

## Wonderful! 316: Things Are Heating Up in the Blanket Discourse

Published March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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[theme music, "Money Won't Pay" by bo en and Augustus plays]

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

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

**Rachel:** And this is *Wonderful!*

**Griffin:** Welcome to *Wonderful!*, a podcast where we talk about things we like, that is good, that we're into. We— First in the game and last in the game of talking about stuff that we're into in a podcast format. No-one else is out here doin' the kind of like—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** — wild shit that we are doing.

**Rachel:** Because most people don't like things, turns out.

**Griffin:** No. Most people— Or they like one or two things.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** But look at the scoreboard, folks. We like so much more stuff than anyone else.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] We like a ridiculous amount of things.

**Griffin:** Way more than anyone else has any right to. And we really, really like this stuff. A lot of people, again, I hate to keep bringing up the haters, but they say, "There's no way." It's true, we like all this stuff, and... and that's just the— that's the *Wonderful!* difference. I guess.

**Rachel:** Wow. Ooo, TM, maybe.

**Griffin:** I don't think so.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] No. No?

**Griffin:** I don't think that you can TM that, no.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I'm not like a legal... guy.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Every— Unlike everybody else who lives in this incredible district of ours.

**Rachel:** That's very true.

**Griffin:** I'm not much for legal stuff and laws, but I don't think we can TM that. Do you have a... Hey. Small wonder?

**Rachel:** I'm gonna say, and I haven't started doing this yet.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** I am mid-job shift. I have accepted a new position.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And with this position, I am going to take the train to work occasionally.

**Griffin:** That's right.

**Rachel:** And I feel like I'm really excited about it, 'cause I think I'm finally gonna feel like a real business person.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I feel like I will be on the train with other business people.

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** And, you know, I'll talk about the train sometimes, I'll have train stories. I feel like this has opened up a whole new world for me. And I haven't started yet.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** But I feel pretty good about it.

**Griffin:** Rachel is the new CEO of Jimmy John's.

**Rachel:** [laughs] It's real—

**Griffin:** Maybe we shouldn't say that, like we don't—

**Rachel:** It's real fast-paced.

**Griffin:** It's a fast-paced world.

**Rachel:** It's like, "You get me [chuckles] those numbers so fast, I'll freak." [laughs]

**Griffin:** Yes. She was corporate, headhunted from Jersey Mikes.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** She was the CEO there for a while.

**Rachel:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** Rachel... runs shit in the sandwich game. Not a lot of people know that.

**Rachel:** I'm not just a sandwich artist, I am a sandwich... master? I don't know, what would be above that?

**Griffin:** You started that sentence so confidently, and I was like certainly there's a payoff.

**Rachel:** I wanted to say "a sandwich maestro." Which maybe?

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** That's works?

**Griffin:** I mean you can conduct a sandwi— a symphony of sandwiches.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Of sandwiches? A symphony of ingredients.

**Griffin:** A symphony of ingredients, that's very good.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** Definitely that's been some ad copy for something that we've had as an advertiser on this show before. I'm going to say something at the end of this sentence—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** — that is going to be the [chuckles] small wonder that I am going to do.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So get your ass [chuckles] ready for that.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** `Cause here it comes, right down the pipe. It is...

**Rachel:** Lookin' around the room.

**Griffin:** Lookin' around this... [mumbles] Boxes, rug. Um.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Uh, feet. No.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um. Hmmm... You know what? We got this thing. There's a company called Fat Brain Toys that makes...

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Sort of STEM-related kid's toys mostly. That—

**Rachel:** Yeah, they're just supposed to be I think like more well-made and educational than a lot of the stuff you would find at like, you know, a big box kinda store.

**Griffin:** They also sell a lot of stuff that you could maybe potentially find at like, a children's museum. And their most recent product, this is not sponsored at all, is air tubes. And it's the thing that they have at a lot of kids' science museum, where it's like a suction tube system, like one might send a check up from a drive thru of a bank.

