

## Wonderful! Episode 16: Greg Claus

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

**Rachel:**

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:**

Hi, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:**

And this is *Wonderful!*

**Greg:**

[laughs] Ooooooh hohoho!

**Rachel:**

Who's that in the studio?

**Greg:**

Greg.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

**Greg:**

I am Greg, a deep voiced stranger who stumbled into your house because I'm very drunk. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

Greg, with that red suit and that white beard, I thought maybe-

**Greg:**

It's my... Well, beard is nothing, uh, it's outta my control and the red suit is my drunk suit. I wear it for comfort. And I bet you're wondering what's in my big bag.

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Greg:**

It's full of toys for children. [laughs] Now I understand the confusion. [laughs] Could I use your john?

**Griffin:**

I'd rather you didn't S-San-Santa Greg. [laughs] I'd rather you didn't. Cause I don't know what you're gonna do in there. The last time we allowed a stranger to use our john...

**Rachel:**

Oh gosh, that really happened. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

It really did happen. And it was a real bad day for us. It ruined Christmas. It probably wasn't on Christmas.

**Rachel:**

We never got to bottom of that mystery either.

**Griffin:**

No, but they got to the bottom of our fucking toilet. They-

**Rachel:**

You know, you say that but whatever they did, they cleaned up.

**Griffin:**

This is a really crude introduction for what is essentially going to be our, our Ch- our Christmas episode. Uh, so real quick, we're not gonna have an episode out next week. We are traveling for the holidays. We're going back to Huntington and it's Henry's first time to the great and beautiful State of West Virginia. And I'm so excited to take him there. But we are gonna be traveling for a long time and we're not gonna have time to, to get an episode out next week. So this is gonna be our Christmas episode and we hope that you enjoy it. We don't really have a format per se as much as we had for our Thanksgiving one.

**Rachel:**

I, yeah, I want you to talk about...

**Griffin:**

Oh.

**Rachel:**

What Christmas was like in the McElroy household very quickly.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. I mean, it was dope. Like it was really great. Our family was like really, really great growing up. I had a very good family growing up and we were all very loving and very, uh, caring. And so for Christmas we got that like u-usual sort of commercial stuff where I got so psyched outta my mind for Christmas presents. Um, we, we were not, I think like remotely spoiled kids at all. Like we, I n, I never just like got random stuff and I feel like I talked about this on the show before, um, and-

**Rachel:**

Except for on Justin and Travis's birthday.

**Griffin:**

Right. But that was a birthday present. It just wasn't there. It wasn't my birthday. I didn't get a present. Um, and so like Christmas was great for that reason cause it was like, oh, shit a bunch of toys and video games. Like video games are super expensive and like I didn't have any money. I was a little kid. And so that was the time I got video games and I just sit around and play new video games like for a few weeks, these new video games that I just like cherished. And it was so-

**Rachel:**

And your-

**Griffin:**

... so exciting.

**Rachel:**

... your Christmas Eve walk.

**Griffin:**

And so yeah, that's the other thing. Is that in, in addition to like that thing that I got, like my, my craft sho- child heart got very excited for, uh, we would, we had so many traditions including a Chris-Christmas Eve walk, which we still do where me and my brothers and my dad would just walk around the block a few times and talk about the year, uh, and talk about

what kinda year we had and what we had hopes for for the next year. And, um-

**Rachel:**

I didn't realize how long this tradition had gone on. I knew that it was happening when I met Griffin, but I was watching some of his old home movies and there is footage of them all bundled up as kids getting ready to go on the walk.

**Griffin:**

Real cute, real cute stuff. It's a really nice tradition.

**Rachel:**

You think that was just like peace of mind for your mom? Like get these kids out of the house. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Maybe. Um, yeah, it's a good, it's a really nice thing to do. Um, last year was a bit, I imagine this year's walk too will be a bit harrowing. Like let's break down the year. Oh fuck! [laughs] Um, but yeah, it's a really nice tradition. And then like we just, I don't know, we loved each other so much and we love each other so much. And, and so like getting together for, for Christmas is always so, so great. We'd have cinnamon and orange rolls on Christmas morning.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I was gonna say, you've got Christmas foods too.

**Griffin:**

That's really it. Justin's on this, uh, like great British baking show like tip Now where, uh, on Christmas he, he likes to have a big, uh, big sort of British style luncheon or dinner with a, a lot of, uh, you know, different puddings mostly sort of a, a pudding based sort of affair. Um, but yeah like we go so hard on Christmas and I look forward to it so much.

**Rachel:**

You go-

**Griffin:**

And as a, as a kid, it was literally the like, uh, like c-center, like the ark stone, like the counterweight of my entire year upon which the entire year was sort of based.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, what about you? What di- I, I know you guys didn't go quite as hard.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. So my family's a little different partially because we're, we're small. You know, it's, it's just me and my parents. I don't have any siblings. And then also the kind of the bulk of the family comes from my mom's side. Um, my mom is one of six, um, and all of her brothers and sisters live in the Missouri, Illinois area. So that used to be kind of our tradition.

**Griffin:**

Right.

**Rachel:**

Was we would have our little Christmas at home or Christmas Day we'd wake up open presents.

**Griffin:**

Was it, is it, was it always as intense as that one Thanksgiving I went to where like the whole damn family rolled up and filled up the entire house?

**Rachel:**

Much bigger actually.

**Griffin:**

Whoa. Damn, okay.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Much bigger. Um, because then we would go to my mom's mom's house. Um, or as, as we got older, one of my aunts or uncle's house, uh, and I had a lot of cousins that were very close to my age. So Christmas was just, it, it wasn't like everybody sat around and took turns opening presents. It was like throughout the day, you would have people come up to you and hand you things. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Oh, that's great too.

**Rachel:**

It was just kind of a, a free for all, uh, and that it was just like, you had to catch the kids as they were throughout the house and hand them a present and then usually-

**Griffin:**

It sounds like a fun Easter Egg Hunt for a, a child hunt for the adults.

**Rachel:**

[laughing] Yeah. Usually they would sit down wherever they were open the present and then go back to playing. So it was, it was definitely fun. Although, as, as we got older and all those kids grew up-

**Griffin:**

Not sustainable, yeah.

**Rachel:**

... Christmas got smaller and smaller and then it became, um, it became less about presents and more just about eating a lot of food.

**Griffin:**

Hey, ain't nothing wrong with that.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Um, you wanna get into it? I think you start this week.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

If you feel comfortable, if the spirit's moving you in that direction, that good Christmas spirit.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I would say so. Uh-

**Griffin:**

The Holy Spirit maybe.

**Rachel:**

I feel like these aren't gonna be a surprise to Griffin, uh.

**Griffin:**

That's fine. And, I'm not the only one that listens to the show.

**Rachel:**

[laughing] Hopefully. Hopefully they'll be... I, I tried to pick some that weren't as classic maybe so we could potentially have some listeners that-

**Griffin:**

Rachel talked to me, she's like, "What if we just do like deep-

**Rachel:**

... like fun.

**Griffin:**

... deep cuts?" [laughs] And I was like, "All right, fucking..."

**Rachel:**

I feel like every podcast does a Christmas Show and I wanted to bring something kind of different.

**Griffin:**

I mean, your charm, your wit your I, your lu-luscious voice. Like you're bringing a lot to the table.

**Rachel:**

Thank you, Griffin

**Griffin:**

Luscious was a bad.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that was very sensual.

**Griffin:**

Mellifluous. That's a word, I think.

