

Wonderful! 375: Brand! Brand! Brand! Brand!

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: Welcome to the *Wonderful!* Spa. We’ve created such a relaxing environment for you here today. I—

Rachel: I feel like you’re at half speed right now.

Griffin: Yeah, I— Yeah no, you do— It’s an efficiency thing, because if you talk at half speed when people listen to podcasts at double speed, which is sort of the default for everyone.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: According to *Podcasts Monthly*.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Then it comes out as normal. But it’s so relaxing in here, we have a candle lit, you guys. [chuckles]

Rachel: A *Poetry Corner* candle, no less.

Griffin: We have a legit *Poetry Corner* candle that I’ve been slow burning for a long, long time now.

Rachel: I can’t smell that more than the food that you had in here.

Griffin: Yeah, so my candle usage is always pretty pragmatic, which is to say I left a plate in here that I had lunch on yesterday, and that lunch happened to include a few pretty sweaty garlic knots.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And then I came up to my office this morning and it was... Well, while I was here, I was family, because it was like living inside of a Olive Garden.

Rachel: Can I ask you something? This is gonna really tap into your West Virginia expertise.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: If I took a garlic knot.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Put pepperoni inside.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Is it a pepperoni roll?

Griffin: No. You don't usually have a lot of chopped garlic on the top of a pepperoni roll.

Rachel: Okay, would it be a garlic pepperoni roll?

Griffin: I guess so, but it— pepperoni already has so much stuff in it, why are you shooting the cannon indoors?

Rachel: I guess— I don't know, I'm still trying to understand... what makes a pepperoni roll distinct.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: From a roll with a pepperoni in it.

Griffin: Just so salty.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You would not believe how salty we get 'em.

Rachel: And it's not like the little piece of pepperoni in the circle? It's like a rod of pepperoni?

Griffin: Excuse me? You're under the impression that a pepperoni roll includes a thick...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Full chode of pepperoni?

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: No, it's usually it's all sliced up.

Rachel: No, I thought it as maybe like a little Slim Jim of pepperoni.

Griffin: No, I think if— at that point we're—

Rachel: 'Cause I feel like I have seen that before.

Griffin: Right, but that's more kolaches territory.

Rachel: Kolache, yeah, that's right.

Griffin: Yeah, this— A pepperoni rolls got it's all sliced up and it's so salty and so good, and now I won't be able to stop thinking about pepperoni rolls so thank you.

Rachel: You know, there is a popular site where you can order food, and get it delivered quickly, as a gift.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And they have...

Griffin: Peppies?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I'm gonna get some. Although we are on—

Rachel: Specifically from West Virginia, actually.

Griffin: Well yeah, they gotta be. We were on tour somewhere, I forget where, not West Virginia, and we were backstage and someone had left up pepperoni rolls. And I was like, "Hell yeah," put it in the microwave for a little bit, ate it, so good. Bad thing to eat right before a show though.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Lot of spicy meat to put in the tank before the masses want you to dazzle them. I was not at my most dazzling after eating that, I think. And I do apologize to the citizens of wherever that was.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: Do you have any small wonders, my love?

Rachel: Mine are always so sad. [chuckles]

Griffin: Aw, alright.

Rachel: But I was gonna say the fact that you can purchase allergy medicine for children under like six.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Love that, man.

Griffin: Yeah, I do too.

Rachel: I know that that's not a particularly exciting small wonder, but in the mornings, we can give both of our sons the same medicine and know that they are both of an appropriate age to take it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I love that.

Griffin: Yeah, big ups to allergy medicine, thanks for tasting so good. Also, that's huge for us.

Rachel: Yeah, it tastes like a Smartie.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And boys love Smarties.

Griffin: I need that for— in adult form. We're all getting pretty— hit pretty hard over here in DC.

Rachel: This happened last year too, I don't know if you remember, but I remember just like being so angry because spring is just such a beautiful time in DC, and it is also devastating to our allergies.

Griffin: Yeah, really really really really rough. I wanna say *Devil's Plan* season two started back up.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You've heard us talk about this one before, I think I did a whole segment on it, Korean reality competition show all about incredibly complex games being played by incredibly intelligent and strategic people.