**Rachel:** Noooo. Do you think our listeners even get that reference?  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Wow, shit. I've never thought about that before. You know, I have not been to a bank in a really long time, since—

**Rachel:** I have— I went when we moved here, because... I forgot my pen, maybe?

**Griffin:** That sounds right.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Anyway, it's like a little air pump, and you can connect to different tubes to like build different structures with it, and you put balls in it, and it [imitates air blowing noise] shoots it through the tubes, and the kids are just wild about this shit. They are lovin' it. And I am too.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** 'Cause you can also use it as a sort of like makeshift T-shirt cannon.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Griffin actually introduced that pretty early on to our children.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it felt like maybe a bad idea, but so far it's turned out okay.  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** It's been great. It's basically turned into... A lot of... game that you play with your kids, especially when you're trying to wear them out, do start to resemble fetch, to some degree.

**Rachel:** Yeah, right?

**Griffin:** Which is a bit demeaning.

**Rachel:** Works real well for the little son.

**Griffin:** But it works really, really good for him. So that was my small wonder. You go first this week. I would love to hear what you've prepared for us.

**Rachel:** I do.

**Griffin:** For the class.

**Rachel:** I'm curious how you'll feel about this. So... Griffin gave me a heads up on what his small wonder was gonna be.

**Griffin:** True.

**Rachel:** Or his big wonder, rather.

**Griffin:** My huge wonder.

**Rachel:** Um... And my big wonder was inspired by his.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Now we don't usually do that.

**Griffin:** And what's interesting is that you're gonna go first.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** And so, in a lot of ways, you're swoopin' in here.

**Rachel:** I like to think I'm giving listeners a hint.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Okay, cool!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** See if you can follow the clues of Rachel's ARG that she's got laid out here.

**Rachel:** My... topic this week is covers.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Okay, cool, yes. Okay, yeah, cool.

**Rachel:** So it's like a— it's a hint, but it's— I'm not giving anything away.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** On yours.

**Griffin:** Now you are talking about the musical type of covers. You're not talking about sort of the concept of—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** — things going over other things to protect them from the elements.

**Rachel:** No, I'm not talking about blankets.

**Griffin:** We could. We could talk about blankets.

**Rachel:** We could, but I don't know... that it would be at all interesting to anyone.

**Griffin:** There are probably people who would be interested in our blanket—

**Rachel:** Our blankets. [giggles]

**Griffin:** I don't know that I want to get pulled into blanket discourse though. There's a lot of people with a lot of really strong feelings, vis-à-vis fleece versus quilts. Do you go big box store? You know. Do you go Bed Bath and Beyond? I can't make these decisions for you.

**Rachel:** Now we're basically doing a segment on covers.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I like that.

**Rachel:** But the kind of cover I want to talk about is when an artist takes an existing song and does their own version of it.

**Griffin:** Yeeees.

**Rachel:** And... I never really knew how this worked.

**Griffin:** Huh.

**Rachel:** Like I didn't know the process for it. Like I knew if you went to a live show and somebody played somebody else's song, that was pretty much easy breezy.

**Griffin:** Mm.

**Rachel:** But I didn't know like, how you put it out in the world and made money off of it, and that was okay.

**Griffin:** That's a good point. I don't know that either.

**Rachel:** I looked it up. Now, I don't know how reputable this source is. As— [chuckles] I got it from digitalmusicnews.com, which sounds—

**Griffin:** Sounds good to me, man!

**Rachel:** Sounds like a real thing. And the article was called "How Do You Legally Cover a Song?" So first, you don't need permission.

**Griffin:** Do it real quiet. You just do it super quiet.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]



**Griffin:** [chuckles] You just do it super-duper, duper quiet.

**Rachel:** Or you hum it. You hum it.

**Griffin:** You hum it, yeah. Or you—

**Rachel:** Or change one word.

**Griffin:** Yeah. You can— [wheezes] [giggles]

**Rachel:** Like, “Skibidi *Fortnite*.”

**Griffin:** Yeah, like, “Skibidi *Fortnite*,” or uh— [snorts]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Or like, “Nine days a week.”

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Could be a good one that you can kinda step your way around.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** “Hey, Dude.”

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** “Don’t make it sad?” But then it does say— Anyway.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay, so you don’t need permission directly from the artist.

