

## Wonderful! Ep239: I Left My Beans in Austin

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[Intro, theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** This is gonna be a fun one, I think.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is gonna be a fun one.

**Rachel:** Introduce yourself!

**Griffin:** This is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** So, this is a show where we talk about things that we like, things that are good, things we're into. It's been, uh... a minute?

**Rachel:** New...

**Griffin:** Since we've uh... Let's... Let's see if we have any new friends in the studio. Oh wait, it's us.

**Rachel:** Yeah. We're in our east coast office.

**Griffin:** We have, uh... We're summering, in our east coast home.

**Rachel:** And falling and—

**Griffin:** And falling and springing and—

**Rachel:** Wintering.

**Griffin:** ... wintering, and um—

**Rachel:** And here indefinitely, hopefully forever.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, here in Washington, DC. We've completed our sojourn across this great... this great nation of ours.

**Rachel:** Yeah. and we took planes. Like, I don't wanna make it sound like we drove across the country with our two young children.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Like, we're not heroes.

**Griffin:** But we did go all over this dang country in- during our flight from Texas. It all went great.

Sadly we did lose a friend, and that friend was my office chair.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It was damaged in the move, which I found out yesterday.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, I sat down to do a recording and I heard a pop, a sort of squishy popping noise—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Coming from my butt area, which is never where you want that.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** And I... I stood up to see that my chair had quite literally exploded underneath and shot ink-black oil all over our carpet that we had had installed the day prior.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [sarcastic] So that was cool.

**Rachel:** And I told Griffin like, when he told me, I was mostly glad that he was the first person to get a stain.

**Griffin:** And it was a bad one.

**Rachel:** Because I didn't wanna be the first stain person.

**Griffin:** I got the stain mostly out. But anyway, the energy in the room is as such: Rachel, sittin' in her usual chair.

**Rachel:** My beautiful chair, purchased for me after much complaint.

**Griffin:** Rugged, rugged chair, I would say.

**Rachel:** Yeah. It survived no problem.

**Griffin:** Uh, I'm sitting in a beanbag chair, on the floor.

**Rachel:** [laughs] As I was walking into the office I thought to myself, "Well, Griffin doesn't have a chair. One, I bet he's been using mine. Two, what's he gonna do when we're both there?"

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And like a true gentleman—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** ... he gave me the chair.

**Griffin:** Well, it is gentlemanly to do. And you know what else it is like, to do? It's a really big Dharma move.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah, you are—

**Griffin:** I'm sitting here cross—

**Rachel:** ... cross—

**Griffin:** ... crissy-crossy applesaucy, right on the floor. And you're in your—

**Rachel:** Yeah, in your beanbag.

**Griffin:** You're in your business chair.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Doing—

**Rachel:** Looking down on you, quite literally.

**Griffin:** Looking down on me.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And my finances.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I... The mic stand doesn't reach down this far.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so he's holding—

**Griffin:** So I am holding it in one hand.

**Rachel:** It feels like you're like a real rogue reporter right now, just like—

**Griffin:** I'm a... Yeah, I'm a cool camp counsellor, and I want to talk to you about drugs.

No. We want to talk to you about the stuff we love.

**Rachel:** You will have a chair though. You ordered another one.

**Griffin:** I did.

**Rachel:** You will have one by next recording, right?

**Griffin:** I pray to god.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, do you have a small wonder that you wanna share with our friends? [makes popping noises] That noise is good. Henry's been really into sending Memojis, those like, animated emoji videos.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** And he sent one to Travis yesterday that was just the octopus Memoji.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But he just made him go [popping noises].

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It was really good.

**Rachel:** That is really good.

**Griffin:** I guess that's my small wonder.

**Rachel:** We sent... We sent a cat to your brother Justin and he made meow noises for that.

**Griffin:** Oh, that's fun.

**Rachel:** Um, my small wonder is going to be... Gosh, the whole new selection of like, foods and groceries.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And just the experience when you get to a new city and you're like, "What do people eat here?"

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** "And where do they get it from?" We're having that in real time.

**Griffin:** It's very fun.

**Rachel:** We've been here a week now, and uh, and it's... And we've eaten at quite a few new establishments.

**Griffin:** We live very close to a Nando's, which I've always been intrigued by. And I got myself some chicken wrap with the spicy french fries from Nando's. Mm, golly.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** It was just as good as everybody says.

