

Wonderful! 282: Our Favorite Summer Stuff, Live from Raleigh!

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[theme music plays]

[audience cheers]

Griffin: That was so loud, you guys!

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Each of you is thinking "If I yell, they'll think that I'm excited for the show," but you didn't think, "If all of us yell, what's that gonna be like for them?" And the answer is pretty scary, if I'm being completely honest.

Rachel: Hi, I'm Rachel McElroy.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Hi, I'm Griffin McElroy.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: This is a—

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Uh—

Rachel: Just feels like we're milking it a little bit. [laughs]

Griffin: A little bit! Uh, this is a show where we talk about things we like, that are good, and we're into. Uh, we used to do a podcast about The Bachelor, and then it stopped fulfilling those three categories, and so...

[audience laughs]

Griffin: ... now we just talk about whatever the hell. Uh, and we've been going almost 200 episodes strong. And today we're gonna...

Rachel: I think it's more than that.

Griffin: Is it really? You might be right, actually. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, so today we're going to focus on the local season that has just started.

Rachel and I are ready to get your summer kicked off right.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: With a show about autumn.

Griffin: With an autumn-based show.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Summer is just autumn eve, if you think about it.

Rachel: Wait, can we—can we do small wonders?

Griffin: Of course, yes! Oh my god, how could I? Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: Can I do two really quick ones?

Griffin: [sighs] Yeah...

Rachel: Okay. First of all, I purposely brought my drink out onstage, so I couldn't—

Griffin: You have to do it right into to microphone.

Rachel: I know. So I could do a thing.

Griffin: Okay, okay, okay. I was you weren't gonna do it—

Rachel: That I've never gotten to do before. Which is...

Griffin: Okay. Paul always does it for you.

Rachel: [opens drink]

[audience cheers]

Griffin: That got absolutely all over you.

Rachel: This is why—this is—

Griffin: Thank you, Paul.

Rachel: That's why we have Paul do it. Thank you.

Griffin: This dress was—

[audience cheers]

Griffin: It's got pockets, I see.

Rachel: The dress has pockets. That's very fun.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Your dress was also going to be one of my small wonders.

Rachel: Aww.

Griffin: So I'm glad that—so I've only got the one. And it's, um, the water pressure in our hotel shower. Um, we talked about it backstage just now,

'cause I didn't, like, love it? Like, the experience of it. 'cause it was so fearsome.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But at the same time, showers are meant to kind of revitalize you, right?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And I'm pretty sure this shower activated my fight or flight response.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Which got me ready for the show, and so I do thank you for that, strong shower. I don't want you at home, strong shower. I don't want to use you every day. You would peel the skin off of my bones. But as a sometimes food, I like a strong shower.

Rachel: Okay. So we're talking about summer. And one of the things I wanted to talk about is the—a particular type of movie, which is the summer camp movie.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And also included in that is summer camp television as well. Um, have you ever been—you've gone to, like, church camp, right?

Griffin: Uh, North Carolina's own Centrifuge for good Southern Baptists, thank you.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That is here, right? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: I can't believe it's called Centrifuge.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. 'Cause it gets all the sin out.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: On the last day they put you in a big mechanical arm and they spin you till all the sin comes out.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] You see people drop to the bottom if it's just not possible.
[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: The number of hand job stories that I overheard...

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Just in the one session that I would go to per summer was absolutely outrageous.

Rachel: Wait. From, like, the other campers, or the counselors?

Griffin: The cooler campers. Not the counselors!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Well, I thought maybe they would show up and, like, you know, try and show off to each other.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: [sighs] Cool, cool, cool.

Rachel: Not, like, by doing it.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure, sure, sure, sure, sure.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, so there's a couple different types of summer camp media. There's—I categorized it as the ones that are about the counselors, the ones that are about the kids, the ones that are just scary, um, and then another type that I'll get to in a minute. But, uh, okay. So, the ones about the counselors. Of course we've got Wet Hot American Summer.

Griffin: Sure. Can't beat it.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Which I don't... I don't know if you all saw that when you were a young person, but I was not expecting it to take the turn that it does pretty quickly? [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Seeing Frasier's David Hyde Pierce be uproariously funny in a film really changed my mind about a—I would say it was formative for me in sort of my own walk with Frasier.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, and then there's Meatballs. Have you ever watched any of the Meatballs films?

