

## Wonderful! 369: Theme Parks with a Machiavellian Twist

Published April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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[theme music, “Money Won’t Pay” by bo en and Augustus plays]

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

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

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

**Griffin:** This is a podcast where we talk about things we like, that’s good, that we’re into. What does that mean? Let’s—

**Rachel:** I always assumed that you knew.

**Griffin:** I don’t. It’s just a bunch of words.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That sound like the description of a podcast when you say them together—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** — in a certain intonation.

**Rachel:** You know, we could say arts, culture.

**Griffin:** We could say that, yeah.

**Rachel:** Weather. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** We could just say that instead of what is essentially a grammatical, syntactically incorrect thing.

**Rachel:** I thought this was like your “modren era,” kind of like your little McElroy spin on it.

**Griffin:** I know, and I don't know why I'm taking this moment to be sort of self-aware, but it doesn't mean anything.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And there's a lot of that kinda stuff in all of our shows.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Like just stuff that we say, like, "Shouldn't the world's best friends pick the world's best games." What's that mean, dog?

**Rachel:** I don't know, that's how most slogans go, right?

**Griffin:** I don't think so, I think most slogans have a sense to them, have a—

**Rachel:** What is the— Happy taste good?

**Griffin:** Happy taste good.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It does have big "happy taste good" energy. Anyway, now that I've sent myself into a bit of an existential panny—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** — I would love to start off this program by asking you if you have any small wonders.

**Rachel:** Okay. Ooo, it's been kinda...

**Griffin:** It's— It has not— Gang.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It hasn't been the most wonderful month, let's say.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I'm pretty sure our kids are wrestling the flu for about the third time in maybe six weeks.

**Rachel:** Yeah, unless it's Covid. I did the thing that probably people all over the world have done, which is like, "What's the difference between Covid and flu?" and when you get down to it, not a lot.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So it's one of 'em, probably. But let's see, a good thing.  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** I mean obviously, we are dealing with the sting of last night's defeat at the hand of the Winnipeg Jets, but before that the St Louis Blues—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — beat their all-time franchise record of 12 wins in a row.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** When they won the Stanley Cup in that glorious 2019 season, they managed to rack up 11 wins, that was the franchise record then, and then just out of fuckin' nowhere, this season which has been middling at best.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** They went absolutely fuckin' ham on it.

**Rachel:** Turned it on man. Brought a bunch of young kids up and they all just like—

**Griffin:** Sjuggerud is one of 'em.

**Rachel:** — immediately— Dvorsky is back, I guess.

**Griffin:** Dvorsky, Sjuggerud.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Lot of fun names in those St Louis Blues.

**Rachel:** Yeah, those are fun names. Okay, I am going to say... I mean spring break?

**Griffin:** Sure man, sure man.

**Rachel:** I don't know, spring break's coming, like we can get excited about that.

**Griffin:** I'm so excited about that.

**Rachel:** I think both our children fortunately have the same kind of school calendar.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And so they are both on break, so we will be on break.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Which is exciting.

**Griffin:** I mean we'll probably have an episode out, 'cause we do record those in advance.

**Rachel:** True.

**Griffin:** But yeah, I am very much looking forward to the break.

**Rachel:** Mm.

**Griffin:** And spending time with my family.

**Rachel:** I can't imagine a world in which I do not kind of build my life around a school calendar.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Because I feel like that has been true for me, like I don't know, 35 years?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I can't imagine when our children are of an age when they are not in school, not still thinking about—

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** — my year in that sort of...

**Griffin:** I'm going to say—

**Rachel:** I thought yours was the 12 wins.

**Griffin:** Oh. Yeah, I guess it could be.

**Rachel:** I mean you can say another thing if you want.

**Griffin:** No, that is fa—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That is a good point, I shouldn't do— I was gonna talk about this *Blueprints* game that I've been absolutely obsessed with.

