

Wonderful! 330: More of Our Favorite St. Louis Stuff, Live!

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

Rachel: Hi, I'm Rachel McElroy.

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Hi, I'm Griffin McElroy.

[audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

[audience cheers]

Griffin: This is a show where we talk about things that we like, that's good, that we're into. It's so good to be back in St. Louis, kind of.

[giggles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's so good to be so close to being back in St. Louis, that the—

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: The posters just went ahead and said "St. Louis."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know if there's any Chesterfield locals here who are like, "Fuck St. Louis!"

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But I hope not. Because who are you kidding? [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, I think this is actually the first time I've been in Chesterfield.

Griffin: Oh wow.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And you grew up in St. Louis.

Rachel: Yes, mm-hmm.

Griffin: So what did Chesterfield do wrong?

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: That you didn't come here until just this moment?

Rachel: I just had everything I needed already. I didn't—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I didn't have to come out.

Griffin: That's fair.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Come out this far.

Griffin: I think this complex here absolutely rips ass.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: The fact— This is my small wonder. The fact that you can start at one end of this complex, hit some top golf, get some pretzel sticks with your buds while you hit the links and make some memories, walk three minutes, now you're at main event, eating a different kind of pretzel sticks.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And playing *Dance Dance Revolution*. You do a little bit of strip mall shopping, there's like an escape room that's based on gameshows, and then you catch a night of kickass alt comedy podcasting?!

[audience cheers]

Griffin: That's the best day of your life.

Rachel: Why would you ever go back to St. Louis?

Griffin: I—

Rachel: Chesterfield has everything you need.

Griffin: Or where we live, with our children. I'm moving to Chesterfield.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: It's a big decision, but. Okay. Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do, actually, and I wanted Paul to help me with this. My small wonder is toasted ravioli baby.

[audience chuckles]

Griffin: What's that? [cackles]

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Don't get me wrong, I know about toasted ravioli, and in fact may be speaking more about it later this very evening. But I didn't know it came in delectable baby form.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So since I have left St. Louis, a little over 20 years ago, St. Louis got into soccer.

Griffin: Okay.

[Some audience members cheer]

Griffin: I think basically every major city in America has done that, without consulting me at any point in the process.

Rachel: [giggles] Or giving anybody a real primer on what soccer is or does, really.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I don't know enough really to be a fan of—

Griffin: They should have a town hall meeting where they explain to everyone—

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: — the rules of soccer.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Before they allow soccer to take place here.

Rachel: And—

Griffin: Anyway, so this is a star soccer for the St. Louis soccer team?

Rachel: [laughs] So before there was toasted ravioli baby, there was toasted ravioli man. Paul, can you bring up?

Griffin: Whoa.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And a witch turned him into a baby?

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So this is Nick Lamarine.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Him and his girlfriend made this costume for himself to wear at the games, and then there was another family, Chris Burke, and him and his wife went to IKEA, got a brown IKEA slipcover.

Griffin: I thought you were about to say they got a toasted ravioli costume.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Bought it for \$5 and said "We have to put our baby in this." And so this is the next evolution.

Griffin: Of toasted ravioli man.

Rachel: Yup.

Griffin: I love that.

Rachel: Yeah.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: I mean, I would dip that baby in marinara sauce and—

Rachel: Granted, it's no Chesterfield, but it is—

Griffin: [chuckles] No.

Rachel: It is remarkable.

[audience chuckles]

Griffin: Who here has never heard an episode of *Wonderful!* before? It's okay. Oh wow, holy shit! A lot of you have heard *Wonderful!* that's great!

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: We talk about good stuff.

Rachel: They brought up the lights for that, just so I could— [laughs]

Griffin: I know, it was chilling!

Rachel: Really make eye contact with everybody who has not listened to the show before. [giggles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Friggin' missed a button on my shirt. That sucks.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Anyway, we talk about good stuff on this show, that's literally it. We used to talk about *The Bachelor*, but that became [chuckles] dicey. [laughs] To do.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: One might say it was always a little dicey.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Okay, am I starting?

