

Wonderful! 363: Our Elevator Kisser

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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: Thank you so much for listening to our podcast, Wonderful. It's a show where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we are into. And the world may be trying to kill us, but...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We say to them—what do we say to death, today? No, thanks. No, thank you. What do we say to the germs and the particulate in the air that refuse to leave us and our family be? We say we're bet—we're strong. We ate our vitamins today. Come at us. Oops, you did, and now we're sick again.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, the inevitability of it has really hit home this school year.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I feel like we have really tried to be thoughtful and conscious about going out in the world and sanitizing ourselves before and after and during.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It does not seem to have made much of a difference.

Griffin: No, no, it doesn't. It sure hasn't.

Rachel: My theory is that when the children go to school, all bets are off. And they're just like licking everybody.

Griffin: I have seen specifically our youngest, and I don't—you know what? I won't say that. I won't name names. One of our children—

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh?

Griffin: Does like to put his mouth on a wall or a counter or an elevator button when we are out and about. He likes to give it a little kiss. And you know what? I think that's nice. I think maybe we need more of that in the world today, don't we?

Rachel: I thought we were past that age, though? I thought that was supposed to stop?

Griffin: Sometimes you press an elevator button and you get so excited that you think, I've got to give that guy a little kiss.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And so I think that's probably the biggest reason for why we continue to get sick and be sick and stay sick.

Rachel: They're lovers, you know?

Griffin: But if you stay sick, you don't have to get sick.

Rachel: [chuckles] Okay.

Griffin: That's what I—that's what I—

Rachel: Now, I'm pretty sure you could get sick on top of being sick.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: I feel like we have seen that.

Griffin: Double jeopardy, actually.

Rachel: Oh, okay?

Griffin: Right now, our youngest has an ear infection, but that's okay, because there's worse stuff he could have. And he can't get another thing as long as his ear's infected.

Rachel: I will say that antibiotics give me this moment of security, of like, well, he can't get another infection because he's got active antibiotics in his system.

Griffin: I've got active antibiotics in my system.

Rachel: Yeah, that's true!

Griffin: Two of us are on antibiotics right now. And here's my whole thing.

Rachel: [chuckles] Okay, here he goes.

Griffin: Here's my whole thing.

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: If these guys, you pop 'em and it makes the diseases go away, why aren't we just always taking these guys? I take vitamins every day, because it's like you gotta get those up in your system to stay healthy. But there's these whole other guys that are basically like anti-sickness pills. Why am I not taking those every dang day?

Rachel: I mean, there's something called good bacteria.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That I think you need.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I think when you put an antibiotic in there, it just gets everything.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is why they're always like, "Hey, you need to eat some yogurt." Or else your body's gonna—

Griffin: Yeah, right.

Rachel: Wither away.

Griffin: That's just the big yogurt lobby.

Rachel: That's true. I'm really in the pocket of big yogurt, in a big way.

Griffin: Yeah, you and Jamie Lee both. Do you have any small wonders that we could talk about as a class together?

Rachel: Oh, a little teaser.

Griffin: Oh, boy?

Rachel: We recorded our bonus episode.

Griffin: Yes, we did, it is—the Max Fun Drive is nearing, and we are in that season where we are making all the bo-co for you.

Rachel: Yeah. And the McElroy family team has been very much on top of getting all of this done and out the door.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So, we did ours the other day, and it was so much fun.

Griffin: It's a delight. It's a crossover, a meeting of the minds, that we will tell you more about when the time comes. But we're very excited.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Kinetic sand.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Is my—

Rachel: Did you also search that? Because I definitely did.

Griffin: You know, I had a moment today where I was playing with kinetic sand, with our—with the elevator kisser in our family. And I was just thinking like, this is so cool. This is so chill. Specifically, the act of making a geometric shape, like a cylinder.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Packing it, really packing it in there, so that it keeps that form. And then taking a blade and carving off like a nice little sort of deli meat slice of it—

Rachel: There's like a... like a million of those videos on YouTube.

Griffin: There's like a million—if you're not familiar, there's like a million videos of people cutting kinetic sand with blades and stuff. And it feels so nice to just chop a nice, even slice of sand out—

Rachel: I did search to see like could this be a full topic for Wonderful, and it's really just like, it's sand that's coated in this chemical that makes it—

Griffin: Doesn't sound like it's got legs, unfortunately.