**Rachel:** Save it.

**Griffin:** But it is going to be *Besties* this Friday.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So like people can hear it then.

**Rachel:** Ooo, what a teaser. Are we cross-promoting now?

**Griffin:** Alright. I don't know man, it's my favorite game I've played in forever.

**Rachel:** Is this the puzzle one?

**Griffin:** It's one that's like *Seventh Guest*, *Myst*.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It's kind of exploring big mansion that's randomized.

**Rachel:** I know you said that Justin's playing it.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Are Russ and Chris enjoying it too? Or do you not know?

**Griffin:** Funnily enough, a lot of it has to do with color.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah, he's colorblind.

**Griffin:** And Russ is colorblind, and I believe the developer is working actively on like—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — how to remedy that, but it gets— I have to— Like obviously accessibility is paramount.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But it does get a little complicated when there's things like how do you make that more accessible when—

**Rachel:** The puzzles.

**Griffin:** — it is kind of a hint—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — that maybe you are supposed to connect the dots.

**Rachel:** Huh, interesting.

**Griffin:** How do you— Yeah, anyway, *Blueprints*, is my favorite mystery game I've maybe ever played, and you should play it too if you are listening to this and you are into that kind of stuff. My big wonder is automatic carwashes.

**Rachel:** Oh.

**Griffin:** And as you can imagine—

**Rachel:** That's a good one. Have you done it lately? It's been a long time.

**Griffin:** It has been a long time, I was realizing— So what kind of spurred this on is we live t cherry blossoms.

**Rachel:** Gorgeous.

**Griffin:** We love these pin beauties.

**Rachel:** Pink, yeah lovely.

**Griffin:** Lovely tourism.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Congestion, both of the traffic and bronchial varieties.

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

**Griffin:** We love it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** What we don't love is when spring sprongs—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** — and then all of that pollen, which we love objectively.

**Rachel:** I guess so.

**Griffin:** I mean for the—

**Rachel:** Necessary. Necessary, sure.

**Griffin:** — for the survival of our ecosystem, like great.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** I don't— Maybe we've overblown the whole like bee, a colony collapse situation.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Because it does seem like pollen is not having a particularly difficult time getting around here.

**Rachel:** We— When we lived in Austin, Texas, the cedar was devastating.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** We were living in a constant state.

**Griffin:** Every fall, if I felt like fall, it would just fuck us up.

**Rachel:** Just year-round, honestly, 'cause it never got super cold either.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So like everything was constant, and we moved to DC and we hit just the bloomiest bloom season.

**Griffin:** It's so vibrant and virile.

**Rachel:** Crazy bloom right now.

**Griffin:** Crazy bloomy, and so there is just a sheen, a neon chartreuse sheen.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Across every car in the land.



**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** We did get a bit of rain yesterday, which does help out a little bit. But I've been thinking about, you know, "Damn, I gotta get this bad boy through an automatic car wash."

**Rachel:** Yeah. Oh yeah.

**Griffin:** Which is harder to do because living in a city like DC, like it is— they aren't attached to gas stations.

**Rachel:** Yeah. No, I mean—

**Griffin:** Like for— It is a thing you have to go to specifically to do.

**Rachel:** I— You could probably easily drive to West— Or not West Virginia, but Virginia or Maryland, you know.

**Griffin:** Well yeah, but would—

**Rachel:** Where space is— It's the wide west out there, you know.

**Griffin:** It is the wide west.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] The wide west, you know.

**Griffin:** I— For me carwashes are one, a thrilling luxury, because I grew up, like me and Justin and Travis would be like hauled off by dad to go to the hands— the manual hands carwash, where you used your manual hands.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Would you guys all have to do it?

**Griffin:** Yeah, and so it would be— it was cute, I guess. I mean you have to use the sprayed.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean as a parent now, I really appreciate that as an activity.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The sense of like, “I am going to do something with my children that will be useful, and also like keep them busy.”

