

Wonderful! 37: Secret Attic Biscuits

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[theme music plays]

Rachel:

Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin:

Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel:

And this is Wonderful...

Griffin:

... Nights. And I'm your third host, Chris. Welcome to Wonderful Nights, night time record in the studio. It's the latest we've ever done it, it's like 08:06 PM, can you even imagine?

Rachel:

Whew.

Griffin:

We flooded the studio with cigarette smoke from a local bowling alley and got all that smooth jazz you love playing and we're here to take you down to slumber town, little dreamy dog.

Rachel:

Uh, just a warning.

Griffin:

Hmm?

Rachel:

I did fall asleep at about 9:00 last night.

Griffin:

Yeah, hell yeah, you did.

Rachel:

So, if I get a little quiet towards the end of this record...

Griffin:

We're gonna be getting into what, we, in the audio business, call the Danger Zone.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

'Cause Rachel might actually fall asleep because it's Wonderful Nights, it's gonna be a little raunchier—

Rachel:

Ooh.

Griffin:

... than you're used to.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Yeah, the, uh, the FCC... or is it the FTC? Which one does... I think it's the FCC, doesn't give a dang what we talk about here. So, butts and pubes, whatever—

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

It's Wonderful Nights, it's a late studio record. Smoke... are you okay?

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Is it all the cigarette smoke from the bowling alley?

Rachel:

Oh, so now we're in a bowling alley?

Griffin:

No, we brought the... We brought this smoke in from a bowling alley.

Rachel:

Oh, to create a mood?

Griffin:

Yeah. I filled up a bunch of balloons, brought 'em in here and popped 'em. It's Wonderful Nights, I wasted my whole day. Any small or smoky nighty wonders that you wanna tell me in the pale moonlight?

Rachel:

Um, actually, I do, yeah. Uh, the new or the new-ish of as of May Hamildrop.

Griffin:

Oh, yeah, it's good as heck.

Rachel:

The Regretts version of Helpless.

Griffin:

Yeah, I, uh, slept on this one for like five days and I... [laughs] regret it.

Rachel:

Oh, that's nice.

Griffin:

Yeah, it was. Good one, Griff.

Rachel:

Uh, this song is what the kids call 'the slap.'

Griffin:

It is the slap, I'm so glad... I think we have to conjure that one up on, like, 20 individual episodes—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Throughout our oeuvre—

Rachel:

For sure.

Griffin:

... uh, to make it really, really stick. Um, I wanted to bring, for the Small Wonder segment, Last Man on Earth.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Pour one out, rip one up for Last Man on Earth.

Rachel:

The news that everybody had six months ago.

Griffin:

The news that everyone apparently... no, its cancellation came with the, uh... the sort of, uh, death—

Rachel:

Oh, yeah.

Griffin:

Death below of, like, Brooklyn—

Rachel:

But the season did—

Griffin:

Nine-Nine. All of that one got saved.

Rachel:

A while ago.

Griffin:

Yeah, the season ended a while ago. We, uh... Rachel and I watched every episode. Wildly inconsistent show, there were whole seasons that I could kind of skip if I ever did a re-watch of this one. But, man, when they show fire on all cylinders, it was the weirdest fucking... Almost every episode that we watched early on, I said the same thing after it finished which is, "I can't

believe this is a television show that got made. It is so strange." Um, and later on, it also has—

Rachel:

Yeah. No, you love everybody on that show. I think everybody's kind of ridiculous, but by the end, you're, like, really invested in 'em.

Griffin:

Yeah, the ones that they didn't, like, kill off as, like, a fun joke-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Which is a fucked thing this show did sometimes. But it was really weird and very unique and it ended in a cliffhanger, which sucks.

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

I wish... I think... I feel, like, all season finale's should be banned from having cliffhanger endings, just in case.

Rachel:

Oh, that reminds me, are there, are there Small Wonders from this week? We have a little correspondence from The Good Place.

Griffin:

And Oreo.

Rachel:

And Oreo.

Griffin:

Oreo, we've tried your salted caramel cookies, they're-

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh.

Griffin:

They are awful. Just kidding, they're the best.

Rachel:

I ate a lot of them yesterday.

Griffin:

I ate six of them after lunch today.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, so, yes, it's been a banner week for us.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Uh, also, another just, sort of, big update in our lives. I have gotten more washing machine repair tips from our fans.

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

So much so, that I could host my own, sort of, uh, tool time with Tim the tool man tailor—

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Or perhaps, this old laundry room, a spin off series. Um, because I think I know every single way that a washing machine can or would be likely to produce a stink.

Rachel:

I know. At this point, it doesn't even seem like we should hire anybody, because we've got all the DIY tips you could have.

Griffin:

Exhaustive list, thank you all, very, very much. Uh, you go first this week.

Rachel:

Ooh. Friends?

Griffin:

Oh. Yeah, it's a great show.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I liked when Joey did eat the sandwich. And when Ross was, kind of, a little bit too much, that's my favorite episode.

Rachel:

I was addressing our listeners.

Griffin:

Oh, okay.

Rachel:

As if they were friends, which I think they are.

Griffin:

They're getting there.

Rachel:

Uh, we're returning to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin:

Hey, come on back into the Poetry Corner. We're gonna say some words that rhyme or maybe they won't, that doesn't count as a poem, change my mind.

Rachel:

Whoa.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

That's fire.

Griffin:

So, the song that I wrote there for Poetry Corner, has a very strong stance about poetry.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And it's cool, the words are all over the page in a weird... yeah, okay, make it fucking rhyme.

Rachel:

Uh, the poem I'm reading this week is Frank O'Hara.

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

Don't know him.