**Griffin:** It’s nice though, I bet.

**Rachel:** It probably is a nice thing to do, especially if you’re like super well known and it’s gonna be a big deal if you release it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But you do need what’s called a “mechanical license.”

**Griffin:** Okay. You gotta go to technical college for four years.

**Rachel:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** To get your hands on one of these bad boys.

**Rachel:** So this is what it says about a mechanical license. It is a process that ensures the songwriter and publisher get paid and credited, and it also covers you legally.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So there are different places you can go and to that. This is what was interesting about the article is it gives you like actual like websites you can go to. So apparently there's... a site called Easy Song, where you can get a mechanical license for under \$15, usually in one to two business days.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Now if you wanna make a music video, you need a sync license. Which unlike a mechanical license, you do need prior permission to obtain a sync license.

**Griffin:** That makes sense.

**Rachel:** But there are— Again, there are sites where you can get a sync license. There are also sites where you can choose a music distributor, like Sound Drop or Distro Kid.

**Griffin:** There's probably also a lot of websites—

**Rachel:** Or Tune Core. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That does sound really cool. There's probably a lot of websites where you can think you're acquiring a license to do these things.

**Rachel:** That's true.

**Griffin:** And then you don't.

**Rachel:** That's true.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Again, I don't know a lot about digitalmusicnews.com.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** But all of this seemed reasonable.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** Like it makes sense that in this world where everything you want is online.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** That you could do this process remotely by yourself. And then they also recommend registering your cover song so that you can earn royalties. So it's not just the song writer, but also you getting a piece of—

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** — whatever flows up from your—

**Griffin:** I've spent a lot of this segment trying to remember, and you may talk about this later on, the *AV Club* series that they did where they brought people in. And they would like pick a song off of a list to cover.

**Rachel:** No, I don't know about this.

**Griffin:** And then— Aw, shit. Oh man, I'm not gonna be able to pull the name of it unfortunately. But they would bring in an artist and they would have like the same list of songs for the whole season. And so by the end of it— I think it's called *Undercover*. Is what it was called.

**Rachel:** That is, I was just Googling it as you were talking.

**Griffin:** *AV Club: Undercover*.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's delightful. I really loved that series a lot.

**Rachel:** So I wanted to share with you some of the most covered songs of all time.

**Griffin:** The most covered songs, or like the most famous cover songs?

**Rachel:** Well, I have two lists.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** I have the most covered songs, and I have the best cover songs.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool.

**Rachel:** Depending on—

**Griffin:** Best cover songs is gonna get wild. 'Cause there's a lot of songs that are cover songs that not a lot of people know are cover songs.

**Rachel:** So on this list I'm looking at, and this article is from June 2023. Of course, this probably changes all the time.

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm.

**Rachel:** But that wasn't too long ago. Number one, "Yesterday" by The Beatles.

**Griffin:** Now—

**Rachel:** Which is interesting, 'cause I can't— Like off the top of my head, I can't think of a lot of covers that have been done. But apparently, Joan Byez, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, En Vogue, Boyz 2 Men, have all done versions of "Yesterday."

**Griffin:** That's I think mostly wild because those are all older now. At this point. I don't think that people are— I don't think a lot of people are currently covering The Beatles very much.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean you wouldn't think so, but.

**Griffin:** Just 'cause I imagine the hoops that one has to get through in order to... do that is considerable.

**Rachel:** Apparently "Yesterday" has been covered more than 2200 times.

**Griffin:** Wow.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** That's not even like a very good Beatles [wheezes] song.

**Rachel:** Well you like it.

**Griffin:** I mean, they're all good, right? It's all The Beatles, but like.

**Rachel:** It's not like your fave.

**Griffin:** It's not even my top 25 faves, I think.

**Rachel:** No. Unsurprisingly, there are other Beatles songs on the list. Number five, "Eleanor Rigby."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which I think is better.

**Griffin:** That one kicks ass, yeah.

**Rachel:** Better song, yeah. Number two, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones.

**Griffin:** Yes. Yes, for sure.

**Rachel:** We're talking Jimmy Hendrix, we're talking Devo, we're talking Vanilla Ice. Apparently, [chuckles] Britney Spears did it at the MTV Video Music Awards. Which I thought was, again... real fun song to cover.

