

Wonderful! 311: Pretty Honkin' Schnozes

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: This is Wonderful, a show where we talk about things that's good that we like that we're into. We hope that you've come to the right place and that you—oh, no. Someone's standing up in the back of class right now. They look real nervous.

They're like, "Uh-oh. I thought that this was, uh... I thought this was one of them murder shows. I'm supposed to be in Murder Shows 101. How to get away—I was supposed to be in How to Get Away with Murder class!"

Rachel: Griffin doesn't really like the murder shows.

Griffin: No, I don't. I guess—

Rachel: What is it about murder that you think is bad?

Griffin: Well, I'll tell you.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You know how I'm sort of socially... not all—not all there? Like, I'm uncomfortable with a lot of sort of interactions?

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Murder seems like one of the more... sort of transgressive social interactions that you can do.

Rachel: I know, that's why it's so delicious.

Griffin: Gross!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, do you have any—do you think anyone ever stood up in the How to Get Away with Murder class and was like, "I'll be straight with you guys."

Rachel: [laughs] "You're all under arrest." [laughs]

Griffin: "I'm supposed to be in, like, uh, Earth Sciences, and I have been so embarrassed to, like, stand up. You all seem like you're really into this, and I'm gonna—I'm gonna go learn about minerals."

Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do! So you've got kind of a grunge look going on.

Griffin: You like that.

Rachel: Which I like. But actually my small wonder is a t-shirt over a long sleeve shirt.

Griffin: That's the opposite of what I'm doing, though.

Rachel: That's from the grunge era.

Griffin: Yes, okay, yes.

Rachel: It made me think of—I always get delighted when I think of the fact that I could wear a t-shirt over a long sleeve shirt. It is not something I remember to do frequently because it's not really the style anymore, but any time I see someone doing it I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I could do that!" [laughs]

Griffin: I guarantee you that'll come back. I feel like the cyclical way that fashion trends go—and I'm really plugged into this shit, if you can't tell—

Rachel: [through laughter] Uh-huh.

Griffin: I feel like 20... 26, around the time that the internet stops being a thing we all use, I think we're all gonna go full fuckin' Doug on it. Just all our underwear on the outside of the pants, Quailman style.

Rachel: Ohh, that reminds me that I want to get a sweater vest. I really like sweater vests and I don't have one right now.

Griffin: You would look great in a sweater vest.

Rachel: And this is the weather we're in. This is the moment.

Griffin: This is the moment. Not much longer. It's gonna heat up. You can't wear sweater vests when the blossoms are blooming.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm gonna say Doug is my small wonder.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

Griffin: That show had a very special place in my heart. It's a little boy, and he... wasn't—he was not very cool. But he wanted to be, so bad! And he liked a lot of cool stuff.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's what I always appreciated about Doug. He liked a lot of cool stuff. He knew a lot of cool people. But he himself wasn't. He himself wasn't. He didn't— [crosstalk]

Rachel: He was kind of a regular guy, you know?

Griffin: Just sort of a re—well, I don't know.

Rachel: Except when he was Quailman.

Griffin: Except when he was Quailman. He had a big imagination. Bigger nose.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: Big nose. Everybody in that show had pretty honkin' schnozes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I go first this week. Doug is also my big wonder. What's—what's up? No. How wild would that be.

Rachel: I know, I had a moment where I was like, "Really?"

Griffin: You looked start—you looked frightened at the possibility of me talking about Doug than— [crosstalk]

Rachel: It's more that it's so taboo to use your—

Griffin: To talk about Doug?

Rachel: No, to—[laughs] To use your small wonder as your topic.

Griffin: Right, no, I would never. I would never.

Rachel: That's against the unwritten rules that we have created for this show.
[laughs]

Griffin: Yes. Um, no. My big wonder this week is a game, but I think it's one that we can all get behind. It is Super Smash Brothers.

Rachel: Ohh. This one is really good for everyone.

Griffin: It's good for all of us.

Rachel: Because even if you don't know what you're doing, you just hit a bunch of buttons, and that's fun.