**Griffin:** And it was like— it’s fun to blast the car with a big powerful nozzle.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It’s fun to sop up the car with a sort of big brush that is sort of constantly gooshing out foam.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That makes a great noise, we love that. Drying the car off sucks shit. It sucks shit every time.

**Rachel:** Why do you have to do it? Is it really gonna get that streaky?

**Griffin:** I think the idea is that it— the car gets dirtier if it’s—

**Rachel:** Still damp.

**Griffin:** — if it’s just kind wet? I don’t know.

**Rachel:** I have never dried off a car in my life.

**Griffin:** Vacuuming was also like not great.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah.

**Griffin:** But it— that sort of was necessary to do ‘cause we were a bunch of boys, and it was dirty all the time. So like I didn’t experience an automatic carwash until I paid for one myself as an— as a driver.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Probably in my 20s.

**Rachel:** Is that true?

**Griffin:** Yeah, no I definitely have no core memories of going through one of these powerful tunnels.

**Rachel:** Oh, I have very powerful memories of like sitting in the back seat, going through a carwash.

**Griffin:** Well, if you wanna talk about the class struggles and the like divide between your—

**Rachel:** [laughs] It's my extraordinary privilege.

**Griffin:** Your extraordinary, wealthy teacher parents, and my—

**Rachel:** With two dollars to spare.

**Griffin:** — my radio disc jockey and church secretary parents.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Real upper crust, *Upstairs Downstairs* shit.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** No, I just didn't use it. So like it's always exciting for me whenever I go through a carwash. And so like when we lived in Austin, it would be like I would pump gas and then it would hit me after I finished with that "Do you want a fuckin' carwash?"

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And it's hard to say no to that, and it's like, "Yeah, I'll go through a little magic tunnel."

**Rachel:** [laughs] The automated message that pops up.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And you're like, "Oh, I can't disappoint the message."

**Griffin:** I can't— Well not that, it's not, you know, the end of *American Psycho* [chuckles] where I have to obey this machine's commands. It's just like yeah I— The carwash has come to me effectively.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But I'm not gonna hop in my car and drive to Maryland just to clean my car? That's wild, no way.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Anyway, that's my current relationship with carwashes is, you know, I don't do them that ever. I don't do them that ever. And yeah.

**Rachel:** I have thought— I mean part of me feels that our boys would be a little bit freaked out. I know that a lot of kids really like that experience.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** I feel like we would have to spend a lot of time kind of setting expectations. Like, "It's going to feel like the car is moving a lot."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** "It's going to be loud, and you're going to maybe worry the windows are going to break in." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And that's normal. That is normal. I looked up before I started researching this like automatic carwash tragedies.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Just to make sure that like automatic carwashes hadn't been cancelled like while I wasn't paying attention, and they are, as far as I can tell, extraordinarily safe. You don't get a lot of reports of, you know, the jets getting too powerful, or like the wax melting a person's skin [chuckles] or something like that.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Did you type in "automatic carwash problematic?"

**Griffin:** No, I typed in "automatic carwash fatalities."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And there wouldn't— there was none that came up.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** So that's exciting, that's great. Great for automatic carwashes. I don't know how you don't accidentally kill someone at some point, automatic carwashes.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** There's a lot of moving parts in there. So the first steps that humans had towards having an automated carwash experience was at a spot in Hollywood, couldn't find the name of it, but it was in Hollywood. Opened in 1940, and it was just a big conveyer belt going through a tunnel.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:** And you would pull your car up on the conveyer belt and then it would go through the tunnel, but people were doing all the washing. So that must've been a kind of wild experience of getting on this conveyor belt.

**Rachel:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** And then just getting a sort of like slow motion, sort of hands-on carwash from people running the thing.

**Rachel:** Yeah, just people running forward and then running back, and then—

**Griffin:** Yeah, or maybe it was just people holding out a brush in front of them.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And as the conveyer belt went forward, it would do the brushing for them.

