

Wonderful! 338: String Cheese is More Acceptable for Adults

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy!

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: This is Wonderful! A show where we talk about things that's good, we like, we're into. Which is a lot of things, it turns out. Sometimes I go to wonderful.fyi, a database of all the things we talk about. And it's like over 1000 things.

Rachel: There's a lot of things in there.

Griffin: And it's like, I like over 1000—I guess the two of us combined.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like around like probably—

Rachel: And some of those we only like enough to talk about for a few seconds at the beginning of the show.

Griffin: It still gets added to the registry, though.

Rachel: Yeah, I guess so.

Griffin: So when someone's like, "Hey, Griffin, what do you like?" I can be like, "I will take you to a website that has all my interests." Icebreaker games for me at corporate retreats would be so easy. Because I'd be like, "What do you want to know? Like, go down this list. If the picture of the boy is on it, that's me. I like that thing."

Rachel: [titters] Oh, yeah.

Griffin: Do you have any small wonders you'd like to talk about before we get started with like the main course? The true dish?

Rachel: Oh? Okay, I'll say this. I'm worried that I am gonna take credit for your good work, but you organized our children's cup shelf.

Griffin: You started this. So I came downstairs this morning, you woke up before I did, as you are—as you so often do. And I came downstairs—

Rachel: You act as if I have a choice.

Griffin: [titters] No, it's correct, you do have—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You do have—you don't have a choice, you have a Gus.

Rachel: Small son insists that I am with him for at least a few minutes in the morning, every morning.

Griffin: Well, he wants nothing to do with me. I come downstairs this morning and you have pulled out every cup and bottle from our like drinkware shelving. And it's sitting—

Rachel: Specifically—this may not be uncommon for families with children, but there is a section of your kitchen that is dedicated to children's cups.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And ours had become just a real pit.

Griffin: Just a disaster of mismatched lids and bottles. It was full, and yet somehow never had some—the thing that you needed it to have in it. So, yes, you had pulled it all out. And then you got up because Gus needed your presence. I think he just came in the kitchen and he was just like—

Rachel: Come in the living room.

Griffin: "Come in the living room."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "Leave the kitchen." And so I stepped in. And it took like 20 minutes?

Rachel: This is the thing, right? Like we've been talking about that for a while. And it felt like it probably wasn't gonna take very long, but the first step was to get everything out of there.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And that itself seems daunting. So, I just did it. And then it took you like 10 minutes?

Griffin: And then it's done, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, and now it looks great.

Griffin: It looks so good in there.

Rachel: That's my small wonder.

Griffin: I'm gonna say—I feel very nervous bringing this as a small wonder. But I want to talk about it. And I certainly don't want to do it—

Rachel: Your incredible sexual prowess.

Griffin: My sexual prowess is somehow only getting better.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: We've been watching Too Hot to Handle again.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: You just made a face like, "I can't believe you want to talk about this show on the air."

Rachel: Well, one, it is always risky to talk about a reality show before the—

Griffin: You've finished it?

Rachel: The season has ended.

Griffin: Yes, that's true.

Rachel: And then two, this is one of those shows that if I was in a room full of fancy people and they were like, "What do you watch?" I would not admit to this.

Griffin: Here's the thing though, this show has changed dramatically. We, Rachel and I have a lot of, frankly, pretty erudite things to say about the reality TV landscape.

Rachel: And how it has evolved and changed.

Griffin: How it has evolved and changed, and how Netflix has sort of their own flavor.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: That they bring to it. Their own way of making reality shows. There is a vibe and a pace and a—

Rachel: The way they cast feels very specific to a Netflix reality show.

Griffin: Exactly. And then the level of reality presented in that reality show. Like Netflix has a, I would say, a pretty low bar for that, that is—that defines sort of—it differs show to show. But like in general, there's a lot of like clearly pretty scripted confessional content of like—

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: "Lana, are you out of *your* mind?"

Rachel: What?

