

Wonderful! 236: Corrosive Cheeto Dust

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi. This is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hey. This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: This is the show where the two of us speak about subjects...

Rachel: Like breakdancing.

Griffin: Breakdancing.

Rachel: And Griffin does breakdancing performances.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I commentate on their exceptionalness.

Griffin: So let's get started. [claps] [making effort noises]

Rachel: Oh, he's doing spins.

Griffin: [distantly] Ow! Ow, ow!

Rachel: He's making everybody in our house...

Griffin: The friction— The friction on the carpet hurts!

Rachel: Concerned for his well-being.

Griffin: And I— Here's a new one. You ready? [pause] [popping noise]

Rachel: [laughs] Now...

Griffin: That's a new one. I've been working on that.

Rachel: ... was that like—

Griffin: I'll do it again real quick. [pops]

Rachel: Was that like a joint popping out?

Griffin: It my butt. It my butt.

Rachel: Your butt popped?

Griffin: It my butt popped.

Rachel: Is that what they mean when they say to make it pop?

Griffin: They do mean that. They mean to do like the...

Rachel: To make that actual pop noise?

Griffin: Like the lollipop [pops]. Ba-dum-bum... Like that sound.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: But with your butt.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Never thought about that before, have you?

Rachel: You're almost saying that like it's a challenge.

Griffin: It's... The way I'm sitting right now feels very empowering.

Rachel: Like, listener. It's up to you.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Make it pop.

Griffin: Don't make it pop. I don't want to be responsible even a little bit.

Rachel: I do like this pose. Usually you're perched like a gargoyle, but this feels very conversational.

Griffin: I'm very relaxed.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm sitting legs crossed, not even with... just my face facing you. My body is sort of turned away. I feel very much like I'm hosting a podcast right now.

Rachel: Good. That's what we're doing.

Griffin: Yeah. You have a small wonder?

Rachel: Hoo, really raced into that one.

Griffin: You have one.

Rachel: Uh-huh...

Griffin: I know it. Inside, I can see it. Inside you. It's a light shining from within your torso.

Rachel: Ooh. Can I take one that you maybe were going to say?

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: The *Stranger Things*.

Griffin: We talked- We did say that last week.

Rachel: Did we?

Griffin: We did mention last week, is the *Stranger Things*.

Rachel: Did we talk about [laughs] —

Griffin: We did finish— We did finish the *Stranger Things*. I thought it was— I can't remember a more fun television watching experience.

Rachel: Super fun. This was one of those rare seasons where they bring in new characters and I'm, like, super invested in them. A lot of times I'm like, "just give me the old crew. That's all I want."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But then there were new people and I was like, "I like those new people, too."

Griffin: Yeah. It was scary. And it was exceedingly campy, but in a way that they committed to without being the least bit winky about it, which is so refreshing to see that.

Like, it takes me out of it so quick when a movie is clearly doing some sort of pastiche.

I love the... Like, I'll watch any Marvel movie, but I feel like they're bad about this, like, anytime they do any kind of pastiche, they're like, "Get it?"

And in this one, it's like, "We're going to do it, but we're going to do it fucking hard. And we are not going to break even a little bit."

Rachel: I thought of... I thought of another—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: ... small wonder since we've already talked about that one.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Just kind of the window air conditioning unit, how it has advanced in technology.

Griffin: [exhales]

Rachel: We live in a two-story house, currently. One story has a working HVAC unit, the other story does not. It has been impossible for us to get somebody out here.

But what they did give us on the day that they broke it forever was a window unit, which, you know, I remember as like the little thing that you actually put in the window, but perilously perched on your sill.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And said, "Let's hope this thing stays where it's supposed to be."

Now it's like a big robot guy, you set on the floor and it's just got a little tube that goes out the window.

Griffin: Oh, man.

Rachel: And it is the reason we have been able to sleep every night.

Griffin: It— The— I mentioned this to Rachel, and you made a face, but I think that maybe—

Rachel: I bet people will agree with you.

Griffin: ... you've had time. Window unit AC just hits different—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... from central air.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You get that outside smell in a lot cleaner with a window unit.

Rachel: It also, I mean, it definitely feels cold in a way of like, it just hits you when you walk into the room.

Griffin: Yes. Of course, that is also because it contrasts with the fact that it's 100 fucking degrees everywhere else on the first floor of our house.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is not pleasant.

