

Wonderful! 286: I'm Not Sure I Believe in Powdered Eggs

Published July 26, 2023

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[Intro, theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: This is *Wonderful!*, a show we talk about things we like that's good that we're into. And thank you all so much for joining us. We hope it's your... I hope you're staying cool out there. Popsicle.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's my number one recommendation for you, glop- blop one of those down, sweet syrupy beauties. Cold. Keeping it cold. Lower the blood temperature.

Rachel: And may I personally recommend a, like a freeze pop that comes in its own little plastic sleeve because... cuts the mess like by 90%.

Griffin: Also cuts the sides of your mouth and make you look like a Joker. I say no to that. I say go for a... Shoot for a Itzakadooie. Go for a Bomb Pop. Go for a Philly Swirl.

Rachel: You're okay with the drip?

Griffin: Am I okay with the drip? Yeah. I mean, if I have to choose between getting a sticky hand or Joker smile.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm going to go with sticky hand a hundred percent of the time.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Because the Joker's a bad dude and I don't even want people to think I'm like, of his friend or something.

Rachel: I mean, couldn't you get Joker smile from any popsicle?

Griffin: The sharp plastic sides of the Freezy Pop—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... when you put it in your- You're laughing like this isn't a real con-

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Everybody at home. You're the only person, right now, within the power of my voice right now that is laughing. Everybody at home is like, "You should take this more seriously, Rachel."

Rachel: Does this happen to you every time?

Griffin: The sharp plastic sides of the Freezy Pop cut my mouth and give me a Joker smile?

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, every single time.

Rachel: I feel like this has maybe happened to me once, tops.

Griffin: Okay. And that's okay, for you to get a Joker smile one time and then have it for the rest of your life?

Rachel: I guess I choose disfigurement over mess. [laughs]

Griffin: That's very telling and powerful.

Rachel: [laughs harder]

Griffin: Do you have a Small Wonder?

Rachel: [inhales] Um... I am watching *Fleischman Is in Trouble*.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And I'm enjoying it very much. It has Adam Brody and Claire Danes and Jesse Eisenberg.

Griffin: Close personal friend of the show, Jesse Eisenberg.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah. Former guest of...

Griffin: Former guest of MBMBaM.

Rachel: Yeah. And it's like one of those shows that I... It's kind of like *Succession* and *Mad Men* and a lot of those shows that Griffin and I don't really watch together because the characters are largely unlikable.

Griffin: Mm.

Rachel: But I like watching those shows by myself because I have, like, a deep pit of darkness inside me?

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: And I feel seen in those shows, I guess, in those moments.

Griffin: Well, that's not fair, I don't think, to you. I don't watch those shows because they usually are filled with unlikable characters doing unlikeable things.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: You are exceedingly likable.

Rachel: [laughs] Well, thank you for saying that.

Griffin: So I disagree with your thesis, but I am glad you are enjoying it. I do miss seeing Adam Brody, friend of the show Adam Brody, on this.

Rachel: Yeah, I mean—

Griffin: He did a thing for Candelights once.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Boy, our web is a wide one, eh?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm going to say, and I... You know, this has been a... this segment in particular has been a real Brennan lovefest, but we just finished *Dungeons and Drag Queens*, the most recent season of *Dimension 20*, and good god almighty, it was good.

Rachel: Oh, so—

Griffin: Holy shit.

Rachel: So, so good. I mean—

Griffin: It's the only one you've watched right, of the *Dimension 20*...?

Rachel: Well, except for *Tiny Heist*.

Griffin: And *Tiny Heist*, right.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is the one that we did.

Rachel: I mean the... the nature of the show is that everybody on it totally has to buy in.

So I don't know how they cast this to find exactly the right people, but it feels like exactly the right people.

Griffin: Bob the Drag Queen, Alaska, Monét X Change and Jujubee.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Are four like, known performers, All-Stars from *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Rachel: Definitely not necessarily like...

Griffin: Who I would have thought of.

Rachel: Yeah, like you don't look at all those people and think like, "Oh they're... they for sure play *Dungeons and Dragons*."

