

## Wonderful! 303: Number the Navels

Published November 22, 2023  
Listen here at [themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[theme music plays]

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

**Griffin:** Gobble gobble, haters. This is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** Thanks for listening to Wonderful! And this is a show that we use as a soapbox. We stand on it to get taller and to shout at you, above the crowd, um, like, "Hey! We like spaghetti!" Or, like, whatever...

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** ... it is we're talking about this week. I've never done spaghetti as a segment on the show or...

**Rachel:** I think that's what Evita does in that movie, Evita, you know?

**Griffin:** She stands on a soapbox and she goes, "I'm here to talk about spaghetti..."

**Rachel:** Spaghetti!

**Griffin:** "... to all of you." I'm— I've become obsessed with the mistake of words I just used of "I've never done spaghetti."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It makes it sound like I haven't used spaghetti as a recreational drug, um...

**Rachel:** Uh-huh?

**Griffin:** Although, I guess it is, right? You put it in your body and it makes you feel things. Um... Well, I could explain why spaghetti is drugs all day, if you wanted to give me the runway to do that, but it doesn't seem like you really do, so, um... Do you have any small wonders?

**Rachel:** Um, well, this one's a gamble because I haven't actually tested to make sure it turned out the way I wanted it to...

**Griffin:** Oh, boy.

**Rachel:** ... but, um, the lights on the hood for our stovetop burned out.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I thought, you know what? I'm just gonna take that light bulb out, I'm gonna look at it, and I'm gonna buy some more. 'Cause you know how, like, those random lights in appliances...

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** ... like, have the kind of bulb that, like, is impossible to find anywhere?

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** So I just thought, like, I'm gonna look at it, I'm gonna figure it out, and I bought them and they're waiting downstairs and I'm really excited about testing whether...

**Griffin:** Should we pause right now and go run down and check this out?

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Because now I'm gonna be on tenterhooks this whole show.

**Rachel:** Well, we can't go downstairs because our little son is there and we'll be trapped for the rest of the day.

**Griffin:** That's right, if he— Yes, if he sees you, he will climb on you, he will stay on you, and he will not ever let go.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Uh, we love that at certain parts of the day but not when mommy and daddy have to make the content...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... for the people.

**Rachel:** Anyway, I'm optimistic that I did a, uh, a good thing and that these little tiny light bulbs will fit and that it will change our life.

**Griffin:** The number of times that a light bulb has burnt out on some sort of specialty appliance and I have just looked at it and been, like, "Well, that just doesn't have lights anymore."

**Rachel:** I know! [laughs]

**Griffin:** That is... That object will no longer be illuminated in the traditional way.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, but we live here now and we are going to live here for a long time, I hope. And so I applaud your initiative.

**Rachel:** Thank you!

**Griffin:** Um, I'm gonna say, I've been watching this show called Scavengers Reign on Max, formerly HBO Max. It's an animated adult, uh, animated sci-fi show and I am obsessed with it. Uh, and can't stop thinking about it. Almost finished with it and I started watching, like, two and a half days ago or so.

It's real, real good. It's, uh, I've been describing it to people, like, if Studio Ghibli made Annihilation. It's just about people who are marooned on this

extremely alien world with this, like, really intricate alien ecology that they have to kind of, like, maneuver around.

It is, like, beautifully animated and wonderfully written and it is, uh, it is just so good. So, so good. I do not think you would like it, even—

**Rachel:** [laughs] You said that immediately. Uh, which, I mean, describing it, it does sound very good. It is not among my first choices, though, I would say.

**Griffin:** No. It was very, uh, I would say gory at times and troubling, hence the adult animation. But it is, uh, man. It kicks so much ass and, uh, I'm telling everybody that I can about it. Uh, and this is a show where I can do just that. Uh, do you want to go first? You have to, 'cause you're...

**Rachel:** [laughing] I was gonna say, that's not the way we do it.

**Griffin:** No. But I thought I'd— Would you like to?

**Rachel:** [pauses] I mean, to keep up with protocol, yes.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool.

**Rachel:** You know what a rule follower I am.

**Griffin:** The boss is really cracking down on us about protocol these days.

**Rachel:** Uh... Okay. So, my thing... This may not be familiar to you. I'm hopeful that I can describe it in a way that it will become familiar and it is the going-out top.