**Griffin:** But it was also— I mean, was it Otis Redding who did the... the famous version of that? I think so, wasn't it? Yes. Otis Redding did a cover of that song that absolutely whips ass.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay. Other ones on the list, I'm not gonna like go in order, but ones that probably won't surprise you. "Ain't No Sunshine" by Bill Withers.

**Griffin:** Oh my god.

**Rachel:** Another great song. "Hallelujah" Leonard Coen.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I mean Jesus Christ.

**Rachel:** Another great one.

**Griffin:** Just watch— Watch *The OC*, you'll see more than one different kind of cover of that song on it.

**Rachel:** [laughs] "I Walk the Line" Johnny Cash. Um... "Cry Me A River" Jilly London.

**Griffin:** "Hurt." "Hurt" by Johnny Cash, I believe. Didn't—

**Rachel:** Oh, well it's not by Johnny Cash. But he did a cover of it.

**Griffin:** Right, "Hurt"— Did a cover of, who is that, Nine Inch Nails?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Gosh, we're real music heads.

**Rachel:** Listen to us. Okay, so there are two different sources that listed their best cover songs of all time.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** I have timeout.com and I have AV Club.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Number one on AV Club, Jimmy Hendrix "All Along the Watchtower."

**Griffin:** Bob Dylan, yeah.

**Rachel:** That was Bob Dylan's original song. Again, very, very cool version. Arguably much cooler than the original. The other one that I didn't know was a cover is Sinead O'Connor "Nothing Compares to You."

**Griffin:** Oh!

**Rachel:** That's not her song.

**Griffin:** Who did that originally?

**Rachel:** Here's what the AV Club says. It says, "Prince didn't treat his 'Nothing Compares to You' especially seriously."

**Griffin:** [whispers Oh, that's right!

**Rachel:** "Especially not when compared with Sinead O'Connor, who delivered the song as if it were a matter of grave importance. He relegated the song to the Family, a group of Prince proteges from the Prince 80s side-project that gained to reputation, outside of Prince."

**Griffin:** That is so interesting. Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** God, that song is so good.

**Rachel:** Her version is so incredible. It's like haunting. Whenever I hear it. I mean there's a bunch of other ones. But it's just— It's a—

**Griffin:** "Proud Mary." Is "Proud Mary" on there?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yes, of course. Another one on the list is... "Respect" Aretha Franklin is a cover.

**Griffin:** That's Otis Redding, right? Otis Redding is all over this shit, man. I think he did— I think he was the original... I think he wrote this one.

**Rachel:** You're right, you're right. Otis Redding originally released it in 1965.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But two years later, Aretha Franklin made her—

**Griffin:** I feel like Dolly Parton had like a huge one.

**Rachel:** Yeah. The Whitney Houston...

**Griffin:** "I Will Always Love You," yeah.

**Rachel:** "I Will Always Love You" is Dolly Parton.

**Griffin:** Dolly Parton wrote it originally, and then Whitney Houston cover—

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay, yeah.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Jesus.

**Rachel:** [laughs] "Hallelujah" I mentioned earlier, Jeff Buckley's version, incredible.

**Griffin:** Yeah.



**Rachel:** You mentioned "Hurt," Johnny Cash. Which was another— I mean there's just— it's— It's fun to look at these 'cause, you know, like half the time you don't realize it's a cover.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The artist has made it so much their own. But it's one of those things I think when you're a musician starting out, you feel like covers are like a cheap, easy way to like, you know... Make yourself known.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** But maybe not like the most artistic thing you could do as a musician, but ultimately it's real life-changing, some of these versions.

**Griffin:** Yeah, absolutely. And there's something about like... I don't know. There's something powerful about like contributing to the like greater landscape of the medium of music, in this way.

Like there— I really, really appreciate whenever, and we're about to, again, talk about this in my segment. But like when a musical artist approaches a song with a level of like reverence that is like, cool to see.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like you feel like they are tapped into some other like musical wavelength that you get to kind of like visit and be a part of for a little bit, and then is a very neat sensations when it is sort of executed artfully.

**Rachel:** There was a version... You remember that artist Nickle Creek?

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure. Of course.

