

## Wonderful 291: Porous as a Spreadsheet

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[theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** This is a real show hosted by two real married people about things we like that's good, that we're into. It's a podcast.

**Rachel:** We're real married.

**Griffin:** We're real married, not the kind of married that you do as little kids, where you say, "This is my husband."

**Rachel:** Oh, I was more using real in the sense of, like, extra. Like we're real super married.

**Griffin:** Right, so, this is not a thing that they tell most people, but when you're super-duper in love...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ...after the wedding, there is a second, sort of, um, priest or parishioner. Uh, in our case, it was a parishioner who came up and was, like, "Hey! You guys seem super-duper in love, would you like to get for real married?" And we were like, "What did we just do? Because it was really..."

**Rachel:** It's like an extra level...

**Griffin:** And he was, like, "It's extra level, super religious." And me and Rachel were like, "Whoa!"

**Rachel:** "Ooh!"

**Griffin:** And he was, like, "But it's like, extra... It's, like, the most married you can get."

**Rachel:** Yeah. And you know we're about those achievements, so...

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** We wanted the extra for sure.

**Griffin:** We wanted the extra, you get a second ring. You get two cakes.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** There's two DJs that play at the party after...

**Rachel:** Uh-huh... There's another certificate you sign, but this one is, like...

**Griffin:** Right. It's a death certificate.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And you sign each other's. Um...

**Rachel:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** But it's, like, romantic in a way.

**Rachel:** Okay. I don't remember that part.

**Griffin:** So, we're super-duper for real married. It sounds like the lady doth protest a little too much, huh? Like, maybe we're not married at all and it's all a sham. That would be the longest, most nonsensical sort of con that anyone's ever run.

**Rachel:** I don't— Can I say, we make a big deal out of the fact that we're two married people who have a podcast together. I don't think people really care if we weren't married.

**Griffin:** No, no.

**Rachel:** I don't think they would be, like, "Well, I thought I was listening to lovers! Forget it!"

**Griffin:** Right, right. No, I mean, we do— Yeah, it's interesting. I mean, there is a certain dynamic between us that people seem to enjoy, but would it be even better if we weren't married and then there was all of a sudden a Jim and Pam energy.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah. People could ship it.

**Griffin:** Yeah, JiPam.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That is what they called them.

**Griffin:** Uh, huh. JiPam. Um, so this is Wonderful and do you have any small wonders to talk about please for me now? Do you have them?

**Rachel:** Um, I got, uh, yesterday... I do a lot of impulse purchasing around the weekend because I... I feel like I need a lot of tools to get through it with the children?

**Griffin:** Typically at Marshall's. When you go to Marshall's, it's, like, I don't know what the fuck you're gonna come back with because it's always a surprise.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That's their new ad campaign.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Marshall's! Come on in with plans to buy some gym shorts, leave with, like, a basketball set.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, well, anyway, I got, like, one of those little Play-Doh sets. This was through a grocery delivery platform that I use typically for

groceries. But also goes to other stores that have toys, and so I got one of those little Play-Doh boxes where the hair... The Play-Doh becomes the hair...

**Griffin:** Love that.

**Rachel:** And it goes through the top? This is something that I think I always wanted personally because I basically, like, pushed out children out of the way to use it first. Uh, and it was exactly as rewarding as I wanted it to be.

**Griffin:** Yeah. It feels good to extrude anything, um...

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. True.

**Griffin:** ...especially, though, um... Especially Play-Doh. I'm gonna say Rachel has a recipe in her repertoire that you do not bust out very often. But when you do, it is grounds for a national holiday. I believe it is your shrimp and grits recipe. Rachel, it's out of this world good, the shrimp and grits that you make.

**Rachel:** Thank you!

**Griffin:** Can you describe what is happening there? Because I don't know.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I mean, I found a recipe, um, that claims that is it southern style.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Which, I don't know that there's another style of shrimp and grits. But it involves, um, when you make the grits, it involves butter and milk instead of just water.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Uh, so it's, like, super rich and then you add, like, a big cup of cheddar cheese at the end.

**Griffin:** Love that.

**Rachel:** Uh, and then you make the shrimp in what they call a Cajun seasoning. I just use Old Bay.

**Griffin:** Oh!

**Rachel:** Uh... And then you sprinkle some green onions. And you make the shrimp, too, in bacon fat. It's just, it's...