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

All right. No, it's fine. Uh, Frank O'Hara was a New York poet and a member of the New York School which was a movement in the '50s and '60s.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, it included other artists and poets like Kenneth Koch, John Ashbery, James Schuyler, I actually don't know how to say his last name.

Griffin:

Skyler?

Rachel:

It's S-C-H-U-Y-L-E-R.

Griffin:

Yeah, Schuyler, like from Hamilton.

Rachel:

Oh, okay, yeah. So, the New York School of Poetry, uh, and, and an artist and writers were, uh, people that drew inspiration from jazz, realism, abstract expressionism painting and contemporary avant-garde movements.

Griffin:

Those are my favorites, so...

Rachel:

Uh, the New York School of Poets, it's, it's an interesting bunch because the majority of them are, like, Harvard educated, uh, white men.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, but the experimental work that they did in their art, I think was transformative, kind of, for the rest of history.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, and really informed, kind of, my initial forays into writing poetry.

Griffin:

Is that common? Is this, is this, like, a big jumping off point for, uh, potential poets?

Rachel:

So, here's, here's what I'll say. So, the reason I picked Frank O'Hara, he was kind of at the center of this movement. He described his poetry as, "I do this, I do that," poems.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

[laughs] Which for me, made it... I don't know, it... Kind of the common thread you'll see through a lot of my interests in poets, is that they make it accessible.

Griffin:

Mm-hmm.

Rachel:

Uh, and I found the New York School poets very accessible because they would kind of bounce back and forth between these kind of academic, uh, esoteric references and then this is very, kind of, common place everyday occurrences.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

And so, this idea that you could kind of exist in a place and do your daily routine and then turn that into a poem.

Griffin:

I've noticed, just based on, like, the poems that you brought to the show, that that's the kind of stuff you're attracted to. Less, the, like, super floral, like—

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

"The blossoming of your bosom in the spring time moonlight—"

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

"—is like a song sung from a huge bird." That's a good start for a poem, I'm gonna write all that down.

Rachel:

I liked it because it had "bosom."

Griffin:

Yeah. I don't know what that word was. I don't know if that, that thing I just said was an affirmative or a negative response to what you said.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

That's a fun catch-all.

Rachel:

That's poetry, man.

Griffin:

Yeah, dude.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

So, Frank O'Hara did a lot of, uh, as I mentioned, mixing of high and low culture, the sharing of preferences and the free association of names and ideas. So, in a way, it's kind of like the song that you brought last week.

Griffin:

Yeah, Aguas de Marco.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Which by the way, gang, has been stuck in my fucking head so hard for 14—

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

—days. I had gotten it out today, and then I was going through submissions and I got a lot of emails from people like, "Yo, this song's the slap. It's called Aguas de Marco." And I was like, "Oh, there it goes again."

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

[sings]

Rachel:

So, here's a poem.

Griffin:

Yes.

Rachel:

Uh, it's from his book, Lunch Poems. Uh, which came out in 1964, it's published by City Lights which is the same published that published Howl by Allen Ginsberg.

Griffin:

Okay.

Rachel:

Uh, it's called Steps. I'm going to read it.

Griffin:

I'm, I look forward to it.

Rachel:

"How funny you are today New York
like Ginger Rogers in Swingtime
and St. Bridget's steeple leaning a little to the left

here I have just jumped out of a bed full of V-days
(I got tired of D-days) and blue you there still
accepts me foolish and free
all I want is a room up there
and you in it
and even the traffic halt so thick is a way
for people to rub up against each other
and when their surgical appliances lock
they stay together

for the rest of the day (what a day)
I go by to check a slide and I say
that painting's not so blue

where's Lana Turner
she's out eating
and Garbo's backstage at the Met
everyone's taking their coat off
so they can show a rib-cage to the rib-watchers
and the park's full of dancers with their tights and shoes
in little bags
who are often mistaken for worker-outers at the West Side Y
why not
the Pittsburgh Pirates shout because they won
and in a sense we're all winning
we're alive

the apartment was vacated by a gay couple
who moved to the country for fun
they moved a day too soon
even the stabbings are helping the population explosion
though in the wrong country
and all those liars have left the UN
the Seagram Building's no longer rivalled in interest
not that we need liquor (we just like it)

and the little box is out on the sidewalk
next to the delicatessen
so the old man can sit on it and drink beer
and get knocked off it by his wife later in the day
while the sun is still shining

oh god it's wonderful
to get out of bed
and drink too much coffee
and smoke too many cigarettes
and love you so much."

Griffin:

It's like, slow down a minute, Frank, there's a lot of stuff going on—

Rachel:

[laughs] Yes.

Griffin:

There Frank. It's like you're painting me an image of this gay couple moving out to the country and then all of a sudden—

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

You're talking about having sex with traffic? I got a little lost, I got in the tall grass there when he was like, "I love the traffic so much, I wanna rub against it and get inside it sexually."

Rachel:

That's the association that I was talking about, which also is a thing that, you know, Ginsberg did.

Griffin:

Yeah, for sure. Um, I enjoyed that very much.

Rachel:

Yeah, he, uh... the New York School is very much rooted in New York and a lot of the poems are, you know, very city oriented poems.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Which I appreciate. I mean, you know, I did that Bob Hicok poem—

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

About Michigan. Um, I've always tried to write about the places I'm from and lived, and it's really hard to do.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Like, I don't know... I mean I guess in a way, you're doing that a little bit with your adventures on arc of, like, how you take a place that you have an attachment to and turn it into, you know, something accessible—

Griffin:

It's—

Rachel:

It's difficult.