Griffin: No, but they- It runs the gamut of like storytelling confidence, mechanics confidence, from like... just sort of across the board, right? Like Bob the Drag Queen is very like, "I'm going to do this thing with this move that is very clever. And, you know, I've put a lot of thought into this one move that I want to make."

Versus like a Jujubee who's coming at it from a much more sort of amateur level per—but there is something very good about that perspective. Whenever Jujubee does like a dope move or something like a very powerful storytelling moment.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That is like because of... because of the newcomer perspective. It is something that is sort of impossible to recapture, that feeling of like someone's first time playing *Dungeons and Dragons* and like, sort of realizing what it is capable of. It's genuinely magical and you get that in huge quantities in this campaign.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's really good.

Rachel: We watched it on the Dropout platform, but I think it's on YouTube.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm not sure how they are rolling it out. Usually there's a delayed release—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: On YouTube, but yeah. I can't... Can't recommend it enough. It's good shit.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And just wild about it. I go first this week.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: You ready?

Rachel: Ooh, you got a little smirk.

Griffin: Birds.

Rachel: Now, are you wearing that shirt specifically?

Griffin: Oh no!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm wearing a shirt that Travis got me that looks like... almost like a neon sign. I don't know how to describe it. But it's got a goose on it, it says "Silly goose." No, I just like, you know, I like the shirt.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: No, I'm not wearing it... These guys are great, though. Birds, love 'em. I'm not like a bird guy, which I feel like I have to clarify—

Rachel: That's important.

Griffin: ... because we know bird people.

Rachel: Yeah, bird people always want to be watching birds.

Griffin: They have a dedication to the craft that I would never like, pretend to possess.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so, like, I don't want to be a poser, but I do want to say to bird people like, I get it. These guys are great. They... I mean, first things first, they fly. That's wild.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Like... It's... We... We're so used to it. But then, like you look at all the ground animals and you're like "Those are animals. And then you look up in the sky and there's animals there too. That's fuckin' wil—you look up at, like a power line. And there's like 20 birds.

Or like, you're looking up at, like, the rafters at Lowe's and there's animals up there I guess? That's wild. When you're in LaGuardia Airport and you look up and there's animals flying around like...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... this is the airport. Cool. This is wild. I feel like I'm in Jumanji.

Rachel: Structurally a bird is surprising too, because like the wings... it's not like they seem muscular, you know?

Griffin: They seem so weak.

Rachel: They seem very weak and the bodies are relatively dense. And so it's like, how are those... those...

Griffin: How are they doing it?

Rachel: How are these things workin'?

Griffin: But they figured it out, man.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And good for `em. They're basically the only animal that sings, and they do it all the time in all kinds of different ways.

And you can just always hear it. If you open up a window and wait a few seconds, you're gonna hear a bird. That's cool. That they're just sort of ever present, no matter sort of where you are, you can almost always hear a bird. And if we didn't hear a bird, it would be very quiet, wouldn't it?

Rachel: It's kind of like... it's a bird's world, and we're just living in it.

Griffin: That's a really good way of putting it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because they're everywhere. They can do ground stuff too. But like it's wild that they're in the sky, but they can do ground stuff, tree stuff. Like I said, power line stuff. Lowe's stuff.

Rachel: Water stuff, sometimes.

Griffin: Water stuff. Sure. And also you can always hear them. That's not true of any... I can't always hear a squirrel.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Can't always hear a dog. Sometimes, but not always.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Always with birds, though. Always. That's bonkers. A lot of `em look really cool.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Obviously, you got big dinosaur looking ones. You got like colorful birds of paradise and like badass-lookin' hawks and shit.

Sometimes you're like looking out the window and you see a bright red cardinal, and I think it's a very human experience that every time that happens, you point it out to everybody else in the room. Like, "Ooh!"

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: "That bird is very... Ooh! Ooh! That bird is very red!"

Rachel: I love seeing a cardinal.

Griffin: I love seeing a cardinal or similar red bird. Happened a lot in West Virginia. State bird. We love them there. Fucking cardinal crazy in West Virginia. But, you know, robins... A blue jay, if I see like a beautiful bright blue, blue jay, that's... that's a... I'm gonna have a celebration.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm gonna make sure everybody within the power of my voice knows about that blue bird. A lot of them, also, really cute.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh. That's true.

