It's \$3 a month—

Rachel: [laughs] You get extra bonus weather.

Griffin: Or \$30 a year. You get bonus weather.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The app's main screen is always on a stream that replicates exactly what you'd see on cable. And then [snorts]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's for people who don't wanna pay for cable, right?

Rachel: But want weather.

Griffin: But want weather.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You can say— I get it, man.

Rachel: You know, if they had weather bloopers, just, you know, for like two hours a day I would be—

Griffin: What's a weather blooper look like?

Rachel: It's like when a weather person is pointing at the map, but like, they accidentally aren't. Or they just— they're giggling about something they just saw earlier. You know.

Griffin: Yeah. Um. Who watches the Weather Channel? Who watches the Weather Channel?

Rachel: I do, if there's an emergency. This is the thing—

Griffin: Well, yeah, that's it.

Rachel: Right? This is the thing about weather forecasting. So, in my head when I thought of this topic, I was like, "How nice is it to know whether or not your weekend's gonna be sunny?" [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then I was researching and I was like, “Oh shoot, people never knew when their entire city was going to fall apart due to some kind of natural disaster.”

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And weather forecasting really improved the quality of lives for people. So hey, guess my sunny weekend isn’t the only reason to be excited about forecasting.

Griffin: Yes. I received my sort of, atmospheric prognostication, from Mr. Al Roker and my local weather people.

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: I never— but I didn’t have my— I never really saw the need to go on to a dedicated channel for it. Like that service was being provided to me in the middle of my *Today Show*.

Rachel: Yeah, but only infrequently, right? Like, you know, only “on the ones” or whatever. Like not all the time.

Griffin: I guess so. Al Roker never kicked my door in like, “It’s about to fucking rain!”

Rachel: And a lot of times too—

Griffin: “Get out of here!”

Rachel: A lot of times too they knew that was why you were there and they would be like, “We’ll get to the weather... right after the break.”

And you’d be sitting there like, “Oh, God! I just want that weather!” [laughs]
You know? [laughs]

Griffin: I don't... I don't really know.

Rachel: It guides your outfit choice, one.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Two, like, if you have an event coming up that you're looking forward to that could potentially get rained out, you're interested in that.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Three, if you're like in an area where you're like, "Oh, maybe I'll get a snow day" aren't you super interested? Like, "Let's see how that snow's looking."

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so. I mostly just wanted to see Katie Couric's incredible blazers.

Rachel: [laughs] I'm so glad you said blazers.

Griffin: What should I have said?

Rachel: So, weather.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Can I talk about it?

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Uh, so the big event that I feel like really kind of accelerated the whole weather forecasting field is the Galveston Hurricane in 1900.

Griffin: Oh wow, okay.

Rachel: So in 1890 the Weather Service is identified as a civilian agency at the request of President Benjamin Harrison. And there is a newly created US Weather Bureau in the Department of Agriculture.

So they're just kind of saying like, "Hey, weather's important. Maybe we should put some guys on that." [laughs]

Griffin: It's— uh, I don't know. I feel like 1890 is about what I would have guessed. The point in time where Americans were like—

Rachel: And then—

Griffin: "— We should start thinking about weather, guys."

Rachel: Okay, so the Galveston Hurricane, 1900. So this... The way that information traveled was real slow for obvious reasons.

First of all, August 27th, which was like a week before the storm happened, there was a ship that detected a tropical cyclone.

And as it's moving through the Caribbean the Dominican Republic gets hit September 2nd, but it's still a weak tropical storm.

And then on the 4th they start getting warnings in Washington, D.C., that there is a tropical disturbance heading over Cuba. They didn't use the word "hurricane" or "tornado" at the time to avoid panicking people.

So one, that's a problem.

Griffin: Yeah, no kiddin'.

Rachel: Two, this is right after the Spanish-American War. There's a lot of tension between the US and Cuba and so the director at the time, of the Weather Service, was like, "We don't take telegraphs from Cuba."

So they just... they just didn't. They just sat on it.

Griffin: So just a lot of ball-dropping across the board it sounds like.

Rachel: Also, that director forced local offices to seek authorization before issuing storm warnings. So if you were going to say like, "Hey, warning!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You had to first check it out over in D.C. and be like, "Hey, can I say warning?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And they'd be like, "I dunno. Let me get back to you."

Griffin: [As local office] "Hey, the roof just got— went away from my house. My house and roof were separated. Can I tell some people about this?"

Rachel: So, September 8th hits, and it's just kind of cloudy. They can't really see a lot of what's happening. So nobody leaves Galveston.

And then the storm hits, levels the town and kills approximately 8000 people.

Griffin: Eight... thousand?!

Rachel: Yes. Yeah. It goes up through Galveston. It goes through the country. Like, the aftereffects of that storm are tremendous. But this is like the most devastating national disaster.

Griffin: I... Jesus Christ.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

So in my head I'm thinking, "This is where people are like, 'Hey, we need to get on this forecasting thing.'"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because nobody did. Nobody went anywhere. Nobody did anything. Everyone's like, "Looks good to me." And that was it.

