

## **Wonderful! 388: Our Favorite Austin Stuff, Live!**

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

**Griffin:** Crazy...

[pause]

**Griffin:** You talk first. [titters]

[pause]

**Griffin:** Thank you. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** Aw... yeah.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Hi, I'm Rachel McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** Hi, I'm Griffin McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** It is a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. And Austin, we're so into you. Even after all these years.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** Distance has made the heart grow terribly fond, we're here to tell you.

**Rachel:** We know that we left, and it wasn't about you, it was about us.

**Griffin:** It was kind of...

[group laugh]

**Griffin:** It was more about Texas like statewide stuff than like y'all specifically.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** Which I'm sure you can relate to.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** But we're not here to talk about that. Here on Wonderful, specifically during our live shows, we take some time to talk about the things that we love about the city we're currently in. And great news, there's a lot of it for here.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** So tonight, we thought we would focus our efforts in talking about things we like, that's good, that we're into, and specifically that we miss a great deal about Austin, Texas, since we have moved away to our nation's capital.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Should we do Small Wonders?

**Griffin:** Yeah, we can do Small Wonders. You got anything—you introduce this bit knowing that you never have one of these cocked and ready, so I—

**Rachel:** Well, I wanted to start, because I wanted to steal one that you might do.

**Griffin:** Oh, shit. Okay.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** We went to that balloon museum.

**Griffin:** God damn it, that is what I was gonna do.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Mm-hm! We were looking for stuff to do with the little kids. And if you go there right at 10AM, it is only small children.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's pretty great.

**Rachel:** And it was kind of amazing.

**Griffin:** Really, really great inflatable art at the balloon museum.

**Rachel:** At the Lewis Shanks. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] At the old Lewis Shanks. Which is cool, because you'll be in a room and it's like, balloon rave! And then you'll be in another room and you'll be like, clearly, they had like credenzas lining the wall here.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** There's ghosts of furniture sort of—

**Rachel:** Same carpeting, same like taupe walls. Like, it feels very much like a Lewis Shanks.

**Griffin:** The only difference is more balloons. Significantly more balloons.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Shit, babe, I really don't... I really don't have—

**Rachel:** I'm sorry.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I know... I mean, the hotel we're staying at is pretty nice, but I don't want to say it, in case people try to follow us or whatever.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** You know what? Horses.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** [laughs] It's a little on-brand.

**Griffin:** It's wild to just be in the downtown of a major metropolitan city and see a few horses.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**A Man in the Audience:** [yells out] *Whoow!*

**Griffin:** And most of the times, cops is on the horses, but I don't think the horses had a choice in the matter.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** They didn't eagerly sign up to be accessories to state violence, necessarily.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Just God's most beautiful and perfect creatures. And it's cool to see one downtown.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Let's start things off. We have prepared a lot of things today. Most of mine are much shorter than Rachel's, so I'm gonna do 'em fairly quickly. Starting out with, the thing we miss most from Austin is, of course, our friends. DVDs that we...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** No, our great group of friends who we formed so many lifelong bonds with while we were here. This isn't particularly funny, but I would be remiss in not starting now—

**Rachel:** Well, we should tell our brief origin story, right?

**Griffin:** Yeah, we moved here and made a bunch of really kick-ass friends.

**Rachel:** Well, Griffin—

**Griffin:** Oh, sorry.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I moved here in 2008. I did AmeriCorps in 2009. I met every single friend I have now—

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Basically, through AmeriCorps.

**Griffin:** Yes. And then I, like a parasite, moved here and was like—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] "You're now trapped in my web!"

**Rachel:** And then we all got married and went to each other's weddings.  
And then we had kids and—

**Griffin:** We had one big, crazy, communal like twelve-way wedding. It was...

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** Not legally binding.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I wanted to start off with this, because a lot of them are here tonight.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** What's up?