Griffin: Little humming... Tiny little hummingbird?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: A little... A little thrush, of any variety.

Rachel: The littlest faces.

Griffin: Little—big, round puffin? Ohh! We love it!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause they're birds too.

Rachel: That's what's crazy to me. Okay, so, like, you know, when you're at the zoo and they make a big difference between monkeys and apes?

Griffin: Yep.

Rachel: And it's like, "No, no, no, no, no, these are totally different things, even though they kind of look similar and have a lot of the same qualities." Birds, it's like... there's penguin and flamingo—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: ... and robin. And they're all birds.

Griffin: I'll jump ahead here a little bit. Birds are mostly divided into two big camps and they are—and I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of this, but I think it's one that's like, different depending on where you live—passerines.

Which are perching birds, which make up about 60% of all bird types.

Rachel: Okay. Okay.

Griffin: And non-passerines, which is everything else, right? Passerines are sort of categorized by the arrangement of their toes. They got 3 going forward, one going back. You know?

You look down, you see bird footprints. That's a bird. That's, you know, the traditional three toes up, one toe down.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That's a passerine, right? So that's sort of like the roughest big grouping that you have. That sort of ape versus monkey type thing, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I love 'em no matter what camp they fall into.

They lay eggs, which is always fun.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like it's like a little slime bag, like a little surprise box. Like, "What's in there? Probably a bird."

Rachel: Do you have stuff on nests?

Griffin: But, what kind of bird?

Rachel: Do you have stuff on nests?

Griffin: Do I have stuff on nests? No, I didn't even... That's what's- This is- I knew I was going to forget something!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Birds are so fucking cool that I didn't even bring up the fact that they build their own little houses out there.

Rachel: I am hoping that everyone that is listening to this has had the opportunity to see a bird nest up close.

Griffin: So cool.

Rachel: Because it is a marvel.

Griffin: It was really cool.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I couldn't make one, with my human hands, and a bunch of little sticks. If you sat me down and you said, "You have a day. Make a nest." I wouldn't know how to fuckin' do that.

Rachel: Well, and it's like... there's dampness in there. It seems like it's mud. I don't—

Griffin: I think it's barf. I think it's like, spit and barf and stuff.

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: I do think it is that, yeah.

Rachel: It's just... They hold together real well.

Griffin: They hold together super-duper well. They're geniuses, these birds. Except for when they get into a house. Then they're not...

Rachel: Ohh...

Griffin: Then they have fallen... Then this shit falls off the wagon real fast, don't it?

Rachel: There's... there's part of your brain, this has happened to us before, because our cat Cecil used to bring in birds as a gift that were not entirely dead. And a lot of times they were just stunned.

And when we would go to try and remove said bird, it would fly wildly around our house. And there's a part of your brain that's just like, "Well, I guess I live with a bird now." [laughs]

Griffin: I have a bird friend. It's like I live at LaGuardia Airport.

Bird scientists aren't quite sure how many different types of birds there are. They estimate it to be between 9000 and 10,000 species based on sort of like traditional bird identifying models. But there's some scientists who think there's just like a hidden biodiversity of like crossbreeding birds?

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That you know, look like one type of bird, but may in fact be a hybrid that's sort of doing its own thing. So that number may be twice as high. There's a lot of fuckin' birds.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: That's a lot, a lots of different types of birds. Birds are an important part of the whole sort of interconnected ecosystem. This experiment we call Earth. They help with pest control. Huge. Love that, birds, please keep it up.

They help pollinate plants. Their poop is fertilizer. So there's lots of birds who eat seeds, poop the seeds out, and self-fertilizes the seed to like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: ... create life.

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: They spread plants between different sort of like biomes. They do just incredible work in the gardening area.

Rachel: I had to kind of explain the other day to Henry, because there was something that I was sure was bird poop and he was like, "Well, but that's not the color bird poop is." And I was like, "Well, let's get into this." [laughs]

Griffin: Did you know all bird poop is guano? I thought that was just bat poop, from the *Ace Ventura* film. I was lied to by Ace Ventura—

Rachel: [laughing softly] Ace Ventura film...