**Rachel:** They call them "chips."

**Griffin:** That's—

**Rachel:** Have you noticed that?

**Griffin:** ... wonderful. No.

**Rachel:** Yeah. It's fun.

**Griffin:** How... how continental.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um...

**Rachel:** You go first.

**Griffin:** I go first this week. I'm shooting from the hip a bit. I did not prepare. My office is still in its, I would say, nascent, pupal stage. A larval stage—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** ... of being set up. So we're comin' in real hot on this one.

I wanna talk about a game that I have always admired from afar, but it was kept out of reach based on my sort of location on Earth.

And now it is at my fingertips and it's at Henry's fingertips and we've been playing it nonstop.

It's Pokémon GO. Pokémon GO, the uh... I have talked about Pokémon before. You're making a face at me like—

**Rachel:** Well, I didn't realize... So the Pokémon GO from yore—

**Griffin:** Yeah?

**Rachel:** ... didn't have the little clicky guy that you have now.

**Griffin:** Sure. So Rachel is referencing the Pokémon GO Plus, which is a little, um, accessory that I think was available very shortly after launch.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** Uh, it—

**Rachel:** I thought this was a whole new Pokémon game.

**Griffin:** No, no.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** No, no. It's a single Pokémon game.

It came out in 2016 from a developer called Niantic who specializes in making these like, geolocation-based games where your position in the real world references your position in the game world, which is sort of overlaid on top of it.

And so your sort of exploration and most of the game mechanics involve exploring the real city in which you live.

Um, the Pokémon GO Plus is just a little accessory that you can, you know, slide onto your watchband or whatever.

And then while you're walking around and a Pokémon is nearby, you don't have to pull out your phone and throw balls at it.

**Rachel:** Oh! Okay. Okay.

**Griffin:** You just click the button and then it will do it for you.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I didn't really know for sure how it was working.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I knew that you had to have your phone.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** But I didn't understand how the little clicker interacted.

**Griffin:** And obviously it was in Austin, but our neighborhood was completely devoid of like, cell signal.



**Rachel:** Well yeah. And just not a lot of pedestrians in our area.

**Griffin:** Not a lot of walking in—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... in... I mean, not a lot of walk- Unless you live like, in the city?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like, unless you live downtown, Austin is not a particularly walkable place.

**Rachel:** Correct.

**Griffin:** You can obviously drive to one of the many gorgeous parks, or walk to one of the gorgeous parks that are there and there will be ample opportunities for you to catch monsters on the go, as it were.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But man, we live *in* DC. We live in the city, just a few minutes from a metro station, and I would say about a thousand PokéStops, which is where you'll visit to get your pokéballs and items and stuff like that.

**Rachel:** I'm glad that you brought this, because I have wanted to ask questions about it.

**Griffin:** Please, yeah.

**Rachel:** Because it is the thing most frequently that will get Henry out of the house right now.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Which is exciting for me.

**Griffin:** Very, very, very. We're also in this salesperson mode—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** ... still, for the city. And it's working. Like, Henry, I think, is really enjoying it here.

**Rachel:** We've tried to do like, a fun thing almost every day.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** That like, kind of introduces the city to him in an exciting way.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it used to be you could only really get him out of the house if you were like, "Alright. Uh, we'll go to Target."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But have you noticed? He hasn't asked really to go to Target lately.

**Griffin:** Yeah. and we live pretty close to a Target.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's amazing. Like one of the first things I did with him here is I wanted to ride the bus with him, so I could like, introduce him to the bus.

He obviously... We took him on the subway last time we came here when we were in our first sort of [crosstalk 8:16]—

**Rachel:** He loves that subway, man.

**Griffin:** He *loves* the subway.

And so we took a bus and just like, at every bus stop he would catch a few monsters and spin a PokéStop. And then we took this bus all the way down to Georgetown and went and saw the DC Super-Pets movie, which, second small wonder, pretty fun, I'll say.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's my review. And then we would just come home and look at our hoard of Pokémon that we had caught during our walk or journey or whatever.

And it's... it's amazing. It's really, really, really great.

**Rachel:** So I wanna ask... So you get a lot of duplicates.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Because we spend a lot of time in our neighborhood.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** And I heard you mention something like, if you get enough of the same kind you can do something else, or...?

**Griffin:** Yeah. So when you catch a Pokémon you can... Later on you can transfer it to the Pokémon professor for research purposes. And in exchange you get a piece of candy that is exclusive to that Pokémon.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** And then you feed another one of that same Pokémon that candy and it evolves them to their next form.