**Rachel:** And then at the end, to blow it off, it was just everyone just going [blows into the mic]

**Griffin:** Yeah, that was really great foley that we just did into these microphones.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** In 1946, an inventor named Thomas Simpson added like a powerful overhead sprinkler and drier to the conveyer belt system, but still nobody had cracked the whole scrubbing thing.

Until three brothers came up with the format that we know today as the fully automated touch free carwash. Their names were Dean, Archie, and Eldon Anderson. E-L-D-O-N, I don't know that I've ever seen that name before, but I'm obsessed with it. Eldon Anderson, from Seattle, Washington.

1951, Eldon Anderson and his wife Virginia opened up the five minute carwash, which pulled a car along a tunnel, which was kind of like a known thing at that point, but it did it with a pulley that you would hook onto the bumper, and then it would blast it with water and soap from a series of sprinklers, and then it would get in there with a series of like spinning mechanical brushes, and a 50 horsepower drier?

I don't know how to convert that, I don't know what kind of unit of measurement horsepower is when it comes to a hot air drier.

**Rachel:** Yeah, me neither.

**Griffin:** But it sounds like it should do the job. Eldon Anderson was a steam shovel operator and foreman during the Great Depression, and had all of this like engineering knowhow and the patents on all of this stuff. Dean, from what I could tell, sort of the business brother, sort of the business guy.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** But Archie! Archie was the marketing one, and he came up with a name for what would become a chain of carwashes across Seattle,

Washington, which was “Elephant Carwash.” Elephant because of the anatomical qualities of an elephant. They have a hose, they have a hose that they spray water with.

**Rachel:** And a trunk. Ha ha.

**Griffin:** And a—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Rachel.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It’s like an innocent, it’s like an innocent, good thing. The picture is like a big pink elephant spraying himself with a— his trunk, and it—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** But there’s no like [quietly] dick stuff [normal] or anything like that.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** And the Elephant Carwash was an enormous success, mostly because of how novel the hands-free automated carwash invention was, but also because of the Elephant Carwash’s bright pink sign.

It was a huge pink elephant, gleefully spraying itself with water from its trunk. It was trimmed in bright neon and set on this rotating pole, and it was a landmark in Seattle. There’s like it is a place where people would go to take pictures with the big pink elephant sign.

**Rachel:** Yeah sure.

**Griffin:** From Elephant Carwash. It was like a big known quantity, and so I think there’s something like 16 locations of the Elephant Carwash still open in Seattle, but their flagship location with the big sign shut down in 2020. And luckily the sign was preserved and donated to the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle.

**Rachel:** That's cool.

**Griffin:** So I guess you can still go see the big pink elephant if you like in Seattle, but that is— that was the first automated carwash/kind of like, don't know industrial cultural icon.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** In the Pacific northwest, invented by three brothers, and you know I love that.

**Rachel:** Which is wild, 'cause that's a place where it rains all the time.

**Griffin:** You would think!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** They wouldn't need so much scrub.

**Rachel:** Gotta have like a real dusty car, yeah.

**Griffin:** Maybe it's dirty rain.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah.

**Griffin:** I haven't spent enough time, I've spent a lot of time in Seattle, but not enough to know how dirty the rain is.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But may— You know, it comes up from the Puget Sound, it probably has like clam gunk and shit.

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

**Griffin:** And like sediment like mixed in with it. Disgusting. There's not a ton of fun facts about automatic carwashes.

**Rachel:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** I did learn a new word, which is “mitter,” M-I-T-T-E-R, mitter or mitter curtain, which is the name of the big thing with all of the big heavy cloth ribbons that whip against your car to clean it.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah yeah.

**Griffin:** That’s called a “mitter curtain.” So now you all also know that. So I think I’ve checked all the boxes for what goes into a *Wonderful!* segment. We got some history, some [chuckles] personal connection the thing itself, and now you learned something.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I feel like fucking Hank Green right now.