Griffin: Yes, please.

Rachel: Okay. So. As I mentioned, I haven't lived here in 20 years, so I may not be up to date on everything that is popular, but when I was a young person here, the place to go was Six Flags.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: And I wanted to talk about the first rollercoaster I went on that ever went upside down, and that is The Ninja.

Griffin: Ooo! [giggles intriguedly]

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: I... love a rollercoaster that people have any kind of feelings about.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, as if I had said like the Screamin' Eagle, everyone would've been like—

Both: [simultaneously] "Boooooo!"

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] Ninja has been around since 1989.

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay.

Rachel: I became very familiar with the subculture of coaster enthusiasts as I was researching this, and I got a lot of information from Coaster101.com.

Griffin: Great.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] Okay, there's definitely some fans of coaster101.com here tonight!

Rachel: And the YouTube channel "Theme Park Crazy."

Griffin: Okay.

[some audience members cheer]

Griffin: This—!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Our audience is the best audience on the planet!

[audience cheers]

Griffin: Of course there is overlap!

[audience cheers loudly]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I just love the overlap between us and rollercoasters.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Mm-hmm. But before I talk about that, I wanted to read the description of The Ninja off of the Six Flags website.

Griffin: Okay, please. [chuckles]

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: Okay. "A ninja is not just strong, precise—"

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: “— and a master of technique, but the ninja is also a master of stealth. He sneaks up on you, delivers his punches and kicks, and is gone before you even look up.”

Griffin: May I interject? [chuckles] If you have waited in a line.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And strapped yourself into a moving vehicle.

Rachel: That’s not stealthy. [laughs]

Griffin: That is not stealthy at no— When it starts moving, you can’t be like, “Whoa, where am I?!”

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: “It moves?!”

[audience laughs]

Rachel: “Slicing through the air at 55 miles per hour, at over 2430 feet of track, you’re about to learn the ways of the black belt.” [giggles]

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: “Riding Ninja is like an education in the art of looping.”

[audience laughs]

Rachel: "How many trained assassins do you know who could, in one maneuver, fly through a half loop and a half corkscrew, then back out at a nearly vertical angle?"

Griffin: I feel like actually that is taught at Ninja School.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [chuckles] "There's only one martial artist that comes to mind. At Ninja School, they call that trick 'a sidewinder loop'." [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] Do you think this— the person who wrote this had to go door-to-door to different Ninja Schools around the world?

Rachel: "Excuse me."

Griffin: "Excuse me, what do you call this?"

Rachel: "If it is a half loop and a half corkscrew." Okay. "Including a sanity-warping double corkscrew—"

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: "— there are a total of five inversions. Ninja employs its famous stealth as it takes the low-banking curves so close to the ground, you'd swear you never saw a rollercoaster race by, unless of course you were riding it."

Griffin: No, again, I have to disagree with that. I feel like I'd be pretty certain I just saw a roller— Oh.

Rachel: One more sentence.

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: "This attraction is presented by M&Ms."

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs uproariously]

Rachel: So deep in the ninja lore, like really brought you into the culture of ninjas.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: And then reminded you. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I personally remember The Ninja feeling like a very exhilarating, smooth, upside-down experience.

Griffin: Looks like it, yeah.

Rachel: But that is because my previous point of reference was the Screaming Eagle, which was an incredibly old wooden roller-coaster.

Griffin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I remem— The first like gnarly wooden rollercoaster I ever went on was Son of Beast, which was only open—

[some audience members cheer]

Griffin: Yeah. At King's Island, which I only rode once or twice because it didn't go up for very long, [chuckles] 'cause it kept hurting people's bones.

Rachel: [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And then I went on a metal rollercoaster and was like, "Oh okay, I get it. Now I understand."