**Griffin:** It's not good for you.

**Rachel:** No. And that— There is a reason I don't make it all the time. It is very rich and...

**Griffin:** I put a little bit of hot sauce on there. It is fucking great. It's so good.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, and so I celebrate— I see you and I celebrate you.

**Rachel:** Thank you!

**Griffin:** In this moment and most moments.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, you go first this week.

**Rachel:** I do!

**Griffin:** What do you want to say? What do you want to talk about? You got the laptop on the floor, I see. Here we come, here it goes. Cracking it open...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ...she's jacking in. Um, no password on that, huh?

**Rachel:** I have the little touch with my finger. I do have a password, but, you know.

**Griffin:** The password's your digit— your finger. It's not secure, someone could steal your fingerprint with, you know, a wine glass. A Danny Ocean type, get at your files. Just sayin'!

**Rachel:** Yeah. All of that could be true. Do you want to hear my thing?

**Griffin:** Uh-huh! I was, uh, stalling there while you got...

**Rachel:** No, I know, I know!

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But I had my computer open, I was ready.

**Griffin:** Ready to rock.

**Rachel:** I wanted to let you know you could stop stalling.

**Griffin:** Please.

**Rachel:** Because what I have is a trip for us to the poetry corner.

**Griffin:** Oh! It's been so long. Let me dust out these cobwebs with this big stand-up bass. [tries to imitate a bass] I got to restring this thing, it sounds terrible.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Oh, is that it? Wow.

**Griffin:** That was it, yeah. It's really messed up right now, I got to take it in to the shop.

**Rachel:** Uh, the poet I wanted to share with y'all this week is Franny Choi.

**Griffin:** Ooh! I don't know that one.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I didn't either until just recently.

**Griffin:** Oh, that's fun.

**Rachel:** I do this thing sometimes where I will find a poet I know I like, and then I will just kind of follow the train from that poet, like... You know, a lot of sites will be, like, "If you like this poet, you should check out this one!"

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And that's how I found Franny Choi.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Uh, so I want to communicate, um, who she is in the way that she seems to define herself. Um, and I've read several interviews and they always introduced her as a queer, Korean-American poet, playwright, teacher, and organizer.

**Griffin:** So many hats.

**Rachel:** So many hats! Uh, yeah, she, uh, has three poetry collections, the most recent one is *The World Keeps Ending and the World Goes On*, which came out in 2022. And she actually, speaking of somebody cutting off my finger to hack into my laptop...

**Griffin:** I did not say that.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I did not say that!

**Rachel:** What did you say?

**Griffin:** Like, on a wine glass, you know? You lift your fingerprint...

**Rachel:** Ohh...

**Griffin:** I— Have you seen Oceans? Any of the Oceans? Danny Ocean doesn't cut someone's finger off to hack in... Sorry.

**Rachel:** Anyway, she writes a lot about tech. Her first book of poetry was called *Soft Science*, it came out in 2019. Uh, and there was an interview with her in *The Paris Review*, uh, and the interviewer asked her how soft science began. And she said the book came out of writing a series of poems that were inspired by and in the voice of a character from the film *Ex Machina*, *Kyoko*.

**Griffin:** Oh, cool!

**Rachel:** "When I watched that film, I had a particular combination of emotional responses that provoked a desire to write, a mix of love, confusion, and outrage. I started writing to try and understand what I was feeling about her and quickly realized that the poems are speaking to other poems about my own experience as an Asian-American woman, as a queer Asian-American woman, about moving through the world in a body that had been made an object of desire, fantasy, and power, living as a soft, fleshy, objectified human of the world."

**Griffin:** I think about that movie a lot. It really got stuck in my craw in a way that some movies do.

**Rachel:** A lot of challenging ideas in that film.

**Griffin:** Yes. If you haven't seen it, it's about, um, this sort of amoral tech-bro asshole played by... I think, was that Oscar Isaac, was in that one?

**Rachel:** Uh...

**Griffin:** Oscar Isaac was in that one.



**Rachel:** Yeah, wow.

**Griffin:** Uh, and he has this, like, retreat in the wilderness that, uh, a, like, new employee at his tech company comes to and he reveals that he has developed AI, like a AI person. And Kyoko is, like, a much earlier sort of, like, very, very subservient AI controlled entity in the film who ends up having kind of a tragic arc, as pretty much everyone in the film does.