**Rachel:**

I mean, that, yeah that, uh, it sounds a little bit like-

**Griffin:**

It sounds bad. Mellifluous sounds bad.

**Rachel:**

... Maleficent who was the villain in *Sleeping Beauty*, I wanna say?

**Griffin:**

And in, um, the Snow, the *Snow White*, uh, in the *Huntsman*.

**Rachel:**

Oh, maybe it was [laughs] it was Snow White.

**Griffin:**

No, I think you're right.

**Rachel:**

You think it's *Sleeping Beauty*?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

I've played the Kingdom Hearts games. [laughs] What's your thing?

**Rachel:**

*Arthur Christmas*.

**Griffin:**

*Arthur Christmas* is a great little flick.

**Rachel:**

Griffin and I just discovered this a couple years ago, which isn't that, uh, unique because it came out in 2011.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**



So it's actually, it came out since we got together.

**Griffin:**

It's fairly new. It, man, it's been a while since there's been like a, like a Christmas jam, huh?

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Like *Elf* came out and people are like, "Okay, this one's going in the, you know, Library of Congress." *Arthur Christmas* is a really great one. Obviously *Fred Claus*. Like you go, uh, like you c, it's not Christmas without *Fred Claus*. And I have that tattooed on my neck.

**Rachel:**

And now the *Christmas Prince*. [laughing]

**Griffin:**

*Christmas Prince* has stepped in here and filled up... Thank you, baby for reminding me of *Christmas Prince* and *Christmas Inheritance*. Netflix has just decided like, Hey, by the way, w-we're Hallmark now. Like, we've already, we've become Marvel and we've become AMC. And now we're also Hallmark. Please enjoy *the Christmas Prince*. Yeah.

**Rachel:**

*Arthur Christmas* came out 2011. It is a production, uh, in partnership with Sony Pictures and Aardman Animations.

**Griffin:**

Talk about Aardman cause you, you sort of turned me onto Aardman.

**Rachel:**

I'm a big Aardman fan. So I, um, gosh, I may in middle school, uh, no, early high school became a big *Wallace & Gromit* fan. Uh, so Aardman kind of got its start in Claymation and then turned to animation, uh, not so long ago.

**Griffin:**

They're still doing Claymation. They have a new feature that I saw trailer for before Star Wars.

**Rachel:**

Oh.

**Griffin:**

Um, and it's I forget what it's called, but it's about like people in this stone age battling against people from the bronze age.

**Rachel:**

Oh, that's kinda fun.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Uh, so I, I really like *Wallace & Gromit*. I like Aardman stuff. It, it, they also did like *Chicken Run*, which is a more recent thing, um.

**Griffin:**

I think their first 3D animated feature was *Flushed Way*, I wanna say.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that's right.

**Griffin:**

Which is about a mouse that goes on a toilet adventure.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] I haven't seen that one.

**Griffin:**

How wonder, uh, how wonders.

**Rachel:**

I have to imagine it's better than-

**Griffin:**

What a magical journey into the toilet. [laughs] And how many poo poo jokes do you think they do? Probably like seven.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. That's probably why I haven't seen it. Uh, [laughs] so *Arthur Christmas* set on Christmas night, the film tells story about Santa Claus's

clumsy son, Arthur Claus, who discovers that the Santa's high tech ship has failed to deliver one girl's present. Uh, and so he sets out to go on a mission to save her Christmas. And it's such notable voices as Hugh Laurie, uh, Bill Nighy. I never know how to say it.

**Griffin:**

You've said it, yes, you've, you've done it perfectly.

**Rachel:**

Okay, good. Uh, you know who else is in it? Eva Longoria, Laura Linney.

**Griffin:**

Hey!

**Rachel:**

Uh, and it's-

**Griffin:**

Who plays-

**Rachel:**

... fantastic.

**Griffin:**

I don't think you said who plays Arthur Christmas.

**Rachel:**

Oh, uh, James McAvoy.

**Griffin:**

Oh yeah.

**Rachel:**

I don't know him super well, so I didn't really know.

**Griffin:**

He plays young professor like sexy Professor X in the X-Men movies.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay. [laughing]

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Um, I think he was in *Atonement*.

**Rachel:**

That was my Halloween costume one year.

**Griffin:**

Sexy professor? [laughs] Um, y-yeah, w-what I really like about it is like the first, like half of the movie, maybe a bit less, it goes into like this wild, like fictional version of explaining the logistics of the Santa Claus present delivery operations.

**Rachel:**

So it's really modernized. So there's this idea that, um, Santas are... W-well, so there's several Santas. There's-

**Griffin:**

There's many Santas.

**Rachel:**

... there's grand Santa who's played by Bill Nighy, who's 136 years old and has since retired to, uh, his son, Malcolm, uh, who is older and being, uh, succeeded by, uh, Steve Claus, who is the eldest son and, and very, and that's Hugh Laurie and very technologically savvy. And so the whole Christmas operation is done in this high tech way.

**Griffin:**

So there's this struggle between the three of them where Sant- where grandpa Claus is like old school. Like we just had the one wooden sly in the reindeer. And then it keeps modernizing. And so it's like a, a, a conversation about like modernizing the process of delivering presents to, uh, children in a world where population has increased so drastically.

I don't know. I think it's so clever and so like, uh, so, so interesting. A lot of movies like ta- a lot of Christmas movies like tackle that idea. And this is by far the most thorough of like, here's how it happens. Here's the technology we use. Here's the magic we use. I, I found it very charming. But then in, in that picture is Arthur Christmas, who's like, nobody, who's like not in the chain of command really at all.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. He, he handles, as I recall, he handles all the Santa letters, all the letters to Santa. Uh, but he has not been tasked with the big Santa Claus responsibilities, um.

**Griffin:**

But it's so charming. His quest-

**Rachel:**

It's so charming.

**Griffin:**

... his quest to save Christmas for just this one person, which is not really like a, uh, I don't know, not really a, a storyline that I feel like a lot of Christmas movies go for where it's just like... The, the whole idea is that he, everybody else has looked at this, you know, they've delivered presents to several billion children and say like, it was a succ- a success, right? This one child is a, a statistical anomaly, nothing to even worry about. But it, it is something to worry about cause that one little girl can have a bad Christmas. So Arthur Christmas like takes it on himself to, to-

**Rachel:**

It's actually Arthur Claus. The movie's called Arthur, *Arthur Christmas*.

**Griffin:**

Well, I'll, I'll edit it in post.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:**

I have this software where I can change words to sound like other words. So all the times-

**Rachel:**

It just says every word in your voice ready to go.

**Griffin:**

Uh-huh [affirmative] And so you know how I say, uh, fudge so much on the podcast-

**Rachel:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Griffin:**

... this software sometimes takes a mind of its own. It makes it the bad, the bad one.

**Rachel:**

Oh no.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. It's a really yucky toilet word and I would never say it with my real mouth. [laughs] But every time I say fuck, it changes it to you know what.

**Rachel:**

Um, [laughs] so yeah, so this has a 92% on Rotten Tomatoes. It's not me that's a big fan.

**Griffin:**

It's really good. I don't if maybe-

**Rachel:**

It's a very good movie.

**Griffin:**

I, I evangelize it a lot and I feel like it sounds so cornball.

**Rachel:**

It's hard to find. We ended up just buying it because, uh, it's not usually available. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

I don't think its streamable anywhere.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, you have to rent it.