**Rachel:** Case closed.

**Griffin:** Case closed!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And that’s— it does solve another one of life’s great riddles.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I love automatic carwashes, it is a simple, fairly inexpensive luxury that makes you feel like you’re living in the future every time you do it, even though it was invented 74 years ago. And that’s my segment, and I’m sticking to it.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[*Home Improvement* transition music plays]

[ad break]

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** My *Wonderful!* topic this week is a thematic line experience.

**Griffin:** A thematic line experience.

**Rachel:** I'm talking about specifically when you are waiting for a ride at a theme park.

**Griffin:** There has to be a name for this that is more— that has a little bit more Disney magic on it, right?

**Rachel:** I mean, I've— I saw some like kind of different terms, but it doesn't seem like there's some kind of industry standard.

**Griffin:** I feel like in— at Disney it is akin to like, "preshow."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Or like, you know, while you are in the cue, you are also— like that's just as much a part of the ride as the thing itself.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. This is something, I mean, you can see it at Universal. Most I think theme parks that are owned by some kind of like film, television company.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Try to build in some kind of drama into the riding experience, 'cause usually they're celebrating like a particularly property that has like a lot of lore attached to it, you know?

**Griffin:** Right, I mean they're also trying to hide the fact that you're in a line. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** Oh, 100%. No, and that's like the— I have a real appreciation for it.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** It feels kind of like how we've talked about... Oh, you know, like a— an experience, like a... Shoot. Like a MEOW, what is that called?

**Griffin:** Immersive art experience? Yeah.

**Rachel:** Immersive art. Yeah, there's this kind of like immersive art quality to it where they're like really kind of trying to get you into that space, and yes it is distracting you from having to wait. But I appreciate the effort, I guess.

**Griffin:** Yes, for sure. I mean it— that's not a thing at like every park.

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Like waiting in line for a ride at King's Island is just kind of being hot outside.

**Rachel:** Well, same with like Six Flags.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** No, I mean this is definitely like the higher end investment. But I love it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So there's some— it— there is some terminology that I learned while I was researching, and one of the things was the switchback cue.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Which is the concept of snaking.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I know that from theme— *Roller-coaster Tycoon*.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah, you'll see that too at like a fast-food restaurant.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** This idea of like seeing a super long line stretch out in front of you is one thing, but having it snake around, like keeps you from ever seeing the whole line.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So you don't even kind of know what you're getting into and you don't feel as daunted.

**Griffin:** That's a double-edged sword though, because when I am in one of those— I remember when we went to Hollywood Studios right after the Mickey Mouse Runaway Railway.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Remember when Mickey's Runaway Railway opened and we had to ride that with the kids, 'cause they were like obsessed with those cartoons. And we were as well. Is you start to mark time by like the "Okay, I see that hairpin turn. It's the next one in front of me."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** "How long is it going to take me to get to that one?" And the answer's like 45 fuckin' minutes, it's right there!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah, and you get kind of irrational upset with people who are just kind of standing there, not moving.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Even though they could only really move four feet.

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Right, yeah.

**Rachel:** Also like within this like switchback cue design is just the idea of like people watching.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like instead of seeing like the person in front of you, you know, you're seeing—

**Griffin:** A lot of people, yeah.

**Rachel:** — too many people, and you're staring at all of 'em, you know?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And then there's the kind of thematic element. So this started at Disney in the '60s, and one of the first examples is the Haunted Mansion ride.

**Griffin:** Oh okay.

**Rachel:** Which was in 1969.

**Griffin:** Wow, so— Oh, I guess I haven't thought of all that stuff as being kind of like prototypical, that like preshow entertainment.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** The like stretching room and the spooky graveyard stuff outside.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** God, I love the Haunted Mansion.

