Wonderful 25: Pizza Time Dudes

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Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.
Griffin: Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.
Rachel: And this is Wonderful!
Griffin: Pizza time, dudes.
Rachel: Okay [laughing].
Griffin: So, yeah. I figured, if I start it out like that, like, old TMNT vibe, get started.
Rachel: Yeah, that's right.
Griffin: What, uh
Rachel: I feel like April O'Neil over here.
Griffin: Yeah. Well, hold on. You could be one of the turtles or the big rat.
Rachel: No.

Who was, like, the turtle king, I guess.

Rachel:

I'm not Michelangelo.

Griffin:

Yeah, yeah, because I am.

Rachel:

Maybe, Raphael.

Griffin:

I'm— I feel like I'm kind of a Raphael.

Rachel:

Oh, okay.

Griffin:

Yeah. What's the other one, to see like that?

Rachel:

Donatello?

Griffin:

Okay. Actually I know what I said, but I feel like I might be Donatello. [laughing] He was kind of actually, he was the smart one. It's like...

Rachel:

Every time I have to think of what the turtles were known for, I have to think of the theme song. It's the only way for me to remember.

Griffin:

Yeah. It's like, [singing] Donatello, he's got the stick. Raphael, he's a pizza hog. And Michaelangelo, he's got a third arm. How come the mutant turtles weren't, like, really fucked up?

I mean, they were turtles that were, like, dudes, which is unusual.

Griffin:

Yeah. I guess it's not great. But I'm just saying like, if they're mutants...

Rachel:

You want them to have...

Griffin:

... because they got the ooze on them...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... I want one of them to have like, six heads.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

What do we, why did we start with the TMNT chat, do you think?

Rachel:

Uh, 'cause you said something about pizza.

Griffin:

Oh, that's right. It's pizza time, dudes.

Rachel:

Yeah, there it is.

Griffin:

Would it be, like, so obvious we're just, like, pizza. It's hard, it's hard to walk a line because I like doing, like, broad strokes stuff here on Wonderful.

Rachel:

Yeah.
Griffin: Things like, uh, you know, Pokémon or just like, you know, uh, driving cars with boys. That's very specific, um.
Rachel: Or French fries.
Griffin: French fries was a good one.
Rachel: Yeah.
Griffin: But I feel like there's ones you could do where it's just so basic, just like pizza. Like, yeah, duh.
Rachel: Uh-huh.
Griffin: Anyway, my first thing this week is pizza. No it's not. I think you actually go first this time.
Rachel: Yeah. I wanted to start with a small wonder.
Griffin: Oh, yeah. I forgot we did this.
Rachel: Mine is very small.

Go for it.

It's the littlest wonder.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, so, uh, Mental Floss is a big source for me...

Griffin:

Yeah, sure.

Rachel:

... uh, when I'm trying to get inspired as to what to talk about.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And on March 6th, they had this article that came out called, 135 Amazing Facts for People Who Like Amazing Facts. And, uh...

Griffin:

Okay. This is, uh, this, that's maybe the most Mental Floss...

Rachel:

Yeah, I know.

Griffin:

... ass Mental Floss shit, I've every heard.

Rachel:

And so it's full of little pieces of trivia including, uh, just a few little things, just to wet your whistle.

Griffin:

Yeah. Wet it, get it wet. Um...

Uh, ravens in captivity can learn to talk better than parrots.

Griffin:

That's incredible. Can we also take a second, why is it wet your whistle? [laughing] Who's getting their whistles, dunkin' them in water? It ruins it. Anyway, that's horrible and I hate it. If I ever saw a raven talk, I would immediately go, like, jump off a bridge or something because I will think it's been a curse.

Rachel:

Two more little trivias. It's...

Griffin:

Are they as spooky as the first one? 'Cause I might have to veto.

Rachel:

One of them is a little spooky.

Griffin:

Oh, shoot.

Rachel:

Uh, Bela Lugosi...

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

... as you know, uh, was buried in full Dracula costume, cape and all. That's kind of fun.

Griffin:

It is, yeah.

Rachel:

It is spooky.

It's fun and I like it. But it also feels like, maybe we're tempting fate 'cause he did pretty good in that movie. And I'm just saying, he's method.

Rachel:

Oh, you think maybe he's ready to come back?

Griffin:

Oh, he's biting.

Rachel:

Uh, and then, the last one. During prohibition, moonshiners would wear cow shoes and they have pictures of these. It's actual shoes that left hoof prints instead of footprints, to help distillers and smugglers evade the police. [laughing] So they left little hoof prints when they're scampering around.

Griffin:

Okay, yeah. But that fact that you and I know that, I mean, that's— That a lot of people knew that back in the day, which means that cops back in the day will just be like, "I don't know. Tire tracks end here. And just, that looks like a cow got out of the car and ran away. There's no way, there's no way. What is this? A fucking..."

Rachel:

There's a man's footprints walking in but then, a hoof print...

Griffin:

A hoof print.

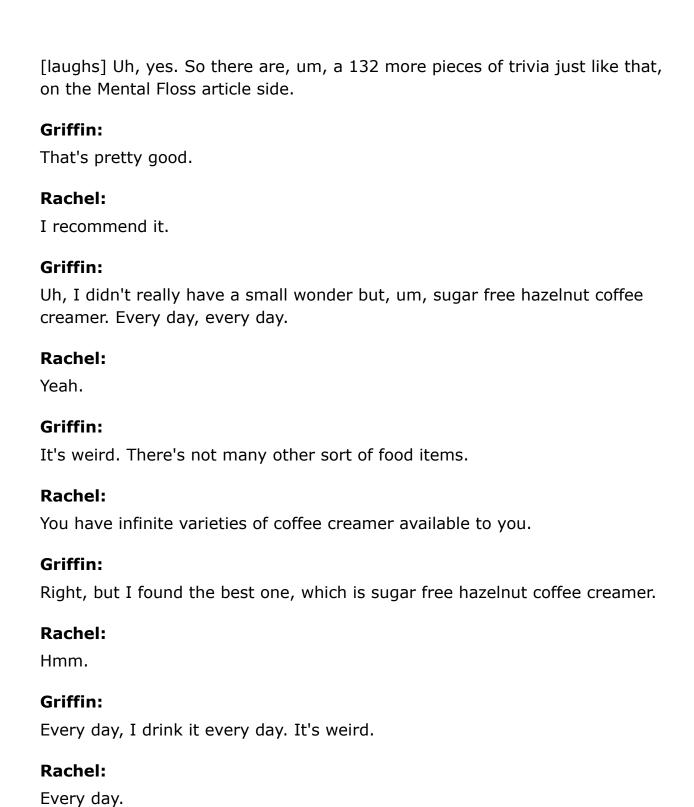
Rachel:

... on the way out.