**Griffin:** The going-out top?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Like, when you do good at a sport and then you quit the sport and say, like...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "...I'm going out top! I'm going out top, I just got a grand slam to win the World Series, I quit! I'm going out top."

**Rachel:** Some people would say on the top, but...

**Griffin:** Not me!

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** I'm so busy playing sports that...

**Rachel:** You're in a hurry.

**Griffin:** ... sometimes, I will just cut words out sentences, just to save time for sports.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uh-huh. Uh, I am talking about a phenomenon that was popular when we were younger that has now returned and it when you wear just a regular pair of pants, maybe a pair of jeans as was popular, uh, when this was big in the early 2000s, uh, and then kind of, like, a fancy, like, a fancy, shiny or, like, a different kind of top.

**Griffin:** That's interesting that... I never think about the bottom half of my body when I go out somewhere really ever. Unless it's church and then its khakis.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And if it's not church, then it's usually just jeans or whatever pants I was wearing at the time when I started getting dressed.

**Rachel:** I wanted to show you some examples just so you would know. I found a great picture of the cast of the OC.

**Griffin:** Oh, my God. It's— Yeah.

**Rachel:** And they're all wearing going out tops.

**Griffin:** Jesus. Those are the smallest pictures I've ever seen...

**Rachel:** I don't know how to make them bigger.

**Griffin:** Can you zoom— Can you put your fingers on the touch pad and sort of separate them?

**Rachel:** Oh, there we go.

**Griffin:** I need to see these... I need to see these gorgeous tops. Yeah. I mean, those are out of sight. Those are...

**Rachel:** They're all wearing denim on bottom and, like...

**Griffin:** Denim on bottom—

**Rachel:** ... and then, like, a frilly party-looking shirt on top.

**Griffin:** A lot of— Let me— Number the navels! I cannot!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I could not hope to number the navels.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Um, this— This was a thing that really came in handy in, like, high school and college where you didn't have a lot of extra income and you were going to a place that, you know, you couldn't wear your normal clothes, but you couldn't wear a formal outfit either and it was just, like, I'm gonna spend \$12 on a shirt...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** ... and then I'm set for the night.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, and this— I never really thought of it with a name, you know? Like, when we were, uh... When I was in college, we would go out and do this and I don't think we had a name for it.

But then, I heard about this going-out top phenomenon and how it's coming back and I was, like, "Oh! That's— Yeah!" No, that was the thing. We didn't think about it that way, but that was the thing that we did.

**Griffin:** What I like about this, there's a lot I like about this, but what I really like about it is that it is the omission of concern for the pants that defines this thing. So it's not so much the going-out top. It is the all-the-time bottom. Like, the off-court buddies of the waist down.

**Rachel:** Yeah, you know, you can't really have a going out top without a regular bottom.

**Griffin:** That's right, or else you're just dressing. Now it's just clothes.

**Rachel:** Yeah, you're just dressing up.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Um, part of it too was in the early 2000s, like, designer jeans started to be really popular.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** I mean, I guess they really started to be popular in the 80s, but, like, this idea that you would spend, like, \$300 on jeans and, like, \$17 on a shirt.

**Griffin:** I love that.

**Rachel:** Um, not anything I ever did, but I did... So, my going out top, and I don't know that I ever actually wore it because I was too much of a coward. But I had this, like, black velour spaghetti strap top that just tied in the back?

**Griffin:** Oh, my goodness, babe.

**Rachel:** And I could never bring myself— I don't think I ever actually wore it. I think it sat in my closet forever.

**Griffin:** Do you still have it?

**Rachel:** No, honey. I'm sorry. [laughs]

**Griffin:** That'd be a weird vibe, I feel like.

**Rachel:** People talk about, like, "Oh, yeah, I still have—" But... That was, like, 20 years ago.

**Griffin:** I don't have any— That would be so wild.

**Rachel:** I don't think I have any clothes from 20 years ago.

**Griffin:** I think— I— The half-life of the shirts I would buy...

**Rachel:** True.

**Griffin:** Would have reduced them to their base particulate components, I feel like at this point.

**Rachel:** Uh, so when you— [laughs] When you research the history of the going out top, uh, I—

**Griffin:** Is it all just screenshots of the OC? Is it...

**Rachel:** I mean, it— Largely, like, Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan. I mean, it's all the favorites. Um, I showed you a picture that was next to the OC that had Pink, Mýa, Christina Aguilera, and Lil Kim all wearing their going out tops, but apparently the origins, according to the Washington Post in 2023, they said that it dates back to the 40s and 50s when ready-to-wear separates entered the market.