Griffin: ... which is like the only time that's ever happened to me. I also want to give a shout out to sort of unsung heroes, and this is a fact that like really changed a lot of my biases when I learned it. Which is carrion birds, they're creepy, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And you see them and you're like, "Uh-oh, something's dead."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But they also are like Nature's janitors. They clean up dead-ass animals, which helps to dramatically reduce the spread of disease.

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

Griffin: And also control the populations of way more dangerous, like carrion-eating mammals.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Like wild, you know dogs and shit like that. They do so much work to pick up... I don't know if you've ever tried to get like animal control out to like clean up a animal that has passed away before its time, sadly.

But it can sometimes just not work. You know what will work, though? A big, hungry bird that will come just like handle that for you, bub.

Rachel: [laughing] I love this—

Griffin: And it's not... It's not pretty looking work, but it's essential and they do a great fuckin' job of it.

Rachel: I love this glass is half full approach. I feel like it's like me saying like, "I keep the world from having too many Oreos." [laughs] Like, thank these birds that survive on these dead animals, because otherwise we would have too many.

And thank you, Rachel, for eating Oreos so that we don't have too many of those either.

Griffin: I want to try and find this article I found about birds.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's a really interesting buzzard fact that I wish... I'm... Any... I'm not gonna find this. I'm not going to find this article.

Anyway, they do like... They do a lot of important stuff, carrion birds. They help keep places from like, getting overpopulated by dangerous animals and stinky disease-ridden corpses. And that's fuckin' pretty cool if you ask me.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Anything else I want to say about birds?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They're rad. They're functional, they're aesthetically appealing, they're vital contributors to the ecosystem. They're just great. I think there's a version of my life where I was... where I could be a bird person. I do feel like...

Rachel: Oh, I thought you were [laughing] gonna say where you were a bird.

Griffin: I think there's a version of my life where I was a bird.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And boy, that's the coolest. Right? Like if reincarnation is like, real and you come back... You go from human to bird? I mean, either way, if you're a bird, birds are probably looking at humans like, "Pff, they got it so good. They can just like, go buy seeds at the store."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And meanwhile humans are looking up at birds like, "You guys are so fuckin' free. You're having a good time. You're helping the ecosystem."

Rachel: [laughs] [sarcastic] Yeah, that's what I think when I see a bird, I think—

Griffin: It is now for me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Keep it up, birds. You all are okay in my book. Maybe I should... Maybe we should just get a bird feeder. But then squirrels come and take that and you know me.

Rachel: I think we see plenty of birds.

Griffin: I guess we do see plenty of birds. Can we put it in a way and we put up a sign that says like, "This isn't for you squirrels."

Rachel: [uncertain] Hmm...

Griffin: No?

Rachel: So we—

Griffin: They get plenty of stuff.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like they eat nuts... And here I'm sounding anti-squirrel, it's...

Rachel: Yeah, I don't think it's fair of us to say what animals can do what in their world, you know?

Griffin: No, but if I put up a bird feeder, I know that a bunch of birds are going to come by and have a little nibble.

One fuckin' wily squirrel and that bird feeder is like toast, man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Anyway, I'm not interested in links to bird feeders that I can buy online.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'll do that research myself. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: [laughing] Yes.

[*Home Improvement* stinger]

[ad break plays and ends]

Griffin: Whaddya got?

Rachel: My thing this week is cake mix.

Griffin: [lustful] Oh yes.

Rachel: Just a... just like a box of yellow cake mix.

Griffin: Oh boy, one of the great baking innovations—

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: ... of modern history.

Rachel: Yes. It... I feel like it... I mean it equalizes the playing field when it comes—

Griffin: In a huge way.

Rachel: ... to baking a cake.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: And the way it's designed, it's usually like, "Oh, do you have an egg? Do you have oil? You're ready to make a cake." You know?

Griffin: One egg. Yeah. Like it's...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like not... It's like, "Do you have one egg and oil? What were you gonna do with that? Fry the egg?" Like, "I have something better for you. A whole fucking cake. How about that?"

