

Wonderful! 310: Body Burn

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: And this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful, the show where we talk about things that's good that we like that we're into them.

Rachel: Can I just get started with a thing that I like?

Griffin: Oh my goodness, yeah!

Rachel: I don't know if you've noticed this yet. So, we are starting to get warmer temperatures and all the snow that accumulated is starting to melt. Have you heard the sound of the snow coming off the roof?

Griffin: Yeah. You like this, 'cause it scares the piss out of me every time it happens.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Every time it happens it sounds like a reverse Santa Claus has just set down on our roof.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, we—and this happened when we lived in Austin, too, although it didn't snow quite as much. But we have a particularly steep roof, and now that everything is melting you hear these huge crashes. It sounds like a, um, like a big dumpster is rolling off the side of our house. And I don't know, it's like a nice little, like—'cause you know, you always have that moment where you're like, "Oh my god, what is—" and then you realize what it is and you're like, "Oh, good!"

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: "That's good."

Griffin: I am—it's funny, because I feel like last week I was very bullish on snow.

Rachel: Uh-huh, uh-huh, me too.

Griffin: Bullish is good, right? I get it confused. I'm not, like, a stocks guy. But I think bullish is good. We like snow. Last week we were like, "Hell yeah, baby. Snow, sledding, snowballs, snow angels, making dinosaur footprint tracks in the snow. We love all this stuff. Igloo."

Rachel: We're not used to living in a space, uh, where snow sticks around for a long time. Neither of us has really experimented that since Chicago. So when, like, we saw snow we were like, "Ooh, yay, snow!"

And then, like, two days later it was like, "Still snow?"

And then, like, a week later it was like, "Done? Done snow?"

Griffin: The same snow. We're done now. Um, but we're moving onwards. We're excited for the wild 60 degree temperatures that we're supposed to be having this weekend. I'm already looking forward to the outrageous sort of sinus reaction I'm gonna have to that. I'm just penciling in Friday, snoozing, Neti. I'm gonna be Neti—a Neti Freddy.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Do you have another small wonder or is that it? Like, is that—do you think that qualified?

Rachel: I could do another one.

Griffin: Okay, okay.

Rachel: So, I'm gonna start out—it's gonna seem like it's not a good thing, and then you're gonna find out why it's a good thing.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So, I have been called to jury duty for three times, which has gotta be pretty unique, right?

Griffin: I've never been called, so I do not know.

Rachel: Yeah. This happened when I lived in Illinois, this happened when I lived in Texas, and now that I have been in DC all of a year and a half, it has also happened. And each time I am told, "Thank you for your service. We are not needing you for anything."

And the feeling of that...

Griffin: Rachel was a mari—we should make clear, Rachel was a marine.

Rachel: [laughs] Well, you're supposed—like, when you're called to jury duty you can, like, only be called, as I understand it, once a year? I don't know. There's a set span of time, and if you don't have to serve, it still counts.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So, like, I can't be called back anytime soon. And I love...

Griffin: Double jeopardy.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's what that is.

Rachel: I love that it counts, and I didn't have to do anything.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That's fun.

Griffin: That is fun, I do like that. Maybe they came to a plea... arrangement. Maybe a plea was done.

Rachel: Oh, uh-huh? Yeah, one of those, like, four PM pleas the day before.

Griffin: One of those four PM pleas.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: We're not lawyer guys.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Over here.

Rachel: We're the only people in DC—

Griffin: We're the only non-lawyers in DC.

Rachel: —that are not lawyer guys.

Griffin: Um, I'm gonna say Tingus Goose is a game on my phone.

Rachel: Yes. Okay, I would like more of an explanation about what this is.

Griffin: Tingus Goose, it's an idle game. Do you know that genre?

Rachel: You have told me about this. It's where you, like, set something up and then it just goes.

Griffin: Yes, then you come back to it later and get stuff. In this one you have a goose that is just a long head—a big head on a big, long neck and it grows upwards like a tree. And then things branch off of the sides of your goose tree, uh, that are sort of like different little bounce pads, right? You think about 'em as, like, uh... little trampolines, right?

And then you have little Tinguses, which are basically just like little babies that shoot out of the top of the goose, and then they go down and down and down and fall down 'cause of gravity, and they bounce off of all the different bounce pads, and the idea is to just create a sort of, like, machine that bounces a bunch of babies and gets a bunch of money—you get money every time the baby bounces. If you get three babies to touch they combine into a better baby, worth more money. And then if three of those touch—and it keeps going and keeps going and keeps going.

