

Wonderful! 383: The Beef Will Go Wherever It Wants To

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Thanks for listening to Wonderful. It's a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. I just made eye contact with our neighbors. I just looked out the window and made eye contact with our neighbors. What do I do, babe?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I'm in hell now.

Rachel: But we're up high, how did you do it?

Griffin: I looked at—I was looking past you, to the outside window—

Rachel: Were they on the ground?

Griffin: No, they're in their house, and they're at their own outside window. And just like, we happened to—

Rachel: There's no way they—they saw you in the eye?

Griffin: Baby, I'm telling you, even from as far away as we are, I just made eye contact—you're not taking this as seriously as I thought you would.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is—we need to leave now. We have to find a new home.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. And I'm gonna... it'll take me a while to shake this off, babe.

Rachel: Do they think you're Joe Rogan?

Griffin: Christ, I hope not. Jesus, god, I hope not. I like to think that if you observe me, voyeur style, through the windows of our home, even for ten, fifteen seconds—

Rachel: You don't have a big cigar.

Griffin: That's one of—is that one of his things?

Rachel: I think that's a thing that he does.

Griffin: Is a big cigar?

Rachel: I think so.

Griffin: Oh... No, I don't know, I don't think I give off that. I don't think I give off big manosphere energy.

Rachel: No. You don't. [chuckles]

Griffin: Thanks for laughing at that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Thanks for laughing at that. You know, I bet the guys in the manosphere would have something to say about the fact that you laughed after that when I said that. Hm...

[group chuckle]

Griffin: Do you have any Small Wonders, babe? Any fun things to talk about? A little light apéritif?

Rachel: I don't see anybody over there, by the way. I'm looking—

Griffin: The other house, honey. The other one.

Rachel: Oh, the other house?

Griffin: Yeah, the one that's immediately behind you. They're gone now. They were there before. I promise.

Rachel: [chuckles] Do you want to go first?

Griffin: I've been playing a neat game called The Drifter, and it's very much in the vein of like the old LucasArts like point and click adventure games from like the '90s. I don't know if you were—if you had any of those at your house? Stuff like The Dig or Full Throttle, or... any of those ringing a bell? Grim Fandango?

Rachel: That one sounds familiar.

Griffin: Yeah. It's just a modern adventure game sort of modeled after that, about a guy who returns to his hometown and finds himself embroiled in this mystery of abductions. And he keeps coming back to life every time he dies, and it's this big mystery. And it's, I don't know, it just feels genuinely a lot like a game from that era. And it's been taking me on a nice stroll through memory lane, because I used to—

Rachel: I like that you—

Griffin: Play the hell out of those.

Rachel: This is just a game for fun?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I like that you still get to do that. That it's not just business.

Griffin: It's very rare. It's very rare.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I happen to find myself between big fuckin' monster games right now.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And in the interim, I've, you know, caught up a little bit on my backlog. But this one just seemed right up my alley. I'm glad I checked it out. Was that enough time? I love what just happened. I love that you went to get your notes for the Small Wonder of the thing that you thought of the other day to talk of the small wonder. I just love it.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, because I think based on the episode we recorded last—

Griffin: Which was two—like two days ago for us.

Rachel: Yeah, somebody gave such a perfect Small Wonder, and I thought I need to start writing these down.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I did. And what I wrote down was, when you go back to a place and your phone remembers the Wi-Fi.

Griffin: That's amazing. That's *amazing*.

Rachel: was thinking about that when we went to your brother's house.

Griffin: Oh, sure, I mean, every Wi-Fi knows our name there. It is a delight for me when we do a live show at a venue that we've performed at before.

Rachel: Oh, and your phone remembers that?

Griffin: Oh god, it's such a—it's cool from like a, hey, you know, I'm part of the—part of the establishment. Part of the—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I'm baked into the drywall here. But also, I don't have to get the Wi-Fi password from Paul.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Which is, you know, not the hardest thing to do in the world, but—

Rachel: Yeah, I mean, especially—you know, it's like, you know, eight, six, twelve months between visits, and—

Griffin: I will fully forget, yeah.

