

Wonderful! 55: Ouchie Bravery

Published October 17th, 2018

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](#)

[theme music plays]

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is Wonderful!

Griffin:

Hey!

Rachel:

Hi.

Griffin:

Brr, brr.

Rachel:

Ooh.

Griffin:

That's the sound of my bones rattling around in my body.

Rachel:

Oh, they sounded kind of like a choo-choo train.

Griffin:

It does, it did.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It did. Well, my body's like a train. I've been told that before.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, when I was, do you remember when I was a gym instructor at—

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, Good Gym Plus, uh, down in the city?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

I would commute down to the city to Good Gym Plus and I would do, I would do, uh, Push-ups 101. And the people would come in, and they would do like five more pushups than they ever thought they could do and they'd be like, wow, "How do you... Your body's like a train."

Rachel:

Okay, okay. Yeah.

Griffin:

So, um, I get told that all the time. And—

Rachel:

Mm-hmm. No, I've always thought it.

Griffin:

So that's weird that you haven't, like, said it out loud on the show before though.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, boy, burned my finger but good, didn't I, downstairs?

Rachel:

You did.

Griffin:

Didn't I? You got some sweet potato fries out of the... And I know that's not relevant to the show but it, it does sting like a real, like a goober.

Rachel:

After you did that I kind of struggled with...

Griffin:

How you should respond?

Rachel:

Well.

Griffin:

I sort of detected that you didn't really know how to respond.

Rachel:

Well, because I had this feeling of like, should I have told him it was hot?

Griffin:

Um...

Rachel:

But I figured you would—

Griffin:

It was hot fries, it was hot fries. I did know it was hot fries.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

You said, "I have made fries."

Rachel:

And they were still in the pan.

Griffin:

And they were still in the pan. I should have assumed hot fries. But I did touch it just with the little tip, the tippy-tip of my pointer finger. So, um...

Rachel:

A lot of marriage—

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

What I've learned...

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

... is trying to find the line between supporting your partner.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm, yes.

Rachel:

And then making them think you don't believe in them.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

And trying to figure out what you can say at what point. And so I didn't want to say, "Hey, this pan I just got out of the oven is hot, Griffin."

Griffin:

Sure, love means never having to say, "Hey, that pan's hot, don't touch."

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Hey, do you have any small wonders?

Rachel:

Uh, so there's a new season of Heavyweight, which is a podcast I like very much.

Griffin:

Oh, yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, it just came back this month and it's super, super great. If you haven't listened before, uh, it's not on this network, sorry. Uh, but it is, uh, a reporter, Jonathan Goldstein, I believe.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

Uh, interviews people that have something from their past that they would like to reconcile, and then he does a lot of research and tries to tack down like, historic events associated, and do a lot of like sleuthing, and then connect them.

Uh, so it's super interesting. So the new season, the very first episode with, is with Rob Corddry.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

And he has this memory of breaking his arm as a child. And every single one of his siblings, including his parents, do not think it's true and do not remember it happening.

Griffin:

Whoa.

Rachel:

So Jonathan Goldstein goes as far as to get medical records from the hospital he says he went to, because his parents and family refuse to believe that it happened.

Griffin:

Wow, don't spoil it.

Rachel:

I won't.

Griffin:

That sounds so good.

Rachel:

It's very good.

Griffin:

I know Justin and I think Travis are always speaking very highly, uh, of this show.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

I want to check it out.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, I want to bring, we got these, um, pumpkin spice sandwich cookies from the store.

Rachel:

Yes, yes.

Griffin:

Um, I think there a Central Market brand, but they're—I know they have them at Trader Joe's too. They're so good. I mean, I mean they blend my love autumnal flavors and sandwich cookies. Um, not sandwich cookies, Oreos. Because Hydrox is a fucking joke, um, that gpd played on the world because of our sins.

Um, what else? New episodes of, uh, Terrace House, Opening New Doors. We finished those up, those were good.

Rachel:

[laughs] We already finished them.

Griffin:

Oops. Um I got a, uh, another pocket operator. I think I'm just going to keep buying these things. It's, uh, they are... So these are like little, uh, synth engines made by the people who make the OP 1, which I talked about on the show before. That little keyboard, uh, synth thing. And you, you can see them right there, uh, on my, uh bookshelf. They look like little calculators, they're so little. They're so little, but they're basically like little sequencers, and you can make cools jams with them. And they're so little, and I like them.

I'm kind of obsessed with buying, like, music, uh, synth stuff. Because people make really, really neat, like, aesthetically neat shit. Uh, and I don't know, I'm too old to collect Pokémon cards, so.

Rachel:

[laughs] There it is.

Griffin:

Hey, uh, you're up first this week.

Rachel:

I am.

Griffin:

You are.