Griffin:

Uh, this isn't fucking Far Side there, Gary Larson. There's no chance that a cow's driving the car. Case closed, we lost.

Rachel:



I don't really do anything else every day, but I drink that every day.

Rachel:

Yeah.
Griffin: So what's your first big wonder?
Rachel: Okay. My first big wonder.
Griffin: The great wonder of the world.
Rachel: Spring break, woo!
Griffin: Whoa! Okay, it's very funny that you're bringing spring break because you are having, like, the most shitty spring break.
Rachel: I know, lamest spring break. [laughs] Yeah. Well, they, you know, get lamer, I think, as you get older. So I don't feel too let down by that.
Griffin: That is true. They are not as exciting, as you age.
Rachel: But there's a whole history of spring break.
Griffin: Okay.
Rachel: Which I didn't know about until I did some research.
Griffin:

That is weird. How did that sort of come to pass? I've never really thought about it before but everybody's just like, "You know what? It's March, I'm done."

Rachel:

And they're, it's all over the world too. If you go to the Wikipedia article, they list, like, the various countries and what their spring break traditions are.

Griffin:

Is it related to, like, oh, it's finally done being cold. Let's, like, take a minute and appreciate it.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's usually like a break in the spring.

Griffin:

Huh?

Rachel:

Um...

Griffin:

Well, yeah.

Rachel:

Well... [laughs]

Griffin:

Well, yeah. I knew that part. But I'm saying, like, was it, is it like, a climate sort of base like, "Ah, finally. Let's, let's take some time off to appreciate!"

Rachel:

Well, the, the article in Wikipedia, more gives the timeframe.

Griffin:

Okay, okay.

It doesn't really say the reasons behind it.

Griffin:

So, um, what did it say?

Rachel:

Uh, so the history of spring break. Um, so Fort Lauderdale.

Griffin:

A righteous dude named, Zach Coolbuzz...

Rachel:

[laughing]

Griffin: ...was just like, "Come on, dudes! Pizza time!" And everybody put down their hammers and shovels and old timey looms and work instruments and said, "Yes, past, past me thine Miller Lite."

Rachel:

He colored his glasses black and said, "You know what? This is really great for sun wear."

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

"I'm suddenly feeling like I wanna be out in the sun." And then, he ripped his sleeves off.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

And he was like, "This should be a whole thing, for a week."

Griffin:
This should be a whole thing. No sleeves. Okay, sorry.
Rachel: Uh, okay. So Fort Lauderdale built Florida's first Olympic sized pool in 1928. And Florida, as you know
Griffin: It's
Rachel:
it's kind of a vacation spot
Griffin:
I have heard that.
Rachel:
for the young people [laughs].
Griffin:
For everyone.
Rachel:
Uh, so
Griffin:
I vacation in You joke, I go to vacation, I went to vacation in Florida literally every year growing up.
Rachel:
Yeah. I mean, I imagine the closer you are, the more that makes sense.
Griffin:
Yeah.

Um...

Also, my Nonny's there. Hi, Nonny.

Rachel:

Your Nonny. Oh, she doesn't listen, I don't think.

Griffin:

She doesn't.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, okay. So by the late 30s, more than 1500 student athletes were flocking to the city's College Coaches Swim Forum. The first forum was hosted in 1938 and college swimmers made Fort Lauderdale their exclusive spring break home well into the 60s.

Griffin:

So, uh, again, this is where spring break came from?

Rachel:

Well, uh, the like, the tradition of really, partying hard.

Griffin:

Oh, okay. I thought you were talking about where like, the concept of taking a week off...

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

... in the middle of spring time.

Rachel:

No. I mean, there's...

Griffin:

You're... [laughs]

Rachel:
No, there's this
Griffin: I completely misunderstood. You're literally talking about fucking party time.
Rachel: Yeah. The history of party time spring break. Not like, the history of like, the Greeks and Romans celebrated the coming of a new season like, no, not.
Griffin: It was probably that for that, though.
Rachel: Yeah.
Griffin: Okay. They probably also fucking partied but in a different way.
Rachel: In a different way.
Griffin: Sexually.
Rachel: [laughs] Uh, there was also, um, a MGM movie called, Where the Boys Are, that came out in the 60s that was a coming of age film that followed four college women during their spring vacation. Which apparently, was very influential to people seeing the, the youths on screen celebrating
Griffin: Sure.
Rachel:

 \dots spring break. And then, thinking, I could also do that.

The 60s are when film started to really show that real hashtag teen life.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm. No, that's true.

Griffin:

Back in the 50s, you get a poster and be like, "This movie's got two kisses in it." And people will be like, "Hoo! Two kisses. Danny, don't go see that movie." It's the...

Rachel:

That was the rating back then.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Instead of like, PG13, it was like, two.

Griffin:

Someone takes the Lord's name in vain once and there are two kisses between four different adults. These red hot pecks are too hot for your teen eyes.

Rachel:

Uh, and then of course, you and I know, MTV Spring Break. Which, hey...

Griffin:

[laughing] This is a big dump. We went from the 60s to...

Rachel:

No, hey, you know what?

Griffin:

Huh?

Racnei:
In 1986, MTV launched Spring Break.
Griffin:

Did you know that?

Griffin:

What?

Rachel:

'86.

Griffin:

That was pretty, that, like, when did MTV launch?

Rachel:

Like, MTV start, I think MTV started right around then. And they were like, "Hey, let's start Spring Break too."

Griffin:

So they were like, [singing] "video killed the radio star! What's up? We're MTV. That's our first jam. Get down to Florida."

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah.

Griffin:

"Get down to the Keys. Sway? B aby Young Sway? Young baby Sway, eight-year-old sway, get down here. We're gonna do this fucking thing right."

Rachel:

Yeah. It was launched in Daytona Beach, Florida. Uh, and then, by the end of the 80s, um, then that's when there was kind of a backlash against spring break, um.

[laughs] Yeah.

Rachel:

Because I guess, in 1985, 370,000 students...