**Griffin:**

It's, it's, it's just like a really interesting, uh, I don't know, there's, it builds this genuinely great family dynamic between the different Clauses like a genuinely great one. Uh, and, and also sort of talks about the differences between generations and how that relates to, um, like technology and how we recognize the holidays and like what's important and what's special to us.

It does it in a really, like a way that like you would not exactly expect from an animated feature film from the robot pants studio.

**Rachel:**

[laughing]. Y-yeah. And it gets, it gets to kind of the whole initial idea behind Christmas, you know, I think part of our life-

**Griffin:**

The Christ child, the Christ child.

**Rachel:**

Well, no, not that part. But uh, this idea that it's, it's, it's not this wide blanket of like, everybody has to get this many presents at this time, um, just to fulfill the Christmas objective. It's more about like, kind of the, the magical experience that little kids have and making sure that everybody gets that.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

It's really nice.

**Griffin:**

God, it makes, it, the ending makes me cry every time.

**Rachel:**

I know, me too.

**Griffin:**

It's so sweet.

**Rachel:**

Its very sweet.

**Griffin:**

It is such a good and un-unappreciated gem. It's, I would rank it probably second behind *Christmas Prince*, actually third behind *Christmas Prince* and *Christmas Inheritance*. *Christmas Prince* is so buck wild. I cannot stress it enough.

**Rachel:**

I, so there's, there's a kind of bad-

**Griffin:**

It's on, it's on Netflix now. It just came out.

**Rachel:**

Yes. There's a kind of bad movie that I enjoy. Uh, this was not that for me.

**Griffin:**

Oh, I loved it. I loved every frame of it. [laughs] There's a scene where the Christmas, the titular, the Christmas Prince is, uh, the, the, this woman is a journalist, but she sneaks into this castle, uh, pretending to be a tutor for a young, a young girl in the castle and falls in love with the Christmas Prince. And there's a scene where her and little girl are looking out the window of the, the girl's bedroom, uh, looking at the Christmas Prince [laughing] as he is practicing archery.

And it sets up like the next scene where they shoot a bow and arrow. And of course she does a silly bad job, but it, while they're looking at him, do archery, he's shooting like a bow at a target that is probably six feet away from him. [laughs] And it's the fucking funniest thing I've, I've seen in a very long time.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I had a fun time imagining kind of how they started filming that. Cause I imagine the actor in like an effort to be a real professional tried to learn to shoot a bow and arrow himself. And they just kept moving that target closer and closer and closer. [laughing]

**Griffin:**

They also try to set up this like mystery with a twist ending close to the end that like ties up all the plot lines and it is the silliest easiest to solve puzzle.

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

Um, yeah, it's, it's a lot. Uh, but it's a, it's enjoyable if you like the Hallmark sort of milieu. Any other Christmas movie that we didn't talk about? I guess not. I guess we've-

**Rachel:**

I think we should, we should keep it going.



**Griffin:**

Save it for 2018. Um, I want to talk about something. It's very specific.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

The thing I have brought is the three note horn stinger in the chorus of Donny Hathaway's This Christmas. [laughs] The whole song is great. The three note horn sort of stab right there in the middle of that chorus is one of the best fucking things I've ever heard in a Christmas song. This is one of my favorite Christmas songs ever. And this is the thing that kind of like makes it. Um, I'm gonna just play a little bit. I'm gonna play that stinger just so folks-

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

... know what the hell I'm talking about. If you've not heard this song, go listen to Donny Hathaway's This Christmas. Uh, but if you don't wanna go the whole thing, here's a little bit of it with that horn and just listen.

[This Christmas by Donny Hathaway plays

**Griffin:**

It's so good. Th-This Christmas is one of my favorite holiday songs because it kind of subverts the expected holiday song formula. Um, and a lot of that is in like the tone of the song. It is in a lot of ways just kind of a love song that takes place at Christmas. Uh, it is a song about him sort of being in love with this other person and his excitement for that love, making him think like this is gonna be a great Christmas.

Um, and it's, well, what I al- what I also love about it is that it's not about how great Christmas is. It is specifically about how great this Christmas is going to be, hence the name of the song. And that, that may sound like a silly distinction, but it's really powerful. Um, the chorus goes, uh, "and this Christmas will be a very special Christmas for me". Like he's saying like this, I'm going to make this Christmas be a good Christmas, and it's gonna be a good Christmas cause I'm in love with you. And that's so exciting.

**Rachel:**

It's the perfect hype song. Like I, I can hear a lot of Christmas music and kind of, you know, feel a little bit of the spirit, but this one is like looking forward to Christmas and it's like gets you really, gets you really excited.

**Griffin:**

Y-yeah. A lot of songs are... It's, it's weird because a lot of songs are the subject of what you get excited about for Christmas, right? Like, uh, you know, Frosty the Snowman, you hear that song and you, it, it's supposed to get you excited for Christmas because it is inextricably linked from being a Christmas thing. Like it's Christmas when I hear Frosty. This one is about like what it is like to be excited for Christmas.

And I think that that's like a, a different thing en-entirely. Um, so This Christmas was released as a single in 1970 and it didn't find like hardly any success at all. Um, and it wouldn't until long after, uh, Donny Hathaway's death in 1979, um, a few different artists covered it in the years after it was released, including The Temptations, uh, Gladys Knight & the Pips, uh, and Patti LaBelle, who have you seen-

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yes.

**Griffin:**

... the video of-

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

... Patti LaBelle. Uh, it is the 1996 White House Tree Lighting Ceremony. And, uh, Patti LaBelle gets up there to do a performance of This Christmas, which she had just released in, uh, her own Christmas album that-

**Rachel:**

Oh, wait, have I seen this? Maybe.

**Griffin:**

I don't know.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

Uh, she put out a Christmas album called This Christmas that had This Christmas on it and she went on the, the Tree Lighting Ceremony in 1996 and they didn't have the words for her. They're supposed to be like a, a-

**Rachel:**

Okay, I have seen this. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... teleprompter with the words on it and they didn't have it. Uh, and she didn't like know a lot of the words. If, by the way, if you think this is leading up, me making fun of Patti LaBelle in any way, you are fucking out of your mind because she gets a little bit lost a bit in the beginning. She says like, "Where's my backup singers?" Uh, trying to get the backup singers [laughs] to step in and maybe help out. And she tries to get the audience to sing along with her. Then she just mostly vamps.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yes.

**Griffin:**

... for like two and a half minutes, and it is still the best shit ever.

**Rachel:**

That is, it's so good.

**Griffin:**

Uh, go look up Patti LaBelle This Christmas.

**Rachel:**

No, she never gives up. She, yeah.

**Griffin:**

She doesn't, she is such a fucking professional. Uh, Diana Ross also did a recording in 1974 that was, uh, not released, uh, until much, much later in a, uh, Motown Records compilation. Uh, but in 1991, it was included, uh, the, the, uh, record label, which I don't remember the name of, I didn't write it down. Uh, the record label that put out This Christmas, put out this, uh, I think it was called Soul Christmas, this, uh, collection, uh, of, of Soul Christmas songs.

And it included This Christmas and after that like it exploded and everybody covered it. Uh, Gloria Estefan, Usher, uh, Christina Aguilera, um, Destiny's Child, Chicago, Harry Connick Jr., Aretha Franklin, uh, Cee Lo Green, Lady

Antebellum, Pentatonix, uh, Seal went to number one on the billboard charts with This Christmas. It only sort of, became like this, this Christmas classic after it had been covered and covered and covered and covered by like everybody. And now it is like widely recognized as, as it should be a, a Christmas classic.