So you basically—it's just like setting up a little vertical conveyor belt, a little marble run situation where you try to get the babies to combine and make you a bunch of money, and it's very weird. It's a very, very weird game.

Uh, there's, like, a pregnant lady on a table, and the goose is growing out of her—her belly? And that's why I guess there's so many babies?

Rachel: Wild.

Griffin: It gets into a lot of sort of, like, existential horror stuff. But it's one of the better idle games I feel like I've played lately, 'cause I just love... I just love tweakin' my goose, you know?

Rachel: [laughs] God...

Griffin: You go first this week.

Rachel: I do!

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I woke up this morning determined to take our audience on a trip to the poetry corner, and good news: I found a corner in which we can have poetry together.

Griffin: [imitates bass line? Scatting?] "[singing] Poetry corner [unintelligible] eggs... " I forgot. It's been so long since I've been to the poetry corner I forgot.

Rachel: I know, it feels like a really long time!

Griffin: I forgot how we get in it.

Rachel: Uh, the poet I wanted to talk about this week is Ron Padgett.

Griffin: Don't know... Ron.

Rachel: Ron. Ron, uh, born in 1942 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Griffin: Oh! R—now I know Ron.

Rachel: Yeah. Were you thinking of Don Padgett?

Griffin: I was thinking of Don Padgett who hails from Nebraska.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, this guy moved to New York City in 1960, attended Columbia College, and is still there today, in big ol' New York City.

But, uh, I was kind of fascinated to learn about him. 'Cause I, you know, I kind of have, like, a poetry biography in my head. Like, if you had to ask me, "How did this poet get started?"

I would say, "Oh, well, they went to college and they took some creative writing classes, and then they published some poems, and now they teach at a university."

Griffin: [sing-song] Boring!

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, Ron got started really early, with this kind of fascinating, like, capitalization on timing. So when he was 13 he started writing, and then he started a literary magazine in high school called The White Dove Review with his friends, and started soliciting the work of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Robert Creeley...

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: ... uh, Ted Berrigan, and Amiri Baraka.

Griffin: In high school!

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. He, uh, published five issues, and I guess just had a sense of, like, what poets were doing the big stuff, and reached out to them directly and said "Hey, send me something and I'll publish it in my literary magazine," and they were like, "Okay."

Griffin: You think maybe Jack Kerouac didn't, like, google the magazine name to find out if it was a high school publication or not?

Rachel: I mean, as you might remember, he was born in 1942.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So when he was in high school it was, like, the '50s.

Griffin: We didn't have Goo—no Google.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, there was no way for these poets to know.

Griffin: Just Ask Jeeves, yeah.

Rachel: And at that time I'm sure all these poets were, you know, desperate to be published.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Probably had pieces that they had been shopping around and nobody had taken.

Griffin: I love this.

Rachel: Yeah. So he, um—so he got it started before he even entered college. Um, he... moved to New York City, as I mentioned, and became really interested in kind of the New York school of poets, which I have mentioned before. Frank O'Hara was one of those poets.

But while he was at Columbia College he had the opportunity to study with Kenneth Koch, who I have mentioned before on the show. Uh, just... what is kind of amazing—I mean, I guess it's always amazing when artists find other artists. But, like, I see that as a big incentive to, like, return to academia is it's like you get—you get connected to these people that are doing the work and are tremendous resources for you.

Griffin: Well, yeah, especially if you go to school in New York City in whatever the—the early 60's.

Rachel: Yeah, no, that's true.

Griffin: Probably one of the more—one of the hotter hotbeds of poetic activity.

Rachel: Uh, so let me share a little bit. So, his work has been described—the poet James Tate wrote:

"Ron Padgett's poems sing with absolutely true pitch, and they are human-friendly. Their search for truths both small and large can be cause for laughter or at least a thoughtful sigh."

Griffin: Hmm.

Rachel: Uh, which is exactly the kind of poet that I'm looking typically to bring to Wonderful.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: You know. Uh, a poet from a human.

Griffin: Mm-hmm. You did bring that dog poet one time—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —which I thought was... interesting?

Rachel: Bark, bark, bark.

Griffin: Right...

Rachel: Bark... bark, bark, bark. Bark.

Griffin: I carry it in my bark.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, so I wanted to read the poem Survivor Guilt that he had published in 2014.