Griffin:

People died [laughs].

Rachel:

... showed up [laughs].

Griffin:

Died and, uh, they get there was, uh, there was a bad batch of Keystone that went out. [laughing] And we lost 370,000.

Rachel:

See, you talk about Keystone a lot.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Um, our like, cheap, crappy beer was Natural Light.

Griffin:

It's funny. I feel like it's a regional...

Rachel:

Yeah, I guess so.

Griffin:

... it really is a regional thing. In West Virginia, Keystone was like, if you wanted to get a six pack for two and a half dollars...

Rachel:

Was there, like, a nickname for it? Because in college it was like, Natty Light. Is there like, uh...

No. I mean, Keystone is tough to kind...

Rachel:

Keyzie.

Griffin:

... some, some Key, um... We had a lot of nicknames for bad things that we shouldn't have been putting inside of our bodies like Keystone, Keystone Light. Um, so there was a backlash. I imagine that was like...

Rachel:

Yeah, so like mayors...

Griffin:

... early 90s for like backlash o'clock, right? That's...

Rachel:

Yeah. Mayors came out and said like, "Don't come here and do this," like.

Griffin:

That's where like, DARE got started and that's where like, people were like, fucking trying to get Pinball banned, like.

Rachel:

Well, you are talking about, like, Reagan time. Yeah, Nancy Reagan was a big anti-drug lady.

Griffin:

Yeah. And Mortal Kombat, hated it.

Rachel:

Mortal Kombat. [laughs] Probably, just 'cause she couldn't beat it.

Probably, 'cause she couldn't beat it. She went to the arcade and was like, "Hey, Nancy. Yeah, come on over here. It's this new game called Mortal Kombat."

"Scorpion! Ugh, get over here!"

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, yeah. So for me, my spring break celebration was always pretty mild. Uh, I think one year, I went to Memphis, Tennessee, uh, on a road trip.

Griffin:

Whoa.

Rachel:

It was very cold. [laughs] It was drivable so that was a big reason we went.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

It was like, what's a fun city that's drivable?

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Uh, and then, my senior year, went to Austin, Texas, my first time.

Griffin:

Oh, really?

Rachel:

To visit, yeah. We, um, I came with some friend who grew up in Texas. And so we made the drive from Missouri to Austin, uh, and spent a few days here.

[&]quot;Uh, oops."

Um, that sounds like fate.
Rachel: I know.
Griffin: And it's, uh, and that's where you knew, this is where I will meet the love of my life.
Rachel: The love of my life, um
Griffin: Cecil.
Rachel: Um [laughs].
Griffin: Um, my spring breaks, I never
Rachel: Yeah, what, did you ever go anywhere?
Griffin: I never went to the beach.
Rachel: Okay.
Griffin: I would go with my dad, my brothers, maybe a friend or two, went to Kings Island every time, every time.
Rachel: Oh, just for a day?

Well, they had, uh, like spring break previews, where like media outlets could like come and check out the new rides and shit.

Rachel:

Oh, and your dad was a radioman.

Griffin:

And my dad was a radioman. And so we would go to Kings Island and like, get to ride all the rides.

Rachel:

Oh, that's fun.

Griffin:

And there would be like, nobody there. It was awesome. Because it was, like, media previews. It was just, like, the park was at, like, 10% capacity.

Rachel:

And so the idea was that your dad would go on the radio and talk about the hot new rides.

Griffin:

Yeah. They would do like, remote broadcasts from the...

Rachel:

Oh, right.

Griffin:

... from the, uh, from the park, um.

Rachel:

That's fun.

Griffin:

So like, the year the Tomb Raider ride went on, I rode that thing fucking five times. Just would, like, walk off, walk right back on again. My friend Tanner, got his balls destroyed by the Tomb Raider ride. [laughing] 'cause it, like, it crushes this big harness over you.

Griffin:
And then it spins you around with centrifugal force. Uh, he lost his phone too. His phone went flying from his pocket. And his, uh, his pizone was, uh, was flattened and it was But it was a really fun ride and really good park. But again, like, the opposite of, like, there was no raging going on.
Rachel:
Uh, so my Kinda my final, closing my chapter with spring break, is when I moved to Austin, Texas in 2008. Um, here in Austin, spring break always lines up with South by Southwest. Uh, and so I would always take a few days off. Wednesday through Friday is the music portion, typically.
Griffin:
Sure.
Rachel:
And during the day, you can see a bunch of artists for free because usually artists are just trying to get out and promote their music. 'Cause typically, they don't have an album out yet or they're unsigned. Uh, and so I used to take a few days every week and go downtown and see a bunch of free shows. And that's obviously how I met Griffin.
Griffin:
Yeah.
Rachel:
Uh, and now, that I work at a college, I get the week off. Uh, and I don't do any of that.
Griffin:
No.

Rachel:

I usually will go see doctors that I have to see.

Yeah.

[laughs] You are doing that. You're like, "Yeah, spring break!" You...

Rachel:

Clean up around the house, um, just get errands done.

Griffin:

"Time to get my teeth looked at, yes."

Rachel:

Yeah. So that's, that's typically what my spring break is like now. But I still appreciate, you know, the time off, so.

Griffin:

Yeah, sure, uh.

Rachel:

Expected.

Griffin:

My first thing this week...

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

... is cereal, this is a dessert that you eat in the morning.

Rachel:

[laughing]

Griffin:

This is a morning dessert.

Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah, yeah. We were just talking this morning about, uh, or not this morning. I'll have to say, earlier in the podcast about, uh, French Fries and you're more basic.

Oh, yeah. Dude, uh, that was preview for this.

Rachel:

This is definitely one of them.

Griffin:

Cereal, dude. This is dessert.

Rachel:

And now, just to make sure everyone is clear, you're not talking about the hit podcast. You're talking about the actual breakfast meal you consume.

Griffin:

I am saying, I have enjoyed C-E-R-E-A-L a lot more, like, over a longer period of time than, the podcast S-E-R-I-A-L.

Rachel:

Now, your oldest brother, Justin McElroy, is a real cereal head.

Griffin:

He's a fiend about it, yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And I would say, too much.

Rachel:

Are there like, deep roots in the McElroy family on cereal consumption?

Griffin:

So I used to, every morning before school...

Rachel:

Yes.

... uh, from like, kindergarten up to, probably eighth grade, I would have a big, big bowl of cereal before school...

Rachel:

Uh-huh.