Griffin:

It is. It's... I mean, what I'm doing, it eventually sounds pretty abstracted out pretty far away.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I wouldn't say it represents my time in Huntington at all.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

But, like, the trick isn't even like putting pen to paper and trying to find the right words to say. It's trying to find out, like, I think, first what to say.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Like, how to... How do you summarize? Even not in a poetic form, if you just wanted to write down a fricking numerical list, like, I don't know how I would summarize Huntington and I lived there for 22 years.

Rachel:

And that's... The Frank O'Hara, like, his, his writing style, as you mentioned, where he's just kind of hopping from moment to moment, really kind of sets the tone for this kind of New York environment.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

You know, like, I read it and I feel really present when he sees, like, the... the, uh, the dancers, um, with their little bags of shoes.

Griffin:

I love the rib-watchers line.

Rachel:

Yeah, "So they can show a rib-cage to the rib-watchers." Uh, so yeah, so he's... he... unfortunately, he died tragically very early.

Griffin:

Oh, no.

Rachel:

He died at 40.

Griffin:

Well, that's very sad.

Rachel:

Yeah, it is very sad. Um, Kenneth Koch, who was also in that school, um, went on to, to write a bunch of works and lived a very long, happy life.

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

Uh, as did John Ashbery, who just recently died in 2017.

Griffin:

Well, no need to brag, guys.

Rachel:

[laughs] Um... so, yeah, so I think it's, it's difficult because it is kind of academic, especially John Ashbery. It's like very, you know, alienating in some ways, but kind of the, the drawback, especially with Frank O'Hara, and Kenneth Koch for that matter, to this kind of daily experience. Um, it was

really motivating to me when I moved to Chicago, right after college. Man, I wrote so many, like, New York School kind of poems about, like, walking down the street and walking by The Chicken Hut and—

Griffin:

Oh.

Rachel:

You know, like—

Griffin:

The Chicken Hut.

Rachel:

I don't know if it still exists, but it used to be Belman and Broadway.

Griffin:

Broadway, yeah. I've been there before.

Rachel:

You've been to The Chicken Hut?

Griffin:

I've been to The Chicken Hut, it's tasty as hell.

Rachel:

I wrote a whole poem about walking by the chicken hut.

Griffin:

I wanna read this poem. I also wanna read you my first thing.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

My first thing. Here's the deal, gang, I love sports where you hit balls with other objects. I just love 'em, I love the idea of 'em. Baseball, tennis, golf, whatever. I find the whole idea of them very deeply therapeutic and enjoyable. The only downside is that I am exquisitely bad at more or less all of them.

Rachel:

You say that but you have very good coordination.

Griffin:

I have good coordination, except when a ball is coming at me above a speed of even 20 miles an hour. Anything above that, and the fight or flight instinct kicks in and the bat just won't do its job. Um, I, I'm also a terrible driver at golf, I just... I've gone golfing twice and my friends got very, very, uh, exasperated at me just because of how many old shankers I put out into the trees. Um, tennis is also just way too much running. However, there are two sports that are an exception to this rule which I classify as, and this is the official subject of this segment, gentle ball hitting games. And that is mini golf and croquet.

Rachel:

I thought you were gonna say badminton, I guess that's not really a ball.

Griffin:

Badminton's like tennis with less running, but still more than I'm used to.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, I'll start with mini golf, which is a game you play by hitting a small ball with a fairly small club that requires maybe the least amount of athletic activity that any sport could possibly—

Rachel:

You are good at mini golf.

Griffin:

I'm pretty good a mini golf. It doesn't require athleticism, which puts it right in my wheelhouse. Um, I, I might attach too much fondness to the idea of mini golf because I did not grow up around a mini golf course. That's not true, there was a bible themed petting zoo near my home town called Noah's Ark, which I imagined there are approximately 1300 of that exact establishment—

Rachel:

Was there two of every animal?

Griffin:

No, no.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

There were a f... maybe, one to a few of, of few animals.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Um, uh... but I didn't go there. I went there, I think, on one church trip and I climbed up in the big boat and I had a taco Lunchable and I got super sick.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

So, I... then I got very angry at, you know, the, the Lord. No, that's not true, I was a good Christian child. Why am I talking about this?

Rachel:

I don't know what's happening.

Griffin:

Um, I didn't go to a course that often because we didn't live around one, so it was always something that we did on family vacation, so it still seemed so exotic to me.

Rachel:

Oh, that's fun.

Griffin:

Um, it helps that a lot of mini golf courses are also part of these big family fun centers with, like, arcades and go-kart tracks and shit. Which, like, don't get me started on go-karts. A good go-kart course... I feel like maybe it's like to say like, "Oh, go-karting is so fun, the cars are so small." A good one where the cars go fast as hell and you can just, like, initial D fucking Fast And Furious drift around the, the hairpin turns in those bad boys... I could do a whole segment on that. Anyway...

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

I would play mini golf right now though and pretty much... no, because it's like 103 degrees outside. But at most points where it's temperate, I enjoy me some mini golf. I don't think I'm, like, awesome at the game. I think I'm slightly above average, which is something. Um, what I love though, is that if you're not, like, an avid golfer who actually goes to golf courses and putts and tries to get under par with very, very good putts, you don't really know how to be good at putting a golf ball, you really don't. You kind of have to feel it out. Every time you play the first hole of mini golf, you're basically learning the sport all over again.

Rachel:

Well, it's kind of... the way I feel when I do mini golf is kind of similar to pool, in that, like, the implement I use to hit the ball puts me very far away from the ball.

Griffin:

[laughs] Huh?

Rachel:

And so, then somehow, I have to get my brain down this long stick to, like, get the ball where I want it to go and that's never worked for me.

Griffin:

Yeah, it's rough. Um, but as a result, every time it goes well, I just get ecstatic—

Rachel:

I know.