It is a absolute jam. Um, so it's a great song, but like, I wanna specifically talk about those three notes [laughs] because they are, they are inexplicable. And if you wanna talk about like music theory and talk about like a lot of, uh, you, you don't get this a lot in Christmas music where a way that, uh, musicians and composers like get emotional effect out of their music is by adding unexpected elements to the song, unanticipated elements of the song that surprise you. And that surprise comes in a lot of ways.

And so in a lot of Christmas music, it's all major key, um, except for like, what are some minor key Christmas songs like, uh, O Come O Come Ye Manuel I think, uh, I think is, is one of them. There's not a lot, right? But here in the middle of this like amazing upbeat holiday song about love and the expectation of Christmas comes this wild horn stab, this minor chord run, uh, that happens right after he says the title of the song. And it happens in a way that almost sounds like suspenseful.

**Rachel:**

Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:**

And this Christmas. Bum bam baaaaam! Like whoa where did that come from?

**Rachel:**

Yeah. Yeah. Like, like the villain has just entered the room.

**Griffin:**

But it's so iconic. Like I can't, when I think of This Christmas, I think that's a great song. And oh shit, those three notes hit so fucking hard every single time. It is, and I don't know why it's in the song, right? Like it, the song would still be great even without it, but with it, it's like, it's just this little, like this little like piece of salt on the candy and you eat it. And you're like, whoa what's, whoa! And it makes it taste better.

**Rachel:**

That is such a good analogy, Griffin.

**Griffin:**

Thank you. I, I don't know. I talk about this all the time whenever I talk about music on this show, which is how wonderful it is when the smallest parts of songs can define them and establish the mood for the whole song using just a few notes. And This Christmas hits you with that, that, that stab in the middle. And it just makes the whole, it just makes the whole thing and it makes it like just a really, really powerful chorus. And I love it so much.

[This Christmas by Donny Hathaway plays]

**Griffin:**

Uh, should we steal me away? I don't know why constructed it like that, but.

**Rachel:**

I have an idea, but I have to go leave the room and come back to do it.

**Griffin:**

Have you been planning this or?

**Rachel:**

No, I just... I have an idea.

**Griffin:**

All right. Oh, what if she comes back and she's got a puppy? Oh, that's fun.

**Rachel:**

Are you ready?

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

[ringing Christmas bells] Oooooohohohohoho!

**Griffin:**

[laughs] God, it was so loud. [laughs] Why when you do it, you always do it so loud? [laughing] Look at the sound, look at the wave forms!

**Rachel:**

I know. I see it. [laughing]

**Griffin:**

Look at the wave forma! So loud.

**Rachel:**

I was so excited.

**Griffin:**

No, I know this you've, you've [laughs] you just hit me with like a dragon ball Z blast of spirit [laughs] just a, a, a big Kamehameha wave of spirit just shot through my chest and back through... We have a big hole in our, our, our house [laughs] is a smoking crater of Christmas spirit right now. I am decimated by the holiday spirit.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]

[ad break]

**Rachel:**

Okay. This message is to talk about the *Love and Luck* Podcast. Go to [LoveandLuckpodcast.com](http://LoveandLuckpodcast.com) for more information, *Love and Luck* is a love story with a touch of magic told via voicemails said in the LGBT community in Melbourne, Australia, *Love and Luck* is for people who like healthy relationships and happy endings, short episodes are released weekly on Tuesdays. There are also episodes available on YouTube with full hand, coded captions. that's [LoveandLuckpodcast.com](http://LoveandLuckpodcast.com).

**Griffin:**

That sounds fucking great. That is also such a good idea for a podcast.

**Rachel:**

It is really good. The voicemails.

**Griffin:**

Like found footage voice mail stuff-

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... that's awesome.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

That's such a good idea. I'm gonna get it.

**Rachel:**

In Australia too.

**Griffin:**

In Australia. So you know the f, the no hate, the voices are gonna be so good. [laughs] I love Australia. I love, I love all accents equally. I don't have a favorite including the American accent. So you know I mean it.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] What is that?

**Griffin:**

I'm trying to cover my bases, I guess.

**Rachel:**

Um, this next message is for their little brother Ross future pharmacist. It is from Sarah in Japan. Kiddo, I just wanted to tell you how proud I am of you. You're such a kind thoughtful and overall wonderful dude and soon you'll also be a doctor. Hang in there, Cabe your kicking pharmacy school's ass. All my love to you, Katie and your pups and kitties.

**Griffin:**

Aw, and there's a sweet message. Good luck slinging those pills. Make sure that you put the three red pills on top of the red virus. Is the only way to beat the diseases. That was a Dr. Mario joke.

**Rachel:**

Oh-

**Griffin:**

And now I-

**Rachel:**

... I thought it was a Pandemic reference.

**Griffin:**

Oh, that also. And I just wanna be honest, I don't know that much about diseases or medicine outside of Dr. Mario or Pandemic. And so that's my main thing and thank you for doing what you do or else I would die from not having medicine and great job.

**Brea Grant:**

Are stacks of unread books taking over your apartment?

**Mallory O'Meara:**

Do you constantly miss your train stop because you're caught up in reading?

**Brea Grant:**

I'm Brea Grant.

**Mallory O'Meara:**

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Learn how to read better.

**Mallory O'Meara:**

[laughs] Wow. That was good. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

Okay. Do you want my second thing?

**Griffin:**

More than the air that I breathe.

**Rachel:**

Uh, wow. All right. [laughs] So if I don't say it-

**Griffin:**

I'll die from not breathing.

**Rachel:**

That's terrible.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Ruin Christmas, I hope. Probably not. You can probably just go and open all presents by yourself anyway, including my presents. So you just wanted my presents, don't you? That's what this whole plan was about. So what's your second thing?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] My second thing is another song actually. It is Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas in the movie, *Meet Me in St. Louis*.

**Griffin:**

You said that so cute. [laughs] And I, I don't, and I'm not saying it in like a diminutive way, but you were just like Merry Little Christmas. [laughs] And it really, it really-

**Rachel:**

It's my Midwestern twang.

**Griffin:**

And this movie's just chock full of Midwestern twang.

**Rachel:**

It's very true.

**Griffin:**

I'm Judy Garland. Yeehaw. That's not what [laughs] people in the Midwest. I don't own that. Okay. I'm not gonna stand in that cause I don't own that. Uh, this is a very pretty song from a very nice movie. Can you tell me everything about it please?

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Uh, so Griffin and I have had lots of conversations before just when we're sitting around, uh, the fireplace about what our favorite Christmas songs are and this one's always like top two, three for me. Um.

**Griffin:**

I get it confused with, I'll Be Home for Christmas, which is a different one. [laughs] And also Jonathan Taylor Thomas movie.

**Rachel:**

Well, Jonathan Taylor Thomas. Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And do you think that maybe we could do a quick pivot and just talk about the Jonathan Taylor Thomas movie, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*.

**Rachel:**

Have you watched that all the way through?

**Griffin:**

Fuck yeah, dude. JTT?

**Rachel:**

Oh, Griffin.

**Griffin:**

So Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas though is not... Jonathan was Jay, was Jonathan involved with this one?

**Rachel:**

No.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

No, it was significantly before his time. Uh.

**Griffin:**

He's actually a Time Lord.

**Rachel:**

You know, I can see that actually. That explains why we haven't seen him lately. Is that he's doing lots of, uh, time adventures.