Rachel: Our kids have been real troopers about it because, largely because they sleep on the second floor. So it has been able to stay cool where they are.

But like Griffin and I, by the end of the day, we just, man...

Griffin: It sucks.

Rachel: It takes everything for us to not just, you know, call it, just say, this is it. This is the end.

Griffin: I'm going to say another TV thing. We just started watching the new season of *Barry* last night.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And that show still absolutely kicks ass. It's going in, mm, some dark directions.

Rachel: Yeah. It is so charming in, like, in the way it gives you like a real insider view into what it's like to be an actor.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: You know?

That is something I didn't really expect from the show, but I feel like it does a really good job of being like, "Hey, this is kind of the gross part of being an actor."

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And it still is exciting, but it's gross.

Griffin: God, there's a part— So Elsie Fisher from *Eighth Grade*, who is delightful, she was on *MBMBaM* for a guestpert segment, is on this season and she's like a part of this show that one of the other characters is on.

And she witnesses, like, a pretty horrific argument that should not have taken place in this professional—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Or anywhere or in this professional environment.

So one of the camera operators is like consoling her, like, "Oh, you really... I'm so sorry that you had to see that, but..."

And then her walkie beeps and she's like, "What's up? Oh, you're needed on set? Let's go." Like just immediately walks away from this conversation.

Rachel: Yeah. That pivot of the ability of being like, "Oh, you're a human being with needs, oh, but there's a job."

Griffin: "Show time!"

Rachel: "There's a job to do."

Griffin: Yeah. Anyway, yeah, that show is good. We're only two episodes in, but good lord, it uh...

Rachel: I imagine it turns out great for everybody. [laughs]

Griffin: I bet everything turns out fantastic.

Rachel: At the end, it's like, maybe there should never be any more murder in the world.

Griffin: Maybe that is how it goes.

Rachel: And then they all join hands. And there's a hugging.

Griffin: Do you go first this week? I don't know.

Rachel: I do go first this week.

Griffin: Please give it to me.

Rachel: I was really excited when I came up with this topic.

Griffin: Oh, boy. I can tell.

Rachel: 'Cause it's a fun one.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Okay. My topic is the *Weekly World News*.

Griffin: Oh my God.

Rachel: Do you remember the bat boy?

Griffin: Uh, yeah, I mean, everybody who was alive, I think between the years of like 1998 to 2003.

Rachel: Oh, it was even before that.

Griffin: Oh, was it really?

Rachel: Yeah. Batboy is earlier than that. It's actually... It was the 30-year anniversary of Bat Boy on June 23.

Griffin: Okay. But it's still not in publication, the *Weekly World News* is it?

Rachel: Well, it's still a website.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: You can't go to a grocery store and see it on the shelves anymore.

Griffin: Which was my, I would say, sole exposure to Bat Boy is that they would have what would essentially now be like an Internet shock image.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: but on the fucking front of their thing at the checkout at Big Bear or Kroger's.

Rachel: Yeah, that's what was fun about it.

There was a period of time, as I imagine is true for a lot of elementary school age children, where I hit this real interest in the kind of goofy, like, paranormal stuff, you know?

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And it was difficult to find because there wasn't really Internet, you know? And so you'd have to get like a book about it.

But then there was this magazine that was out there and was like, "Let me tell you about those aliens, Rachel."

And I was like, "Cool, this is fun."

Griffin: Was it a magazine or was it like a print, like a newspaper print?

Rachel: It was like a print. Like a black and white print.

Griffin: Right, okay.

Rachel: But it was like with the magazines at the checkout.

Griffin: Sure. And it blended in just so surreptitiously.

Rachel: [laughs] So, it is—

Griffin: You'd be flipping through and it'd be like, "Cameron Diaz, Cameron Diaz, Tom Cruise, Cameron Diaz... Bat Boy?"

Rachel: "Bat Boy!"

Griffin: "Cameron Diaz."

Rachel: [laughs] So that is the thing.

So that is kind of how the *Weekly World News* hit its stride, is that initially it was just kind of another tabloid.

So the *National Enquirer* switched from black and white to color in 1979. And the *Inquirer* still had this black and white press.

And so Gene Pope, who was the owner, said, "What are we going to do with this thing? Maybe make another one that's a little more like globally, "news of the weird" focused."