Rachel: There was a description on one of the rollercoaster websites that I was looking at that says “Ninja is perhaps the most infamous attraction at the park, due to many enthusiasts labelling the ride as quote ‘rough and a neck-breaker’.”

Griffin: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I don’t remember that being true, but again I was very young. My bones were not—

Griffin: Your bones were so—

Rachel: — fully connected.

Griffin: Just supple.

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: I will say, I was not present for this, but for a few years there was a VR experience.

Griffin: Wait.

Rachel: Did anyone participate in that?

[some audience members cheer]

Griffin: Oh wait, so they didn’t put a VR helmet on you while you were on Ninja, right?

Rachel: So there were headsets that had like a Samsung phone in it.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: And you would wear the headsets on the rollercoaster, and it would present a themed fighter jet experience.

Griffin: But you’re on a rollerco—! What?!

Rachel: [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: What could you possibly see on a screen that is better than the rollercoaster you're on?

Rachel: That's what I thought. You were going through a futuristic city, and you were battling aliens.

Griffin: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Eventually, you would encounter a mothership, and then that debuted in 2016, and then as I understand, it was gone by 2019.

Griffin: Yeah yeah.

Rachel: There was a lot of cracking and freezing of the phone, or running out of battery.

Griffin: You mean the one that's an inch and a half from my face and eyes?

Rachel: [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And also, the operators of the rollercoaster had to manually adjust each headset.

Griffin: Oh, God Almighty.

Rachel: So the wait times became enormous.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And also, if the phone was out of sync, it would cause extreme nausea. [giggles]

Griffin: No way.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Because people would have the visual of going down a hill before they were going down a hill.

Griffin: Oh my god.

Rachel: And it would just—

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It sounds like you've engineered the scariest imaginable rollercoaster experience.

Rachel: I know.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So this launched on 2016, as of 2019 all Six Flags VR coasters were...

Griffin: I bet I could put it together—

Rachel: — discontinued. [chuckles]

Griffin: — on my phone in a shoebox.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I bet I could make my own Ninja headset.

Rachel: So that is Ninja.

Griffin: That's amazing. I would like to talk about a beverage. Last time we came to town and did *Wonderful!*

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: You sang the praises of Vess soda.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Thank you, thank you.

Griffin: Which I still think is made up. Specifically you mentioned Whistle, and orange soda which apparently contains a billions bubbles. Did you also know that the create— You probably do 'cause you grew up here. The creator of that drink, Charles Grigg, also whipped up a little beverage called 7-Up?

Rachel: I don't know if I did know that or not.

Griffin: Well now you freakin' do.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: He invented it in 1929, it was a formula he devised [chuckles], which he named "Bibbed— Bib Label Lithiated Lemon Lime Soda."

Rachel: Ugh. [laughs]

Griffin: And it launched two weeks before the Wall Street crash of 1929.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Which is fortunate actually, because this beverage was chock full of lithium citrate. [chuckles] Which is a potent mood stabilizer.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: You may know it as a medication historically prescribed to folks with bipolar disorder.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It is also a premium thirst quencher.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: They later went on to change the name to “7-Up Lithiated Lemon Soda,” which is weird!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because I guess they took the lime out, but they left the lithium in.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And then they just shortened it to 7-Up in 1936. But don’t get it twisted, this bad boy had lithium in it all the way up to 1948.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: It’s interesting because people talk about how there’s been this increase in diagnosis of mental health concerns, but it’s just because years— carbonated beverages.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Don’t have lithium anymore. [laughs]

Griffin: That’s right.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: People were getting what they needed!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: From 7-Up.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The name “7-Up,” there is not universally agreed on reason for the etymology of that name. Some people theorize ‘cause it has seven main ingredients.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: One of which, [chuckles] I assume, is lithium.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Or that lithium’s atomic mass is seven. Or because it was released in seven-ounce bottles, when the norm at that time was six-ounce bottles.

Rachel: Wooooooah.