Griffin: Sounds funny so far!

Rachel: [laughs] I mean, a lot of poets at this point—I mentioned he was born in 1942. He is now 81. Been around for a while. In his poem, Survivor Guilt is more in reference to the fact that he is an older man.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Uh, it's not gonna be anything, uh, particularly traumatic, I would hope, for people.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Survivor Guilt.

"It's very easy to get.
Just keep living and you'll find yourself
getting more and more of it.
You can keep it or pass it on,
but it's a good idea to keep a small portion
for those nights when you're feeling so good
you forget you're human. Then drudge it up
and float down from the ceiling
that is covered with stars that glow in the dark
for the sole purpose of being beautiful for you,
and as you sink their beauty dims and goes out—
I mean it flies out the nearest door or window,
its whoosh raising the hair on your forearms.
If only your arms were green, you could have two small lawns!
But your arms are just there and you are kaput.
It's all your fault, anyway, and it always has been—
the kind word you thought of saying but didn't,
the appalling decline of human decency, global warming,
thermonuclear nightmares, your own small cowardice,
your stupid idea that you would live forever—
all tua culpa. John Phillip Sousa
invented the sousaphone, which is also your fault.
Its notes resound like monstrous ricochets.

But when you wake up your body
seems to fit fairly well, like a tailored suit,
and you don't look too bad in the mirror.
Hi there, feller! Old feller, young feller, who cares?
Whoever it was who felt guilty last night,
to hell with him. That was then."

Griffin: That's good shit, man.

Rachel: Isn't that pleasing?

Griffin: That is very pleasing. And very relatable, even though I am not an 81-year-old man.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. Uh... I found this, like, a nice little affirmation. You know? I have that experience a lot where, you know, yesterday I'm just devastated and torn up and, like, focused on the hundred things that I feel like need to be improved, and then I wake up and there is always that moment where it's like, oh, that doesn't feel as intense to me right now.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: And I just liked that poet and that poem as a nice way to start this new year, you know?

Griffin: Yeah. I like that too.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I hope that I'm that sort of, uh, I don't know... wistful and also whimsical when I am in my 80s.

Rachel: Yeah, no kidding.

Griffin: The idea of there being that upswing in the morning when I'm in my 80s sounds actually pretty appealing.

Rachel: Well, to be fair, this was published, like, ten years ago, so he was in his 70s.

Griffin: Oh, okay. Totally different story.

Rachel: Totally different.

Griffin: Totally different.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Thank you.

[ad break]

Griffin: From the twisted minds that brought you *The Adventure Zone: Balance*, and *Amnesty*, and *Graduation*, and *Ethersea*, and *Steeplechase*, and *Outre Space*, and all the other ones, the McElroy brothers and Dad are proud to reveal a bold vision for the future of actual play podcasting.

It's, um... it's called *The Adventure Zone Versus Dracula*?

[music plays]

Justin: Yeah, we're gonna kill Dracula's ass.

Travis: Well, we're gonna attempt—we haven't recorded all of it yet. We will attempt to kill Dracula's ass.

Justin: *The Adventure Zone Versus Dracula*.

Griffin: Yes. A season I will be running using the D&D 5th Edition rule set, and there's two episodes out for you to listen to right now! We hope you will join us. Same bat time, same bat channel, for more fun.

Clint: Bats. I see what you did there.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

Griffin: You ready for this?

[pause]

Griffin: Are you ready for this?

Rachel: Oh, you—do you need my consent?

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: [through laughter] Yes, I'm ready.

Griffin: You really left me hanging to dry there!

Rachel: [laughs] I thought that was just like a—like a—

Griffin: Like I was about to go into a Jock Jam? Like a solo Jock Jam?

Rachel: Exactly. Yes.

Griffin: No. I'm asking, are you ready for this?

Rachel: I think so, yes.

Griffin: Ranch! [pause] Flavor. Ranch flavor.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Ranch flavor, and dressing. Ranch.

Rachel: Alright!

Griffin: Ranch.

Rachel: Alright.

Griffin: You're trying to play a cool hand right now, like you don't like ranch.

Rachel: No, I would say it was kind of my gateway salad dressing, for sure.

Griffin: For a lot of people. For a lot of Americans, certainly.

Rachel: Yeah. It's one of those flavors that I feel like is usually a hit.