Griffin:

... with a big whole thing of milk poured into it.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

And every day at school, I would be sick. [laughing] And it took me...

Rachel:

[laughs] A long time.

Griffin:

It took me a long time. It took me nine years.

Rachel:

I feel like, when I met you, you were just recently like, "Oh, you know what? I don't think, uh, milk goes well with me."

Griffin:

Yeah. I said, eighth grade. It may have been all the way through high school. [laughing] So let's say like, around 14 years...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... I was just like, "Why do I get sick every day?"

Rachel:

I will say, I do see you eat ice cream still. So it's not like you've sworn off.

Griffin:

Yeah. I mean, I got, um, I need it. Um, but this is not about my gastrointestinal distress. In fact, this is one of the few segments where I don't want to focus on that 'cause now, I've discovered almond milk and now, it's fine.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Um, cereal, cereal. When you move to Austin, Texas, you, and you may not know this if you don't live here. You kinda have to break up with cereal because there's so many more sort of, prestigious breakfast offerings that kind of...

Rachel:

Hmm.

Griffin:

... uh, suck you in.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Uh, I'm talking about those breakfast tacos and talking about kolaches, I'm talking about upscale brunch spots, I'm talking artisanal waffles. There's, like, so much stuff. And so you move here and you go crazy on all these options, and it's good. That's a good reason to live in Austin, I think it's, your breakfast options are fucking legit.

Ra		h		
Na	u		C	

Yes.

But then, you just gonna bring it back on home to cereal someday, because cereal is always gonna be there for you. Um, there is so much about cereal that is so mystifying to me. Um, some of its origins, I get, right? Like, you cook up some grains and you're, like, and you eat it. And you're, like, oh, I like the texture of this but the flavor sucks.

And so you sugar blast it and you're like, "All right. I wanna eat this in the morning for some reason." Like, all that I can kind of get down with. Why did somebody put milk on it for the first time? Is there another food? When you're eating a big bowl of chips, are you ever just like, "What if all of this was wet?"

Rachel:

[laughs] Well, I mean think about oatmeal. Like, that is, uh, that is a old timey...

Griffin:

Yeah, definitely. There...

Rachel:

... wet morning food.

Griffin:

Yeah. I think we got to where we are here, from, and I did no research on this.

Rachel:

Okay [laughs].

Griffin:

'Cause nothing is less interesting, I think, than the origins of, uh, cereals. Um, scientists, however, I did do some research. I lied.

Rachel:

[laughing]

Griffin:

Scientists did cereal experiments, which is a very good sentence, um, to figure out why we put milk on cereal. And this is like, a vein of like, Seinfeld, "Why don't we do water?"

There are some people who do water. And by the way, I'm not slamming Jerry Seinfeld. I'm sure we did that bit on My Brother, My Brother and Me once. But...

Rachel:

You also like to do your Seinfeld impression.

Griffin:

Uh, it sucks so bad.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, so like, why do we put milk on it? Why don't we put water or some other fluid? They measured the, quote, rupture force of various cereals, when submerged in different liquids including 2% milk and then, distilled water. And then, freeze dried, uh, after soaking them for a set amount of time.

And then, uh, examined the freeze dried cereal that is soaked in these different liquids. And they found that milk actually holds cereal together better than water. The fats in the milk actually form like a layer around the cereal that keeps the liquid from fully penetrating the, the cereal. Unlike, water which just like, destroys it. I thought that was interesting.

Rachel:

Who are these scientists, man?

Griffin:

Uh, they're doing good work. [laughing] This is why I'm so excited about cereal. It's not just these scientists but the scientists who are making the cereal. And I recognize, this is hugely unhealthy. Please, I get it. It is like, you're eating 10 candy bars in the morning. It's not great. But it is also like this eternal frontier for food ingenuity unlike any other sort of foods field that exists.

Rachel:

That is true.

The people who make cereal are fucking bonkers and their experiments have gone unchecked for so long. Do you remember when Oops! All Berries came out in 1997? And then, you were like...

Rachel:

[laughing] Do you remember where you were?

Griffin:

I probably do 'cause we ate it a lot. But I was like, I remember being like, "Damn, Cap'N. This is excessive."

Rachel:

So your family didn't have a rule about sugary cereals in the house?

Griffin:

Oh, no. We did not.

Rachel:

Oh, wild.

Griffin:

We would have gone nuts. But Oops! All Berries in '97, you're like, this is it. This is the wildest, I feel betrayed. I'm not mad about it. But it's just, like, you all have betrayed sort of the core concept of your cereal and what the cereal means. And this is as bad as it's definitely gonna get. And now, my boy, Cap'N Crunch is doing Sprinkled Donut Crunch and Blueberry Pancake Crunch.

Rachel:

Ooh.

Griffin:

And Sprinkled Donut Crunch has sprinkles in it. And it's like, "Is that still cereal at this point?" I don't know but I love...

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

... that you're asking the hard questions. [laughing] And then, there was this, like, golden age of, like, licensed cereals.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

And that represented just sort of a better time in America, I think. [laughing] 'Cause Urkel-Os were poison and I ate about half a metric ton of them, um.

Rachel:

That was real cereal you could buy?

Griffin:

Urkel-Os, yeah.

Rachel:

Oh, my God.

Griffin:

The best one was, there was, uh, I think, like, Mario cereal. We would go deep in the pain.

Rachel:

I mean, of course, yeah.

Griffin:

But then, Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure came out. They released a cereal called, and this is not a joke, Bill and Ted's Excellent Cereal. And I want aliens to find that. [laughing]

Like, the first thing they find when they come to Earth, is just like, "Well, they put their name on all of the things that they make. And they're very

braggadocious about the flavors that they're able to generate." Bill and Ted's Excellent Cereal is so good.

Rachel:

That's really good.

Griffin:

What if they done like, Harry and Sally's Good Oatmeal?

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh.

Griffin:

And this is the oatmeal from, When Harry Met Sally.

Rachel:

I see, I immediately went to the Fast and the Furious movies.

Griffin:

The Fast and The Furious' Excellent Hard Boiled Eggs. And these are little eggs that come in small bags. I get excited when it's cereal time but I'm perpetually like, always excited about how these food astronauts are exploring the endless reaches of the dark flavor space.

Rachel:

I will say though, I know that you are a cereal enthusiast. I believe that. One time, I ate a bowl of cereal in front of Griffin in the evening and he looked at me like I was an alien.