Rachel: Yeah. It was kind of like... it's been around I think since...

Griffin: Sand?

Rachel: Not long. No, the kinetic sand in particular, it was not around when we were kids.

Griffin: No, we didn't have kinetic sand. I remember when the commercials came out and it was like, "Kinetic, kinetic, kinetic sand!" And I was like, this will never—this will never work. This will never catch on. Jokes on me. I would take a million pounds of kinetic sand in my home over a single ounce of slime.

Rachel: Yes. Yes, 100%.

Griffin: Can't vacuum slime up!

Rachel: Nope.

Griffin: From a rug. You can vacuum sand up. It's just sand.

Rachel: No, we have a spot on one of our rugs that is just the slime spot—

Griffin: A whole thing of slime. A whole thing of slime was just left on a rug. Just left idly on a rug. And it's not possible to come up. It won't, it can't come up.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, luckily it's hidden away enough that we didn't really have to do anything about it. But it's just the spot on the rug—

Griffin: But it looks like something fucking died there.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It looks like a crime scene, and there's nothing we can do about it. Kinetic sand, vvv, vacuum, gone.

Rachel: Yeah, it's wonderful.

Griffin: That was a vacuum sound. Do you wanna know what I'm talking about this week?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: I've had birds on the brain. I've been thinking about birds a lot lately. I told you I was thinking about bringing ducks to the show. Perhaps inspired by the fact that we just watched Mighty Ducks on one of the 100 sick days that our children have had recently. But then I talked to you about how like I would have to talk about their corkscrew genitalia.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I was like, why would you have to do that?

Griffin: Because I couldn't not. Like if I didn't talk about the duck's corkscrew genitalia, then like listeners would reach out to us like, "And did you also know?" And like I can't have my inbox filled up with that.

Rachel: You know that's not the only animal though that has like a, like a, like a spikey—

Griffin: A weird penis?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, I know. But you know who doesn't have a weird penis? The northern cardinal, I think. I don't think the—

Rachel: Yeah, should you Google that? [chuckles]

Griffin: Let me Google 'northern cardinal penis.'

Rachel: [chuckles] 'Weird penis.'

Griffin: Northern cardinal genital shape...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The northern cardinal... nothing. I'm not getting anything. So I'm assuming that what they're working with down there is just sort of your—is a sort of standard... it's bog-standard bird tackle.

Rachel: Yeah. Now, when you say northern cardinal, are those like the bright red ones?

Griffin: Those are the bright reds ones.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Yes. And it's probably my favorite bird. It's a sweet, red, rad bird that you can find all over the western hemisphere.

Rachel: Beep-beep-beep-beep, beep-beep-beep-beep-beep. Extra, extra, Griffin McElroy announces favorite bird on episode of Wonderful.

Griffin: Well, okay—well, not—if you're making a—

Rachel: World is relieved.

Griffin: If you're making this big a deal about it, maybe I do need to think. I mean, I did talk about parrots, because it's cool they can talk and stuff.

Rachel: Do you want this on the wiki? Griffin McElroy—

Griffin: One of my favorite bird—

Rachel: Married.

Griffin: One of my—

Rachel: Two children.

Griffin: One—

Rachel: Favorite bird is—

Griffin: One of my favorite birds is the northern cardinal.

Rachel: Okay, that—okay.

Griffin: When I—and when I say cardinal, I mean the bird, and not the Catholic sort of higher up. Although, did you know that the northern cardinal and—the bird, the cardinal, is named after Catholic cardinals? Because of the bright red vestments that Catholic cardinals wear.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I didn't know that.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: You would have thought that the bird came before the church position.

Rachel: I imagine it did, but nobody named it.

Griffin: That's a good point. Well, they probably called it something else, like a blood bird—a blood bird. Or some like—

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Some shit like that, when they named it back in like the Middle Ages. Back when everybody was like so nasty all of the time. I am—by the way, a group of northern cardinals, like the proper noun or whatever, can be a college, a conclave or a Vatican of cardinals.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: I like that. A whole bunch!

Rachel: Super religious, I didn't know.

Griffin: Yes, the new—that movie, The Conclave, that came out—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's—it is—it's about like 40 birds.

Rachel: I'm kind of convinced that that movie, there's nothing in it. Because I know—

Griffin: [guffaws] You're saying you turn it—you boot up the DVD and it's Ray Fiennes just like, "Wow, you got us."

