

Wonderful! 324: Dinner Milk

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[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful.

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful. It's a show where we talk about things that is good that we do like and that we are into. If you've never listened to the show before, welcome. We're so glad to have you. If you have listened to the show before, this one is going to be repeat.

Rachel: Oh, interesting?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: A clip show?

Griffin: This is a clip show.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: We gotta get up—once you hit 500 episodes of podcast, you reach syndication. We so badly want this show to start airing on TBS.

Rachel: God, we'd be perfect for TBS.

Griffin: God almighty, we would be perfect for the Turner Broadcasting System. Up there, it would be us. We would come on after every Atlanta Braves game. Ah, perfect.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: Isn't that weird to think about? How there used to be a channel that you could go to watch Atlanta Braves, where you go to watch the baseball games of one team. Isn't that kind of weird to think about?

Rachel: I feel like in the Midwest, that was WGN?

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: It was like Chicago stuff.

Griffin: Okay. That's cool.

Rachel: I don't know if that's right.

Griffin: That's cool to think about.

Rachel: Sounds right, though.

Griffin: I like that.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Anyway...

Rachel: You could pretend that you live there. That's what it was like to live in that city.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: Like I'm just watching the things that they watch.

[group chuckle]

Griffin: Do you have any small wonders for me?

Rachel: I do! I wanted to talk about the fact that we brought little son to the doctor and he is perfectly average.

Griffin: He is average in height and weight.

Rachel: This is a boy who went from being enormous as a baby, to way too small.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And now just right.

Griffin: Yeah, he's that perfect porridge. Just how we like it.

Rachel: Nothing considerable or concerning about his height and weight. Just A-okay. He is the model boy.

Griffin: He is the perfect specimen of a child.

Rachel: [chuckles] That's far from true, but—

Griffin: That's true, he's got—he could sleep better.

Rachel: It is always nice to take your child to a doctor's appointment and not have them be like, "Ooh..."

Griffin: "Ooh, yikes."

Rachel: "Have you—oh..."

Griffin: "He does *what?*!"

Rachel: [titters] "I gotta refer him to my guy that handles this."

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. I'm going to say, I really like when you go to get your hair cut and they shampoo your hair for you.

Rachel: Oh, yeah!

Griffin: That's a really nice feeling.

Rachel: Do you go like, "Aah!"

Griffin: No, I don't go, "ah?"

Rachel: [in a silly voice] "Yeah!"

Griffin: Rachel! Do you do that?

Rachel: [chuckles] No.

Griffin: You understand that that's—

Rachel: No. To me, that is the funniest thing in the world, though. To like go to a place where you're treating yourself and just really let out some groans. [titters]

Griffin: I have reflexively done that once or twice during like a massage, where—

Rachel: Oh, yeah?

Griffin: I've been like particularly sore or tense. And then you know, they get up in there, just right where the pain lives. And it just escapes my—

Rachel: And you go, "Ooh!"

Griffin: No, I don't—what do you think—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Maybe this is a—this could be an issue where like maybe you don't understand that as a fella, if I make those noises—

Rachel: Yeah, that's true.

Griffin: There's a certain—

Rachel: It's a little creepy.

Griffin: Yeah, it's way, way, way—

Rachel: It's less—

Griffin: Way, way, way, way creepy.

Rachel: Less charming, I guess.

Griffin: Yeah, if you were to do that, ah, it's cute. If I were to do that, "Get this guy the fuck out of here."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You go first this week. On the program. What have you got? Prepared for the class. Today? I'm stalling. As you open up your MacBook.

Rachel: You know you don't have to do that? We have a lovely editor that will just take out the time between you asking me and me bending over to pick up my laptop.

Griffin: Yes, that's true. And yet—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles]

Rachel: You're real, you know? Like you like to keep things real.

Griffin: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: You like our audience to know what it's really like in the studio.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's a little bit humid. I'd love to get that door open there, but there might be a little bit too much outside noise.

Rachel: I mean, do you want me to open it?

Griffin: Do you mind? It's raining out there. And you know how I like that petrichor funk.

Rachel: Ooh.

Griffin: Isn't that nice?

Rachel: It's chilly.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And this is May?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles] Ooh!

Griffin: Ooh. [in a silly voice] Ugh!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [in a silly voice] Ah-ooh!

Rachel: [snickers] Wow.