Griffin: Yes. Way more supernatural in nature.

Rachel: Well, so that's the thing. So when it first started, it was 1979. It started and initially it was just kind of combing existing papers, specifically for weird stories.

Griffin: That's fantastic! I didn't know that.

Rachel: Yeah. So again, before, like Google, there was really no one place to get all those weird stories.

And so what they would do is they would... And this is like 80% of the stories they published.

They would have three or four, what they called clippers, who were surrounded by mountains of newspapers, and they would spend each day looking at the newspapers across the world.

Griffin: What a fucking job.

Rachel: Clipping stories. And then basically rewriting the story and putting, like, a splashier headline.

Griffin: That's— I mean, when you put it that way, it's a little grosser.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Not as gross as, I would say, probably what was the standard operating procedure for the *Inquirer* or any other tabloid in existence, but still...

Rachel: So this is a *Mental Floss* article that I am citing. But they talk about how those stories were usually like, somebody falling off a cliff or hanging on a tree branch for four days until they were rescued.

Like crazy, unbelievable stories. They put it all in one paper.

Griffin: Four days is a long time to hang off a cliff.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: My arms would get pretty tired, I bet.

Rachel: And so that's kind of how they existed for the first two, three years.

So, like, all real stories, just kind of sensationalized a little bit.

Griffin: Yeah, I think that's probably safe to say.

Rachel: And then Eddie Clontz, who has the most newspaper name ever, became the managing editor in 1981.

Griffin: Can you say it with, like, a thick New York accent, like, [New York Accent] "Eddie Clontz! I need those papes! Oh, my—"

What was— What just happened to me?

Rachel: [laughs] Oh no...

Griffin: [Extreme New York Accent] "It's me, Eddie Clontz from New York."

Rachel: I was trying to prepare my own accent. I lost track of where you were going.

Griffin: Yeah, I went somewhere else.

Rachel: [New York Accent] "Julie, this is Eddie Clontz. Give me that scoop, ASAP."

Griffin: [New York Accent] "Come on, Julie, scoop me, Eddie Clontz."

Rachel: [laughs] So, managing editor 1981, he kind of inspired people to have a little more fun out there.

They did some airbrushing to create, like, a half dog, half cat, for example.

Griffin: Loving it.

Rachel: Kind of create these stories. They usually would get a source, like, people started calling it in and saying, like, "Hey, this crazy thing happened to me."

And that was enough for them to write a whole story about it.

Griffin: Sure. Vetting— They probably did not have a vetting department.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: They were just like, "Ooh, cat-dog? Sure."

Rachel: They kind of— What I was reading— So the *Mental Floss*, that article I was reading was kind of an oral history. And they were talking to people that used to work at the paper.

And they talk about how they kind of had two audiences. They had the humor satire audience, and then they also had the people that wanted to believe that there was, like, crazy stuff out there happening in the world.

Griffin: Man, I don't know— The lengths to which they went [heavy emphasis] out there.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It is wild to think— It's like it reaches the level of people who, like, see *Onion* headlines and are like, "Whoa, he did what?"

Rachel: So it got more extreme as they got Photoshop, which was like, you know, a relatively new thing when they acquired it.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And so that's when you got to see more things. So previously it had been a lot of "Elvis is Alive" stories. So between 1988 and 1992, they did a lot of stories on Elvis still being alive.

They actually— So the *Los Angeles Times* basically credited the *Weekly World News* as being the instigator for this phenomenon that Elvis is still out there.

Griffin: Oh, interesting!

Rachel: They were kind of the first ones just to say, like, "Maybe Elvis is still out there." And so everybody started kind of [crosstalk] it...

Griffin: Well, I mean, anyone could say that.

Rachel: I guess that's [laughs]...

Griffin: I could say that. Maybe Elvis is still out there. I don't know.

Rachel: Once Elvis lost steam in 1992, they developed Bat Boy. Two foot tall, 19-pound hybrid beast child is highly sought after by government officials, found... Do you know where Bat Boy was found?

Griffin: No.

Rachel: A cave in West Virginia.

Griffin: Hey, okay.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Probably Point Pleasant.

Rachel: You think?

Griffin: Somewhere in that neighborhood. I think that's where Mothman is from, originally.