Griffin: Like the absolute pits. But I am—we fell off of it like two seasons ago. I am enjoying it from that perspective, from the perspective of like—I made the comparison to wrestling. Because it's like, clearly this is all a work. Like, a lot of this on Too Hot to Handle is a work.

Rachel: And they know exactly who they have been cast to be.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And there's also, this year, there's a whole economy.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Like they have a whole ecosystem they've created with very specific rules. And it's interesting. It reminds me a lot of—gosh, what was the show we watched that had that whole fantasy reality? And they had to like collect things?

Griffin: Oh, New World.

Rachel: New World. It reminds me a little bit of New World in the sense that—

Griffin: I don't know about that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: New World is one of the finest reality shows ever made. And this is garbage.

Rachel: There's a whole like currency and it gets changed, and people have different amounts of power. It's—

Griffin: What are you—I don't know what you're talking about?

Rachel: I'm talking about like for example the happy hour menu.

Griffin: Yeah, so—

Rachel: Which I won't go into detail about.

Griffin: There's a bad Lana now.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: The little AI robot Lana that is usually like—

Rachel: And you find this out like episode one, so this isn't a—

Griffin: Yeah, so it's not a—yeah.

Rachel: Not a big spoiler.

Griffin: Lana, who will be like, "No kissing." But then Bad Lana will come out and be like, "You guys should kiss! You guys should totally kiss."

Rachel: Also, from what I can tell, nobody gets eliminated. And so now there's like a new Limbo they go to.

Griffin: Yes. Well, you don't get eliminated, you leave if you're unsuccessful at finding love. Or if you break the rules too many times, but that should never happen.

Rachel: That hasn't happened yet.

Griffin: Anyway, I don't—I genuinely don't want to get to—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I want to talk about Too Hot to Handle from the lens of like, I am enjoying it from a—this is a polish, like not great reality TV show. And like a

lot of decisions are made in Too Hot to Handle, in the things that people say and the storylines that they pursue, and you know, so on and so on. And it is kind of fun to like try and figure out those decisions that they're making before they make them. It is... yeah, it's been enjoyable.

Rachel: Yeah, I appreciate—and Netflix is pretty good about this, typically. They will kind of keep a lot of the key elements, but every season they'll add like a little new twist.

Griffin: New twist. A little something-something.

Rachel: And I'm enjoying it.

Griffin: The Circle is, in my opinion, still the gold standard of Netflix reality. I enjoy—and then I would probably say Love Is Blind. And then I would say like below that is Too Hot to Handle. But there's really not much on right now, guys. [titters]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Survivor's not on, hockey's not on, like it's fuckin'... it's rough out here.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But Too Hot to Handle is here for me in the dark times.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: And I do think we're probably going to drop it as soon as we find something better.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: But for now, thanks, Too Hot to Handle. I go first this week.

Rachel: You do.

Griffin: I want to talk to you about a crunchy friend that I adore. And before I do that, I've never done this with a segment before, I'd like to start off with a trip back in time. With a little history journey that go on together.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: So, it's 1924.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And Italian immigrant and restaurateur, Caesar Cardini, is working at his restaurant, Caesar's, in Tijuana, Mexico. Things are booming, the place is popping. He opened the place to attract American tourists who were like wanting to party during Prohibition. And so they would just scoot on down to TJ—

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: And they would—

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: They would get silly with it. And that is the scene here on the 4th of July, 1924. A big, huge crowd has come down. And he is running out of supplies. Supplies are running low. He doesn't have enough food to keep up with everyone, but customers keep coming in. So, what does Caesar Cardini do? He improvises. He goes in the kitchen shelves, he grabs whatever ingredients he's got. He grabs some romaine lettuce, some croutons, some lemon juice, some olive oil, some eggs, some Worcestershire sauce, some anchovy, some garlic, some Dijon, some Parmesan, some black pepper. And then he heads out on the show floor. And by show floor, I mean restaurant floor.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But it really was like his theater. Because he added some theatrics, he was like, "I'm about to cook something that's going to blow your guys' fuckin' minds." Probably the whole time being like, "God, I hope this is good."