**Griffin:** Ready-to-wear separates?



**Rachel:** Instead of being yoked to the outfit sets, you had the ability to mix and match a skirt with a more formal top.

**Griffin:** You said this was the 1930s when this idea was...?

**Rachel:** No, 40s and 50s.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** A separate.

**Griffin:** Yeah, no. I mean, that's just wild, the idea of just going to a store and buying— Well, hold on. 'Cause I like that, actually. I'm saying this, but I would love it if I could just go to a store and it would be, like, shopping for a Halloween costume.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Where they would just be, like, "Here's pants and socks and shoes and hat," because it's the 30s, 40s, and 50s. "Here's hat and pants and shirt and socks and shoes. And go. Go. That's it."

**Rachel:** Well, and here's the thing, right? 'Cause when you think about, uh, the idea of the going out top, if you're like, how would that even go out of fashion? But the Washington Post article said, "in 2010s, dresses, jumpsuits, and matched sets became more standard."

**Griffin:** Oh, interesting.

**Rachel:** So, 2010s had a return to what you're talking about.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The, like, uh... This shirt goes specifically with this skirt.

**Griffin:** Yeah. But then during COVID shut down, we were all, like, itching to get back out there looking our fucking best.

**Rachel:** Well, that... So that is what's interesting. So, like, 2020s... It was more, like 2017 when I started to see articles that was, like, "the going out top is back!" Um, and then, you know, there was, of course, COVID and then there was a suggestion that maybe the going out top was popular because people don't want to wear uncomfortable clothes anymore?

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** And so, they're, like, want to keep their jeans on, but dress it up.

**Griffin:** I will say, the velour breastplate that you've described does not sound like the most comfortable sort of experience.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Um, I mean, I don't know. I don't think I ever actually wore it out.

**Griffin:** You never wore it, so we have no empirical evidence either supporting or to the contrary.

**Rachel:** The other thing that, I mean, worked in my favor was there was no social media.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** I don't think I have a picture of me in any going out top, now that I think about it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Um, but of course, you know, anybody that went out in the late 2000s probably have that.

**Griffin:** Absolutely.

**Rachel:** Uh, so part of the return, there is the suggestion that trends come back every 20 years, which, I mean, would make it about right for when I was in college.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But apparently, like, the... What is it? The Gen Z? They're, like, interested...

**Griffin:** It's just genz now.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** They like genz.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's what they like, I...

**Rachel:** And how do you know?

**Griffin:** Friends.

**Rachel:** Friends?

**Griffin:** Friends with a...

**Rachel:** Young friends?

**Griffin:** Um, well... We, I mean, I don't know— I don't know if I would call them friends. We're, like, Razor scooter... My fellow Razor scooter enthusiasts.

**Rachel:** Okay. [laughs] When you have your meetups and—

**Griffin:** Me and the other mall rats.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, so anyway, this whole Y2K period is apparently of great interest...

**Griffin:** Fuck yes!

**Rachel:** ... to the young people.

**Griffin:** I'm ready!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I've been ready for this my whole life.

**Rachel:** We went to a, like, a party that was thrown that had a 2003 theme.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And it was really— It was really eye-opening because I had never been to a party that was themed after a particular year before.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So it was really interesting to go back in that time period, uh, and really re-experience a lot of this. I did not wear a going out top to that party.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Um, but there were a lot of them in attendance.

**Griffin:** Yes. Um, no, I mean, 2003 was a great year for media. That was a lot of fun to play with at that party. Um, but yes, very disorienting because the last time I had been to a party like that was... I mean, not exactly 2003, maybe closer to 2009 or so, but still, uh, a harrowing sort of flashback.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So I still kind of think this way, like, if you were telling me we were going to a bar tonight, uh, I would...

**Griffin:** You would say, "what!?"

**Rachel:** [laugh] I would.

**Griffin:** "What are you talking about?"

**Rachel:** I would say, "Griffin, I don't know when the last time we went to a bar was."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, but the second thing I would do is I would prepare an outfit which would probably be very similar to this.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like, regular comfortable pants and then a shirt that suggests, like, "I know I'm somewhere."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That's the going out top.