Rachel:

My first thing is the band, Jungle.

Griffin:

Jungle.

Rachel:

This is a band that I, felt very familiar to me. And I figured out maybe why they do. Uh, one, they came to South by Southwest in 2014.

Griffin:

Oh, okay, so maybe that's where... Rachel messaged me earlier today like, "Have—you've talked about this band on the show before." And I was like, I have not heard of this band before. I don't know how you're, you're...

Rachel:

Also, one of their songs was used in a Toyota Yaris commercial. [laughs]

Griffin:

That's probably what it is.

Rachel:

[laughs] Yes. Uh, so this is an English, modern soul musical collective based in London. Uh, Jungle was founded by Tom McFarland and Josh Lloyd-Watson. Uh—

Griffin:

Todd McFarlane, the Spawn writer?

Rachel:

Tom McFarland?

Griffin:

Oh, okay. That's not the Spawn guy.

Rachel:

Okay. [laughs]

Griffin:

The guy who made Spawn is named Todd McFarland. That's my, uh, my deep well of comics humor that I'm pulling from.

Rachel:

Is it hard for you, sometimes, that I don't know stuff like that?

Griffin:

No, I would be more worried if you did know. I, I know you don't know anything about comics. And so if you were like, "But I do know everything about Spawn." I would be like, oh shit, that's an issue.

Rachel:

Uh, so this duo lived next-door to each other growing up. Uh, and they went on to form Jungle at the beginning of 2013. Uh, and if you watch their music videos, they're pretty incredible. They uh, they put a lot of emphasis on uh, the performance of other people, basically.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

So the two of them do not appear in their videos, but they have incredible dancers in every single one of their videos. Apparently, and I wasn't familiar with this. But there was a song, Platoon, that was released in 2013 and it was a six-year-old girl in a plat, purple tracksuit break dancing.

Griffin:

Hell yeah.

Rachel:

And uh, it racked up five million views on YouTube.

Griffin:

The vid—the video you sent me was awesome.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, it reminded me of that super fresh... I don't know if you ever saw, I think I sent it to you, the Spike Jones Apple Home Commercial, uh, where the woman like pushes into the walls and they keep moving back. And then she just has like a wild dance solo.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

It really, really reminded me of that.

Rachel:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, so their first album, uh, came out in 2014. It was, uh, called Jungle.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

Appropriately. And I wanted to play a little something from the track that was used in the Toyota Yaris commercial.

Griffin:

Oh, good.

Rachel:

It's called Busy Earnin'.

[`Busy Earnin' by Jungle plays]

Rachel:

Uh, so if you read reviews about Jungle, uh, the genre of music they do, uh, you'll see it described as mid-tempo 1970s style funk. Uh, their influences include Disclosure, Marvin Gaye, uh, and um, Sly and the Family Stone.

Griffin:

Hell yeah, I'd get that, yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah, mm-hmm. They only, after the release of their first album were they able to quit their day jobs. Um, but they said that it's still—they'll go and play to 10,000 people in Glastonbury, and then go to Luxembourg and play to 50 people.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

So they're kind of like, finding their legs at that point.

Griffin:

Yeah, sure.

Rachel:

Uh, and then just recently as of last month, they released their next album, which was called Forever. Uh, they recorded it in London and they describe it as a post-apocalyptic radio station playing breakup songs.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

Uh, I read a lot of reviews, uh, that compared this, uh, the sound to kind of Michael Jackson's Off the Wall and the band Junior Senior.

Griffin:

Okay, wow, that's a lofty comparison.

Rachel:

Yeah. Uh, and so I wanted to play a song from the new album called Happy Man.

[‘Happy Man’ by Jungle plays]

Rachel:

Uh, so it, this reminded me the other day, Griffin and I were trying to find songs that would motivate our son to dance.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Uh, and we were just kind of trying to come up with all the dance jams that we could think of. And I thought of Jamiroquai's Virtual Insanity.

Griffin:

That, that video, that song, that singer still fucking bags.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm, yes.

Griffin:

That is the best shit.

Rachel:

And so when I was watching Jungle stuff today, just like the music and the videos I was like, oh man, this like, scratches that itch for me.

Griffin:

Yeah, for sure.

Rachel:

It's just like a, kind of a dancey, fun but like, unusual sound, you know? Like, not exactly like, you know, what you hear in like, EDM for example.

Griffin:

Yeah, totally. Do you want to know my first thing?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

My first thing is a Japanese manga artist, strap in folks, named Junji Ito. Uh, who makes some very, very spooky stuff. I wanted to talk about it because it's, it's the Halloween season, and I have been kind of obsessed with his work.

Rachel:

How did you happen upon this?