Griffin: So you got extra thirst-quenching, mood-stabilizing drug with every bottle you bought.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There’s been some great marketing campaigns that have come out of 7-Up, like the “Make 7-Up Yours” campaign, which is still very, very good. But it can’t beat the original marketing campaign, which is “This will cure your hangover.” Which like maybe.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: I don’t—

Rachel: Wait, wait. That was the marketing campaign, or that’s just true?

Griffin: That was sort of what they pushed as the main message of 7-Up, is if you’re hungover, this will help you get better from that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which I have used it for that purpose post-lithium, and I don’t know, it does okay. I bet—

Rachel: It's bubbles. Something about those bubbles, man. Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Something about those bubbles. It can also cause hangovers when blended with Sigram 7 Crown Whiskey.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: To create the classic 7 And 7.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which swept the nation in the late '70s.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It was also my drink of—

Rachel: It was your go to.

Griffin: It was my drink of choice for a long time, partially because the bubbles made my tummy feel better, as I was making it sicker [chuckles] by putting alcohol in it.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But also because that's what Ryan Atwood drank on *The OC*, and I wanted to be like him.

Rachel: I never realized that.

Griffin: But, like all great things invented in St. Louis, it didn't stay here forever, 'cause eventually it got bought by Phillip Morris [chuckles] in 1978. The cigarette guys. Where the beverages market just completely—it tanked. And now it's part of Keurig Dr Pepper, which I didn't know that's what that company was named.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: That's gross.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: That's 7-Up.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: You're welcome?

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs and cheers]

Rachel: So I wanted to bring a musical artist, which meant that I had to reacquaint myself with the St. Louis musical scene.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I was very delighted to co— to discover Smino.

Griffin: Smino.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Ooo, is this new to a lot of people?

Griffin: Some people know Smino.

Rachel: Oh my god.

Griffin: And some people don't.

[audience member shouts from a distance]

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: Love Smino. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I feel really hip right now.

Griffin: Yeah, cool man.

Rachel: Okay. So, Smino was born in 1991 in St. Louis, born Christopher Smith Jr, in a very musical family. His father played the keys, his mother sang, he learned to play the drums and sing at church, and I know you're all wondering what high school he went to.

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And that is Hazelwood Central High School.

[Some audience members cheer]

Rachel: Alright.

Griffin: Y'all are so frickin' weird for that, you know that, right?

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: You're the only ones that do that, you know that, right?

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So— And I don't know if this is a movie you're familiar with, so the name "Smino" supposedly was inspired by a character named Nino in the movie *New Jack City* from 1991, starring Wesley Snipes?

Griffin: I don't— I haven't seen it enough times to recognize the names of characters from it.

Rachel: Mm-hmm, to be fair, you were four years old when the movie came out. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. But I was a cool four-year-old.

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: Okay, you were cool. And so his— He did a few EPs, but his first album came out in 2017, it was called *Black Swan*. And I wanted Paul to play a song from that album, and it is called “Anita.”

[audio clip of “Anita” by Smino plays]

Griffin: Really, genuinely great.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: Very, very cool.

Griffin: Really though, I will say, one of the most uncomfortable 35 to 40 seconds of my entire life.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] I know!

Griffin: ‘Cause for a few seconds I was like, “Okay, what do I do? Lot of people are watchin’ me right now, and they’re just listening to a song. But they’re not seeing the person making the music, they’re just wat—”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: “It’s like they’re watching a YouTube Reacts live video of this artist.” So I kinda nodded my head for a while, but then after 10 seconds I was like, “I’m gonna look like an asshole— ”

Rachel: [laughs] I know!

Griffin: “— if I just nod my head this whole time.”

Rachel: I know, I had to fight a lot of instincts to just like really move my body.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I didn't wanna do that.

Griffin: Any of that.

Rachel: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. We should've just climbed under the desk that we're sitting behind.

