

Wonderful! Episode 18: That Smooth Soup

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[theme song Money Don't Pay by bo en plays]

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

Hi, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin:

Why do I sound like this? Hold on, let me tu- touch some of the knobs on the microphone. Gotta tweak it. Cause obviously the pitch setting has been turned down quite a bit. Let me see. And they turned it up to feel. So let's do that.

Rachel:

Everybody knows you're sick, Griffin.

Griffin:

Okay. Well, maybe not. Maybe this is the only podcast they listened to.

Rachel:

I can't believe that's true.

Griffin:

It's gotta be true.

Rachel:

Once you get a taste of Griffin McElroy's...

Griffin:

Once you tasted the McElroy juice.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

[laughs] I'm sorry.

Griffin:

McElroy.

Rachel:

I started that and it's my fault.

Griffin:

Is McElroy juice what you get when you sort of grind one of us down in like a mortar and pestle? Like a big giant, like a big evil, giant... Anyway.

Rachel:

I was thinking more like secretions, but that's worse.

Griffin:

Yuck. I don't know which one's worse actually. So, uh, yeah, listen, we are very sorry that we did not put out an episode last week. Uh, and to be frank, this episode's probably gonna be a little bit short and a little bit strange. Uh, here's, here's the situation. For a little while now, uh, Henry has, uh, been sick and he's getting better. He has, uh, bronchiolitis, which-

Rachel:

But before that?

Griffin:

But before that, I was also sick.

Rachel:

Bu- and before that?

Griffin:

I was also sick.

Rachel:

Well, no, I mean, he had a stomach bug too.

Griffin:

He had a stomach bug. He, him and I have just sort of been... It's like we're playing like a Pokémon Trading Card Game. And it's like, I've got stomach flu. Oh yeah. Well, I'll see that. And I'll raise you a Sinusin. It's bad. By the way, don't Google bronchitis. That's what our doctor told us to do. It can apparently get pretty bad.

Um, but he's on the upswing. I'm very slowly on the upswing. Uh, but it's been, it's been like a while like this. And this is a podcast all about like positivity and talking about things that we are like enthusiastic about and things that make us happy. And to get like pretty real for a bit, like, it's kind of hard to do this show compared to, uh, our other podcasts when you're feeling down.

Rachel:

Yeah. No, there is a lot about being, uh, sick that shifts your focus to just surviving. Um-

Griffin:

Well, and, and having a sick baby-

Rachel:

Yeah. And, and-

Griffin:

... is, is the worst fucking thing in the world.

Rachel:

And what I'll say is that, um, this show is kind of... The approach that we're able to take on this show is, is one that we are very fortunate, uh, to be able to do. You know, we can, we can identify things in our life that make us really, really happy, but when you're going through something difficult, that is challenging.

Griffin:

Yeah. And, and that's always something that we strive for. And I think it's something that humans strive for, is just like, look, look on the bright side. Um, but last week, I don't know, we probably could have found time to also, he is not sleeping. And we record this most of the time while we're in the

room right next to his nursery. And I'll be damned if we're gonna, you know, break one of his precious, precious few sleep cycles, uh, for any reason.

But we're doing this today. And we thought with this episode, um, I, I, we had this idea to just sort of talk about things that make us happy literally right now. Um, things that maybe wouldn't take up like the normal amount of time that, uh, a segment might take up on this show, things that maybe don't justify a full like 15-minute deep dive. Um, but also, we just kind of wanted to talk about stuff that we're, that we appreciate right now in an effort to kind of like, I don't know, boost our own spirits in a way.

Um, so yeah, we're gonna just sort of rapid fire through some, some real good stuff. It's not gonna be our usual airtight format that we usually have. Um, but I'm, I'm very happy to be here. I'm excited to be recording. Uh, wonderful again, despite that I may not be able to create the sound of excitement with my voice right now. Um, but here we are. Do you wanna start us off?

Rachel:

Uh, yeah, sure. I can do that.

Griffin:

This is just off the dome, people. I'm gonna unbutton a button 'cause I'm, this shirt is too hot for what we're doing.

Rachel:

[laughs] Can you hear that?

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

Can you hear the sound of Griffin's chest hair coming outta his shirt?

Griffin:

Shht shht shht shht! That's all the hair.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, I mean, I guess my first thing and all the chest hair I've gotten lately. Uh, in the last like three months or so I've really been blossoming and it's such a special and important time in my life.

Rachel:

Oh, Griffin, that was gonna be my favorite thing.

Griffin:

Well, you can do it too. What do you love about my thick, bushy crop of chested hair?

Rachel:

Oh, crop!

Griffin:

Yeah. What, what, what's your favorite thing about it? The feeling of it against your face every morning? Every morning I rub my chest and torso, [laughs] uh, across Rachel's face and it's like-

Rachel:

That's how he wakes me up.

Griffin:

And, uh, I don't wanna do it, but she said that it's like an, an angel's kiss, uh, every morning. And that she loves it and needs it. So that's the first thing. What's the second thing?

Rachel:

Um, you know what? I'm just gonna put this out there.

Griffin:

Hit me.

Rachel:

Wheel of Fortune. [laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs] Yeah. All right. Yeah. You, you've been into this lately? This is making you feel good right now, Wheel of Fortune? Or just the idea of the Wheel of Fortune that's here?

Rachel:

I watched it the other day while you were cooking dinner and I thought about how comforting it is to me.