Griffin:

It's a morning food. We just talked about.

Rachel:

But it's a dessert item.

Griffin:

I will go to, hmm, I'm so sorry. I disagree whole-heartedly. [laughing] It's a weird thing to eat, period. Getting a big thing of sugar blasted oat squares

and then, getting it well, like, really wet with cow milk or almond milk and then eating that in the morning is, like, wild. But I think it's 10 times as wild, if it's like 11 o'clock and you're like, "Now, let me get at these oat squares."

Rachel:

Well, it's me. So it's definitely not 11 o'clock. [laughing].

Griffin:

No, it's like, 7:30.

Rachel:

It's more like, 9 o'clock, yeah.

Griffin:

Um, anyway. These food astronauts, they are committing crimes and I could not be more proud of them.

Rachel:

I appreciate, um, your adventurous spirit when it comes to cereal because a lot of times, we'll go grocery shopping and we typically buy exactly the same thing every time.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

But where I see Griffin's artistry is when we go down the cereal aisle.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

And he's like, "Hey, you know what? I'm gonna get Life Cereal."

Griffin:

Yeah, yeah. I'll get some Cinnamon Life. I dip in that. So here's the thing, these days, I do have to actually watch my sugar intake a little bit.

Rachel: Oh, my gosh. Really?
Griffin: Oh, I would destroy them. The way that these instantly, uh, the, give way to the rupture force of the milk is like, I love that. [laughing] That instant sort of rainbow slurry and I would just guzzle that down.
Rachel: Wild.
Griffin: Um, and whenever I go to Huntington and I stay with Justin, uh, Justin is with these food scientists.
Rachel: Yeah.
Griffin: He is on, he is deep in outer space. It's like gravity, he got dislodged from the ship and he's just flying out there.
Rachel: Actually I asked Justin because every time we go, he has like, the newest, like, most underground cereal.
Griffin: Yeah.
Rachel:

Um, and that's not a joke. But some of these, some of the cereal like, uh, um, I used to fuck up a bag of Fruity Pebbles. And I say, bag because we get

Rachel:

Griffin:

the Sam's Club big bag.

Yeah.

Like, how he keeps up. And he does, like, he does do research to find out what the new cereals are.

Griffin:

Now, Justin's the one who got me on Blueberry Muffin Tops. Which back in the Joystiq days, was like a thing we talked about in the Joystiq podcast non-stop, 'cause it was this incredible blueberry muffin top flavored cereal.

That's probably the best one of all time. But the sugar content in that would literally, probably kill me these days. Um, so I keep it a little bit more reserved. I go with a nice cinnamon, uh, I like cinnamon in general. Cinnamon Life, I'll get down with that, uh.

Rachel:

You have a lot of Cinnamon Chex.

Griffin:

Uh, Honey Bunches of Oats.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That one's actually pretty high in sugar content but I still enjoy it. I have to, but I can still walk down the aisle and see that there's like, Buffalo Wing Coco Krispies. And it's like, whatever the fuck, dude.

Rachel:

[laughing]

Griffin:

Yeah, sure. I can't but I'm glad you will, uh...

Rachel:

That's a great one because I also love cereal. Uh, and I think there's a lot of room out there for new discoveries.

Griffin:
There's still, yeah.
Rachel: Mm-hmm.
Griffin: We've seen one, one percent of one percent of what's possible. I'm calling the food scientists cowards, now because they know the flavors they should be dabbling with but they won't. And I'm talking about meat cereal. Do you wanna
Rachel: You did just mentioned like, a Buffalo. I think, uh
Griffin: Yeah, come on.
Rachel: BW3.
Griffin: BW3 wants this.
Rachel: Partnership.
Griffin: With
Rachel: With?
Griffin: Honey Smacks.
Rachel:

[laughs] Yeah.

Griffin:

I wanna see that bury a big Buffalo wing. Or is it a frog? The Smacks is the frog, anyway. Honey Smacks are gross. Can I steal you away?

Rachel:

[musical popping sound effects]

Griffin:

Is that crickets? Is it like, uh, oh, it's like a whole cartoon cricket got in here. Hey, bud.

Rachel:

Pow!

Griffin:

Oh, you got a secret for me?

Rachel:

[popping noises]

Griffin:

Don't, I shouldn't get into the car today.

Rachel:

[more popping noises]

Griffin:

Why should I stay out of the car today? What's the...

Rachel:

I don't wanna do this anymore.

Griffin:

[laughing] Uh, come on! Okay.

[ad break]

Griffin:

I, you wanna read that first Jumbotron for me?

Rachel:

Yeah. Uh, this message is for the benevolent universe. It is from, this message is from Alma, Almahg, Dalal, Faruza, and Lynn. "Hi, Hannah. Happy Candlenights. We thought the best gift would be..."

Griffin:

Oops.

Rachel:

[laughs] Oh, they actually want you to read this.

Griffin:

Oh, okay. Hand it on over.

Rachel:

Unless, I'm their favorite DM, which is possible.

Griffin:

"We thought the best gift would be one of your favorite DMs telling you," it's not their favorite, it's one of their favorites. I'm in the pantheon, uh, of...

Rachel:

Maybe I'm their favorite and they thought they couldn't get me.

Griffin:

Oh, I see. [laughing] Uh, "one of your favorite DMs." Wait, let me start over. "We thought that the best gift would be one of your favorite DMs telling you that you're our favorite DM. You're an amazing world builder, a gifted writer, a wonderful voice actor and a great friend. We all love you so much and wish you would stop killing our characters family members. Love, your bunch of freaks."

That is so nice. Don't ever stop. [laughing] Don't ever let up. Do not ever let up. You have to let them know that they can't just do anything.

Here is a message for Ray Pan. And it's from Ginger who says, "Happy birthday, Ray. You are incredible talented, kind and the best housemate and friend I could hope for. I'm so lucky to have you in my life. And hearing it from one of your favorite set of brothers, definitely makes it true. Love you so, so, so much." I added one extra so, but I could just tell that there was a three situation.

Rachel:

Ooh. That's, uh, extra value.

Griffin:

Yeah. That'll be \$15.

Rachel:

[laughing].

Allie:

Hi, I'm Allie Goertz.

Julia:

And I'm Julia Prescott. And we're the host of, Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

Allie:

[simultaneously] Everything's Coming up Simpsons.