Griffin: It's been a while.

Rachel: It has. The wonderful thing that I want to talk about this week is string cheese.

Griffin: Excellent stuff, this stuff! Excellent stuff, this perfection, string cheese. The unfried mozzarella stick of my heart. I love this guy.

Rachel: [chuckles] I think... I mean, I've always enjoyed—well, I don't know that I've always enjoyed string cheese. But as I became older and more mature, I started to enjoy stringy cheese.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And now I like it because it is a thing that our big son will eat.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I know that it has vitamins and nutrients and some good things for him.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And...

Griffin: Comparatively. Compared to some other shit that he might also eat, this one we can feel pretty okay about.

Rachel: This one's like, oh, you're getting something from this that will help your bones.

Griffin: Not big milk drinkers, this fam. I would say as a—

Rachel: No, it—no, well... hm, yeah. I mean, Henry and his cereal. Sometimes on the side of a Happy Meal.

Griffin: Yeah, but not—not a—not just, you know, just because. Not like—

Rachel: Which I, like as a Midwestern woman, I definitely did grow up having a glass of milk with dinner every night.

Griffin: I definitely had some dinner milk as well.

Rachel: Yeah. Should we be doing that?

Griffin: Dinner milk?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Do you know what, for me, now, what that would—

Rachel: No, not should—when I say 'we,' I mean should we be bringing that tradition to our sons?

Griffin: Oh? I mean, I'd love them to have like huge bones. Like huge, huge, crazy bones.

Rachel: [titters] I think that I'd be into it.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: We should try it out.

Griffin: Let's become milk... milk guys.

Rachel: Milk guys. [chuckles] Okay, string cheese. This is another one of those things that exists in the world. And to my knowledge, has always existed in the world. But that is very much not true.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Like, somebody had to invent string cheese.

Griffin: Invent is a word that I find challenging for string cheese.

Rachel: Somebody had to...

Griffin: Make a tube—

Rachel: Create a new configuration of cheese.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Someone had to extrude cheese from a small circle.

Rachel: Exactly. I mean, you've just done my whole segment for me.
[laughs]

Griffin: Oh, yeah. I imagine extrusion... is that a word? I imagine extrusion is the order of the day.

Rachel: Huh?

Griffin: There's no mold. There's no string cheese mold that you—

Rachel: They like shoot liquid cheese into?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: No, you're right. It's some kind of... squirting.

Griffin: I wish I could just—

Rachel: Squirting. But I don't... I don't want to say extrusion, because I'm not sure it's a word. [titters]

Griffin: It's okay. All words come from somewhere. And this could be where this word comes from. How tight would it be to just put your mouth right in front of that extrusion nozzle and just catch yourself a—

Rachel: A whole mouthful?

Griffin: Catch yourself a rope of string cheese. That would be so good. That's my only thing with string cheese, is sometimes I wish it was like three to four times longer. Like a Nerds Rope of string cheese.

Rachel: Ew. Ugh.

Griffin: What's wrong?

Rachel: That's weird, the like—

Griffin: Nerds wouldn't be on it.

Rachel: Yeah... I'm just picturing like the packaging of a Nerds Rope, but string cheese in there. And it's a strange—

Griffin: It could be tasteful. I'm imagining it like hanging, like a... you know, like a fancy dried sausage at a deli or something like that.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: You would just go and you would take it from the artisanal—

Rachel: Or like a sausage on a rotating pole, like on *The Bachelor*.

Griffin: Precisely. What an extremely specific pull.

Rachel: Okay, string cheese. There is no patent on string cheese, so—

Griffin: Let's go make some fuckin' string cheese and get rich quick then!

Rachel: So, the origin of it is a little uncertain. But an Atlantic article from 2014 called *The Secret Life of String Cheese*—

Griffin: I always knew. I always suspected.

Rachel: Doesn't that sound like a parody article, like you would see in like an episode of like a show? Like, "Oh, I just read *The Secret Life of String Cheese* in *The Atlantic*." Like, no, that's real.

Griffin: Yeah, that does sound—yeah.

Rachel: That's a real article.

Griffin: I mean, there's a reason people say that shit about *The Atlantic*.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: They do write that stuff, man.

Rachel: So Baker Cheese is the outfit that claims at least the origin of string cheese in the Midwest.

Griffin: Baker Cheese?