Rachel: And your phone's like, "Oh? Oh, here we are again."

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: That's nice.

Griffin: I go first this week.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I'm going to talk about a thing I don't know if you are familiar with. I think I maybe have talked to you about it before. It is a historical artifact from the halcyon days of the internet in 2007. A blog post about None Pizza with Left Beef. Do you know about None Pizza with Left Beef?

Rachel: I think you have told me about this, actually.

Griffin: None Pizza with Left Beef happened eighteen years ago. And you know, it's a classic internet meme, but also, I think it had a very profound impressioned statement about how we introduce automation in our service industries. And what the ramifications of that might be.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And I like that it takes a little bit of time to be reflective about that stuff, all the way back in 2007. None Pizza with Left Beef is, and this is according to the Wikipedia article—first of all, there's a Wikipedia article about it, so—

Rachel: Perfect.

Griffin: You know it's a big deal. None Pizza with Left Beef is, quote, "a pizza delivery experiment," conducted by Steven Molaro in October 2007. So, Steven Molaro used to run a blog called The Sneeze, all the way up 'til like 2011, which was a comedy-focused blog that I had read like a bunch of different articles from just because they would go sort of viral in their way, back in the early aughts. He also was a writer on Big Bang Theory for twelve years. But the most prominent thing that he ever did on The Sneeze was an article titled The Great Pizza Orientation Test, in which he orders a pizza from Domino's using its brand-new online like ordering portal.

Rachel: That's been around since 2007?

Griffin: It's interesting that that's your—that that is your reaction. Because like, for my—in my mind, when I read that—I don't know, I think about None Pizza with Left Beef a lot. But I guess I hadn't really thought about the fact that in 2007, bringing the internet or some website or an app into these sort of like traditional human service industry things was still pretty new.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because up until then, you would call the place to order the pizza, and you would talk to a human being.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so, this experiment very much sort of celebrated the fact that you could reduce the amount of human interaction that one might use. But it's wild, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, it still feels new to me, I guess is what I'm saying. Like that technology, that you can get that precise in what you want, still feels like a—like a new phenomenon.

Griffin: That's so—yeah, I guess I don't—I don't know, I take it very much for granted.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And do not think much about it. But this, I mean, this was an experiment, in the truest terms, exploring this bold new territory of online food ordering. So, Molaro got behind the wheel of these pizza ordering tools and decided to have some fun, to see how wild a pizza Domino's would let him make. And for each of the toppings on the pizza, you could choose what amount you wanted. So like light or normal, or whatever. And also, how that topping would be oriented on the pizza, on the whole pie. Do you want it to be on the whole thing? Do you want it to be just on the left, just on the right? Or—

Rachel: Yeah, which makes sense.

Griffin: The fourth option, which is none. Which is interesting that they've categorized that in the orientation part of the menu, because it's like, I want the sausage... somewhere else.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Take the sausage, put it off the pizza. So, as a control experiment, he ordered a pizza with pepperoni on the left and mushrooms on the right. It came, and the toppings were on the wrong sides. But otherwise, like the place, you know, got the order correct.

Rachel: I mean...

Griffin: Can't you just turn the pizza around?

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: There's a whole thing on the article about how the pizza comes presented and how the box is supposed to open.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And that first appearance is the, you know, that is how you set your cardinal due north—

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Sort of compass. Yes, is—you could argue semantics on that. The bigger thing that happens is that he orders a second pizza. For this pizza, he goes down the list of every single topping, including cheese and sauce, and sets the orientation to none. Allowing the only thing to be on the pizza, to be beef on the left side of the pizza only. So, he orders this, and the menu lets him do it, and it goes through. And—

Rachel: So at this point, it should just be loose beef, right? Like there's no dough?

Griffin: Well, the dough is there. You can't turn off the dough.

Rachel: The dough is there, okay.

Griffin: But what you get is none pizza with left beef.

Rachel: Yes, I have seen this picture.