Rachel: Oh! So they were doing... At the time they were doing a lot of, like, alien kind of stories.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And they were putting together kind of an alien baby.

And the editor at the time was kind of like, "Hey, you've got something there. You know, you've got the big ears, the big eyes. But we've done a lot of alien stories. Can we do something different?"

And then they developed this whole subterranean civilization and wanted to make something kind of episodic that would carry through issues.

Griffin: Uh-huh!

Rachel: And so they developed Bat Boy.

Which was funny because they had to be careful— So it is in the grocery store checkout. So they didn't want to do anything that kind of suggested bestiality.

And so they instead were like...

Griffin: Oh, wow, Jesus! What a... What a... What a wild leap for anyone to make!

Rachel: So they kind of suggested like, "Let's say it's this whole creature that lives in caves that we just now discovered."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Not like a person and a bat got together.

Griffin: Right. Okay, good. I don't think— Again, I get it.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: Crossing your T's, dotting your I's.

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: And lowercase J's. But that seems like maybe you are the one who introdu— You, *Weekly World News*, are the one who introduced the idea.

Rachel: You know, everybody has a line and the *Weekly World News*, that was, I guess, their line.

Griffin: [skeptical] Okay.

Rachel: So what became interesting about this?

So as I mentioned, two audiences, right? The one that's like, "Oh, isn't Bat Boy funny?" And the audience that is like, "Maybe there's a Bat Boy."

And so what ended up happening is they created this whole arc around the FBI, like, trying to seek out Bat Boy.

Griffin: Bat Boy was something of an antihero, if memory serves. Like, there was a lot of fondness for Bat Boy in this publication.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: It was not... I think that's important.

Because, like, I think if you hear this story and you weren't around and didn't see these things, it's easy to imagine this otherness that was sort of put upon the Bat Boy.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: When really *Weekly World News* celebrated this fictitious bat child—

Rachel: Exactly.

Griffin: ... in a way that was oftentimes kind of, like, whimsical.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. I would argue, I mean, like before the internet really took off. You know, there weren't memes. There wasn't *The Onion*, at least when they were first getting started.

Like, there weren't places where you could see, like, crazy pictures and crazy stories, except for this kind of publication.

Griffin: The *Weekly World News*, yeah.

Rachel: So back to the FBI. So the FBI started getting calls demanding that Bat Boy be released. [laughs]

Griffin: So awesome.

Rachel: The FBI would contact *Weekly World News* and say, like, "Okay, you have to stop printing these stories because people are calling us, protesting our capture of Bat Boy."

Griffin: You can't stop a signalman. The story is more important than you or I.

Rachel: [laughing] So Bat Boy, as Griffin mentioned, real phenomenon. There was merchandising. You can still buy Bat Boy products on the *Weekly World News* website. There was apparently a 1997 off-Broadway musical.

Griffin: I love this.

Rachel: Which I never saw.

Griffin: Oh, you didn't?

Rachel: [laughs] No. Did you?

Griffin: No. I uh—

Rachel: Who was in that? Was that uh...

Griffin: Oh, it was, um...

Rachel: Who was that? Oh, gosh.

Griffin: Gosh.

Rachel: Hmm. Who was that?

Griffin: It definitely had...

Rachel: 1997, so...

Griffin: '97. So in the original '97 run?

Rachel: Freddie Prinze Jr.?

Griffin: Freddie Prinze Jr. was in it. Matt Doyle was in it.

Rachel: [laughs] Very, very young.

Griffin: Very young Matt Doyle.

Rachel: Super young.

Griffin: He was Bat Boy. He played Bat Boy.

Rachel: There was also talk of a feature film that never came to fruition. There were people that would develop movie scripts, but nobody... nobody went the distance.

Griffin: God, I'm looking at a picture of Bat Boy right now.

And the photoshop, or I guess whatever was the rudimentary photoshop that they used, he looks sort of like a Trolls doll with a big, Nosferatu mouth.

Rachel: Yeah, there's definitely a Nosferatu. Somebody... Some of the articles I read suggested there is a similarity to "The Scream", if you wanna get classy.

Griffin: Possibly. The eyes are so big, and I would say beautiful, glistening eyes.

Rachel: Yeah, it's captivating. Like, can you imagine? Like, how do you pass that up? I feel like I remember seeing it in the checkout lane. Like, you can't unsee that image.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Okay, so Gene Pope, the creator of this, passed away in 1988. They went on to continue the publication with a different leader.