Rachel: Baker Cheese. The last name of the family is Baker.

Griffin: Oh, I see, I see. Not this is cheese for bakers to use specifically.

Rachel: No. Initially, in 1916, they began selling cheddar cheese in St. Cloud, Wisconsin.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Which is exactly what you want to hear.

Griffin: Sure. Yeah. No, it's—yeah, I assumed.

Rachel: This is something I always forget. And every time I read it, it blows my mind. But the whole origin of you know, this mozzarella cheese phenomenon came in the 1950s. When the soldiers came back and they were like, "We love this thing called pizza. We can't find it anywhere."

Griffin: I—is that—really?

Rachel: We've talked about pizza before on this show. And that is 100% true. It came to America because people had been spending time abroad. And were like, "Man, this stuff is good."

Griffin: "This shit's so good." Yeah, and I guess mozzarella—we weren't like big into mozzarella before. Wow, that's tragic, man. That's a shame. I feel like this nation really didn't get started until mozzarella showed up. You know what I mean?

Rachel: There are people alive today who like can remember the pizza invasion. [titters]

Griffin: Right. It's like when—I remember how when the iPod came out, it like changed the way we all listen to music. It's like then, for cheese.

Rachel: I remember when the cordless telephone came out.

Griffin: Yeah, I remember that also.

Rachel: Wild.

Griffin: Wild. This is cordless cheese, though. And that's exciting.

Rachel: [chortles] Okay. So, pizzerias start blowing up. Pizza Hut, 1958. Little Caesars, 1959. Domino's 1960.

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: Just bam, bam, bam.

Griffin: I didn't realize I guess that the story of mozzarella was so intrinsically linked to pizza mania in the United States.

Rachel: So, let me tell you the story as told by Baker Cheese. They switched over to mozzarella and they would make six-pound loaves, or 20 pound blocks of cheese that restaurants could then cut for their pizzas.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Just like a six-pound loaf of cheese.

Griffin: I mean, of mozzarella, I would—mozzarella is, I think mozzarella is my favorite cheese.

Rachel: Oh? Even more than like a Gouda or a brie?

Griffin: More than a brie, yeah.

Rachel: Wow?

Griffin: I mean, here's the thing. I love a brie, specifically. I would—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Put some—have some apples with it. With a little honey or walnut in there.

Rachel: Ah.

Griffin: Get some bread, whatever.

Rachel: Ooh! [titters]

Griffin: [in a silly voice] Argh!

Rachel: [laughs] Make the sound the whole show.

Griffin: I'm into that. But I can eat mozzarella anytime. Anytime, any day of the week, and it would scratch the itch.

Rachel: And what is the itch exactly?

Griffin: Cheese itch.

Rachel: Cheese itch. [titters]

Griffin: Inside cheese. I call hunger like a tummy itch, like an inside itch. And then I scratch it with this cordless cheese.

Rachel: Did you know our friend is now living in cheese itch village?

Griffin: She's—what's that?

Rachel: I was making like—you said cheese itch and it reminded me of Greenwich Village in New York. And so I said cheese itch village.

Griffin: Do we have a friend who lives in Greenwich Village though?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Okay. So that confused me on two different levels.

Rachel: Well, I mean, who—I don't know anyone that lives in Greenwich Village, so I didn't know how to structure the joke.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: This is... this is why... [chuckles] I'm not an improvisational comic.

Griffin: I don't think that's true. I think you're very, very sharp.

Rachel: Well, not in this case. Okay, so we're talking about big blocks of cheese. At this point, we are in the third generation of Baker Cheese, as far as who is managing the business. But Grandpa Frank is still around.

Griffin: [laughs] I feel like you needed to introduce Grandpa Frank earlier in the segment. So I can start getting like excited.

Rachel: Getting hyped for Grandpa Frank. Well, so I love—I just wanna— [titters] I wanna quote this directly from the article. So the interview is with Brian Baker, who is like current tip-top when this article was written.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And he said, "My grandfather, Frank, was playing around with mozzarella in the plant." [chuckles]

Griffin: That's cool. Yeah, I mean, I imagine if you have that much cheese on hand, eventually you do start just mucking around with it.

Rachel: Like, "We gotta set aside a few pounds. Grandpa Frank's coming in today and you know how he loves to play with the stuff."

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, it's moldable, it's pliable.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: You can play with that. You play with cheese, sure.