Griffin:

'Cause it's like, "Whoa, I wasn't expecting that." Uh, I also really like the holes where the path splits off or offers you, like, multiple trajectories because then you get some strategy, like, that's my shit.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

That, I do think I'm good at, is, like trying to figure out how to bank it off what thing. Like, when they have little pieces of wood over the corners and you're like, "Oh, I can hit that and bank it at a 90 degree angle and then at least, get it close to the hole." Um, or, like, "There's a ramp that goes over the water trap, is there a way I can use that? Is it worth it?" Um, I really, really like that about golf. Um, and also, golf courses, and this is gonna be very telling, I think, of the... I don't know, nature of my childhood. Uh, they always seemed so opulent to me, like, so well-manicured.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And so well designed and fancy. I feel like I'm remembering a lot of the ones I played at in, you know, Tennessee in North Carolina. I remember them smelling excellent, which may not be true.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Um, but it was like kind of like going to Disney World for me in a small way.

Rachel:

I feel like every mini golf course I've been to is a little bit run down.

Griffin:

Maybe... I don't know, in, like, a tourism town, I feel like they're usually a little bit better.

Rachel:

There's, like, grooves where you, like, start the course and then all the painted creatures... like, the paint is chipping.

Griffin:

I guess we only went out there nice places.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Uh, in like Asheville, North Carolina, that had like... which is probably the mini golf capital of the world. I don't know if you ever got out there, but there was one year we went out there. Man, we would play so much mini golf, go-karts, we went to laser tag and, like, did all this shit and it was the best trip ever. Um, we have a place here in Austin called the Peter Pan Mini Golf which is also BYOB, which is a whole nother thing for grown up Griffin. That is real good, 'cause it's hot constantly in Texas. Washing it down with a nice cold brew-ski and a nice—

Rachel:

And that place is always packed, man.

Griffin:

And it's so crowded.

Rachel:

Because it appeals to every human being—

Griffin:

All the time.

Rachel:

—of all ages.

Griffin:

Like, 13 more mini golf courses here in Austin... if you live here and you're an entrepreneur, get at it. Now, the second game, croquet. Mini golf's not always convenient, sometimes, you can't get out there. Croquet, you can set that shit up in your backyard, you own a croquet course, technically. I, uh... I discovered this game when I was on a lake trip with some friends in Chicago, Ohio, who I actually wasn't all that familiar with, I was kind of just invited along for fun-zies. Uh, and I had really, really great time they all were playing croquet and, uh, you know, having, having some beers and going swimming. It was such really, really great time.

It's got the kind of same, like, feeling it out vibe as mini golf, like, every time you hit it, you're like, "Oh, I hope this goes good." Um, and... but it's kind of, like, more strategy, you can... I feel like I've talked about this on some show before, but you can get extra shots if you, like, run your ball into an opponent's ball. Uh, so you're trying to, like, chart out the best path through the course, which makes it different every time you play, even if the

course relatively the same. Um, you can also send your opponent's balls and, like, spin one of your bonus shots, like, knocking your opponents out of the way, which one time, our friend, Eric, did to me while we were playing on a huge field in Zilker Park—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Trying to set, like, the Guinness World record for largest croquet course and he sent me out into the parking lot. Which I was miffed about, but I recognize the strategy and neutralizing his greatest threat. Um, but I, I think I'm actually pretty good at croquet, unlike mini golf. Uh, even if I wasn't, I would still love playing it because it's just a... I like hitting the ball with another object.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

And these are the only two sports where I can do it without, you know, running or... the ball's not gonna jump up and hurt you, uh, which is a constant, constant fear, constant fear of mine. Uh, gentle ball hitting games, get at 'em.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Do you wanna steal me away?

Rachel:

Yes. And I will do so with a little thing that goes like...

Griffin:

Oh, boy.

Rachel:

This.

Griffin:

Ai.

Rachel:

[makes indescribable but awful sound with mouth]

Griffin:

Okay, so just to set this up, we have windscreens in front of our microphones. They are these big black sort thing, this mesh thing, so I can't see anything below. I can just... it's kind of creeping me out now that I'm thinking about it for the first time, is that I'm getting just sort of Rachel's eyes, and then this big black circle mesh. You do kind of look like my wife turned into Bane. And so, I don't know how you made that sound, I think you were trying to do, like, a clock—

Rachel:

[muffled] Bring me the Batman.

Griffin:

Yeah, his famous line was, "Bring me the Batman," in the movie.

[ad break]

Rachel:

This message is for Rob and Lauren, it is from Bernadette. "Dear Lauren and Rob, I just wanna thank both of you for being my best friends. You both mean so much to me. Lauren, thank you so much for getting us into all the McElroy content. Rob, thank you for buying us tickets to see our boys live in Brooklyn. I love you both with all of my heart and I'm hoping you're surprised by this jumbotron."

Griffin:

That's a very sweet thing to do for a couple of friends. Also, do you think Bernadette has ever written a parody song of, uh, David Bowie Suffragette City, uh, where she drops her own name in there and said the word suffragette? Do you know? Or it's like... [singing]

Rachel:

I like that a lot.

Griffin:

I love that.

Rachel:

I would also work for Antoinette, if you're listening.

Griffin:

[Singing] That was a pretty good Bowie.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs] [Singing]

Rachel:

I really appreciate how much confidence you have.

Griffin:

That was a really good David Bowie. There's, there's no way that you could debate that that's a bad David Bowie. [singing]

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

[laughs]

Rachel:

Um, this is message is for the Wonderful hosts and more, and it is from Emerson. "Hello, after a year of non-stop animating, I finished my grad film today and wanted to thank all the amazing people who made it possible. My friends, my boyfriend, my uni family and you guys. Wonderful is a blessing and gives me the good vibes I need to make it through the day, thank you. Love, Emerson."