Griffin:

Sort of in the ether, right? Like, sort of in the nerd, pop culture ether. He's extremely prolific, and his works have inspired like, lots and lots and lots of different people. Um, and a lot of the sort of threads that he was woven have been parodied in, in other things. Uh, his work has been adapted in so many different forms.

Rachel:

Oh, okay.

Griffin:

He is, he is just like a, he is a, a beloved just horror writer. And I'm fairly new to him. Uh, I think I probably like became aware of his work and started reading it last year. Because I don't like, read manga. That is like one area of nerd expertise that I've never really dabbled in. Um, but his stuff is so good. And the, the scariest stories I've ever experienced in any medium, ever.

And speaking of, like, and we've never done this, I don't think, on this show before. But I want to include like a legit content warning because some of his work does involve like, uh, like body horror and um, and like, self-harm in some of them. So if, if that's something you are sensitive to, uh, I would not seek out his work. And if you want to skip ahead, totally understand. I'll actually drop in a time code for when, when we're done talking about this right here.

18 minutes and 34 seconds.

So there are, there are a few things about his work that I think really make him stand apart from other sort of horror creators. Uh, and the first thing is just the art style of his work. Um, I don't know if you ever, I don't think you, you did not like grow up in the church, so I don't think you would have exposure to this. But there are these things called Chick Tracts. And—

Rachel:

You've told me about this.

Griffin:

They were basically like little booklets with like horrible, horrible like uh, scare, scare you into the church, like, uh stories in it. Like, uh-oh, did you hear about uh, Cindy? She started playing Dungeons and Dragons and it became witchcraft. And it would have, uh, little annotations like, saying like where in the Bible it says not to play Dungeons and Dragons. Like, no, okay. But okay, Chick Tract.

Rachel:

Is this like a Baptist thing, or is this like a...

Griffin:

This is a, this, I don't know. I don't know. But, there was something about the art style of those that kind of remind me of Junji Ito's work, in that both are sort of designed, I think, to be unsettling. It is the best word I can use to describe his, his art style. And like, each, each definitely has a, like a dubstep drop page in it where you see the subject of terror that the, the story is based around. And where his books really succeed is almost always before you get to that page that is like the horror climax of his story, you get one last panel on the page before of a character like, reacting to it.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

And then it's up to you to turn the page and see the very, very scary thing on the next page.

Rachel:

Have you read this in like, physical form? Or is...

Griffin:

Uh, I've read, yeah. I had a, I had one of his books. A lot of them are archived online also.

Rachel:

I wonder, how do they replicate that online?

Griffin:

Uh, just like clicking through the different webpages.

Rachel:

Oh, okay.

Griffin:

Um, so, so, his work is unsettling, right? And that, that climax page is scary as fuck. Like, it's very scary. But just the people in these stories usually, just, just people talking is unsettling because of the way it's drawn. Uh, the, the people in his stories are drawn with a very sort of uncanny valley effect, do you know what that is?

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It's very much like that. Where they're like, very realistically drawn, but just kind of fucked up.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

So that everybody looks like panicked, all the time. It is, it is, it is really, it sets a creepy tone for all of his stories.

Um, but the other thing that I really, really love about his work is that the, the, the subject of the stories that he writes, the thing that is horrifying in the stories that he writes, is almost never like, a monster. It's almost never like, a killer. He does have stories about those and they are usually very cleverly done. And there's one, sorry, I have to mention about an author who's like having a hard time getting writers, uh, getting over writer's block. So she goes to a store to buy a chair. Uh, and, uh, to, to like sit in so she can write her stories and become inspired.

And this guy sells her this chair and tells her this story about how, uh, this, this guy gave this chair to another author, and he was so obsessed with this author that he built the chair so that he could be inside of it. And so it's a chair that a man is inside. So like, while you're sitting in it.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, which is like funny. But also, when you see it, fucking so scary.

Rachel:

Yeah, yeah.

Griffin:

So there is some stuff about like a, a subject, right? A person or a being that is coming after you. Most of the time though, the thing that is scary in his stories are intangible. They are completely intangible. They are, they are forces more than anything else. Um, I had a hard time sort of putting this to words. Wikipedia had a great way of summarizing it. They said, uh, "The universe Ito depicts is cruel and capricious. The characters often find themselves victims of malevolent, unnatural circumstances for no discernible reason, or are punished out of proportion for minor infractions against an unknown and incomprehensible natural order."

Um, to give you an idea of what that looks like, I think probably one of his most famous works, uh, he had, he had lots of like long-running series, and then he did lots of like short-story, just like one-shots. Uh and, and one of his most famous ones and most like, referenced ones, and the one that I actually discovered first, was called The Enigma of Amigara Fault.

Um, and I think it's fucking so scary. It has been parodied a lot, there's like a Steven Universe gag kind of making fun of it. But like, I also think the source material is super scary. It's a short story about this fault that opens up after an earthquake, uh, that is uh, covered in holes in the shapes of people.