Rachel: So, Frank started creating these one-pound packages. So taking this continuous flow of mozzarella and chopping them into strips. He would cut off strips by hand and roll them and cut them into ropes, into these little three, four, five-inch pieces. He'd soak them in salt brine, and that would give the cheese the stringy characteristic.

Griffin: That's what—okay. This is interesting, because here's something I forget about string cheese. That you don't just grab it and [spoofs eating sound] right off.

Rachel: I mean, I would say that is exactly what our son does.

Griffin: Is peel it or he like chomps it right off?

Rachel: He chomps it.

Griffin: Yeah, I chomp it too. I don't peel it.

Rachel: You don't peel it?

Griffin: No, I chomp it. I'm busy! I have one hand that's doing business. I don't have to—

Rachel: [chortles]

Griffin: I don't have the luxury of using two hands to peel my cheese and [spoofs nibbling sound].

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: For one thing, that's not enough cheese.

Rachel: What if it came pre-peeled?

Griffin: What are you talking—what does that mean?

Rachel: [laughs] So it's like a string cheese, but deconstructed and peeled for you.

Griffin: You know what I always really liked? I'm about to go so fucking far down a rabbit hole, and I apologize for this in advance. But in the hit Nathan Lane comedy, *Mouse Trap*, in which two brothers own a cheese business and are thwarted by a mouse who lives in the cheese business. They try to kill the mouse a lot.

Rachel: Is this the film based on the board game?

Griffin: No. Maybe... no, I don't think so. At the end of the movie, spoilers, they befriend the mouse. Which is what happens in most mouse-based sort of media.

Rachel: Yes, true. [titters]

Griffin: And they realize that they can use their old like yarn weaving equipment, and then they can make balls of like actual strings of cheese that you roll into a ball. How dope would that be?

Rachel: Ooh? I do like that.

Griffin: You just have a ball of string cheese in one hand and you can just sort of, you know, thread it into your mouth and then just like [spoofs biting sounds].

Rachel: Like bubble tape. [titters]

Griffin: Like a big ball of bubble tape. But that's not real, it doesn't exist.

Rachel: Not yet.

Griffin: Yet.

Rachel: There's no patent out there. We could start that today.

Griffin: We could.

Rachel: Just use some old bubble tape containers and put cheese in there.

Griffin: That would be dope!

Rachel: So, Baker Cheese began testing the string cheese by just going to parties and bars and asking people, what do you think?

Griffin: They should have string cheese at bars, though.

Rachel: I know. So they would just roll up with I guess a big, I don't know, what would it be? Like a big tray of cheese. Or maybe like a bag that you like pull newspapers out of, except it's cheese.

Griffin: Yes, a sling bag. Or a bandolier of string cheese.

Rachel: Ooh, I like that too.

Griffin: Yeah, that's cool.

Rachel: So originally, it wasn't like, "We're making this for kids." It was like a, "We're making this for people to snack on."

Griffin: I stand by this is an adult snack that we are—that we loan to children sometimes.

Rachel: So, they took this three-to-five-inch model but made it a thinner, more holdable and lighter option. Apparently, so the average string cheese now is 28 grams. Back then it was 40 to 45.

Griffin: Now we're fuckin' talking, baby!

Rachel: It was thicker. It was like a can of beer. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: So just a can of beer in one hand and then your string cheese in the other.

Griffin: That's perfect for me. That's actually great.

Rachel: There's too much cheese, Griffin.

Griffin: I don't think so! I don't think so. Because I do need to down two of these puppies to even feel it. To even feel something.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: You know what I mean? God, I want me double cheese.

Rachel: I mean, we have that downstairs right now.

Griffin: I know, I'm going to eat string cheese—well, we're going out to dinner tonight.

Rachel: We're going out to dinner, I don't want you to pre-game on cheese.

[group laugh]

Rachel: Okay, so that was the 1970s. A few years later, when string cheese had become cylindrified, instead of the twisted rope status—and there were retail opportunities, that's when they started looking at putting it in the individually wrapped tubes. Because people would buy these like one pound bags and then have to throw—

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: A chunk of it away. So, that is—I mean, that's string cheese.

Griffin: I love it.

Rachel: There's no more to say. I enjoy the peeling. I am of the leisure class. [laughs]

Griffin: Right, I—

Rachel: I have the time to peel.