Rachel: [chortles]

Griffin: "We didn't actually make a movie. I didn't think anyone was gonna see it."

Rachel: Usually, when a movie is well reviewed and up for awards, I think like I should give that one a shot. I watched like the trailer and was like, this isn't for me.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: I don't know who it's for, it's not for me.

Griffin: It's honest—maybe if I—

Rachel: I'm sure it's good.

Griffin: If I came up in the Catholic tradition and not the Southern Baptist tradition, maybe there would be something there that would really—but anytime I see anything that's like, "And now we're gonna get really deep into the nitty-gritty of the pope choosing process," I'm always like, "Check, please."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That sounds mad boring. Like it's crazy all the stuff that you do, but it takes 100 years. That's not, I don't... I don't think so. I do like Ray Fiennes finds, though. Anyway... I'm not a big bird guy. I'm a human man.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But I do think that it's great that there is a bird out there that absolutely anytime anyone sees one of them, they have to stop everything that they and everyone around them are doing to point out that there is this cool-looking red bird outside.

Rachel: Yeah, for sure!

Griffin: That's very special to me. I like that I guess—I like that idea across all of nature. I recognize that like if you are a big bird watcher, it's probably, you know... like a top 40 pop hit. Like, oh, yeah, of course you—

Rachel: Everyone likes the cardinal.

Griffin: But when you see a bird that's a color that you don't normally see up in a tree? That's cool and that's exciting. And I like that that is out there.

Rachel: Do you remember when you learned that like the male birds were prettier than the female birds? Because I feel like that is one thing I learned in school that like stuck with me in a big way.

Griffin: That is true of the northern cardinal. The northern cardinal, the males are—

Rachel: They're the like full-body bright red.

Griffin: Are full-body bright red. Whereas the female cardinals are more of a pale brown with streaks of red.

Rachel: I always feel like a real bird scientist, which I can't remember what the name of those bird... scientist. Ornithalo... ornithologist?

Griffin: That's it, baby, you got it.

Rachel: Did I?

Griffin: And the first step to becoming an ornithologist is to know that word and to know the thing about bird sexes.

Rachel: Yeah, right? [chuckles] That's what I assume. I think like... it's like one of those things where I can like elbow one of our kids and be like, "Hey, you know that one?"

Griffin: Uh-huh. Yeah. I'm pretty sure the test they give you at ornithology school is; what's the name of the school you're at right now? And do you know any cool stuff about sort of sexual dimorphism in specifically this one type of bird?

Rachel: Yeah. And I say yes and they say, "Here's your—"

Griffin: Here's your sign!

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: This is the blue collar school of ornithology.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It is a prestigious, online-only—

Rachel: Yeah, for sure.

Griffin: Educational facility. And I support them. So, cardinals are not the only birds that have the sort of red-all-over appearance. There's a few breeds of tanagers that look somewhat similar. There's the southwestern vermilion flycatcher, which is a kick ass name for a bird. But those are a lot more rare to see than the northern cardinal, mostly because the northern cardinal is just fuckin' everywhere, man. It's—

Rachel: Yeah, I was gonna say, I don't think I've ever lived somewhere where you couldn't see a cardinal.

Griffin: Yeah, pretty much everywhere throughout like eastern Canada, most of the eastern US and the southwestern US you can see cardinals. And then down into central and South America. Like they're just, they're all over the dang place.

And they didn't used to be, but it's thought because of, you know, climate change and stuff like that, they are able to exist in more ecosystems. Which I think probably makes them a rare breed, as the opposite is very much true for so many other species.

As you said, male cardinals are the ones that are primarily read all over with the black mask. That coloration, I did not know this—I would have thought that what I'm about to say was made up until I peer review checked it on LexisNexis—is the reason they're red colored is mostly because their diet.

They eat mostly berries and seeds, which contain carotenoids, an enzyme that Cardinals ingest and they convert into the red pigment in their feathers. Very, very rarely, a northern cardinal can possess a genetic mutation that converts those enzymes into a yellow pigment. And so—

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: There can be a cardinal that is just a yellowish-orange hue all over. And whenever that happens and one of those birds is spotted, it usually makes like headlines. Like, "What's up, Minnesota? We got one of these yellow birds." Because the National Audubon Society estimates that mutation only exists within one in a million red colored birds.

Rachel: Whoa!

Griffin: Isn't that wild?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I didn't know that.