Griffin: So, it is basically a pizza crust that has been cooked, and quartered, and then exactly fourteen beef nuggets, sort of arranged in a random constellation.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Across this—

Rachel: Which could be due to travel.

Griffin: That is what he allows for. In the article, this is a quote, "It was close, but the whole pizza was so small and light, it must have shifted during delivery. And the little beef pellets didn't have any sauce or cheese to hang on to, so a few lost their footing from the left half." So yes, there was a—there was obviously some issues. But the fact of the matter is that the computer let none pizza with left beef go through—go through the system and give it the ol' rubber stamp. And then someone had to make that. And that's just, I don't know, it's so astonishing to me. I mean, the phrase "none pizza with left beef" is so genuinely phonetically pleasant for me. Like it's—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It is like, syntactically ugly in a way that like I just kind of keep coming back to. You don't hear things described as "none pizza with left beef," and so that's like, it always feels exciting when you feel like I'm hearing something new that no one's ever said before. But it's also like, sociologically thinking, a fascinating sort of thing. Because you could not order that pizza from a human. You simply couldn't do it.

There is not a—you could not convince me there's a human being alive that you could go to and they'd be like, "Okay, how much cheese do you want on your pizza?" And you'd say, "None. None sauce, none pepperoni, none mushrooms." Go down the list, and then only put sausage on the left side? There's not a human being that would let that go through. So, this only happened because it was a computer who had been brought in as a sort of intermediary force.

Rachel: I think it's interesting that it distinguishes between left and right, because it is—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: It is not uncommon to do half, right?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, I remember that as a young person, of like, "Let's do half this and half that."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And you know that like your group is small enough that—

Griffin: That's fine.

Rachel: Splitting a pizza is reasonable. But specifying left and right is a little bit wild.

Griffin: It is extremely wild.

Rachel: In an era of like, you know, a lot of dietary restrictions, it does not seem that crazy to me that people would get precise enough to leave out things like sauce and cheese.

Griffin: This is what I'm saying. You could absolutely order a pizza with only beef on the left side. You could absolutely order a pizza that didn't have sauce or cheese on it, if that is where your dietary restrictions lead you. You could not do both.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't think a human being would say, "Okay, so no sauce, no cheese, no other toppings, and you want beef on the left side." There's not—they would say, obviously, "Well, that won't work. Like, that's not—the beef is gonna go all higgledy-piggledy.

Rachel: Yeah, okay.

Griffin: They would try to stop you at the very least and say like, "You sure you don't want some sort of—maybe I could give you the beef in a bowl, and you could—"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, it's so unfathomable.

Rachel: "It can't be done."

Griffin: And like, this was in 2007, which was a long time before like McDonald's, you know, changed. And by—and also like a lot of other fast-food places, changed it so that you place your orders on like a touch screen when you get there. And very quickly, people realized like, you can get a hundred and fifty pickles on your hamburger if you do this shit. Therefore kind of like reinforcing like, there's stuff you can ask a computer to do for you that a human being would not do for you.

And first of all, I'm sure it's probably pretty annoying in this instance for like a McDonald's employee to have to make a hamburger with all this stuff. In the specific instance of none pizza with left beef, I guarantee you, that was the easiest pizza that particular chef had ever made in their entire pizza making career. I bet that they celebrated the opportunity to cook a none pizza with left beef.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Because you could do it in basically three swift movements. Which is very exciting.

Rachel: I'm just surprised that, I mean, in all of this discovery, has nobody ever sat down with a person that created that pizza?

Griffin: Yeah, no, I mean, there's—so, in the, you know, however many years it's been, eighteen years since then—

Rachel: Did somebody come forward and say, "I made that pizza?"

Griffin: Oh, I don't know who made the pizza. I was talking about the—

Rachel: That's what I'm asking.

Griffin: Oh, no, I don't know if that—there have been a lot of articles written about this.

Rachel: It seems like you could trace it back, right?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Like, if he knew what location and when he placed the order, it seemed like you could find that person. And I would love to hear their perspective.

Griffin: It's entirely possible that that information is out there.