**Rachel:** I know. So there are apparently four principles of creating an ideal queue. One is—

**Griffin:** Is this like Disney like, you know, philosophical stuff? Or is this like—

**Rachel:** I think so. I mean I don't know if it started with Disney, I know that Disney subscribes to this.

**Griffin:** I know they're not the only ones who do this thing, but it definitely would not surprise me to learn—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — that there was like some sort of handbook that you receive your first day as like a cast member.

**Rachel:** So a fair wait, which is like first come first serve.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** A comfortable wait, so you have bathrooms available to you. And understood wait, which is why like waiting makes sense for the ride you're about to get on, you know?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The waiting is unreasonable, or something's not really—

**Griffin:** I thought that meant you know how long it's going to make you to get through the line.

**Rachel:** No, the next one is a known wait.

**Griffin:** Okay, sweet.

**Rachel:** So that's what you're talking about, with estimated wait times.

**Griffin:** Okay, that all makes sense.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I will say something about wait times, the one thing you mentioned. So one thing that Disney does do is they give you like a sense of the wait time.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And it will always be posted as longer than it actually is.

**Griffin:** Oh, really?

**Rachel:** Which they call a "Machiavellian twist, which makes you feel as if you've won back minutes." [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** "If the journey is quicker than expected."

**Griffin:** So you get up to *Frozen Ever After*, and it says, "80-minute wait," you're like, "Fuck!"

**Rachel:** And then you waited like 60 minutes.

**Griffin:** And then you waited like an hour, and you're like, "Hooooo baby."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "We're zoomin'. Fuck you, Olaf! That's 20 minutes of my life I got back."

**Rachel:** *Frozen* is a particularly rough one because unlike *Pirates*, or you know like one of those rides where they have a lot of real estate.

**Griffin:** Uh-huh.

**Rachel:** *Frozen* is tiny.

**Griffin:** *Frozen's* tiny, you are not—

**Rachel:** You walk in there, it's like not even as big as a restaurant, and you are snaking and snaking and snaking. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It's like you're at ComiCon, like you're on the show floor.

**Rachel:** Yes. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** In a crush, yeah for sure.

**Rachel:** Yeah. The other kind of speaking to the immersive experience. [chuckles] So they had this article I read from *Popular Science* talk to Richard Larson, who is a queuing expert at MIT. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Okay, I love that.

**Rachel:** And he talked about the dual task paradigm, which is when you are waiting, your wait time feels less important when your brain is surrounded by exciting things.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So like you're kind of distracted basically.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Like your brain is working on kind of the environment you're in more than like how much you hate [chuckles] being in line.

**Griffin:** Is there I wonder an inverse ratio of like, you know, there's like never a line for the *Little Mermaid* ride at Magic Kingdom, because it's been around for I guess a while. But I have to imagine if you catch Skuttle's little comedy, his tight five that he does.

**Rachel:** Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:** If you catch it 20 fuckin' times.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It's probably then it has a negative sort of—

**Rachel:** True.

**Griffin:** — overall effect on me.

**Rachel:** True, like Mr Potato Head in the *Toy Story* Mania ride.

**Griffin:** Yeah man. Yeah.

**Rachel:** When he's doin' his bits.

**Griffin:** We need a long loop on Mr Potato Head.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** We cannot keep cycling through his material.



**Rachel:** The other thing I found out the Savannah College of Art and Design has a themed entertainment design program.

**Griffin:** Fuck yes, that's amazing.

**Rachel:** Which is a graduate level program that prepares students for crafting attractions and lands at theme parks. One of the courses focuses on the art of creating queues. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** There— That's ama— By God.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Sometimes I wish I could just go to one class at a school for a thing, and not have to pay, you know, \$45,000 in order to do so. 'Cause I bet that's so fascinating.

**Rachel:** I know, just like audit that class, just like hang out and learn about it.

**Griffin:** I bet there's a book I can read, huh?

**Rachel:** Probably. I will say, my internet research, it was difficult to find like a source, but there have been a lot of like academic papers written about this.