**Rachel:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Griffin:** Very messed up ending, I would. Very, uh, very scary stuff.

**Rachel:** Uh, so I wanted to read a poem that she had published in the New York times that is called Unrequited Love Song for the Panopticon.

**Griffin:** Alright!

**Rachel:** "Once, I breathed without your blue metronome  
rising beside me at night. Once, I turned the pages  
of magazines, and only God saw. When we met,  
we chatted first in placid facts: How many siblings

*do you have? What was the name of your first pet? After,  
I'd cover your eyes, walk off into rooms where you  
couldn't follow. Back then, I had just one brain.  
I was lonely, that is, when you emerged, sturdy*

*as a cage. You remembered every anniversary.  
You licked my data and didn't wince at the smell.  
What is your mother's maiden name? Do you want to save  
your billing address? Truth is, I wanted to be known,*

*cracked open by gentle hands. You completed my  
sentences, sent me gifts: gifs; wine recs calibrated to  
my thumbprint; reminders to meditate; reminders  
to menstruate; my own memories. Are you still watching.*

*Who have you called, and for how long did you speak.*  
You listened when I asked for advice; when I hummed  
in the shower; you were always listening. Now, I'm porous  
as a spreadsheet, tethered to your tentacular

benevolence. *List of prescription medications.* Darling,  
I have no secrets from you, though I've never seen  
your face. *Difference in heart rate during and after playback; during  
and after sex.* Tell me: does your inquisition carry a smell?

*Genetic predisposition toward impulse spending.* What are you  
afraid of? Where do you go when you're— *dream-based  
investment potential*— in sleep mode? Can you feel it when  
I touch you here? Will you think of me when I'm gone?"

**Griffin:** That fucking ruled!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That was the best poem ever! Tentacular benevolence is the  
strongest two words I've ever heard said together. That fucking ruled. That  
was a good-ass poem.

**Rachel:** I thought you would like that.

**Griffin:** Fuck yeah, I did.

**Rachel:** I thought you would like that. Yeah, you know what's interesting?  
So I...

**Griffin:** "Porous as a spreadsheet." That shit ruled! What a good fucking  
poem!

**Rachel:** I was watching, like, YouTube clips of her performing her poetry,  
which I usually do to, just to kind of get a sense, one, of how the writer  
pronounces their name.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But also just kind of what the tone is of the poem. Uh, and then I did a little more research on her. She was a finalist in the National Poetry Slam, the Individual World Poetry Slam, and the Women of the World Poetry Slam. And she is the, uh, codirector of the Providence Poetry Slam.

**Griffin:** Just a slammer sort of 24/7, it sounds like.

**Rachel:** Yeah. And explains, like, if you watch footage of her reading her poems, if you read some of her work, too, it has that kind of cadence, like, the word play and the, kind of, um, preference towards sound. Uh, you can, like, you can tell right away.

If you're somebody who has seen a lot of performance poetry, which I have at this point, um, but anyway. Yeah, she brings a lot of energy to her work. Um, and she talks a lot about technology, obviously because of her first book, *Soft Science*.

But she talks about how she understands that it is kind of this thing that people are afraid of or that they view kind of as a guilty pleasure, but she sees that, like, there should be room for kind of more emotion and more complicated feelings about it and kind of how we retain ourselves in that. And I feel like that poem really speaks to it.

**Griffin:** I genuinely loved everything about that poem, but I think I love that most of all, this idea... There's this weird stigma around technology in the arts. And I think we have it through, like, a very specific lens of having kids and having this enormous, sort of, stigma around how you use that as a parent, when that kind of ignores the fact that it's, like...

Everything we do now involves this sort of panopticon? And to just sort of write that off or say that it is not worth thinking about artistically or creatively in that way, I think is, like, pretty stupid. Uh...

**Rachel:** Well, and there's just such an opportunity for, like, a worldliness, you know? I feel like there's a chance to kind of move past a lot of ignorance when you can access information and from all parts of the world, you know?

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** I just think about our Big Son...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** ...who is incredibly curious and is always, you know, kind of chasing his interests, you know, through his use of technology, uh, and that's exciting. That's cool, as a parent.