Griffin: And the guys will do stuff.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: I get into that a bit later on. But it is—I have never really gotten deep into the fighting game scene. All the way back from, like, you know, Mortal Kombat, when that was first coming out. 'Cause it always annoyed me that every

character had a different sequence of, like, arcane button inputs and combos that you had to memorize. And so, like, even today, like, people who are good at fighting games are like, "Well, I main Sub Zero, so I know all the different controls for Sub Zero. But if you drop me down into, you know, uh... into, to—" I can't think of a single other Mortal Kombat—Scorpion. Then, like, I'm not gonna know what I'm doing.

That's always very annoying. Smash Brothers did away with all that and it's like, you press one button and it does the same shit for every character, and that's very good.

Rachel: Well, they do have different powers, though.

Griffin: They have different powers, but you don't have to do, like...

Rachel: You don't have to, like, a button sequence.

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: So to do a Hadouken in Street Fighter, sort of the most, like, iconic move in fighting—you have to do a quarter circle turn with the stick, and then hit punch, and you have to do it with the right timing. And so, like, it's not like you press the Hadouken button.

That always drove me fucking crazy!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And so, like, I would learn how to do that, and then I'd be like, "Well, I guess I main Ryu now."

When I played Street Fighter, the character I would always play is was E. Honda because you could crouch and then press the punch button really fast, and he would do this thousand hand slap, and you could just slowly walk into your opponent and hope that they didn't move around too much. And I was like, "Well, that's my main."

Smash Brothers, it's the same buttons. It's the same buttons every time. And there's not even that many buttons on a Nintendo 64 controller, to begin with, so.

Rachel: It seems like a lot of buttons to me.

Griffin: Well, yeah. I guess that's fair.

Rachel: Any time you get those, like, shoulder buttons I'm like, "What?"

Griffin: "What? Where do they go—" yeah.

Rachel: "They're not on the top!" [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um, so I have been, like—I have been a Nintendo fan, like, my whole life, because the NES more or less came to the states around the same time I did.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And, like, I play everything they make. I pretty much always have. And so in November, 1999—which was, like, a wild time for Nintendo in the first place 'cause that's about when Pokemon came out, uh, just a lot of game playing was happening around that time.

Uh, Nintendo released Super Smash Brothers for the Nintendo 64, and it was just—it was one of the more monumental kind of gaming moments in my life. Because imagine you grow up playing... games that have Mario, and Donkey Kong, and Link, and Samus from Metroid, and, you know, all of these different characters in it, and then all of a sudden you can play as all of them in the same game.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: That's—that was literally unheard of. Um, and I would say remains unheard of outside of the boundaries of Super Smash Brothers.

Rachel: So it started with a whole bunch of characters, it wasn't like it started with four or something.

Griffin: It started with 12. It actually started with eight, and you had to unlock the other four, and it was really fucking hard to unlock the other four. Uh, I

remember playing this game with my friend Clint, trying to unlock Ness from Earthbound, which was a pretty obscure, like, Super Nintendo RPG, but he was, like, the last character you had to unlock. You had to, like, beat the arcade mode on the hardest setting without, like, having to use a continue. And it was really, really—we had multiple days of attempts.

Uh, and then finally we did it. We beat the game on the hardest mode without using a continue. And then you have to beat Ness. And we were just, like, on... like, the edges of our seats.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, one of the biggest pop-offs I think ever. Which, like, knowing the two of us, not really the popping off type. It was—it was—it was a huge moment. Um, but yeah. I mean, it was a game where you could play as these 12 different characters from different games using a very simple control scheme. And so all of a sudden, like, I could play fighting games. Anyone could play fighting games.

And so in that way, it became more of, like, a party game, which the Nintendo 64 had some, like, really good ones of. So it was just in this rotation of that, and Mario Party and, you know, Mario Tennis. There was, like, a beautiful sort of ecosystem of party games that Smash Brothers, like, dominated when it first came out in '99.

So, I played it. I played it nonstop with my brothers and my friends. Everyone at my school was talking about it. It had one of the—no. It had the all-time best commercial for a video game ever, because it was just people in mascot costumes for Mario, and Donkey Kong, and Pikachu—

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: —and they were, like, holding hands frolicking through a field to, uh, "[singing] I can't take you loving nobody—"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, and then they just start beating the shit out of each other.

Rachel: [laughs] I do not remember this, but that's great.