And season two is no different from season one, aside from like some more intense kind of like faction-based dynamics. The crew playing the games have been pretty evenly split this time, and there's sort of rivalries forming, and the number of secrets there are to uncover in the different living areas.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Has been like dramatically [chuckles] increased.

Rachel: So cool.

Griffin: And the games, guys, are just as impenetrable.

Rachel: Yeah, I would encourage you, for those of you who are not big game players in your day-to-day life, it's very easy to kind of bounce off this show, because the rules really are quite extensive.

And if you are the kind of person who is going to get frustrated that you can't keep track of all the rules, just tell yourself "It's okay. Hardly anybody is able to follow all these rules." [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, I mean twice now throughout the series, we're only three episodes in, but like twice now throughout the entire run of the *Devil's Plan* show, they have played games where the whole gimmick is that they don't know what the rules are.

Rachel: Or—

Griffin: Then they start playing it, so it's like, "Yeah, we're kind of on the same page there," yeah.

Rachel: Or they put a guy in the room with him who is specifically like the rule guy.

Griffin: The rules explainer guy.

Rachel: Yeah, there have been several games where people will go up to him and be like, "Wait, can you do this?" and he can like only exactly speak to what was just presented to them, but like is necessary because it's hard to remember all of those.

Griffin: But the games are just so, so thrilling. There's one— The one we're watching right now is basically just an RPG, like a—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — a multiplayer sort of RPG that they're all playing together, which is like— it's so bonkers, it's so, so dense, but like if you can— if it gets its hooks in you, you're gonna be along for the ride. You go first this week with the big stuff.

Rachel: So let me say off the top, I'm a little afraid.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: That this is going to have the reaction... that the Charmin Bears had. You remember when I said I liked those toilet paper bears, and a lot of people were like, "That can't possibly be true."

Griffin: Me among them.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: This is kind of similar, but I think I can get you onboard. And that is a type of music called "grocerycore."

Griffin: I mean babe, I don't know what that means, but if you're looking for support in your exploration of really, really outside the box weird genre music, you know I'm there for you.

Rachel: It's not, is the thing. This is specifically the kind of music that they play in retail stores. [chuckles]

Griffin: Okay. [sighs]

Rachel: Often grocery stores.

Griffin: [chuckles] I see. So this is not like you get on Soundcloud and you click on the grocerycore tag, and then you get taken—

Rachel: You might be able to. There are definitely playlists on a lot of platforms advertising like, "This is a good playlist to play in your retail store."

Griffin: I'm trying to think of what this means, I'm trying to think of songs that I would put in this category.

Rachel: Let me—

Griffin: And I can't think of a single one.

Rachel: I was gonna maybe get to this at the end, but it might be good to start with, just to kinda set the tone.

Griffin: 'Kay.

Rachel: So— Well first of all, I will say, I have worked in many retail establishments.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: One of them, we just played the radio. Like we just had a little like radio— I mean this was like a long time ago. [chuckles] Like almost 20 years. But we just had like a little boombox.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And we would play the radio. One of them, a very kind of large, established, nationwide chain, kind that made their own CD.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Had this CD of world music. One—

Griffin: Wherever could this have been that you worked?

Rachel: It was like a market, for world items.

Griffin: [chuckles] Yeah, man.

Rachel: Anyway—

Griffin: Are you afraid to say the name?

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: Like we're not gonna get sued.

Rachel: I know, it's just like I don't know, I don't wanna get in the habit of being like, "Brand! Brand! Brand! Brand!" you know?

Griffin: Yeah, I guess that's true.

Rachel: Anyway, one summer I worked there, they played world music all the time. One of the songs I remember on the soundtrack was by Santana and it was "Oye Como Va."

Griffin: Oh fuck yeah.

Rachel: And we used to hear that soundtrack on loop, and like that song, you can't help it man.

Griffin: Yeah, no.

Rachel: Anyway, the other thing I liked about it is that one, if you go into a store that has no music—

Griffin: Weird.

Rachel: — like it's eerie.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You noticed it right away. Also for those of you who have worked in retail know that a technique when you [chuckles] wanna get people out of your store, because you're trying to close and nobody seems aware that it is closing time, is that you turn the music off.

Griffin: Turn the music off, get outta here.

Rachel: The next step, I don't know if you've ever gotten this far, is when they start turning off the lights. [chuckles]

Griffin: Wow no, I don't think I've ever pushed my luck.