In 1996, I don't know if you remember, there was a USA Network television series...

Griffin: I do not remember this.

Rachel: ...for *Weekly World News*, which I don't personally remember, but it seems familiar to me.

So the publication ceased to be printed in 2007. August 27th, 2007 was the last print issue.

And then it went to the website, which you can still find today.

There are still stories in there. Apparently, it still gets picked up occasionally.

In 2010, a story about the Los Angeles Police Department purchasing jetpacks was picked up by Fox News. [laughs]

So, people are still falling for it, which is kind of entertaining. But, yeah, it's not what it once was.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: But you can still... You can still find stuff on there.

Griffin: Some good stuff, I would say, including [giggles] my favorite one that I just found is "NASA Confirms: God Throwing Asteroids at Earth."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thanks, NASA, for the heads up. We'll keep a eye to the skies.

Rachel: I never really thought about the comparison to the *Onion*. Like, as I was reading this oral history with people that used to work there. They talk about this whole idea of satirical media for the general public.

The Onion has really cornered the market on that. But *Weekly World News* was in there kind of early.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Saying, like, "You can make up some crazy stuff and it can have just as much entertainment."

Griffin: And the way that *Onion* has extreme self-awareness in that everything is a joke, this has a, I would say, slightly lower, but still definitely present level of self-awareness.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Where when they run an article like "Fire Breaks Out on the Moon!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They don't... There's not somebody with like, a, you know...

Rachel: I saw an article about the Eiffel Tower being eaten by termites. And if you're, like, in the middle of the country in the US and you don't have access to cable news...

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And there isn't Internet, I could see you having a moment being like, "Wait. For real though?"

Griffin: "Termites eat... Is it made of...wood?"

Rachel: "No." [laughs] But you know it was kind of... It was before you could really fact check anything, you know?

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And so it's kind of— I don't know.

It's a very unique, uh, experience that I think people had reading that publication.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it was— I don't know.

I'm bringing it because I found it kind of, like, charming and delightful, this idea that there are people out there just kind of swinging for the fences.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Creating these kind of, like, extraterrestrial stories.

And I don't know, I always found it really charming.

Griffin: Uh, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[ad break]

Griffin: Got a couple Grandpa Johns here, and this first one I would love to read because it is for Maddie.

And it is from Maddie who says, "Hey, me, it's me. I hope this message is what you need to hear right now.

"You look beautiful today. You're happier than yesterday. The days keep getting better. You may feel like you're falling so far, but the landing won't hurt at all.

"When the falling feels like too much, make grandma's brownies, have a good cry, and breathe. You are so loved."

Rachel: Aw.

Griffin: That's really nice. I don't know if that one line was, "Make the recipe your grandma taught you for brownies" or "Go out there..."

Rachel: [laughs] "Get your favorite grandmas together..."

Griffin: "Wrangle up some grannies..."

Rachel: "Make `em brownies!"

Griffin: "And make `em some brownies!"

Rachel: Both would be great.

Griffin: Both would make you feel better, I bet. Do you want to do the second one?

Rachel: I do. Oh, wow. Hey, look. This is for Evelyn. It is from Evelyn. We got buddies sending messages to themselves...

Griffin: Through time!

Rachel: They don't even know each other, and now they do.

Griffin: Wow. Beautiful.

Rachel: "Evelyn, this note is to a very important person in my life: myself.

"You've been through a lot and worked hard to be a person you're proud of. Remember to keep looking for wonderful things like your cats, your friends, living in Austin, and that you can always try something new.

"I couldn't do it without you. And thanks to all the McElroys for bringing me joy."

Griffin: You're welcome. Gosh. It's time! It's finally time someone said it, huh?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We're breakin' our backs over here!

Rachel: Evelyn, hold down Austin for us.

Griffin: Please lock it down and...

Rachel: Keep it great.

Griffin: Keep it great. Keep it fun. Keep it weird...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... is something we like to say.

[ad break ends]

Griffin: Got a spicy one for you.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Takis.

Rachel: [excited squeal]

Griffin: Curiously, we have two episodes in our back catalog that have the word Takis in the title...

Rachel: But aren't about Takis.