Griffin: No, and based on the audience's reaction to that, I think I made the right choice.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Sounds like maybe it has a bit of a mixed legacy, let's say.

Rachel: Well, I watched the first one. I didn't realize there was one—so the first one's '79, then '84, then '87, then '92, and then they called it.

Griffin: It's like Seven-Up. They were doing it at regular intervals just to show you how summer camp was changing in a realistic and wholesome way.

Rachel: Okay. The ones that are my favorite are the ones that are about the kids.

Griffin: Of course.

Rachel: Uh, originally I was going to do just a whole segment on Salute Your Shorts.

Griffin: Mmmm!

[audience cheers]

Rachel: But then I thought maybe our audience trended a little bit younger than us, and I didn't know...

Griffin: Just show of hands, who's never heard Salute Your Shorts? Thinks Rachel's just making stuff up? That is...

Rachel: Whoa. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Hey, what's up, audience! Yeah, alright! This is great! 'Cause half the audience just had the reaction we have a lot of the time!

[audience laughs]

[pause]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We need to figure out a way to—it would be wild if we could manage to just seat people based on how they answer that question.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Anyway.

Rachel: Um, Salute Your Shorts was only on one season from 1991 to 1992.

Griffin: You are kidding me!

Rachel: Yeah. Well, I guess... no, technically there were two seasons, but it was only on from '91 to '92.

Griffin: Okay, okay, okay. I got you.

Rachel: Um, yeah, because the first season is Michael. The second season is Pinsky.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Um, incredible Nickelodeon show. I don't know how you can see it if you want to, but it's very well done. [laughs]

Griffin: Very well done!

Rachel: [laughs] I think so!

Griffin: The cinematography on Salute Your Shorts... is beyond compare.

Rachel: It has kind of like a Freaks and Geeks quality in that it's, like, real kids. They're not made up. They're, like, people you would actually see if you were a young person, which is not something—

Griffin: Yeah. I had a friend named Donkey Lips in school.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, and then—okay. Camp is scary is Friday the 13th, of course.

[scattered cheers]

Griffin: Sleepaway Camp as well, another..

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: Here's the thing. This is not a comprehensive list, I should say.

Griffin: No, no, no, no, no.

Rachel: Did you see any of the Friday the 13ths?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. I've seen the—I've seen the first one, and then... [laughs] the one where, uh, a child turns into bugs? No, that's Halloween 3 actually I'm thinking of.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, I've seen some of 'em, huh? They're all the same.

Rachel: Yeah, from what I understand they're basically all the same.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then there's a special genre that I called the lead is the story. And of course I'm talking about Ernest Goes to Camp.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And... I'm going to argue also that fits in that category is Troop Beverly Hills.

[scattered cheers]

Griffin: Now, is that camp? Troop Beverly Hills? Is that camp?

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. I haven't seen it in a million years, so.

Rachel: Yeah. It's, uh, Shelley Long. And she's got a group of campers, and she's trying to kind of prove herself as a—

Griffin: Sounds funny. It sounds good so far.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, and then there's this kind of other kind of nebulous mix, where there seems to be kind of a camp element, like Dirty Dancing for example.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: Adventureland kind of has that.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh... but again, not technically a summer camp property.

Griffin: No. I want to give a special shout out to Bug Juice, one of my all-time favorite reality shows.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: It was a summer camp reality show, straight up, that Disney did in, like, 1996 or something fairly early on. Pioneers.

Rachel: I had never seen it, and we watched it as I recall early in our courtship.

Griffin: It's still so good!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There's a little bit of indoctrination that goes on, but it's so good!

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, yeah. So that is—I have never gone to, like, a sleepaway camp. I've done, like, a day camp, but I've never had the full, like, matching t-shirt, like...

Griffin: It's fun, because you—

Rachel: ... kind of whole deal.

Griffin: —you miss—all you missed out on is the worst part of going to camp.

Rachel: Yeah, that's fair. [laughs]

Griffin: Which is sleeping on a plastic bed in a room with 30 other people.

Rachel: [laughs] Oh, god.

Griffin: Night camp is the worst part! Day camp is good to go.

Rachel: No, you're right. You're right, that's true.