Rachel: We used to because this market that sold world goods was such a large like airplane hangar of a store.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You could start hitting the lights in like sections that were empty.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And like feel a little less rude. And then shoppers would sometimes be really innocent, and be like, "Oh my gosh, they don't realize I'm still in here."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But a lot of times they got the not-so-subtle hint. But anyway, so I like the music as a tool. But I also just find myself poppin' around a little bit when you're in a grocery store. So let me give you this playlist I found.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: From a websink— a website called soullink.com. This is... a list of songs to add to your music for retail stores playlist. Alright, number one, Alicia Keys "Girl on Fire."

Griffin: Yeah. Most store—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Genuinely, any store.

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: Play that at a Auto Zone, and it's like gonna get it goin'.

Rachel: Avril Lavigne, "Complicated."

Griffin: Less univer—

Rachel: Which I can hear in my head.

Griffin: Less uni— Of course. Less universal, now I'm— now we're getting more into, in my mind, the sort of... retail fashion space. Your Hollisters and what have yous. Is Hollister still an ongoing concern?

Rachel: I'm not sure.

Griffin: Yeah. Okay.

Rachel: I don't think I ever shopped at a Hollister.

Griffin: Mm. I bought one shirt there, it was \$80.

Rachel: [giggles] I will add a few more. Annie Lennox "Walking on Broken Glass."

Griffin: Sure, that's— Now I'm back.

Rachel: Perfect, right?

Griffin: Anywhere, any time.

Rachel: Backstreet Boys "I Want it That Way."

Griffin: I— Yeah.

Rachel: These are all songs from a time period where it was very easy to memorize the words, 'cause it was all that was playing on the radio.

Griffin: Right. No my aversion specifically to BSB, respect them as artists and as musicians, I feel like their comeback happened so long ago that I'm kind of over that, and I'm ready to go into hibernation mode for a little bit until the second comeback.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Do you know what I mean?

Rachel: [giggles] Yeah. And I will just close out by saying Barenaked Ladies "One Week."

Griffin: Uh-huh. That's another—

Rachel: Another one.

Griffin: That's another one.

Rachel: Like these are all songs you have definitely heard in a store.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I did a little research, kind of on the psychology of music in stores.

Griffin: Yeah. I'd be curious to hear when it switched over to— I mean obviously when CD technology and all that shit evolved, I imagine it had an impact on it. But when it changed from being like easy listening background, gentle jazz—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — to like actual top 40, you know, contemporary hits.

Rachel: Yeah, 'cause all of this started like in the '30s, and it was pretty much exclusively like muzak.

Griffin: Yeah, right.

Rachel: Which is like, I think most people know, but it's the kind of like... it's often called like, "elevator music."

Griffin: Weather channel music, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, like there are no lyrics, it sounds exactly like it was played on a keyboard.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Sometimes it's recognizable songs, other times it's completely unrecognizable.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Studies on this though didn't really start 'til the '80s, there is a 2014 article from *Psychology Today* that talks about how research was done kind of on how the type of music influences shopping.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So there was a study that found that shoppers spent more money and time in a store if the background music was slow tempo.

Griffin: Huh.

Rachel: So like example, like Christmas time, like, "Silent Night."

Griffin: Okay. [chuckles]

Rachel: But—

Griffin: Is the idea that just you're like mov— you're subconsciously moving your body slow?

Rachel: I— Yeah, I think— Well it's more like the inverse of that, which is like a fast tempo.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Which I think kind of motivates you to have this kind of more like frantic energy.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like when you're shopping. There was another study I found referenced in *Reader's Digest*. [chuckles] Just saying that music in general makes you wanna spend like 10% more typically, but that's only true on weekdays, which I think there is definitely a correlation. Like when you are going into a store on a weekday typically like before or after your workday.

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: Like your attitude in general is different. So I don't know that music necessarily— Like this maybe be a correlation not causation situation.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't know how those would be connected.

Rachel: But that 80% of customers say that they like hearing music instore, which I think is speaking to what I said earlier, which is it's very eerie.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: To be in a completely silent store. Like there's something very relaxing about hearing music. I think it's just the idea of background noise in general also.

Griffin: Yeah, of course.