Griffin:

That was a very sweet little message.

Rachel:

That is very sweet.

Griffin:

Thank you, Emerson. I'm glad that we could help and—

Rachel:

Congratulations.

Griffin:

Yeah, Congr... *congradulations*.

Rachel:

Are you the first to ever do that?

Griffin:

I think, yeah. I think, yeah.

Rachel:

Now, do it as David Bowie would do it.

Griffin:

[Singing]

Rachel:

Perfect.

Griffin:

[Singing]

Rachel:

[laughs]

[Maximum Fun ad]

Griffin:

Hey, what's your, uh... numero dos there, partner?

Rachel:

It's your David Bowie impression.

Griffin:

[laughs] Right.

Rachel:

No, it's not. [laughs] But next week.

Griffin:

Next week.

Rachel:

For sure.

Griffin:

Once I've had time to really polish it. Look forward to that, Rachel.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

This is a threat.

Rachel:

[laughs] My next thing is Sriracha.

Griffin:

Sriracha.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

The spicy paste really gets to me.

Rachel:

[laughs] Uh, so I did some research on Sriracha because it is one of my fave condiments, specifically on noodles.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, on vegetables.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Meat.

Griffin:

Vegetables is my friend to have these on. Eggs, is another good one.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Cake? What's the other food you haven't listed?

Rachel:

I didn't say ice cream and I didn't say ice cream intentionally.

Griffin:

'Cause gross.

Rachel:

Yeah, a bit too much for me.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, so Sriracha, most of you will probably know, uh, is composed of chili peppers, vinegar, sugar, salt and garlic. Uh, and it was developed specifically to provide Vietnamese immigrants with a hot sauce worthy of their Pho soup.

Griffin:

Yes, I love the Sinh Pho, especially bad Pho. Which, holy shit, there is so much of in Austin. I did not realize that when I started eating Pho a few years ago, I would become kind of a snob about it but I've had maybe two good Pho places in Austin and maybe a dozen super, super bad ones.

Rachel:

That's very true.

Griffin:

You drop some Sriracha in there though, what's up? Now, you can't taste the bad flavors.

Rachel:

It's, it's such... it's such a good addition to anything that is remotely bland.

Griffin:

Sure, like vegetables. Again, broccoli.

Rachel:

Uh, Sriracha was developed in 1980 by David Tran. Uh, it is now located in the Huy Fong Foods, uh, factory in Rosemead, California. Uh, the factory used to be owned by WHAMO, the maker of Frisbees and Slip 'N Slides.

Griffin:

Okay, but it wasn't a... they weren't cranking out Sriracha, right? They weren't like, "Here's our fun discs and also our burning paste."

Rachel:

No, but I like the idea that they kept some of the slip 'n slides there.

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

It's part of the factory.

Griffin:

Jesus Christ, you would be done-zo-

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

On Sriracha slip 'n slide, no thanks. Didn't the factory, like, famously kind of ruin the property values of all surrounding... like, didn't—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I remember reading something a long time ago, or not that long ago, about how it just kind of—

Rachel:

Yeah, it is an issue—

Griffin:

Overpowered the whole neighborhood—

Rachel:

The smell.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Yeah. But that's not what I'm talking about this week. [laughs]

Griffin:

No, it's good for... it's good for 99.999999% of the country except for that one small outlier of their neighbors.

Rachel:

Uh, so when he, uh... when David Tran first started making Sriracha, they were in glass bottles, uh, filled by the spoonful and personally delivered all over China Town in a blue Chevy van. A nice little—

Griffin:

It started from the bottom.

Rachel:

Yeah, nice little start up. Uh, so, they also make other types of sauce, which I've never—

Griffin:

Whoa.

Rachel:

Had. Uh, they all start with a chili mash, but some of them have more garlic, uh, or more sugar.

Griffin:

Are these, are these different types of Sriracha? Or are they in different sort of families all together?

Rachel:

Uh, no, different, different families.

Griffin:

Interesting.

Rachel:

Um, but hot sauce, you know, focused—

Griffin:

Sure.

Rachel:

Because of the chilies. Uh, the company has never advertised. Uh, and yet, sales have still increased by almost 20% each year.

Griffin:

That's fucking... are they... That's the only company on earth that that's true, that's crazy.

Rachel:

But think about it, have you ever seen advertisements for it? I haven't.

Griffin:

No, I've just gone out to eat at, like, virtually, any Asian restaurant.

Rachel:

I know. Uh, the rooster's on the bottle because David Tran was born in the Chinese year of the rooster.

Griffin:

Interesting.

Rachel:

Uh, the article I read... so, I looked at articles from LA Times and Huffington Post. There was an article that says, "You'll soon see a gallon sized bottle of Sriracha." I don't, I don't know if that's true or not.

Griffin:

I don't know if I can... I mean, if the Huff Post says it, if Arianna's sworn by it, then it's gotta be true. I just—

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Don't know that... I don't think I could work through that before I died either of old age or my insides melted like a terminator, because of how much Sriracha I would try to eat.

Rachel:

Well, I don't know, part of it I enjoy is the squeeze.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

I don't know that I could squeeze a gallon.

Griffin:

You could, but you're gonna get... your, your bottle's gonna write a Sriracha check that your mouth can't really cash.

Rachel:

[laughs] A hundred million pounds of fresh chilies, uh, were processed last year over the course of the harvest season which lasts only ten weeks and provides for the entirety of the company's yearlong Sriracha sales. Uh, but they used fresh chilies, which is, uh, unusual for hot sauce—

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Hot sauce usually uses, like—

Griffin:

Dry, dry—

Rachel:

Yeah, exactly.