Griffin: Are not about Takis. One, I believe is called "Hot Brie and Takis," where you talked about brie. I don't know if you talked about pairing Takis with them or not.

We have another one called "Eatin' All the Takis."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was an early one, but, like, I don't think there— I skimmed through it. Didn't hear any actual Takis—

Rachel: Yeah...

Griffin: ... discussion.

Rachel: You know, I— I mean this is some... This is a snack food that I didn't have until I moved here.

Griffin: It is definitely a new phenomenon for me and we are going to do it now. We are talking Takis now.

I would say only for the past few years I've been eating Takis. And not frequently, but when I do get the urge, when I do get the desire to eat Takis, it hits me like a truck. And I cannot think of anything else...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... until I secure some Takis.

Rachel: No, there is no substitution. It's not like, you know, a Lays versus a Ripple situation, like...

Griffin: There are pretenders to the throne. I believe Doritos has a chip called a Dinamita or something like that—

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: ... that is a similarly rolled corn tortilla chip.

Rachel: It is rolled. Interesting...

Griffin: Which is what a Taki is, if you are not familiar [crosstalk].

Rachel: Trader Joe's has a good like—

Griffin: It does.

Rachel: ... chili lime knock-off that I enjoy.

Griffin: That is... I would... I enjoy it because it is slightly less, um, devastating.

Rachel: Yeah. Do you like a... like a spicy...?

Griffin: So—

Rachel: Did you have a spicy chip experience prior to this?

Griffin: No, not one that I enjoyed.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Which, again, we're— You can tell we're excited to talk about Takis because I don't know that everybody knows what a Taki is.

It is a rolled-up tortilla chip that is spicy beyond— It is flavorful beyond definition.

Rachel: Similar to a Cheeto, in that the covering is so dense that your hands will be covered in it—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... while eating them.

Griffin: Only Cheeto dust doesn't possess a sort of corrosive property in the same way that Takis...

Rachel: Yeah. God, my mouth is watering just talking about it.

Griffin: We got some Takis downstairs. I ate some for lunch. About...

Rachel: With your leftovers?

Griffin: With my leftovers.

Rachel: Interesting. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, it was leftover Thai food.

Rachel: [laughs] Sprinkle it on top.

Griffin: No, it was like a post— There wasn't that much Thai food in there.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, okay.

Griffin: So I just had some Takis to polish it off.

Uh, and then when I was writing my notes, like an hour and a half later, I still had a pretty spicy mouth from the Takis I'd eaten 90 minutes prior.

It is— Man, it's extremely spicy. It is also super sour.

So it just kind of overwhelms all of your senses.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: With just a single chip is just all it takes to...

Rachel: No, it's true. It's the kind of chip where... You know when you're eating a Pringle?

Griffin: Mm.

Rachel: And then ten minutes later, you've eaten 25 Pringles.

Griffin: Can't do that with a Taki.

Rachel: Yeah. Taki, you've really got to keep track of how many you're eating. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Set a timer on your phone or watch.

The chip itself is also really good. It's a little bit thicker than your average, like, Tostito.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which means you have to work just a little bit harder to chew it up, which means that flavor gets just a little bit more time to take up residence in your mouth and destroy your tongue.

So Takis are made by a company named Barcel, which is under a Mexican corporation named Grupo Bimbo.

They were introduced in Mexico in 1999, and they were imported into the States in 2004. And—

Rachel: Oh, so this is— I mean, not new to the country, but new to us in our experience.

I didn't know that there weren't Takis when we were kids.

Griffin: No, no, certainly not in the States. But when it did hit the States, it sort of became a much sort of broader multicultural demographic hit than Barcel was sort of anticipating.

But, man, just it's, I think, everywhere now these days.

Rachel: Yeah. I don't even know if prior to the song "Hot Cheetos and Takis," if I had had a Taki.

Griffin: I had not. I definitely had not. Taki is, of course, a play on taquitos, the rolled taco, which this is, of course, a sort of derivative of.

Something else I love about Takis...

Rachel: All right.

Griffin: And I did just haul a bunch of stuff downstairs—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... in the break.

Rachel: He's not breathless from his Takis enthusiasm.

Griffin: I did eat some Takis while I was hauling stuff downstairs...

Rachel: We both did, let's be honest.

Griffin: Yes. And so they're—

Rachel: So spicy, I always forget—

Griffin: They are so very spicy.