Griffin: I will show it to you later. It is—it was so, uh... like, sacrilegious in a way. Uh, and it also was, like, very much '90s 'tude. That really, really worked for me. So this was, like, a huge, huge game for, like, all the people in my life who I knew who played games. Uh, more entries in the series came out. There was Smash Brothers Melee on the Gamecube. That added, like, a bunch more characters. It also added, like, a bunch of weird, high level play sort of strategy that I didn't really enjoy.

Like, there's a lot of very advanced techniques you can do to, like, move your character, like, a little bit faster, or be a little bit more evasive. And so, like, the hardcore Smash Brothers community still plays this one, because it's the one that, like, lets you do the most, like, technical, high level shit that is completely inscrutable to me, and frankly kind of goes against the spirit of Smash Brothers in the first place, which is why I didn't really rock with that one too much.

Rachel: From the very beginning did they do the thing where you could fall off the edge of the platform and die?

Griffin: Yeah, so that was another big thing is, like, you weren't trying to deplete someone's health bar, right? Half the game is about movement and, uh, you know, positioning yourself well so that you're not just gonna take a bunch of hits right on the edge of the map. It's also about, like, picking up the items that appear, and so that's a huge balancing.

Rachel: And also being able to find your character on the screen at any point, because that happens to me a lot. That's why I hate those levels where you can fall off the edge, because if there's, like, four characters on the screen, all of a sudden—

Griffin: And you just walk right off.

Rachel: Yeah, and I've seen this happen to Henry, too. It's like, "Wait. Where am I? Oh no!"

Griffin: He does get very, very frustrated. And so then there was—on the Wii there was Super Smash Brothers Brawl, which added even more characters. There was Super Smash Brothers for WiiU, which is not a great title. That added even more characters. And then finally Smash Brothers Ultimate came out on the Nintendo Switch in 2018. Uh, and Ultimate was notable for, one, being sort of the

last Smash Brothers game, because I can't imagine why you would need any more, anything else?

Um, it was notable because it included every character from the roster that had ever been present in any other entry in the series. I remember when they announced that at E3. Like, who's coming? A lot of people come in and they're like, "Oh, I miss, uh, you know, playing as, uh, Falco in this one," 'cause he wasn't in Smash Brothers for Wii U.

Well, guess what? Fucking everyone's going to be there. Not only that. This game, Super Smash Brothers Ultimate for Switch, contains a... unthinkable amount of crossover characters. Not just characters from other Nintendo games, although they certainly go very, very deep in the roster for those characters.

Games that, like, Nintendo didn't even make, right? You have Sonic, you have Pac-Man, you have Simon Belmont from Castlevania, you have Banjo-Kazooie, you have—

Rachel: Also, like, a lot of the Nickelodeon characters, right?

Griffin: Well, that's Nickelodeon All-Stars Brawl, which is a completely different—

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: —which is a different game. That would be lit if, like, we could get that, get Danny Phantom in the official Smash Brothers mix. That game is great. I love Nintendo All-Stars Brawl I think is what it's called, and Henry does too, 'cause you can be Garfield in it.

Um, but like, you had, like, old RPG characters. Cloud and Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII, Sora from Kingdom Hearts. That game has 89 playable characters in it, which is... crazy. That is a bonkers number of characters for any game, especially any fighting game where, like, balance and fine-tuning is, like, the most important thing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause nobody's gonna, like, play a competitive game like that if there's just, like, the one character that can beat all of the other characters.

Rachel: I imagine what happened is they, like, started with less and they kept getting feedback. Like, "Aww, you should really include this one!"

And they just kept doing it until it was like, every single one. [laughs]

Griffin: Absolutely. Like, it was an ongoing thing of, uh... when Ultimate came out in 2018, right? This franchise was almost 20 years old, and so that was 20 years of people asking for characters to be in the game, and teasing out, like—a big one is Ridley is this big alien monster from Metroid, named for Ridley Scott. And so people have been asking for him for so long.

And then I remember when the trailer came out, any time they would announce a character they would do it with this big, cinematic trailer that would be, like, several minutes long, and it would show, like, Mario, you know, walking along a bridge, and then Sephiroth comes, like, flying out of the sky and stabs him through the chest, and everyone's like, "Oh, shit! Sephiroth's in the game!"

Uh, some of my favorite gaming videos ever are, like, crowd reactions to character announcements, because there is something so pure and just undeniably enjoyable about seeing a crowd of adults gathered at the Nintendo Worlds Tour to watch the, like, Nintendo Direct press conference. And then when they announced that fucking Banjo-Kazooie is coming to the game, and it's just—everybody loses their minds.