**Rachel:** Wow!

**Griffin:** There is a... So when the game launched in 2016, I was like, stoked. I was like, on top of it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We were in Austin at the time, and I was... You know, I was ready and rarin' to get out there.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I remember you like, got out of the house eagerly to get started.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But the game was in rough shape when it launched.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Both sort of technically, like crashing was a huge issue. Just shit just straight up did not work most of the time.

But even when it did work, there wasn't much to do. You could walk around and catch Pokémon and you could find eggs and hatch those.

And then there was this really rudimentary like, gym-battling system that was not very good.

Now, there's almost too much to do. Like I am still finding new sort of features.

Like, now Team Rocket is all over. And they'll just like, post up at the fuckin' Nando's PokéStop and be like, "This is our Nando's now! Get out of here!"

And I'll be like, "I don't think so. Go Magmar!"

And you know, we'll have to destroy Team Rocket.

**Rachel:** So you... So you battle, in the... in...?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Okay. Okay.

**Griffin:** There's battles. There's... You are... There's three, like, factions that you join when you start playing, and so you are always vying for control of these different gyms.

So if your faction doesn't control it you can go and try and knock out the Pokémon that are currently housed there and then you can put your own Pokémon up as defenders.

There are like big 20-player raids that you can do, that like count down to like, "At 1:30, at the Nando's, Palkia is gonna come stomping around."

And so you can, you know, I guess ost- I have yet to do this, but ostensibly team up with 19 other real human beings and just descend upon the Nando's—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ... to get that good legendary. Um... But then there's also like, trading. And there's a Pokédex with like over 700 Pokémon to fill out that Henry is like, very into.

I say Henry. I am also very into it. It is just cool, the community that exists around this game. Because it is not, I would say, gigantic. Like it's not... It is not this zeitgeist that everybody's doing.

I think maybe for a week it was that when it first launched.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** But the players who are still playing it are very hardcore about it. And I think it's because it is a game that is sort of associated so closely with one's lifestyle?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like, I'm going to be walking around anyway, because I live in a city—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** ... and I enjoy exploring the city. Uh, may as well catch a few Pokémon along the way. And then these like, really neat communities pop up.

Like, there's little Pokémon GO Discord channels for every little area in the country, really, and you can team up with them and try and work together to do those raids and stuff like that.

It's very, very, very cool now, I would say. And I don't know how long we will keep playing it. But I mean, we are both still very deeply into it.

And the way it has dovetailed with our attempt to get Henry comfortable in a completely new time zone...

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** ... has been nothing short of like, kismet. And—

**Rachel:** Yeah! Yeah, it really—

**Griffin:** ... I'm very glad for that.

**Rachel:** It gives him a very kind of easy carrot, you know? because if we suggest going to a place he's never been, he can't really envision what he is walking into.

But if Griffin's like, "Hey, and maybe we can catch some more Pokémon", that's all we need.

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's very cool. I'll post my trainer code up in the Facebook group or something like that. Because you know I need... [sighs] I need those postcards. Those are important.

Every time you hit a PokéStop you get a little postcard, and you can send it to other players and they can like, open it, to get items and then your friendship level increases and you get experience points.

But you get those from PokéStops and so I have like, a million, from this church we used to live close to in Austin.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah! Yeah.

**Griffin:** And we would just like... You know, I would walk by it sometimes, or really any time I left the house we like had to pass by this church.

And so I'm still sending people postcards from this church in Austin because I have so many of them in reserve.

Anyway, it's a cool game, and I thought the idea was cool when it first launched but the execution was a little bit off.

But I would say that they have mostly gotten over that now, and I'm just having a hell of a lot of fun with it. And so is Henry, and I'm very... I very much appreciate that.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Good.

[Ad break, *Home Improvement* theme plays]

[Ad break ends]

**Rachel:** You wanna know my thing?

**Griffin:** Absolutely I do.

**Rachel:** My thing will come as no surprise to you.

**Griffin:** Okay...

**Rachel:** It is the giant panda.

**Griffin:** Oh boy!

**Rachel:** Yeah

.

**Griffin:** Oh, these guys.

**Rachel:** These big `ol guys.

**Griffin:** These *big* guys.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Part of our salesmanship when it comes to DC has always been the pandas.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Because very, very few places have them. And—

**Griffin:** Yeah. Aren't there only two in America? I mean two place- Two... It's us and San Diego, right? I don't know that it... they have pandas anywhere else.

**Rachel:** So there are 600 pandas that live in zoos around the world.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay.