Griffin:

It is comforting. It's probably my favorite game show to play along with.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

Griffin:

Cause I feel like I'm pretty good at it. Uh, a buddy of mine that I went to church with had a, the Wheel of Fortune Game on his computer. And I remember being really good. There was one day are over there eating McRib's. Holy shit! [laughs] What a, what a visceral memory this is. We were eating McRib's and playing this game and the thing popped up and I guessed it before any letters had been added to the thing.

Rachel:

Wow, Griffin

Griffin:

And I felt incredible.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It never happened again. I love Wheel of Fortune though.

Rachel:

Yeah. No, it's fun to play along with. Um, and I love, I love a good word game.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And, um, it has been the exact same show for decades.

Griffin:

They really haven't tweaked it very much.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

They added the million dollar prize, which I saw somebody win once. I saw some... You know how they, they add like the million dollar thing-

Rachel:

Uh-huh [affirmative].

Griffin:

... onto the wheel and then you collect it and then it'll show up in one of the prize envelopes in the end. So it's like a very small chance that you'll get the prize envelope. And then a very, very, very small chance that it'll be the envelope that you pick at the end.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I saw it. And then I went to get a haircut. And while I was at the haircut, and I was like, the craziest shit just happened. I just saw somebody win a milly on whe- on the wheel. And the woman who cuts my hair was like, holy shit, I saw that too! And we celebrated. I celebrate.

Rachel:

You've very specific memories around Wheel of Fortune. [laughs]

Griffin:

I do. It apparently occupies a very important space in my life. That was a good one. Um, I wanna talk about one that I apparently have done before. I talked to Rachel about it. Um, but this last week I consumed countless, countless hours of it. And will continue to. And that Games Done Quick, uh, to the speed running charity event that they do twice a year.

And by they, I mean, uh, this, this organization that puts on these events where a bunch of speed runners come and play video games as quickly as they possibly can and raise a bunch of money for different charities. Usually the Doctors Without Borders organization or this year it was the Prev-Prevent Cancer Foundation. They raise \$2.2 million. It's like a huge, cool thing.

Rachel:

How does it raise money?

Griffin:

Uh, they just get donations from, from viewers.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

And they're really smart about it. There's like donation incentives where like you can, you know, pick a character's name in a video game or something like that. There's a lot of stuff like that where they, they, they sort of boost donations. But yeah, man, I just love video game speed runs. I think it's a really, really fascinating practice and a, uh, an interesting community. And there's so much like technical stuff that goes into it that I kind of love watching.

Um, so this happened all last week. I probably would've done this last week if we had an episode, uh, because they do it in January, and then I think they do it again in July for summer Games Done Quick. Um, but I think it's just the best stuff. And I love watching all these old games, but like seeing them in new ways, uh, seeing, seeing things that are wrong with them that can be exploited, that I never even knew about, and watching these games that I like bashed my head against as a kid, get completely obliterated. Uh, it's, it's just, it's really, really interesting.

Rachel:

Is there a way to figure out what game they're gonna do when?

Griffin:

Yeah. They have a whole schedule.

Rachel:

Oh, okay.

Griffin:

Uh, that, that is up on their website. Uh, I think they did, I can't, like a couple hundred runs or something like this.

Rachel:

I feel like this would only work for me if I were familiar with the games, which is a very rare occurrence.

Griffin:

Yeah. They do, they do a *Cool Spot* run, uh, Rachel. [laughs] They've probably do on *Cool Spot*. Would it make you happy if I learned how to

speed run *Cool Spot*? Cause I can guarantee you that vid- that branded video game was, is not, does not have the tightest code.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I bet you, there are some, there's some shit you can get up to.

Rachel:

Our listeners at home don't know that I-

Griffin:

Love *Cool Spot*.

Rachel:

Love *Cool Spot*. I, that was one of those games that I never owned that I used to rent from Blockbuster repeatedly.

Griffin:

Oh, that's cool.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, there, there were a bunch of great runs this year. They're all, uh, on demand on the Games Done Quick YouTube channel. The Resident Evil 7 run. That's a game that came out last year. They've already like figured out ways to like screw with it. And I loved that game. And the run was really cool. They did one run of, and, and this is probably my biggest recommendation, of, uh, *Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*, which was the Super Nintendo *Zelda* game, which is like one of the best games, one of my favorite games ever.

And there's a category of running that game where they randomize where everything is. They like get into the code of the game and then like, oh, you know where to find the bow in *Zelda*, only in this random version, it's gonna end up where it's not supposed to be. So you, you're playing through the game in like a weird order. Um, and they actually did that as a race. So they had two players who started playing the game, trying to find where out, where everything was.

Playing this game that is again like a classic that I know backwards and forwards, but presented in this really new way. Uh, it was really interesting and cool. So I love, I love speeds runs. Speed runs. And this was a, this was a really cool event. What else you got?

Rachel:

Uh, so another thing is, um, this is kind of hard to phrase. I feel like the things that have brought me pleasure this week, or this past week have been kind of abstract.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Um, so Doing the Right Thing, I guess. [laughs]

Griffin:

Okay. Uh, that's, it's actually called Do the Right Thing.

Rachel:

Do the Right Thing.

Griffin:

Is the name of the...

Rachel:

Oh, yeah. Um, so, this is embarrassing, but, um, when I was parking the other day, I hit somebody's car with my car.

Griffin:

That is true.

Rachel:

And I left a note. [laughs] Uh-

Griffin:

So wait, hold you. Hold on. No, hold on. Of course, like you left a note, are you saying that like, are you just trying to like brag right now that you-

Rachel:

Well, so-

Griffin:

... you had a bumpy, an auto bumpy and you-

Rachel:

Yeah. So embarrassing. I got a bigger car a few months ago and I don't know how to maneuver it yet. And so I'm like constantly over the line in parking's spaces and all this stuff. So yes, of course I left a note, but what I'm saying is that in that situation, I had one decision to make. And I made it. I knew it was the right decision.