I'm putting a lot of gross shit in here. I really—I'm putting anchovies and Worcestershire in here together. This seems like it's gonna be gross, but it's all I got." And my man makes a salad that's a fuckin' hit. And the Caesar salad is born.

Rachel: So when you say your crunchy friend, you just mean the salad?

Griffin: The Ceasar salad.

Rachel: Okay, I thought you were gonna talk about the crouton at first. I thought you're gonna do a whole segment on the crouton. [titters]

Griffin: I could do a whole segment on the crouton, if you would like? When I was growing up and our mom was trying to get us to eat more vegetables, I would eat a salad occasionally at home. That would basically be lettuce, crouton, bacon bits and ranch dressing. Which is only—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: At that point, the meat outnumbered the veg by a pretty significant kind of like ratio.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: No, I'm gonna talk specifically about the Caesar salad.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Because I—

Rachel: I'd like a Caesar salad.

Griffin: That's what everyone would say about this! "I need a Caesar salad."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If you're going through a menu—

Rachel: Except for your brother, Justin.

Griffin: Justin doesn't party with the Caesar salad.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Too wet.

Rachel: Too wet. [titters]

Griffin: But if I'm going down a menu and I don't see anything that excites me, but they have a Caesar salad on the menu, I'll think about it. If I'm in a salady mood, I'll go for a Caesar salad, thank you.

Rachel: This is a fun story, actually, for me. I have a particular relationship with the Caesar salad.

Griffin: I'd love to hear it.

Rachel: My parents took me to Toronto to go to the Hockey Hall of Fame when I was in middle school, and—

Griffin: Didn't go to the beach very much.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Went to the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Rachel: Went to the Hockey Hall of Fame. And to be fair, I was excited about going.

Griffin: Fuck yeah.

Rachel: But we went out to a lot of restaurants that were not kid-focused, because it was more about like proximity and timing. And you know, it was also the '90s, so internet did not feature prominently in our travel plans.

Griffin: No. [titters]

Rachel: So, I went to a lot of restaurants and exclusively would order Caesar salads. Because there was nothing on the restaurant that I was comfortable with, except that.

Griffin: This is—

Rachel: So that was my go-to at every restaurant.

Griffin: That's the thing, I've never—I've eaten a lot of Caesar salads. I've never eaten a single Caesar salad where I finished it and been like, "What was going on there?"

Rachel: [laughs] "Boo."

Griffin: "What the... what the fuck? That was so wild!" It's like, a Caesar salad. And I think that it is—it accomplishes that because it has a lot of bold flavors that it kind of carries with it. It assaults your mouth with Dijon and Worcestershire and like pretty potent—it's a pretty potent brew. Right? And so, another salad that's more based on like the seasonal vegetables, you eat that, that could go either way. But a Caesar salad is pretty much going to be the same no matter what.

Rachel: You know what else? There, to my knowledge, as I recall, there's no tomatoes in a Caesar salad.

Griffin: No tomatoes in a Caesar salad.

Rachel: And tomatoes, particularly when they give you like a whole huge cherry tomato—

Griffin: Yup!

Rachel: And they're like, "Figure it out!"

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: I don't love that.

Griffin: Sometimes they put raw onion in it, but it's not like shaved particularly thin, so you just—all of a sudden, you're just—

Rachel: Huge chunk of onion.

Griffin: Fucking Shrek.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: A Caesar salad does not fuck around.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: You do not get the sense of satisfaction with a Caesar salad of like, "I have made a good choice today." Because it's romaine lettuce and a bunch of garbage. [chuckles]

Rachel: Yeah, I was gonna say, is the only vegetable in it romaine lettuce?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, it is. But it's, the original sort of recipe called for it to be—it was just like a big leaf of romaine lettuce that they dressed with all of this stuff.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: And then you're supposed to sort of like pick it up by the stem and [spoofs chomping sounds].

Rachel: Oh? Okay.