**Rachel:** They did a version of Britney Spears "Toxic" which I love.

**Griffin:** They— I mean Nickle Creek is infamous for that. They did— Their cover of "Spit On a Stranger" by Pavement.

**Rachel:** Ohhhh, I bet.

**Griffin:** It's fucking am— Have you not heard it?

**Rachel:** I don't know that I have.

**Griffin:** Oh shit. I think you have. I have to have played that for you at some point.

**Rachel:** Probably, at some point.

**Griffin:** 'Cause you're the one who turned me onto Pavement, and then I was like, "Oh, well check this shit out." Yeah.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Boy, I am frothing at the mouth to do my segment.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Thank you.

[*Home Improvement* transition music plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** So cover songs are great.

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

**Griffin:** And I'll be the first to say that, and admit that. I'm going to talk about a specific one. It is a song that has had a monumental impact on sort of music nerd YouTube in the last week or so.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah?

**Griffin:** Oh yeah. I'm going to get into to it 'cause it's—

**Rachel:** When you shared it with me, I hadn't heard anything about it.

**Griffin:** It is— Yeah. I think you have to be sort of on the ground floor of that to necessarily understand that impact. Even if you don't it is remarkable. It is a cover of the Simon & Garfunkel song "Bridge Over Troubled Water," by Jacob Collier, who I've talked about on the show before. He is a sort of music theory YouTuber guy.

**Rachel:** Yeeeeeah. Okay.

**Griffin:** He did the series of videos about like explaining harmony to people of different ages and levels of expertise. He had that like wild run where he showed how you can combine any chord with any other chord to like make it make sense in a progression.

He's a genius. It is his version of this song, featuring three incredibly talented vocalists named Yebba, Tori Kelly, and John Legend. That is a mouthful.

**Rachel:** [gasps lightly] Oh, I didn't realize that last one was John Legend. I don't know how I didn't.

**Griffin:** Yeah, John Legend is actually in the middle, I don't know why I read the names—

**Rachel:** Oh, okay.

**Griffin:** — in the order that I did. I can't remember the last time a song has like physically like impacted me.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** As hard as this did. I heard it for the first time last night, is was just like lying in bed with my airpods on, like trying to fall asleep, and like swiping around YouTube like trying to find chill music. And I saw this pop up. And it is a staggering [chuckles] achievement in music and singing.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So four years ago, Jacob Collier, who has been doing like... music theory YouTube stuff. He has like also won a bunch of Grammys. I think he's won like four Grammys. He is... He is an absolute genius.

He posted like a short, like a YouTube short, and it was sort of like in the vein of like a TikTok collaboration with a gospel singer named Yebba. In it, Yebba sings this incredible just run-filled, acapella version of "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Which is, in its own right, like a classic. Like a beautiful— One of the most beautiful songs, I think, ever written.

And in this short that he made, Jacob Collier accompanies Yebba with this 12 part choral harmony, sort of behind her, presented in this picture in picture in picture in picture style. And people went ape shit.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** For this like 45-second-long video. Because it was so gorgeous and it was so powerful, and also because of like the time length restrictions of shorts, cuts off halfway through the first chorus.

And so there are people like, "This is the most beautiful thing I've ever heard, and you— it just stops in the middle." Like [singing] "Like a bri—" And then it just stops. And so for four years, people were like, "I would sell my soul."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "For a full version of this song." The short has tons of comments on it from people like, "I can— I listen to this ten times a day, I'm obsessed with this, and it breaks my heart that it is not real. And not a full song."

Four years later, he delivered on this song last week, with a full version that belongs in like a shrine. Like shoot this song into space, it is the Sistine Chapel of vocal performances.

So this song, cover of the Simon & Garfunkel song, it is separated into three parts, each one assigned to a certain different lead vocalist, with Jacob Collier providing all of the acapella backing vocals.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** That run like dozens of layers deep, underneath it. I think a few days ago he posted a video to his YouTube channel, it was actually a live

stream for two hours, where he just walked through the logic... like workshop file.

**Rachel:** Ohhh.

**Griffin:** Like showing like how— just how deep and intricate and detailed of a project it is. So the first part starts with Yebba, and this is the section from the original clip, but it's been sort of reorchestrated with his own sort of vocal accompaniment. And it also runs through the whole like first verse and first chorus.