Griffin: Yeah. Always love to see ranch. Always love when ranch is involved.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I'm talking about the flavor and the dressing here now, because you can kind of abstract them from one each other—one another, but they are both very powerful in their own right. Henry has gotten very into ranch flavor chips lately, so much so that he has requested ranch flavored variations of chips that do not exist, uh, like [crosstalk]—

Rachel: What does he—what did he ask for?

Griffin: He really wanted ranch Wheat Thins for a while.

Rachel: That was a thing.

Griffin: I think it was, but it ain't no more.

Rachel: Yeah, no. 'Cause I searched it and saw a photo of a box, proving that at one point they did exist.

Griffin: Yes. But not—not—not any longer.

Rachel: Good idea, though.

Griffin: Great idea!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Seeing him sort of, like, really get fired up about this—this zesty flavor has really kind of rekindled my own appreciation for this creamy white stuff, because I also kind of discovered it in elementary school, and ate it with basically everything for a long, long time. Um...

Rachel: Like what? Can you give me an example?

Griffin: I mean, salad, certainly. But then, like, any kind of—anything that could be dipped.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so I was big into, like, popcorn chicken or popcorn shrimp, uh, I would go nuts on ranch with that.

Rachel: Ohhh, okay.

Griffin: Um... pizza crusts, uh, absolutely going down there.

Rachel: That blew my mind, by the way. Somehow I grew up in the Midwest for 18 years, did not know that was a thing, and then my college town had a chain called Gumby's, and they had what they called Pokey Stix, which is basically cheese bread, and it came with ranch. And I was like, "Oh my god. Where has this been my whole life?"

Griffin: Yeah. It's very, very, very good. I have never really considered the constituent components that make up ranch flavor, uh, but it is usually made from buttermilk, salt, garlic, onion, mustard, chives, parsley, dill, pepper, paprika, and ground mustard seed, all of which are sort of incorporated into a mayonnaise-like base. Um, that makes sense. There's not much surprise in there.

If it had been like, "And also, watermelon," or something wild.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Um, ranch dressing is the most popular dressing in the US. According to a Slate article that was published in 2005, it overtook Italian dressing all the way back in 1992.

These days, I will say, I don't usually spring for ranch as a salad dressing. If I am dressing a salad or ordering a salad from a restaurant, ranch is usually not what I spring for anymore.

Rachel: It's very heavy. It's very physically heavy. [laughs]

Griffin: Yes. I love it as a dip, I love it as a flavor. But on a salad it turns the salad into a mostly cream-based experience.

Rachel: Yes, yes.

Griffin: That is kind of not as pleasing for me anymore.

Rachel: It's a very strong flavor, as you mentioned, too. It's kind of good on, like, one thing at a time. A salad has a lot of things in it, and it's just all gonna taste like ranch. [laughs]

Griffin: Yes. Uh, these days I will spring for an Italian or a balsamic vinaigrette.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I like a Russian or a thousand island dressing if I want to go the more sort of cream-based route. Um, I will typically go that way. Um, ranch dressing's strength as a dip, though, is just unrivaled. If I see a veggie tray I'm always like, "Eh." But then when I see ranch dressing with the veggie tray I'm like, "Okay."

Rachel: On a carrot stick?

Griffin: On a carrot stick? Forget about it! When I was in high school our cafeteria had, like, a little condiment stand where you could—they had those, like, ballpark lever action [laughs] ketchup and mustard pumps. And then there was a ranch dressing one. And so just pretty much every day I would have ranch dressing with whatever it was that I was eating for lunch that day, which is probably too much ranch dressing to eat.

Rachel: [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um, so... [laughs quietly] okay. Ranch dressing was invented by a guy named Steve Henson. The background I could find leaves some pretty huge gaps in the story of ranch dressing that I did not have time to really hit NexisLexis and do my own firsthand, peer-reviewed research on, so instead I'll just call attention to those gaps and try to—maybe we can piece it together ourselves.

Uh, he lived with his wife in Anchorage, Alaska. He was working as a plumbing contractor. The Wikipedia article on this man says—it fails us tremendously here, because it then says, after stating where he lives, it says:

"While there, he invented a new salad dressing."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I want the, like, Slumdog Millionaire background story behind this story, behind that, because people don't just invent salad dressings.