Rachel: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: So that album was named a Top 50 album of 2015 by *Consequence of Sound*, one of the 40 best rap albums of 2017 by *Rolling Stone*. And the story behind it is that he really wanted to kind of elevate Black women.

He had just seen *Hidden Figures*, and he felt like it was so frustrating to him that there were so many Black women in history that aren't written about, so he wanted to do a song that kind of emphasized, you know, Black women.

And he said quote "With Trump in office, now is such an important time to be confident about Blackness. We need some congregational ass music that we can sign together."

Griffin: [cackles] That's fantastic.

Rachel: I know. So he released that album on March 14th, in honor of St. Louis Day.

And he said "I feel like a lot of people don't know much about St. Louis period. I can't even explain it. St. Louis is a city that doesn't have a lot of influences, we're cool with whatever is around us, but I want people to know that St. Louis has creative talent coming, like in the early 2000s."

Griffin: That's amazing.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[audience cheers]

Rachel: He has released... two albums since then; *Noir* came out in 2018, *Love For Rent* came out in 2022. He has also started a new collaboration with [chuckles] the aforementioned soccer team.

Griffin: [chuckles] [claps]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I didn't expect this to be such a soccer-heavy episode.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Smino and St. Louis SC announced their new collaboration called "Homegrown," where Smino chooses artists with ties to St. Louis, and they receive one on one access to him, and he advises them on building their craft and career trajectories. He also has an annual concert called Kribmas.

Griffin: Crimp—

Rachel: K-R-I-B-mas.

Griffin: Okay, cool.

Rachel: Started in 2016, and the proceeds from that benefit Almost Home, a non-profit helping homeless women and their children, and provide new coats to the Annie Malone Children and Family Services Organization.

Griffin: Smino sounds like the best!

Rachel: He's the best.

[audience claps]

Rachel: Yeah, so I'm glad that this is new to you all, or a lot of you.

Griffin: Check it out.

Rachel: 'Cause I think it's incredible. His work is amazing.

[*Home Improvement* transition music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: I wanna talk about something that you all probably haven't heard about before, and that is... normal toasted ravioli.

Rachel: [cackles]

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: St. Louis has given a lot to the rest of the country, but I think your most generous offering remains this new and exciting way of eating ravioli.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: You guys heard about this?

Griffin: It is superior— No, you don't, 'cause you've lost perspective.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: It's so much better than eating untoasted ravioli—

Rachel: That's true. [chuckles]

Griffin: — in every conceivable way.

Rachel: That is 100% true.

Griffin: Upon my first visit to St. Louis, when we were courting, you took me to a restaurant to sample two of St. Louis's trademark cuisines, the first of which was this profane cracker thin pizza, which is—

[audience laughs]

Griffin: You all still should be ashamed of.

[audience cheers loudly in defiance]

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: Y'all were cheering so loud, I thought for sure Paul put a picture of your bad pizza up on the screen behind us.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Here's what I tried to tell Griffin. I said, "You're going to enjoy it if you don't think about it as pizza."

Griffin: [cackles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And I stand by that. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, sure. The other thing that I sampled there was T-ravs, which absolutely dazzled me. T-ravs, I think, are—

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Love those. Love those.

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: T-ravs are a curse, if you think about it, because after I had one the first time, it became impossible to unflip the switch in my mind that told me that regular ravioli is now just raw toasted ravioli.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: It's just wet dough for idiots.

Rachel: Yeah.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: That is reborn in the flames of a deep-frying machine. That's also great, that it's not toasted. That's the best part about it.

'Cause no-one really knows why, except [chuckles] there's a lot of argument about who was the originator of toasted ravioli, but there are a few restaurants on the Hill that say they are responsible for it.

There is one parti— potential originator named Louis Oldani, or perhaps Louis Oldani, who said he called them "toasted ravioli" on his menu because it sounded more appealing than "fried ravioli," which I would reply to that with no it fuckin' doesn't.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Fried ravioli sounds a lot better than toasted. If something—

Rachel: No, see I disagree. Toasted, it sounds like there's a real precision to it.