**Griffin:** Yeah. It's, like, I'm not saying that, you know, technology and, I guess in the case of this poem, sort of, like, the way that we are observed by the technology that is designed to help us and also sort of absorb and assimilate our personal data for the use of the corporations that made it. Like, I feel like there is a kneejerk demand to be, to like shun that shit in the Binsky-est way imaginable 100% of the time...

**Rachel:** Yeah, of course, of course, yeah...

**Griffin:** ...without acknowledging the fact that it's, like, you just also describing a thing that every person uses, or most people use, like, everyday throughout their lives and it's just, like, an aspect of life now that is worth considering and reflecting upon without just instantly being, like, "It's bad!"

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** Um... Yeah. That's great. What a good poem. Thank you for... What was her name again?

**Rachel:** Franny Choi.

**Griffin:** Franny Choi. Excellent. Great work, Franny. Keep it up.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** 10/10 poet. 10/10. Um, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Cool.

[Home Improvement stinger]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** This is another one of those segments that I cannot believe we have not done before. Maybe the most that I cannot believe we haven't done before. It's trains, baby!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Now, I will say in going on Wonderful.FYI, uh, I did see that you very recently did talk about the Zoo Train. I do not believe that there is... I think there was a lot of depths left unplumbed there.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Because I don't think people are using Zoo Trains for long distance...

**Rachel:** Yeah, I imagine the way you're talking about the train is when you want to potentially travel between cities...

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** ...and not between exhibits at a zoo.

**Griffin:** Right. I cannot believe I haven't talked about this before because I very frequently and loudly, like, exclaim my love of a train, um, to anyone who will listen and that didn't used to be the case, but really once we started touring a lot, once we started to hit the, like, one tour a month schedule that we are kind of back on now at his point after a brief hiatus thanks to the novel Coronavirus, 2019 edition. Uh, we're back at it and now that we live in DC, the train opportunities for us are through the roof.

**Rachel:** Are you specifically talking about, like, Amtrak?

**Griffin:** I mean, yes, I guess I am talking about long distance— I love a subway train, I mean...

**Rachel:** Because I was gonna say there are a lot of...

**Griffin:** Sure. I think, you know, a light rail, any other form of, sort of like, um, public transit that one would use on a daily basis? That's obviously amazing too, right? And I love availing myself of that here in DC when we have a chance to use it. I think I am focusing more on trains as long distance, sort of, um, transportation.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I will say, it's interesting because there was a period of time when I would live in Chicago and I would take the train to St. Louis and I kind of hated that train ride? Because—

**Griffin:** That's so short!

**Rachel:** It's not, though. Chicago to St. Louis...

**Griffin:** What is that, 6 hours?

**Rachel:** Yeah, about that. But the problem is that there were always delays.

**Griffin:** Oh, I see.

**Rachel:** And I think it was something unique about that route because a lot of the times what would happen is another train would need to go by and you would have to, like, sit on the side and wait, uh, and that was at the time when cell phone technology was not great either.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And so I was, like, scrambling to, like, tell my parents, like, "Hey, I am actually going to be an hour to maybe two hours late."

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** "Please don't leave the house yet."

**Griffin:** So, it's funny, because I looked up just as a data point, like, the comparison between air travel and train travel with regards to...

**Rachel:** Delays?

**Griffin:** Delays, right. And the numbers are somewhat comparable, actually, like for air travel, across the airlines, some are better than others. Like, Frontier, it's, like, 31% of flights are delayed in some way. I forget what the best one was, but it was only, like, 20%. Basically it's between 20 and 30 percent of flights are delayed, regardless of what airline you are going on. The numbers are roughly the same for train travel because, uh... And a vast majority of those delays are due to freight trains that block routes, right?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's an inevitable... Freight trains always run on time. Freight trains are always gonna get there because I guess they take priority, but... Um, but delays are much much short in duration, on average.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I saw some fact about, like, for an Amtrak train that goes, like, 550 miles on a route, on average, is arriving at its final destination just, like, half an hour past when it usually is. Which—

**Rachel:** Yeah, see, yeah.

**Griffin:** Compared to, uh, a plane, like, once a delay starts to happen on a flight, odds are it's going to keep rolling and keep rolling and keep rolling.

**Rachel:** No, that's true. And just the— I mean, the experience of airports just seems to have gotten...

**Griffin:** Sucks so bad.

**Rachel:** ... worse and worse as we have gotten older. And a train station and the process of getting on a train, oh, it's so pleasant.

