

Wonderful! 280: Cuppy vs Cuppy

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, I'm Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, I'm Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: You changed the article there. You usually say "Hi, this is—"

Rachel: "This is," yeah.

Griffin: Right. But—and that shouldn't freak me out so much.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't like how much that threw me.

Rachel: As I was saying it, it felt weird, but I also kind of liked it, 'cause it made me feel like I was like a host of 2020, you know?

Griffin: Oh. Yeah. "I'm... Rachel McElroy." Yeah, that felt really official. This is Wonderful, a show where we talk about things that we like, that is good, and are good, and we is into it. And, um, I'm so—I'm so happy to be in the studio with you. A bit late this week. It's been a real barnstormer over here, folks. We've got... busine—Rachel has... Rachel has other business.

Rachel: Yeah. So, I have, um, a job.

Griffin: Right. And that—what you just said is offensive to me.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I want to make space for that.

Rachel: Well, I wasn't finished yet.

Griffin: Oh, okay, okay.

Rachel: I have a job that, um, involves me having bosses and coworkers that I'm not related to.

Griffin: And don't know that you do this on the side.

Rachel: True, yeah.

Griffin: Most of them.

Rachel: I don't—

Griffin: Which is wild.

Rachel: I don't talk about or introduce myself in a way that's like, "Hey, my name's Rachel McElroy, of the McElroys, and I have a podcast, as you would expect."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That is not how I...

Griffin: But when people find out you're always like... "That's right. Shh! Don't tell!"

Rachel: [laughs] "Wink!"

Griffin: "Wink! Don't tell about my family!" Um, so yeah, we're a little late this week.

Rachel: So anyway, so yeah. So I was busy with that. Griffin was busy with...

Griffin: No, I was ready. Don't put this on me, Ricky Bobby. I've been ready to party.

Rachel: Oh yeah?

Griffin: Midnight. I'll get up outta bed and crank out the sausage and make the donuts.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I can't be stopped.

Rachel: I thought you'd want to talk about your various appointments, but I guess we're not that kind of show.

Griffin: We're not that kind of show. My health is my privacy. [laughs quietly]

Rachel: [laughs] That's—that's the saying.

Griffin: I treat my health like you treat... b—being a part of this family.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's a secret to everyone. Do you have any small wonders?

Griffin: Ho...

Griffin: Ho...

Rachel: [laughs] I've been getting real into Facebook Marketplace lately.

Griffin: You really have been.

Rachel: Which is kind of embarrassing, um, for a bunch of reasons. I mean, even saying the word Facebook is kind of embarrassing now.

Griffin: Sure, sure.

Rachel: Um, but you know, like, there are a lot of things, uh, that you purchase that seem like they cost too much.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And there are a lot of people in this kind of transient state that are, you know, moving to a different location for whatever reason, and they are pricing things to move.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, um... yeah. Like, I got, like, a little storage thing for downstairs for all the toys that our children don't play with but can't throw away.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And the woman was, like, moving stuff out of her apartment complex, and she was so grateful that I took it. And I just felt like, this is a good thing that I'm doing.

Griffin: I have so much stuff that I need to hawk, but I'm so... I don't know why I'm scared.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, I don't know why I'm scared to—

Rachel: This is like when you moved to Austin from Chicago and you, like, had—

Griffin: When I moved to Austin from Chicago it was a fucking, like, clearing—like, going out of business sale. I sold so much shit before I moved here.

Rachel: I think part of it, you've had a few, like, weird interactions, I feel like, when you have sold things.

Griffin: Maybe that's it, yeah.

Rachel: And so you're, like, anticipating.

Griffin: I sold a drum kit to someone in Chicago. I don't know why I brought the drum kit with me to Chicago. But I sold it, and the asking price was, like, a may—I was selling it for, like, 150 bucks, for like a full drum kit that was—like, I had put a little bit of work into. And somebody came and was like, "Okay, okay. How about 60?"

And I was like, "Jesus, man!" Like, I understood that this was gonna be a part of it. Um...

Rachel: See, I never do that, and I've never had anyone do that to me. Like, a lot of times it's like, I'm giving it away and it's out on the porch, and I don't even talk to you.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um, or it's like, "Hey." We stand there for a second, exchange, like, Venmo or whatever, and then we get back in our cars and that's it.

Griffin: Yeah. See, I also just remembered when I sold my bed to a recent divorcee in Austin, in what was one of, I would say, top five most uncomfortable human interactions I've had on this planet.