Griffin: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Like when you fry something, you just dump it in and pull it out. Toasting, you are watching it, and you are monitoring the exact time when it is right to remove it, I would say.

Griffin: Right, that's—

Rachel: It also sounds healthier, "toasted." [giggles]

Griffin: Yeah, but I— but it doesn't sound as delicious as fried ravioli does.

Rachel: Right, okay. That's fair.

Griffin: You all are, I feel like, immune to this revelation. I despise ravioli. I think it is— There's not a good bite of a ravioli that doesn't just turn into like ricotta gushers.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But when you told me we were getting toasted raviolis, I assumed that we were going to get these crusty, dried out versions of my least favorite pasta.

Rachel: I didn't know—

Griffin: And then out came these gorgeous, golden brown, crispy beauties.

Rachel: I didn't know you felt that way about ravioli at the time, and it really speaks to me how much of a sport you were that you were like, "You know what? This is early in our relationship, we're courting."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "I'll give this a shot."

Griffin: It was a real one-two punch, 'cause you were like, "You gotta try our pizza," and I was like—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: — "Pizza, I know what that is."

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] I do not think I introduced it as pizza.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: What I adore about toasted ravioli, I've been all over this beautiful country of ours.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And there is a way that local delicacies have of expanding their turf; your Philly cheesesteaks, your Buffalo wings. You all have had this thing going [chuckles] with ravioli for a while that the rest of the country has decisively said, "We're good, actually."

[audience laughs]

Griffin: But those people are cowards, because T-ravs absolutely rule.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Everyone else is wrong.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[audience claps]

Griffin: What have you got?

Rachel: Okay. So those of you that have listened to the show know that a signature bit of mine is a trip to the Poetry Corner.

[audience cheers]

Griffin: [imitates the *Frasier* intro music] [sings] "I hear the poetry callin', to—" [normal] If you haven't watched the show before, I do like a *Frasier* thing.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [sings] "— tossed salads and scrambled poems." [normal] It's never good. I don't wanna do it anymore.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But to change it at this point would be wild.

Rachel: I'm gonna explain what I think is your process on connecting it to the *Frasier* theme, which is you see poetry as a very intellectual thing.

Griffin: [laughs] I do!

Rachel: And the most [chuckles] intellectual song you can think of.
[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: [through laughter] Is the theme song to *Frasier*. [giggles] Am I right?

Griffin: I mean, yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Okay, so the poet I wanted to talk about is a—

Griffin: Frasier Krane.

[audience chuckles]

Griffin: [chuckles] From Seattle, Washington.

Rachel: [chuckles] I bet he does have a book of poems out there. Kelsey Grammer? I bet he does.

Griffin: Oh, I bet it is good.

Rachel: Mm.

Griffin: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Okay, so the poet I wanna talk about is a professor at Wash U, his name is Carl Phillips.

[Single audience member cheers loudly]

Rachel: Oh good.

Griffin: There's some Carl Phillips heads in the audience!

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I mean so he has been teaching at Wash U over 30 years. So the odds are a little bit better that there would be people in the audience.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: If you have been [chuckles] to Wash U in the last 30 years.

Griffin: Oh, Carl Phillips!

Rachel: Oh, Carl!

Griffin: Yeeeah.

Rachel: Carl Phillips. So he just recently, as of last year, won the Pulitzer Prize for a collection of poems called *Then The War*, from 2022. He lives in the Central West End, walks his dogs in Forest Park, and he has been a very celebrated poet. He has a Guggenheim and a Library of Congress Fellowship, he got a Pushkar Prize, an Academy of American Poets Prize, the United American Academy of Arts and Letter Prize, he's—

Griffin: That's a lot of prizes.

Rachel: He's celebrated. He ended up at Wash U— So he is actually originally from Massachusetts, he ended up at Wash U because a friend of his, and friend of the show, Robret Pinsky. Not really friend of the show, but I've talked about him.