Griffin:

Yeah. And ain't hard decision though.

Rachel:

No. [crosstalk 00:11:13].

Griffin:

Okay. For a good person, I guess it's not a hard decision and you're a good person.

Rachel:

Hear me out. [laughs] Hear me out. Um, I feel like when you are typically in a difficult situation, there are usually like a hundred things to do. Like knowing that there is something that has happened and now I have endless options in front of me, terrible. And usually it ruins my day. But in this case I did something. I knew exactly what I was supposed to do. And it was done, I like totally forgave myself and moved on.

Griffin:

I think it helped that the person whose car you hit was apparently a real gent.

Rachel:

Yeah. They were very, very nice, [laughs] which was, I appreciate.

Griffin:

I heard Rachel on the phone with him like la- laughing like she was talking to an old friend whose car she had just maligned.

Rachel:

[laughs] I was really embarrassed. And they approached it with a lot of understanding, which was very nice.

Griffin:

I'm sure they appreciated it too. 'cause I have definitely been in a situation. Uh, I had my, uh, window, my side window in my car like fucked up because somebody hit it in a parking garage-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... uh, and didn't leave a note. They didn't do anything.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That was just up to me to solve the mystery. [laughs] Follow the clues. You could have saved your window, but, um-

Rachel:

Yeah. I wa- I guess I was just-

Griffin:

Did I say window? I meant side view mirror. Okay. Anyway.

Rachel:

I was just surprised. I think, you know, after... It probably was the week I had had, or it was just kind of like, well, [laughs] this is another thing.

Griffin:

Makes sense.

Rachel:

Um, but I was surprised at how kind of easy it was to not beat myself up over it.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Because it happened, it was an accident, and I was able to do something that I was supposed to do about it and then it was over. And it was just-

Griffin:

I think that comes with age.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I feel like a, when I was younger, I've never actually been in an accident, I don't think.

Rachel:

Yeah. I hadn't either.

Griffin:

Um, you hadn't either? You got an on our way to the, by this house.

Rachel:

Oh. Yeah, that's right. [laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs] Um, I have a thing that's not exactly this week, but I can't stop thinking about it. Um, it's *Lady Bird*, the movie.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um-

Rachel:

I almost, I almost mentioned that.

Griffin:

I, we, we went to see... So Rachel and I like don't really have opportunities to go see movies. Really, our only chance to do it is if Rachel is off work and I'm, uh, off work in Henry's and daycare, which is a day like today is the only real time that that's true, where we can sneak out and see a movie. We've seen make... I, I went and saw *Star Wars* without you. But other than that, I think we've only seen like three movies in the last year.

Um, and one of those movies was *Get Out*, which was my favorite movie of 2017, hands down. But I think *Lady Bird* clocks in just behind it, 'cause it's

such a, it's such a good movie, man. Like it's... The praise that it has been heaped upon it and the, the praise that I can heap upon it sounds so simple, but it really stands out when you see a movie and believe every single word that every single character says. And it connects with you as, as feeling real. Um, and it, and I also think it's kind of profound that this, the, the, the character, Lady Bird, her experience in this movie, uh, does not mirror my own experience, like coming up. Like I had a very good non-confrontational relationship with my parents and, um, you know, other, other differences, but I found it so relatable. Like it, it, it taps into something that I think a lot of coming-of-age movies and stories, uh, don't really tap into. There's, there's something so universal about it that I found so incredible.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's, it, it's, it's a really honest movie. Like it feels like not dramatized, particularly. It just feels like this is, this is the experience that a lot of people have. Um, and, and there's so many relatable characters because everybody is, is being played in this very believable way. I don't know. It's hard. You're right. It's hard to kind of get to it.

Griffin:

I've seen it described as like a small story told really well, but I actually think like it actually does quite a bit. Like, it, it, it tells a lot of different sort of facets that you would see in, you know, maybe a few coming-of-age stories. Um, I I- I love that she has like relationships with people who like, occupy these kinds of archetypes that were absolutely relatable to me growing up. Like, oh yeah. I also, you know, dated a person like that. Um, yeah. I, I don't know. I think it's such a really, such a really great movie. And I'm so glad that we went to, that we went to see it.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's... I, well, and, and maybe it's, it's because the, the character Lady Bird herself is, is so, um, able to be interpreted. Like you don't get any kind of inner monologue, you're not like reading her diary over her shoulder, but you feel like you understand how she feels in every situation.

Griffin:

It's becau-

Rachel:

So you're you really with her the whole time.

Griffin:

Yeah. It's, it's because she's a very... It, it's interesting how it tells this very... It tells the story about like kind of a vulnerable character as she kind of finds her way through the world. Right? Like you cannot have a coming-of-age story without that. But at the same time, she's also really confident and really like well spoken and like, very like charming, the scene where she's flirting with the guy, uh, who she just met in the, uh, in the, uh, grocery store, li- like shows you like, this is a, a character who like knows what she wants and is not like afraid to pursue that. While at the same time also being kind of like unsure of every single thing that she's doing. I don't know. I, I think it's a, I think it's such a great movie. Um, yeah. You got anything else?

Rachel:

Okay. This didn't happen to me this week because I have actually been healthy. Um, but I've-

Griffin:

I think you're gonna say I hit two more cars.