Rachel: 77% say they're more likely to wait in line if the music is playing, like if engaging music is playing, which again is like I think true.

Griffin: Yeah, that makes sense.

Rachel: You know, like it— waiting in line for me, there are a lot of times— I don't know if I'm the only one who does this, but I will like... If I see a store has a line, I will abandon the whole purpose of my trip immediately.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like I will have gone around the store, I will have filled up a basket, and then I will get to checkout and I will be like, "Oh, there's 17 people," and I will just put everything back and walk out. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. That's the difference between me and you, I don't mind a— I don't mind the line so much.

Rachel: Yeah, well I think you're generally a more patient person than me, I will say.

Griffin: Some— In some regards, yeah.

Rachel: Yes. There are certain stores that don't play music at all, which I was surprised about. Apparently until recently Target didn't have music.

Griffin: Huh.

Rachel: And apparently Aldi still doesn't play music, which I've never really been in an Aldi, which is gonna be really shocking for people. The— People seem to be very loyal to that chain. But as a way to keep costs

down and provide like an efficient in and out shopping experience, it's apparently—

Griffin: No music?

Rachel: — it's apparently like as a chain quiet in Aldi.

Griffin: There's just a voice coming over the loudspeakers constantly, just like, "Go. Go go go go. Go go go go."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Now."

Rachel: "Get out."

Griffin: "No, that's in dairy."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "No, up— Yeah, go go go go!"

Rachel: Yeah, so anyways, so that's store music. This is one of those things, I don't know that I specifically like the brand, I did like that it was called "grocerycore."

Griffin: That is a really good name.

Rachel: But I don't know that I would seek this out when I was listening to music while I was doing anything else. But I do like when I enter a store.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: And they got some fun bops in there.

Griffin: I do appreciate that. The only exposure I ever did have to it when I was working in retail was at GameStop, I was working when the Zoon came out.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: The Microsoft Zoon. And there's some tracks on there, there was a fuckin'... "Consay Sir Sexy" I think was the name of the band? A French pop band had a track on there.

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: Fuckin' 30 Seconds to Mars had a track on there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The Thermals, it was very much of a time, and it was— but it was also only like 15 songs on there that we would just listen to in a loop, and it got pretty old pretty fast.

Rachel: I think back when going to the grocery store was a more social experience, like it is not as much, like I'm almost always there by myself if I am going. But it was also like a thing, like you would turn to the person you're with—

Griffin: "Hey hey."

Rachel: — and you're like, "Oh my god, is this grocery store playing Nirvana?"

Griffin: [chuckles]

Rachel: Like it was just like a fun—

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: — little conversation piece.

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[*Home Improvement* transition music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: Alright. I'mma talk about *Andor*, and I know that this is a television show that you will probably never watch, but I do know that you know some stuff about *Star Wars*.

Rachel: I do.

Griffin: And I do think that it fits into the canon of the *Star Wars* world in a really, really interesting way that hopefully will not bore you to tears.

Rachel: [giggles] I am curious to know kind of what it's all about, 'cause people are crazy for this show.

Griffin: People are raving for it. If you have not finished all of it, I'm not gonna spoil anything. I may have to talk about *Rogue One*, which is the movie that came out first, some of the stuff that happens in that movie, so I guess spoilers for *Rogue One*. That movie's nine years old, so I think we're past—

Rachel: Have I seen that one?

Griffin: — the stature of limitations. I don't know.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'll talk about it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And then if it sounds familiar, you let me know. But I just finished season two of *Andor* and like I— I think it's the best shit that has ever come out of *Star Wars*.

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: Like full stop, and is a very, very impactful show to watch specifically right now. So starting with *Rogue One*, came out in 2016, it was co-written by Tony Gilroy, and Tony Gilroy did the screenplays for all the *Bourne* movies, he also wrote the screenplay for *Michael Clayton*.

And so when *Rogue One* came out, it was this story about this group of doomed rebel operatives who were tasked with stealing plans for the

Death Star and getting them back to the rebel base. And it basically took place in the days leading up to... *Episode IV: A New Hope*, the oldest, you know, *Star Wars* movie, the first *Star Wars* movie.

It sets up exactly what happened, how the rebels got the Death Star's plans and how they, you know, managed to make that miracle shot at the end of the first movie and blow up the Death Star. It was like these are the guys who were responsible for the fact that that was able to happen at all.