Uh, just this side of a mountain is covered in holes, basically, in the silhouettes of, of people. Uh, and these holes lead deep, deep, deep, deep into the face of the mountain. Uh, and, and as people arrive to study this phenomenon, uh, people realize that the holes are in their exact shape.

Rachel:

Ooh.

Griffin:

Um, and so people start compulsively, uncontrollably... Not uncontrollably. Because, because they know what they're doing, but they cannot resist the, the urge to enter their hole and get sucked into the mountain, never to be seen again. Uh, and it's so scary to me.

Rachel:

That sounds incredible.

Griffin:

Because it's, it's not, at the end of the day like, the horror in that story is like, inside of us. It is about, uh, it's about morbid curiosity. That is the villain in that story. And it's so like, relatable. And so like, in the story, so inescapable as uh, most of like, the, the, the antagonists of his stories are. It's, it's, it's just really, really scary to me.

There's another series that I read, um, all of this last week. And it's why I wanted to talk about his work, because I just, I got so consumed by it. Uh, he, there's a series called Uzamaki. Uh, where a town becomes afflicted by a spiral curse, where people just become obsessed with the shape of a spiral. Or, or, or they're like, otherwise like cursed by spirals. Like, people start growing snail shells on their back. Uh, there are people who start growing their hair into spirals, and it like comes alive and starts killing them. Uh, the, or otherwise just sort spirals leading to, to people's horrific deaths.

In this story, the villain is a shape. Like, the villain is just the shape, a spiral, that people become obsessed with.

Rachel:

Yeah. This like, and I hope isn't reductive, but it sounds a lot like what works so well with shows like Twilight Zone and Black Mirror, you know?

Griffin:

Yeah, for sure, absolutely.

Rachel:

Where it's not like a big, crazy, like, you know, alien that's coming after you. But like a, a more psychological horror.

Griffin:

A more like, oppressive horror too, is kind of what he deals in.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

He has a story called, a series called Hellstar Remina that is just about a sentient giant planet descends on earth. And then it's going to eat it. And people start freaking out. And what do you do when that's about to happen?

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And it gets buck wild. All of his stories like, also kind of deal with like, the breakdown of society. Uh, and, and what that does to us, and how we become villains in that, in that sense. But um, yeah. His work is utterly terrifying to me. It's like, I have, I have a pretty strong stomach. Like, I love watching horror movies.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

And most of the time I'm not like, especially scared of them. Uh, I just sort of enjoy them for, for what they are, like a really well-crafted horror movie. These scare me quite bad.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

These uh, I may have had some, some, uh, some bad, some bad dreams. Some of those dark thoughts.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh after, after reading these all week. But uh, they are also very, very good. Um, you can, you can find some of them online. Uh, or you know, buy collections of them on, you know, whatever bookstore you, you prefer.

Uh, can I steal you away?

Rachel:

[sings a tune]

Griffin:

Was that a, what, what, what song was that?

Rachel:

No Diggity.

Griffin:

[laughs] Was it? No Diggity has words, a lot of words, though.

Rachel:

I don't know the words to No Diggity.

Griffin:

I like the way you work it, no diggity.

Rachel:

Well yeah.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

But, but, the Home Improvement, it was a mash up and I'm not going to—

Griffin:

It was a great mash up.

Rachel:

Thank you.

Griffin:

It was so good.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I thought Girl Talk had broken into our house.

[ad break]

Rachel:

I have some jumbotrons for you.

Griffin:

Let's do the damn thing.

Rachel:

This first message is for Lorn and Jack, it is from Jeanie.

"Congratulations on your engagement. Lorn, you are the most gorgeous, caring person I've ever met, and I'm so grateful to be in your bridal party. Jack, I made a lot of grand statements in college, but I stood by the best one, that we would be lifelong friends. Let's co-op Stardew forever, you're both so, so wonderful. Love always, Jeanie."

Griffin:

Do you think co-op Stardew is like a drugs thing?

Rachel:

I figured you would know.

Griffin:

I do know, they're talking about Stardew Valley, and you can play it co-op now.

Rachel:

I mean yeah, okay.

Griffin:

Hey, will you farm with me?

Rachel:

Maybe.

Griffin:

Ugh.

Rachel:

What does that mean, what do I have to do if I farm with you?

Griffin:

You water the plants and help, you'll get, you'll get 50%, um...

Rachel:

Do I have to do it all the time?

Griffin:

Every d, every day, yeah.

Rachel:

But like, multiple times a day?

Griffin:

Yeah, every hour.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

But you'll get lots of virtual money—

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

That you can spend on virtual drugs.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

So what's the second jumbotron?