**Griffin:** Yeah. That's cool, babe. I love that. I love fashion.

**Rachel:** I know!

**Griffin:** And so do you.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** We both love it so much.

**Rachel:** That's a big thing people say about us.

**Griffin:** We are at the forefront of a bold new fashion movement. [pause] And I don't know what it— I don't know what it is...

**Rachel:** Yeah, okay.

**Griffin:** ... 'cause we're so at the forefront of it that, like, we are ahead of what it actually is, of defining it.

**Rachel:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Griffin:** But whatever it is is gonna be big and lucrative.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** This is the last episode of our podcast. We are getting into fashion lines now.

**Rachel:** Yes and the fashion will be something that you wear...

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** ... and you will have never worn it before.

**Griffin:** Join us next week as we discuss going out bottoms. This is where you wear...

**Rachel:** Oh-ho!

**Griffin:** ... the worst shirt you own...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... but the pants? Hey, can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** 'Kay.

[Home Improvement sting]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** I do not know if you have much experience with the subject I'm going to discuss. I think you may. I want to talk about point-and-click adventure games.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** I know that you played a lot of, uh, like, PC games with your grandma who was an early adopter of PCs and PC gaming. I know that that was more in the sort of, like, Wolfenstein area but, uh, would like a Myst or a Monkey Island or anything along those lines?

**Rachel:** I did play a little Myst. I found it impossible, uh...

**Griffin:** Everyone felt that way about Myst. No one ever beat Myst.

**Rachel:** I played some Tomb Raider...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** ... on the computer. Um, yeah. Doom, Heretic, Wolfenstein.

**Griffin:** Yeah, those are all...

**Rachel:** Mad Dog McCree.

**Griffin:** Uh, Mad Dog McCree, we're getting closer. That one at least has clicking in it.

**Rachel:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Uh, I am talking about a genre that, much like when I talked about sort of, like, character-based rhythm games, is not around so much anymore these days. Or if it is, it is, like, in the realm of sort of indie games. Uh, but in the '80s and '90s, this was the biggest shit in the whole wide world.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, I remember when this idea of you being in constant movement came to video games.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And, like, how nauseating it was to me of just, like, aw, I can't play this for very long. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Right. Point-and-click adventure games were not that. Point-and-click adventure games were largely static screen with a little guy on it that you could make walk around and solve puzzles in a very chill way.

Uh, and it really wasn't until, sort of, computer graphics and processing became fast enough that, like, first person shooters and action games like Tomb Raider sort of, like, became what everybody wanted that people looked at adventure games and were, like, "Oh, that seems pretty fucking boring."

**Rachel:** You'd, like, move your cursor over something to see, like, "is this interactive?" [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes, yes. That is, uh, that is a beautiful staple of this, uh, genre. Um, I spent so much of my time playing adventure games. Growing up, we always had a computer from the time I was born, basically, uh and it was a—

Like, such a huge genre because when adventure games, point-and-click adventure games specifically, were coming out, like, computers couldn't do a lot more intense stuff than just that.

Um, obviously adventure games as a genre is a pretty huge umbrella starting with text-based adventures like Zork. Uh, Zork, of course. I'm looking at your for recognition of Zork, but I realize now...

**Rachel:** I don't remember Zork. I do remember Hitchhiker's Guide.

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, absolutely.

**Rachel:** That was text-based.

**Griffin:** That was a fucking great one.

**Rachel:** Uh...



**Griffin:** Um, you had, uh, stuff like— Uh, King's Quest came out which sort of added visual stuff to it that was made by a company called Sierra Online which was one of the two big sort of creators of adventure games in the 80s.

Uh, in 1985, a company called ICOM Simulations released a game for the Macintosh computer called Deja Vu, which was the first in the series of macventure games and the Macintosh computer was a sort of, like, pioneer in making it so that everybody used a mouse, uh, in addition to a keyboard.

So these games were just static screens that you would sort of, like you said, just sort of move a cursor around on...