Julia:

We are a Simpsons podcast brand new to the Maximum Fun Network. And every episode, we cover a different episode of The Simpsons, um, that is a favorite of our special guest.

Allie:

We've had guests that are showrunners and writers and voice actors like, Nancy Cartwright. All people that have worked in The Simpsons. And we've also had guests like, Weird Al. And people that are on the Maximum Fun Network already. And each week, we will talk to a very cool guest about their favorite episode and it is so much fun. So if you like The Simpsons, come listen to Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.

Julia:

All right. Smell you later.

[ad break ends]

Rachel:

My wonderful thing this week is closed captioning.

Griffin:

Yeah!

Rachel:

Uh, this is something that we started using a lot, when we would have to turn the volume down on our television, uh, because our infant son was a very light sleeper and continues to be a light sleeper. Uh, but obviously, this has tremendous value for people that, uh, are deaf, or people that have difficulty hearing. Uh, so I did a little research on it today, uh, to figure out what the whole story was behind it.

Griffin:

This is, uh, I mean, this isn't just, like, television too. This is, uh, or films like, video games. Uh, this is a big thing for like YouTube videos.

Rachel:

Oh, yeah. That's a good point. I didn't think about that.

Griffin:

There's an auto-generated, like, closed captioning service but there's a lot of, uh, there's lots of other, there's like a big conversation happening in, like, online media right now. Which is like, it's... This is a hard fucking job.

Rachel:

Yeah, sure.

Uh, it's, it's tricky conversation but I think it's, like, essential work.

Rachel:

Uh, so closed captioning was first demonstrated at the first National Conference on Television for the Hearing-Impaired in Nashville, Tennessee in 1971. That's how recent it is. I had no idea. The second demonstration of closed captioning was held at Gadaullet... Gallaudet, Gallaudet College, uh, on February 1972. Uh, where ABC and the National Bureau of Standards demonstrated closed captions embedded within a normal broadcast of The Mod Squad.

Griffin:

What?

Rachel:

Yeah. So here's something that's interesting also, 'cause I had always wondered how real-time closed captioning works. Uh, it was developed by the National Captioning Institute in 1982.

And real-time captioning court reporters, trained to write at speeds of over 225 words per minute, give viewers instantaneous access to live news, sports and entertainment. As a result, the viewers see the captions within two to three seconds of the words being spoken.

The National Captioning Institute was created in 1979 in order to get the cooperation of commercial television networks. And the first, uh, use of regularly scheduled closed captioning on American television, occurred in 1980. The first program seen with captioning were a Disney's Wonderful World presentation of the film, Son of Flubber on NBC. [laughing]

Griffin:

Had to do that. Had to get that one.

Rachel:

Uh, an ABC Sunday Night Movie airing of Semi-Tough and Masterpiece Theatre on PBS. Uh, there's all these legislation around it, ensuring like, quality and access. Uh, it used to be the kind of thing where you could only have, uh, like a box on your television. And the box was very expensive.

Yeah, I imagine.

Rachel:

Uh, but in the early 90s, um, there was act called the Television Decoder Circuitry Act that required all analog television receivers with screens of at least, 13 inches, either sold or manufactured to have the ability to display closed captioning.

Griffin:

Uh, well, this would have been probably around the American, uh...

Rachel:

Exactly.

Griffin:

... Americans with Disabilities Act, which is in 1990, I think, yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah, 1990 was, yeah, Americans with Disabilities Act. So, um, yeah. Obviously, it's something that's very widespread now. It's something, um, that I have, I don't know. I've just gotten so used to it now, that when I watch something-

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

... even if Henry is not home. Like, earlier today, I was watching something while I was eating. And I wanted the captions on, even though I could have turned it to any volume I needed it to be.

Griffin:

I think this is, uh, this is interesting, right? And this conversation is maybe, it, it seems a little bit weird because I think we both, acknowledge the fact that our enjoyment of it...

Rachel:

Yeah, oh, yeah. I know.

Griffin:

... is secondary to its actual purpose. Which is...

Rachel:

Uh, yeah. I mean, we're coming at it from a place of privilege, for sure.

Griffin:

Yes, absolutely. It is there to serve this sort of diverse, uh, community of people who are hard of hearing in, you know, whatever way. But I, uh, I almost exclusively, I play games with subtitles on. I play, I watch everything with captions on. And I think it has something to do with, like, how I digest information.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, by like, it is easier for me if I am reading the words that, like, a character in a game is saying or, uh, that a person on TV is saying. Uh, like it is easier for me to, like, really digest and have it stick, I guess...

Rachel:

Yeah.

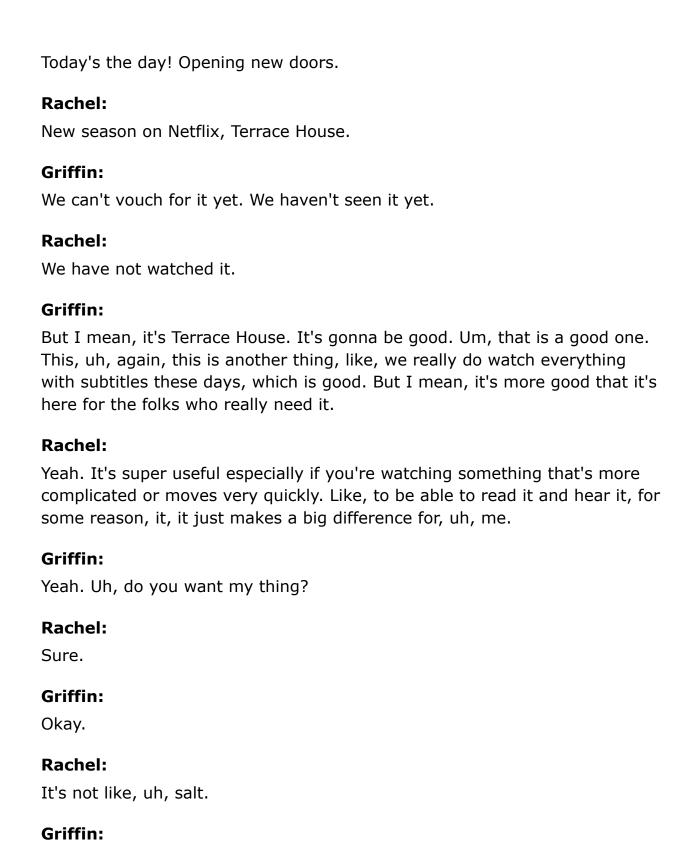
Griffin:

... than just, like, hearing them say it. And then, of course, for Terrace House like, we need it because we do not, uh, know how to speak Japanese. We do not understand Japanese. And so the good people who do the unofficial streams, should we... I feel like we're in a speakeasy every time we talk about this [laughing] Terrace House. This Terrace House hookup we have.