Rachel:

The second message is for Jeff, it is from Seth.

"Honk. Jeff, my sweet boy, yes you, Jeff, who loves seals and Bucky Barnes, you are wonderful and I think lovely Griffin and Rachel are the perfect conduit to say so. Here's to our quote-unquote "flirting" via iMessage, stickers, corn?"

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

"Simultaneous screenshots of CRJs, "I Really Like You", and adding our names on to pics of cats cuddling. Endless smooshes, Seth."

Griffin:

Um, corn?

Rachel:

How, how sweet is that?

Griffin:

It is a sweet message.

Rachel:

Yeah, I'm not sure about the... But like, uh...

Griffin:

I'm very into it. If you want to drop your, your, your inside jokes stuff on our show, go for it. But I do, I do, I feel like you've tantalized us with corn? And that it's a mystery that I need to get to the bottom of.

Rachel:

And that's C-O-R-N.

Griffin:

Yeah, not the band Korn.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

But maybe that's part of it.

Rachel:

Maybe.

[Maximum Fun ad plays]

Griffin:

Hey, what's your second thing? God, my voice is so raspy.

Rachel:

What's going on?

Griffin:

I still just, I think it's still just getting over the surgery, man. When's this new snoot going to pay off? It's going to let me breathe underwater, which I'm really excited about, but I haven't tested it yet. What was your second thing?

Rachel:

[laughs] My second thing is a book by the wonderful Elizabeth Gilbert called The Signature of All Things.

Griffin:

Hmm. This is a good book.

Rachel:

This is a very good book.

Griffin:

Rachel very much likes this book.

Rachel:

A lot of books that I have read in the last ten years or so have not made their way on to my list of favorites.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Uh, this one definitely did. Like, top three favorite books of all time, ever.

Griffin:

Well break, break it down for them.

Rachel:

So the book came out in 2013, it's over 500 pages. It's like, epic. Uh, and you may know Elizabeth Gilbert from Eat, Pray, Love, which came out in 2006 and was turned into a feature film with miss Julia Roberts.

Griffin:

And also for being top five best human beings currently living.

Rachel:

Yes, that too. That too. Uh, so she wrote this kind of sweeping novel that starts uh, in the 1760s with a father of, of this family named Henry Whitaker. Uh, he becomes an adventurer that travels the country looking for medicinal plants. Uh, and what ends up happening is he returns to England where he is from, and he expects to be lauded for his triumphs. And he, because he was born poor—

Griffin:

Right.

Rachel:

And because of his kind of scrappy upbringing, is not welcomed with open arms. So he moves his family, which is his wife, his daughter, and his adopted daughter to Philadelphia. Uh, and then we just follow from his kind of experience all the way into Alma, who is his daughter, through her entire life. So this, this 500 page novel like spans generations.

Griffin:

Kind of a 100 Years Of Solitude thing?

Rachel:

Exactly. And that's what I was going to say, that's another one of my favorite books.

Griffin:

For sure.

Rachel:

Uh, is that I love these books that follow like, generations in the same family. Uh, the thing—

Griffin:

I Googled it. Can I, can I, I can never remember if it's 100 Years of Solitude or 1000 Years of Solitude. So if you heard clickety-clack, that was me checking. I thought it was 100 years, and I was correct.

Rachel:

1000 would be a really epic book.

Griffin:

A long book. And it would be like, then it would be like, "My space family."

Rachel:

Can you trace your family back 1000 years?

Griffin:

Sure, man. Sure.

Rachel:

Yeah?

Griffin:

At uh, uh, 23 And Me? Is that what it's called? I've never done one of those tests.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

The answer would be so boring.

Rachel:

[laughs] So this is, this is a time period, um, and Elizabeth Gilbert talks a lot about this, about her interest in like Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, of this like time period where women are, are kind of restrained from pursuing interests that are deemed kind of unladylike at the time. Uh, but one thing that was acceptable, and Elizabeth Gilbert found this through her research, was uh, women being interested in botany.

Griffin:

Hm.

Rachel:

So Alma is a really tremendous student, and spends a lot of time just fascinated by botany. Uh, but at the same time, feeling kind of isolated. Uh, and you know, just kind of diving into her research and her study. And Elizabeth Gilbert did a lot of study during this time to kind of learn everything that was involved, you know, with plants.

Griffin:

Right.

Rachel:

Um, the thing that Alma becomes particularly interested in is moss. Uh, and I just wanted to read you a little passage. Uh, so she is kind of exploring in the gardens.