**Griffin:** Right. So, the amount of time that you have to factor in when you fly, between getting to the airport, parking, getting on the shuttle at the parking lot to the terminal, getting your boarding passes, dropping off your bags, going through security, waiting at the gate, boarding, waiting to taxi, then flying, then landing, and then waiting to park at gate, and waiting to deplane, waiting for your bags, like...

There's so much time not spent flying when you're flying. Um... And it's stressful, that entire process of just getting on the plane, especially with kids, it's so fucking stressful. Um, and with a train, you show up to the station five minutes before the train arrives at the station and you just walk on. You just walk right on it. Then you put your bags in the rack and then you go on the train on your merry way.

**Rachel:** It's so wild to me that you get on a train, you sit down, and only after the train starts moving does somebody come and get your ticket.

**Griffin:** Come and get your ticket! It's crazy!

**Rachel:** [laughing] You know? Like, I get that there's probably not a lot of people trying to scam the train system, uh, but it is surprising to me, just to be, like, I'm already here.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And now you want to know if I'm supposed to be here?

**Griffin:** Like, obviously, trains are slower than planes for longer distances, right? Like, we live on the east coast, as a result when we— I'm about to fly to Seattle for Pax, and that flight is, like, five and a half hours. It's a long flight. The train would, I think, be about, like, 36 hours. Like, it would— That is not tenable for me where I'm at in my life. Um, now I will say, my great dream is that in my lifetime, we will have a high speed rail system...



**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... that crisscrosses this beautiful country of ours, like they have in Japan or China or most parts of Europe. Um, not happening quite yet, which is unfortunate. But, yeah, got to fly to the west coast, that's just how it is. But, you know, for Washington to New York, uh, I think it's actually faster once you factor in all of the, like, bullshit at the two airports that you have to go to, uh, to just take the train. It's faster and in most cases much cheaper...

**Rachel:** Yeah, definitely faster than driving, also.

**Griffin:** Yes. Um, also, train stations are, especially in, like, bigger cities, gorgeous. Union Station here in DC is one of the most unfathomable beautiful insides of a building I have ever been in. It is cathedral-esque. Um, and I love it so much. I'm hopping all around my notes right now. I'm just quantum leaping all the way through these notes because I'm just fucking excited about trains.

Um, they're huge. You get so much more space, sometimes you can get a table where you just, like, sit across from the people you want to just, like, chat with and just, like, play a board game or whatever the fuck.

**Rachel:** Yeah. The fact that you can get out of your seat and move around is a huge pro now that we have children.

**Griffin:** Our young son is at an age that is the worst for travel, because he is, like, very active and rambunctious and cannot sit still for a minute. And on an airplane, that sucks because there is nothing for us, we will literally just run up and down the aisle, uh, and then just, like, stay in the back of the plane with the flight attendants...

**Rachel:** Yeah. And you just have to pray that you get a flight attendant that is very forgiving.

**Griffin:** Chill, yes.

**Rachel:** Because, yeah, that is... Obviously, planes are not intended to have children running back and forth on them all the time.

**Griffin:** On train, run around as much as you want. Hop between cars if you want. Go to the dining car, buy yourself some snacks. Or, I didn't even think about this until I was reading an article on why train travel kicks ass. Bring your own snacks! Bring your own food and drinks from home because they're not gonna make you throw it the fuck away as soon as you get to the train station like they do at a airport.

The number of times that we had to fly with one of our kids and every single TSA agent looked at the bottles of milk that we would bring through as if they were some sort of, like, improvised explosive device, is 100% of the time. It's every single time when it's, like, "No, that's milk. The baby needs that for nutrition. And living. You know, like, babies do it?" They don't care on a train. Just bring whatever the fuck you want.

Um, the bathroom's so spacious. You don't have to squeeze your knees together just to fit in the thing and then somehow get your hand down there when it's wiping time? I don't want to get blue, but, like, that's a reality, a fact of life, and... You don't have to do that on train bathrooms.

**Rachel:** I don't remember train bathrooms being that much bigger.

**Griffin:** Oh, my god, they're so big! On the Amtrak that we took back from Richmond to DC, those were, like, the size of this office.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** They were gargantuan. Um, I just, let's talk scenery. It beats planes in every way. Scenery— Okay, I will say this. In a plane, you get a good vista of a nice big city or clouds or just an ocean, a paradise of clouds from above. I love that. But you've kind of seen one, you seen them all.