Rachel: I would love to have, like, a video of that. Because, I mean, it doesn't seem crazy that she would sit on the bed just to make sure that it was, in fact, a bed.

Griffin: But she didn't need to... [tapping] tap it after she set—you know what I mean? [tapping]

Rachel: Oh, did she tap it?

Griffin: No, she didn't tap it.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs] I was gonna say, "Wait a minute!"

Griffin: This isn't The Graduate. Um... I should've thought of something to say here at this point. Oh, you know, I'm gonna say, uh, E3 is gone. This is typically the time of year that E3 would happen but, like, E3 is just fuckin' fully gone, which I'm still kind of bummed out about, even though I'm not really deep in the industry anymore. But the past week there's been, like, a bunch of different individual little shows, little showcases. Like, Xbox did one, and, uh, Ubisoft.

Rachel: Little farm-to-table.

Griffin: Little farm-to-table Xbox games showcase. Uh, there's this guy, Jeff Keighley, who has been sort of a presenter host type dude in the industry for forever who just started his own show called Summer Game Fest. And all of those really patched together really nicely for me this week. It was a very fun week for gaming news, uh, that got me really excited. Um, and so I'll say that.

E3 is—E3 is gone, but the spirit of games and gaming is still going strong, folks.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: Oh, fuckin' Summer Games Done Quick is happening, right? I didn't know! It's been happening all week! I've been sleeping on it!

Rachel: Oh, wow! I always assumed you got, like, a little alert on your phone.

Griffin: [laughs] No, no. You know, with all of my health appointments this week, it's hard to keep up with [crosstalk].

Rachel: I want to specify, there's nothing critically wrong with Griffin. Don't worry.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: He just, like, was catching up on some, like, annual visits and such.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, so... I think it's fun that you think I only have to go to the dentist once a year.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: One of them's a dentist. Here's a clue.

Rachel: I didn't want to air your business. I just wanted to make clear these are routine visits. They're not like, "Griffin, you're gonna lose this appendage if we don't see you tomorrow."

Griffin: Yeah, no. I mean, my teeth are amazing. Like, they're in amazing shape.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You go first this week, and I can't fucking wait.

Rachel: Yeah. So, this is—we kind of teased this in a previous episode. We started watching a show, and I thought, I want to talk about this in detail. I want to do a whole episode about it. And it's all we're gonna talk about. And maybe we should make a series about it. And Griffin was—[laughs] had me—

Griffin: This was literally—the first episode wasn't even done yet and Rachel was like, "We have to dedicate—we're gonna relaunch fuckin' Rosebuddies, but just about this show."

Rachel: Um, and Griffin had me dial back a little bit.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: And we kept watching.

Griffin: Well, I wanted to vet the show a little bit, which I'm glad that we did.

Rachel: There are 18 episodes of it, and we're not finished yet. We've watched 13 of the 18, right?

Griffin: 15.

Rachel: 15. [laughs] We watched 15.

Griffin: We've been moving at a clip, okay?

Rachel: They're very short. They're, like, 30 minutes, right?

Griffin: Right, yes.

Rachel: Uh, and, um—

Griffin: It's called Frasier.

Rachel: [laughs] There's 18 episodes.

Griffin: There's 18 episodes [holding back laughter] of Frasier. 'Cause a lot of 'em got too problematic through the looking glass of history, and so they got rid of a bunch of episodes, but there's 18 still good—no, it's not Frasier.

Rachel: Do you and your family members have a rule about how often you have to say Frasier on a McElroy product?

Griffin: Yeah, and in fact, let me email my fuckin' parole—my Frasier parole officer.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, so the show is called Love Village, and it is on Netflix.

Griffin: Yes. Love Village on Netflix! Just popped up in our—"Hey. Hey, Griffin. We think you might like this."

Sometimes that section is not. Like, Netflix, you don't know me at all. Love Village is like, "Wow. You really, wicked, definitely know me, Netflix."

Rachel: Yeah. So, I sometimes forget that our Netflix suggestions are so curated.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So when I went online to start researching this show I was like, "There's nothing about Love Village anywhere!"

Griffin: There's fuck all. Folks, you are getting—this is hot, exclusive, off the presses, just reporting on the Netflix show Love Village that you're not gonna find anywhere else.

Rachel: Yeah, speaking of that. So, the thing that got me so excited about Love Village is that it is—I mean, it's a reality dating show, one. But two, it has so many different features that you can't—you literally can't find anywhere else.