That is—I watch that video from time to time, because it is just pure delight to see people get excited. There is nothing else like it in all of gaming. I can't think of another thing where every time they would announce some new character—again, 89 times—people would just flip absolute shit.

And then of course the game came out and was incredible. Just, like, one of my favorite games ever. One of the things I really do enjoy about how approachable it is is that Henry has been able to, like, play it and get really into it, 'cause it's not that hard to, like, make the characters do cool stuff and sort of succeed at the game.

Rachel: You can also, like, play with the difficulty, right?

Griffin: So, yeah. You can customize the game in, like, a million different ways to make it so that you are beating up, you know, seven... you know, Jigglypuffs

that are—have their difficulties set to zero. And then all of a sudden, like, it's a totally different thing.

There's, like, a whole story mode that is, like, genuinely very good, uh, that we have played through I think a couple of times now.

Um, and it's really wonderful to, like, have this game that I love playing, that I get to play with Henry, that he gets a big kick out of, and also, like, he gets to learn about all of these different characters, most of which, like, I grew up with.

And so, like, this is his first exposure to, like, a lot of these characters. He has played way more Smash Brothers than he's ever played any Zelda game. So, like, he knows who Link is, and Toon Link, and Young Link, who are three different characters in the Smash Brothers Ultimate roster.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because of Smash Brothers. And I think that's... I think that's really, really, really special and cool.

Um, I love this game. I can't think of many other more important games than it. Where, like, desert island, if I'm on a desert island with my Switch, like, I would want Smash Brothers Ultimate to be there with me, because it's just a... it is just a big toy box full of stuff that is all fun to play with that you can play with any way that you want.

You can make your own levels. You can, like, make your own characters now. It's like there's so many ways to get around with it. It is a very generous game, and everything it does is so good, and I can't think of too many other games that kind of fit that bill.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's Smash Brothers.

Rachel: That's cool.

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Thanks.

[ad break]

[music plays]

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Dimitry: It's got some history and so many story lines that it can feel overwhelming to get into.

Oscar: Mm-hmm. It's like a Real Housewives season, but everyone's a better singer.

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[music and ad end]

[music plays]

Jordan: I'm Jordan Crucciola, host of Feeling Seen, where we start by asking our guests just one question. What movie character made you feel seen?

Speaker 2: I knew exactly what it was.

Speaker 3: Clementine from Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

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Speaker 5: Roy in, uh, Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

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Jordan: New episodes of Feeling Seen drop every week on Maximumfun.org.

[music and ad end]

Rachel: You wanna know what my thing is?

Griffin: Desperately.

Rachel: It is the NHL All-Stars Skills Competition.

Griffin: Aww, hell yes!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm so stoked to learn about the NHL All-Stars Skills Competition.

Rachel: This is coming up, so this is—

Griffin: It is, yeah!

Rachel: Yeah. What made me think of it is we were watching hockey last night, and the teams across the league are gonna go on what they call the All-Stars break, because on February 2nd is when they're doing the skills competition, and then I believe on a different day they actually, like, play a game, like, conference versus conference.

Griffin: Who got called up for the Blue—is Thomas going there?

Rachel: Thomas, yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Thomas is a Blues player who is great.

Rachel: Robert Thomas.

Griffin: Robert Thomas. [through laughter] We're not on first-name basis.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Gotta be out there for Thomas.

Rachel: "Tommy gonna be there?"

Griffin: "Tommy!"

Rachel: Uh... so, this hasn't actually been around that long. It's been around since 1990.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And it's funny, in the beginning—

Griffin: The All-Star—does the All-Star game precede it, I assume? Or did both come out at the same time, the All-Star game and the Skills Competition?

Rachel: Oh, that's a good question. Uh, All-Star Game I think started... yeah, in the 1940's. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Okay, so yeah. By about 50 years.

Rachel: Um... so, this is—I was trying to think of something applicable in other sports. Uh, and I know that, like, Baseball does, like, the Home Run Derby.

Griffin: Yes, yeah!

Rachel: Like, but football doesn't do anything like this, right?

Griffin: There's the NFL Combine. But I don't know what that is.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I think it's—I think—I think it's where player—like, new players come to, like, show how fast they can run a 40 yard dash?