Griffin: I genuinely do feel like I—there are several different kinds of like snack cravings that I can have. And sometimes it's like I want fruity, gummy, chewy. Sometimes it's like I want salty. But sometimes I want something kind of like mellow and a little bit filling. Like mellow and a little bit filling. And string cheese is like the only thing that can scratch that—

Rachel: Yeah! I started to get really excited because you know, our sons have a series of snacks that come in no particular order throughout the evening.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And anytime Henry says he'd like a string cheese, I feel like, yeah!

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: We're doing it.

Griffin: But then there's—it's gone. Because I ate it all up. Because I also need my bones to—it's actually more important for me where I'm at—

Rachel: You're still growing.

Griffin: At this stage of the game. Well, I don't know about that. But now it's more sort of like reinforcing what's already there. With the power of string cheese. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad reads]

Griffin: Can I do my segment, please?

Rachel: Please.

Griffin: It's one I bet you'll like. I'm going to talk about a television show that we talked about last night. And now we're going to talk about it for content. And that is The Good Place.

Rachel: Oh my gosh! I guess this has probably been a small wonder?

Griffin: It has been a small wonder. Because I got on wonderful.fyi to like make sure we had not done a big wonder on it. First of all, we haven't talked about it in several years. Also, the context in which we spoke about it is that the official Good Place Twitter account tweeted at us I guess once and we were like fuckin' stoked.

Rachel: Oh my god?

Griffin: I do not remember that, for the life of me.

Rachel: I don't either.

Griffin: So, The Good Place. I mean, we were talking about it in the context of like, is it time for a rewatch? And like, I don't know, man. The further we get from the ending of The Good Place, the more I have felt like it deserves its own topic here, because it is such a very, very special television program. If you did not watch The Good Place, it is a fantasy comedy series. It ran for four seasons, starting in 2016. And it was created by Michael Schur, whose hit rate is kind of bonkers.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: He wrote and produced some of The Office. He co-created Brooklyn Nine-Nine and Parks and Rec. But this show is like his baby. This show was like—he was at the spearhead of it. And it is without a doubt like the weirdest show I feel like that his name has been involved with. So, The Good

Place. It follows Eleanor, played by Kristen Bell, who has died before the show even starts and has gone to the Good Place. Which is basically an analogue for Heaven. Important to note that a lot of the maybe traditional Judeo-Christian kind of Heaven stuff is hugely absent from how this show depicts the afterlife. It is very sort of like—

Rachel: It's more like presented as like a, what a lot of people think. Which is like a, this like utopia.

Griffin: A modern utopian society where all of your needs are catered to, and everything is perfect. However, very quickly, Eleanor realizes that due to a clerical error, she has taken the place of another Eleanor. I don't remember her last name.

Rachel: I don't either.

Griffin: I feel like I should. And her unearned presence here in the Good Place starts causing all kinds of weird chaos and like glitches that is kind of like ruining the experience for everybody else in the Good Place. As she kind of tries to reconcile this, she meets other humans who are starting to kind of struggle to settle in, including Tahani and Chidi and Jason. She befriends this omnipotent intelligence, named Janet. And has frequent run-ins with Michael, who is the Good Place's administrator. Michael, of course played by Ted Danson.

Rachel: Ted Danson.

Griffin: I don't know that I adored Ted Danson until this. Because I didn't watch Cheers or like a lot of other Ted Danson—

Rachel: Ah, he's incredible in Cheers. He's like one of the most likable humans.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: You know. It's like watching him on screen, you can't imagine anyone else playing that role.

Griffin: No, absolutely not. I would say that's true of everyone on this show. I can't fathom anyone else—everybody turns in a pitch-perfect performance. And it is—so much so that this is a show where like now, whenever I see anyone else—you know, whenever I see Jameela Jamil in something else, I'm like, oh, hell yeah! Like it's because I have gotten excited about this person because they were in this show, which is one of my favorite shows ever. So like, I just described the plot of season one of *The Good Place*. At the end of season one, something happens that flips the show completely on its ear. And then it's about some completely different shit from that point on.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Which is interesting. I feel like that is a... I don't know, in a much, much smaller way true of *Parks and Rec*. You think about *Parks and Rec* as a show that like after season one, like it kind of turns and it's sort of about a different thing. This is this that times a million. The entire premise of the first season is not really upheld from that point on.