Rachel: And to find out if, from their viewpoint, that is the craziest pizza they've ever made, or if, in fact, there is another crazier one.

Griffin: Now, I will say, on none—on the downside of none pizza with left beef, it probably did spawn a lot of copycat jokesters out there who then probably gave a lot—a lot of very difficult times to—

Rachel: What if it had been pepperoni? Do you think they would have shimmied around quite as much?

Griffin: None pizza with left pepperoni does not hit nearly as hard as none pizza with left beef. None pizza with left beef—

Rachel: Well, true. I mean, I think beef on a pizza is still kind of—like, I get it—

Griffin: It's wild.

Rachel: And I know that people do it. It feels less common.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I'm wondering. I mean...

Griffin: I think if you had pepperonis, especially little cuppies, little cuppy boys, they would not move around a whole lot. There would be a sort of vacuum-esque—

Rachel: They kind of sit in their own—

Griffin: And they would suction force—

Rachel: Juices.

Griffin: [chuckles] Fuse themselves to the—to the crust. Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: What if it had been vegetables too? It's just, you know?

Griffin: That would have been too gross. What's kind of beautiful about none pizza with left beef, is there's not—if you swiped those fourteen beef nuggets off of the pizza, it would be... their existence, there would be no trace of them whatsoever.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: So separated is the pizza and the beef.

Rachel: You have to—I would encourage our listeners that have not seen this picture, you have to go look at it. Because you might be picturing, for example, like a, like a—

Griffin: Pizza.

Rachel: Like a taco meat situation. It is not that.

Griffin: No. It is fourteen... just, nuggs.

Rachel: You can very clearly count these chunks.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles] Sorry, just saying that statement—

Griffin: No, babe, celebrate it. There's so much about none pizza with left beef that resonates with me, and I'm sure with you, now, eighteen years later.

Rachel: We talk about it a lot because of Justin's kids.

Griffin: Yes, we do. It created a shorthand for fussy like online ordering issues.

Rachel: Because Justin's daughters have similarly crazy pizza orders.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Where like one of them just wants cheese and no sauce, and the other one wants like sauce and toppings, but no cheese.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So they—what they basically want is not pizza.

[group laugh]

Griffin: Well, I mean, it is. And this is obviously such an edge case in that it was not a dietary or even a preferential choice. This was, "I want to push the limits of this thing to see if there are any guard rails on this robot that a human, a rational human being, would naturally kind of put up there."

Rachel: It feels like a school science fair experiment. Like it seems like you can—

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: See the little cardboard display set up in the school gym.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And there's pictures of like these different tests.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I'm—

Griffin: That's why it's a—I guess that's why Wikipedia calls it a pizza delivery experiment.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But there is like, I don't know, there is a social boundary, a reason boundary here that a person would identify and utilize, that I do not think would be as easy for a, you know, an AI who you teach to handle pizza orders would necessarily clock.

Rachel: I don't know. I don't know. You're saying that, but I feel like there is a certain amount, like having worked—and I know you have too. Like if you were a TCBY—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And somebody came in and said, "I just want toppings in a cup."

Griffin: I would lose—we would lose so much money.

Rachel: And... and then—

Griffin: Are they armed? Are they—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Do they have a big knife or something?

Rachel: And then just put like a teaspoon of yogurt in there. Would you say like, "Well, here are the reasons in which—you know, and actually, what you should probably—" Or would you just do it? Because, I mean, who are you to like stand in their way?

Griffin: Baby, I was extremely... do you remember when I lied to the guys—

Rachel: [chuckles] I know, I know.

Griffin: Who were robbing my Gamestop, because I didn't want them to steal our PS3s?

Rachel: I know, you're an incredible employee.

Griffin: I'm an incredible employee! A loyal and dedicated employee.

Rachel: I'm saying, but in that case, your loyalty was to the establishment. But what you're describing is more of a loyalty to the customer and saying like, "What you're asking for does not make sense."