It is incredible. I had never heard of Yebba before. She has a remarkable voice. This very soulful gospel voice. I'm gonna play a clip of the song here in a little bit. I can't play the whole song, for reasons that—

**Rachel:** I know, I was wondering how you were gonna do that.

**Griffin:** But the Yebba song was like the original, the OG, and maybe you've heard it before, maybe you haven't, but it is a gorgeous way to start out. Just the harmonies behind it are just so soulful and so powerful.

And then you get to part two, where John Legend steps up as the lead vocalist, and things get like slowed down a bit. John Legend has like amazing range. Going just from these like very like deep resonant like baritones, to just these like soaring falsetto.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Head voice.

**Rachel:** I'm familiar with his work.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Yes, of course. All while just an army of Jacob Collier's in the background just provide this very rich vocal backing. I'm gonna— I— We can play a clip now from the John Legend part.

The vocals are like amazing, but what I really like about this part is that the chord progressions just start to go absolutely ape shit at this part. They start to go bananas. Like Yebba's bit is gorgeous, but in this second bit it gets like way more experimental in terms of—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — like the chords and everything like behind John Legend’s performance, so here’s a clip of that part of the song.

[audio clip of the second verse and chorus of Jacob Collier’s “Bridge Over Trouble Waters”]

**Griffin:** So, John Legend’s bit is just— it’s gorgeous. And then it ends, and it’s quiet, and you think like, “Oh, well that’s it. That’s the end of that.”

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** “That must be the end of the song, right?,” and then Tori Kelly steps up to the player. Another singer who I was not familiar with, but she does the voice of the elephant in the *Sing* movies?

**Rachel:** Ohhh! I didn’t know that. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which is sad that that it my main sort of point of contact.

**Rachel:** I know, you and I. “Oh yeah! Of course! The *Sing* movies.”

**Griffin:** “Of course, the elephant from the *Sing* movies.” It— Now I wanna become very familiar with her work, because this is one of the single best vocal performances I’ve maybe ever heard.

It starts off just like— It starts of very soft and quiet and controlled, and the, you know, the background vocals are similarly like very reserved and very restrained. And then it ends with, not a joke, two straight minutes of just... stunting.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Just absolute just going off.

**Rachel:** Is this the clip that you sent me?

**Griffin:** I sent you the whole—

**Rachel:** Or was that Yebba?

**Griffin:** No, the clip that I sent you, yeah, was Tori Kelly.

**Rachel:** Okay. Where he like she and him are going back and forth.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Doing these runs.

**Griffin:** Yeah. He posted a lot of videos of sort of the making of this, including that two-hour live stream. But then he showed a clip of him.

Apparently, him and Tori Kelly recorded like her vocals in like a couple hours, in a hurry, like before having to go off and do a show with Laurence. And so this clip is like Jacob Collier saying like, "So, it's gonna be like [imitates a vocal run progression]." Like walking her through.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** She's like, "Oh shit." You see her, like this incredibly talented vocalist, just like nodding like eyes wide at this woodland elf.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Who has like come to show her all of this like incredible stuff. And then she just absolutely kills it. This is the clip that, I feel like when you look at the YouTube comments to all pointing to the same time, like, "Holy shit, this put me in the ground."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So this is a little bit of Tori Kelly's part of the song.

[audio clip of Tori Kelly singing the third chorus in Jacob Collier's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" plays]

**Griffin:** It's— It is— It's just staggering. It is absolutely— It is like... unrestrained, like maximalist like composition of what a bunch of voices singing together can sound like.

And it also does the thing that Jacob Collier's like really known for in kind of the world of music theory, in that he's like very enthusiastic about how flexible a composition can be. How flexible you can be with things like chord progressions and specifically like how a theme can resolve, right?

That's his big deal and it's been like a huge point of understanding of music for me that I did not even possess at all. Maybe I would have if I had taken like more proper musical training or music theory training.