Rachel: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yeah, I think I'm not somebody who would have ever thought to have, like, start a cake from scratch. But I mean, I've made a box cake before.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: It's available to me anytime I want it.

Griffin: And it's not even like... It's not... For me, it doesn't feel like cheating, right? It's not like you get a roll of cookie dough from the store and you slice that up and you put that in the oven. You don't say like, "I baked Rachel's special brand of cookies." But box cake mix, I feel like because you do have to add shit to it—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And blend it up, that's cooking, bay-bee.

Rachel: This is so interesting that you say that, because that is a big part of what I was reading about.

Griffin: Okay, this like psychological sort of difference between cake mix and cookie dough?

Rachel: Yeah, about how people want to feel like they're doing something.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Because initially, cake mix, they had the possibility of not adding an egg. They just did powdered egg. Like you could just add water.

Griffin: [grossed out] Ugh.

Rachel: And people were not as into it. And they realized, like, people wanted to add their own eggs.

Now this gets a little fraught, but I will get to that.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Because I'm not entirely...

Griffin: Did I just step in it?

Rachel: No. [laughs] I'm not entirely sure that I believe...

Griffin: In powdered eggs?

Rachel: [laughing] No.

Griffin: That powdered eggs is something that exists?

Rachel: No, in this reasoning that people want to feel like they're doing something.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Okay. Anyway, so 1930, John Duff applied for a patent for a quote "invention that relates to a dehydrated flour for use in making pastry products into a process of making the same."

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: The whole idea is that like, World War II, everybody had a lot of molasses.

Griffin: [giggles]

Rachel: I don't really know how that happened...

Griffin: [giggling intensifies into laughter] [claps] Just in World War II like, "Yeah, we fuckin' got 'em. We won!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Oh, my God I'm super... Now that the war is over and we can kind of turn our eyes back towards the home. There's molasses fucking every- We are lousy with this... This sticky stuff."

Rachel: There's this culinary historian, this is from an article in *Bon Appetit* magazine in 2013, who says quote, "What it was really about was using up molasses. People were eating differently and food and how they made it had changed drastically, so Duff figured out how to dry it and add it to a flour mix."

Apparently Duff's recipe, for every hundred pounds of flour called for a hundred pounds of molasses.

Griffin: Good Lord.

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

What ended up happening... So 1933, 1934, Duff worked with like, Duncan Hines for example, to make not just cake but like nut bread and bran muffins and fruit cake. This idea that you could like put anything in a box. At the time it was 21 cents per can.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Per can?

Rachel: Yeah, I guess this was back when people were buying everything in cans.

Griffin: Okay. Okay. I guess plastics technology hadn't really hit that point yet? I like it. Fine.

Rachel: So there were companies like Pillsbury that stuck with the "just add water" approach for a really long time.

Griffin: In college? Absolutely.

Rachel: [laughs] But at the end of the 1940s, two hundred companies were putting out cake mixes, mostly Betty Crocker and the whole marketing was like, "Add water and two of your own fresh eggs."

Griffin: "Your own that you made."

Rachel: [sarcastic] Uh-huh.

So this kept up until around the 1950s, when the sales of cake mix flattened out. And they brought in this person named Ernest Dichter to do what he basically started, which was focus groups.

The idea was that... He was focused on motivational research, so instead of just saying like, "What are you buying and how much of it?" like, trying to figure out why people made the decisions they made.

And so he brought in a bunch of people to ask them, like, basically, more or less, "What was unappealing about cake mix?" you know. And his takeaway was that people wanted to feel their own hand in it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know, that they wanted to feel like—

Griffin: The goopy feeling...

Rachel: ... they were doing something.

Griffin: Oh, you mean...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, I thought you meant like, they like to just sort of goop their hand into the... the batter.

Rachel: That adding eggs made them feel like they were cooking.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Basically.

Griffin: That makes sense to me.

Rachel: What I think is interesting, there's like a lot at play here, because I think it's like the 1950s too.