**A Lady in the Audience:** [yells out] *Whoow!*

**Griffin:** What's up, Dog Pound?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[a few audience members cheer]

**Griffin:** It is not easy, making friends as an adult, but I always found it easier here, largely because folks I've found more easy to talk to and eager to share the stuff they've got going on in their lives. Which brings me to the next thing I missed about Austin, Texas, which is, people not being weird about their jobs.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** There's this weird etiquette thing in D.C. where, if you ask someone what they do for work, they react like you've just taken a big bite out of their arm or something.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And I think it's because everyone's so certain that everyone else is trying to flex nuts about how big their law firm is bigger than their law firm. And they usually just try to like laugh the question off like you're a Rumpelstiltskin like trickster imp, trying to like steal their kids with a riddle or something.

**Rachel:** Can I tell them my story about when I talked about what you do?

**Griffin:** Oh, yeah, this—I mean, it never goes great!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** I went—I went to a book club with a bunch of new people that I just met, and they asked me what my husband did for a living. And I said, "Well, actually, he makes podcasts with his family, and they when they tour. And you know, that's how they make their living." And the woman touched me on the arm, and she said, "Good for him."

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I wasn't there for that, and so, Rachel didn't have to tell me that story.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** But did, the moment she got home from book club. The jobs here are just more fun in general, and so, that's great for me.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** When I'm talking to someone who like does a startup dating app for dogs, or like runs an underground Beyblade arena for adults, and I'm like, "Well, I do podcasts for a living," they're like, "Hell yeah."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** So, yeah, it's—I do miss that about this city.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Rachel, what have you prepared next?

**Rachel:** Okay, so, I wanted to talk about our beloved karaoke bar.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** And that is Common Interest.

**Griffin:** Common Interest. North Burnet, if memory serves?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Yes.

[a few audience members cheers]

**Rachel:** Yes. I don't remember the first time we went, do you?

**Griffin:** Probably when we lived in North Burnet—

**Rachel:** Well, yeah.



**Griffin:** At some—[chuckles] at some junction.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** Yes, we lived in the grand neighborhood called Wooten.

**Griffin:** Wooten, yeah.

**Rachel:** And we wandered over there, and it's like a sports bar, typically, but they have karaoke every night of the week. And the talent is unmatched.

**Griffin:** Yes, it's truly next level.

**Rachel:** And unlike Ego's, it doesn't feel like it is a destination karaoke spot when you walk in.

**Griffin:** Yeah, it's underground.

**Rachel:** So, we were always pleasantly delighted at just the—like the caliber of performers.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And also, you know, they have Jell-O shots and syringes, you know, it's just like—[laughs]

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's—the duality of man is really on display at Common Interest.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I said it was underground, but Common Interest, it is—it is not subterranean. I don't want people to get confused. You were looking for some videos—

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Of some star performers. The great thing about Common Interest is the same people go there every week, which is always what you look for in your karaoke destination. Tried to find some videos, couldn't find a lot. And then I remembered that I had taken quite a few Vines from Common Interest.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Griffin:** Which I have pulled for us to show here in this—in this slideshow presentation. Paul, if you can load up those Vines?

[video excerpts play]

[Karaoke crowd singing "We Are Young" by Fun]

[Karaoke crowd singing "Bodies" by Drowning Pool]

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[video excerpts ends]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] So, that's demonstrative of the fact that there was a... a slightly older lady who would get in and do Let the Bodies Hit the Floor every time we were there.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** Which was always pretty lit.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so I, when I—you know, it's hard to find research about The Common Interest, but I did find that, at least, according to the website, that it is the second oldest original bar under single ownership...

[pause]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** All right!

**Rachel:** [titters] In Austin. First is Broken Spoke.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** It started out as a piano bar on Medical Parkway, in August of 1974.

**Griffin:** Jesus Christ, okay! [chuckles]

**Rachel:** And then moved to their Burnet location in 1986. They first implemented karaoke in 1989, on a trial basis.

**Griffin:** Way ahead of the curve, I will say!

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I have never been to their paintball karaoke. You can find a lot of YouTube videos about it.

**Griffin:** Yeah! So they have a karaoke where I guess people can shoot you with paintballs if you don't do good enough.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** I wouldn't recommend doing that one.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** They also have a random karaoke, where you spin a wheel and have to sing the song that comes up. Which is also pretty, I think, maybe for me, more terrifying!

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** One of our best memories, though, is you can get private rooms there. They have like a small room, that holds twelve people. They have a large room, that holds up to thirty people.