Griffin: I could not give them a cup of toppings and keep my job. That would—because they're so—that would be a huge loss—

Rachel: Well, they would pay for it. They're saying, "I will pay for it." This is like no pizza left beef's situation of like, "I'm gonna pay for this like it's a regular pizza."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "I'm gonna pay for this like it's a frozen yogurt with seven toppings."

Griffin: But I'm saying that the—if I gave somebody a cup of jimmies, and they walked off with that cup of jimmies, it may have cost 'em two bucks for the usual yogurt thing, but I just gave them twenty dollars of jimmies. Do you know what I mean? The toppings are worth their—more than just the yogurt or the cream. That's—this is deep industry—

Rachel: Okay, so this example doesn't work.

Griffin: Not—not really—

Rachel: This example doesn't work.

Griffin: Obviously like—

Rachel: I guess I'm saying, like a human being, I could see just letting that slide just as much as like whoever. Because it's like, you know, you're in a position where you're like, what do I care?

Griffin: Right. Whether a human would or wouldn't do that is obviously unknowable. But there is a—I don't know, it... I am pretty fascinated in, I guess, this topic of how people talk to people, versus how people talk to machines.

Rachel: No, I see what you're saying, the left and right.

Griffin: And I must be clear here, I'm not saying that from a, [in a silly voice] "machines have souls, and must be—"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like that's not my fuckin' vibe, even a little bit at all. But I do think it's interesting, and this is so far ahead of like a lot of those conversations. This is seventeen, eighteen years before like a lot of the—

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: That stuff was sort of happening.

Rachel: Hundred percent.

Griffin: And I don't know, I find it very fun that there is this very silly, very funny thing that was very ahead of its time, a little bit.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And—

Rachel: For sure.

Griffin: Has stuck with so many people for so long.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, I guess ultimately, I just, I still have a lot of questions all these years later.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And the left and right thing is really what still puzzles me.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I guess I would still like to know more.

Griffin: Okay. Well, this is not the venue for... for that. But maybe after the show, during our time of—

Rachel: Maybe I'll scour and see if like 99% Invisible—

Griffin: I bet you a real podcast—

Rachel: [chortles]

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yeah.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

[theme music plays]

Rachel: Okay, do you want to hear my thing?

Griffin: I do!

Rachel: Okay, I'm just excited to get in here before you did.

Griffin: Oh, boy?

Rachel: This is something we have experienced together, and I am just happy that I get to bring this topic—

Griffin: Oh, shit.

Rachel: Before you got a chance to do it.

Griffin: Wow, okay?

Rachel: And that is the mansion on O Street.

Griffin: The mansion on O Street is really, really something else, man.

Rachel: Or sometimes called the O Street Museum, the O Museum in The Mansion. There's a lot of different—

Griffin: Big—

Rachel: Names for it.

Griffin: Big shout out to Hoops and Syd and the girls for giving us the heads up about this place.

Rachel: Can I tell you, though, I had seen... I had seen this on lists for DC forever.

Griffin: Oh, like things to do?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, that's interesting.

Rachel: It kept coming up, because I kept looking for things for us to do, and I was concerned that our kids were too young.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because the way they present it, it sounds like it is a tour situation?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In which you are—and maybe this does exist, and that's just not the like ticket that we bought, but that you are personally guided. And I thought our kids are gonna get antsy.

Griffin: Yeah, they would.

Rachel: It looked like there was a lot of breakable stuff, and I just thought like, I think our kids are too young to appreciate this. But I'd had my eye on this ever since we moved here.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it just kind of took them saying like, "We're gonna do this," that I was like, all right, let's go for it.

Griffin: I had never heard of this thing, so can you give us some background?

Rachel: Yes. So, this is in Northwest DC. It is, actually, and this is something I didn't know, it is made up of five interconnected townhouses.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And within these townhouses, there are more than a hundred rooms, with more than seventy secret doors and passageways.

Griffin: They really hit that very, very hard.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: In all the marketing materials. And folks, let me tell you, it does not disappoint. There's a lot of fuckin' secret doors in this place. Like a lot.