Rachel: Okay yeah, I haven't seen that.

Griffin: It... was really cool. It was so different from any *Star Wars* stuff I had seen before, it was like a gritty spy drama with just like mile high stakes and tension, and like almost zero Jedi stuff. Like—

Rachel: Huh.

Griffin: — virtually zero Jedi shit whatsoever. And it was also self-contained, because... it didn't have a lot of like recurring *Star Wars* characters in it, and also spoiler here, this plucky team of rebels dies, like sacrifices themselves to get these plans back to, you know, Princess Leia and Mon Mothma at the end of it all.

Rachel: Mmm, like *Armageddon*.

Griffin: Sort of like *Armageddon*, yeah, not too dissimilar.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And the movie was great, but then they announced a few years later that there was gonna be a spinoff show on Disney+ about one of the rebels on this crew called Cassian Andor, who was like this pilot intelligence officer played by Diego Luna.

And I wasn't really interested in the show, partially because like, I don't know, my *Star Wars* fixation has waned somewhat over, as I have, I don't know, moved away from the series a little bit I guess. But also because like I know what happens to this guy at the end of the movie, so it's like I'm gonna have a hard time really gettin' super invested in this—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — in this dude who I had not seen before this movie, and who I know what his fate is going to be. But then the first season came out a couple years ago, also created by Tony Gilroy. And then the second season came out, and they were both fuckin' incredible.

What makes this series special, and what makes it work so well, is the way that it sort of recontextualizes the entire *Star Wars* story. Which focuses really so much on like these few individual people, right? There's Luke and Han and Leia, and they gotta stop Darth Vader and Emperor Palpatine, and the result of that conflict between those [chuckles] five people determines what happens for every other person in the galaxy.

So it's like a war epic that is so zoomed in on like such a specific small part of what this like intergalactic conflict was supposed to be. This show like fully, fully focuses on what life is like, you know, in the shadow of tyranny, in the shadow of the Empire. What life is like for everyone else who is not a super-powered, you know, psychic warrior.

Rachel: Ohhhh, okay.

Griffin: And it does not for a second shy away from like that exploration. *Andor* is a brutal show, where some pretty bad shit happens, and it really takes the Empire's kind of like cartoonish evil out of the abstract, and shows—

Rachel: Yeah, wow.

Griffin: — like their crimes, and it shows their cruelty like really explicitly. And in so doing, it really, really makes you root for Andor, and you know—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — all of the other— there's so many great characters on the show who are all rebels, all sacrificing so much, and all approaching, you know, their rebellion in different ways. Some like less scrupulous than others, and what that means to like do bad stuff to help the good guys.

The show really, really explores like all of it. It also like spends time with characters on the Empire side, and like shows them for what they are, which is like immensely ambitious, and... not particularly sensitive to the needs of other people, and just seeing everything as a vector for control.

And in so doing like takes them from being these caricatures of bad guys, like, "Oh well he's the evil wizard, and he just wants to kill every person." Like that stuff doesn't hit as hard as "Well here's what really— here's how real people justified 'I'm working for the Empire and, you know, we're building a ship that can blow up a planet'."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's a really tricky needle to thread, but they do it so, so well, and I wasn't expecting to like care so much about these characters, because I know basically what is going to happen to every character in this show based on what I know about the rest of the *Star Wars* story and *Rogue One*.

It is a very impactful show to watch right now. Because a lot of the series is about this kind of slow build of the Empire's like tyranny, up to when they go full mask off, authoritarian.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like evil, evil, evil dudes.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So there's like a level of comfort at the beginning of the series where you see like, "Oh man, the Empire's doing some shit," but for the most part everyone's just like gettin' by doin' their thing.

And the way that that evolves over time is just this— it handles with sort of mounting, familiar horror, and I think that... That makes it sort of challenging to watch right now. And I don't wanna make this comparison to be like dismissive of... things in the country and in the world, but it is— the parallels are quite striking.

But... I think that... [sighs] why *Andor* is like everyone is talking about it is because like it takes a lot of the core themes that *Star Wars* has always

been about, about like facing tyranny with hope and courage and sacrifice. It lands so, so, so much better in this— in the *Andor* saga where they really show their work a little bit more.