And then like, the town is leveled entirely.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And a lot of it is due to technology, if you think about 1900.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Like, ships, you know? Like how are you getting— there aren't—

Griffin: Yell real loud.

Rachel: [laughs] Like, I was literally reading about like, kites and balloons. Like, "Let's send something up into the air and try and get something."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it moves—

Griffin: But the problem with it is if you try to do a kite in the middle of a tropical storm...

Rachel: I think what, the other thing that motivated it, so 1927 the Weather Bureau established the west coast prototype for an airways meteorol— meteorological— that's hard for me to say.

Griffin: You got it.

Rachel: Meteorological society. Because Charles Lindbergh is doing his big like, nonstop, you know, New York to Paris, like "I'm going to show off on my plane" kind of thing.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: and they're like, "Oh hey, we need to start paying attention to what's happening in the sky because people aren't going to survive really terrible storms in these— "

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: “— rickety planes that we’re making.”

And so they’re starting to focus on aircraft. And then in 1935 is when they establish the Hurricane Warning Service, which—

Griffin: So just a good 35—

Rachel: [laughing] Thirty years.

Griffin: — fucking years.

Rachel: I know. The Smithsonian Institution also begins making long-range weather forecasts based on solar cycles. So this, this is the other thing, right?

Griffin: Solar cycles?

Rachel: Yeah, like trying to— I mean, because people were collecting information. It’s not like nobody thought about weather for hundreds of years.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: It’s just they were collecting information and compiling it but they couldn’t really predict other than based on like, historical data.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um—

Griffin: I feel like radar is when shit like, really popped off.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And they didn’t have that then.

Rachel: Yeah. A hundred percent. So, 1940s the Navy gives the Weather Bureau 25 surplus aircraft radars to be modified for ground meteorological use, which also kind of springboards the weather radar system.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It's like, "Hey, we got all this military equipment. Maybe you could start using that for weather."

And then the 50s is when you start seeing the weather— the weatherman.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like the guy on your news show.

And initially it was just kind of like, comic relief. Which like, if you think about Willard Scott, for example.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Like, he used to be Bozo.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Like, he used to specifically be a clown. Like the weatherman was more like, "Oh, we have characters and stunts and costumes." Like, "Haha, we're the funny guys. Lighten up your day."

Griffin: Yeah. Until shit got real and they were like, "Put away the— put away the clown butt."

Rachel: Yeah. It wasn't until the 70s that the weather presenter became part of the news team.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Like, "Oh hey, guess what? Weather is news. Maybe we should maybe— "

Griffin: Weather is news.

Rachel: “— consider it news.”

Um, the 60s is when the first Doppler radar was installed. 1969 at a TV station in Tampa, Florida. Which obviously made a huge... a huge difference.

And then 1982 is when you saw the Weather Channel.

Griffin: Yes. Yes!

Rachel: Triggered from an idea by John Coleman, the weatherman on ABC—

Griffin: [as John Coleman] “Weather should have a channel!”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That was— Uh— that was a recreation of the—

Rachel: I mean, it probably is pretty accurate.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: He was the weatherman on *Good Morning America*. And he partnered with Landmark Communications to put the Weather Channel on the air.

Griffin: Okay. So somebody went to him when he was on *GMA* and was like, [old timey TV executive voice] “You’ll never be a star! You’re just a... a weatherman!”

And he was like, “But what if weather was the channel?”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [As John Coleman] “I’ve got it! We’ll make weather the channel!”

Rachel: Do you think it was like a telethon at first, like he was the only employee and they were like, "You've gotta stay up there, man."

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs]

Rachel: "We got 18 more hours in this day." [laughs]

"I just wanna go to bed. The weather hasn't changed! It's been four minutes, what am I supposed to say?"

Griffin: Oh man. "Describe a tornado you saw one time that was really—that was bitchin'!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Uh, okay. Uh, so— "

Rachel: "It was real windy."

Griffin: "It was super windy, but in a circle."

Rachel: [laughs] And then 1990 was when the supercomputer showed up. So this is when they could start doing the like, numerical weather production models.

So start like saying, "Okay, if this happens then this can happen. And if this ends this way it'll look like this."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And, "Here's the 70 percent chance of that and..."

Griffin: I will never, ever forget pre-pandemic we were on tour and we had plans to do this Disney trip with the fam.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Because we were going to be in Orlando. But, Hurricane... I want to say it started with an H? Howard, maybe? Something like that.

Rachel: I don't know.

Griffin: I am not gonna be able to pull it. Was barreling towards Orlando.

Rachel: I mean, Florida.

Griffin: Florida, sure.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yes. and we were really rolling the hard six on whether or not it was going to curve. And we didn't like, cancel our plans because we were going to be in Orlando for the show anyway.

Rachel: Griffin was on that weather radar 24 hours a day. Talk about weather channel.

Griffin: Twenty-four hours a day. And then they— they— I remember the venue canceled the show.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because they were a hundred percent certain that it was going to just smash into Orlando. But then, by some fluke, it curved at the last second and completely, or at least mostly, missed, like landfall in central Florida.