Rachel: Yeah, which is wild because I remember watching that first season and feeling like I could be okay with this show for a while. You know, like I didn't feel like, oh, thank god they've switched it.

Griffin: Yeah. In so doing, in changing the show as dramatically as they do, it evolves from this like situation comedy about this woman wrestling with this cosmic guilt for getting into Heaven and seemingly ruining it. And it becomes so much more. It becomes this lovely meditation on morality and mortality and existentialism, that like you do not necessarily expect from a 30 minute sort of comedy show.

Rachel: And it's so smart because they, you know, they present these characters as kind of like these archetypes. You know, there's like a professor type and then like a fancy, like upper-crust woman type. And then they really like really dig into kind of the humanity and struggle of each of those characters. And it's just so lovely and surprising.

Griffin: I am a sucker for what this show does. I think specifically, maybe because like growing up in the church really filled me with this kind of inexplicable curiosity about like the afterlife. And so like I have always been

kind of fascinated with depictions of that in media. Like anything, right? From like *Dead Like Me* or like fuckin' *Beetle Juice*, or *What Dreams May Come* with Robin Williams. Anything that shows here's what the afterlife is like. I don't know, I've always found that very, very interesting. And I think that probably resonates from a very deep and existential part of my being.

Rachel: Well, yeah! And this idea, I mean, the very relatable idea that you would end up in a place like that and not feel good enough for it. You know?

Griffin: Yeah. Absolutely.

Rachel: Like I found that just really compellingly. Even though Eleanor is this like cartoonish like character at the beginning, you feel like—yeah, no, I mean, it would be weird to be in this place where everybody seems so admirable.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And you're so certain that that's not you.

Griffin: Yeah, I feel like *The Good Place* is my favorite version of this like, here's what we think the afterlife could be like. Or you know, not that explicit. But here's a version of the afterlife that you've probably never seen before, and you have not. The amount of world building that takes place across this show's 53 episodes is fucking bananas. A lot of it is played for laughs.

And usually, that circles around like these humans encountering some aspect of the infinite divine, that their mind cannot comprehend. My favorite of which, the most memorable of which is in one episode, Chidi accidentally like falls through a portal and is just kind of like floating through the ether for like a few seconds before someone pulls him out. And he talks about how he sees infinite realities collapsing upon themselves. Like infinite sheets of metal, until forming a blade in existence. And then Michael's like, "Oh, yeah, you saw the time knife."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, the time knife. That kind of like element of like humans seeing things that they cannot possibly comprehend.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because of the—you know, their infinitesimal nature in comparison with eternity. But like, it also gets into like heavier stuff too. Like, I feel like this show has a lot to say in how it presents Heaven and Hell, and particularly like eternity. You could argue that like the way it depicts Hell is this like cartoonish torture factory. Where demons are like, "Yeah, it's time for your six o'clock red-hot poker in your eyes stuff." But like also, that is kind of how the Bible also sort of talks about Hell sometimes.

But like, it has a lot more to say than just that. Like, this idea of how do humans comprehend their place inside of infinity? How does a human work in eternal life, right? That is like a super heady, kind of scary concept. And the gentleness and thoughtfulness and cleverness with which this show treats that subject is just beautiful and remarkable. And really makes this show stand out, from being like a great comedy with great characters and really touching stories and great moments. It also has this thing to say about like existence, and that's fuckin' huge, man.

Rachel: Yeah, that is.

Griffin: The ending of this show is one of my favorite finales, maybe in the history of television. Mostly because like how tricky a needle it is to thread, to end a show about eternity, right? How do you give characters good send offs? How do you give the story a good send off? When like, I don't know, you're talking about this infinite space. I remember watching the finale of this show, like anxious. Like filled with dread. That this thing I've loved, like there's no way that they're going to be able to do it. And they absolutely do. And it is truly beautiful beyond compare. I have tried very hard in this segment not to like talk about any kind of specifics, about like the things that actually happen on the show. Because I think—

Rachel: I think there are a lot of people that probably missed it.

Griffin: I think there are too. Because here's the thing I will say, I think—I was late to it. Because I think the premise of the first season is a little bit single-faceted, right? It's like, oh, this woman's in heaven and she's not supposed to be, and everything's going wrong. And I hope she gets to the bottom of it. But it really—I mean, you could make the argument that is what the first season is about. I don't think you could make an argument that any of the three following seasons are about any one thing.