There is a character in the first season called Nimik, who is this really super idealistic young rebel who passes his manifesto on to Andor, and it becomes central to sort of the whole message of the show. And it's something I've seen resonate with a lot of people because it's like genuinely helpful to hear right now, and I wanted to close this off by reading a little bit of it.

If you've— If you're on TikTok, you've probably seen like 100,000 fan edits of like *Star Wars* shit to this character reading his manifesto, but I just thought it was so well-written, and... neat. Okay, here it is.

"The Imperial need for control is so desperate because it is so unnatural. Tyranny requires constant effort, it breaks, it leaks. Authority is brittle. Oppression is the mask of fear, remember that. And know this, the day will come when all these skirmishes and battles, these moments of defiance, will have flooded the banks of the Empire's authority, and then there will be one too many. One single thing will break the siege. Remember this, try."

Rachel: Oh, I love that.

Griffin: It's really... The show is very, very, very well-written, and the way that they kind of return to this—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — this sentiment over and over and over again. I don't know, it is so nuanced, it is thrilling, it is exciting, and I— Not hyperbole, not recency bias, like it's the most finely-crafted, most... I don't know. Best *Star Wars* shit that I've ever seen, and I'm— I don't know, I'm glad.

It has really kinda changed my— I liked the sequels okay, I wasn't like wowed by them, and I felt like, "Oh, this is sort of a thing that I'm— It's neat to go to the *Star Wars* Land at Disneyworld, I guess, but I don't feel like I have a ton of— "

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: “— affinity for it so much anymore.” And that’s I would say been changed because of how fuckin’ good *Andor* is.

Rachel: Yeah, I like that is kind of— it does explore what led to that rebellion. Like because it’s such a heavy part of those original movies. But you don’t get a lot of context for it.

Griffin: No, you don’t, and it— Again, the way it kinda recontextualizes the rest of *Star Wars* is like watching *A New Hope* now is this— [chuckles] this yokel gets picked up from his planet.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then lands at the... base of the entire rebellion, that has been mounting this effort for years, and so many people have sacrificed and died to build. [chuckles] And then he’s like, “I’ll fly the ship! I’ll shoot the bombs!”

Rachel: [giggles]

Griffin: “Boom boom, bang bang! Yeeha!”

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: “Woo! We win!” And it’s like I— That’s not to— You know, they’re still great movies.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But it is, I don’t know, it kind of— it’s like you’re watching the sausage get made, and it’s I mean as visceral as that sounds.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then at the end, you know, you get to see the, you know, two guys with lightsabers fighting to kind of just winner-take-all it.

Rachel: How— Like how long does *Andor* take place over?

Griffin: Season—

Rachel: Like is it weeks, months, years?

Griffin: Season two spans a pretty big—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: — pretty big gap. It's— It starts off— The first season is like fairly well before *Rogue One* takes place, and then season two goes basically right up to where *Rogue One* takes place.

Rachel: 'Cause that's the thing, like so many like... action genre things take place over like a week, or a day.

Griffin: Oh no, no no no.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: This is— This is— stretches it out, it will show you— It's really kind of sorta smartly, wisely I should say separated into like three episode like set pieces, right.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And so there's like— God, there's— Season one has a set piece that is a prison, he gets sent to prison, Andor does just by kind of accident ends up in prison. And it turns out that this prison isn't, you know, releasing people, and so there's this whole like prison break arc that is— You got Andy Serkis in it, it fucking rules, it's so good and so cool.

So like It— It will do these little, you know, sort of contained chapters, and then it will, you know, jump forward in time and kinda show the result of what happened from that, and you know, keep exploring other stuff. I think it's fuckin' great. I don't know if you would like it, I think you probably would.

Rachel: I mean I like *Battlestar: Galactica*.

Griffin: Yeah, I could see there being sort of similar ideological themes here at least.

Rachel: But I didn't like *Game of Thrones*.

Griffin: No, you didn't—

Rachel: I feel like if—

Griffin: This is definitely not that.