Griffin: Munch it down that way. Which is fun, I like a hand salad. That's crazy. What are you doing, man? I just, it's a funky flavor that goes good with like any protein, is another thing that I really like about it. I typically

rock with a chicken Caesar salad. But it's always good, like it always hits the spot, it always tastes like a Caesar salad. And unless there's something terribly wrong with the romaine lettuce, like it's gonna be a Caesar salad and it's gonna be good for you and you're gonna like it.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: That's basically how—unless you don't like Caesar salad. Which is understandable, because that list of ingredients has a few gnarly customers on it. That like—

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I remember the—do you remember the first time? I wonder if it was after your Canadian love affair with Caesar salads that you found out what was in a Caesar salad? That it was like, yeah, it's got eggs and Worcestershire and anchovies and stuff.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I'm not convinced that is always the case. I feel like a lot of restaurants don't actually follow that recipe to the letter.

Griffin: Interesting?

Rachel: I don't know. I mean, I will say it's pretty easy to put a certain kind of dressing on romaine lettuce and convince you that you have had a Caesar salad. I'm not 100% sure everybody's doing the eggs and the anchovies.

Griffin: Yeah, I feel like there is a difference between—I don't think I've ever made a home Caesar salad that has been particularly good. Where I just like put the Caesar salad dressing—

Rachel: Well, yeah. I mean, yeah. Usually, we get it in a bag if we're gonna do a Caesar salad. [chuckles]

Griffin: Right. I feel like at restaurants, they probably do more shit to it in the back. I hope so. I hope they're doing more shit than I do at home with my craft—my bottle of craft Caesar salad—

Rachel: It's prepared literally 10 seconds before it comes out to your table.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah, exactly. I mean, my man Caesar did it tableside, which I really like, which I really appreciate. So, Caesar salad, that was the story of its introduction. It proliferates throughout the US kind of slowly. It starts with some mentions in West Coast newspapers.

There's an excerpt I found on Wikipedia in 1946, a columnist named Dorothy Kilgallen wrote about the Caesar salad and wrote, "The big food rage in Hollywood, the Caesar salad, will be introduced to New Yorkers by Gilmore's Steakhouse. It's an intricate concoction that takes ages to prepare and contains (zowie!) lots of garlic, raw or slightly coddled eggs, croutons, romaine, anchovies, Parmisyayan." They misspelled it. "Cheese, olive oil, vinegar and plenty of black pepper."

Rachel: You know what I kind of love about the way you—

Griffin: Zowie.

Rachel: Presented this? Is it sounds like everybody was there for the party of the year.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And then what became like your signifier, like, "Were you at the party of the year?" Was like a, "Hey, you had a Caesar salad?" And then they would like wink and touch their nose and be like, "Yeah, I've had a Caesar salad."

Griffin: So, another thing in like looking at the history of the Caesar salad is like a big reason that it proliferated was because like Hollywood types would go to Tijuana and then come back and be like, "Hey, guys, I'm the hottest guy in the country and I gotta tell you about these new salads."

Rachel: "Excuse me, can I speak to the chef? Yeah, I have a particular way that I would like my salad prepared, and I'd like him to come to the table."

Griffin: Can I tell you something, babe? That was prescient, what you just said. In 1937 there was a Paramount Pictures exec named Manny Wolf, who started to spread the recipe around restaurants—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: In Hollywood, like the Brown Derby and other sort of like big name restaurants. Which I aspire to that level of success, where one day I can go around to local D.C. restaurants and be like, "Hey, start cooking this."

Rachel: There's no way not to be shitty, though, if you're doing that.

Griffin: Oh, no, but it's—

Rachel: Like, "Let me tell you how you're gonna do it, okay? What I say is gonna sound crazy, but you're gonna do it this way and it's gonna change your life."

Griffin: Yes, no, I mean, I—it would be part of the being so successful that I could be—

Rachel: That you could be terrible? [titters]

Griffin: That I could be terrible. That is really a reason why it started to spread. In the 1950s, it gets added to the menu of the Waldorf Astoria. Where at that point it's kind of like widely adopted as like—

Rachel: Did America try and like co-opt it, though? I have to imagine people started saying like, "I invented this."