Griffin: I'd rather sleep in my own home. Speaking of bug juice, my first thing... summer is the season of great bugs.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I recognize that summertime also invites mosquitoes to the equation, and they're the worst bugs. And so, like, I guess objectively speaking winter is the best season for bugs. Um, but if I had to pick the season that had the best bugs in it, it would be summertime. 'cause we get our—yeah, a lot of you know what I'm talking about.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: How about our glowing friends, the fireflies? Hello?

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Or lightning bug, if you grew up in certain enlightened parts of this great nation of ours.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: These are the best bugs, hands down. I don't think there's another bug that lights up. Is there? I don't think so. Is there any—is there any tech bug?

[audience members talking]

Griffin: I don't think so.

Rachel: [simultaneously] I don't think so.

Griffin: Probably. I hear so many—so much dissent from the audience right now.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I think if bugs put a little bit more work into their presentation in general, we would all be—we would all be bigger bug fans.

Rachel: Well, I mean, there's, like, the ladybug. You know.

Griffin: The ladybug's great. We love the ladybug.

Rachel: Dragonfly is a showy bug.

Griffin: Dragonflies, great!

Rachel: But don't light up.

Griffin: But they don't light up is the only thing! Can you imagine a ladybug came out and you were like, "Oh, look, a ladybug." And then it was like, [imitates electrical sound]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: That'd be so great. We have crickets on the ones and twos! Generating natural white noise for us. For all the campers and open window sleepers out there. Thank you so much. That's so cool of you, crickets. Um, I'll give half credit on this point to cicadas, the sort of...

[scattered cheers]

Griffin: ... overzealous cousin of crickets. Who go a little bit too hard on the ones and twos. And then they leave their desiccated corpses around all hither and yon.

Rachel: I love—can I just say, I love when you come at a segment like you're a trial lawyer. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And then we get june bugs, which can be a garden pest from what I understand. Again, a lot of dissent and groans coming from the audience right now. But I don't keep a garden, so whenever I see one of these just iridescent emerald beauties scuttlin' my way, I get so excited. More bugs should look like precious gemstones.

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Next topic.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay, I wanted to talk about something. It is a product that I associate with summer, and that is the product that is called Sun-In.

Griffin: Sun-In?

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Okay.

Griffin: Sun-In?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Not sunnin'?

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: Well, I don't know. I mean, I guess... if you're more casual.

Griffin: Okay.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I don't know Sun-In like that.

Rachel: Do you know what I'm talking about?

Griffin: I have no idea what you're talking about!

Rachel: Okay. It is a spray that you would put in your hair, and it would encourage the natural lightening of your hair if you were outside.

Griffin: Okay, okay!

Rachel: None of this is familiar to you?

Griffin: Not at all.

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: No, it may surprise you to learn, I don't put a lot of thought into what my hair does, or looks like, or how it goes.

Rachel: You say that, but I know that you have a highlighting experience.

Griffin: [holding back laughter] Yeah. Y'all aren't ready for that story. Nah. I'm telling y'all, you're not ready for that story.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: It was when he was a child. This was not recent.

Griffin: Yeah, this was not—and by child you mean probably 16 years old.

Rachel: Okay, well.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: It was involuntary, I will say that.

Rachel: [laughs] You make it sound like a prank. Like you woke up and your brothers had—

Griffin: It may have been.

Rachel: Okay.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Uh, so Sun-In first became popular in the 70's. And here was the, like, catchphrase that I enjoyed. "Just spray Sun-In under the sun and see what happens."

[audience laughs]

Griffin: [loudly] That sucks!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm gonna need a li—if I'm walking down the grocery store, through the sprays aisle... and I see that? I'm gonna need a little bit more information, thank you.

Rachel: I know. Well, see, and that was the thing. So, Sun-In, it was basically hydrogen peroxide.

Griffin: Cool!

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Can't say that under—in parentheses. "See what happens! ([whispering] It's hydrogen peroxide. It's gonna burn a bit)."

Rachel: Uh, hydrogen peroxide and lemon juice. Uh, so yeah. [laughs] Let's hope you don't have any cuts, I guess, on your scalp.

Griffin: [laughs] How on God's green Earth would you know if you had cuts on your scalp?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I guess Sun-In. I guess you spray Sun-In.