Griffin:

Dry-ass chilies, yeah.

Rachel:

Uh, and so, their factory is only an hour away from Underwood Family Farms, which has been the company's only chili supplier for the past 20 years.

Griffin:

They're cranking on a hundred million pounds of chilies every... Hey-

Rachel:

I guess so.

Griffin:

Pretty good farm, it seems like.

Rachel:

Yeah. Uh, yeah, so I liked, I liked the story of that. Like, it feels very personal, like the fact that there was this man that used to sell it out of his van.

Griffin:

Yeah. The Sriracha man.

Rachel:

And now, it's like on every table in every restaurant.

Griffin:

Yeah, um—

Rachel:

It's a cool story. And it's also, like, unlike any other condiment, I would say.

Griffin:

Yeah, I certainly can't think of any other condiment that's like... I mean, there's probably a ton of, you know, east, east asian, uh, spicy pastes out there.

Rachel:

I would say, yeah, that's true. I'd say between Sriracha and Cholula—

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Those are probably my two fave hot sauces.

Griffin:

Oh, yeah, for sure. Uh, only one's in the game, in my opinion.

Rachel:

Ooh, gosh, we're gonna get a lot of comments about that.

Griffin:

I'm just saying, I used to eat a lot of Tabasco and then, like, the first time I had Cholula, I was like, "Oh, okay."

Rachel:

I know, but there are—there are so many hot sauces out there and you're gonna hear from...

Griffin:

Oh, don't get me wrong. Like, I enjoy, like, a wild... a wild and spicy hot sauce. But if I'm looking for my fricking off court buddies, it's gonna be Cholula and Sriracha.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

You know what I mean?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Like, I don't need to get our te... I'm not... it's, it's not like I'm drinking the same bottle of wine every time I drink wine, it's just these are, these are my spicy friends and I know what they bring to the table.

Rachel:

Mm-hmm.

Griffin:

Because sometimes, a spicy friend comes at you with, like, a bad chemical burn. I ate... while I was on tour, our last tour, Justin had the spicy Skittles. Holy shit.

Rachel:

Wait, what?

Griffin:

They make the Skittles and spicy though.

Rachel:

What kind of spicy?

Griffin:

I could only describe it as—

Rachel:

Like, hot? Like...

Griffin:

Uh, more, uh, like, an acid rain chemical burn in my mouth.

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh.

Griffin:

You take, you take... I ate one. It was not like I was, like, challenging myself. Justin was like, "Do you wanna eat the spicy Skittle?" And I was like, "This Skittles my favorite, so this seems like sort of, uh, an abomination in God's eyes." And he said, "No, try it, they're good." And so, I ate one and I feel like I just ate... Like, I took a big, big... if I had metal teeth and I chomped into a big thing, it just... a chemical burn in the mouth and, like, a little bit of that strawberry sweet. No, thank you.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Anyway, my second thing is the electronic entertainment expo, the E3 which I—

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Have gone to, I believe, nine times. Uh, this year would have been my tenth but—

Rachel:

Oh, my gosh, Griffin.

Griffin:

I got fired from Polygon for stealing all the cups in the office.

Rachel:

The cups?

Griffin:

Yeah, hella cups. I thought it would be a fun April Fool's Day prank, I brought 'em home and then I looked at 'em on the shelves and I said, "Oh, shoot, they look good there." And so, I didn't take 'em back and then it became less of a prank and more of... I stole all the cups.

Rachel:

The, the flaw in this—

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

Is that you say that you brought them home and I also live in the home with you—

Griffin:

Mm-hmm. Oh, they're not in the kitchen.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Yeah, they're not in the kitchen, they're in the secret kitchen I have in the attic.

Rachel:

Okay. [laughs]

Griffin:

Oh, shit.

Rachel:

Continue.

Griffin:

Now I told you about the secret attic and the kitchen. You know, sometimes, our air conditioner comes on and you'll smell, like, biscuits or eggs and you'll be like, "Huh?"

Rachel:

Gosh, you're making secret biscuits?

Griffin:

I'm making secret attic biscuits, so—

Rachel:

Jeez.

Griffin:

Anyway, E3, if you don't know about it, is, is a show I've covered in some way either there or remotely since 2008. Um, and I'm feeling a little bit blue that I'm not gonna be going to it this year. Here, here's, here's the truth, on paper... this is, like, the big video game, sort of, expo of the year. There's lots of video game conventions across the world and I've gone to a lot of them, I was lucky enough—

Rachel:

Is it—

Griffin:

To go to Tokyo Game Show and Gamescom in Cologne, Germany and a bunch of—

Rachel:

Is E3 always in Los Angeles?

Griffin:

Always. One year it was in Santa Monica, when they were beefing with the LACC but pretty much all the time, it's in Los Angeles. Um, it's the big show, basically, where all the big, big game developers and publishers come together in the Los Angeles Conventions Center and after, you know, weeks

or months of building up hype of their big announcements, they finally reveal everything that's coming.

So, on paper, it is kind of a crass event, right, like, they spend outrageous amounts of money promoting these games they're working on that'll be out over the next year or so.

They have these press conferences that are big and ostentatious, uh, with usually, without, uh, a ton of substance. They are sales pitchers that are, like, doctored to the point of, like, unbelievability. Um, and so, yes, on paper, all that, pretty, pretty bad. Um, and also, also the, the nine years that I covered this show without fail, it was always a... just a staggering amount of work at which I wasn't used to as a games industry professional.

Rachel:

Especially when you were doing, like, news team stuff.