Trains? You're down in that, man. You're zooming through all the beautiful biomes in this great planet of ours. Some trains have observation cars that are just big windows you can just sit and you can just kick it and watch the trees go by, the foliage.

**Rachel:** You've been on a train that had, like, a sleeper situation, right?

**Griffin:** You can get a sleeper car! If you really splurge, which—

**Rachel:** Not all trains have them.

**Griffin:** Not all trains have them and, frankly, you don't need them for a lot of things. But we... I forget, we were on tour, travelling on a train. We didn't really even need the sleeper car, because it was only, like, a four hour trip which is not, you know...

**Rachel:** You can go four hours without sleep.

**Griffin:** You can go four hours with sleeping, I hope. Um, but I did avail myself of it and it was amazing. Just being rocked and lulled to sleep by the movement of a power engine. I was in hog heaven, plugging in all my devices to the copious power outlets, jacking in to the web on the free wi-fi that most, like, long distance commuter trains have now. Um... I mean, what else do I need to say? They're amazing, they beat plane travel in every conceivable way...

**Rachel:** Much more affordable, also.

**Griffin:** Much more affordable. I don't get, like, terrible sinus problems...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I get bad, like, barotrauma from being on a airplane, from pressurizing the cabins, like... I would say coin flip, like, 50% of the time, especially if I don't pound the Flonase, like, a couple days before, which reminds me, I need to start hitting that now for the Seattle flight... I get sick on a airplane. On a train, they don't pressurize the cabins because you're on the ground where God intended you to be!

**Rachel:** Now we are recording this in 2023. The future of train travel, I mean, maybe it gets...

**Griffin:** Even better.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Because here's the thing, because train—

**Rachel:** I will say, people also used to love planes, that's what I will say.

**Griffin:** People used to love planes, but planes have fucking fallen off. Every single sort of airline has, like, had a— I would say a steep decline in quality over the last, you know, five or six years. Especially during COVID. Train, uh, demand has gone up.

**Rachel:** Oh, really?

**Griffin:** Amtrak has had to add new trains to their lines, right?

**Rachel:** I didn't know that.

**Griffin:** So there's not, uh... Tragically, we just had this big, you know, infrastructure package in late 2021, I think, that did not include, uh, I believe one red cent for high speed rails. But imagine, if we did have that, it would be a totally different conversation about how people got around in this country in such a major way.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um... So I, you know, I joke a lot about my enthusiasm for trains, but it is genuine and it very powerful and I would be so— That would be a life changing thing for so many people, if we could get that.

**Rachel:** You'd think Joe Biden would be all about it. You'd think that that would be...

**Griffin:** Scranton man? Loves his trains.

**Rachel:** Like, took the train into DC every day or whatever. I feel like, you know.

**Griffin:** [overlapping] I, yeah, I don't know, man. I'll talk to him.

**Rachel:** Yeah, see what you can do.

**Griffin:** Romantic, too, trains are. And Joe Biden, maybe.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Trains are so romantic. If *Before Sunrise* took place on a airplane?

**Rachel:** True!

**Griffin:** Totally different story. Because also, I think Jesse convinces Selene to get off the train before she reaches her final destination, which is not how airplanes work.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** They would jump out of the— They would have to skydive out of the air— Oh, okay, or, more importantly, uh, at the beginning of the film, she trades, she changes seats because there's a couple arguing next to her and sits next to Jesse. That's how the romance sparks. They don't let you do that shit on airplanes, so... So there. Take that in your pipe...

**Rachel:** Take that... [laughs]

**Griffin:** Take that in your pipe and shove it, airplanes. You're the worst.

**Rachel:** I like that we've set up this environment where you have to be pro one and anti the other and we are very firmly pro train.

**Griffin:** I don't, there's parts of plane travel that I also do not mind, right? Like, it is genuinely very beautiful to see a city from above as you are coming down into it. Um...

**Rachel:** I like... a short flight is incredible. I will say, like, when you are flying, you know, like, when we used to have to fly from, like, Austin to

Dallas, or when I used to fly from St. Louis to Chicago, those flights that are, like, an hour? It's a treat.