**Rachel:** Can't you, like...

**Griffin:** ... and try to add—

**Rachel:** ... still hear the sound of a mouse in your head? Like, when you, like, move it real fast on the desktop?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I can hear that when I... [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, like a... [imitates clunky computer mouse]

**Rachel:** Yeah! [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, when there was no way to adjust sort of, like, sensitivity and so, like, in order to go, you know, coast to coast on your small computer screen, it would involve several lifts and drops of a two and a half pound piece of computer hardware.

Uh, yeah. A lot of that happened, uh, playing these sort of macventure games. The biggest name in the game was actually Lucas Arts which was originally Lucas Film Games, uh, which joined the scene in 1986. They made an adventure game adaptation of Labyrinth which I didn't know.

**Rachel:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** I never knew that there was an adaptation of Labyrinth, but this studio's sort of, uh, first foray— It didn't exactly set the world on fire, which may be why I hadn't heard of it, but their second game, Lucas Arts', uh, second game was helmed by a programmer name Ron Gilbert who would go on to sort of become one of the godfathers of this whole genre.

Uh, and that game was called Maniac Mansion. Maniac Mansion whips ass. It is, like, a pastiche of, like, b-movie tropes and, uh, like campy horror stuff. You explored— You could control three teens, uh, and you would explore this big, just scary house filled with mad scientists and monsters and...

**Rachel:** Scooby Doo.

**Griffin:** Sort of Scooby Doo-like, yeah, except with death in it. You could die in this game.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** Uh, there were very high stakes and it was kind of scary because you would just be, like, walking around doing the adventure game thing of, like, I'm gonna click on this, see if this will pick up...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... but then sometimes, like, a... You know, a mad scientist would chase you around with a knife or something. It was super scary. This game sort of changed also the way that people would interact with adventure games. Uh, Ron Gilbert created this system called the Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion, which would be acronymized into SCUMM.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** And SCUMM would become the engine for pretty much every adventure game that Lucas Arts would go on to make and they made a fucking lot of them and most of them are club bangers. Uh, Sam and Max was a big series...

**Rachel:** I played that one!

**Griffin:** Sam and Max is a classic. All the Monkey Island games, Loom, uh, which was this weird sort of, like, musical magical fantasy game. Uh, The Dig, Day of the Tentacle, which was sort of a spiritual successor to Maniac Mansion.

Uh, Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis. I think they also made a Last Crusade, um, game also. They were also adapting Lucas franchises as well.

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

**Griffin:** They're all so good and so incredible and they all use this system, SCUMM which basically, you know, you can move around and you click on things to interact with them, but then at the bottom of the screen, you have, like, 16 verbs and that's how you know, like, what you can do. So it'll be, like, turn on, turn off, pick up...

**Rachel:** Oh.

**Griffin:** ... push, kick, open.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And so using those, like, it created a way of sort of parsing what you are seeing in these games, uh, and it made them very enjoyable to play and fun to kind of, like, experiment with. Uh, those games all also had a, like, humorous streak a mile wide.

They are, sort of, irreverent and weird. A lot of the humor is, you know, not the funniest stuff I've ever seen, but it was so charming, especially the Monkey Island games are so weird. It's just, like, a full send-up of all pirate canon. Uh, instead of sword fights, you have insult fights and you have to, like, learn that mini game in order to, like, finish the entire game.

Uh, Sierra, who made King's Quest, which was a sort of more traditional, like, fantasy adventure game series that they made, like, a million of. They

would go on to keep making Quest games. Basically, they made Space Quest, like, five of those. Uh, Police Quest.

They would eventually go on to make an RPG adventure game series called Quest for Glory which is probably my favorite, uh, adventure series ever. What was neat about those games is they were just like other point-and-click adventure games, except you picked a class at the beginning and you had stats sort of, like, in D&D or whatever. And the solutions to the puzzles would change depending on what class you were playing.

So if you were playing the game as a thief, you would do completely different stuff to solve the puzzles. So it wasn't like Monkey Island where it was, like, pick up the rubber chicken and use it on this. It would be, like, oh, I'm gonna use sneaking here to, like, go in here or I'll fight with my fighter or magic as a magic user.

What was also really cool about those games is that you could save your character after you finished one game and import them into the next one. So you could have the same character through all five of the Quest for Glory games...

**Rachel:** Oh, wow. Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... which was so incredibly cool. Uh, I started playing these games, uh, probably when I was, like, seven years old or so and then I was able to sort of, like, keep my same character going throughout the whole run of them.