Rachel: Uh-huh. So hydrogen peroxide—I mean, it acts similar to bleach in that it strips the pigment from your hair. But it really only was effective in the way it was intended on people that were already blonde. Because what would happen is if you had darker hair is that your hair would turn orange.

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: So that makes the catchphrase of "Just see what happens... "
[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Sure, no, just roll of the dice it sounds like.

Rachel: Uh, and also if you had already dyed your hair, again, you couldn't really predict how the chemical was gonna interact with the dye in your hair.
[laughs]

Griffin: So fun. So fun. I love not knowing how chemicals interact on my body.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And so this still—this still exists today. Now they add things like, you know, botanical extracts like aloe.

Griffin: That's not doing the work, though. We all know who's carrying the load on that one. I'm gonna say it's probably 99% hydrogen peroxide doing the work, and then lemon juice comes in at the end just for the—the smell of it.

Rachel: Again, just—so, my connection to it. I did try using it, and it did turn my hair orange.

Griffin: That can be a cool look though.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Vitamin C?

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: One?

Griffin: Paramour did it for a bit, I think.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: So... um, I'm gonna talk about local library summer reading programs.

[audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: There you go. Now you've got them.

Griffin: Now they're hooked.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This groups hates bugs, loves books.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Um, summer is, like, un-school, and I love that about it, and I would never take that away from summer. But as it turns out, if you're a young person and then you just, like, chill on, like, reading or learning for three months, there is a little bit of retention issues that do come up.

Rachel: Yeah. It's literally called summer learning loss. That is a thing.
[laughs]

Griffin: And that is why 95% of libraries across the country offer some kind of summer reading program, both for kids and adults. And historically it takes the sort of otherwise arduous process of getting a book, and opening it, and making the information in it go inside your brain and gamifying it, baby!

[scattered cheers]

Griffin: I could not care less about reading for most of my youth, um, because it was always in a sort of quiet competition with my Super Nintendo and the odds... never favored books.

Rachel: And in some ways still is, I think.

Griffin: And in some ways still is!

[audience laughs]

Griffin: That's a great point. But the Cabell County Public Library where I grew up...

Audience Member: [cheers loudly]

Griffin: Hell yeah!

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Uh, they had a summer reading program when I was younger where there was, like, a little folding game board, and every time you finished a book you got entered into a raffle for, like, prizes. And then you would roll a dice and move around the game board, and if you landed on special prize spaces, you would get even more prizes!

Rachel: [laughs] This is unreal.

Griffin: There was, like, a Razor scooter up for raffle one year and, like, a Tamagotchi. It was so great! And so, yeah, that got me into it. Because all of a sudden, reading wasn't just some, like, extracurricular, like, hobby through which I could enrich myself.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It was something that could be won.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Do you remember any of the prizes you got?

Griffin: I never won any of the big, like, raffle ones, because there were a lot of overachievers in my neighborhood.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, but I definitely got a few consolation prizes. They would give out old books. Which...

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Congra—

Griffin: Was always sort of a grab-bag.

Rachel: "Congratulations for finishing this book. Your prize is another book."

Griffin: Yeah. It was just, like, really outdated, really problematic encyclopedias.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

[ad break]

Griffin: What do you got next?

Rachel: Okay. So, you mentioned Rosebuddies, and I wanted to do a little return to form and talk about the short-lived television program, Bachelor Pad.

Griffin: Oh, Bachelor Pad...

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: I'm scared to ask, but can you raise your hand if you watched Bachelor Pad?

[pause]

Rachel: Oh, there's, like—

Griffin: Four!

Rachel: —seven people here.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] But the hands are high. [laughs]

Griffin: The hands are high and proud. Actually, that's not true. I saw a lot of neck height...

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] So we watched Bachelor Pad. It only lasted three seasons and was canceled in 2012. The thing that was unique about it—I mean, there were a lot of things. But the biggest thing was that instead of a show to find love, it was a show to win \$250,000.

Griffin: Fantastic.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And the idea was—I mean, it was kind of like a road rules, real world challenge kind of thing, in that they would bring back previous contestants from the Bachelor and Bachelorette, and then have them compete in games together.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, and then at the end of, like, each week—which, you know, was probably, like, three days if I understand the reality television—

Griffin: Yeah, probably like 19 hours of shooting.