But this idea of like when you are hearing a song, your mind is filling in the blanks, right? And your mind wants to maybe get back to the key of the song.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It wants like wherever you're going in this chord progression, I know that you're going to take me home to the root chord of like whatever section that you're in.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And that is like where I'm going to like, relax and feel comfortable and things are going to resolve. The last minute and a half of this is just like him almost— Like it's— [chuckles] I don't wanna call it musical edging.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Because that feels gross and reductive, but it really is you going like, "Okay, and then almost certainly you're gonna stop now right? Like almost certainly— Now this is the end of the song and you're gonna like finish up the chord progression. No? You've got more, huh? You've got more shit comin' down, huh. That's wild." It is—

**Rachel:** Yeah. I kept kind of waiting for the drop. Like I thought this was gonna be some kind of crazy techno remix that was gonna like happen—

**Griffin:** Nope! Just singin'.

**Rachel:** Just— There's just building and building.



**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I was like, "What— When does it— When?"

**Griffin:** It does resolve like at the end of it, but no joke, they make you work for it, and the whole time you're like, "Jacob, please!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "Resolve it!" Tori Kelly's just like doing like kickflips in the background, with just the most— one of the most incredible voices I have ever, ever heard. My favorite thing that I've been doing today, other than like sending everybody that I know like this song.

I sent it to Dad and Justin and Travis, like, "You guys gotta—" Like this felt extremely like Dad's shit, and sure enough, like it hit him real good. But the other thing I've been doing is watching videos of singers and vocal teachers reacting to this song.

**Rachel:** Ohhhhh. Yeah, normally I don't get those kind of reacting videos, but in this case definitely. I could see that.

**Griffin:** Yeah, reaction videos I think are a touchy subject, because there's a lot of people who see it as just like straight up lifting content.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But I actually— I do enjoy it when it is coming from a place of like expertise and explanation.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But in this case, I just like watching these musical professionals make some of the—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** — gnarliest stink faces I have ever, ever, ever, ever— Like as soon as Tori Kelly hits that run like at the end, just like, "Eugh!" like, "Augh!"

**Rachel:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** The faces that they make, like they are in physical agony of—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — like how unexpected and powerful and beautiful it all is. I watched this one [chuckles] where this guy was like, “I’m a huge fan of— I did a video of the Yebba short from four years ago. I’ve been lookin’ forward to this for a long time.”

And he like presses play, and like as— like gets through the Yebba section, and then John Legend comes in like [singing] “If you’re— ” [normal] And he immediately is just like pause. Crying.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Just starts weeping openly at the beauty of the song. It is— It is— It’s a phenomenal song that is... genuinely, in every way that like one can consider music, like a masterpiece. Like it is— It is incredible, and I’m going to listen to this song a whole, whole lot. And that’s very exciting for me, I always really like that feeling.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But there’s something else to this specifically that is especially kind of touching, which is this phenomenon of like there are lots of people who have been waiting for this song for a long time. Who have been waiting for this completed vision of this song, that this one dude and these, you know, guest vocalists can deliver.

And to see that actually land and be better and more experimental and like playful and emotional and powerful than I think anyone could’ve even imagined, is like really, really cool to see and witness.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Griffin:** I don’t— We— The whole song is like almost six minutes long, it’s just six minutes of good singing, and I would heavily encourage you to seek it out and listen to it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's on an album that he just put out called, I believe, *Jesse Volume 4* is the name of it. But you can find it on YouTube or wherever you get music.

And then if you like me like are as moved by it as you are, there's like other videos that he has put out, sort of explaining the making of the song, that are similarly very fascinating. But that's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" by Jacob Collier. A very, very, very special song, I feel.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I am happy to have discovered. You wanna know what our friends at home are talkin' about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Faith says, "My small wonder is waking up a few minutes before your alarm. Being on time without that jerk awake is a great start." I do like that. It doesn't ever happen for me. It used to, I feel like, sometimes I would wake up before my alarm. But not any longer. I don't really wake up to any alarm. I mostly wake up to Rachel waking me up.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Because she has been awake with Gus for a bit. But I do really—I do like— Maybe with a nap, you set a timer for a nap. Not having that alarm like, "Hey, get up!" I don't know. It's nice for my heartrate, I feel.