**Rachel:** How would that work?

**Griffin:** Floppy disks!

**Rachel:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** You would save it to a floppy disk and so whenever you loaded up a game, you could import right off the floppy disk.

**Rachel:** Okay, I was gonna say, like, that sounds like a web-based thing, but I know that couldn't have been true.

**Griffin:** Yeah, no. That's way ahead of their time.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Despite the fact that they were called Sierra Online, was the name of the— I don't know. They didn't have inter— They didn't have Internet in these things.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Um, so Sierra and Lucas Arts were sort of the two big players in this space. Uh, but other games came along and sort of broke the mold like Myst, uh, there were also a lot of Myst games.

Riven was a very good one that was also kind of creepy. It was like Myst except sometimes you'd be walking around and then you'd turn a corner and there'd just be a little ghost boy there. Woo, spooky stuff!

And then, of course, there were, like, full motion video adventure games, uh, which were all pretty universally terrible. Um, don't tell Justin I said that. Uh—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I have so much fondness for these games, partially because of, like, you know, they really were the only sorts of games that were coming out on the PC for a long time and they were the only types of games that we had and so I have a lot of nostalgia for them for that reason.

**Rachel:** I just remembered one!

**Griffin:** What?

**Rachel:** The 7th Guest?

**Griffin:** The 7th Guest, absolutely The 7th Guest!

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** 7th Guest fucking rules.

**Rachel:** When you said little ghost boy, it, like... [laughs]

**Griffin:** I think they're remaking 7th Guest.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah?

**Griffin:** Or maybe it just came out, yeah. I think so. Um, so, uh... These games, like, they weren't just, like, the only games coming out. They were also, like, vast in comparison to, like, other games. Like a Wolfenstein, right? Like, Wolfenstein, not much for story or really any writing or any character development or anything along those lines.

You could get that with adventure games and so that was just eye-opening for me, somebody who, you know, had been playing video games my whole life, uh, as a child, getting to play a game and being, like, "Whoa, actually, this story I'm, like, vibing with." Or, "this joke in Day of the Tentacle, like, actually made me laugh really loud and I didn't know video games could do that."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But like I said, graphics got better, processing became, uh, you know, stronger. First person shooters became every game, uh, and other sort of action games, and so pretty much around the turn of the century, uh, adventure games just sort of died off completely.

Uh, in 2004, there was a company called Tell-Tale Games which tried to revive Sam and Max and some of those old series. Uh, then they started to do adventure game adaptations of sort of niche franchises, uh...

**Rachel:** They did the Walking Dead game, didn't they?

**Griffin:** So, yeah, in 2012...

**Rachel:** Yeah, I remember.

**Griffin:** ... they had this huge smash hit with the Walking Dead which they made I think a few seasons of, uh. Tell-Tale was unique in that they would make adventure game seasons so you would play, like, a two or three hour long chunk that would be, like, episode one of, like, a five part season. Uh, and we adored those games.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We played the hell out of those. Uh, looking back on sort of the Walking Dead media property as a whole, I think I like those better than the TV or the comic or anything else that really came out of those, uh, because they were gritty as hell and, uh, fascinating and presented sort of moral dilemmas that were very, uh, thoughtful and unique and, uh, really, like, great for same-screen sort of, like, multiplayer like you're watching an interactive movie.

Which is kind of, like, the height of what this genre could do. Unfortunately, Tell-Tale, uh, had a huge success with Walking Dead. They did a bunch of other, like, really great adventure game adaptations, but unfortunately they, like, expanded way too far, way too fast.

They overstaffed, like, a ridiculous degree and took on all of these different, uh, like, licensing deals to, like, make a Game of Thrones one and make a X, Y, or Z one, and, uh, they shut down in, like, 2018 because they just sort of, uh, they bloated a little too fast.

Um, so now point-and-click adventure games are, like I said, sort of the indie game territory. And they are doing, like, incredibly interesting stuff with them. There's stuff like There is No Game which we actually watched a video, I believe of LankyBox playing with Henry the other day.

**Rachel:** Yeah! Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which is very, very good. Uh, or Curse of the Golden Idol is one that came out last year that I really liked. Uh, they're keeping the spirit alive of adventure games and sort of innovating them in cool new ways.