Rachel: Each cast member would go into a voting room and drop a headshot of a person they wanted to go home in a wooden box.

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: Um, so the thing I wanted to talk about specifically was season three. Uh, because when I was looking into this show and trying to figure out, why did it end? Because Griffin and I preferred it to...

Griffin: Bachelor in Paradise.

Rachel: ... Bachelor in Paradise.

Griffin: Was the inferior product in so many ways.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Season three, there is a week where there is a new rule where instead of voting out one man and one woman, the entire cast would vote out a woman, and then that woman could pick whoever they wanted to leave.

Griffin: Oh yeah, I remember that! Didn't they get Michael what's-his-face?

Rachel: Yeah—well, spoilers.

Griffin: Sorry, sorry.

[both laugh loudly]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So I was reading an article in a reputable publication called Life and Style Magazine.

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: And they talked about how they think that this broke the show. Um, some might say it was a decrease in ratings. But others would say it is because what happened was they were all pretty sure they were gonna vote out this one woman named Erica Rose, who had been in season two. And they were gonna try and make it seem like Chris Bukowski, who is like a—

Griffin: Oh, Bukowski!

Rachel: —franchise legend.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: They were gonna make it seem like he was leading the charge, so when she got voted out she would take him.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And so what he did is he took her into the voting room and said, "Look. I'm not voting for you."

And he put somebody else's headshot in the box and walked out.

So she ends up taking... Michael Stagliano.

Griffin: [simultaneously] Michael Stagliano.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, who had led the whole charge and was, like, the most popular—

Griffin: The star of the season.

Rachel: The most popular guy on the show.

Griffin: The audience surrogate for the entire show.

Rachel: The other thing that happened that season is that the prisoner's dilemma...

Griffin: Oh, boy howdy!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So at the very end, there is a man and woman, and they have the option to say they're going to keep the money, or they're going to split the money. And—

Griffin: With each other.

Rachel: Yes, with each other. Season one and two, both winners said "We'll split it."

Griffin: "I love you so much."

Rachel: [laughs] I know.

Griffin: "I would never do this to you. You're the love of my life. I would never take the money from you."

Rachel: There's, like, this gentlemen's agreement of like, "Oh, we don't—no."

Griffin: "I would never burn myself down on national television like that that bad. No way!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Let's split it, babe."

Rachel: Uh, and so the other twist is that if both contestants choose keep, then the remaining eliminated contestants get to split the money among all of them.

Griffin: This is great. This is a lot of fun. It's horrible. It's great.

[scattered laughter]

Griffin: So mean. So fun.

Rachel: So it came down to Nick, and then this woman named Rachel Trueheart.

Griffin: [wheeze-laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Which, like, you can't make that up! That's unreal! [laughs]

Griffin: If you're playing a prisoner's dilemma game and you find out that your opponent is named Rachel Trueheart, you're like, "Well, I think I know which answer to pick."

Rachel: So she of course voted to—er, she said she was gonna split the money, and Nick said he was going to keep it, and he left with the whole pot, and people were outraged.

Griffin: So angry.

Rachel: All of the eliminated contestants on stage like, "What?!"

Griffin: Here's the thing. Those two—

Rachel: And then she was like, "I carried you! You wouldn't have gotten here without me!"

Griffin: Those two were kind of the remainders from when all the other couples coupled up. And so he was like, "We don't... we don't owe each other anything. This is a game, and I won!"

Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Griffin: Yeah. You can't do it again after that though, is the problem.

Rachel: Exactly. Yeah. So the show no longer exists. They've always kind of teased that it might come back, but never as pure and beautiful as the third season.

[scattered laughter]

Griffin: Yeah. Um, real quick. Shorts. Uh, these are the small pants that you can wear in the hot weather.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, keeps the bottom part of your legs cool and the upper part of your legs sort of ventilated. Um, this is a sad confession. I used to never really like shorts. I would really look forward to when summer would end and fall would come because then all of a sudden I could get back into my friend, jeans.

Rachel: Why—why didn't you like shorts?

Griffin: Well, it was because they looked bad on me. But then I realized only a few years ago that I needed to use a much, much, much, much higher inseam than what I was doing. Like...