Rachel: And, I mean, it has gone—there's a lot you can learn just by going. The tickets are like thirty dollars. You go, and you can sit down and watch a video, and they tell you kind of the various... like different historical points of

interest, like through the timeline of this building. But I mean, the—one of the most remarkable things is that everything in all of these rooms is for sale. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yes! I was so curious about that.

Rachel: Every—like a lot of the rooms are themed. There are—there are pieces of art and like housewares, and toys and electronics all over every surface, in in each of these rooms. And you can bring those down to the front and purchase them.

Griffin: So awesome.

Rachel: Yeah. Just at any point during your visit. The building itself was originally designed in 1892, by Edward Clark, who was an architect for the US Capitol, to be a home for himself and his two brothers. And over the next century, the mansion served many purposes, including a place to stay for FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover.

Griffin: Wasn't there a vice president who stayed there for a minute? Or am I thinking of J. Edgar Hoover?

Rachel: I mean, there's—so there's just kind of endless historical figures—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That have lived in this—in this building. It's possible that just got left off of my list. I will say, the house kind of as we know it today, the building was bought in 1980 by Reverend H.H. Leonards, in the hopes to provide a place where clients could come to learn from one another, and foster the development of diversity, the creative process and the human spirit. And she is the one that created the five-story annex, and converted the space into a hotel.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And brought in donated—

Griffin: Oh, god, I forgot you can actually stay there.

Rachel: Yes. And brought in donated pieces to kind of furnish the spot.

Griffin: I feel like you haven't dropped the important piece of information here, which is that this—it was all sort of decorated with the touch of a mad man.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, so there is, for example, a John Lennon suite. There is a two-story log cabin room. There is a secret wine cellar. There are over fifty signature guitars.

Griffin: A couple of anime babe rooms.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like a couple where you walk in and it's just like a bunch of busts that you might see at like a comic book shop.

Rachel: There's a cherry blossom room.

Griffin: There's a Star Wars toilet. Like, say any combination of like famous person or media franchise, and then a name of a room of—in the house, and it's gonna have it in there somewhere, probably.

Rachel: I guess so. And this is as of 2022, to spend the entire night exploring the mansions, prices start at four hundred and seventy-five dollars. But every year, the mansion has continued a long-running tradition of providing, on average, over eight hundred and fifty free room nights a year to support their Artists and Heroes in Residence program.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: A lot of this is connected to kind of one of their most famous guests, which is Mrs. Rosa Parks. In 1994, Mrs. Parks had been robbed and beaten up outside of her Detroit home, and she reached out to one of her friends, who happened to be a board member at the museum. And she

ended up spending time living at the mansion, under the heroes in residence program.

Griffin: Do you think she was there at the same time as Prince?

Rachel: Oh, man. I don't know, man!

Griffin: Because Prince also had, if memory serves, quite a long residency.

Rachel: But it says that while she was there, she hosted Sunday gospel brunch, she hosted an anniversary event for the Montgomery bus boycott, held negotiations for her participation in Bill Clinton's State of the Union address. And yeah, to this day, they still have a Mrs. Rosa Parks room. The owner, or the person I mentioned, Reverend H.H. Leonards, wrote a book about Rosa Parks' life. And just her connection with Rosa Parks while she lived at the house. It's... I mean, it's an incredible spot. They have events all year long. They have a New Year's Eve event. They're open on Christmas Eve. They're open on Thanksgiving.

Griffin: Yeah—

Rachel: They're open like 9AM to 9PM every day. It's incredible. I mean, you will—you will walk into a room, sometimes it's very obvious where the secret doors are. It will just be like a bookcase, and you will just kind of very easily swing it open. I was reading—

Griffin: There were a couple, though, that were pretty well-concealed, that felt like, oh, I'm about to break some shit. And then you pull and you're like, oh, no, there's another room! Cool!

Rachel: Yeah, I read an article that says each visit promises access to at least sixty rooms and thirty-two concealed passages. "Which rooms and which secret doors change daily, as we have a hundred and twelve rooms and nearly ninety secret doors."