Rachel: I forget how spicy.

Griffin: That's what I love about it.

The predominant Taki flavor on the market is Fuego, which uses hot chili pepper and lime seasoning.

And usually that's all you can find on store shelves. It's the one that comes in the purple bag.

Rachel: Yeah. And honestly, I read that as a Westerner, that was like, "Oh, well, where is the mild Taki, please?" [laughs]

Griffin: Well, Fuego is the spiciest Taki that there is.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Which is what I love about it, is that the stan— You got your Cheetos and your Doritos, right? And those have spicy flavors. Sure.

Rachel: Yeah, that's what I was expecting. I was like, "Where is the, like, just a smidge of spicy?"

Griffin: The Takis flavor that is by far the most common one that you will find on store shelves is Fuego.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: It is the spiciest, according to the *Wikipedia* article.

Rachel: I didn't know. I did notice on the bag, though, that they were marketing other kinds that I had never seen before.

Griffin: Yeah, there's one that doesn't have...

Rachel: There's like a blue one.

Griffin: There's a blue one that doesn't have the lime flavor. I think it's just the spicy chip, but for me, the lime really sets it off.

Rachel: Yeah, that's it. Uh-huh.

Griffin: Like that gets you that good tajin flavor.

Rachel: Why do you want it blue?

Griffin: I don't know. Yeah, that's just going to get all over, isn't it?

Rachel: I mean, I feel that way about most foods, though. Like when a beverage is blue or a candy is blue.

Griffin: High risk game, that you're doing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: There are other flavors which I'm going to describe some of now because the flavor names of Takis are almost universally exceptional.

There is a flavor that is chili cheese flavor called Party.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There's a habanero and cucumber flavor named Zombie.

Rachel: Woah!

Griffin: And my personal favorite, there's a pickle and like, cheeseburger flavored Taki called Angry Burger. And I am deeply curious about that one...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: ...because I don't like pickles, but I do love pickle seasoning on, you know, popcorn or chips [crosstalk].

Rachel: We should say here, as much as we would welcome the gift of Takis—

Griffin: We are moving! Please don't send anything.

Rachel: We are moving. Please don't send us anything.

Griffin: Please don't send us anything.

Rachel: But...

Griffin: But...

Rachel: I've never seen those on shelves before and I'm curious.

Griffin: I have to imagine that they are a rarity.

Becoming more common are other Takis products like Takis Waves, which are potato chips.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: They're like Ruffles but with Taki fuego seasoning.

That doesn't sound so good to me. I don't know that I like a potato chip as much as I like a spicy corn chip.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But there is Takis Pop, which is just Takis flavored popcorn. And I bet that fucking rips.

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: I bet that's real good.

So Takis has also been the subject of a number of health advisories, some more sensationalist than others.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin: They're— I mean, I don't know. I feel like around the “Hot Cheetos and Takis” drop is when this prevalence amongst young people eating hyper spicy Takis became sort of a big thing.

And so around, like, 2018, there were a lot of... rumors, let's call them... that overconsumption of Takis led to an increase in risk of different stomach cancers and ulcers.

Rachel: Oh...

Griffin: But that's not— It's not—

Rachel: Okay, good.

Griffin: It has no scientific basis whatsoever.

However, around that same time, more than a few pediatricians came out and said, like, “Oh, yeah, like, the number of kids we have received in our hospital and emergency rooms for, like, acute gastritis. Is...”

Rachel: Oh... That makes me sad for Little Griffin that ate all that hot sauce.

Griffin: Oh, for sure. Yeah. Young Griffin didn't know what he was talking about.

So Barcel themselves said in 2018, they responded to these reports and said that Takis are safe to eat in moderation.

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: Which is just another reason that I like them.

Because I know I can only have maybe like eight to ten Takis in one sitting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then I need to walk away. So I don't, like, overstuff myself.

And I get completely flavor blasted.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Like, instantly. And then I can just feel good about the amount of restraint I've just employed and not like, eating so many Takis that I hurt myself.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It's an exercise in... I don't know, wisdom and judgment and a delicious one at that, I would say.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So, yeah, eat Takis responsibly. Eat, I guess, whatever responsibly. But especially Takis and hot Cheetos.

They got in some hot water around this same era, also.

Rachel: You know, I don't think I've ever had a Hot Cheeto.