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Like, much higher inseam than I was doing. That—I don't wear, like, any kind of, like, outrageously high inseam. It's just that they were so low before.

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: Well, you were part of the, like, great cargo reckoning of, like, 20...

[audience laughs]

Rachel: What, 12? Feels right.

Griffin: I'll tell you this. It was pretty quickly after we started dating. So...

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I would say late 2011 is when a lot of people started to look at me and my cargo pants wearing friend—cargo shorts wearing friends and say, "Still wearing those, huh?"

[scattered laughter]

Griffin: I can't stand long pants now that I've disco—I hate—I hate this.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Um, I think that shorts tell a story.

[scattered laughter]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: To the world, when you wear them in public. Because if you see someone in shorts... if you see me in shorts on the street, you know I'm not going to the White House. Um...

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Whereas otherwise you would think, "Maybe."

Griffin: Okay, if you saw someone who you didn't know was a clown man professionally...

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I'm not going to choir practice at church in my shorts.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I'm down to party, and I hope that you are as well. Um, in high school I did experiment with the legs that could zip off of 'em.

[audience laughs and cheers]

Rachel: Oh, man.

Griffin: Which was offensive to see. Uh, the transformation process. It also introduced unsightly, unnecessary seams at different points in your legs, um, that no one really liked. Neither in long pant form nor in shorts form did these look good. But I like having options available to me. I like being able to adjust to my climate.

Rachel: [holding back laughter] Uh-huh.

Griffin: 'Cause I'm, uh, cold-blooded like a lizard man.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh? So, I have an option here.

Griffin: Okay. Long pants or shorts?

Rachel: No. First I would like to take you to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin: Oh, I would love to.

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: [scatting] [singing] Baby, I hear the poetry callin'. Tossed salad, and scrambled poems.

Rachel: [laughs] That's so confusing.

Griffin: [singing] Hey baby, I seem a bit confused. [out of breath] But baby, I've got some poems!

[audience laughs]

Griffin: [singing] But I don't know what to do 'bout those tossed salad and scrambled poems. [laughs]

[audience cheers]

Griffin: [singing] They're calling again. Scrambled poems all over my face!

[pause]

Griffin: That's gross.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Whenever you do that, I always like thinking about the people in the audience that have never listened to our show before.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And are just super confused right now.

Griffin: Or watched Frasier is another possibility.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: People might be in the audience, never watched Frasier. Be like, "That was good!"

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Did he come up with that? That sounded good!"

Rachel: Um... [laughs] you act as if you and your brothers don't reference Frasier every single episode.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Okay, so I have two different poets here, 'cause I feel like we only really have time for one.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: I have a poet that's kind of funny.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And a poet, uh, that is pretty, but kind of a downer.

[audience members talking]

Griffin: Alright, let's raise our hands for funny? Whoa, whoa, whoa! Shush, shush, shush! Raise your hands for funny, please? Yeah, that's how I thought you'd go. Raise your hands for downer?

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Whoa! So we're going downer.

Griffin: You're gonna regret that!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Well, so, okay. So, a poem about summer, like, I think what you're picturing is a very, like, sensual experience, right?

Griffin: [loudly] Absolutely!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: The funny poem doesn't really have that.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So I wanted a spare.

Griffin: A sad, sensual poem. Great. Let's go.

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: So, the poet is Lucia Perillo, and she grew up in the suburbs of New York. She earned a BS in wildlife management from McGill, and then got her MA in English at Syracuse. She was diagnosed with MS when she was in her 30's, and wrote a collection of essays called *I've Heard the Vultures Singing*, which is, like, a real examination into her life as a person with disabilities. Uh, she's won a McArthur Genius Grant, um, and she lived in Washington State until she passed away in 2016. Uh, the poem I wanted to read is *Early Cascade*.

"I couldn't have waited. By the time you return
it would have rotted on the vine.
So I cut the first tomato into eighths,
salted the pieces in the dusk
and found the flesh not mealy (like last year's)

or bitter,
even when I swallowed the green crown of the stem
that made my throat feel dusty and warm.

Pah. I could have gagged on the sweetness.
The miser accused by her red sums.
Better had I eaten the dirt itself
on this the first night in my life
when I have not been too busy for my loneliness—
at last, it comes."