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: There's something along those lines.

Rachel: [laughs] That sounds right.

Griffin: It's been so long since I—it's been so long since I've watched a football game.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: When I used to watch a lot of them. It feels so weird... to me, to be so wildly detached.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: From the space.

Rachel: Well, I won't let you be that way about hockey.

Griffin: I don't wanna be that way about hockey.

Rachel: Good. Uh, so the All-Stars Skills Competition is, um—if your team has a player or a couple players that are particularly good; like, they're great scorers or you have a great goaltender or whatever, they will get kind of nominated to participate in this.

And then they have some fan votes, too, where you can, like, vote for the player you want included. I checked, none of the Blues got voted up.

Griffin: Oh, I just remembered. The NBA Slam Dunk contest.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: God, that's good shit.

Rachel: Um... so they all will, like, represent their various divisions and play a game together, and then now, since 1990, they do a skills competition which has, like, a variety of events.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: One of the ones that is, like, most iconic to me is the—the accuracy shooting.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: So this is where they used to put a target in each corner of the net. Uh, and then players would have to, like, hit all of them with a puck. So they would stand back, I think at the blue line or maybe a little bit closer, uh, and fire pucks at those plates. It used to be that the object was to hit all four targets in as few attempts as possible, but in that format a lot of people were doing it.

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: In, like, in '92, '93, '96, it was just—people kept being able to do that. And so now they changed how fast you can do it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Uh, and they also—for a couple of skills competitions they changed it up a little bit. [laughs quietly] In 2018, the foam targets were replaced with LED targets that light up to show the player where they had to shoot next. Uh, in 2019 [laughs] the targets had emojis.

Griffin: That's... that's... that's nothing.

Rachel: Uh, in 2020 they put a fifth target in the center of the net.

Griffin: Where you don't usually shoot, 'cause there's a guy there, most of the time.

Rachel: [laughs] Most of the time.

Griffin: That's the most confusing one for players 'cause they're like, "Right in the middle? Where's the guy?"

Rachel: But the current record-holder hit four out of four targets in 7.3 seconds.

Griffin: That's fucking [crosstalk].

Rachel: Isn't that, like—

Griffin: Who was that?

Rachel: Uh... it is, uh, Sedin?

Griffin: Hmmm.

Rachel: Daniel Sedin. A Swedish hockey player, used to play with Vancouver.

Griffin: Ah, that makes sense.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, so I like that one a lot. That one's just cool to watch. Like, it is amazing to me how accurate some of these players can be.

Griffin: It is also a trip in hockey... whenever someone scores a goal it's a huge fuckin' deal 'cause it doesn't happen that often per game, compared to a lot of other sports. And so to just watch people hum puck after puck after puck after puck into an empty net, there's a weird... primordial, like, serotonin that is

released where it's just like, "Yes, puck! Go in there. Yes, puck! Get in there! I love when puck go in net."

Rachel: [laughs] Um... there is the breakaway challenge, which they, um, made into, like, a slam dunk style—like, as you were talking about—challenge. Um, this didn't start till 2008.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And for 2008, 2009, and 2011, I think 2010 there was a strike happening.

Griffin: Oh yeah!

Rachel: Uh, Alexander Ovechkin won all three years.

Griffin: Oh really?

Rachel: Pietrangelo won in 2022, which I think I remember. I think we watched that one.

Griffin: Yes, we did. So, that's the one where they kind of have to, like, stunt as they—

Rachel: They stunt, yeah. So they will do some kind of clever thing as they are skating towards the net, and then fans text message who they think should win. [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, that's good.

Rachel: Uh, fastest skater. Uh, which—

Griffin: That's one I really like.

Rachel: —Jordan Kyrour won in 2022. Uh, you have to just go around the ice as fast as possible. You just do one full lap around the outside. Um, and the record... is 13.172. Jordan got 13.55.

Griffin: That's really good!

Rachel: But it kind of ranges. It's funny, the first year they did this in 1990, they didn't [laughs quietly] 28 miles per hour. I don't know how they figured that out, but instead of counting the amount of time, they measured the speed, yeah.

Griffin: [simultaneously] How fast you could get up to 20 miles an hour?

Rachel: No, they measured the speed of, like, who could skate the fastest.

Griffin: Oh, whoa!