Rachel: Yeah, it's true.

Griffin: Like it really, really, really—each episode really delivers a lot of really interesting stuff. And so like, yeah, I could see there being people who watched a few episodes and they're like, "Eh, I get it. I like Kristen Bell and Ted Danson's incredibly handsome. But it just kind of seems like I get it." I promise you, if you get to that moment at the end of the first season, that's like—that moment at the end of the first season was like, oh, I'll watch every episode of this that they care to make. Thank you so much.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: I think this is—I think the ending of this show specifically cements it as like one of the greatest pieces of comedy television ever created. And it is one of those shows that like anytime a clip of it pops up in any of my algorithms, in any of my feeds, I'm like, yeah, I'm gonna go ahead and watch this clip. And I do actually think I would be down for a rewatch. I do think it's—

Rachel: Yeah! Yeah, we don't typically do that anymore. It really tended to be our thing if we were like kind of stuck in a limbo period. Like if we had a new baby, you know, or like nothing going on.

Griffin: Yeah. Well, the Blues didn't make the playoffs and we don't have no babies.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I do think I would be down for—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 53 episodes, too. That's nice. In the grand scheme of things—

Rachel: That's true.

Griffin: That's pretty tight.

Rachel: Yeah, you could easily get through that in a couple months.

Griffin: Sure. Do want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Alex says; "My office is about half a mile away from the spice factory, also known as the McCormick flavor manufacturing center.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: I didn't even think of the fact that like—

Rachel: I've heard of that.

Griffin: That's got to exist somewhere.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: McCormick's got to make that stuff somewhere. "It's surreal and wonderful to roll up to work at the start of the day and smell coriander, pepper, cinnamon or old bay in the air. Almost like an old factory horoscope." I like that a lot, Alex.

Rachel: That's beautiful.

Griffin: That's beautiful, Alex. I do like a—on the west end of Huntington is Heiner's bread factory. Anytime I would drive by on my way to work at Tri-Data, under the oppressive thumb of Tommy Smirl, I would get that good

bread smell. Because it just always smelled like freshly baked bread, like within a—

Rachel: There was a part of—

Griffin: A block of that building.

Rachel: Chicago that smelled like cookies for a while. I can't remember what it was.

Griffin: That was after the great cookie fire of 2008. I remember it, sadly.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Jeremy says, "Drywall anchors. These little guys pack a punch and let me put a shelf wherever I freaking want, and that's wonderful to me. It makes my apartment just feel a little bit more like my own space, where my stuff is *exactly* where I want it to be."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I do love a drywall anchor.

Rachel: Yeah. No, I mean that's brilliant. It's like such a like seemingly innocent little piece of you know, plastic.

Griffin: I remember watch—I got pulled into ToolTok at some point. The ToolTok algorithm on TikTok.

Rachel: Oh, okay. [titters]

Griffin: And it was a comparison of different drywall anchors. And so it was like screwing these anchors through the wood. And sometimes there's like crazy gizmos in 'em, like a bar that pops out as you screw it in. And then twists and it pulls back—

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: Drywall anchor technology is pretty fucking wild, man. And I got a lot to say about that.

Rachel: [chortles]

Griffin: 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. And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org. Check out all the shows that they got there. When you're listening to this, we're on tour doing MBMBaM and TAZ, if this is out on Wednesday. We're doing TAZ tonight in Tacoma. And then tomorrow night, Thursday, we're gonna be doing MBMBaM in Tacoma.

If you live in the Seattle, Tacoma, Pacific Northwest area, come see us. It's gonna be a fun show. We got some new merch over at mcelroymerch.com, including a DJ Thumbs sticker from TAZ Versus Dracula. And some other stuff. That was designed by Lucas Hesperheide. It's great. That's going to do it for us for this episode. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you for your attention. There will be a test. What if we did have a test?

Rachel: I don't know what would be on it.

Griffin: It would be like, how many times did they reference you know, Quantum Leap in this episode?

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Like an ARG, you know what that is?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: It's like an alternate—I think an alternate reality—actual reality game or alternate reality game. It's like when—I'll explain it. This is, it's so boring. This is like most boring fuckin' ending—

Rachel: Let's go back to talking about drywall anchors, because I really feel like there's more there.

Griffin: What can't they do?!

[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

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