Uh, and she says, uh, "There, rising no more than an inch above the surface of the boulder, she saw a great and tiny forest. Nothing moved within this mossy world. She peered at it so closely that she could smell it, dank and rich and old. Gently Alma pressed her hand into this tight little timberland. It compacted itself under her palm and then sprang back to form without complaint. It appeared to have its own weather. This was the entire world. This was bigger than the world. This was the firmament of the universe, as seen through one of William Herschel's mighty telescopes. This was planetary and vast. These were ancient, unexplored galaxies rolling forth in front of her."

Griffin:

God, she's so fucking good.

Rachel:

She's so good.

Griffin:

You almost cussed.

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

I saw it, I saw your mouth purse as if to curse.

Rachel:

I would never. [laughs]

Griffin:

All right. I saw the curse purse though.

Rachel:

[laughs] Um, I feel like when I was thinking about this book, which I love so much, um, and how much it reminds me of like, kind of the whole spirit behind the show that we do.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Of just like there is, there is so much in the minutiae that is like worth, you know, celebrating.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And Elizabeth Gilbert definitely does that, I would say in all of her books, but I feel like especially, especially this one.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

The other thing that's great about this book, uh, there's a lot of discussion about female masturbation.

Griffin:

Heck yeah.

Rachel:

Which is the one thing Elizabeth Gilbert said, when she was talking about Dickens and Jane Austen. She's like, there was never any room for that. Like, women—

Griffin:

In *Pride and Prejudice* there's not like, an extended cranking scene?

Rachel:

She said, "I wanted to rewrite the 19th century women's novel, which had only two possible endings; you either get married or you're ruined by a sexual or social error. You get *Pride and Prejudice* or *Anna Karenina*. You're living in the big mansion with Mr. Darcy or you're under the wheels of a train. I wanted to write about somebody who doesn't get everything she

wanted, and is able to look at her life and say it was an interesting one, a worthy one, and a dignifying one."

So like, you, there are a lot of scenes of Alma kind of going into a closet and exploring herself. Which I remember reading and being like... Because you know, you're so caught up in the time period.

Griffin:

Right.

Rachel:

And you're kind of, especially if you've read other books that take place in this time period. You kind of like fit into the groove of like, oh, this time period when women did this, and this is how they talk to each other, and this is what the occupations were. And you know, what it meant to be of this class and whatever. And then you get to that scene and you're like, "Oh, this is different."

Griffin:

Oh hey, what's up?

Rachel:

Ooh. Uh, so I just, I wanted to close with, um, another quote that I feel like, I mean, in our, in our best moments of Wonderful, I would like to think kind of describes what we try to do.

Uh, she said, "You see, I have never felt the need to invent a world beyond this world. For this world has always seemed large and beautiful enough for me. I have marveled why it is not large and beautiful enough for others. Why they must dream up new and marvelous fears, or long to live elsewhere beyond this dominion. But that is not my business. We are all different, I suppose. All I ever wanted was to know this world. I can say now, as I reach my end, that I know quite a bit more of it than I knew when I arrived. Moreover, my little bit of knowledge has been added to all the other accumulated knowledge of history. Added to the great library, as it were. That is no small feat, sir. Anyone who can say such a thing has lived a fortunate life."

Griffin:

That is so cool.

Rachel:

You got to read this book, Griffin.

Griffin:

You got to read this freaking book, everybody.

Rachel:

It's so good. If, I mean, if you liked 100 Years of Solitude, obviously. If you like, you know, Jane Austen or Charles Dickens, obviously. Like period pieces, if they're not your thing, which most of the time it's not mine. But you just, you like this kind of like sweeping look at like, an entire generation. I just, man, can't. This is definitely top three. And a lot of the books in my top 10 are not books I necessarily would recommend to everybody.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

I just want them.

Griffin:

I will dip in. I haven't had a book in my brain in quite some time.

Rachel:

Just do like an audiobook.

Griffin:

I'll do an audiobook.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Yeah, why not? Can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

I'm excited to talk about it, because I think you're going to be much more into it than the long form manga discussion that we had.

Rachel:

[laughs] Okay.

Griffin:

Uh, I want to talk about the album Surf by The Social Experiment. Uh, other, formerly known as Donny Trumpet and The Social Experiment.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Uh, they, The Social Experiment is a musical outfit comprised, uh, I think most notably, uh, Chance the Rapper is one of the members. There is also producers Peter Cottontail and Nate Fox. Uh and the, the former Donny Trumpet uh, is a trumpeter named Nico Segal.

Uh, so when this album first came out in 2015, the, the original title of it was Surf by Donny Trumpet and The Social Experiment. Uh, and I was like trying to research it and couldn't find it. And I was like, wait, what happened? Uh, after Trump got elected in 2016—

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Uh, Nico Segal changed sort of his stage name, and stopped using Donny Trumpet as his stage name. So now it's just The Social Experiment.

So this album, like I said, came out in 2015. It's, it is, oh god, it's phenomenal. Uh, it, it took my world by storm when it first came out. I was listening to it pretty much constantly.