**Griffin:**

The time adventures with his companion friend who is Zachery Ty Bryant. Um, so can you walk people in to what *Meet Me in St. Louis, I*, which it's hard to say it like that cause this there's a very prominent song in it that's [singing] "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis."

**Rachel:**

And then that, uh, clang, clang, clang went the trolley.

**Griffin:**

Went the trolley. Aint there a trolley accident in the movie? Isn't there a horrific, horrific trolley accident?

**Rachel:**

Well, they say yes, they say street car, I think in that example.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

Which I assume is the same thing. But part of me wonders if there's a very slight difference between street cars and trollies.

**Griffin:**

Probably not.

**Rachel:**

Probably not. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And there's a street car accident. And then, and then it's a street car named on fire.

**Rachel:**

So the movie, the movie is about this, this family of, uh, three daughters. Their dad is a, a businessman. He, uh, they all live in St. Louis. It's about to be the 1904? Beliefs World's Fair in St. Louis. St. Louis is kinda like the, the height of the country at that point.

**Griffin:**

That's where the toilet was first introduced.

**Rachel:**

Did you do some research?

**Griffin:**

No baby because what I just said is buck wild.

**Rachel:**

[laughs]. And, but so the movie *Meet Me in St. Louis* actually came out in 1944, but it's set in this time period where St. Louis is kind of the happening place to be and it's musical and everybody's singing about love and St. Louis. And then the dad is going to be transferred. And so then the movie kinda takes a turn and they're all gonna move and they don't wanna leave St. Louis, but.

**Griffin:**

No. Hey, can I ask you something?

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

Does it trip you out at all when old movies are set in even older times than when the movies came out. [laughs] There's a part of my, a caveman brain where it's like this movie-

**Rachel:**

What's is, wait, wait, wait.

**Griffin:**

... was in the 1904 Worlds Fair.

**Rachel:**

What is.

**Griffin:**

And I'm like, "This movie came out in 1904." But I, it didn't.

**Rachel:**

What is an old movie to you outta curiosity?

**Griffin:**

Anything before *Wayne's World* more or less. [laughs] You know, do you know what I mean though? Like I'm, I don't, I don't know that I have the sort of historical underpinnings required to be able to differentiate, this was a movie that people made in 1944 where they were like, you know, it would be a real hoot, what if we did a movie set in the olden days, which to them was 1904, but to me, 1944 is still wicked olden days. Same with like, um, uh, *It's A Wonderful Life*. Like, I have no idea when that movie was made, but it was sometime in the first, probably four decades of the 20th century. Anyway, so.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Um, so did you, like, what about when it's an old story, but it's modernized like, uh, *Romeo and Juliet*?

**Griffin:**

I don't understand. Like, oh, no, that's, are you asking me if I liked, uh, [laughs] uh, Leonard, Leonardo DiCaprio version of *Romeo + Juliet*?

**Rachel:**

I was wondering if, if it's an old story, but told as if present day, if you liked that better?

**Griffin:**

So basically Baz, Baz Luhrmann's whole fucking scene.

**Rachel:**

Are you, are you Santa Claus?

**Griffin:**

No, not the best. No, not the best. Because it feel so like. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

I don't know. I guess I've watched a lot of those movies before the version of little women with Katherine Hepburn like there are a lot of old movies about even older times. It doesn't really trip me out so much.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. I guess not. Oh God, you've got me thinking, you've got me down a Baz hole now. [laughs] What, what drives me wild about that stuff, it's like, it is it's timeless, like the works of Shakespeare, like when they're performed well is like, oh, that's how people talk and it's timeless in a way. And so when you make it, I don't know, when you try to modernize it with JNCO jeans, it's like, what are you fucking doing?

**Rachel:**

Yeah. No, I know what you mean.

**Griffin:**

It was, it was already pretty good. That's not to say modern adaptations of old works are bad, but just these specific one. [laughs]

**Rachel:**

Clueless is a modern adaptation of Emma. And I think-

**Griffin:**

Oh.

**Rachel:**

... Clueless is great.

**Griffin:**

Well, that's different. I mean, that's an adaptation. This is just a straight-

**Rachel:**

It's not a-

**Griffin:**

... straight up production.

**Rachel:**

... straight dialogue. Yeah. Anyway.

**Griffin:**

So *Meet Me in St. Louis* was made sometime not now [laughs] about a different time before it.

**Rachel:**

Uh, yeah. Again, not the reason that I'm talking about it this week.

**Griffin:**

Uh let's get to that song.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. So the song is supposed to be kind of a mournful song, uh, because they're celebrating their last Christmas in St. Louis and Judy Garland is sitting with her younger sister Tudy, and they're looking out the window at the snowmen they made that day. And Tudy is sad because she knows that they can't bring the snowmen with them.

**Griffin:**

Well Tudy, to be fair, those snowmen were never gonna be sort of a permanent fixture [laughs] of the... You understand that. Right Tuds?

**Rachel:**

Well, she's very young. Actually the actress herself was not even 10 years old yet. Uh, and I think her character's supposed to be even younger.

**Griffin:**

Okay.

**Rachel:**

So it's not crazy that she wouldn't really have that realization.

**Griffin:**

Know how snowman work? No, I think by about six you've probably got snow lockdown and how it functions in heat [laughs] in the springtime and summertime. You know how in summertime you're playing around and you're at the beach and you don't see any snowmen? Is enough to form a causal link, I think even a, in a young, young brain.

**Rachel:**

Well, this is, I mean, that doesn't mean that it's all right.

**Griffin:**

This is 1944. Maybe people weren't [laughs] paying attention yet.

**Rachel:**

They'd make big advances in refrigeration. Maybe she thought-

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

... science was ready to bring the snowman wherever you wanted to go.

**Griffin:**

That's beautiful. And that's how the Yeti cooler got invented.

**Rachel:**

How about it, science?

**Griffin:**

So can you-

**Rachel:**

So.

**Griffin:**

... tell me about the song, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

**Rachel:**

So I've always thought it was a very beautiful song, partly because Judy Garland is a beautiful singer.

**Griffin:**

She does a good job with her voice.

**Rachel:**

Um, and also there's, uh, there's this kind sadness to it. But, um, I think it's, it's largely hopeful too.

**Griffin:**

I mean, the, the turn of phrase Merry Little Christmas is like speaks volumes-



**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

... to that because every other Christmas song is like, [singing] "triumphantly, praise the baby God." Or like let's blow this motherfucker up with Holly. Like let's jam, let's fucking jam Holly in every hole of this thing.

**Rachel:**

No that's a good point.

**Griffin:**

And this one's like, oh, let's, you know, we're gonna get through this one.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. That's a good point. Uh, and so interesting thing about this song, uh, the original version was even sadder.

**Griffin:**

Yes.

**Rachel:**

Uh, and Judy Garland refused to sing it. Uh, she said, and I'm looking at an NPR story, She said, "If I sing that little Margaret who is the actress will cry and they'll think I'm a monster." [laughs]. Uh, and the people that wrote the song, uh, Hugh Martin and his writing partner, uh, were like, "Well, I'm sorry you don't like it, but that's the way it is and I don't wanna write a new lyric." Um, but they said, no, you, we we've gotta change it. That's a good point.

**Griffin:**

In their defense, in the songwriter's defense, it's a sad scene. Like it's a really really sad scene. And they, the original version really doubled down on the like let's just get through this thing sort of style so much so that when you hear the old lyrics and you hear the new ones side by side, the new ones don't sound sad at all. They sound very, very happy compared to the old, extremely sad lyrics.