Rachel: I mean, if you had to ask me the story of ranch, I would assume, one, that it took place on a ranch.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, that it, you know, somebody maybe had, like, a large property and had to feed a lot of people and just combined a lot of seasoning together. Like, in my head, the story of ranch is very, um, I don't know, like, agriculture-based. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: We'll get there. But I'm more surprised by, like, I don't know... it—a hobbyist invented ranch dressing. Like, not a professio—not a food scientist or a, you know, chef. A contract plumber just on the side invented ranch dressing.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Why? How? What... happened? How did he do this? Um, we don't know. But it apparently, uh—it worked for him, 'cause he retired from plumbing at 35.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which seems young to retire from plumbing. And he moved to Santa Barbara, California. In 1956 he bought a sort of guest ranch in San Marcos Pass in California, and he renamed it.

Rachel: Ohhh. Hidden Valley?

Griffin: Hidden Valley Ranch. Uh, and he served his amazing dressing to the guests that would come through the—the ranch.

Rachel: Just like shot glasses on, like, a sterling silver tray.

Griffin: Yes, exactly.

[both laugh]

Griffin: Uh, there was also some restaurants in the area that he sold it to, and then he began to sell the packages of ranch dressing mix in stores in 1957 on a very small scale basis, but very quickly he realized like, we got a fuckin' hit, folks! Uh, and basically converted the entire building, the entire ranch into a production line for his incredible zesty stuff. By the mid-1960's, no longer was the ranch taking guests. Instead it was just creating ranch dressing and ranch dressing flavors, which he sold through a mail order business up until 1972, when of all companies Clorox bought the Hidden Valley Ranch brand.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, for eight million dollars, and—

Rachel: Our cleaning solution doesn't smell enough like food. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, that's what surprised me. I didn't know Clorox had a food sort of subsidiary. Clearly they do, because the idea of, I don't know, ranch-flavored Tide Pods or whatever seems, like, so yucky to me.

So we get a few more evolutions in ranch technology after that. In 1983, Clorox would sort of find out how to synthesize non-refrigerated ranch dressing, which made it much easier to sell in bottled forms at stores without having to put it in the cool section.

Speaking of the cool section, in 1987, the year of my birth, the game would evolve once more when Doritos introduced the Cool Ranch Dorito chip, which was really sort of the first introduction of ranch flavor on a thing that is not a salad.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Uh, and some other sort of chip brands. I mean, every chip brand has, like, a ranch version. Wavy Lays has a Hidden Valley Ranch flavor that's been around since, like, 1993. Um, and so, you know, obviously they started singing a song that got the whole world singing.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I still, to this day, will destroy a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos.

Rachel: Oh yeah.

Griffin: And allow it to, in turn, destroy my stomach and breath... and finger smell.

Rachel: [laughs] Finger smell.

Griffin: My finger smell. Just my sort of—my general aroma. I will also say the creation and then heartbreaking discontinuation of the Cool Ranch Doritos Locos Taco at Taco Bell remains one of the cruelest sort of stories in the history of food.

Rachel: You know what's funny is that whenever you go out and try something like that, I always think, like, this is insane. You're an insane person.

And then it goes away and I'm like, "Well, now I never got to have it."

Griffin: You never got to have that, and that's heartbreaking.

Rachel: Look at me, I thought I was too cool for school, and now I never know.

Griffin: Imagine a Taco Bell, you know, hard shell taco.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: But then, like, make it taste like Cool Ranch Doritos times a million.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Pretty fucking good, yeah! Lot of flavor per bite.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: The FPB on these bad boys is off of the charts.

Rachel: I was thinking about this guy inventing ranch. There had to be, like, a hundred milder versions that he just kept stepping up until he was like, "That's it. That's the one." And everybody was like, "It's too much. You're crazy." And he's like, "I'm gonna do it."

Griffin: "I'm gonna put more. More in."

Rachel: "This is how much I want." [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. It's not a simple recipe. It's not like a... again, I'm just blown away by this dude, 'cause it's not just a couple ingredients that you mixed—you didn't put honey and mustard together and was like, "It's honey mustard."

This has a lot of components in it that you have to sort of alchemize into a proper blend. And my man just fucking crushed it, right outta the gate!

Rachel: Yeah. I will say, when I was avoiding dairy for our son's reasons, I kept looking for, like, a vegan ranch. And it was very difficult. Like, everybody could kind of handle the flavor, but the consistency was challenging without that, like, buttermilk, like, heavy fat piece.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah, we didn't really have—I can't remember a good one of tho—I also ate a lot of vegan options, and I was surprised to find out how just sort of solid the offerings were across the board. But we never really did crack the ranch code on that one.