Griffin: [chuckles] I was so confused by that!

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You just scared the shit out of me.

[audience laughs]

Rachel: I have talked about him on the show before.

Griffin: Okay, my mind was racing. I thought you were about to say, "You remember, right? Our friend, Robert Pinsky?"

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience chuckles]

Rachel: So— I mean where did you go, to salute your shorts immediately? Because that's where I—

Griffin: Immediately.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Without a—

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Without a beat, yeah.

Rachel: So he found out about a three-year job at Wash U from Robert Pinsky that, as I mentioned, ended— turned into 30 years. So I wanted to read a poem of his called *Domestic*. And I will do that now.

"If, when studying road atlases
while taking, as you call it, your
morning dump, you shout down to
me names like Miami City, Franconia,

Cancún, as places for you to take
me to from here, can I help it if

all I can think is things that are
stupid, like he loves me he loves me
not? I don't think so. No more
than, some mornings, waking to your
hands around me, and remembering
these are the fingers, the hands I've

over and over given myself to, I can
stop myself from wondering does that
mean they're the same I'll grow
old with. Yesterday, in the café I
keep meaning to show you, I thought
this is how I'll die maybe, alone,

somewhere too far away from wherever
you are then, my heart racing from
espresso and too many cigarettes,
my head down on the table's cool
marble, and the ceiling fan turning
slowly above me, like fortune, the

part of fortune that's half-wished-
for only— it did not seem the worst
way. I thought this is another of
those things I'm always forgetting
to tell you, or don't choose to
tell you, or I tell you but only

in the same way, each morning, I
keep myself from saying too loud I
love you until the moment you flush
the toilet, then I say it, when the
rumble of water running down through
the house could mean anything: flood,

your feet descending the stairs any
moment; any moment the whole world,
all I want of the world, coming down."

Isn't that lovely?

[audience claps]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That is the first poem you've ever bought with poop as a framing device.

Rachel: [laughs] I know.

Griffin: And I think that represents a tremendous amount of growth from you.

Rachel: It's growth, yeah. He said— He gave an interview in studentlife.com, and said "In the early days of writing poems, the story that was unbearable was my queerness, and my poems knew that, even if I didn't at the time. Closing each poem, I realize now that I was constructing a world within which, and a language with which, a crucial part of myself could find a voice and make space for itself."

Griffin: I love that.

Rachel: Isn't that lovely?

Griffin: That was beautiful.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, Carl Phillips is set to retire, so if you're thinking about going to Wash U, now is the time, get there.

Griffin: [giggles]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: 'Cause he— I mean, every interview I've read with him was like, "Any day now," so. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: You're gonna get tail end career, just the snicklefritz.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "These frickin' kids!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'd like to do one more.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If that's okay.

Rachel: Please.

Griffin: I wanna talk about— [chuckles] To just do a complete 180 tonally, the forward projectile football pass. This is connected to St. Louis in a way that probably not a lot of people in here may know about.

Rachel: This episode has been way too sports heavy for me. [laughs]

Griffin: That is a good point. No, I'm talking about football Norte Americano.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Not the soccer—

Rachel: Okay, okay.

Griffin: — traditional form.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: So.

Rachel: Which I know a lot about. [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] Which you know way more about! In the early days of football, basically every third person who played the sport died. Because it was a game about ramming your head—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — into someone else as fast and as hard as you possibly could.

Rachel: Some might say it still is. [laughs]

Griffin: Well, you— maybe. We didn't have great pad solutions for that back then.

Rachel: True.

Griffin: Everything was made out of actual, factual leather.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: In 1905, in the Collegiates Football Circuit, which is all there was, there was no NFL at the time, there were 19 deaths and 159 serious injuries reported across the nation's college [chuckles]— Yeah! It's a lot!