Griffin: I've had an Andy Capp's Hot Fries, and it was so- and I imagine this might damage my brand- so gross.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So gross and bad, that the idea of another sort of puffed, spicy experience is just a nonstarter for me.

Rachel: Do they— And this may be me like making some false equivalencies, but do they taste kind of like a potato straw, but spicy?

Griffin: Andy Capp's hot fries?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: No. Andy Capp's hot fries are more sort of like eating a very savory, very spicy insulation, is kind of how I would describe it.

Rachel: Ooh.

Griffin: In my high school, for whatever reason, there was a vending machine right next to the Fruitopia vending machine that had different little five stick packs of gum that you could get for a quarter.

And then like three rows of Honey Buns and three rows of Andy Capp's hot fries. And that would be lunch—

Rachel: [laughing uncomfortably] No...

Griffin: ... would be a Fruitopia, some Andy Capp's Hot Fries, a Honey Bun, and then like, a stick of Big Red.

Rachel: So you kept eating the Andy Capp's?

Griffin: No, I didn't... I didn't eat them.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I had them when my friends got them out of vending machines. I never sought out Andy Capp's, because I think they were... I knew then they were gross and I—

Rachel: You just wanted to look cool with your friends.

Griffin: Sure, you know. Your friends are hanging out underneath the bleachers in gym class and you're like, "What are you guys doing down there?"

Rachel: Just holding a Hot Fry between two fingers?

Griffin: And they're like, "No, Griffin. You don't want any of this shit."

Rachel: [As Young Griffin holding Hot Fry] "This makes me look so sophisticated." [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. So that's Takis. They fucking rule.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: They're so... There's no other eating experience on the planet like it.

And it scratches this itch, it fills this category for me, that when I start to crave. Takis, literally nothing else will do.

Rachel: Yeah, no, it's that lime thing. I think that's the big— that's the big deal, right? Like, I love a lime tortilla chip.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: For me, it's pretty much exclusively—

Griffin: Little guac? Can't beat it. Gotta have it.

Rachel: ... That I'll buy. But the spicy and the lime?

Griffin: Ooh, boy. [smacks lips] I've already hit my quota for today, of Takis.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I've actually had about 15. So I need to stop.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Or else I am going to want to eat more later on.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And I can't do that to myself.

But what I can do is say thanks to Ben and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." Find a link to that in the episode description and you're going to just love it.

And we have a bunch of stuff at McElroyMerch.com that you should go check out. And we have shows coming up for *MBMBaM* and *TAZ*. And... do we have any *Wonderful!* live shows on the books?

Rachel: No, we don't. We don't. But maybe...

Griffin: In DC we should do one.

Rachel: Yeah, that's a great idea.

Griffin: We'll live there.

Rachel: Should we just decide right now?

Griffin: I mean, we should talk to our—

Rachel: We should probably talk to somebody.

Griffin: ... various representatives, but that would be a fun idea.

Anyway, that's all at bit.ly/mcelroytours. Thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. You can go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows there.

Rachel: Yeah, I haven't listened to the new episode of *Depresh Mode*, but I'm excited because one, Justin McElroy is a guest.

Griffin: Yeah, and I'm also excited to hear that. You told me that yesterday. I didn't know it because I'm not plugged in to my brothers' social media feeds anymore.

Rachel: Well, the McElroys, they're not a braggy bunch.

Griffin: I guess that's true.

Rachel: You know? It wasn't like he texted everybody, like, "Hey, guess what?"

Griffin: Yeah. "I'm up on *Depresh Mode*."

Rachel: "Your bro just hit it big."

Griffin: Yeah.

Um... That's it. That is it. We do need to go 'cause, 'cause... Just, we got stuff to do, okay?

Like, we're busy people and we have so many friends.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: [sarcastic] And I have, like, three parties I've been invited to today.

Rachel: [laughs] Well, tell me about those parties.

Griffin: Oh, one is from Janice.

Rachel: Uh-huh. And is there, like, a theme or a thing with it?

Griffin: Uh, it's a, um, or... A George Orwell. George Orwell party.

Rachel: George Orwell party?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: So I'm going to go as *Animal Farm*.

Rachel: I'm going to go as the eight in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. [laughs]

Griffin: [Snorts] I love you.

[theme music plays]

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