Rachel:

Speaking of which, today's the day, right, for Netflix?

Griffin:



[laughing] No. Uh, it is The Weakerthans.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

I wanna talk about The Weakerthans. They are a band. So it's weird, lots of people on the Facebook group have been talking about The Weakerthans a lot, like, more than the national average. Uh, we also get it, like, in our submissions box, like, uh, a lot. And that's really been eye-opening, uh, for me. Uh, we got a lot to talk about, they have a song that they, uh, wrote about curling.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Uh, because they are a Canadian rock band.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

And they're very, very clever. Uh, and so when we discussed curling on the show, there were a lot of people like, "Hey, let's do Weakerthans." And, um, it's been eye-opening for me because they were one of my favorite bands ever in, like, high school and college.

Rachel:

Yeah. You introduced me to them. I was not familiar with them before.

Griffin:

Because nobody really is. Um, aside from one song that they had on the Wedding Crashers soundtrack, they never really gained much popularity. They were in the game for about a decade. They released four studio albums. The last one was, uh, Reunion Tour, back in 2007. And I cannot fucking believe that was 11 years ago.

Rachel:

Wow.

Uh, and then, more or less like, went on hiatus and then, kind of broke up. I think they say now, that the band is cryogenically frozen, which is just I think a cute way of saying that they broke up. Um, but I wanted to talk about them because the things that make this band great are really kind of unique and they're kind of hard to pin down.

Uh, they are a Canadian rock band. They're fronted by a dude named, John K. Samson, who has gone onto release some solo stuff after The Weakerthans split. Which I also encourage you to go listen to, because it's, it is also very good in its own right. Uh, and John K. Samson left the band Propagandhi. Have you heard of Propagandhi?

Rachel:

No.

Griffin:

They're, uh, uh, a sort of a punk, politically driven punk band. Politically charged punk band. I guess most punk is. It's weird to make the distinction. But he, he left that band to start The Weakerthans. Um, but I don't think you could categorize The Weakerthans as, uh, punk. In fact, they were kind of hard to categorize in these sort of containers of popular music, back in the early aughts.

Which for rock, you're talking about, um, I mean a lot of emo. And Weakerthans music was like, emotional but it wasn't like, Dashboard emotional. Um, it wasn't, uh, you know, Sunny, Sunny Day Real Estate, I think, is another emo band.

Rachel:

Yeah, mm-hmm.

Griffin:

It's been a while. I have been out of the, out of the game for a bit. Uh, like, it was emotional but it wasn't emo. It did go hard sometimes but it wasn't really punk. Uh, their music was full of these, like, narrative and hyper-obscure literary references. Uh, and they painted these portraits of like, un-extraordinary, small towns scenes. And that probably like, contributed to their lack of mainstream success because like, it's, what is

that? But I'll be damned like, if it didn't check all the boxes for me, back in the day.

Rachel:

How did you find... How did you find them? Do you know?

Griffin:

Um, I feel bad because I can't attribute it to who it was. But I used to get rides to school, uh, with, uh, it may have been my friend Elisa, uh, who would give me a ride to school and there was, like, a Weakerthans song on a CD of hers in the car. And I was like, "Hell, yeah. This is amazing." Um, I was in love with this band and I still am. I still think they are a terrific, terrific band.

Um, and if you're not familiar with them, uh, here's a song that is a perfect encapsulation of, of everything I love about them. It is from Tournament of Hearts, which is a song off that last album, uh, Reunion Tour.

It is a the curling song. It is, uh, taken, the title is taken from an actual women's curling championship that happens in Canada. And this song drops constant curling terminology, constantly. But it does them as metaphors to describe the subject of this song's strained relationship with their significant other. So this is a clip from Tournament of Hearts

[Tournament of Hearts clip plays]

Griffin:

There is no other band on, on Earth who could pull off what this song does. A curling like, love song kind of.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And, like, most of their songs are like this. They tell these hyper-specific stories over music that fucking rules. Like, the music is also extremely good. It's not just, like, oh, aren't we clever? Uh, it's really, really good. They have another song called Plea From A Cat Named Virtue. Uh, which is another song that would fucking stink from any other band.

It is literally a plea from a cat to its owner. All their song titles are completely literal. Um, it is a plea from its cat to its owner, to do something

nice for themselves, like, throw a party. Like, the owner's in this funk and they want them to get out of it by inviting some people over.

Rachel:

Oh, that's nice.

Griffin:

Um, uh, it references like, being a cat in some ways that are very, very clever and delightful. And, uh, it could be the most cornball shit ever but it really works here. And not just because it's clever but because that music fucking rocks. So this is Plea From A Cat Named Virtue.

[Plea From a Cat Named Virtue plays]

Griffin:

So that song is off of Reconstruction Site, which is their best album. And maybe one of my favorite albums of all time, partially because every song on it is great. But also, um, because it is an essay about losing someone close to you from a terminal illness and how you sort of, reconstruct your life in the wake of that.

Which this album came out in, in 2003, and my mom died from cancer in 2005. And this album, and this sounds like a weird way to talk about like, an album or really like, any inanimate object, I guess. But like, it was kind of, like, there for me, in a way.

Rachel:

Yeah. That makes total sense to me.

Griffin:

Um, and it handles this, like, really heady, really heavy subject really beautifully and realistically, in a way that I thought was like, genuinely helpful at the time. It handles that story of like, loss and acceptance mostly, with these three songs that frame the album. The opening track, it's called Manifest and it's this celebration of this person's life.

And then like, right in the middle of the album, you get a track called Hospital Vespers, that's kind of about their last rights. And then, there is this final song that I wanna, uh, play a bit off and read the lyrics to, 'cause it's very short. Uh, but it's called Past-Due. And it's about how this singer responds to this person's passing.