Griffin: Can't get anywhere else. It is a Japanese dating reality show, uh, that—

Rachel: Yeah. Hey. This is my topic.

Griffin: Oh, I'm so sorry! I got too excited.

Rachel: [laughs] See, I offered you! I said we could do a whole episode about this.

Griffin: I know, I know...

Rachel: And you said "I don't know that the audience is gonna want a whole episode of Love Village."

Griffin: No, that's fair.

Rachel: But look at how excited you are!

Griffin: I know. I love it.

Rachel: [laughs] So... um, so a lot of what you'll find about it talks about it as, like, the spiritual successor to Terrace House, because it is a Japanese kind of dating show where they live together. Um, and the—but unlike Terrace House, the goal of this one is to really find what they call [holding back laughter] your final love.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And they call it that because all the contestants are age 35 and over.

Griffin: Yes. Which is—and when we say 35 and over, like, up to—I think there's, like, a 61-year-old person. There's, like, a couple of 60s folks, a lot of 40s, mid-40s, and some mid-30s thrown in there too. The 50—the 50 to 59 demo has been underserved so far, but who knows?

Rachel: Yeah. This means that a lot of the contestants, you know, have been married before, or have children. They're at, like, a point in their life where they're actually—like, some of the contestants are thinking about, like, "I've maybe got ten good years left. I should probably get married." [laughs]

Griffin: Which is especially great when, like, a fuckboy does work his way into—

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: —the machine, and that people have just no fucking time for that whatsoever, which is very refreshing.

Rachel: So the other thing I want to mention quickly that got me so excited about this show is that they have them... live in, like, a very remote area of Japan in, like, a traditional, like, old Japanese style house that is in complete disrepair.

Griffin: It is, uh, in shambles when they get there.

Rachel: Like, they have to replace the floors. There's, like, no furniture.

Griffin: There's no insulation. There's—yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. Uh, and so that was what was really exciting to me. And it actually ends up being kind of—it plays a lesser role as the show goes on. I had kind of thought that this was gonna be a real, like, frontiersman kind of show, you know? Where they were gonna have to learn to [through laughter] set traps.

Griffin: This show has made me and Rachel think of a reality television show that we watched fuckin' all of, and maybe the only two human beings on Earth—I don't know. Actually JD is—JD Amato's probably watched it too—called Utopia. Where some people live in a sort of self-sustaining ecosystem, uh, that was a complete, huge commercial failure. Uh, but this show has a lot of that, like, "Go farm some vegetables." You all get, what is it? Like, 30,000 Yen, which is like 300 bucks a week to spend on groceries and stuff like that for the whole house.

Rachel: Yeah. So things are provided to them. And they'll also have experts come in and, like, teach them how to do stuff. So, like, if they're gonna put in a new floor, uh, you know, they'll have actually somebody come in and be like, "This is how you do a new floor."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Although a lot of the contestants do have some kind of, like, construction background, which I think is probably pretty intentional.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The other thing I will say that makes it like Terrace House is that there are hosts.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Not a full panel, but two hosts that I guess have been working together for a while in the industry and are pretty well known. Uh, Becky and Atsushi?

Griffin: Yes, Atsushi.

Rachel: Uh, and—

Griffin: Becky is... it's really good. It's—we were... not sold on them at first, I think, because—

Rachel: They're not comedians. They're, like, hosts. You know?

Griffin: Right. And they're also always there. Unlike Terrace House where you watch Terrace House and then there's, like, a break where the commentators speak...

Rachel: There's a little picture-in-picture where you are watching them watch the show.

Griffin: It's not always there, but you can always hear their voices talking over the show, which was very distracting. But then, they're great, so...

Rachel: They're great, yeah. Uh, and it's similar to Terrace House in the sense that they are very enthusiastic about the show. They are very invested in the, like, romance. Uh, and they get very connected to, like, some of the story lines. So it is fun in that Terrace House way of like, you're watching it with buds.

Griffin: Yeah. There's something about it that I... obviously the conversation around Terrace House has changed dramatically, right? And I think that is because it purported itself—and one of the reasons why, like, we really fell in love with that show is compared to a Bachelor or Bachelorette or really any American reality dating show, it felt, like, really raw and unproduced, and very real. And very boring at times, which made those real moments feel, like, really good. But then, you know, after everything that happened, like, it—you know. You realize, like, "Oh, there was—" you know. The hand of production was guiding a lot of that along the way, which doesn't completely remove the merits of that show.