Rachel: So they winner, like, if you look at the ranking, uh, [laughs quietly] the winner in 1990 just has 28 miles per hour, and everybody else has, like, 14 seconds, 13 seconds, 15 seconds, so I don't know what they did first year.

Griffin: Did they just—I see why they changed it, 'cause otherwise you would just get up to 28 miles an hour, and then just shatter the glass in the back of the rink.

Rachel: [laughs] I know. Hardest shot is a really good one, too.

Griffin: Oh, yeah! That's one I like because [laughs] the dudes who do that one can't do any of the other ones.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Usually with the —

Rachel: They're not great skaters, typically.

Griffin: No. When you have someone like Cole Parayko who, like, does, like, you know, a hundred plus mile slap shots several times a game, he's not—he's not the nimblest fella out there.

Rachel: Yeah. Uh, so the all time winner of this, winning seven years, is Al MacInnis.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Who is a St. Louis Blues player.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Um, his numbers are not actually particularly high, but he used a wooden stick, because he thought it was more accurate. Um, players now don't typically use a wooden stick [crosstalk] faster.

Griffin: [simultaneously] They have, like, some crazy fiberglass shit, right?

Rachel: Um, yeah. Like, his fastest speed ever in all those years was 105.2?

Griffin: I mean, that's faster than I could hit it.

Rachel: Oh yeah, no, it's incredible. Uh... [laughs] but the, uh... the hardest shot now is up to 108.5.

Griffin: I mean, that doesn't sound like a big difference, but that's... that's faster than any shot I've ever seen shot in my—all my time watching hockey.

Rachel: So those are kind of the main ones. Um, and there are a bunch that they have tried and not continued. The thing that I kind of love about the NHL is there's, like, this, like, kind of grassroots quality.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Because the industry as a whole makes, like, half what any other—

Griffin: Any other sport does, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. So, like, every year they're kind of trying something new.

Griffin: Has there ever been a fighting one?

Rachel: [through laughter] No!

Griffin: That was my question, is have they ever—

Rachel: [through laughter] That would be so great, though!

Griffin: Have they ever had a fighting one?

Rachel: I'm sure they're not against that idea.

Griffin: I'm sure someone suggested it. I'm sure Craig Berube in his time was like, "Hey, I have an idea."

Rachel: The one we watched—and I don't know if you remember this—this was in 2020. Uh, players shot approximately 30 feet above the ice from the seating area?

Griffin: [wheezy laughter]

Rachel: They shot seven pucks, scoring points for each target hit. They did this one year in 2020, and Patrick Cain won.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Uh, he got 22 points. Um, but yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Not applicable, traditionally, when you watch hockey. 'cause I know there's a lot of our fans who maybe don't watch it, and so our discussions of it is the only exposure they have. Traditionally in hockey—

Rachel: You're on the ice.

Griffin: —there's not a lot of...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There's not a—there's not a play-it-where-it-lies rule, traditionally.

Rachel: Yeah. It's not like a Cirque du Soleil show where players go into the audience and interact with the fans. [laughs]

Griffin: Now, I will say, I would love eradicating the delay of game penalty when you shoot it over the glass on your own end, if instead the ref was just like, "Go—get out there, guys!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Crack open the z—"

Rachel: "You have to go get it now."

Griffin: "Crack open the Zamboni portcullis and you go get that puck."

Rachel: There was another one, a passing challenge, which I think sounds really cool. Um... players had to, uh, complete four successful passes to the targets that randomly lit up.

So I guess that they would have to, like... there would be lights around the arena and they would have to, like, pass it to that light.

Griffin: But that's a shot. Like, if you're—you can only pass it to a human, I feel. In my estimation...

Rachel: The robots aren't gonna—aren't gonna choose you when they do their great culling.

Griffin: In sports video games there is a pass button and there is a shoot button. And the pass button I feel like necessitates a receiver of the pass. Right?

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, what are you passing, if it is not to an individual?

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Now you're just—now you're just... ridding yourself of it as fast as you possibly can.

Rachel: Okay. So, 2024, this year, in Toronto.

Griffin: "Toronto!"

Rachel: [laughs] There's a lot that is fun about this. So, one thing, um, is that each team, uh, will have a celebrity attached to it. I don't know if you remember this in past. I feel like John Hamm was it one year. But four celebrity captains. So, they are connected to the various leagues.