I think there... The things that I'm not seeing in these articles that I think is really interesting is the like... One, the guilt. You know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: This idea that you are coming into an era of more convenience which is lessening your role and potentially like lessening what you think of as like the ideal, you know, mother or partner or spouse or whatever.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, "I am cheating. I am using a box."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know, like, "If I were... If I were really better at this, I would make a cake from scratch and I would, you know, add my eggs." [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I think that's interesting. I also think... I also think this idea of wanting to be more involved is interesting, especially... A lot of what I saw too was in addition to the eggs they started focusing on frosting. This idea...

Griffin: Ohh...

Rachel: Like what they called "homemaking magazines" at the time showcased elaborate cake constructions. So it would be more like, "How do you make this cake look like a football field?"

Griffin: But I mean, that's the thing still now, right?

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: Like anytime you look at any recipe... Like poke cakes were like, the biggest shit in the world for such a long time in the, you know, amateur baking realm. And it was literally just, "Make a cake."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, "Step one. Make a cake."

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

Griffin: "Step two. Now do a bunch of wild jazz to it. But first you have to just... Just make a cake, with the cake mix. You know, it's easy. You do the one thing and then you have a cake? Do that first."

Rachel: Yeah, because I feel like I've talked to so many people and it's not uncommon when somebody makes a cake out of a box, to admit it immediately.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: To like, say it like guiltily, at the beginning of, just like, "Well, it's from a box. But look, you know, I turned it into Garfield."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And like, that's some kind of apology in a way [laughs] of like... Like, "Well, no, but look, look. I'm... I put my time in. I made this cake look like an orange cat."

Griffin: I just "be realed" you.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I just "be realed" you so hard. Sorry, babe, it went off. I had to... I had to snap you.

Rachel: So yes. So I think... I don't know. I think there's a lot of like, interesting levels here.

I think it's interesting that Dichter got a bunch of women together to get them to—

Griffin: I hardly know her.

Rachel: [pause] ... to get them to talk—

Griffin: [snorts]

Rachel: ... to get them to talk about their feelings about cake and cake mix.

Which I think ultimately probably turned into a larger, more complicated conversation about, like guilt and lack of time and the kind of discomfort with this, modern convenience that is like, taking some of their agency away but also giving them more time to do more things for themselves.

I feel like there's a lot happening here, but instead it's like, "Let's focus on icing and make sure they add eggs."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I was reading a lot like, "What's really happening here?" I want to see the transcripts of these focus groups. Because part of me is just like, "People really just wanted to add their own eggs because that made them feel like they were cooking more?" I was like, "There's something deeper happening there."

Griffin: Now, let me say this though, Devil's advocate. If I gave you a side-by-side taste test, one of these was a "just add water cake"...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... one of these was a "add oil and eggs cake," I feel like I could tell the difference.

Rachel: Yeah. So, and that's the other thing. So I'm reading all these articles that say, like, "Americans just wanted to add their own eggs because they felt uncomfortable with powdered eggs." And then I read another article that was like, "Although the cake did taste better..." [laughs]

Griffin: "It is better..."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "It's less dry and way better..." Yeah.

Rachel: So yeah, so then what turned into just a like... A real, sincere interest in box cake because I love it and I get excited when I see it, turned into like a deeper examination of feminism and what modern society has done to our roles in the kitchen.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [laughing] And so that was... it was a surprisingly complex topic for me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I enjoyed it.

Griffin: Hey. I want cake so fuckin' bad right now.

Rachel: I know.

Rachel: You know what I've never made is a layer cake. I'm super intimidated by it.

Griffin: It just seems... greedy to me.

Rachel: I mean I think you just kind of cut off the round part and then you stack 'em on top of each other with frosting the middle.

Griffin: Sure, sure.

Rachel: I don't think it's actually hard, but I have seen a lot of people on *Nailed It!* that don't let the cakes cool and then they turn into soupy messes.

Griffin: But I do just want a cake.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like a cake.

Rachel: Yeah, no. Yes.

Griffin: I don't need a cake burger.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Do you know what I mean?

Rachel: Yeah, but the layer is so pretty.

Griffin: The layer's so pretty, but I'm very utilitarian.

Rachel: It's like surprise extra frosting.

Griffin: The only thing I care about the aesthetics of is birds, anymore. That's pretty much it for me.