Griffin: So, the—like any sort of food I've ever talked about on this show before, there are multiple reports of like where it comes from.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: The Caesar Cardini story is sort of the most widely accepted one. There's a little bit of juicy family drama. Because Caesar's brother, Alex Cardini, said that he is the one who kind of like tweaked and perfected the

recipe of the Caesar salad as we know it today. And that he would serve it up to his pilot buddies and called it the aviator's salad. Which is also I think a pretty strong name. Like if I was at a restaurant and I was like, "Let me get an aviator."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That sounds cool, like I'm also into that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So the exact origins of it, it is not possible. I think the fact that a lot of people think that it was a salad that Julius Caesar made, speaks to the fact that maybe this is not a topic that people spend a lot of time thinking about.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But I did today, to do this thing I'm doing right now in front of you.

Rachel: It does remind me of like when restaurants name sandwiches after like supposed celebrity guests.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: It's like calling it the aviator salad is your way of saying like, you know, who likes a salad?

Griffin: Yeah, pilots. [snickers]

Rachel: Fancy pilots. Like, you know who likes the sandwich? Billy Crystal. [snickers]

Griffin: I mean, I think in the 1920s, if you meet a pilot, that's probably it. That's probably—

Rachel: That's probably a thrill.

Griffin: That's like meeting the president.

Rachel: I feel like I'd still be a little thrilled to meet a pilot?

Griffin: I don't know...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know, it's just a job. Just a job. There's a lot of people—

Rachel: Just a job like yours.

Griffin: Hm... no, it's different from mine. But that doesn't—but we both do an equal service, I would say, to our country.

Rachel: [titters] To our country.

Griffin: Yeah. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Thanks.

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

Rachel: Okay, my wonderful thing is also a food item.

Griffin: Oh, cool?

Rachel: But perhaps not something you would see in a restaurant.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: In a similar vein to the week that I brought string cheese.

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: Or did you bring string cheese?

Griffin: I'm pretty sure you brought string cheese.

Rachel: Okay. This week, I am bringing the fruit snack.

Griffin: Yeah, man.

Rachel: It is—

Griffin: Tough to beat.

Rachel: My approach to the fruit snack is very similar to string cheese. Although I think string cheese is more acceptable for adults to eat.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I will say the reason I love the fruit snack is that my children like it.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: It is not a messy food.

Griffin: It is not a messy food—

Rachel: Like if I am in an environment where I kind of know my children aren't supposed to be eating, like an art museum, I can give them a fruit snack and I don't think I'm gonna get any dirty looks from the security guard.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Because they know that fruit snack is not going to create—

Griffin: It's not gonna melt.

Rachel: A whole crumble mess on the floor.

Griffin: It's not gonna leave a residue on their little hands.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's a fruit snack.

Rachel: Yeah. And so I did a little research on the fruit snack, and came upon what is called the fruit snack wars. Similar to the chicken sandwich wars—

Griffin: This is—my mind is reeling right now, because like there's a brand of fruit snack that we buy now that I can't—I don't—I can—

Rachel: Welch's.

Griffin: Welch's?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just straight-up classic fruit snacks. Fruit shapes, fruit flavors.

Rachel: Relatively new to the scene, though? My research—

Griffin: But that's what I'm saying is like back in the day, you would go to the grocery store and there would be 80 million boxes of fruit snacks that were based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles or—

Rachel: Uh-huh, exactly.

Griffin: A Flintstones—

Rachel: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is one of the first like character ones that I found.

Griffin: Yeah. So, I remember that it wasn't quite as homogenous as it may be—not that you can't get TMNT fruit snacks out there, but like—

Rachel: Of course.

Griffin: I feel like the Welch's thing has really cornered the market.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah. According to their website at least, they have been the number one fruit snack since—well, maybe not since 2001. Welch's fruit snacks launched in 2001 and now claim to be the number one fruit snack worldwide.