Griffin:

Why news team stuff was wild. When I started out at Joy Stick, um, I was doing half dozen interviews every day, I was checking out over a dozen games every day or so. And there was an expectation that we'd have all that written up before I went to bed that night.

Rachel:

Yeah, like, immediately, because everybody else is doing the same thing.

Griffin:

Yeah, there was a, a desire to be first, to be fast. Uh, and I... don't get me wrong, like, I loved that feeling of being, like, side by side in the war room-

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

With all the other writers and just, like, cranking shit out. We famously, like, pretty much never went to parties, which a lot of people would go to E3, just to hobnob. We couldn't do that, because we were writing until literally... I was, like, falling asleep at my computer.

Rachel:

In the war room, did you guys ever help each other out? And somebody would be like, "What color were Mario's overalls?" And somebody would be

like, "I'm pretty sure they were green," and somebody else would be like, "No, they're yellow this time."

Griffin:

You've just described Lario and Luigi? Hold on—

Rachel:

Whoa, you've been out of the game too long.

Griffin:

I guess so. [laughs] It's been, like, three weeks and I've already forgotten the good brother's names. Um, no, it was fun. It was like, like, it was genuinely like grit your teeth and, like, let's just, like, be first and just, like, crush it. And so, it wasn't just exhausting ourselves for exhaustion sake, like, it was really enjoyable. Um, but, like, like, the years where I was doing the podcast, also at the same time, it did get a little bit too much. Especially the year where we did MaxFunCon which is a very fun weekend.

Rachel:

Oh, yeah, you went straight into it.

Griffin:

You know, a little bit exhausting. You're hiking all around and we'd do, do a show there and then literally drove down from the mountain to E3 to cover that for the next week. That was, that was pretty, pretty rough. All that said, I mentioned it will continue to be this way and it has been this way for a long time for me.

It is one of the most, like, exciting weeks of the year for me, because I, I really love video games and I always have, um... There is this culture of secrecy that game, like, creators try to maintain, most game creators. And, and I should mention here that I'm speaking almost exclusively about, like, the big Triple-A games.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

I do not mean to exclude, like, the indie games, which I think have more of a presence at, like, other shows like PAX and, uh... there's tons and tons of indie game conventions. They do get, like, some, uh, placement in, in, like, especially the press conferences, but this is mostly about Triple-A games. I just didn't wanna make it sound like that was all I really cared about.

Um, but the, the creators of these big games try to build this hype around their announcements before revealing them in one big push, to try to, like, own the day for, like, maximum exposure. And I think that's kind of bad for the industry as a whole, because, like, you don't get to see the people making the games. There's a disconnect between—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

The people making the games and the people playing the games, because the publishers try to, like, maintain the message by not letting you really see the, the, you know, the guy behind the curtain. Um, but the one good thing about that is there's one week a year where everything just goes fucking haywire.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

And, like, a billion things get announced. And, and I don't know, I just really, really love games and I love playing new games and, like, getting to experience them and try to figure out, like, what they were thinking when they made them and, uh, get to dive really deep into them. And so, having a week where it's, like, getting an idea of what my following year of entertaining myself and my favorite hobby—

Rachel:

Yeah.

Griffin:

Was going to look like. You don't really get that for movies or TV or, really, anything else. And so, I think it's kind of a cool little... maybe, like, the auto... What's the big auto show that they do? There's... I think there's an auto show equivalent. Um...

Rachel:

Super Car...

Griffin:

Super Car, yeah..

Rachel:

Polooza's...

Griffin:

Polooza's... Super Car Palooza's I think is what it's called and they do that one in the ocean. Um, if you've never been to E3 and you're not in the industry, do not go, it is not made really for enthusiasts because you usually will... I've watched people wait, rush the, like, line for the new Mario game that came out last year, uh, to wait in line in that booth... They get there and are three hundredth in line and then they spend their whole day waiting in line to play the new Mario game—

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Which is, like... if that's your jam, I do not mean to shame you, but, uh, it seems like a lot of lot of work to play the Mario—

Rachel:

Is there a set time for how long you get to play those games—

Griffin:

Oh, yeah, yeah.

Rachel:

While everyone is waiting in line?

Griffin:

Usually, the games are programmed to end.

Rachel:

Oh.

Griffin:

Like, the demo will just, like, shut off after ten minutes. Um, so, that is kind of rough. There are other shows, like, PAX is much better suited for fans. But even if you don't go, you can still watch the big press conferences to, like, see the announcements in real time. Sometimes, every few years ago, there'll also be, like, a new console cycle starting, like... "Oh, we had

PlayStation 3, guess what we got now?" "PlayStation 4?" "Yeah, it's, it's the PlayStation 4."

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, and things get really, really, wild then because there's, like, a big land grab from all the publishers and all the developers trying to, you know, be the killer, killer app on this new thing that appears. And so, things just, like, get whipped up into a frenzy. I don't think this is gonna be one of those years, but it's still, you know, really exciting when that happens. Uh, I think in 1998 when Saygo was still a big player, right, they still had... like, the Genesis had just come out and they were like, "You wanna see what we got next? It's gonna blow your fucking mind." Do you know about this?

Rachel:

I don't think so.

Griffin:

They announced their next console, which is was the Sega Saturn, which you may not have heard of because it failed miserably. But they announced it at their E3 press conference and then they said, "And it's available right now," and it was avail... you just go fucking buy one, which nobody had ever done before and nobody did again, because they didn't have time to market it at all. And like, it didn't sell.

Rachel:

That's weird.

Griffin:

It was a colossal mistake. Um, but that was more of the buck wild sort of examples of this. Um, I don't know, I just... I... like I said, like, I like knowing what my year of this hobby is going to look like and I am very... you may know this about me, like, I am very much a person who likes having things to look forward to. Um, and E3 is, like, pound for pound, like, one of the densest, sort of, examples of that, that I can think of.