Griffin: Crazy.

Rachel: "Discovering three secret doors makes you an above average sleuth."

Griffin: That's fun.

Rachel: The thing I can't figure out, some of the rooms that they offer that you can stay in—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I wonder what—I guess they just lock those doors when somebody's staying in there.

Griffin: Yeah, maybe.

Rachel: So like you—for example, you can stay in the log cabin suite. But when we were there, we got to see it.

Griffin: Yeah, we got to go in the log cabin suite. We also went in what was called the Halloween room, which was—

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Filled with—

Rachel: Was there—there wasn't like a bed in there though, right?

Griffin: No, there was no bed in there. It was a dark door behind one of these secret doorways. And you would walk in, and it had a little side room, like a coat closet. And that was filled with like Spirit Halloween style horror animatronics, like that detected with an IR sensor, and then, you know, the pumpkin man laughs, or whatever. And then that emptied out into an even bigger room filled with like fifty to sixty more of these animatronic Halloween machines. Room was too scary for any of our children to go in.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Way too scary.

Rachel: Yeah, and like just even the idea of the room was a focus. There is a package you can purchase called the secure harbor package, where you and twenty-five other guests can have ninety rooms and an elevator all to yourself.

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: For ten thousand dollars a night. [chuckles]

Griffin: Okay, well, that's... that is a little rich for my blood. It's just cool—it's like if there was an antique store, where the antique store had different rooms, and those rooms were based around the antiques that were within them. And you could just buy whatever the fuck you wanted.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's overwhelming.

Rachel: I will say, each room is very full in a way that suggests that not a lot of people come in and purchase things. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, no.

Rachel: It's... and some of it is because the items are priced pretty high. We found like an Elvis room, I think, at the bottom. Like there are a lot of rooms that have like memorabilia from very like famous like collectible figures.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And it's not imaginable that you would leave necessarily with one of their items.

Griffin: It's one of the weirdest places I've ever been.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's cool—I don't know. I feel about it the same way I feel about like a Meow Wolf or something, where it's like, it's just cool to be surrounded by really weird stuff.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And have the freedom to kind of go about and poke at what you so choose. And also, like Bart Simpson's fuckin' everywhere.

Rachel: c[chuckles]

Griffin: Just like every third room has Bart Simpson action figures all over.

Rachel: Gus I don't think really understood what was going on. Because what happened was, we drove there and we met Justin and Sydnee and the girls. And later on, Gus was talking about how he wanted to go to normal Huntington. And I realized that he had thought maybe that we had gone to West Virginia earlier, when we had been in the O Street Mansion.

Griffin: Made pretty good time, I would say.

Rachel: [chuckles] And in the future, he would prefer to go to regular—

Griffin: Regular Huntington, not the Huntington that's a five-story townhouse filled with a bunch of wild antiques.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, I... ah, yeah, I don't blame—I think I—hm, if only we could do both at the same time. If only the Mansion on O Street was in regular Huntington.

Rachel: I would definitely like—like next time we have visitors and have the time, I would definitely like to bring people there again.

Griffin: Yeah. It's a fun—it's a fun poke around.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: How about this one from Frankie, who says, "I'm a writer, and my Small Wonder is the word count display on my writing document. It's so satisfying to hit a goal every time I write that I can always keep an eye on. I just reached twenty-six thousand words on my story, and I had to tell everyone I know, just because seeing the number in the box felt so rewarding."

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: I like that a lot.

Rachel: I don't know that I've ever written that much.

Griffin: I mean, cumulatively?

Rachel: Well—[titters]

Griffin: Certainly.

Rachel: On one project, I don't think so.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, I do love a word count. I do also love like expanding the margins of a term paper to the point where it looks like a golden book in terms of the kerning, just so you can squeeze an extra page or two out of—

Rachel: I will say, my job tends to be more, as a grant writer, of like taking seven hundred words and turning them into two-hundred and fifty.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And that is kind of where I get my thrills.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Hey, man, me too. Back when I was on Twitter, and Twitter imposed those limits—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Oh, man, the amount of succinct sort of thought evoking you had to do was a fun challenge. Sorry, that plant is sticky for a reason I don't quite understand. I've been watering it. If anyone knows why a plant would get sticky on the leaves, hit me up. It probably means something. Anyway, here's one from Spencer, who says, "Just wanted to let you know that there is, in fact, a person driving around my town in New Zealand with the vanity license plate 'poop doctor.'" Now—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's cool.