[audience laughs]

Rachel: And they just thought like, "We'll get this." [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: "We keep telling 'em to slow down, but everyone just goes crazy out there!" People went to President Teddy Roosevelt and were like, "Hey, maybe we should ban football," and [chuckles] Teddy Roosevelt was— He probably just finished bow hunting or something.

Rachel: Yeah, uh-huh.

[audience laughs]

Griffin: And was like, "Well, no, football's great."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: “Let’s just make some new rules.” And so the year after that, a bunch of schools got together to change the rules of football, which you know, bear in mind, no NFL, this was it. These were the big— This was all the football that there was.

And they came up with allowing legal forward passing. This is wild to me for a few reasons. One, I think we can all agree the only exciting, good part of football is when somebody throws the ball really far and someone catches it.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: And you’re like, “Holy shit!”

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: That’s so much more football that I don’t have to pay attention to because—

Rachel: Yeah! [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: — they skipped a lot of it, and you’re telling me that never happened until these rules went into effect in 1906. How—

Rachel: That’s a good point. [laughs]

Griffin: How did this sport stick around for so long when it was just running plays forever?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So the team that is credited with really taking ownership of this new touchdown vector was the 1906 St. Louis Blue and White football team. Bradbury Robinson was the quarterback for that team, and he threw the first ever legal forward pass on September 5th, 1906, playing against Carol College. It was an incomplete pass.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: So there must've been lots of people who thought "Ha! This new way of playing football is for dummies!"

Rachel: "It's not gonna work."

So did he know that he was doing it? Or was it just like no— Everyone looked at each other like, "Eh, we'll let this one slide?" [laughs]

Griffin: No, he knew what he was doing. At this point, the rules had been agreed on, this was the first season where the rules had taken place.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: And this was the first game in that season where somebody had done it. Later in that game, they went on to make a lot of complete passes, to win that game and every other game they played that season, ending that season with a record of outscoring their opponents, for the season, 407 to 11.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience reacts in shock]

Griffin: This is why I'm obsessed with this moment in sports history. Y'all, they played a game against the Missouri Minors, which they won 71 to nothing.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: Wait, so I don't understand why other people weren't doing this.

Griffin: Because when they changed the rules, there were probably a lot of people—

Rachel: Ohhhh.

Griffin: A lot of cigar-smoking coaches who was like—

Rachel: [chuckles] “Nah!”

Griffin: — “They think they’ve figured it out? No way!”

Rachel: “Nah!” [giggles]

Griffin: The Missouri Minors, at this— Can you imagine the terror in those boys’ eyes?!

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: Where the defenders are like, “[shouts] We don’t know what to do!”

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: [shouts] “The ball is up!”

[audience laughs]

Rachel: “None of us can run very fast!”

Griffin: [laughs] “We can’t run—! We’re all huge lads!”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: “Who can tackle so good! The ball’s up there! We can’t fly!”

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Griffin: The coach of the St. Louis University football team that season was [chuckles] a man named— I didn’t look up the pronunciation of his last name and I never will, because in my name it’s pronounced as follows; Eddie Coachems!

[audience laughs]

Griffin: That's incredible! Did everyone eventually get wise to the fact that you could make the ball go so far, so fast if you just yeet it with maximum excitement? Yes. Are there other teams that did that that season that didn't get as much credit 'cause they didn't go first, 'cause their football season started later than St. Louis? Yes.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Also, but only one team had a coach named Coach Coachems, and that's gotta count for something.

Rachel: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Rachel: That's amazing.

Griffin: Yes. That's all that we have prepared for you today. Thank you all so much for joining us for *Wonderful!*

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

[audience cheers loudly]

Griffin: Thank you to Bob and Augustus for the use of our theme song "Money Won't Pay." If you're listening to this later, there's a link to that in the episode description. We have a poster for sale for *MBMBaM* out in the lobby, designed by Kate May. We've signed a bunch of 'em that you can go grab, and we'll be back soon. Thank you all so much!

[theme music plays]

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