Rachel: I remember when we went to the Animal Kingdom and they told us that flamingos have their color because of...

Griffin: Shrimp.

Rachel: Yeah, the fish that they eat, or whatever.

Griffin: Yeah, I learned that from a Kero Kero Bonito song.

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah, no, I—that's very much—I mean, that's—

Rachel: It's just wild to me. Like to think that if I ate enough of something, my hair would change color.

Griffin: Yeah, it might.

Rachel: I guess when babies eat a lot of sweet potato, they turn orange. As we know—

Griffin: That's jaundice. That's just jaundice.

Rachel: No, no, no.

Griffin: That's just jaundice.

Rachel: Oh, okay. [chuckles]

Griffin: It's... that one's just jaundice.

Rachel: Okay. [titters]

Griffin: And it's evidence that you're giving your baby too many—too much sweet potato. And you need to slow things down a little bit for 'em. They are incredibly vocal songbirds. They have 16 distinct calls that they commonly emit. The most sort of common of those is this very short, high-pitched, metallic chirp that they blast out as sort of a siren or alarm whenever they're trying to ward off predators. They do that a lot because both male and female northern cardinals are like extremely, fiercely territorial. Famously, northern cardinals are prone to getting in just vicious fights with their own reflections in car mirrors and like windows and still surfaces of water. There's a lot of great YouTube videos of just—

Rachel: That's interesting.

Griffin: These beautiful, dumb-ass birds.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Absolutely going ape shit on a car's, you know, driver's side mirror. Which, you know, God doesn't give with both hands.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: To humans or birds alike.

Rachel: When you look that good, you don't really have to spend the time, you know, like figuring stuff out.

Griffin: Yeah. And if you are a less attractive breed of bird, you gotta look at that and be like, you know, I'm fine with how I am. At least I'm not—

Rachel: Or you're not as threatened by your own appearance, because you're like, "Oh, yeah—"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "That's a pretty average-looking bird in front of me." [titters]

Griffin: Yeah. [chuckles] "I look totally normal."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I have always had a fondness for the northern cardinal, partially because they're native to Appalachia and I, you know, would see them all the time. But also because they are the state bird of West Virginia. I always liked that. I was always like, that's a kick ass state bird to have. That's very, very special. What I did not realize until researching this segment today, is that they are also the state birds of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio and Virginia.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Seven states these birds are the official bird.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: That does make it feel slightly less special. I did not realize this, the Amtrak Cardinal, the passenger train that runs from New York to Chicago and sort of sweeps across most of the northeastern seaboard, it is named for that because it passes through six states where the cardinal is the official state bird.

Rachel: Interesting!

Griffin: Didn't realize that. That is a line I'm familiar with because I believe it runs through Huntington, and it is what I would take when I would travel from Huntington to Chicago and vice versa. Yeah, I love cardinals. Dad Facetimed us the other day just to show us that they have this like bird feeder in their yard and they had like eight cardinals just like swooping around this tree.

Rachel: Yeah. I've never seen that many in one place before.

Griffin: It was freaky! It was like a sign of the apocalypse or something like that. But I get it also, and I love that my dad saw so many cool red birds that he had to call us to show us.

Rachel: I will say he also texts you when a celebrity dies, so he's not—

Griffin: The two things I get from my dad is when he does—when he has a Vatican of cardinals outside in his front yard tree. And when a celebrity of any level of fame or notoriety, regardless of whether or not that person holds a special place in our family history or anything like that, if they do pass away, he is always the first one to let me know.

And sometimes those heads-ups do not carry the amount of perhaps gravitas that I would wish for when finding out that sometimes a celebrity I really do like has passed away. Just, dad, if you are taking feedback, sometimes it—a little bit more care in the delivery of those messages. But

keep hitting me up with as many red bird calls as you want. I do think I could be a—become a bird guy.

If the conditions were right, I think I could become a bird guy. There's a lot in my... programming that I feel like would lend itself to being a bird guy. I like catching digital Pokémon on my phone when I'm out and about, and this is just those but they don't fight. And a lot of them look the same. But they're real, right? So, they do have that going for them.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, what, so bird people, they usually have like a good set of binoculars.

Griffin: Got to.

Rachel: Maybe they have one of those little books. There's probably an app.

Griffin: There's definitely, definitely an app.

Rachel: What bird is what bird.