So, these are the lyrics. And I'll drop in some of the music too, from, from Past-Due. 'Cause it's one of like, the most poignant, like, things about losing a loved one that I've ever heard. Uh, the lyrics go, "February always finds you folding, local papers open to the faces, passed away to wonder what they're holding in those hands were never shown the places. Formal photographs refuse to mention his tiny feet, that birthmark on her knee. The tyranny of framing our attention with all the eyes, their eyes no longer see." [Past-Due clip plays]

Rachel:

It's beautiful.

Griffin:

It's... It is a song about this idea. And maybe it's a cliché but, like, it's really the only truth about how you actually recover from losing someone that you love. That when a person passes away, they leave behind a footprint in your life. Like, they have an impact that outlives them. And what this song kind of focuses on that I found so unique and so helpful, is that like, that footprint is infinitely complex.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

So much so that you can't describe it to somebody else. It is made up of infinite stories and lessons and acts of service and jokes and all these other ways that they, uh, impacted your life that, that forms this thing, that changes you. But it's so complex that you can't even really appreciate it.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

It's hard for you to do it, let along for like, an obituary, to fully capture it. Um, and in 14 lines, like it encapsulates that experience perfectly. The idea that like, losing someone kind of makes you realize something bigger about the world and about the permanence of the things that we do with our time. And how everyone leaves behind like, something that is intangible but also like, the most meaningful thing that there is.

Um, and it also recognizes that with that realization, there is like a pain that come with it, too. But, like, appreciating the bigger picture of a person's impact and, like, trying to like, remember it and appreciate all the little, little parts of this infinite thing are ultimately like, how you move on.

And I, like, it is a manual on grief, this album is. And it doesn't like, glorify it in a way that, like, other bands might. Where it's just like, "I'm so sad, isn't that cool?"

Rachel:

Yeah, mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Um, it doesn't paint a pretty picture about it either. Most of The Weakerthans music tells a story and this is a really fucking hard story to tell. And the fact that it tells this story about grief and loss, while also rocking very fucking hard is like, an enormous musical accomplishment.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Um, so I'm really glad that the folks in our community, like, inspired me to talk about this album. And, and like, really reflect on it 'cause I don't think I really appreciated how important it was to me back in the day until like I kind of started to do a deep dive into it, so.

Rachel:

Yeah, that's incredible.

Griffin:

Uh, do you wanna hear some submissions real fast?

Rachel:

Yes, yes.

Uh, Joseph says, "I love watching Nardwuar interviews." Do you know Nardwuar?

Rachel:

No. I don't know what you're talking about.

Griffin:

Oh, Nardwuar's great! "He is a Canadian interviewer who does an incredible amount of research on the artist he's interviewing and even finds gifts for them, based off of that research. It's wonderful to watch these people be amazed by his obscure questions, then get excited about the presents he bought them. I suggest watching his interview with, uh, Pharell Williams, who stops him..." Uh, oh, with N.E.R.D. "Pharell Williams stops him several times, to express how much he loves the interview. And his interview with Questlove, which is 46 minutes of, uh, Questlove becoming increasingly giddy about the deep hip hop knowledge Nardwuar's bringing to the table."

Rachel:

Oh, that sounds great.

Griffin:

It's really good. I watched the like, long compilation of people being surprised by Nardwuar today.

Rachel:

I love interviews.

Griffin:

It...

Rachel:

That sounds great.

Griffin:

He does the best ones. Um, Samuel says, "Something that stood out to me as wonderful this week, people's reactions to the surprise announcement of

the new Super Smash Bros game. While I'm excited about the game without the announcement itself, was wonderful. What I've really enjoyed was watching people's reactions to it."

Um, they announced the new Super Smash Bros game in the latest Nintendo Direct. But they did it by showing two Splatoon, uh, kids like, swimming around and shooting at each other. And you're like, "Oh, more Splatoon." [laughing] And then, the camera zooms in on one of their faces and then, reflect in their eyes, you see the Smash Bros logo. [laughing] And there's like countless videos of like, at the Nintendo World store in New York, just people doing like, "Yes."

Rachel:

[laughs] That's awesome.

Griffin:

Yeah. That's absolutely my shit also. Uh, Whitney says, uh, "One of my favorite wonderful things is when you're listening to a song and you can hear that the singer is smiling. I hear it a lot in They Might be Giant songs. Just this lift in the melody that makes it so I can't help but smile too."

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh. I never thought about that before. That's cool.

Griffin:

Oh, yeah. I love hearing that.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I think they, I think, yeah. I don't know that John Linnell's a big smiler, but...

Rachel:

[laughing]

Griffin:

...um, that is the episode. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. You can check out MaximumFun.org and a bunch on great shows.

Rachel: Yeah. A bunch of new shows. There's a new Simpsons podcast for all of our Simpsons [crosstalk].
Griffin: Yeah, Everything's Coming Up Simpsons.
Rachel: Yes.
Griffin:
Uh, there's, oh, there's just so many great shows. You're gonna go to that website right now, and you're gonna find them, or else. And there's other stuff at mcelroyshows.com that we do. Oh, we're doing some live Adventure

Zones and MBMBaMs, you can go to mcelroyshows.com/tours. Tickets for

Sorry, sorry, we're rushing. We have to go to daycare, like, right now.

that go on sale very soon. So, um, look lively. Uh, is that it?

Rachel:

That's it.

Griffin:

Rachel:

Griffin:

Rachel:

Griffin:

Rachel:

Bye.

Bye, I guess!

Bye.

Uh, so bye.

Yeah.

Griffin:
Just bye then, I guess!
Rachel:
[laughing]
[theme song plays]
MaximumFun.org.
Comedy and culture.
Artist owned.
Listener supported.
Jonah: Hey, my name is Jonah Ray. You might have seen me on the latest season of Mystery Science Theater 3000 or heard me on the Nerdist Podcast. Well, I got a new podcast that's about five years old, but we're moving it over to Max Fun, along with my friend, Cash Hartzell.
Cash:
Hello, everybody.
Jonah: And my other friend, Neil.
Neil: Hi.
Speaker: Neiled it!
Jonah:

So it's a music podcast where a lot of people just kind of hangout and talk about music but so much more. We also take submissions. And so you can

hear your band or, uh, music [laughs] or both, or both of it.

Cash:

You could do, you could, you could listen to your band play your music.

Jonah:

Yeah. Um, so tune in, why don't you? You could find out about some new bands and maybe just hear us embarrass ourselves, as we drink too much.

Cash:

Not too much.

Jonah:

Well, it's all perspective, isn't it?

Cash:

Sure is.