But that's really all I've got. I just really do—I do love ranch, as a... I eat less of it now, because it is an overpowering flavor, and it does sort of just take over whatever it is that you eat. Oh, god! On a buffalo wing?

Rachel: Yes. Yes.

Griffin: To counteract the spiciness of a—fucking forget a—oh my god, my mouth is watering right now just thinking about that.

Rachel: Yeah. The celery stick? Mm-hmm.

Griffin: On a celery stick, too. I just—there's lots of subtle flavors in the world, and that's... good. And then there is ranch, which has just a singular, overpowering flavor that is unlike anything else. And I think that is also beautiful. It takes all kinds. And I would...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: ... do anything to eat some ranch dressing right now. I don't think we have any in the house.

Rachel: We don't! I think about that every time I, like—we have leftover pizza, for example, which includes today. And I think, like, "How good would it be if we had ranch in the fridge right now?" And we just don't.

Griffin: Let's... make a—

Rachel: Add it to the list.

Griffin: I'm adding it to the list right this second.

Rachel: I get a little notification on my phone that says, "Griffin McElroy added ranch to your shared list." And now—

Griffin: [laughs] I tapped it in and it autofilled in our grocery app a former entry that just says, "Ranch flavor Wheat Thins question mark?"

Rachel: [through laughter] I know. I optimistically left that on our list for so long, just so I would keep searching for it, thinking maybe there is an establishment in this region that has them. I have not found it yet.

Griffin: We also had ranch rice crackers and ranch rice cakes. The idea of a big ranch rice cake I do like. Just a big sort of personal pan pizza of rice cake but covered in ranch dressing.

Rachel: Yeah. I haven't been able to find 'em.

Griffin: Damn! Okay. Anyway, that's it for ranch. We got some submissions from our friends at home. If you want to send yours in, please send your email to wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com. Keep it brief, a sentence or two about something that you're fired up about, and maybe we'll read it on the show. Let's start with Jake.

"My small wonder is watching YouTubers do circuit bends on musical consumer electronics. Some of the creations they make really push the limits of what the brands originally intended."

I don't know if you're familiar with this scene.

Rachel: I don't know what this means.

Griffin: Basically, there is a sort of subgenre of, like, music maker content creators, and also electricians, who will crack open a thing like a speak and spell, and then change the wiring inside or change the voltage that is being powered through the various components to make it make other, wilder noises.

So maybe it's the sound that the speak and spell is supposed to make, except it's, like, crazy glitched out, sort of like screaming.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: There's, like, a whole world of people taking any sorts of, you know, battery operated toys or whatever, and then circuit bending them. Furbies is a big one, 'cause you can make a Furby open its mouth and shout some arcane cyber language. That is very cool to watch.

Uh, Danielle says:

"My small wonder is a hot bath on a cold day. After a very cold day when you can feel the chill in your bones, there's nothing like a hot bath to thaw out and feel like a human again."

This is true. I miss—we don't really have a great bathtub solution in our house, but I did—we have been playing with our kids outside a lot in the snow this past week, and I think two days ago I came right in from outside and hopped right in the shower. Oh, man that was good stuff.

Rachel: I bet that was good.

Griffin: That burn—like, the sort of burning feeling that you get from, like, heating up your cold body.

Rachel: Really fast like that, yeah.

Griffin: Really fast like that. That is so good. It's the opposite of brain freeze. It's body burn.

Rachel: [laughs] Griffin's new fitness series.

Griffin: My new fitness series. My new erotic thriller, Body Burn.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, thank you so much for listening. Thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description.

Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. They got so many good shows over there that you should go check out. And we also have a bunch of merch over at mcelroymerch.com, um, that we're gonna be updating very soon, when the new month rolls over, so keep it locked.

Rachel: Gosh, I can't believe January's almost over!

Griffin: I know, I know. It's a fast one. It's a fast one. That'll happen when your kids are out of school half of the month.

Rachel: Oh, god.

Griffin: So—but we're back in it, baby. Back in the swing of things. February's looking bright!

Rachel: Sort of. [laughs]

Griffin: Sort of. Um, until then, stay—stay with us... well, don't. No, leave! We'll be—come back in a week!

Rachel: But keep us in your hearts. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Keep us in your hearts! Please?! [singing distantly] Think of me.

[theme music plays]

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