Rachel:

[laughs] Just while we've been recording.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um-

Griffin:

RC cars.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, it's that moment when you have decided that you're better enough to clear off all of your sick person's things.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, so when I am sick, um, there is a bag of used Kleenex that follows me around the house.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, it's usually like a, like a grocery bag that I use to put my, um, my used Kleenex in. I don't know why I really have to go into that much detail.

[laughs]

Griffin:

Yeah. Geez. Getting anatomical on it.

Rachel:

Uh, but yeah, so there's that. There's cough drops. There's medicine. There's, it's just the number of things that kind of follow you around when you're sick. And when you realize that you're better enough to not need these accessories in your life every minute, uh, God, that's a wonderful feeling.

Griffin:

Yeah. I feel like you're really taunting me right now.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I, I feel like this is timely, 'cause I just cleaned up my office before you're recorded in here, 'cause it was a fucking den of plague.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, but yeah, I, I get that. I also-

Rachel:

You really fold up the little blanket you've been using on the couch and you say now, now this blanket is done.

Griffin:

You, you're making a decision, is it, is it that you cleanness of the zone after that, that you like, or is it the like importance of the decision of just like, I don't need these things anymore?

Rachel:

[laughs] I mean, it's both! It's both, but it's definitely, um, it's that moment where you're just like, I've, I've beaten this and now I don't need all of you weapons.

Griffin:

Yeah. On that same note, that first shower you take after you're finally like feeling better, I feel like that first shower... I mean you take showers when you're sick, probably. Or if you don't, that's fine. I don't know what you've got going on. But that first one where you're starting to feel healthy and you take the shower, a shower is so revitalizing anyway, that when you like finally are over the hump, it's like, you feel like you could go and fight Superman or something.

Um, I have one, and it's a little bit esoteric, that I've spent a lot of time this past week playing around with, uh, a piece of software called GameMaker Studio 2, which is the sequel to GameMaker Studio. And it's a like game development tools, which I know I don't know anything about anything, really. Um, I, I've messed around with stuff like this kind of in the past, but I, I started to look into this, um, because, uh, a couple of games that I really like, like *Undertale* and, uh, *Hyper Light Drift* were made with it. And, um, I heard that it has a, a sort of cool way to do programming. Which, again, I don't know. I, I took some code academy classes, but I don't know like basically anything.

And without going into too much detail, it's just a really accessible, like cool way to make games if you don't anything about like programming where, uh, all the coding is done. I, I really think it should be taught as like STEM, uh, classes for kids and stuff like that. 'cause all the programming is just done through like drag and drop where you just drag little chunks of code into these sequences and then drop 'em. And then it's so like parse-able. Um, which I love that word because means something, but it also sounds like you're saying the word possible in like the weirdest way imaginable.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Although on that note, it is very passible [laughs] to make a game with it. Cause like I've made like two little rough prototypes for games that I think

are really neat in the last week that I've been messing around with it. And like, I don't know, I, I, the way that my brain works, like I love a good like puzzle. And I love trying to figure out like, okay, I want it so that when you press this button, the look of the button changes and it opens up this menu that has all your stuff in it.

And then figuring out like, okay, well I need to figure out how to make this look different when you press it. I need to figure out how to make it send message to this other thing that opens up the menu. And then I have to figure out how to populate that menu with all the different items or whatever inside of it. And I need to figure out a way to, you know, set quantities for those things. Like e- each sort of decision you have to make opens up this tree of, of like branching decisions where you have to figure out the best way to like achieve what you wanna do.

And in a lot of like places that's just like coding, you do all that through, you know, scripting and writing scripts and have a, like having to know like, uh, the ins and outs of a language or something like that. And that's like way above my pay grade, but this is so like approachable and parse-able. And I think it's really neat.

Rachel:

Does it work if you don't have a very specific idea of what you wanna make?

Griffin:

Um, I mean there are tutorials that it comes with that are actually really helpful. There's one in particular that like walks you through like, okay, we're gonna make a shooting game. So first off... It, it's great. It actually shows you a little YouTube video in the corner of the software that like literally you could just a step by step and then you make a game. And if you're at all interested, uh, the trial version is free. And that tutorial is free. So you can just hop in and make that thing.

Rachel:

Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. I imagine a lot of people are kind of interested in game design, but-

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

... don't have a very specific idea of what they wanna make.

Griffin:

I mean, I've always been. Like I, uh, video games are the art form media type that I have consumed by like a huge margin the most of in my life, but making them has always been inaccessible because it requires you to be proficient in all these different doctrines. You have to like know how to, uh, operate, uh, game development software, like GameMaker or Unity or Unreal or whatever. You have to know how to program. You have to know the scripting language. You have to know how to make art.

Um, and I, I think what's really cool about this is that you don't really need most of that stuff. So like when I started, I did that tutorial and I made this very basic sort of like twin-stick shooter game where you're a little UFO flying around shooting things. And I finished that tutorial and had like enough of an understanding of the tools that I was like, okay, I wanna add lives to the game. How do I do that?

And then I tried to figure out how to add lives to the game. And then I did. And I was like, okay, I wanna add like power ups. How do I, how do I make a power up? And I had to think it through. And then I figured out how to add power ups to it. And then... And doing that, uh, like taught me how everything works. Uh, and then I had this super complicated virtually unplayable game, but I don't, I don't know. I, I love learning new stuff. And I love creating. Like this is why I like, uh, GarageBand and Logic Pro X where it's like-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... now I know how to make music and I didn't know how to make it before. I feel very similarly about this. It's just like I did not know how games were... And even if I never make anything, which I probably will ever make like a full game, like, it's really interesting to know how games work. Or at least appreciate that every single facet of every single game has, uh, you know, a hundred decisions and a hundred different like solutions for problems that went into it. Um, I, I would definitely recommend checking it out if you're at all interested, it's free.