Griffin: And the app would make me feel comfortable knowing that I could press a button and check something off in my... I mean, it wouldn't be called a Pokédex, but it would probably be called like a bird—a bird-dex.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Birdex. Something like that. Just food for thought, bird people. You've almost got me, just finish the sale. Drive it home and I could become one of you. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Rachel: Okay, the thing I am talking about this week—

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: And I couldn't get Wonderful.FYI to load. I'm assuming we haven't talked about it, because I don't remember saying these words to you before.

Griffin: You probably have a virus. I do have it up on my phone, so let me know and then I'll search for it.

Rachel: Okay, well, I'll start talking and then you can stop me.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It is kangaroo care, otherwise known as skin-to-skin contact.

Griffin: Okay, so we do have—it does look like in episode 101, you talked about the tree kangaroo.

Rachel: [chuckles] Okay, this actually doesn't really have anything to do with kangaroos.

Griffin: Okay. Just letting you know that we have had kangaroo-based—

Rachel: Our listeners do know what a kangaroo is, because I have—

Griffin: Well, they know—let's not go crazy. They know what a tree kangaroo is.

Rachel: Yeah, okay. [titters]

Griffin: Because of you and the hard work that you've done.

Rachel: Yeah, so I—so this is another name for skin-to-skin contact. This is like, this is the... the thing that is like a best practice now. Where when a baby is born, it is placed on a parent's chest.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Just it's skin against your skin.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I've been thinking about this a lot lately, because our elevator licker kisser.

Griffin: He doesn't lick any—he kisses. He doesn't lick.

Rachel: Kisses.

Griffin: Let's not—

Rachel: Our elevator kisser.

Griffin: Let's not overcharge him.

Rachel: When he is not feeling well, likes to physically be on top of me.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And it always makes me feel good, because I feel like I'm helping in some way, and it like settles him down. And so it's a win-win. Now, you can't find a lot about skin-to-skin when your child is three years old, but—
[titters]

Griffin: Hey, some kids—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Some kids like things a certain way.

Rachel: But you can find a lot about the practice of putting infants on your skin. Which is relatively new in the grand scheme of things. In the late '70s, there were two doctors in Bogota, Colombia who used this as a kind of work around because they didn't have enough incubators basically to support these like low birth weight, pre-term babies.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: So they started kind of placing the babies on the mothers to kind of regulate their temperature and breathing. And all of a sudden, it was realized like this is actually tremendously beneficial.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: There's a lot of like great positive outcomes associated with it. And now it's kind of... I mean, it's kind of common practice.

Griffin: It certainly is like an extremely important—a thing that has driven a home of being like extremely important. I also have to assume it is the type of thing that, throughout history, people have done and just hadn't maybe put a sort of official name on it, until these two doctors from Bogota, Colombia did it. Because it feels like such a... I don't know, man, fundamental human experience.

Rachel: Yeah, I will say, and this is interesting, I found an article on Science Direct that came out 2017, that talks about how the global uptake of this practice has been very poor, estimated in 2013 to be less than 5%.

Griffin: Hm.

Rachel: A lot of it is because it is seen as like a poor person's practice, you know, because it was used in a circumstance where people didn't have enough equipment to support these like, you know, pre-term babies.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: People see it as a thing that you do like if you don't have, you know, the right equipment.

Griffin: Well, and they're wet when they come out.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: They're like so, so wet. And a lot of people are not okay with that. Like, they don't necessarily want a wet person to lay on them.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Regardless of like the circumstance.

Rachel: I don't see a stigma of wet people on here.

Griffin: They're so wet when they come out!

Rachel: No, that's true.

Griffin: Like crazy wet.

Rachel: [titters] You know, it's interesting, because when we were taking all those newborn classes, they were very like big on birth plans and like putting together what you were going to advocate for. And one of the things they really said was specifically like get that baby on you as soon as possible.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: We didn't have to tell anybody that, they just did it.

Griffin: They just did it.

Rachel: We didn't have to be like, "Hey, hey, hey! Over here, over here!"

Griffin: A quick courtesy wipe, I will say, did happen.

Rachel: [chuckles] It gets really specific in some of these descriptions, in that the baby should only be wearing a diaper. And if it is cold, potentially a hat and socks.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's very important to literally have that like skin-to-skin.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And like I mentioned, there's a lot of positive effects from it. And not just associated with mothers either, actually, which I thought was interesting.

Griffin: No, I mean, I treasure the skin-to-skin time I had with both our little guys.