**Rachel:**

And so I was talking to Griffin about this and he actually found the orig lyrics.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, I have the old lyrics. Okay. So the original lyrics that, uh, Hugh Martin proposed for Have Yourself, um, A Merry Little Christmas, which was originate— I don't know if we hit this hard enough, was originated by Meet Me in St. Louis is where it first appeared. Um, which pay attention to how much plot is also in the original version of the song. It's wild to think that if it had not been changed to these more upbeat lyrics, it would not be a holiday classic because it is so-

**Rachel:**

Yeah, so specifically.

**Griffin:**

... intrinsically plot, plot based. And I, I really, uh, believe that. Okay, so "Have yourself a merry little Christmas. It may be your last. Next year we may all be living in the past, have yourself a merry little Christmas. Pop that champagne cork. Next year we may all be living in New York." Like can you imagine [laughs] being at the holiday party in Santa Fe, just like "next year, we may all be living in New York." What? [laughs] Uh, "No good times like the olden days. Happy golden days of yore." Okay. Pretty good there. "Faithful friends who were dear to us. Sounds good so far will be near to us no more."

**Rachel:**

Yeah, that one's a real dark too.

**Griffin:**

But uh, "At least we all will be together. If the Lord allows," He might just kill one of us. "From now on, we'll have to muddle through somehow." Now that is the most interesting line in the song. We'll come back to it. "So have yourself a merry little Christmas now." From now on, we'll have to muddle through somehow is still a very, very sad lyric. Can you tell me the line that has been changed and it got changed by Ol' Blue Eyes. This is the one line... Actually I think there's maybe a couple other things that got tweaked, but this is like the major revision that when Frank Sinatra did the song a few years later, this was the big tweak. Can you tell me what line was missing that replaces, uh, "from now on we'll have to muddle through somehow."

**Rachel:**

Uh, I'm assuming the rhyme scheme is the same.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. You got this.

**Rachel:**

Does he replace muddle with, oh gosh-

**Griffin:**

Buddle. N—

**Rachel:**

... cuddle, cuddle?

**Griffin:**

Yes, baby. The song that we all know, Have Yourself A Merry little Christmas with the line from now on will have to cuddle through somehow.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] That's not so crazy.

**Griffin:**

[singing] "Hang, hang a shining star up on the highest bough." That's what Frank Sinatra sounds like, just replaced it. Frank Sinatra is like, "Yo, you did a good job. Cleaning it up. Desaddening it." It's still kind of a bummer. That line is still kind of a bummer. Can you-

**Rachel:**

Wait, so what does he say? Sorry. I was distracted by your beautiful voice.

**Griffin:**

From now, uh, "hang a shining star upon the highest bough."

**Rachel:**

Oh yes, of course.

**Griffin:**

So that line replaces that line. So Ol' Blue Eyes comes in and is like, "Let's, I'm gonna punch it up a little bit more."

**Rachel:**

That's really good.

**Griffin:**

And then that became sort of the version of the song. Someone show that Judy Garland, uh, did a rerelease like Christmas album where she's sang

Sinatra's version. I just think this is so interesting. It went from this like sad show tune that the actors refused to do-

**Rachel:**

Do you wanna say the other lines that were replaced?

**Griffin:**

Um, I think the other lines that were replaced in the-

**Rachel:**

Cause it's not New York anymore.

**Griffin:**

You're right. You're right. Uh, I mean, I feel like people know-

**Rachel:**

I don't think so. I don't think this one-

**Griffin:**

... the lyrics to Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas, but if not, um, how about instead of reading the lyrics of the song, I can just play some of it from *Meet Me in St. Louis*. [Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas by Judy Garland plays]

**Rachel:**

Great. Uh, yeah, so I, I, for me, that song has just always been one of my favorite Christmas songs. It's not one that you hear on the radio a lot. There's been a lot of covers of it.

**Griffin:**

Sure.

**Rachel:**

Uh, I guess Sam Smith did one not long ago.

**Griffin:**

I don't, I don't know anything about that, but okay.

**Rachel:**

Um, but Judy, Judy's my fave, uh, as far as that song goes and I, uh, can't get enough of it. I watch *Meet Me in St. Louis* every Christmas time.

**Griffin:**

We haven't watched it this year though.

**Rachel:**

We have not.

**Griffin:**

No, we gonna, you wanna knock that out tonight you think? Trade some prezzies, knock it out?

**Rachel:**

Yeah, I think so. I like it.

**Griffin:**

All right. Let's do it. Can I do my second thing?

**Rachel:**

Yes.

**Griffin:**

It's about the greatest Christmas gift of all time.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

[singing badly] The greatest gift of all, I got when I was nine. That's how the original song went.

**Rachel:**

This is gonna be sad to my parents who listen to this podcast.

**Griffin:**

Can you not think of a greatest gift of all?

**Rachel:**

Well, I can remember specific Christmas gifts.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

I don't know that I ever had the feeling of like, this is the best Christmas ever.

**Griffin:**

Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:**

But I also didn't get super into video games or anything like that.

**Griffin:**

That's it. You gotta be in the video games.

**Rachel:**

Yeah.

**Griffin:**

And speaking of, I wanna take you all the way back to Christmas 1996.

**Rachel:**

Okay. Okay.

**Griffin:**

Hop in my ship. Hop in my magic time shed.

Rachel:

Beep boop beep boop boop!

**Griffin:**

That's not how the time shed works. It uses gears. It's steampunk inspired and you know that. Look around the time shed, do you see any buttons? It's little brass levers.

**Rachel:**

I don't know how to make lever noises.

**Griffin:**

Well, try it now.

**Rachel:**

[making lever noises... I guess]

**Griffin:**

God, I'll oil this thing. Hold on. [squeezing noises] Let me put some WD 40 in there. All right. Try it again.

Rachel:

[makes much smoother lever noises]

Griffin:

Oh, now that's a lever if I've ever heard one. No, don't pump it twice. [laughs] It's a dinosaur baby, run. Take this bazooka. [laughs] Okay. Okay. Now we're in Christmas, 1996. It's Christmas 1996. *Jingle All the Way* is killing it in theaters. So is *Jerry MaGuire* and *Scream*, both raining supreme December 1996.

**Rachel:**

I believe Backstreet Boys and NSYNC were battling it out.

**Griffin:**

I don't know if that's true.

**Rachel:**

... on the music charts.

**Griffin:**

Well, no, they, there was no battle to be had because the Spice Girls were on top of all shit. Uh, I was nine years old and the Nintendo 64 had just come out in September. It launched was just two games, but those games were Pilotwings 64 and Super Mario 64. So what else do you fucking need [laughs] with those two diamonds shining?

**Rachel:**

What is Pilotwing?

**Griffin:**

Oh, no!! Pilotwings is great. It's like a game where you do a bunch of sort of aerial sports. So there's like a hang gliding, little game and a helicopter game and a plane flying game and you do stunts and stuff. Pilotwings also

had one where you had these just super jump boots and you jumped across like a very miniaturized version of America.

**Rachel:**

Can I ask you another question? I know you haven't even gotten to what you were gonna say yet.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

All the McElroy boys liked video games.

**Griffin:**

True.

**Rachel:**

How did your parents pick which boy got which present since you all were gonna play it?

**Griffin:**

No, we all had distinctive tastes.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

Yeah. I think we all had different... I mean-

**Rachel:**

So, not everybody wanted this, uh, Nintendo 64?