Rachel: Yeah. But I feel like if I were to sit down with somebody and be like, "Here are my end posts for sci-fi."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It would be like *Game of Thrones* on one side and *Battlestar: Galactica* on the other side, and I think if you can find the sweet spot.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's—

Griffin: I will also say, as someone who has like watched all the *Star Wars* stuff, a lot of my enjoyment— Not a lot of, but some of my enjoyment of this show was just out of shock at how far they were allowed to push the envelope of what they could show.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: What kind of like... It's— It is the difference between watching Alderon get blown up by the Death Star laser at the beginning of *A New Hope*.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And the difference between... being inside of a city of people.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And seeing it happen to— Right?

Rachel: Oh wow, yeah.

Griffin: Like that is the difference, and it makes all the difference in the world, and it is— it really, really... It is at times a hard watch, but I—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think you come out of it feeling... hopeful, and I— that is an emotion that a lot of shit and a lot of *Star Wars* shit has— tries to elicit very, very hard, but you gotta do so much work to get there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And to earn that, and it does quite well.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So, I really, really like it. Do you wanna know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay, here's one frooom Dan, who says, "My small wonder today is Internet Roadtrip, the latest project from neil.fun. It's Twitch Plays *Pokémon*, but for navigating around Google street view. This afternoon we circled an island in Maine three times, and are currently arguing about going to Canada, or a place called 'Wild Blueberry Land', all while listening to a local college radio station. I can't wait to wake up and see where we are."

Rachel: Whoa.

Griffin: I'm— To put this in perspective, Sarah has been telling us about this Internet Roadtrip project, where basically it's Google street view.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You're on Google street view, and then every like three to five seconds, there's a vote that happens for everyone watching of which direction you wanna go.

Rachel: Interesting.

Griffin: And so there's like Discord servers where people are collaborating on their efforts, like, "Alright guys, there's 100 of us, we can push the vote in certain directions. Let's go to... Nantucket Island. Like let's go—"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: "Let's see if we can get all the way to Phoenix today." And also there was a college radio— I forget how this factors in, but there is a college radio station that was like online streaming, and they started using it on the Internet Roadtrip, and then the actual college radio station found out that they were the soundtrack for this Internet Roadtrip, so now they are taking like requests from people who are on this Internet—

Rachel: Oh, that's wild.

Griffin: It's really—

Rachel: That's cool.

Griffin: It's really neat, I have dipped in a couple times just to see where they are. Both times they have been stuck in the middle of some rural road, so hopefully they have gotten out of there.

Charlotte says, "My small wonder is finishing a really good book, and reading through the acknowledgments section at the end. It feels like watching the writer doing a victory lap after a job well done, and is a nice way to decompress after being so immersed in their writing. And it's also a lovely reminder that art does not happen in a vacuum, but is rather the result of the love and support of an entire community." That's nice.

Rachel: That is nice. I think that when you're reading a book, you can kinda tell if it is very researched, you know. Like particularly if it's taking place in like a time in history—

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: — that was pretty fraught. So I do definitely, if I'm reading a book and I'm like, "Oh, this is about a real thing, and a real time," I am always curious to see like, "How did they get all this information?"

Griffin: Yeah. Thank you so much for listening, everyone, and thanks to bo en and Augustus for the use of their theme song “Money Won’t Pay.” You can find a link to that in the episode description. [sighs] If you like in Michigan or Minnesota, we’re gonna be up there this week doing *TAZ* and *MBMBaM*.

You can get tickets over at bit.ly/mcelroytours. We also have a bunch of other shows for *TAZ* and *MBMBaM* coming up all across the country. Coming to Texas, coming to California, coming to a bunch of places. Again, tickets and links and all the jazz are over at bit.ly/mcelroytours.

We got merch over at mcelroymerch.com, we got that Flaming Not-Poisoning Raging Tea of Doom that we made in collaboration with the Good Store. So good, so spicy and yummy, I would actually love a cuppa.

Rachel: Yeeeeeah.

Griffin: A cuppa that right now would hit so hard.

Rachel: Me too.

Griffin: But that’s it. We’re gonna go now, and we’re gonna... we’re gonna grab some Luden’s, and we’re gonna put— pop four or five of `em in. And then we do this really cute thing where we shoot `em into each other’s mouths.

Rachel: [laughs] Like little characters on a fountain?

Griffin: Yeah, just like that. It sucks to watch, we’ve heard.

Rachel: Yeah, for sure.

[outro theme music plays]

[ukulele strum]

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