Rachel:

Yeah. That's cool.

Griffin:

Um, you know, it's not free though. Advertisements on our show. Can I, can I see the UI.

Rachel:

A bunk, kabunk, kabunk, kabunk, kabank, babunk, bunk, bunk, bunk bunk.

Griffin:

[laughs] Did you-

Rachel:

Bunk.

Griffin:

Now, I'm imagining like you just pointed to a musician in the corner who was playing, I don't know what that sound was supposed to be, like a thumb piano or something like that. And they were trying to read the sheet music, but it's pretty dark in here. So they were bunk, bunk. Is it an E-flat? I guess so. A bunk.

Rachel:

[laughs]

[ad break]

Griffin:

All right. We got a few jumbotrons here. Stick with us. We got one for Blain. And it's from Nora, who says blern. That's clearly not how his name is spelled or pronounced. Nice try, Nora. "You're the greatest friend a person could ask for. And I'm so lucky to have you in my life. Sorkin quote." I guess they want me to add a Aaron Sorkin quote in there, but I will not. "Uh, I miss you all the time, but I know we will see each other soon. TAZ reference." [laughs]

Rachel:

I love this. [laughs]

Griffin:

"You're wonderful. Get it? I said the thing on the thing. A huge nerd. And you bring joy to all who have the pleasure of knowing you. Love Nora and the McElroy." The ma- and it might have gotten cut off. But technically, it is true. One of the McElroy did say that.

Uh, have another jumbotron for Megan. And it's from Lindsay who says, "Griffin, read please." Okay. "Sorry I couldn't take you to Hamilton with me." As is me saying this? Anyway. "But please accept this birthday message

from Sweet Baby Brother 30 Under 30 Media Luminary." They can't take it away! "Griffin McElroy." It says that. I've moved on.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, "you are a good, good sister. And I will always associate with you as long as we live. [laughs] But remember, you snooze, you lose, mumbly. Happy sweet 16 Mc." Oh, that's a nice one.

Rachel:

Uh, our next jumbotron is for graceless.com. Graceless is the world's first anti-aspirational brand for women, hell-bent on changing how we're talked to and about. It's content and connections for those tired of the supposed to and should have, and ready to just be. Media targeted to women aims for perfection, regardless of its focus. Graceless throws out the measuring stick, saying you don't have to aspire to be anything but yourself, which is already wonderful. Join us at graceless.com.

Griffin:

Fuck yeah. I'm gonna edit some, like, uh, like DJ horns all over that message. Cause it is dope as fuck.

Rachel:

Boo-boo-boo boo!

Griffin:

Yeah. Those-

Rachel:

Like those? [laughs]

Griffin:

Thank you. Yeah, I'll just cut and paste that over it.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, this message is for Dee. It is from, you know who this is, and I love you.

Griffin:

Ah. But I don't know. What a mystery.

Rachel:

Hmm.

Griffin:

I bet it's uh, Paula Abdul.

Rachel:

"Hey, there. Exclamation point." And that's just in parenth- I don't know if they were wanted me to say that, but it's in parentheses. So I thought maybe they did. "Hey there! Your brain's been all fuzzy lately and everyone's been asking you to say a few good words to yourself. And they love you. So let's take a baby step and ask someone else to say something you wrote. You're a champ. You're a teacher changing lives, a kick ass web developer, and you're basically the best at animal crossing. You're okay."

Griffin:

Now, you're great, but you better watch that animal crossing throne.

Rachel:

Yeah. Griffin, Griffin could challenge you on that.

Griffin:

I'm just saying what you sellin' in those turnips for. That's all I'm saying, is what's your max turnip gains. If your turnip gains are any less than a mil, you need to go ahead and back off that a little bit. Don't get me wrong. You've got it going on. But the turnips, just keep it in mind.

[MaxFun ad break]

Griffin:

Uh, do you have another thing for me?

Rachel:

I do. Yeah. Uh, and this is actually inspired by watching the show, *The Good Place*.

Griffin:

The Good Place was literally my next thing.

Rachel:

But I'm not gonna talk about *The Good Place*.

Griffin:

Well, beans!

Rachel:

So you can if you want still.

Griffin:

All right.

Rachel:

Oh, I kind of spoil it. Uh, it made me think of replacement swears.

Griffin:

Okay. These are fun.

Rachel:

Uh, so the, one of the big things you learn early on in *The Good Place* is that people are not allowed to swear. Uh, and when they try to, uh, replacement swears come out of their mouth.

Griffin:

Yeah. So fork and shirt.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And I can't remember the other ones, but there's a lot.

Rachel:

Uh, but I've always really liked these just in general.

Griffin:

Did you like frack, uh, *Battlestar Galactica*? That's like the big one for me.

Rachel:

Yeah. Kind of.

Griffin:

What, what are the ones you're thinking of?

Rachel:

Um, I mean, I like... I actually do say like darn and gosh a little bit because I'm Midwestern.

Griffin:

Are those replacements? I guess, I guess they are.

Rachel:

Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Um, I like frig a lot.

Griffin:

Oh man. That one's tough for me.

Rachel:

I wouldn't say it personally, [laughs] but when other people do, I, I find it charming. Uh, shoot is another one as I say sometimes.

Griffin:

I've gotten really into shoot lately.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um-

Rachel:

You say beans sometimes too.

Griffin:

Beans is good. Beans is sort of a catchall. But shoot, I don't know, there's something fun about like my sort of cuss-heavy brand and sort of going against that with a good shoot from time to time.

Rachel:

I guess I really, I've always really enjoyed those.