**Griffin:**

Oh no, we all wanted it. And it was very much a group like.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

This is for, this is for the good boys. [laughs] Launch of two games, but a bunch more games came out in the months following. Um, and that holiday



season, the Nintendo 64 was impossible to find. It was impossible to find. I think it was either 200 or 300,000 units for the whole country, which is-

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:**

... nothing. Um, and I remember it was like full blown. It's appropriate the *Jingle All the Way* was in theaters cause it was full fucking Turbo Man up in there. [laughs] Uh, I remember a lot of our local like game stores cause you know I had my ear to the ground, my fingers to the pulse like [laughing] checking the, the Vegas odds on whether or not we were gonna get an N64 for Christmas. Uh, a bunch of our local shops were doing like lotteries for sales. It was like, it was preposterously scarce. Um, but it was all we wanted. Like all that we wanted was a Nintendo 64. So Christmas rolled around. Christmas morning we opened up present after present. None of the presents were Nintendo 64. [laughs] Our parents did a full blown *Christmas Story*.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:**

"Oh, I think there's one more present behind the entertainment center."

**Rachel:**

I love-

**Griffin:**

Hold it out.

**Rachel:**

... the flare for the dramatic in your house.

**Griffin:**

I watch the Nintendo 64 kids viral video. You know that one where they open it up. They're like, "Nintendo 64!!!!!!!"

**Rachel:**

Now I don't. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

Oh, shit. It's a big, it's a part of the cultural landscape.

**Rachel:**

Okay.

**Griffin:**

It's just two kids opening up an Nintendo 64 and just like losing their fucking minds. And it is a, it's a big viral video [laughing] and like now it's like 20 years later, where are those kids today? And I watch that video and I think like, "God, I'm glad my parents weren't filming us." Cause it would've literally been us. We destroyed the house. Uh, we were, [laughs] we were so psyched cause we had given up hope. We had essentially given up hope that we were gonna get an N64. Um, but there was one caveat and that is that it wasn't just the console that was very hard to find, the games-

**Rachel:**

Oh, no. [laughs].

**Griffin:**

... uh, which were cartridge based, which was a big point of contention because the PlayStation which had come outta year before was disc based and it was like, "Oh, video games have to be on discs now." And Nintendo was like, "No, you think you got this thing cracked. It's definitely gonna be cartridges."

**Rachel:**

We need something for you to blow on.

**Griffin:**

Yes. You just shouldn't do that.

**Rachel:**

Oh really?

**Griffin:**

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Wow. I didn't know that

**Griffin:**

You introduce moisture to the contacts.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

What, what you really are doing when you take it out and blow on it, all you're doing is just when you take it out and put it back in, you're receding the contacts.

**Rachel:**

Oh, yes.

**Griffin:**

It's those metal contacts. That's what they did. When you blow into it, you can rust it with your moisture, your horrible moisture.

**Rachel:**

Your brain is— Your brain is so big.

**Griffin:**

So [laughs] the games were very hard to find. They were also really expensive. The standard price and Nintendo 64 game back then was \$70.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:**

The standard at MSRP on like a new AAA game that comes out these days is like 60 bucks. Uh, but some of them were \$70. Most of 'em were \$70.

**Rachel:**

\$70 in the mid nineties is like 150 today.

**Griffin:**

It's an... Y-y-yes, it's preposterously expensive. Uh, Turock, the Dinosaur Hunter was like this big like 3D shooter. It was \$80.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:**

It's, it is wild. And so my parents, they, they, they filled our dark Nintendo 64 needs, but they only found one game for us to play. And that game was Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Oh, I love this so much. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

And I know you're wondering, did they buy this for us because we are particularly huge hockey fans. [laughs] No.

**Rachel:**

I had, for Sega, I had NHL 96.

**Griffin:**

NHL 96 was the best one.

**Rachel:**

Oh, okay.

**Griffin:**

Uh, is it... That's a good hockey game. I'd actually

**Rachel:**

What was Wayne Gretzky's game? Was it just all Gretzky in every position?  
[laughs]

**Griffin:**

Yeah. It was just a bunch of Gretzky clones. Um, no, it was just like the 3D okay 3D hockey game where like a lot of those like early Nintendo 64 games you play them now and it's like, yo. [laughing] But you play 'em back then. It was like, oh, okay. This is, this, these are 3D graphics. [laughs] These w, I've never seen these before.

**Rachel:**

I wish we should have brought your dad on so he could do a little director's commentary on this episode.

**Griffin:**

I mean, I can explain it. We found in Nintendo 64 and it was super hard to find that.

**Rachel:**

Do you know how he found it?

**Griffin:**

There were literally, there were literal, there were no games available. And so we bought the only game available so you guys would have something to play. And it was Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey. [laughs] And let me tell you something, we played the fucking shit outta Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey. [laughs] We played it like wild. Eventually a couple weeks later we found Shadows of the Empire, which was the big Star Wars shooter, uh, which was very exciting, not like a huge game.

We probably beat it like 50 times in, in the next month or so, cause it was like, again that and Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey were the only games that we had. I think it wasn't until like February that we actually found a copy of, of Mario, which if memory serves, we were on a wait list to rent it at Blockbuster. That is how scarce these games were.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh.

**Griffin:**

Um, but we got it and we checked it out for-

**Rachel:**

What a simpler time. [laughs]

**Griffin:**

... a very, very, very long time. But like all that is said, I like, I was so appreciative back then, right? It was, it was, we had given up hope that we were gonna get this mythical uber-present that we were never gonna get it cause it was so rare. And, and there were not that many. Um, but we were so grateful to get it even with our one sort of weird choice of the game. [laughs] And today I am grateful because I cannot imagine the links that my parents went through.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh, I am picturing your dad driving across state lines.

**Griffin:**

Fighting Sinbad. The whole way. Um, cause like, since we, since I've gotten old enough to like do my own Christmas-

**Rachel:**

That's a *Jingle All the Way* reference.

**Griffin:**

Yeah.

**Rachel:**

Just so you all don't think the McElroys never be-

**Griffin:**

My dad actually does have a longstanding beef with Sinbad. [laughs] Um, since, since we've been like doing our own Christmas presents and buying them for everybody, especially since our family's gotten larger like I understand what a, like an ordeal, it can be to secure everything-

**Rachel:**

I don't-

**Griffin:**

... that people need.

**Rachel:**

I don't think we do though. I think with Amazon now-

**Griffin:**

It's definitely a lot of easier. I have, I've never attempted to do something like this because it's, it, it's work. It's a full-time job to find the Turbo Man.

**Rachel:**

We, yeah, we had to drive from store to store to track something down.

**Griffin:**

But I know that's what my parents did. And they did it so that we would be happy and we would have this crystalline moment of like childhood joy.

**Rachel:**

Oh my gosh, yes.

**Griffin:**

And get, a-a-and, and get, and like, hey mission accomplished. I'm talking about it on a podcast about things that I love fucking 21 years later, um.

**Rachel:**

[laughs] And that's what they hoped, I'm sure. They were like, "You know, one day, 20 years now-"

**Griffin:**

It's probably not what they hoped [laughs] but, um, yeah, I'm I, I loved it back then. And today I see it as like a story of like my parents just trying to do something very nice and very difficult for their kids-

**Rachel:**

That's wonderful.

**Griffin:**

Um, even though we played the most hockey [laughs] we would ever play in our entire lives during that, that those few weeks with the Nintendo 64.

**Rachel:**

And that explains why you love hockey so much today.