Griffin: Rough estimate, how many bags of these bad boys have you torn down since we had kids?

Rachel: When—me, personally?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: I actually ate some today because I got really excited as I was preparing this.

Griffin: Yeah. I'll tell you what the problem was, you were cleaning out our like pantry area and left all the fruit snacks on the counter. Every time I walk by the—into the kitchen—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm like, "Oh, a fruit snack wouldn't be bad right now."

Rachel: They were only on the counter for like 12 hours.

Griffin: Yeah, it was a chewy 12 hours for yours truly. A juicy 12.

Rachel: [chuckles] So the fruit snack, the history of it is like inextricably tied to the fruit roll up.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: Which I didn't really realize, fruit roll ups came first.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, that makes sense, right? Because that's sort of the most primordial state that chewy, gummy fruit can take.

Rachel: Yeah, because like the first-first was like the fruit leather. Was this like dehydrated fruit that was like a trail snack that people would take when they were like camping, walking around.

Griffin: I like fruit leather.

Rachel: I know you do.

Griffin: I didn't—I forgot. We haven't gotten fruit leather in so long—

Rachel: No we haven't because I think you're the only one in this house that likes it. I personally do not very much.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: But I remember that. I remember before we had children, we used to buy fruit leather.

Griffin: I did like that.

Rachel: I remember because my friend Leah made that joke.

Griffin: What?

Rachel: [titters] My friend Leah really fixed on the fact that you were five years younger than me.

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Rachel: And I was talking about fruit leather and she's like, "Oh, yeah, kids love that." In kind of a suggestion that you were a very young man. [titters]

Griffin: Okay, well, that's hurtful, but it's—I guess if the shoe fits.

Rachel: What were you gonna say about fruit leather?

Griffin: Can we get some?

Rachel: Oh? I mean, you are going to be the only one eating it.

Griffin: I'll put 'em here on my desk. I'll have a little desk drawer with fruit leather in it.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Documents on one side, fruit leather on the other.

Rachel: Okay. [titters] Yeah, so fruit roll ups, fruit leather all kind of started in the late '70s. The concept of fruit snacks started in 1975. General Mills was developing a new fruit filling for a cake mix, and then kind of just got—

Griffin: Just started eating it.

Rachel: Gotten jazzy on it. And revised, and then went to test markets in 1979 as fruit roll ups.

Griffin: What a victory they snatched from the jaws of defeat. Because if you put a fruit roll up in as the filling of a cake, that textural experience makes me want to yartz.

Rachel: Yeah, I'm sure—I mean, I don't have that detail, but it does kind of seem like that's what happened. You know, in the sense of like, "We're trying to make one thing and we ended up with another. And then we just improvised."

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: So... what ended up happening is that the fruit snack that I'm speaking of today didn't really pop off until the 1990s.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: In between—in 1986, there was a group called Fruit Corners that came to the market with all of their fruit roll ups, and introduced something called fruit wrinkles.

Griffin: Fruit wrinkles?

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: "Ah, fruit wrinkles." That sounds like something you would say when you're like—you are a very, very puritanical person who just like did—

Rachel: "Oh, fruit wrinkles." I do like that a lot actually.

Griffin: You shank your drive and you're like, "Ah, fruit wrinkles."

Rachel: Can we remember that for our Max Fun pin?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Fruit wrinkles.

Griffin: Ah, fruit wrinkles.

Rachel: Ah, fruit wrinkles. So from 1986 to 1995, fruit wrinkles were on the market. They were basically soft jellybeans with the texture of raisins in a variety of fruit flavors.

Griffin: Oh? Disgusting.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Okay. I'm down to clown with any fruity food, that does not sound great. Raisins, I would say not known for their strength on a textural level.

Rachel: Also, 1986, fruit corners. 1987, Sunkist came out with their own fruit snack that coincidentally was soft and pellet-shaped, rather like a jellybean.