Lovely.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Griffin: That was really good. I didn't think it was that big of a downer.

Rachel: It's a little bit of a downer.

Griffin: It made me hungry for tomatoes.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Which is the power of poetry.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] There's, like—for me there's nothing more summer than a tomato.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Maybe a watermelon.

Griffin: Yeah.

[scattered cheers]

Rachel: But yeah, no. This is a beautiful poem. I mean, first of all, I love just the experience, the idea of swallowing the stem, which I just—I thought maybe would appeal to you, as somebody who's...

Griffin: [loudly] Rachel McElroy!

[audience laughs and cheers]

Griffin: I... have never been so betrayed on stage before.

Rachel: Um... [laughs] but yeah. I mean, the reason I thought it was kind of a bummer is that it's somebody who, like, finally has this moment of this kind of beautiful time to herself, and then she realizes, like, how lonely she is in that moment. I find that very, like... you know, relatable, and also sad.

Griffin: Yeah. [loudly] How we feelin', audience! Woo!

[audience cheers]

Griffin: That was lovely.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: Uh, to close things out here—we're gonna go a little bit long, but I worked really hard on this next part, so...

[scattered laughter]

Griffin: I have created a definitive ranking of songs with the word "summer" in the title of them.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: This is a very scientific thing, and so because it's science, you can't argue against it. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Um, I'm not talking about summer hits. That's a different thing. I'm talking specifically about where summer is in the title of the thing. So integral to the DNA of the song they had to put it on the tin. Um, I haven't ranked all of them, obviously. Um, I've got the top 5 with a tie. But again, unimpeachably correct. However, I do have a song that I have placed in infinity-th place.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And that song is, of course, Summer Nights from Grease!

[clip of Summer Nights from Grease plays]

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs and cheers]

[clip ends]

Griffin: This entire musical... and by the way, we're pretty sure our kids are watching downstairs, so we're not cussing a whole lot here. But know that I would otherwise. This whole musical... this show is the musical equivalent of, like, a nostalgic Boomer Facebook post.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: At this point. And this song is the worst offender of the bunch. And obviously... there's a lot of these. And the discussion about consent has surely come a long way since this musical was first released a hundred years ago. Um... but surely someone was in the room when they played this one and they heard the line "Did she put up a fight?"

And they went, "Hmm, I—actually, maybe don't do—that actu—hmm, that actually sucks!"

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Let's get into it. 5th place! We have a tie for 5th place. The first song that is tied for 5th place is The Boys of Summer by Don Henley.

[‘The Boys of Summer’ but Don Henley plays]

Rachel: [laughs] I don't think this is for me.

Griffin: Very little of Don Henley's music is.

Rachel: [laughs]

[clip ends]

Griffin: Um... this is an interesting one. And but "this" I mean Don Henley is interesting to me.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: 'Cause he wrote, uh—he wrote, like, three good songs and, like, 200 really bad ones?

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And I don't know how someone with that bad of a hit rate writes a certified banger like The Boys of Summer. Um, but it's a sad look back at a sad man's life, which featured many summers and many babes.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And with that description, that song should not go so hard, but it really does.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so thank you for that, Mr. Henley. Tied for 5th place... I'm gonna give it to Summertime by Will Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff.

Rachel: Oh yeah.

[audience cheers]

[clip of 'Summertime' by Will Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff plays]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We can fade that.

[audience laughs] [laughs]

[clip ends]

Griffin: Here's the thing. I didn't let you hear Will Smith there because... I think—and this is controversial—I think this is one of Will Smith's okayest performances? But it is without a doubt DJ Jazzy Jeff's crowning achievement.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs and cheers]

Griffin: Will wrote this song in a flight. He was flying and he wrote it. He came home, he recorded it with a sore throat, which made him come in at a much lower register than he usually does. Which, like... couldn't've waited.

[scattered loud laughter]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um... but the real hero of this is DJ Jazzy Jeff, whose contributions are just next level. That rising synth arpeggio is iconic? It is paradigm-shifting.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And more notably it's a sample from Kool and the Gang's Summer Madness. So technically it's two summer songs in one.

Rachel: Wow, okay.

Griffin: Thank you very much, Mr. Jazzy Jeff.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: 4th place, we're gonna give it to Summertime by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.