**Griffin:** Well it's such a common— like relatable thing, right? If you've been to a theme park, you know exactly what this experience is like, and yet there's probably only 20 people on the planet who are actually tasked with—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — like generating that.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So I looked at this Ranker list of like—

**Griffin:** Best queues.

**Rachel:** — the best theme park line tricks, or line examples, and one of the ones that came up that we experienced not long ago was *The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man*. [chuckles] Where you walk through the offices of the Daily Bugel.

**Griffin:** Yeah, fuckin' rules.

**Rachel:** [laughs] See I remember thinking like, "What kid is like hype about a newsroom?" [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I mean when you have like I think it's like you get like shadows of Spider-Man like swinging around.

**Rachel:** I guess so.

**Griffin:** Like I think I remember some of that stuff.

**Rachel:** I guess so. I mean I enjoyed it personally, but I did have that thought of like, you know, Universal's got all of these crazy like immersive experiences now, and you're like, "Whoa, a newsroom!"

**Griffin:** The *Spider-Man* ride slaps ass, I'll go to bat for that.

**Rachel:** "Oh, there's a desk with papers on it!"

**Griffin:** I'll go to bat for that one all day.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** That's a good ride.

**Rachel:** It is a good ride, I'm just saying the line is not...

**Griffin:** It's not the most exciting.

**Rachel:** Not thrilling.

**Griffin:** I mean for me probably, and obviously partially recency bias and also it's so new, the tech is like insane, all of the pre-Guardians of *the Galaxy* stuff is.

**Rachel:** Yes, I was thinking that too.

**Griffin:** Like and also star power.

**Rachel:** And—

**Griffin:** You get like the actual actors from the thing doing new stuff.

**Rachel:** True. They make you feel like you're on a spaceship, like it's a very... I don't know.

**Griffin:** The *Avatar Flight of Passage* stuff is also very, very cool, 'cause that's like a multi-stage process—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — where you go through like decontamination and scanning and—

**Rachel:** Talk about real estate too, man.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** That line situation is enormous.

**Griffin:** That thing sprawls.

**Rachel:** And of course all the like new *Star Wars* stuff too is crazy.

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

**Rachel:** Yeah, another one on here that I almost forgot to mention is the *Dumbo* ride has that play area!

**Griffin:** [claps] Big ups to *Du*— Although it was closed last time we went.

**Rachel:** It was closed last time.

**Griffin:** Hopefully they fix that.

**Rachel:** I don't know what makes it closed, but it is like basically like an indoor—

**Griffin:** It's a huge indoor playground,

**Rachel:** Yeah. And they give you like a little pager or something so you know? Or they call out when your ride is ready.

**Griffin:** But the ride— the line for *Dumbo* is never particularly long.

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** And really the playground being indoors makes it one of the most attractive spots—

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** — in the whole Magic Kingdom for me.

**Rachel:** I know, yeah. Our kids are not particularly interested in *Dumbo* ride, but that little playground area is—

**Griffin:** It kicks ass.

**Rachel:** — pretty great. Yeah, so those were just some of the examples. I don't know, I always like... it gets me excited man, you know?

**Griffin:** I mean it's— it is... Man, I try not to go full Disney dad sicko mode.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Because I realize it probably turns off quite a large portion of our audience—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** — who does not care for that shit at all.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And I get that. For me, what we are discussing is kind of part and parcel of what I enjoy about Disney especially, but also other theme parks we have been too also, which is like feeling the invisible hand of a person who has designed an experience with like the utmost thoughtfulness.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean it's similar to an escape room, right?

**Griffin:** Yes, exactly.

**Rachel:** Like you are in an environment that is created around his like story, and you are getting to kind of experience it and kind of excited about like being totally surprised by what is there.