Griffin: Amazing. Okay. They're figuring it out.

Rachel: Mm-hm. That's when we got to Sunkist Fruit Gems, Sunkist's first fruit snacks. And then early '90s is when General Mills hit the scene. In 1992, your friend and mine, the Gusher—

Griffin: Ooh! In '92?

Rachel: Came to the market.

Griffin: Yeah, and this was a bold time for television marketing. The Gusher commercials, I feel like when I think about the 1990s and I think about what the media landscape looked like, I think a lot about the Gushers commercials. Where kids could take a bite of a food so juicy that their head turned into a giant banana.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Their head turned into a giant watermelon. Like, it happened.

Rachel: Mm-hm. Yeah, no, it's like, it's weird how strong those commercials are in my head.

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: But I'm gonna bring up something that I don't know if you will remember.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: In 1990, Betty Crocker had a fruit snack called Shark Bites.

Griffin: Yeah, that sounds familiar.

Rachel: Do you remember this?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The commercial was, "Just when you thought it was safe to eat fruit snacks, here comes Shark Bites. A feeding frenzy of fruity fun."

Griffin: All right!

Rachel: And they were shark-shaped, including hammerheads, tiger sharks, and a fan favorite, the great white shark pieces.

Griffin: Yeah, everyone can't stop talking about the great white fruity sharks.

Rachel: [titters] Those lasted until 2016, when General Mills eliminated artificial flavors and colors from their products.

Griffin: Yeah, what's left?

[group laugh]

Griffin: It's just a bag of dust.

Rachel: So Shark Bites had to go. Although I have heard that Shark Bites are back.

Griffin: Interesting?

Rachel: This kind of nostalgia craze that is happening with a lot of our childhood snacks, you know?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Shark Bites, apparently you can still find—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Out in the world.

Griffin: I remember, for all of the—for as much conflict as there were in the fruit snack wars, as many like brands and franchises got a hand on the fruit

snack product ball, I was not especially picky. I just wanted fruity snacks that looked like my dudes I liked. And whether—I wasn't—I didn't swear by the TMNT fruit snacks. I would eat a fruit shark, I would eat a just straight up [Jim??], if that is the direction it went. Because it was all pretty good. [titters]

Rachel: Mm-hm. Yeah, I mean, fruit snacks are all pretty similar.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: What varies tends to be like the shape and the—

Griffin: And the gumminess, like some of them have—

Rachel: Oh, well, and how like sticky it is.

Griffin: Yeah, right.

Rachel: Yeah. And then we mentioned 1998 is when Welch's came to the scene. This is when we're talking about making them with real fruit.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Although it should be noted and probably not surprising, fruit snacks are not in fact healthy because there is a tremendous amount of sugar.

Griffin: *What?!*

Rachel: [chuckles] So, if you are eating a fruit snack, please do not consider that as a serving of fruit for your day. Because—

Griffin: Eh, go ahead.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: We don't care. Do what you want.

Rachel: So in 1998, they were imagined. 2001, they were out in the world. That is currently what is residing in our cabinets today.

Griffin: Ultra-portable, keeps forever, not messy. It's like—

Rachel: You can fit like 10 in your bag.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because inevitably, at least with our children, they never eat one small bag of fruit snacks.

Griffin: No, no, no, there's—my only complaint about Welch's fruit snacks is that they only have like seven fruit snacks in each bag. And that is an insult to me and my children. The only other bag you can get is like at the airport, the one that has 400 fruit snacks in it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is too many. Split the diff, guys.

Rachel: And one thing I have noticed is that fruit snacks, when left in the open air, tend to get very hard.

Griffin: But that's another benefit, because then when you're picking them out of your car seats, because your kids—

Rachel: True.

Griffin: They're so easy to just [smacks lips] grab.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: They crumble up some Doritos? That's your whole fucking day, trying to pick that out of the fine leather of your automobile seats. But a fruit snack you just, [clicks tongue] easy.

Rachel: Can I ask how you feel about a fruit snack as a Halloween candy?