Rachel:

Yes, I remember that.

Griffin:

Um, and I wasn't actually super familiar with Chance like before I, I got into this album. Uh, this is where I sort of first discovered him and I'm, you know, I think everybody's life is improved when they have that moment of discovery.

Rachel:

Yeah, if you're like me, you, you didn't know how to get to his music. Because at first it was only like a mix tape on SoundCloud, I think?

Griffin:

There was, yeah, I mean he had dropped, he had had uh, a couple of EPs I think, at that point.

Rachel:

But this was like a full album on iTunes. And that's when I was like, oh.

Griffin:

And what, what's really fascinating about it is that like, when it was, when this album was like about to come out and they were building buzz for it, the buzz was, uh, from, from a lot of like the press and, and fans was, oh shit, yeah, like a new Chance album, that's going to be so great.

Uh, and Chance the Rapper was, was kind of explicit in interviews. Like this is, this is not my thing. Like, I am involved in it. And he has verses on almost every track, uh, but he was very clear that this is Nico Segal's album. This is like his, this is like his vision.

Uh, and sure enough, like they're... The, the, the mix of songs on this album is so, so, so eclectic. Like there are absolute banger dance-jams that are so fucking good, all of them across the board. And there are a lot of them. And then they are blended with just these somber horn songs, just these somber sort of trumpet solos that, that go on for three minutes.

Uh, and they just follow each other one, one after another. The like thing that ties every song in this album together is the horns that are, that are behind all of it. Uh, and I think that's why they accredited it to Donny Trumpet and the, The Social Experiment when it first came out.

Rachel:

Man, I love a horn.

Griffin:

I love a good fricking horn, huh? Like any, any song is improved by a horn in my opinion. 25 or 6 to 4? Like if Chicago didn't have horns in it, nobody would, nobody would know anything about Chicago.

Rachel:

Totally true.

Griffin:

Um, yeah. I, God, I love a good horn. Uh, Dave Matthews Band. Anyway.

Rachel:

Ska, just all ska music.

Griffin:

All ska.

Um, so like I'm, I'm obsessed with this album. The, the, the dance jams are jams, and the experimental stuff that is just all instrumental is like so entrancing. To kind of give you an idea of like where this album goes, uh, I want to play a couple of songs. The first one is probably the, the most famous song off this album, and one of probably the better-known Chance the Rapper tracks. It's called Sunday Candy.

Uh, which is like, it's one of my favorite songs on the album. It's basically just Chance the Rapper just singing a great song about his grandma. Just about how nice his grandma is, and how he needs to go see her and go to church so he can hang out with her on Sunday. It is, and there's a lot of guest vocals. There's a lot of guest vocals on this entire album, which I'll talk about later.

But, um, yeah. This a little bit of Sunday Candy.

[‘Sunday Candy’ by The Social Experiment plays]

Griffin:

It's like, this song is so fun. And it's got like, these infectious like, horn riffs on it. It's really great.

Rachel:

This is one of those songs, like, I remember where we were the first time we heard it.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And like, I remember listening to it just constantly, like every day, multiple times after hearing it. Because I was just so, like, intoxicated by it.

Griffin:

Yeah. And there, there's a lot of songs like that like, on the album. Like a lot of really fun songs. There's one called Slip Slide, uh, that has a verse from Busta Rhymes in it. Which like, is a seasoning that improves every meal. Uh, there is—

Rachel:

Just horns and Busta Rhymes.

Griffin:

Just horns and Busta Rhymes is pretty much all you need. Uh, there's a song called Wannabe Cool, which is just like this really fucking catchy song about the lengths you go to for like, acceptance from your peers. They're all so great and they're all so fun. And then, just four tracks into the album is an instrumental track called Nothing Came to Me, which is just this like, it's haunting and it's lovely and it leads right into Wannabe Cool. This like sad trumpet song ends, and then it's—

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

So this is, this is Nothing Came to Me.

Um, the, the album just does this, like constantly. It like swings back and forth between, between genres. It encompasses everything. It is aided in that effort by, like I said, like so many guest appearances. Busta Rhymes, uh, Janelle Monae, uh, Erykah Badu, uh B.O.B. Like, it's fucking wild. There's like—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Every track when you look at like the, the credits for each song has like 14 names after it. [laughs]

Um, I don't know. I just, I love this album. It is so, uh, it is a classic to me. And it is so like, expertly made. And so I appreciate it for that fact. But I also appreciate like, an album that I can just kind of put on, and it'll take me to so many different places, and scratch so many different itches, just in one like, play through of it.

Rachel:

And you're an itchy guy.