Rachel: A 2016 study looked at international literature reviews of early skin-to-skin benefits for infants and fathers. And Swedish and German reviews found that father is as effective as mother for skin-to-skin and raising a baby's temperature. And there is no difference between a father and mother on biophysical measures of the baby's expenditure of energy.

Griffin: So, it's—if you're not familiar with this concept, which I imagine a lot of our listeners maybe are not, there's a—there's so many crazy like deep sub routines that your body does when—

Rachel: It feels a little woo-woo even talking about it. Like there's something kind of mystical about it that I don't fully understand, so I always feel kind of like weird saying like, oh, no, but this is a real thing.

Griffin: But it's a type of like synchronization or balancing out of like the baby's body temperature and breathing, as the baby sort of links up to your own... your own stats.

Rachel: Yeah, like the baby will tend to cry less, have lower cortisol levels. Like it's just a very calming thing for the baby. And then for the parent, it really promotes bonding. And then also, if you are intending to breastfeed, it can kind of stimulate milk production.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The baby will just kind of automatically start looking around, and your body kind of responds to that.

Griffin: It's something that is so like, I don't know, established for us I feel like now. But I do remember in those—in the like, you know, birthing class, learning these things and being like, that's crazy. There's no fuckin'—

Rachel: No, it sounds like magical thinking a little bit. Like you've convinced yourself that these things are possible and then they happen. But there's like actual studies that say that this is a real thing. [titters]

Griffin: That's so cool.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: What if that is how it worked, but not just for babies and parents, but like, I don't know, when you're in a high-profile, high-stress business environment and you shake someone's hand.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: If there was just a little—if there was just a little bit of like you shake someone's hand and both of you just kind of like vibe there for a second until you link up.

Rachel: I was picturing you like having a co-worker like open up their button-down shirt and you just nestle in.

Griffin: Well, no, babe, I'm gonna go ahead and say, clearly, that's not anything that I would ever wish for.

Rachel: No, I know.

Griffin: I'm saying in just a hand—with a handshake.

Rachel: I was just picturing, you know, business people.

Griffin: I just think we should put more stuff into handshakes.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, this is what I was talking about the other day, was like putting my cheek against—

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: My family members'—

Griffin: European style.

Rachel: I think like the oxytocin thing continues.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: That definitely, obviously, is present when you have a new baby.
But like—

Griffin: But with a business colleague... maybe not that, just a handshake.

Rachel: No, no, no. But if I put my cheek against your cheek, like it makes me feel good.

Griffin: Oh, yeah. Well, yeah, it makes me feel good too.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: What? I really didn't... I didn't—I don't think I put any English on that ball—

Rachel: No, but your eyes were saying a lot.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: [chuckles] Other—

Griffin: I was talking about our butt cheeks.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: When we put—and I don't want to get blue, because I know sometimes people listen to the show, you may not want to hear this, but we put our butt cheeks together because we're grown—we're grown adults.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: In an important relationship. And that's just how it works sometimes.

Rachel: Having two children in busy lives, it's hard for me to—

Griffin: Find time to put our butt cheeks together, I know. But it's important.

Rachel: Yeah. [titters] The logistics. Other things that it has been shown to do, when the baby gets the heel prick test.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is where they like... they do like a blood test, but they like pull it from the heel. Because the baby is so tiny, there's like not a lot of good area.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that babies that were like experienced with skin-to-skin like had a less like negative reaction to that.

Griffin: Huh.

Rachel: Which is wild.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It also can support healthy sleep, which...

Griffin: Oh, does it?

Rachel: We did not find to be true, but apparently is a thing that some people experience.

Griffin: Maybe if we had done more, huh? If only, if—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: If only we had done more skin-to-skin. That was the secret.

Rachel: Why didn't our pediatrician say something.

Griffin: It wasn't the \$2,000 sleeping machine that we invested in, that wasn't the secret.

Rachel: Luckily we knew enough to know that like let's just lease it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because it might not work.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And we didn't want to pay the full thing. And it definitely did not work.

Griffin: Definitely didn't work.

Rachel: We boxed that thing up happily.

Griffin: Yeah. That's a lovely one. I get very emotional when I think about... the times where I had skin-to-skin contact with our boys.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Because it was special. It's, it is...

Rachel: It makes it so real in like a, like this is yours.