What I like about Love Village is it's very produced. Like, it is extremely—it's like, "Alright. Now everybody come outside. This is the dating bench. You sit on this to talk about dating."

Rachel: Gosh, there's so much to talk about with this show. [laughs]

Griffin: There is a lot to talk about in this show.

Rachel: I haven't even talked about the bell!

Griffin: Yeah, there's a bell. There's a very important bell.

Rachel: [laughs] So... so the way they keep the show moving at a clip and new contestants coming in, uh—

Griffin: Contestant is a wild word to use.

Rachel: Well, yeah. So—

Griffin: Participant. Subjects.

Rachel: How many—there's—how many are on the show at any—

Griffin: Eight.

Rachel: Eight, okay. Typically there's, like, four women and four men, and the goal of the show is to find somebody that you feel serious about and confess. And the way confessing works is there—you go up a hill [laughs quietly] and there is a bell, and the bell is very loud, and you ring it, and then everybody comes outside, and then you, like... you know, schoolyard pick style, take the person that you are confessing to, and you walk somewhere else.

Griffin: To the dating bench.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which moves. It moves around. It's a quantum dating bench. Sometimes it's by a waterfall. Sometimes it's in a field.

Rachel: And then, uh, if you are the confessor, you kind of give your little speech, and then the person gets back to you the next day. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: They give you a whole day to sit on it, which is so cruel!

Rachel: And when—[laughs] and when you get back to them, it is you and the confessor in front of the house, like, Wild West style. Like, getting ready to have a shootout. And they make everybody line up. So, like, all the other, like... what am I gonna say?

Griffin: Subjects. Participants.

Rachel: Participants.

Griffin: Lovers.

Rachel: Stand there and watch you have this exchange where you again state your interest in the person, and then that person publicly responds.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And you can either leave together, or if the person you confess to isn't into it, they will stay and you will leave.

Griffin: You will leave.

Rachel: And it is done.

Griffin: Which is really a fascinating thing. Because it... when you see people participating in a reality television show, it is really hard to separate the objective of finding love from the objective of being on a television show and getting some sort of following or cred or whatever from that. When you confess your—when you ring that bell, you're gonna go home. Like, you are going home, no matter what, when you ring the bell, which is a really

interesting thing. You don't see that anything else. It's like if—on Bachelor in Paradise...

Rachel: Yeah. People will sometimes choose to leave if they don't see a partner for them.

Griffin: But also, what would never happen is like, "I think I really like this girl, and I'm gonna tell her. And then I have to leave."

That's, like, nobody would fuckin' do that! Because they need as much screen time to sell tummy tea as they can possibly get their hands on.

Rachel: Yeah. And so far there is nobody who has outwardly very specifically said, like, "I am a model," or, you know. Like, nobody has identified themselves as an influencer, and I have not, like, looked into it to see.

Griffin: I have my suspicions about Anchovy.

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: There's a dude named Anchovy who's been in the house the whole time whose whole vibe is—and they've played it up to, I would say, a slightly—a slightly mean-spirited extent.

Rachel: He—he is a chef at an Italian restaurant, and so he is called Anchovy. We don't really know if this is something that occurs outside of the house, or if this is just his house name.

Griffin: His house name, yeah, I don't know. But his whole thing is he just assumes every woman in the house is in love with him.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And he has this whole theater of the mind thing happening that the hosts just delight in. He is television gold, this man. Uh, yeah. It—it... the v... the vibe of this show... is pleasant in a way that Terrace House was pleasant, even though it is more produced, more traditional dating reality show style

thing. Like, it walks the line. And I think it's just them living together. They form—they are really—

Rachel: And they're always working on projects.

Griffin: They're always working on projects together.

Rachel: So that is the thing that does come up, since it is a very, like, rustic style house, is they will have these ideas, and they will get the materials, and then typically they will pair up to complete a task.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So, like, build a fire pit, you know? Or build, like, a duck... coop.

Griffin: A duck coop, yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, what's really telling about the show, and is kind of the sweetest thing about it, is any time someone rings the bell, it means they're going home, right? So the other—and they'll usually sneak off to do it so that nobody knows that they're going out to ring the bell. So everybody else will be sitting around eating, you know, lunch or whatever, and then they'll hear from way outside, like, "Clang-clang, clang-clang!"