Rachel: Did you see in our Facebook group, a lot of people posted Virginia license plates?

Griffin: No, I didn't.

Rachel: There's somebody that posted—there was a license plate, like a charitable license plate, that said "kids first" at the bottom. And somebody had gotten the vanity tag that said "eat the." And so it said, "Eat the kids first."

Griffin: Eat the kids first? Wow, that's...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Virginia, keep it up. Poop doctor is cool. I don't think it's as cool as doctor poop, do you know what I mean? Like this—

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: To me, I don't know, it feels like two different things. Like the name is...

Rachel: This makes me wonder, if it had been none pizza right beef, if you would feel differently about it.

Griffin: Yeah, I would. I don't think none pizza right beef is as funny as none pizza with left beef.

Rachel: You are kind of a poet in your own way.

Griffin: Well, I guess so, but like—

Rachel: Your precise feelings about language...

Griffin: "Right" can mean too many things. And...

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But I suppose "left" can too, huh? I don't know, I just think non pizza with left beef hits so good. I wouldn't change—

Rachel: So, you prefer doctor poop?

Griffin: I prefer "doctor poop" to "poop doctor," yeah. Because poop, in that term, is modifying doctor. As opposed to doctor modifying poop. Do you know what I mean?

Rachel: Huh. I'll have to think about it.

Griffin: I hope so, because I don't—I don't really know what I mean.

Rachel: I'll have to think about it.

Griffin: Thank you so much 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. I've been listening to more Bo En music on Spotify. Henry was playing a game that Bo En did the soundtrack for.

Rachel: Oh, cool!

Griffin: It's all really, really, really great music. And obviously, Augustus and Kero Kero Bonito is all fuckin' great stuff too. Anyway, thanks for letting us use that song. And thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. We do have some new merch up in the merch store right now—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Over at mcelroymerch.com.

Rachel: It's August.

Griffin: It's August, and that means that we have some stuff back in stock. Most notably, I will say, the Flaming, Raging Poisoning Tea of Doom is back in stock.

Rachel: Ooh.

Griffin: By popular demand. I love this tea!

Rachel: Did we go through ours?

Griffin: We fuckin' tore through ours. We definitely, definitely need a resupply.

Rachel: We need more.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Can you...

Griffin: I'll do my—I'll do my thing. [chuckles] I'll work my magic.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: Yeah, no, it's really very, very, very good tea. And that's over at mcelroymerch.com, as well as a few other things. We've got some live shows for MBMBaM and TAZ coming up very soon. We're going to be in Atlanta during DragonCon. We're coming to Utah and Texas, and a couple

other places later this year. [Bit.ly/mcelroytours](http://bit.ly/mcelroytours) is where you can go for ticket links and more information. And one more time, I'm writing a Choose Your Own Adventure book, it comes out next year. It's called The Stowaway. And you can pre-order that right now at bit.ly/griffinstowaway. I know that's a lot of links and everything, I—you know... do whatever you want.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Now you're armed with the information. And what you choose to do with it is not up to me.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: You are a person.

Rachel: You can choose which side.

Griffin: And you choose which side.

Rachel: The beef goes on.

Griffin: Yes. I mean, no, because nature takes its course no matter what. The pizza—the beef will go wherever it wants to. But you can ask—

Rachel: You can indicate your preference?

Griffin: You can indicate your preference, but Mother Nature is gonna toss that sausage around.

[pause]

Griffin: Is that our new tagline?

Rachel: Yeah, I feel okay about that.

Griffin: Mother Nature gonna toss that sausage around. That's too much in the mouth.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Bye!

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

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