**Griffin:**

Nope. Do you wanna hear some, uh, some submissions from folks?

**Rachel:**

And why you're such a Gretzky fan.

**Griffin:**

Huge G head. [laughs] Here's one from Erica who says "One of my favorite things about this time of year is the smell of the wreath on my parents' door. They have a storm door. So the wreath smell gets trapped between the wooden door and the storm door."

**Rachel:**

Wow, that's great.

**Griffin:**

"And when I arrive home for Christmas, I always open up that outer storm door and inhale deeply that incredible reath smell. It's wonderful." This is this, this is an incredible technology. [laughs] You create like a little stink pocket for that wreath to really do its thing and you open it up and it's like, it's like a car fresh, uh, air freshener. Like it's like thrown in your eyes and I love it.

**Rachel:**

My, uh, my mom sends, uh, all family members wreaths every year.

**Griffin:**

Oh, we don't have that stink bubble around.

**Rachel:**

No, we don't. But it, it is. I mean, you can smell it when you get to the door.

**Griffin:**

Oh yes, it's very nice.

**Rachel:**

It's nice.

**Griffin:**

Uh, here's one from Caitlin who says, "Something I find wonderful as an Aussie listener is summer Christmas. Since Christmas is so tied to winter and snow, as a Southern hemisphere dweller, I often, uh, I used to feel a little left out of holiday traditions I saw on American and British TV shows. Over the years though, I find the summary twist on holiday classics more and more delightful. Christmas Day on the beach, Santa in board shorts with zinc on his nose, summer berry pudding served cold with cream, water balloon fights on Christmas Eve, and my favorite, a guy dressed as Santa visiting my street on a fire truck instead of a sleigh and giving out lolli bags are just some of the Aussie Christmas quirks I find wonderful." I am in heaven right now.

**Rachel:**

What are lolli bags?

**Griffin:**

I mean, I'm assuming bags full of lollipops, but let's check in on that. Lolli bags, a lolli bag, what's a lolli bag? [laughs] Uh, it's an Australian term for Speedos, which is very funny. [laughs] But that's not what it is.

**Rachel:**

But that's not what it is.

**Griffin:**

It's like little bags of candy, I guess. It is a little bag full of candy.



**Rachel:**

That's awesome.

**Griffin:**

That is very good. Thank you very much for sending this one in. It is so pure. Um, here's one last one from Kimberly who says "I wanted to share a wonderful holiday tradition in my family that I just learned the name for, the Feast of the Seven Fishes. Basically it's an Italian American Christmas Eve tradition that has roots in Southern Italy. The number seven is kind of an arbitrary, is kind of arbitrary. The feast ranges from three to 13 kinds of fish, including lobster, eels, smelt, clams, et cetera."

"My family pretty much limits it to pasta in clam sauce. We've always had it as a side and I never knew it's history until this year. Hardcore Roman Catholics abstain from meat before Christmas so they eat a ton of fish before midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Aren't holiday traditions wonderful? As I get older I love learning more and more about my Italian heritage, especially food related tradition." That does sound so great.

**Rachel:**

Yeah. I have never heard of this.

**Griffin:**

I had never heard of it either until I looked into it after reading this submission that Kimberly sent in. And it's yeah, it's, it's, uh, I don't know the exact days, but there are days where, uh, Roman Catholics are not supposed to eat, uh, meat with like fat in it.

**Rachel:**

Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:**

And so they go, they go fish wild. And I guess that this is like the most fish wild they get. [laughs] Sounds good though.

**Rachel:**

Fish wild trademark Griffin McElroy.

**Griffin:**

Fish wild, the Outkast musical.

**Rachel:**

And the next Netflix Christmas special.

**Griffin:**

The next Netflix original series fish wild, a Fish Wild Christmas. [laughs] Uh, no, this sounds really nice and very appetizing actually. I'm very hungry. Uh, okay. I think that's it. Yeah?

**Rachel:**

Yeah. If you haven't joined our Facebook group, I would recommend it. It's especially great after you listen to the podcast, if you wanna share your own experiences related to our show, it's a great place to do it.

**Griffin:**

If you have like international holiday traditions or fuck it, just like whatever your holiday tradition, the, the Australian one like blew my mind and I thought was so wonderful. Um, so yeah, share those and I, I'm curious any of your holiday traditions I wanna know all about 'em. Um, thank you to bo en and Augustus for the use of that theme song Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to it in the episode description. Um, you wanna thank Maximum Fun?

**Rachel:**

I do wanna thank Maximum Fun. Uh, if you are looking for other great podcasts to listen to, maybe you've got a long travel plan for the holidays, uh, I would recommend going to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org). There are a lot of great shows. Uh, I was listening to *Pop Rocket* because they did their own Hanukkah special last week, which was great.

**Griffin:**

Very good. Um, I think that is gonna do it for us. Again, we're not gonna have an episode out next week. So enjoy the week off from hearing our voices??

**Rachel:**

[laughs] Yeah. Well, Griffin!

**Griffin:**

That was, that was a dunk on us, I guess. [laughs] Um, yeah, sorry that we're just, it's basically when you and I talk, it's just burps is if what we get a lot of-

**Rachel:**

Griffin!

**Griffin:**

... feedback we get. Not you. You have the honey dipped voice of the sweetest angel, but me, they say, I sound like a big burp man that crawled out of a sewer to fart into a microphone.

**Rachel:**

No, they don't.

**Griffin:**

They say that on the Apple iTunes.

**Rachel:**

Oh and that's what-

**Griffin:**

And it's a five star review, but they say Griffin's... "I love the honey dipped sweet angel voice of Rachel but Griffin sounds like the burp man."

**Rachel:**

[laughs] This is a reminder that if you don't think Griffin is the burp man, please review us.

**Griffin:**

I mean, you can say I'm the burp man as long as long we get those five stars. That's really all that matters. [laughs] It helps a lot. Oh, okay. That's it. Have a good holidays. Bye.

**Rachel:**

Bye. [rings Christmas bells]

**Greg:**

Oh it's back. [laughs] I destroyed it.

[theme music plays out]

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**Allegra Ringo:**

I'm Allegra Ringo.

**Renee Colvert:**

And I'm Renee Colvert, and we host a podcast called *Can I Pet Your Dog?*

**Allegra Ringo:**

Renee, can I tell you about a dog I met this week?

**Renee Colvert:**

Yeah, I wish that you would.

**Allegra Ringo:**

In turn though, can I tell you about a dog hero? May I tell you about a dog breed in a segment I like to call Mutt Minute?

**Renee Colvert:**

[laughing] Yeah. I would love that.

**Allegra Ringo:**

We maybe talk about some dog tech.

**Renee Colvert:**

Could we have some cool guests on like Lin-Manuel Miranda, Nicole Byer and Anne Wheaton?

**Allegra Ringo:**

I mean, y-yeah, absolutely.

**Renee Colvert:**

**I'm in.**

**Allegra Ringo:**

You're on board? What do you say, we, uh, we do all of this and put it into a podcast?

**Renee Colvert:**

Yeah. Okay.

Allegra Ringo:

[laughs] You think? Right. Uh, should we call it like, I don't know, *Can I Pet Your Dog?*

**Renee Colvert:**

Sure.

**Allegra Ringo:**

All right. Uh, what do you, what do you say, we put it on every Tuesday on Maximum Fun?

**Renee Colvert:**

Or on iTunes. Sounds good to me. [laughs]

**Allegra Ringo:**

Meeting's over!