[clip of 'Summertime' by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong plays]

Rachel: Really classing up the joint right now.

Griffin: Um... this is the song everyone knows from the musical Porgy and Bess by Gershwin. Uh, and this is probably the version that everyone knows the best.

[clip ends]

Griffin: Because it has two musical titans just blowing out the limiters and just lettin' her rip.

Rachel: Yeah. Ugh.

Griffin: I like to think about if any other person had been in the room with Ella Fitzgerald and she was like, "Alright, I'm gonna sing."

And then the other person, any other person other than Louis Armstrong was like, "Okay, go for it."

"[singing] Zab, zab, zab, za—"

"You're singing, right? Go for it. Don't let me get in the way."

"[singing louder] Zab, zab, zab, zab, zab."

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But it works. It has a different song vibe than any other song on this list, which I will grant it. But it also has a different vibe than most other songs, because I can't think of one off the top of my head that I would describe as a sultry lullaby?

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But here we are. 3rd place! Summer Breeze by Seals and Crofts!

[clip of 'Summer Breeze' by Seals and Crofts plays]

Rachel: Yeah. Took me a second.

Griffin: Here it comes.

Rachel: [laughs] Can I say, this is what it is like riding in the car with Griffin. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I genuinely think if it was the early 70's and you were on some sort of sailing vessel and you put this song on, it would power the boat.

Rachel: [laughs] Yes. Yes.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I harbor a great fondness for the yacht rock era, and this one checks all the boxes. It's got smooth riffs, it's got gentle falsetto lyrics.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: It's got absolute garbage nonsense lyrics.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: You tell me what flowing through the jasmine in my mind means. I don't know, but I do know that the drums are so crisp, and those falsettos are so high.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And, uh, I could—I could just rest my head upon this song like a soft pillow.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: 2nd place, we're gonna give it to Hot Fun in the Summertime by Sly and the Family Stone.

Rachel: Mmm.

[clip of 'Hot Fun in the Summertime' by Sly and the Family Stone plays]

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Um, I don't have much to say about this one. It's just a complete bop start to finish. Uh, it's just this funky little 3/4 time, a little celebration of summer. It really does talk about a lot of summer things, which I appreciate. It's like this episode if it were a musical, and very, very good.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Sly and the Family Stone didn't use strings in their songs, like, hardly at all, which makes this song also kind of special. The orchestration of this is just, like, outta sight. It's got those rising horns and those little constant little playful staccato piano hits. That bass that just goes on a voyage. Uh, I just—I love this song, but it's not number one. Number one is gonna have to go to, um, Summer Girls by LFO.

[clip plays of 'Summer Girls' by LFO plays]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thank you.

[clip ends]

Rachel: I feel so betrayed by you right now.

Griffin: [laughs] Now you know how I feel!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Sometimes...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: When songwriters give into their every creative impulse... the weight of hubris can pull the resulting work down into a kind of music hell. And this is exactly what happened with Summer Girls by LFO.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But the vision of this song... the guiding force of "Let's write the best summertime song ever, including references to every conceivable—not just summer stuff, but just stuff from the writer's whole childhood," is very powerful. So many songs try to capture something bigger than, like,

themselves. And I think it's notable that this is a song that teaches you, not only what makes the writer horny—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —but also what makes him very sick. Um...

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... and also for some reason some quick IMDB credits for Macaulay Culkin and Michael J. Fox? [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It also has the tremendous, tremendous—I don't know if I would even call it a rhyme, uh, but I believe it goes, "When she drinks, she's j— she'll buzz like a hornet. Billy Shakespeare wrote a whole bunch of sonnets."

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Okay. You know what? I forgot about that. That's good.

Griffin: That's really good, because it either— it means you've either gotta say the word hornet like sonnet, or sonnet like hornet?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And he split between them and made them both into words that don't really exist in the real physical space. That's Summer Girls by LFO, a bad song with a truly pioneering vision...

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: ... for summer music that I appreciate. That's it for us today. Thank you all so much.

Rachel: That's the show.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Griffin: Um, thank you all so much for being here.

Rachel: Thank you guys.

Griffin: We'll be back... later. Bye!

[audience cheers and applauds]

[theme music plays]

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