And then there's a really—there's a moment where everybody looks around to see who's missing, and then without fail a handful of people just break down into tears, because they know that their friend is leaving. That is so... that connection that you get from making a show together and living in a house together and working on projects like this together, is palpable. It is incredibly, uh, sweet, and really makes [crosstalk] the show.

Rachel: Yeah, and it's the combination, right? Like, it's the combination of your friend is leaving, and also recognizing, like, this person has found love and I have not.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, I have to imagine that's a piece of it, you know?

Griffin: There are two women who start out in the house together who form, like, this really beautiful friendship, and are both kind of unlucky in love. And then somebody new shows up to the house, and one of them, like, strikes up a romance with them. And those two women, their parting is the most sort of moving thing that has come out of the show, because it's like, you know, they were—they were soldiers in the battlefield of love together. It was, uh...

Rachel: Alright. So we've already talked a long time about this.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, two more things I will just say as little throwaways. Uh... [laughs] the theme song of the show...

Griffin: All music for the show.

Rachel: All music for the show is brought to you by the Backstreet Boys.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: And not like today's Backstreet Boys but, like, Backstreet Boys of the mid-90's.

Griffin: And quick! Go through the Rolodex of Backstreet Boys that you know in your head, and assume which one is going to be the theme song for this love-based reality show called Love Village. Did you guess Backstreet's Back Alright?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Probably not! Probably went with one of their ballads, right? Shape of Your Heart shows up a lot.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Both in the, like—both the original version and the orchestral version that the score—that the show has produced that will play over certain scenes.

Rachel: Uh, and the other thing I will say is that a lot of times when contestants are telling a story about themselves...

Griffin: [laughs and claps]

Rachel: ... it will be animated.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: And this is the most produced thing that happens in this show.

Rachel: It always catches me off guard. But they do these very, like, uh, compelling animations that are very accurate, in that they look exactly like the contestant. And it will be like, "Let me tell you the story of my first marriage." And it's going to be animated onscreen so that the viewer at home can watch it in its entirety.

Griffin: And it's animated in, like, a rotoscoped black and white almost, uh—I think you likened it to Take On Me, the A-ha music video for Take On Me. Uh, and you also made the comment that they are so few and far between that every time one starts—

Rachel: I'm always surprised! [laughs]

Griffin: —you are always surprised.

Rachel: I'm like, "Oh, it's animated now!"

Griffin: "Oh my god, what?"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I will also say, I was unsure about this show because there's a dude on it at the very beginning named Hollywood who sucks. He's, like, very overbearing and, like, has real boundary issues.

Rachel: He does seem like—to use a phrase—he's on the show for the wrong reasons.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I mean, everybody kind of has an affection for him, but he is very clear that he is looking for somebody that he can bring to his movie premiers and his industry events, because he is a famous actor who is only gonna get more famous.

Griffin: Yeah. He's—he's—it's—he's pretty gross. But also, just a little pro-tip from us to you, he leaves after three episodes. So you—he's not in there very long. If you can get over—

Rachel: [crosstalk] Wisely the first to confess.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, so it was. That was kind of what we were like, "Is this guy gonna hang around? Is this really gonna change the tone of the show? 'Cause he seems pretty obnoxious." And...

Griffin: If you can get over the Hollywood hump, it's...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... you're made in the shade, baby. Um... I—yeah. I really like this show a lot. I feel like it wears its heart on its sleeve a lot. Uh—

Rachel: And it's a new show too, so when I was doing my research I was kind of hoping it was like Terrace House, in that we were getting a season here in the states and there were more hidden somewhere. No, this is a new—

Griffin: No. This is not like when, uh, Terrace House the first season came to Netflix, and then there was a, like, 105 episode season before it that we had never seen that we then spent the next, like, two years trying to find and watch all of. This is hot, this is fresh, this is now.

Rachel: We have not even talked about the individual contestants, you know? Uh, I'm gonna leave that as a treat. We have given some teasers as to people that are on the show.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: There are a lot of really great people.

Griffin: Lot of really great people.

Rachel: That we could spend the rest of the episode talking about. But...

Griffin: We should talk about the hosts' fashion is—in the same way that, like, the panel of, you know, six hosts of Terrace House always had, like, something fresh going on, something great, Becky and Atsushi, their vibe is immaculate.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Every episode I look f—and I'm not, like, a clothes guy. But every episode I look forward to seeing what these two wear on their bodies, 'cause it's fucking outrageous and good every single time.