And so, Disney we ended up going to.

Rachel: I feel—

Griffin: And it was abandoned.

Rachel: Yeah. I feel like we were like, a group of what was maybe like, 120 people there.

Griffin: And we will never recreate... It was a bummer that the show got canceled because we ultimately could have done it if the venue had not scrapped it.

Although obviously you gotta make the call that you gotta make.

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: But yeah, I— But we learned so fucking much about like, weather pattern projections and stuff like that.

Sarah Davis, who works with us, is a Florida resident and is like always boots on the ground like, "Well here's what this means about this hurricane."

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: "And this tropical storm's looking a little sus."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I think that a lot of people who live in Florida have to get good at that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I found it—

Rachel: And like the Houston area, for that matter.

Griffin: Houston for sure. Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If I lived in Galveston I would probably keep my fucking head on a swivel for the rest of my life.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: Galveston's on the coast, right?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: That's like oceanside, on the Gulf, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yeah. We've been there before.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: No. We've been to Sao Padre.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: [laughs] It is still obviously not a hundred percent accurate.

Griffin: No!

Rachel: And there are a lot of things you can't account for. Like for example when we had the freeze, we had been told there was going to be a freeze and that it was going to be bad and that we were potentially going to lose power.

Griffin: Yeah. that was less a weather prediction problem and more a "stability of our state's entire fucking infrastructure problem."

Rachel: Yeah. yeah. I have also seen that, despite the fact that there is a 10-day forecast, really only within three days can you have any kind of accuracy.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, there are a lot of things still to be improved in weather forecasting, but oh man, what a difference it makes.

Griffin: I always thought the *Farmer's Almanac* was a joke, because it's like, "Here's a book. You buy it. It's gonna tell you the weather for the rest of the year."

It's like, "Uhh, are you sure about that?"

Rachel: And that's a lot of what weather forecasting was initially, was like, for agriculture reasons.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, "I'm not going to plant a bunch of stuff if there's going to be a freeze tomorrow or whatever." You know? Like, you had to kind of put all of your resources—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: — into this crop, and you had to do it in a way that it was going to be successful. So you needed somebody to tell you like, is this gonna work?

Griffin: Yeah. "I can't do my corn party on Friday— "

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: "— because it's supposed to be pretty windy."

Rachel: Yeah. and then when I have the corn statue that everybody dances around—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: — like, the wind'll just pick that right up.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: For the corn party.

Griffin: When the children do a corn tag.

Rachel: A corn— corn tag?

Griffin: When the children have a corn fight.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, no, I've heard of the corn fight, but corn tag you lost me now.

Griffin: Corn tag is like a non-contact corn fight. It's like a night— It's a ge— because the kids get a little too excited.

Rachel: Like flag football except it's corn?

Griffin: Yeah, right. Because the children get a little excited sometimes and they throw the corn a little too hard and a child gets hurt... with the corn.

But um... God I would love an old-fashioned corn party right about now.

Rachel: [laughs] I know.

Griffin: I'd love some old-fashioned corn right about now.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We've never talked about corn. Should we do a third segment on corn real quick?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's fucking great.

Rachel: I don't— I don't have anything to say about corn.

Griffin: I don't either. Our baby is crying. I can hear our baby crying.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It's really harshing my fucking mellow.

Rachel: Totally distracted right now.

Griffin: Totally, totally. Hey, let's wrap up! Thank you to bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in our episode description.

And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go check out maximumfun.org, check out all the great shows that they have there. Shows that you're just gonna have a great time listening to.

How about *Judge John Hodgman*? I was just on an episode of that where I helped adjudicate a case, several cases—

Rachel: I haven't listened to that one.

Griffin: — about Dungeons and Dragons.

Rachel: I haven't listened to that one yet. I listened to *The Flop House* that you were on though.

Griffin: Yes, that was a good— a great time, where I talked about *The War with Grandpa*, a film that lives rent-free in my head for the rest of my life.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: We have a bunch of new stuff at mcelroymerch.com. Some new like TAZ stickers and designs. There's a Count Donut pin, I believe.

Rachel: Yeah, I saw that!

Griffin: It's really great. There's a bunch of stuff there. [Mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), check it out.

And we're still going on tour. If you go to bit.ly/mcelroytours, you can find tickets.

We're just about to do *MBMBaM* and *TAZ* in Boston and then *MBMBaM* at the Foxwoods Casino in Mashantucket.

And then we're gonna be comin' to like Salt Lake City and Portland and San Diego and Detroit and Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati.

So, come out and see us if you live in one of those places. Or even if you don't. Go to those places and see us.

We'd love to see you, that's for damn sure.

And maybe you'll see a baby on the plane.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Maybe you'll see two babies on a plane. That's the dream. Two babies, their heads squishin' out through one chair crack?

Rachel: Oh, like a little like, stare stack?

Griffin: And they're twins, too. And they've got... and they have little hats on.

Rachel: And mustaches.

Griffin: And a mustache. [laughs long]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Theme song, "Money Won't Pay" plays]

[ukulele chord]

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