**Rachel:** But I don't know how those zoos are stacked up.

**Griffin:** I may be wrong. Yeah.

**Rachel:** But I mean, I know that I've never lived anywhere with a panda.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's true.

**Rachel:** And I mean, they're just undeniable, you know?



**Griffin:** [wistful sigh]

**Rachel:** They're like... They're the cutest, for a lot of reasons.

**Griffin:** There aren't many animals where just like, when they do *anything*...

**Rachel:** Anything!

**Griffin:** ... you're like, "Oh you fuckin' scamp!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "Look at you literally just sitting down in a corner and scratching your leg."

**Rachel:** I know. Their like... Their body composition and their little faces. Like there is no part of a panda that I don't find adorable.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** And so I did like a little research on the giant panda and also a little research on how they came to the Smithsonian Zoo.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Uh, so—

**Griffin:** I will say it's fucked up the Smithsonian Zoo puts the red panda exhibit right next to the giant panda exhibit, which is way bigger.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which those red pandas probably look at the giant panda... Well, I mean, I guess they are giant so they do need a little bit more space. But people would—

**Rachel:** I don't think—

**Griffin:** ... just breeze right by poor red panda and I'm over here like, red panda stan. Although I do think *Turning Red* has boosted the stock of the red panda.

**Rachel:** Yeah, right? You would hope so.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I feel like it's very easy to not- for me- to not associate the red panda with the giant panda, you know?

**Griffin:** Well, that's wild.

**Rachel:** Well just 'cause they... They're very different, in a lot of ways, you know?

**Griffin:** Well, one is red. Famously.

**Rachel:** Well, but also like the way they get around.

**Griffin:** One's giant. Yeah.

**Rachel:** The way they get around is different.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know? And their tail. The tail situation.

**Griffin:** The tail situation is wild, yeah.

**Rachel:** So there's a lot I didn't know about pandas.

**Griffin:** Okay. They're venomous. They have venomous barbs.

**Rachel:** [laughs] No, basically all pandas do is eat. They eat 70 to a hundred pounds of bamboo each day.

**Griffin:** that's a lot of bamboo.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** I wish we could've had `em at our old house when we had wild bamboo all over. You get one panda in there they'd knock it out in an afternoon.

**Rachel:** Apparently the Smithsonian Zoo used to take bamboo donations. Which they don't anymore, but like, that would have really come in handy.

**Griffin:** I would have happily kept a panda fat and happy—

**Rachel:** I know!

**Griffin:** ... with our own shitty wild bamboo that I hated so much.

**Rachel:** So the digestion of a panda is pretty inefficient, which is why they have to eat so much. They spend 10 to 16 hours a day feeding, because they um... And this is from the World Wildlife Federation, they um—

**Griffin:** And their logo is a panda—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** ... so they know what the fuck they're talking about.

**Rachel:** They um... They poop 40 times a day. [shocked silence] S-[laughs]

**Griffin:** That's...

**Rachel:** [laughs] Can you imagine? You're spending 10 to 16 hours eating 70 to a hundred pounds of food. And then you're just constantly pooping.

**Griffin:** Just always kind of pooping a little bit.

**Rachel:** Yeah. This is part of the reason, when they talk about kind of the crisis around pandas being endangered for a long period of time?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Part of it is like, "Who's got time to get busy?"

**Griffin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know?

**Griffin:** [As amorous panda] "I would love... Tonight is a very special night, Melissa. I appreciate you cooking the pot roast, you know it's my favorite. And you've put on some really smooth music. I know what you need tonight, but I cannot give it to you."

**Rachel:** [laughing] [As amorous panda] "I cannot stop."

**Griffin:** [As amorous panda] "I can't... I have only pooped 26 times today. I have a lot to catch up on."

**Rachel:** [As amorous panda] "I wanna respect you and your body, so I don't wanna be eating—"

**Griffin:** [As amorous panda] "And your needs."

**Rachel:** [As amorous panda] "... or pooping while we're engaged."

**Griffin:** [As amorous panda] "No. No."

**Rachel:** [As amorous panda] "So I'd like to stop both of them, but I can't, unfortunately."

**Griffin:** [As amorous panda] "I can not. Because I do it *40 times a day!*"

**Rachel:** [laughs] In addition, when I talk about the difficulty to get pandas to successfully mate... So, a female panda is only in heat once a year in the spring for 12 to 25 days.

And then this is the article, the Smithsonian said, "and she's only receptive to mating for two to seven of those days."