**Griffin:** They're fine, but you're also spending an hour and a half going through all the airport bullshit. Just take a train, man.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You know? Just take a train. Uh, you get to watch movies. I watched John Wick 4 on an airplane recently, that was nice. Sometimes there's food, um... And you know, I love having gadgets on the plane, just sitting down and playing a game or something. But most of the time, there's no chargers. Uh-oh, my Switch is dead. Now I'm just bored. Uh, not a problem on trains. Trains kick ass in every way. Thank you so much, trains. Bridget! Oh, wait....

**Rachel:** You gotta intro! [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes, please!

**Griffin:** Bridget has a small wonder here. Uh, Bridget says, "My small wonder is reaching the end of a tube of Chapstick. It's rare that I can keep track of one long enough to use it all up. It feels so satisfying when I do." I'll be honest, I do not know this feeling.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I don't know that I've ever...

**Griffin:** I've never, ever, ever... I've never lived— I mean, maybe— Okay. If I, like, grew up in Minnesota or Chicago or whatever, uh, and lived in a sort of chappy environment...

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** Then maybe, I could see myself, sticking to one.

**Rachel:** Well, I will say, I'm always convinced that there is a better lip product out there and so a lot of times, I will switch halfway through only because I have decided that this is not the one I want.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** I've got to chase this \$9 thing because that's gonna be the best.

**Griffin:** Right. Um, James says, "Cultural festivals are wonderful! Specifically, the chance to eat lots of super delicious foods that are otherwise hard to find in my town." Yes. Yes. Growing up in Huntington, there was...

**Rachel:** You guys have food festivals every weekend.

**Griffin:** We had food festivals every weekend that were not inherently cultural in nature.

**Rachel:** [laughs] No.

**Griffin:** Um...

**Rachel:** Unless the culture was, in fact, Huntington, West Virginia.

**Griffin:** Well, I mean, yeah. Hot dogs and, you know, rib fests and chili fests and, like, we had lots of fests. But there was a Greek festival, uh...

**Rachel:** Ooh...

**Griffin:** ... that was, like, a big deal and it was across the street from my elementary school. Uh, and we went to that shit a lot. And that is where I had gyros for the first time. I had lots of tasty food at the Greek festival [crosstalk] ...

**Rachel:** Yeah, I'm always looking for stuff like that in DC. Like, I will always eagerly check out, like, an events calendar to see if we can bring the boys to something like that.

**Griffin:** Hey, thanks to bo en and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. I mentioned it a few times during my preaching about trains, but we're gonna be in Seattle this weekend doing My Brother, My Brother and Me and The Adventure Zone during Pax West where, also if you're going to be at Pax, doing a couple panels.

If you go to [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family) you can get tickets for those, I think. They might be sold out, I don't know. Uh, and find out the details on when our panels are and stuff. Come see us and it'll be a great time. We got some more shows coming up too that you could learn about at [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family), as well. Got more merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com)...

**Rachel:** Can I mention your YouTube streams?

**Griffin:** Yes! Please!

**Rachel:** Uh, I will kind of save them up and treat them as a little lunch time entertainment, but, uh, Griffin and his brothers will play some Mario games together.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, and it is so fun and funny and I always enjoy it.

**Griffin:** If you've not watched it, we play Super Mario World. By the time you're hearing this, we hopefully finished the game yesterday in a series we call Super McElroy Brothers. Uh, and we split up controls so that I do the jumping, Justin does the moving, Travis does everything else. And it's cockamamie and so fun.

**Rachel:** It's insane that it works. Sometimes I watch it and you guys will not be communicating, you will just be, like...

**Griffin:** Blood harmonizing.

**Rachel:** Same brain. Yeah.



**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah. Um, yeah, it's a lot of fun. And we have a lot of other stuff on there, too. A lot of video game stuff, a lot of good stuff. At the McElroy Family YouTube channel. Go check that out. That's it. Thanks for listening. We sure do appreciate you. We'll be back next week with another great episode. Have a great time. Have a great time out there. Have a great weekend, everybody! Have a great weekend. Any big plans? [pauses] Oh, that sounds fun! I'm talking to the audience now.

**Rachel:** No, I know.

**Griffin:** Someone probably answered back. What? What's that? Oh, that sounds exciting.

**Rachel:** Oh, and I'm— Also, I'm sorry that your weekend plans are not what you want them to be because there's probably listeners that have that too.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay, yeah. You do the sad ones and I'll do the fucking party animals.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[theme song plays]

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