Griffin:

And I'm an itchy guy. Um, I am wearing because it's 40 degrees in Austin. It's, I don't know how we—we skipped to fall I guess.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And so I've been itching under this sweater. But I've been blasting, I turn up the stereo all the way, and I put on um, uh, Donny Trumpet and The Social Experiment, and—

Rachel:

It just gets in different parts.

Griffin:

It gets in, it's like a, it's like a, a, a soft, sweet lotion.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

For my trained body.

Rachel:

[laughs] I really want you to review music professionally.

Griffin:

I don't know how to do it, man. Like, it boggles my mind. I am, I am friends with music writers, and they're so talented. And then I, I read their stuff and I'm like, I don't even know how to like... And we talk about music a lot on this show.

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

I feel like I, I feel like I am able to sort of voice my enthusiasm for music, but I would not know how to like, write about it.

Rachel:

Yeah, same.

Griffin:

Because like, I don't, I don't what, how, I don't know why Sunday Candy is such a good song. I don't know why Nothing Came To Me is such a, like, a memorable like, beautiful track. But like, it is. So go listen to it.

Uh, do you want to know what our friends at home are all about this week?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, Eliot says, "My wonderful thing is Super Mario Party. I've been a big fan of the Mario Party franchise since I was a kid, and my friends and I have been having a super great time playing the newest entry and making each other so, so, so mad when we steal each other's stars."

We have this. We've played it once.

Rachel:

We did.

Griffin:

We had four people, we lost to, uh, Chris Plante had to, had to bail. And so we, we took turns being his character, and he actually almost won the game. Which tells you about the, to quote Wikipedia, the cruel and capricious nature of the, of the Mario Party games. They are fun, though.

Uh, Heather says, "Hi, guys. One of my favorite things at the moment is flannel sheets. I always get excited about putting flannel sheets on—"

Rachel:

Ooh.

Griffin:

"Because it means the weather has finally become chilly. In my mind, it really solidifies the arrival of the fall/winter season. And the first night I go to bed with them on us is, I am so, so, so cozy and content."

Rachel:

I love a flannel, uh, just in general.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Just flannel anything.

Griffin:

Yeah, for sure.

Rachel:

Is just the best.

Griffin:

Uh, the heater kicked on in our house for the first time yesterday. And I, that, that too is sort of the same like, checkpoint for me where it's like, oh, it's on.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm, that new heater smell.

Griffin:

Uh, it is, that was my first time smelling this house's heater.

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

And I'm pleased to report it is, it smells like any other heater.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It could have been bad.

Uh, Angela says, "Hot or cold, alcoholic or not, apple or pear, all cider is good cider."

Rachel:

Oh my gosh, that reminds me that we have this huge jug of cider in our fridge right now.

Griffin:

We need to drink it. We really, really need... Let's, I'm going to heat some up when we... We're both so raspy for reasons beyond my comprehension, we're going to both have hot, hot cider when we go downstairs.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Does that sound good?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

So uh, hey, that's the end of the episode. Thank you for listening. Thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Um...

Rachel:

Thank you to maximumfun.org for hosting our show. And just, what seems like hundreds of other great shows. Uh, you can find them all at maximumfun.org. Um, shows that cover, you know, all sorts of things. Can I Pet your Dog for the dog enthusiasts. One Bad Mother for the child enthusiasts.

Griffin:

You're always listening to Stop Podcasting Yourself. Every time I get in the car—

Rachel:

Stop Podcasting Yourself, oh my gosh.

Griffin:

You are always listening to Stop Podcasting Yourself.

Rachel:

It's just, those guys, they're so, they're such nice guys. And they bring like, a comedian on, and then the three of them just talk. And it's just, just nice.

Griffin:

Um, I mean, you don't know what I know.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That's what I'll, and that's all I'm going to...

Rachel:

Griffin, they're Canadian.

Griffin:

That's what I know, they're not.

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh.

Griffin:

Yeah, I know.

Rachel:

They say they live in Vancouver.

Griffin:

No, they're from Tennessee.

Rachel:

Oof.

Griffin:

I know.

Rachel:

I still like them.

Griffin:

I'm going to edit this out. Because I think the episode's already ended, but they're from Tennessee.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, I think that's it. So, um, I just want to celebrate myself, I guess, in this moment. For how brave I was doing this whole episode with a, uh, a big boo-boo on my finger. Uh, a big, big ouchie. Um...

Rachel:

You were very brave. I'd, I, you know, I had forgotten, as a listener of you, that that had happened. You were so convincing.

Griffin:

Uh, yeah, yeah. And I did like the usual stuff, like the jokes and the enthusiasm. I didn't ask for a kissy, uh, on my boo-boo this whole time. So I think I deserve like a fucking, a medal or something.

Rachel:

What about a hot cup of apple cider?

Griffin:

Yeah, let's get to it. Bye!

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.