**Rachel:** Yeah, it's interesting. I have not really had to set an alarm in a very long time. I mean, when we're like taking a plane or something, I have.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But like day to day, like I just— The boys always wake me up.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Before seven.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Always.

**Rachel:** So it's like why would I set an alarm? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah. Dakota says, "My wonderful thing is the way that babies learning to talk will have some words down pat from minute one. Love to hear my little son shout 'Hey!'."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's really good. Gus is going through like a language explosion right now that is...

**Rachel:** [through laughter] Yeah.

**Griffin:** Really, really great. Really, really great.

**Rachel:** [giggles]

**Griffin:** A lot of very emotive like thumbs down like, "No, thank you!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like outrageously precocious. Thank you to Ben and Augustus for the use of our theme song "Money Won't Pay," another musical masterpiece, if I may be so bold. And thank you to MaximumFun for having us on the network. Go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org), check out all the great stuff that they have goin' on over there.

While you're doin' that, maybe start gettin' pumped up about the MaxFun Drive. It's gonna run from March 18<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>. We have lots and lots of super fun stuff comin' your way, from all the shows. We'll announce what we've got coming down the pipe for *Wonderful!* maybe next week, maybe we can start teasing it out.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I was wondering when we should start teasing it.

**Griffin:** I'm very excited for it to come out.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It is... It is... It is a fun and nostalgic old romp for us—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — which is why I'm excited for y'all to hear that. We got merch over at [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com) that you can go check out. Some new Fungalore stuff. There's a little sailor boy Griffin pin.

**Rachel:** Oh, there is?

**Griffin:** There is, it's adorable.

**Rachel:** Aww, I want it.

**Griffin:** Lot of great stuff over there. I think that's it. Thank you all so much for listening.

**Rachel:** Oh, and you and your brothers and your dad are gonna be in Chicago.

**Griffin:** Yes we are. We're gonna be in Chicago at the end of April. We're gonna be doin' shows, we're gonna be doing *MBMBaM* and *TAZ* in the days leading up to C2E2, and then we're gonna be doing appearances there. So you can find links to all that stuff, and get tickets I believe they might be on sale now, over at [mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.family).

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That's it, thank you.

**Rachel:** That's it.

**Griffin:** Thank you so much for boosting my— the live shows. I forget a lot, and.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, you know, I think a McElroy live show is always a delight.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I've never been to one and been like, "Bor-iiing."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know. 'Cause I would. I mean, if it was like that, I would come up to you afterwards and I would be like, "Bor-iiing."

**Griffin:** You would?

**Rachel:** No, I definitely wouldn't.

**Griffin:** No, I—

**Rachel:** But I don't think it will ever happen, honestly.

**Griffin:** I don't even like imagining Mean Rachel.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Can you give me some more Mean Rachel? Like what else— like what—

**Rachel:** It's just like me in the audience, goin' like, "You stink!" You know?

**Griffin:** The whole audience is on Mean Rachel's side?!

**Rachel:** No, like I'm leading the audience. [giggles]

**Griffin:** Oh, okay, interesting.

**Rachel:** Like I like turn backwards to the row behind me and I'm like—

**Griffin:** [chanting] "You stink. You stink."

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Awesome.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Alright.

**Rachel:** And then like I worry that it's not specific enough, so then I—  
Each individual brother, I like lead different chants.

**Griffin:** About like what's wrong specifically.

**Rachel:** Like specifically like, "Ju—"

**Griffin:** Give me some examples.

**Rachel:** "Justin stinks." No, it's just stinks.

**Griffin:** Oh. Okay.

**Rachel:** Stinks is the whole thrust. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** So, she's not very good and being mean, it seems like.

**Rachel:** It's "Justin stinks." And then I would go on to "Travis stinks," and then I would end with "Griffin stinks." But you would be anticipating it then.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And so like—

**Griffin:** It wouldn't hit me as hard.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Which would cushion it.

**Rachel:** Like you knew it was coming.

[theme music fades in]

**Griffin:** Like you're mean and you think I stink, but you're still like—  
You're think— You have like my feelings like at heart.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Of course.

**Griffin:** And that's what's so nice about being Mean Rachel.

**Rachel:** Of course, yeah. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Thank you.

[outro music plays]

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