Rachel: Well, and it really stands in contrast, because most of the people in this kind of rustic style house are dressed practically, you know? They're wearing overalls, they're wearing work shirts, you know. They're living kind of a hard life, you know, tilling the field. And then you cut back to the studio.

Griffin: To Becky wearing fuckin' Grace Jones shoulder pads that, like, go up over her ear. Like, yeah. Uh, it's really good! It's really good. I'm really excited. We're almost done with it, which is heartbreaking. Uh, 'cause we've

only been watching it for, like, six days or so. But, um, yeah. I love it and I hope it takes off and they make more of it.

That's... I mean, we probably could've done a whole episode about that.

Rachel: Yes! This is what I'm saying.

Griffin: But I would like to do my segment, right after the break, if I may.

Rachel: Okay. Can I steal you away?

Griffin: Yes.

[ad break]

Griffin: This'll be quick. It's a celebration... of fast food mascots. I... want to sing a song of fast food mascots. Um, to the audience.

Rachel: Did you... see the new Grimace thing?

Griffin: Yes. This is the inspiration for the fast food mascot segment. I started prepping a thing about fast food mascots and then I realized, like, the last half of my notes were all Grimace. So this is, like, a... he's a featured player.

Rachel: We've talked about something similar to this before, right?

Griffin: I believe... we—we have an episode that is titled, like, Abstemious Grimace.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Or something like that. Um, so it's possible.

Rachel: I don't think we've specifically talked about Grimace in detail, but I feel like we have talked about... mascots in a variety of shapes and forms. But I—so, here's the thing. I also saw Grimace in his new featured role with

McDonald's, and I had the instinct that people probably all over the world have. Which is like, does Justin McElroy know about this?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then I realized the fact that I am having that thought means that he most definitely does. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Um, yeah. I looked, I didn't see anything about—it does feel like we have discussed something around the periphery of this before, but we've been doing this show for almost 300 episodes, so that's un—that's—that's unavoidable.

Rachel: You know what? The listeners want to take a deep dive into Grimace. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: I think so too. Um, obviously I think, you know, fast food marketing can get pretty gross. But I can also hold that truth in my mind while also holding a deep and abiding love of fast food mascots. Um, because the very idea that a restaurant chain, or to further sort of, like, abstract that out, like, a food business that sells people food and wants you come in and spend your money on their food, is like, "I know what'll help with that. A little guy."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "I know what's gonna help people come in and buy our pizzas. What if we have... a little guy who is a cartoon, and he also likes the pizzas? That's gonna definitely move some pies."

Rachel: Or we have a little guy who wants this so bad and can't get it.

Griffin: He'll take it. He'll do crime. That's another good element to it. Of just like, this person loves this pizza so much that they'll do crime for it. I don't have to do crime for the pizza. But it's still very good.

Rachel: And the fact that this lil guy wants to do crime for the pizza makes you at home think like, "Man, this must be really good." [laughs]

Griffin: Right. This has been a thing for our whole lives. Obviously you got Ronald, you got Taco Bell chihuahua, you got—which I don't think is still a thing.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Um... you got Wendy. You got Burger King. Um...

Rachel: We were of course referring to the Noid.

Griffin: The Noid is of course, uh, not so much—the Noid I feel like they flirted with a revival, a Noid revival, and then realized, like, he's too fucked up.

Rachel: Did the Little Caesars guy have a name?

Griffin: He died. Caesar.

Rachel: Was it just Caesar?

Griffin: I'm pretty sure it was Caesar. Or Little Caesar.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And any time you ate pizza from Little Caesars, which for me was several times a week in college...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... you were eating his pizza. Don't...

Rachel: [laughs] Several times a week?

Griffin: I will tell you something. I still yearn for \$5 Hot and Readies. Like, I think about them a lot, even though we have obviously reached a point in our adult lives where we can have better pizza. There is something so zesty about a \$5 hot and ready that I think about a lot.

Rachel: No, see, for me I pair them with, like, sad times in my life.

Griffin: Oh yeah, for sure!

Rachel: [laughs] So the idea of getting it now feels like a backslide.

Griffin: Obviously... fast food mascots, largely targeted towards kids. Most explicitly in the BK Kids Club, which was an ensemble of cool children from different backgrounds.

Rachel: Yeah, I have no real connection to that. I remember that being a thing. I couldn't tell you anything about 'em.