**Griffin:** When you look for the like intention behind everything, and recognize it as also another small attempt to like entertain or delight you.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Ev— Regardless of how well it accomplishes that, I fucking love seeing that stuff, I love seeing that stuff.

**Rachel:** I also will just get very stressed with we have to wait anywhere with children.

**Griffin:** Yes, of course.

**Rachel:** Because our kids are pretty good, like they hang for a surprisingly long time. But I just always start to get nervous of like, "We have waited in this line for 30 minutes. If our kids lose their minds now—"

**Griffin:** Now, yeah.

**Rachel:** "Like we will have waited this long for nothing."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So the like outside entertainment is very appreciated and it makes it a little easier.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Hey, got some stuff from our listeners. Do you wanna hear it?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Okay. Max says, "My small wonder is finding an abandoned snack in a vending machine. Just got some free peanut M&Ms, fuck yeah."

**Rachel:** Oooo.

**Griffin:** That's nice.

**Rachel:** That is good.

**Griffin:** I don't know that it's ever happened for me.

**Rachel:** Oh really?

**Griffin:** I've gotten a freebie like you get a thing and then like two fall out, and that's cool.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I've never found an abandoned snack. I don't know what the use case is though—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** — where someone is like, "C8. [imitates vending machine dispensing sounds] I'm out of here, no way. That fell too far."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** "Those M&Ms are gonna be crumbly, I'm gone."

Skyler says, "My small wonder is the arts museum café. I love the sensory experience of partaking in these fancy rest areas of sorts and treating myself to a little espresso, and often a warm cookie in the afternoon to get some more pep in my step after exploring galleries for hours beforehand. The espresso pit stop is also the perfect time to reflect on what I've seen that day by going through the notes I've taken on the artwork."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I do like that. I do like the—

**Rachel:** They had one of those when I went to Chicago recently to visit friends, I went to the Art Institute, and they a little like coffee shop in there now.

**Griffin:** A little bistro. I do like that. I just like a coffee shop...

**Rachel:** Period?

**Griffin:** Period, yeah.

**Rachel:** Well you've got— I mean you gotta have your—

**Griffin:** I gotta have my beans.

**Rachel:** Your java.

**Griffin:** I gotta have my beans.

**Rachel:** Don't even talk to him before.

**Griffin:** Don't talk to me until I've had my hot beans.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Hey, thanks for listening. 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. And thank you to MaximumFun for having us on the network. Huge thanks to everyone who supported us in the MaxFun Drive. You all—

**Rachel:** We probably already thanked them. But I guess we can always thank 'em—

**Griffin:** Time has fucking collapsed in on me like a demolished building.

**Rachel:** [laughs] We can thank 'em again.

**Griffin:** I mean thanks, thank you.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** I appreciate you and the life you allow us to live, and the career you allow us to have because of your support, and thank you. Got some live shows comin' up, we just announced a few more in the like somewhere in Michigan, I don't know.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's— I'm pretty tired and it's— we're recording this quite late, so comin' in pretty hot. Bringing in the plane for a spicy landing here. Yeah, go to [mcelroymerch.com](http://mcelroymerch.com), check out all the merch we got.

Bit.ly/mcelroytours if you wanna come see *TAZ* or *MBMBaM* live, we got some shows coming up later this year, and thanks again for listening to our program. Join us again for *Wonderful!* because shouldn't the world's best friends pick the world's best games, what?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** No. Shouldn't—

**Rachel:** Shouldn't the world's best lovers.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Now I gotta be careful, 'cause I can't say this one on there. Do you know what I mean?

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well are you worried you're gonna get them mixed up?  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** Maybe, baby.

**Rachel:** Shouldn't the world's best lovers...

**Griffin:** Pick the world's best stuff? I mean that doesn't drip off the tongue.

[theme music fades in]



**Rachel:** What if it's just, "Shouldn't the world's best lovers?" [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I mean, that's the kind of nonsensical heat that I think people expect from us.

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele chord]

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