Griffin: Oh, okay. That's fun.

Rachel: Um, you know, there's like a Metropolitan League and a Central League and a Pacific League. So those four celebrities—for whatever reason they only list three in this article, so I don't know what that means—uh, Justin Bieber, Will Arnett...

Griffin: Which teams are they associated with? Are they—are they each associated with a team, you said?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay. Do you have—do you know who each one—I assume both of them are I'm guessing Canucks, and Oilers, and...

Rachel: Well, no. Each division has All-Stars.

Griffin: Ahhh, okay, so they're—

Rachel: You see what I'm saying?

Griffin: Yes, I get you, now.

Rachel: So it doesn't really matter, honestly, you know. Because every division will have players from different teams.

Griffin: I thought you were saying each NHL team had a celebrity representative.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Which is, like, that's 32 celebrities. That would be a lot of famous people, I think, to get to go to the All-Stars Skills Competition.

Rachel: No, the celebrity captains help the four All-Star team captains select their 11 player teams. Now, help—I don't know what that means.

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Rachel: In this case.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But it's Justin Bieber, Will Arnett—who both have connections to hockey. Like, both hockey enthusiasts.

Griffin: They're both Canadian, yes?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I mean, the third I think is also a Canadian. Micheal Buble.

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: I don't know what his connection to hockey might be. It's possible he also has one.

Griffin: I'm betting I can Google Buble hockey real quick and get something.

Rachel: So, the thing that is particularly interesting this year—usually with the skills competition it was kind of open to everybody. Like, anybody could get out there, like, you know, Jordan Kyrrou, like, "Oh, I'm the fastest skater. I'm gonna compete in the faster skater."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: This year, only 12 players are gonna compete in the competitions, and they're gonna compete throughout.

Griffin: Interesting!

Rachel: And then the winner will get a million dollars.

Griffin: What?!

Rachel: [laughs] Yes. They will collect points throughout the competitions. Uh, and at the end the winner will get a million dollars. Apparently the winning goalie will get 100,000 dollars, too.

Griffin: But there's not a Blues player in the Skills Competition, right?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: No, they announced all the players, actually.

Griffin: I'm sure I would recognize a lot of the—they have to be big name, big name boys, I assume.

Rachel: Yeah. I know Conner McDavid, I recognized him off the list.

Griffin: He's quite good.

Rachel: Yeah. Um, but, uh—

Griffin: You got Bedard, that lil—that lil...

Rachel: No.

Griffin: No?

Rachel: I mean, he's brand new.

Griffin: He ain't ready.

Rachel: I don't think you get there right away.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The other thing that I thought was funny about this is how much it is sponsored.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Like, you know how Ninja Warrior would have The Minions whatever?

Griffin: [laughs] No, okay, honey. Babe, you can't say that and then just expect from the sentence you said—

Rachel: [through laughter] Okay.

Griffin: —anyone other than your beloved husband to glean any—

Rachel: There are portions of the Ninja Warrior course that have some kind of promotion associated with it. And so, like, they go over a pit and it is the, like, Minions pit.

Griffin: And there's big balls that roll when you jump on them, and you have to run across them very fast. And the number of people who had built their whole years about this one Ninja Warrior course run to be thwarted by the Minions, and then look up at them from the pool of water like, "You fucking Minions!"

It was funny every single time that it happened.

Rachel: So, uh, round 1, fastest skater. It is the Fastenal NHL fastest skater. I had to look up what Fastenal was? Apparently it is a—

Griffin: [simultaneously] Like a—like a glue, an adhesive of some sort?

Rachel: —the largest fastener distributor in North America. [laughs]

Griffin: Hell yeah, that's what we—that's what he—we—re—fuckin' Adidas? Outta here!

Rachel: I know. [laughs] There is the Cheetos NHL accuracy shooting. [laughs]

Griffin: [claps] I will say, if they suspended Cheetos inside of the net and then they had to shatter, you know, puffy or crunchy, take your choice.

Rachel: This one's new. There is a Pepsi NHL obstacle course.

Griffin: What's that mean?

Rachel: It's like, uh, the top six point earners will advance to the eighth and final even. Uh, and the obstacle course, I think they have to do a little bit of everything.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Rachel: All at once.

Griffin: Hey, I wanna watch this, I think. Even if we don't know anyone in it.