Griffin: They're a collection of cool kids from different backgrounds who were brought together by their love of, like, flame grilled hamburgers.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... but so many of the mascots that have existed in this space have been, like, over-designed by a team of, like, ruthlessly efficient marketing, like, managers. And that does very little for me. What I love is, like, the desperation plays of fast food mascots that businesses leave behind them like a trail of dead, that they just refuse to... Dunkin Donuts has a mascot whose name is Cuppy. And he's a cup of Dunkin Donuts coffee.

Rachel: I feel like I saw an animation of this at some point. But it was like, on some material. It wasn't like—I didn't see this cup move around and say anything.

Griffin: He shows up at sports games sometimes, and just, like, gets out there. Um, but like, Dunkin Donuts is a pretty big business, and they absolutely refuse to commit to Cuppy. Because I imagine a lot of people don't know about Cuppy.

Bojangles has a mascot that is also Cuppy. It's called Cuppy and it's a cup of Bojangles stuff. Which, like, when I think about Bojang—Dunkin Donuts? Yes, cup... of coffee. That's their thing. Bojangles, I don't think, like, "I'm gonna go to Bojangles and get beverages." I think it's—

Rachel: So it is a beverage? It's not, like, a cup of, like, popcorn—

Griffin: Of chicken?

Rachel: —chicken?

Griffin: [laughs] No, I don't believe so.

Rachel: I think here's the thing, right? Like... any mascot that appears as a food item, you are kind of putting yourself in an awkward situation of just, like, a, "Destroy me." [laughs]

Griffin: But that's the thing, right? Culver's has Scoopy, which is a sentient, smiling ice cream cone, right? Bojangles and Dunkin Donuts have different Cuppys. But you're not killing Cuppy... when you enjoy the beverage out of Cuppy.

Rachel: Here's the thing. If I were dressed in that mascot costume, which I know is something that you can think of a little more viscerally than me—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: —people are coming up to you and they're saying, "Can I put my mouth on your straw?" All day long.

Griffin: All day, all day long.

Rachel: [laughs] That's not pleasant for anyone.

Griffin: No one likes that. Unless Cuppy's nasty.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: One of the Cuppys is nasty. Either the Dunkin Donuts or the Bojangles Cuppy. One of them's nasty.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And you have to know. You have to kind of feel it out. 'Cause if you walk up on Dunkin Donuts Cuppy and they're giving off a vibe like, "I don't want your mouth anywhere near my straw," but Bojangles Cuppy might be down to clown.

Rachel: What is your instinct? What does your heart tell you? Which is the nasty?

Griffin: I think Bojangles Cuppy... would be down to clown.

Rachel: That's my thought too.

Griffin: Okay, good.

Rachel: Dunkin Donuts seems a little more proper.

Griffin: I—well, not proper. Prudish is the word I would use.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. We gotta talk about Grimace. 'Cause McDonald's has been on a big Grimace kick lately, in honor of his 52nd birthday. [laughs quietly]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And it resulted yesterday in the release of an—

Rachel: He could've been a contestant on Love Village.

Griffin: He could've been a contestant on Love Village. God Almighty! How fucking funny would that be? If somebody was like, "Oh! Someone's at the gate! Go answer it!"

Rachel: Nobody acknowledges it.

Griffin: No one answer—"Oh, it's... Grimace?"

Rachel: It's Grimace. But, like, nobody acts like it's unusual.

Griffin: They celebrated his 52nd birthday yesterday with the release of a new Game Boy Color game titled Grimace's Birthday, and it's real, and you can download and play it right now. Uh, Game Boy Color of course a platform that was sort of—that we all moved beyond in, like, 1999, maybe?

Rachel: See, I assumed it was, like, an app or something.

Griffin: You can play it online.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: But I think you can also download a ROM and, like, slap it onto your, like, emulator device and play Grimace's Birthday on the go. I have not played it yet. I probably should've before this bit. But that's great. Grimace is god-tier, right? He's an absolute unit. He's a purple mass of flesh that loves eating McDonald's food and hanging out with, according to the wiki, his best friend, Ronald McDonald.

Rachel: Whoa! So he's the number one?

Griffin: He's the number one. He is Ronald McDonald's emergency contact.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, what I love about Grimace and find so fascinating about Grimace is this liminal space he occupies between, like, forgotten mascot relic of the past, fuckin' Cuppy, and cherished part of the McDonald's canon and McDonald's family.