But, like I talked about in sort of the character-based rhythm game segment I did a few weeks ago, like, there will never be another time like the 80s and 90s for adventure games or for any genre of game ever.

Uh, again, because, you know, the... Right now, I have Steam open on my computer, I could click on three buttons and play any of, like, 50 thousand games or something like that.

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

**Griffin:** Uh, so I have, like I said, a lot of nostalgia for point-and-click adventure games and I will still go back and replay, you know, Quest for Glory or some of those old ones, um, because once you know, like, what to use the rubber chicken on, you can pretty much burn through those games in, like, 30 minutes or so. Can I tell you what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes!

**Griffin:** Hemlock says, "My small wonder is farmers' market vendors recognizing me. I go to my town farmers' market every week and the vendor who sells cheese recognizes me now. It makes me feel so cool and like I'm in a little video game and our friendship level has increased.

**Rachel:** Did that ever happen to us?

**Griffin:** Um... There— Yes! At, uh, the Austin farmers' market, we used to get ginger beer from the same vendor and there was a woman there who... Because the ginger beer vendor, you could bring your old bottle of ginger beer back.

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



**Griffin:** She would be, like, "More of the same, Mr. McElroy?" She didn't know me by...

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** But there was a flash of recognition whenever she saw us.

**Rachel:** Yeah, we used to go almost every weekend and we would get, like, the same five things.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I don't remember there— anyone ever being, like, "The usual?"

**Griffin:** There was, like, a Thai meal kit place too and they—

**Rachel:** Did they remember us?

**Griffin:** They would— I remember one time I walked up and they were, like, "What did you think of that, you know, tom kha soup?" And I'd, you know, say, like...

**Rachel:** Aw, that's nice.

**Griffin:** "Well, it was very, very good." Um, Chris says, "My small wonder is shirts without physical tags. They don't irritate your skin and you don't have to try to cut them only to have them sharp and itchy or end up cutting the shirt. Bonus points if they have a printed graphic on the inside of the shirt. All the useful material and washing information with none of the irritation."

**Rachel:** Yes! This is, like, almost the only kind of shirt I will buy for our children.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Just because I remember that sensation as a kid...

**Griffin:** The worst.

**Rachel:** Of, like, for whatever reason, in children's clothes, the tags were always, like, they would jut straight out.

**Griffin:** And there would be, like, six of them?

**Rachel:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Griffin:** It was like a mattress situation...

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** ... inside of there. Um, thank you to Bob 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 to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Go to MaximumFun.org, check out all the great shows that they have there and, uh, download them all. Download every episode 10 times. And... Oh! Candlesnights is coming up.

**Rachel:** Yeah! But before that, 'Til Death Do us Blart.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit, that's right. I don't know why I'm saying oh, shit.

**Rachel:** This is— This is—

**Griffin:** I already had to watch the movie and...

**Rachel:** This is gonna come out the day before.

**Griffin:** That's right!

**Rachel:** For those of you that don't know, uh, every American Thanksgiving, they release this podcast, uh, and it is a delight.

**Griffin:** Yes, this is our ninth year, uh, of watching Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 with our friends Tim and Guy from, uh, The Worst Idea of All Time. Um, and,

uh, well, the ninth viewing of Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 is when you really start to unlock a lot of stuff.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Um...

**Rachel:** And then Candlenights, of course.

**Griffin:** And then Candlenights is, uh, coming in December. You can find a link to tickets for that at McElroy.family, as always. Uh, proceeds for that show... It's a virtual live holiday spectacular. Not live.

A virtual holiday spectacular. Uh, will go to benefit Harmony House in Huntington, uh, an organization we adore and, uh, we have other merch and stuff over at McElroyMerch.com, so why don't you go check that out too? There's some great Blart merch, actually, on there, if, uh...

**Rachel:** I saw that!

**Griffin:** ... if you do feel so inclined. Um, that's it. I have to go right now because I have an appointment to get to. Um, thank you so much. Thank you so much for joining us.

**Rachel:** Namaste.

**Griffin:** Namaste. As always, like we say at the end of every show, namaste.

**Rachel:** Namaste.

**Griffin:** And, um... And also with you.

**Rachel:** Exactly.

**Griffin:** Sort of mixing my spiritual...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[theme music plays]

Maximum Fun

A worker-run network  
of artist-owned shows  
supported directly by you.