Griffin:

Yeah. They're great.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

Griffin:

Let's talk about *The Good Place*.

Rachel:

Okay. [laughs]

Griffin:

It's a, a... Because the reason I wanted to do it here, I could talk endlessly about this show. Um, but I do not want to sp- spoil anything. It's in its second season right now. And it is like... It's probably my favorite show on television right now. Uh, and it's sort of new on, on the throne there, but I, uh, I, I love this show so much. It's so, so smart. And it handles these really heady philosophical concepts, like genuinely very, they get into the work of, you know, [inaudible 00:32:17], and, and like really, really hit that stuff hard in a way that is like really digestible in a 22-minute comedy television show, uh, that, that really follows along and explains like what the, those concepts are.

Uh, that's not what I like love about it. The things I love about it, I literally just can't talk about, um, because I, I think this is a show that you just gotta start with episode one and just get going into it.

Rachel:

Well, we can say that all the characters are really strong.

Griffin:

Characters are really strong. All the actors are fantastic. Um-

Rachel:

Like there's no kind of throwaway character in the bunch. Like if you had to pick your favorite, for example-

Griffin:

Yeah. It's a small cast.

Rachel:

... it would be difficult to do.

Griffin:

It's a small cast. And they are so deliberately developed out that they, they just have so much personality. Um, I, I will say it is like, it is a show that is

not afraid to, uh, like blow up its own concept, like to, to change the rules, uh, all the time. Like a lot of shows are kind of afraid to do that. Or they do it like once and a, a, sometimes they're successful and sometimes they're not.

The Good Place is like constantly reinventing itself in a way where it's been so successful every time it's tried it, that no matter what they try to do... Usually when a show tries to like do something big and new, I get worried like, oh, they're gonna do a bad job with this. And it's fun to watch a show where I just trust them so completely no matter what they try to do. 'cause then whatever they throw at you, you get excited. And it's like, oh my God, I can't wait to see them try to dig their way out of this one.

Uh, it is a, it's a, it's a brilliant, brilliant show, which again, you have to start on episode one and really power through 'cause it really takes like... I think I stopped watching it first time I watched it like three episodes in.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, and only started watching it once the first season was done, 'cause people were like, oh, you have to watch this show and-

Rachel:

Well, 'cause it starts out with this premise and you kind of think you understand what's going on and then they just keep complicating it.

Griffin:

Yeah. There's-

Rachel:

Keep complicating it. And then suddenly you realize like what a challenging and interesting show it is.

Griffin:

Yeah. It is a, it is a, it is a brilliant, brilliant show. Um, you got another one?

Rachel:

I know what I can talk about.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Amazing Race.

Griffin:

Yeah. *Amazing Race* is good one too.

Rachel:

Amazing Race is back!

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, this is one of those shows that's been around forever that people may have seen a season of and then stopped watching. Kind of like *Survivor* for us too, where I think both Griffin and I watched maybe a season or two and then didn't for like 10 years. [laughs]

Griffin:

And then have watched every episode ever since.

Rachel:

Yeah. Um, but they, they've started doing some really interesting kind of innovations to it, much like *Survivor*. Uh, but the idea, and this is kind of like Griffin dating show that he came up with on *Rose Buddies*.

Griffin:

Yeah, I think we actually did talk about *Amazing Race* quite a bit on that one.

Rachel:

Yeah. Yeah. But I, I will just say that, um, you know, it's, it's interesting to watch people kind of... There's relationships that fall apart immediately. Like as, this season, as soon as, like the very first leg, something gets complicated. These two people turn on each other right away. Uh, and there's other people that are just really positive and, and have a really good attitude. And I can't think of anything more stressful than traveling, uh, especially in a place that you don't speak the language and you don't know how to get from place to place. And so it's really fascinating to watch these people kind of have these brand new experiences over and over and over again in like a really highly-stressful environment.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, and, and so you feel really excited for them when they win or when they overcome a challenge or whatever. And I, I find it like I never watch that show and, and, and feel like disappointed when I leave it.

Griffin:

Yeah. Uh, if you've never watched it before and you want a good season to hop onto, I don't remember which number it is, but there was a season where half the teams were made up of these like long-time couples, I think, and the other half were what they called blind dates. They just took like six people and matched them up with six other people just to see if love could spark while they all out there.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Which aga- which is literally the reality show that Rachel and I pitched.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, it was a, it was a really good one. Um, can I talk about our new blender?

Rachel:

[laughs] Okay.

Griffin:

We got a new blender. And it, it's the first time I've ever like splurged on a blender. I think it was like a hundred bucks or something like that, which is not that blend tech, like one that can like dissolve a crowbar or whatever, it's like a much more expensive. But it's so nice to have a good blender, 'cause it opens up... My jam is smooth soups. Like...

Rachel:

[laughs].

Griffin:

If the... Chunky, chunky soups, you gotta earn it, chunky soup. A smooth soup, I'll... Oh, and just knowing that every bite's gonna be the same. Why are you laughing?

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Why you laughing at?

Rachel:

Because you're a 30-year-old man. [laughs]

Griffin:

I guess I am. Um, but yeah, with a blender, you can make so much good smooth soup so easily. I've made a couple really good smooth soups. I made a ground nut bisque that was like peanuts with, uh, sweet potatoes and, uh, I forget everything that went into.

Rachel:

Ginger.

Griffin:

Ginger. Well, we also made a sweet potato and gingers bisque, but this was like a different one that had like kind of a spicy peanut profile-

Rachel:

No, you're right.