Uh, 'cause McDonald's has been really cagey about Grimace. About, like, what he even is, which is alarming.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So there's a 2012 tweet from the McDonald's corporate Twitter account in response to somebody, and McDonald's tweeted, "Grimace is the embodiment of a milkshake, though others still insist he's a taste bud."

You should fucking know that. You should probably know. Rachel feels very confident that we have talked about this before; Grimace's, like, identity.

Rachel: But again, not in detail.

Griffin: Not in detail. Obviously when he first came around he was a scaly four-armed monster who wanted to steal kids' milkshakes, which scared children very badly.

Rachel: Oh, see, I didn't know that.

Griffin: So they sanded off some of the rough edges, and two of the arms... of Grimace.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And made him the friendly simple blob man.

Rachel: Can I tell you my theory on the origin story of Grimace?

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: I mean, he's shaped like a nugget. You know? And so my thought was they tried to make a big nugget.

Griffin: A big purple nugget?

Rachel: Well, no. I think it was chicken colored. I think it was like a flesh colored nugget, and everyone was like—

Griffin: So this was a flesh colored giant man with four arms? Yeah, that's bad.

Rachel: And my assumption was that like, "Ooh, I don't like him flesh colored. Let's try some other colors." And then they landed on purple.

Griffin: Yes. Here's what I don't think we've talked about before. He—he has not been a featured player. He wasn't for a very long time. In 2012 he appeared at a Dodgers game. He danced to Black Betty... bam-ba-lam. That song?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: As a promotional stunt for McDonald's. And then he fucking disappeared for eight years.

Rachel: Whoaaa!

Griffin: No sign of Grimace was seen. McDonald's kept his name out of their fucking mouths until the 2020 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: He's up on the float, hand-in-hand with his best—his best friend, Ronald McDonald.

Rachel: Maybe they had a falling out, honey.

Griffin: They had a falling out! I don't know what happened, uh, that made this sort of fall apart for them. Um, anyway, I've gone on long enough about a subject that we may have discussed before. But I—

Rachel: The thing I saw that entertained me about this new Grimace situation with McDonald's is that they were like, "In honor of Grimace, we have purple milkshakes."

There is no explanation as to why they are purple.

Griffin: What it tastes like, yeah.

Rachel: What kind of natural flavor they are associating with purple. Just like, "Hey, we have milkshakes, and now they're purple like Grimace."

Griffin: It could be like a yummy sort of, like, purple sweet potato vibe. Like, that might be good.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: Anyway, I love Grimace because McDonald's won't really go all in on Grimace.

Rachel: Well, by far the most huggable of the McDonald's group.

Griffin: Yeah... yeah. Uh, I mean, I'm sure Birdie's not bad. Um, the Fry Guys, I'm sure there's something there. You definitely don't want Hamburglar to hug you, 'cause you'll come back—your wallet's gone.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They call him Hamburglar to kind of, like, disarm you and think like, "Oh, he's just doing burger—he just does burger crime."

No. No, he'll steal any—he'll steal whatever.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Anyway, uh, that's Grimace. And maybe we should've just talked about Love Village the whole time, but... you know. You take the good, you take the bad.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thanks 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. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network! Go to Maximumfun.org, check out all the shows there. Uh, there's a lot of good stuff there.

This week, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, me and Travis are gonna be at Awesome Con here in DC, which you can still get passes to. So come out and see us. We're doing panels, we're doing signings, we're doing photos, we're doing all kinds of stuff. And then the week after that we're gonna be doing shows. We're doing MBMBaM and TAZ in Raleigh, North Carolina, and then we're doing MBMBaM in Richmond. And I think we're gonna try and do Wonderful in Raleigh for that MBMBaM show too.

Rachel: Yeah. We don't have any kind of great childcare solution, but our hope is to do Wonderful to open for MBMBaM in Raleigh.

Griffin: Yes. So go to I believe mcelroytours.com, or just mcelroy.family will get you there too, and you can get tickets to all that stuff.

Thank you so much for listening. We're gonna... go now, so we can just get this bad boy up. So, um, check you on the—check you later. Check you on the flip. If we've talked about Grimace before, please don't tell us.

Rachel: [laughs] We should end every episode that way.

Griffin: If we've talked about Grimace—if we've talked about any of the subjects before, please don't tell us. Let us live in—

Rachel: No, specifically Grimace. [laughs]

Griffin: Don't talk to me about Grimace.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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