**Griffin:** [as hack comic] "Heh, right?"

**Rachel:** [laughs hard]

**Griffin:** [As hack comic] "Yeah. Sounds—"

[laughs] I can't... That character is really hard to play.

**Rachel:** [still laughing] Yeah, it's pretty gross.

**Griffin:** [As hack comic] "Right?!"

**Rachel:** Right.

**Griffin:** [as hack comic] "Sound like, familiar? Ha ha heh heh. You all know what I mean."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** There's a... I feel like I can make *that* joke, but also you could very easily lay the pooping 40 times a day right back at my, you know.

**Rachel:** No, I'm not gonna do that.

**Griffin:** No. And I'm not gonna do the other thing.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. Well, you kinda did a little bit.

**Griffin:** That was a goof.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You... You have an insatiable—

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay. Nope. Nope.

**Griffin:** [cackles]

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, so... So yeah, so that's it for the year. So if it doesn't work out, like, we've gotta wait a while to try again. That's why most of the pandas you'll see in zoos are a result of insemination.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like there are panda couples, you know? For example, the Smithsonian Zoo has Mei Xiang and Tian Tian.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which arrived in 2000. And they have produced several offspring.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** But... But not through their lovemaking.

**Griffin:** Not the uh... Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** [laughs] But I wanted to talk about like, how they got started. you know how we talked about presidential gifts and animals?

**Griffin:** Are you about to tell me there was a president that had a panda bear?

**Rachel:** It was a gift.

**Griffin:** It was a gift?

**Rachel:** So Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing were a gift to Pat Nixon, when she mentioned in China that she loved pandas. They were like, on a visit and—

**Griffin:** And they just...?

**Rachel:** In 1972, she's like, "Oh, you know what? I love pandas." And so they—

**Griffin:** Gave her two pandas?

**Rachel:** They gave here two pandas. Like, "Here you go." [laughs]

**Griffin:** To—

**Rachel:** "We got tons of these guys. Take two."

**Griffin:** "Take a couple." That's wild. How do you... A panda seems like it would be a pretty *horrible*... It poops *40 times a day*, Pat!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Havin' fun Pat? So cute and fluff- That was probably a gift in a very like, sinister sense. They were like, "Oh, you love pandas, huh?"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "You *really* love these pandas?"

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "Alright. I hope you don't have carpet. Here they come. That's two of `em. That means *80*, Pat! Eighty a day, Pat, between the two of `em, Pat! Have fun!"

**Rachel:** So the reason I even knew about that is when we went to the zoo the other day, they were talking about the 50th anniversary. It was the arrival of those pandas.

It would've happened 50 years ago. April 2022 is the 50th anniversary.

**Griffin:** Huh. Were they the first pandas in... in America?

**Rachel:** I... You know, that I can't tell you.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** I just know that that's when the Smithsonian got in the panda game.

**Griffin:** Okay. I see.

**Rachel:** And then the current pandas that I mentioned, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian have been producing cubs. Mei Xiang actually gave birth to a panda at age 22, making her the oldest panda to give birth in the United States.

**Griffin:** Oh. Uh...

**Rachel:** Which is kind of exciting.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I don't know, but also I don't think I want to know, the lifespan of a panda.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I don't actually... I didn't look it up! [laughs]

**Griffin:** I don't... I'm uncomfortable with the idea of them, you know, oofing. Because it's like... they're so... They're so powerful and so cute. I'd like the idea of just they retire, instead.

**Rachel:** So the thing that is kind of... I mean, I get it. But so this relationship with China and the China Wildlife Conservation Association is kind of how we stay in pandas.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And what happens is we, you know, get these pandas together. They produce an offspring, and after about four years we send 'em back to China.

**Griffin:** Oh! Okay.

**Rachel:** Just to help kind of repopulate. So pandas are actually no longer endangered. They're considered a vulnerable species.



**Griffin:** I can't imagine there's a lot of panda, like... hunting? I don't know. I shouldn't talk out of my ass. It's just... Uh, it doesn't seem like they have many natural predators, if they exist mostly in captivity.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, I mentioned earlier that there were 600 pandas living in zoos. And there are as few as 1800 giant pandas living just in the wild, so...

**Griffin:** Okay. Uh-huh. It's not a lot.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Um, so if you go to the Smithsonian Zoo website there's a panda cam. You can just watch these pandas any time you want.