Rachel: [laughs] Cool.

Griffin: Got some submissions from our friends at home. Daniel says, "My Wonderful Thing is concept albums, albums that tell a connected, continuous story through the songs in them.

"With the release of the jazz fusion *Antimai* by The Deer Hunter last year and the prog rock *The Fox and the Bird* this year by Ok Goodnight, I've been utterly basking in the music."

I love a concept album even when I don't even like the music that much.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I think all-time for me is *Hazards of Love* by The Decemberists, adore that album. That's the one that's like a fairytale sort of story about a woman who falls in love with like, a forest... elf... spirit.

Rachel: I don't think I know this.

Griffin: Oh, really? Oh man, it beats ass. It's so good. It came out once when me and Justin and Travis had to go on a... not had to. We went on a road trip to Chicago. Drove there. Saw a Harvey Danger concert and then drove back that night. Just listened to *Hazards of Love* the whole time. It was great. Great, great tracks.

Do you have a concept album that you have any particular fondness for?

Rachel: I was trying to think. I mean, I probably do, but I don't ever really think about them that way?

Griffin: Was *Tommy* a concept album before it was a musical? By The Who?

Rachel: Again, I don't know.

Griffin: Okay. Amy says, "I think to-do lists are wonderful. I make one for myself every day, always including something easy to cross off my list, like making the bed, having my little list of to-dos for the day helps me stay focused and productive, which is a wonderful feeling."

Rachel: I have kind of been trying to do the opposite.

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: Almost like an "already done" list. [laughs] Because I feel like at the end of the day, a lot of times I struggle to think about like what I've accomplished.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, like it'll get to be like, five o'clock or whatever. And I'll think, like, "What did I do today?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "I didn't do anything." And then I realized, like, if I at least just write down, like, "Oh, I've made muffins, and I did the laundry and whatever."

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Like, it's like, "Oh good. I did do something."

Griffin: That's good. There needs to be some middle ground between a To-Do List and I Have Done List. Because I have a To-Do List I swear by. I do... Every day, I have... There's like a website, it's called Todoist is the name of the website—

Rachel: [laughs] Of course.

Griffin: ... platform.

Rachel: Of course.

Griffin: It's great. Like people who are part of our like, company, use it and so we can like send items to each other to knock out.

But then I have my own like, recurring daily To-Do List things and then like weekly To-Do List things. And I keep my appointments on there. And I have a little widget on my phone so it's always like in the background on my phone. Like I swear by it.

But also sometimes I'll be banging stuff out and I will also do some other thing that is good.

Rachel: Nya-huh. Uh-huh.

Griffin: Like I built the... I built a shed.

Rachel: Yeah. The shed.

Griffin: Huge effort.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Not on the To-Do List. So it's like, what... That was for nothing!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So it's a to-do list that also turns into a... I guess every To-Do List turns into a To-Done List.

Rachel: [laughs] I promise that I will continue to make a big deal out of that shed.

Griffin: Thank you. It is a gorgeous, very spacious shed. I love it so much.

Rachel: I know like, we could easily hide in there if we had to.

Griffin: We could hide in there if we needed to. Let's hide in there.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thank you to Bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in the episode description.

Thank you for listening. Thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great shows there.

We got merch over at mcelroymerch.com, including a poetry corner candle.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: We'll have some new stuff coming next month which is going to be here very soon. That's... I mean that's it for the immediate.

Rachel: You were just in San Diego.

Griffin: We were just in San Diego, great to see everyone.

Rachel: What's next? Do you know?

Griffin: Um... I don't know what is public, but if you go to mcelroytours.com you can find out.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Or mcelroy.family, that'll work too.

Rachel: Ooh! Teaser.

Griffin: I don't know what is... Well, no, it may all be announced and I just don't know about it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So... just go there. We're going to... We have more shows coming up.

Rachel: Sure, Griffin's name is on the tin, but that doesn't mean he knows what's in the tin. [laughs]

Griffin: No. It's a big fuckin' tin.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thank you all so much. And... um...

Rachel: In the words of birds...

Griffin: [squawks]

Rachel: [laughs]

[outro, theme music plays]

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