Rachel: I know. [laughs] I know, that's my thought. Like, if you are not somebody that follows hockey because you find it complicated and difficult to stick with, like, this is just a fun... a fun thing to watch.

Griffin: Yeah. I remember wa—I mean, obviously we're very deeply invested in the Blues as an organization. But watching Kyrour win the speed skating competition in... '22, you said? I remember that just, like, on our feet, like, really very, very, very excited for this very silly thing.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah. Uh, also the Tim Horton One Timers competition. Um, that's just, like, somebody passes it to you and you just immediately shoot.

Griffin: That's fas—yeah.

Rachel: Um, I think that's it. I'll be curious to see if this new format sticks around or not. Like, on one hand I get the, like—the 12 player idea, um, because it makes them more competitive. The prize will, you know, make them, I guess, compete harder.

Griffin: But also, we don't see any players we know, because it's a much, much smaller roster [crosstalk].

Rachel: Yeah, and you're—I mean, I used to think of it in, like, Olympic format where I wanted to believe when Jordan Kyrour won, he was officially the fastest skater in all of the NHL.

Griffin: [simultaneously] The fastest skater [crosstalk]. Right.

Rachel: Which you can't even really say with much confidence if only 12 players get to do it.

Griffin: Right, yeah. Yeah. Um, hey. Do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Ben says:

"When you go to fill up your pill container for the week and you dump exactly seven pills in your hand. It makes me feel like I have some sort of superpower."

Rachel: Ooooh.

Griffin: I love this shit.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I love it.

Rachel: This is the most, like, adult thing to be excited about, but I know exactly what this person is saying.

Griffin: It's very good.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It make—it's convenient. It makes you feel good about yourself. Like, I can—I know when seven pills are in my hand. Uh, it's huge. And also you have to spend less time refilling your pill caddy, which is such a chore.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Finn says:

"My small wonder recently has been the presence of bodega cats at my local delis. It always makes my day that much better to meet a furry little guy when getting my morning coffee, especially when the staff refers to the cat as the manager."

I feel like we've had bodega cats submitted for this very segment again. I can't get enough of hearing about these little guys.

Rachel: Yeah. The only comparable thing I had growing up was there was a used bookstore that had cats, and as a kid I always used to like going, 'cause there were just cats hanging out in sunbeams.

Griffin: We had a costume shop called Magic Makers in Huntington that we went to, unsurprisingly, a lot.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh.

Griffin: And the owners of that store owned a monkey together.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So you'd go in to, like, get Dracula teeth or whatever, and the monkey would be there.

Rachel: I'm confused... by—I thought owning—

Griffin: What type of monkey? It was a Capuchin monkey.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I did a whole report on it when I was in seventh grade.

Rachel: I thought when you owned a business you were under some scrutiny, and it seems like somebody would be like, "Oh. You can't own a monkey."

Griffin: Nah, they—I mean, Huntington was pretty chill about it.

Rachel: Okay. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um, that's it for the episode. 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 also, for having us on the network. Go to Maximumfun.org, check out all the great stuff they got floating around on there. You're gonna find something that you like there, I bet. Um, and we have merch over at mcelroymerch. I don't know what day you're listening this to—to this on. If it is January, we've got that three-brother moon shirt going on. If it's February, we got a bunch of other new stuff coming up.

Rachel: What's February got in store? Can you give any teasers?

Griffin: Oh yeah.

[pause]

Rachel: [laughs]

[pause]

Griffin: Oh yeah, baby.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There's a, uh... there's a—[laughs quietly] there's a new shirt design—first of all... if you want Fungalore, you're gonna have Fungalore. Do not worry about that. We've got you in so many different ways.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't know when this episode comes out so I don't wanna spoil too much. Maybe I'll just drop that and say, "Lot of Fungalore. Lot of Fungalore coming your way."

Rachel: [simultaneously] Yeah. I mean, I think listeners could expect that, yeah.

Griffin: Um, so go check all that out. Uh, let's stop. Let's stop there.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: This has been a good one, and let's not get greedy, you know?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: We got in there. We delivered gold. Let's get out.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Wash our hands of it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: [slapping hands] We'll see you guys—we'll see you guys next week. And, uh... [slapping hands] That's us, washing our hands of you.

Rachel: Bye!

Griffin: Bye!

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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