Rachel:

You mentioned you were gonna watch some of it online, since you weren't going this year. How do you do that?

Griffin:

Um, all of the... like, on Twitch and YouTube—

Rachel:

Oh, okay.

Griffin:

Usually, every... yeah. So, like, Nintendo only does Nintendo Directs, they don't have a press conference, by the way. Rumors are going around about that new Animal Crossing Switch, you know I'm gonna sort of—

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Go dark.

Rachel:

I'm gonna be jealous of that alligator again.

Griffin:

Rachel's gonna get furious about this fucking digital alligator again. Um, uh, so, yeah, I'm gonna watch pretty much all of those, I think.

Rachel:

Well, I'm excited for you.

Griffin:

I'm excited for Yoshi.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Do you wanna hear some submissions from our friends at home?

Rachel:

Yes.

Griffin:

Okay. Here's one from Clementine who says, "My wonderful thing lately, has been the little pieces of cookie dough that go on top of fro-yo or an ice

cream. They're so convenient to eat, it's so delicious, like little bits of happiness."

Rachel:

I didn't even know that was a thing.

Griffin:

Yeah, cookie dough ice cream?

Rachel:

Well, okay, yeah, obviously I know about cookie dough ice cream. I didn't know that you could go to get fro-yo and just scoop a bunch of cookie dough pieces.

Griffin:

Oh, sure, maybe not at the average, uh, yogurt place, uh, but if you went to, say, like, The Country's Best Yogurt—

Rachel:

Oh, yeah? Do you have some of that?

Griffin:

We had that and we had cheese cake bites, both of which you could kind of warm up in your hand and then you could through as hard as possible at the wall—

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

And it would stick to it, which was a fun game we played in the back room a lot. Which is probably why I don't usually indulge myself in the stickier topics.

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, Sabrina says, "I don't use vending machines often, but there's such fun little adventures that end in a snack. My favorite vending machines are the ones dotting every corner of Japan, especially the one I use that literally poured a drink in a cup for me. Uh, it was like a giant rectangular outdoor

Keurig." Um, I do love myself a vending machine. I'll tell you why I love 'em, the airport coming back home, I land, I want a little snack roll, I don't wanna wait for 30 minutes to get home from the airport. Vending machine, Skittles.

Rachel:

They have a really interesting vending machine at Costco, it is an entire machine full of bottled water, yet they still let you pick your letter and number when you're buying it. So, it was a strange experience for me to look and say, "Uh, I guess I'll get C7."

Griffin:

[laughs] I'm sorry, Rachel's allergy's really bad right now or something is going on in that corner of the room. I don't mean to... I'm not laughing about that, I'm laughing about the fact that you look like you're crying, a little bit while you were talking about it. "There's this vending machine at Costco."

Rachel:

[laughs]

Griffin:

Uh, you're okay, right?

Rachel:

Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin:

Okay. Uh, Owen says, "Hey, we have different colored chip clips in our house and I absolutely love finding the matching color clips to the main color of the bag, so that they're coordinated. Thank you." Thank you, Owen.

Rachel:

That's delightful.

Griffin:

That's very good practice. Uh, seems like a little bit of work, but, um, you gotta risk it for the biscuit, as I say. And as we all know, in the UK, they refer to chips as biscuits.

Rachel:

[laughs] Perfect.

Griffin:

Yeah, and cookies as crisps, which is how you get the name Cookie Crisps. I'm just see wealth of knowledge. Um-

Rachel:

Now, could you say that as David Bowie?

Griffin:

[singing] I lost it.

Rachel:

It's okay.

Griffin:

No, it's not.

Rachel:

I pushed you, I pushed you too hard.

Griffin:

You pushed me too far.

Rachel:

Do we have any other submissions?

Griffin:

No.

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

Nobody else was grateful for anything.

Rachel:

That's not true. Hey, if people have suggestions, where would they email them?

Griffin:

Uh, wonderfulpodacast@gmail.com. Fill that thing up with, uh, whatever you want. Submissions, keep 'em tight, one, two sentences, that's gonna be

great. Um, and we sure do appreciate you. And we appreciate Bo En and Augustus for the use for our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. And, uh, thanks to Max Fun for having us on the network. They have so many shows, it's so great.

Rachel:

Uh, like Can I Pet Your Dog?

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

That's a real upbeat, fun trip into pet land with two wonderful lady hosts.

Griffin:

Yeah.

Rachel:

I'd recommend it.

Griffin:

And there's No, Stop It. Which is the sort of, um... they react to every epi... they do, like, a recap of every episode of Can I Pet Your Dog? And it's just, like, you've petted him like 30 times already, his fur's starting to come off. So—

Rachel:

If you wanna listen to other McElroy podcasts, you can find them @mcelroyshows.com.

Griffin:

That is true. And let's just wrap it right up, huh?

Rachel:

Okay.

Griffin:

'Cause, like, I need to start, I need to start editing it right now so I can remember how good the Bowie was and what it sounded like. It was like—

Rachel:

You never ask me to do my David Bowie.

Griffin:

Oh, I'm... yeah, that's a good closer. Maybe we should, maybe... because that would be the second time that we've done this, you ending your sort of, uh... episode with, uh, you doing an impression of a British celebrity. It is something that I could get really into as sort of a standardized thing. So, go ahead, Starman, Ziggy, Ziggyman, David Bowie. Let's go.

Rachel:

I'm gonna do a quote from Labyrinth.

Griffin:

Oh, great.

Rachel:

"Forget about the baby."

Griffin:

Shit.

Rachel:

[laughs]

[theme music plays]

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