Griffin: Here's the thing. I don't think fruit snack is candy. I don't think fruit snack...

Rachel: But a gummy bear is candy, right?

Griffin: Gummy bear is candy. Fruit snack is not candy. I don't know why. Couldn't tell you.

Rachel: It's the fruit, right? Like, there's something about your brain that's like, "Well, candy is candy, but this is a fruit snack."

Griffin: If I go to the—okay, at the movie, they always have fruit snacks. Like I feel like that is always available at the concessions.

Rachel: Do they?

Griffin: Always, always.

Rachel: I don't even see them.

Griffin: You don't even see them.

Rachel: [chuckles] My brain is not registered—

Griffin: Because what I also have available to me is real candy.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And fruit snacks isn't real candy. It's a bit more responsible, a bit more buttoned-up and a bit more straight-laced.

Rachel: [titters] Mm-hm.

Griffin: I want to go eat some fucking fruit snacks right now.

Rachel: I will tell you, though. So, I was preparing this segment.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Got really excited about fruit snacks.

Griffin: Yeah?

Rachel: Went and grabbed a little bag for myself.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Did not really enjoy it.

Griffin: Was it—are they stale? Are they old? What's the problem?

Rachel: It's just not what I—it's not as good as what I remember them being.

Griffin: How long has it been since you've eaten fruit snacks, baby?

Rachel: I'm saying when I was a child and had limited access to fruit snacks, I remember them being exceptional.

Griffin: Our oldest child is seven years old. Are you telling me that you have not eaten a single fruit snack in the entire time?

Rachel: I can probably count on one hand the number of fruit snacks I've eaten in the past few years.

Griffin: That's so wild.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Our brains work in some different ways sometimes.

Rachel: I will eat a lot of their snacks.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I'm not as enticed.

Griffin: You're working your way down the list of snacks that our kids like.

Rachel: I will say we got some Gushers recently, and those are as good as I remember.

Griffin: Those shits rock, man. Those—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Those taste so good. They taste so crazy. Gushers taste so crazy, they have so much flavor.

Rachel: They have a sour apple kind now that—

Griffin: Oh my god.

Rachel: Our son got excited about, and that is a delight.

Griffin: Knocked it out of the park. I think I've done Gushers, maybe? Maybe I haven't done Gushers. Gushers are so good.

Rachel: You've definitely talked about them—

Griffin: Have to have talked about Gushers—

Rachel: I don't think we've done a whole segment on gushers—

Griffin: They're really important to me. One of my Inside Out brain islands is Gushers island.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And when I have a fight with my dad, Gushers island starts to turn gray and fall down.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hey, thanks for listening to the show. We do not have audience submissions this week. We are sort of getting caught up on recording, so it's only been a couple of days since we recorded the last episode. And tragically, the—our inbox is mostly spam at this point. So, if you have something you want to send in for us to consider and talk about here at the end of the show, go to wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com. Send in just a brief description of something, you know, novel that you enjoy in your day-to-day life. And maybe we'll read it here.

Thanks 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. Go check out our merch over at mcelroymerch.com. We got some shows coming up for MBMBaM and TAZ. You can find out about it at bit.ly/mcelroytours. Coming to like... coming to Indianapolis and Orlando and Atlanta and Portland, and a bunch of places. So, go check out that link if you want to get tickets. I think that's it? I think that's it. I'm still gonna go eat fruit snacks, like—

Rachel: Yeah, I can't stop you.

Griffin: You didn't dissuade me from eating fruit snacks.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: I've eaten so many of them since we had kids. So many of the fruit snacks.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, gummy is an important texture for you.

Griffin: Gummy is a part—is a group—is a food—it's part of the triangle now.

Rachel: I'm chocolate all day, but I'm a real Cathy.

Griffin: [exclaims] Ack!

Rachel: Yeah, that is what—that's what I say.

Griffin: It just called the food pyramid, the triangle.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Health is important to me.

Rachel: [chuckles]

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

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