Griffin: Yes. And as someone who's body does not produce milk, for me, when I would, you know, disrobe to the point where I could put, you know, one of the boys on my chest or something, it was like such a deliberate... like extremely deliberate. I'm only doing this for this.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: And it's—

Rachel: Griffin doesn't go shirtless very often.

Griffin: I don't go shirtless and hug for like long periods of time, really. So, it's like a deliberate thing that feels like kind of weird. But then, you know, once you get over that comfort... you know, hell, it's really genuinely very nice.

Rachel: Yeah, and it is something that I appreciate. You know, there was a lot about our whole process of like trying to get pregnant and having babies that was not easy.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But we were really fortunate in that the births of both of our children were like, you know, pretty...

Griffin: The first one was pretty shaggy, I will say!

Rachel: Yeah, that one was a little shaggy. But I will say, they came out not needing immediate medical attention.

Griffin: No, that's true.

Rachel: So it was easier for us to like get that baby on top.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Which... which felt really good, it felt like—and they say that a lot of parents have more confidence in their parenting after doing that because it's like, oh, this? This? I can do this.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. This is just huggin'.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: This is all it is? Cool. Do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, good, because I have a couple of them here. This first one is from Manolo, who says, "My big wonder is that the game I've spent over four years working on is finally out. It feels so surreal watching my partner and our friends meet the characters that I have known and spent thousands of hours with. With from their very first drafts pitched by narrative designers to them now having complete story arcs and fully-animated and voice acted conversations."

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: That's gotta be nice.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: It's so hard to make a game. I bet it's pretty dope to have it be out there now.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, it takes like years, right?

Griffin: Four for Manolo specifically. And I would say that's even on the lower end for a big—for a big title. Jody says, "My small wonder this week is snow shoes. I borrowed some on Saturday to go on my first little wintertime hike up in the mountains, and they made the whole experience actually quite pleasant. I didn't expect to like hiking in the snow at all."

Rachel: Are snow shoes like the ones that look like tennis rackets?

Griffin: I assume. Yes.

Rachel: I guess it distributes your weight so you don't sink as much in the snow?

Griffin: It's a thing—I feel Jody here, because it's a thing where I see those and I think those would not be fun to walk around in. To have these giant planks on your feet, that has to make things harder. But then I bet you get out on that snow and all of a sudden you're Legolas out there dancing across the tops of the drifts without disturbing it at all. And I bet it's actually a pretty magical experience.

Rachel: I don't know who Legolas is.

Griffin: He is Orlando Bloom's beautiful elf character from The Lord of the Rings films. And I think he was in a couple of The Hobbits.

Rachel: It's so interesting sometimes when you will name a character like that, and my brain is completely blank and I find myself searching around like what could that be? And then I'll like—

Griffin: Like searching around my office? Like looking around my—

Rachel: No, no, no. [titters] Like looking around internally going like, am I supposed to know this? Is this a mythological creature and/or why can I only think of Lego men right now?

Griffin: You could be forgiven for thinking of a Lego man because it's got it right there in the title. But he's just a beauty, he's a beautiful elven man. And when he walks on snow, he doesn't sink into it.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Because he's, you know, they're special. They're better than us.

Rachel: Mm-hm. [titters]

Griffin: So they don't sink down. Thank you so much for listening. Thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You find a link to that in the episode description. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Max Fun drive coming up soon. We'll have all kinds of fun stuff for you then. We got a couple live shows coming up in Florida this week, here in Jacksonville and Tampa.

Doing MBMBaM and TAZ, come see us, bit.ly/mcelroytours for tickets and more information. And we're about to announce a bunch more shows coming up across the country, so stay tuned and maybe we'll be coming to your neck of the woods. And go over to mcelroymerch.com and check out the stuff we've got poppin' over there, please.

That's gonna do it for us this week. Oh, can I just say, going through the emails looking for small wonders, we've gotten a lot of really, really... kind, generous emails from a lot of people over the last couple of weeks. Just talking about this show being a nice sort of respite, I suppose. And I genuinely, that... it means the world to me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It is not the easiest thing in the world to like kind of get in the mood to do this show right now. [chuckles] Or really, to be completely honest, any of our shows right now. And so that is... it's very, very meaningful.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I sure do appreciate it a whole lot. So, hang in there, everyone, and we'll be back with a new episode next week. So, catch you then. Stay true to yourself and the promises that you made...

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: To the Lord.

Rachel: [chuckles]

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

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