Griffin:

... that was like really, really good. And it took like no time at all to make 'cause this thing is a, is a fucking like NASA grade centrifuge that just... Actually, they do actually sell centrifuges that you can use in the kitchen. They can use to like clarify butter. You like put it in this compartment and it spins around real fast until like the, the butter part of it, the like liquid part of it drips out of this hole.

Rachel:

Oh my gosh.

Griffin:

It's so expensive and so excessive, but I think that's interesting too. But I love this new blender!

Rachel:

Yeah. No, it's, it actually, it's pretty incredible. I've always been discouraged with blenders because they never actually blend.

Griffin:

This one blends the hell out of some stuff.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Um-

Rachel:

And you get that smooth soup that-

Griffin:

And you get that very smooth-

Rachel:

... all 30-year-old men crave. [laughs]

Griffin:

It's good. Listen, a chunky soup. The texture of it usually grosses me out, cause there's usually some cooked vegetables in there. And the texture of most cooked veg- cooked vegetables bums me out in a major way. Um, but here, you don't get that, that chaotic jumble of like [laughs] there's some celery in this one and there's two beans, but there's no meat. And in a smooth soup. No questions asked, baby. It's all particles and stuff. You're getting it all.

Rachel:

You know who else I bet would be a huge fan of the smooth soup?

Griffin:

Who?

Rachel:

Our baby son, Henry.

Griffin:

Are you saying I eat baby soup?

Rachel:

[laughs] I'm saying he also likes the smooth meal.

Griffin:

The flavors I make with this incredible blender are too complex for our baby to appreciate. Um, yeah, smooth soup. I guess it started out being I would love blenders, but now it's I love smooth soup.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

You got another one?

Rachel:

Um, this actually kind of goes a little bit along with what you said.

Griffin:

Well, smooth, this is, chunk, uh, a hard soup?

Rachel:

[laughs] No.

Griffin:

Hard soup?

Rachel:

No. [laughs] Although that's something fun to ponder, isn't it?

Griffin:

You could take smooth soup and make a smooth soup popsicle with it. Now we're talking. Hello!

Rachel:

Could you make a hot Popsicle?

Griffin:

Could you make a hot popsicle? This season on Top Chef.

Rachel:

If Travis were here, he would say hotsicle.

Griffin:

Why would he... Yeah, he would.

Rachel:

He would. Um, I, I like watching a cooking show while I eat dinner.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

This is something Griffin and I do quite often. Um, it, it elevates your own meal, I would say. [laughs] Um-

Griffin:

It makes you feel a little bit more like artisanal and all that.

Rachel:

Yeah. You're like fancier. You really appreciate the flavors that you put together. Uh, and, I don't know, it's just this quick little one off thing.

Griffin:

Yeah. We watched a whole season of *Top Chef* in like a, a week.

Rachel:

Yeah, we watched *Top Chef*. We watch *Master Chef* occasionally.

Griffin:

Not quite as good. It's, it's really fallen off the wagon for me.

Rachel:

I know. I know.

Griffin:

Um, I wanted to recommend a book that I've been reading. Uh that's right, folks. That's right, folks. I read a book.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Like two a year. Uh, it's called *Several Short Sentences About Writing* by, uh, author named Verlyn Klinkenborg.

Rachel:

Oh this is the book Justin gave me?

Griffin:

Yeah. So Justin sent me this book and he was like, I've been reading this book and it's really eye opening. Um, and I don't do a ton of writing. I do some for the adventure zone. And I do a little journaling here and there. And have tried to start like writing down like outlines and concepts for like a fiction novel if I ever had the time to ever do that. But I don't really know how to write well. And that's not me like begging for compliments. Like it's a different thing than the stuff that I do.

It reminds me of the Mitch Hedberg bit where he talks about being a comedian. And then, uh, people coming to ask him if he would write a movie and saying that's like going to a, a chef and being like, oh, you know how to cook, huh? And the chef says, yeah. And they say, cool, can you farm? Like it reminds me of that a lot.

But anyway, uh, this, this book is really cool because it is sort of all about breaking down your style and trying to understand what you learned, uh, throughout your life about writing and what is actually helpful about what you've learned and what is kind of harmful. Specifically, like the things that you learned if you went to like college and you took writing classes in college and had to write these like very formal papers. You learned a specific style of writing in a certain way of organizing your thoughts that today might just sort of be more like you trying to emulate, uh, a, a, a style that you were taught, trying to emulate this very, very formal way of writing-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... rather than actually figuring out what your own thoughts are. And then figure out how to sort of transmit those thoughts into sentences, which this whole book is literally made up of, very, very short sentences. And the whole point of it is that's what you need to start writing. And you'll get longer. But like before you can do that, you need to like basically kind of

start over and, and try to out like what your own voice is. Um, which a, a, again, like I'm not like a big writer. So it's not like I, uh, have a lot of beliefs in this department. And it's really interesting to, to read something sort of, uh, critical in, in this way.

Rachel:

Yeah. No, I think that's a good point 'cause I, I'm somebody that did a lot of creative writing classes as an undergrad in graduate school. And, um, uh, you, you're reading constantly. And you're reading other people's work. And you're reading published and, and unpublished stuff. And uh, that has always really impacted what I was writing at the time. Uh, and so it is that you get to a point where you start to figure out like, wait, who, where, where is my part in this?

Griffin:

Yeah. And that was the big realization that I've... I have not finished the book. Um, but that's the big realization I had like very early in the book. It says like, when you wrote those formal papers, you had one thought. And you had that thought in the last paragraph of the paper. And then everything else leading up to it was you trying to build your way towards that one single, good, salient thought. And that cannot be... That, that's like how you learn to write. For, for the most part, if you, if you go to college, like you learn to write, like trying to emulate that. And that is, that ain't, that's not good. That's not, that's not how you're supposed to do it.