**Griffin:** I like that!

**Rachel:** They have birthday parties for the pandas.

**Griffin:** I like that a lot!

**Rachel:** They also have little like, celebrations when a panda goes back to China. It feels sad to me. I get that it's not, but this idea that these little...

These parents get together. They spend four years with their baby, and then they send their baby off.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know? I mean I'm sure... I'm sure it's different for them.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know? Than it is for us.

**Griffin:** For pandas? Yeah, we shouldn't project our human—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... expectations, upon these [crosstalk 33:40].

**Rachel:** But I'm just... I guess I'm just saying, so Mei Xiang and Tian Tian are only going to be here until 2023.

**Griffin:** Oh my god.

**Rachel:** And then they are... They're going back to China.

**Griffin:** Well what are they... Who are they gonna put in that big panda bear exhibit? Don't tell Henry that!

**Rachel:** I... Maybe we'll get some new pandas, I don't know. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh hold on! Now we're talkin'! Fresh, young, sexy, giant pandas.

**Rachel:** Coming on skateboards.

**Griffin:** Comin' in, "What's up, losers?"

**Rachel:** [laughs] I love these pandas. I love 'em so much. I love that when you go to the zoo, it's like half of the zoo is basically dedicated to these pandas and all of their merchandise. Um—

**Griffin:** It is such a big to do, and then you walk in and you just see these big, just slow, just dumb-dumbs. Just like sitting—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ... like they have four bones in their whole body.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like, all of this, for you. You special, beautiful, spherical boy.

**Rachel:** It is... It is... I mean, it's a large habitat and it is easy to kind of tell where the pandas are, because people will cluster. And if you don't see anybody clustered, most likely you have to go inside.

And so what happened to us is last time, is that we were like, "Okay, they're inside." And then by the time we got to the inside they were back outside again.

**Griffin:** We saw one of their butts just walkin' away. Not today.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But we've gone before and seen 'em just like, straight up dead-eye looking at us while eating just a big cabbage or something.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's like, "Yeah, you like... Is this doin' it for you? Stick around. I got something I'm gonna do a lot today."

**Rachel:** [laughs] So that's pandas.

**Griffin:** Thank you pandas. And 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 the episode description.

We should... I don't know that we've formally said this, but I would hope that people would have the... Would put it together that we don't live in Austin anymore, so please... We've shut down that box.

**Rachel:** Yeah. The PO box is no longer, and we have not replaced it.

**Griffin:** We have not replaced it. I don't know what the plan is for that. But yeah, please don't send stuff to Austin.

**Rachel:** Thank you to everybody that has sent us stuff.

**Griffin:** Yeah! We don't mention it, but it's... People have sent us some really amazing stuff and we appreciate it.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Hey, thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), check out all the great shows that they have there.

Maybe you'll find a new favorite. Maybe you'll find something that you just can't get enough of.

And what el- I mean, we have merch at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com). We got some shows comin' up. You can find those at [bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours)?

**Rachel:** [laughs] I don't know.

**Griffin:** I'll double check on that.

Yeah, I think that's it. Thank you for being patient for us while we went biweekly there for a little bit.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Now we're back and better than ever.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** My body hurts so much.

**Rachel:** Yeah. We... We have been unpacking, and on our whirlwind tour of the country and of DC, and it has been an exhausting time.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Um, but—

**Griffin:** And sitting in a beanbag chair...

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** ... is probab- Is not the... I don't feel the best about myself I've ever felt.

**Rachel:** Not just the beanbag chair, but like a beanbag chair we've had for like five or six years now.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It doesn't offer a lot of lumbar support.

**Griffin:** A lot of the beans have fused, on a sort of molecular level.

**Rachel:** We left some beans in Austin, I'm sure.

**Griffin:** For sure. And so I'm basically... I'm sitting on the ground.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And it's... And it's not doing much for my posture.

**Rachel:** Do you appreciate though that I'm looking directly into your eyes and nowhere else?

**Griffin:** Um, I mean, when you were doing your bit—

**Rachel:** Because your—

**Griffin:** ... you were looking a lot at your computer, and so I did feel like I was trying to get the teacher's attention—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ... and she just wasn't giving it to me.

**Rachel:** I'm just saying, in your position, I could be looking somewhere else.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh, at my... Oh.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh, I see.

**Rachel:** But I'm not.

**Griffin:** You're not.

**Rachel:** Because I respect you.

**Griffin:** And I respect you.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Goodbye everybody.

**Rachel:** Goodbye.

[Outro, theme song plays]

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