It also talks a lot about like revision and what revision is and what it should be. Um, it, it, it like advises against just writing in this like flow, uh, and just like writing a bunch of shit, writing on the first things that come to your mind. And then going back and revising them later. Like it tells you that revision is a process that should take place in your brain before you write a single word down. And that each sentence, like every single word should be thoughtful in the sentence. And if you're writing down stuff that's kind of automatic, then you have fucked up. And-

Rachel:

This book sounds really intimidating. [laughs]

Griffin:

It is kind of, it's kind of intimidating, but it's also like, uh, every single sort of bad practice that it mentioned, I looked at and I said, yes. And not only, yes, like these are the reasons why when I start trying to write down things for like a, a, a novel or try to like write down the first like chapter of a novel, and then I look at it and I say, this is fucking garbage. This book is like a little key that's like, here's why it's garbage.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Is because it's literally just the first thing that entered my mind that I wrote uncritically. And then went back, and during the revision process, I was not like bold enough to just say like, okay, well this is gone, this is gone, this is gone, this is gone, this is gone, this is gone.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, yeah, I think it, uh, it is, I think, intimidating. But I also think, as somebody who is, uh, almost chronically unhappy with the things that I write after I write them, uh, it's, it's sort of an interesting, uh, guide on how to be critical of your own work and how to try to, um, streamline your process a little, not streamline, but like, uh, master your own process so that, uh, you you're, you're a little bit more confident in what you write. My voice is almost completely-

Rachel:

Yeah, I'm hearing that.

Griffin:

... almost completely done. Uh, maybe we should just wrap up, if you're okay with that.

Rachel:

Yeah, I think so.

Griffin:

Um, I have a couple sub- uh, submissions here. Uh, the first one was sent in by Jessica who says, uh, "I wanna share one of my favorite things, the charity knitting circle I run. Every other week, a group of volunteers meet up and I teach them basic knitting techniques. And we make squares that we sew into baby blankets to donate to local hospitals. This is my second year running this. And there's something so wonderful about watching my student's eyes light up as they make progress and realize that they can, in fact, finish the project and help out a family in need, all while making friends, sharing about their days, and eating popcorn." Best shit ever-

Rachel:

That's so cool.

Griffin:

... top tier, amazing stuff off. Thank you so much for sharing, Jessica. And thanks for doing this really cool thing. It sounds really fun. Um, here's another one from Beckett who says, "My wonderful thing right now is sleeping with the window open. My fiance and I live in a densely populated suburb of D.C, and there's always lots of traffic on the street below. And having the window open for sound and breeze at night is really great. It's been extremely cold, lately. So we haven't been able to for like three months, but I'm really looking forward to when it warms back up." This one resonated with me. I have this, these like weirdly powerful memories of the first like few times I slept over at your house that you were living in, in Austin.

Rachel:

Yeah. I used to always have the window open.

Griffin:

You used to always have the window open, which I never did. And we would sleep with the window open. And I remember being so like romanced by-

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

... by, well, everything about that situation.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, and here's one last one from Monty, who says, "Recently, my adoptive older brother got the SNES Mini. Uh, and he's been teaching me how to play all the games he grew up with. I'm still on earthbound now, but I think spending time playing video games with family is just wonderful." I actually talked about the SNES Classic. I think it's called the mini in Europe, maybe. Um, but I love this, I love this idea of just like, hey, you haven't played these games before. Let me show 'em to you.

Rachel:

Griffin, is so excited about that becoming part of his relationship with Henry.

Griffin:

Yes. While also being like entire cognizant of like-

Rachel:

Yeah, I know.

Griffin:

... how weird it would be to just be like, now sit down. This is Crash Bandicoot. [laughs] You must love *Crash Bandicoot* like your father and your, his father before.

Rachel:

We're a Bandicoot house.

Griffin:

We are a Bandicoot household. That is our birthright. You must love Crash and his weird jots

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I can do this voice really good right now.

Rachel:

Yeah, you can.

Griffin:

It's not even hard for me.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

He eats the Wumpa Fruit and he throws them away.

Rachel:

[laughs] Okay.

Griffin:

You too must feast on the Wumpa Fruit like your father Crash Band- I mean... Oops. The secret is revealed.

Rachel:

Oh, no

Griffin:

Hand me that Wumpa Fruit. I think it's called Wumpa Fruit. Anyway this has been *Wonderful!*

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It's a Wumpa Fruit podcast about *Crash Bandicoot*. And thank you so much for listening. Thank you again for bearing with us while we sort of deal with our own stuff over, over here. Um, we try not to put that on you, but it's, it's a, it's a heavy load. Um, thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Uh, they're really great. What are some great Maximum Fun shows that you're into right now?

Rachel:

There's so many new ones really.

Griffin:

I know.

Rachel:

Inside Pop is a good one.

Griffin:

It is a good one.

Rachel:

Oh, *Heat Rocks* is another one.

Griffin:

Heat Rocks is fantastic.

Rachel:

That's very, very good.

Griffin:

Uh, and there's shows like *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, and *Jordan Jesse Go*. And so many. All at maximumfun.org. Uh, and if you wanna see more of our stuff, you can go to mcelroyshows.com. Is that it? I think that might be it.

Rachel:

That's it.

Griffin:

Thank you all so much for listening. We'll go back and be back next week. And then there will be a new episode.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Oka- okay?

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Okay. Alright!

Rachel:

Bye.

[theme music plays out]

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