**Griffin:** No fuckin' way, man.

[group laugh]

**Rachel:** But we spent a New Year's Eve there one year.

**Griffin:** We've spent a New Year's Eve there. It's a wonderful place, if you've never been, Common Interest on North Burnet.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I would recommend it. I especially keep an eye out for Nathan.

**Griffin:** Nathan—

**Rachel:** Who was one of our favorite—

**Griffin:** A star performer.

**Rachel:** Performers.

**Griffin:** I want to talk about something that is tragically and inexplicably absent from our nation's capital, and that is literally any queso at all.

**Rachel:** [chortles]

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** D.C. really is like a great multicultural hub, so we've been able to like replicate a lot of the food stuffs that we do, that we fell in love with here. But for whatever reason, it's an absolute queso desert. And when you can get it in a restaurant, it's served in like one of those little like Costco sample cup-sized dealies, which is not enough to satisfy my queso hunger. You can't get the Torchy's shit with like a scoop of guac and cotija cheese and this—

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, yeah..

**Griffin:** Whatever that drizzle is on top. You can't get a Styrofoam bowl of that sweet ochre nectar from Posse East. You can't get that next-level cheese pull from a queso fundido from Fonda San Miguel! Forget about it!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** If you did a cheese pull out of some queso in D.C., they'd lose their fucking minds.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** So, I'm considering becoming a queso bootlegger, from—

**Rachel:** Yes!

**Griffin:** From here, up to the whole—

**Rachel:** Big ol' barrels in our basement?

**Griffin:** Just a cement mixer to keep it from congealing.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Another thing that is also sort of inexplicably absent from our nation's capital that I do miss a lot from living in Austin is congressional representation. Now...

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** To be fair, though, sometimes you live a place, and you have it, and it's not exactly what you wanted.

**Griffin:** Yeah, touchy subject, touchy subject. I understand that.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Especially now that Texas' districts have been hewn into the shape of these insane eldritch runes.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** But it could be way worse, you could have no congressional representatives whatsoever.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** D.C. does have a non-voting member of the House of Representatives, which is cool, but it would be way cooler to have voting members of the House and any—they don't even have like an honorary senator who can sit there and like do Sudoku, while everyone else is voting to take your rights away.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Just like a visual reminder.

**Griffin:** What's that?

**Rachel:** Just like a visual reminder that D.C. exists.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that D.C. is here.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It doesn't make much sense to me, because there's more people that live in D.C. than Wyoming and Vermont, so maybe they could share some of theirs, but whatever. I know what you're thinking, though, "Hey, at least there's no taxation." No, we still do that! Isn't that fucked up?!

**Rachel:** Yeah.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Griffin:** What else have you—oh, I know what's coming next. I know what's coming next.

**Rachel:** Yeah... but pretend you're excited and surprised.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool.

**Rachel:** I would like to take this entire audience on a little trip to the Poetry Corner.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** [sings] Bum-bum, bum, bum, bum! Bum-bum, bum, bum! Baby, I hear the poetry calling, tossed salad and scrambled eggs!

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** If you don't listen to Wonderful, I started doing that in like episode one, and it's been fuckin' like ten years, and it's... I don't know how to stop the train anymore.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** What poet have you brought for us today?

**Rachel:** So, I found a local poet that I was not familiar with, and that poet is KB Brookins.

[audience member cheers loudly]

**Griffin:** Shit, yeah, all right?

**Rachel:** Oh, good! Good. This is a poet that still lives in the Austin area and is very active, so I thought maybe there'd be somebody in the audience, so I'm excited to hear. So, they moved to Austin in 2018. They were born and

raised in Fort Worth. Attended Texas Christian University and graduated in 2017. And I would like to read a poem that was originally published in 2021, and the poem is called Elon Musk is Moving to Austin.

**Griffin:** Oh, fuck.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You picked another poem you were going to do here first, and you were like, "I actually changed my mind, because that one is gonna make everyone too sad. But now, I am actually worried about this other— [chuckles] the effect this other poem will have."

**Rachel:** This may not surprise you; not a lot of poets are big tech bros, so...

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess that's fair.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** I think—I think we'll find some commonality with the voice in this work.

**Griffin:** Great. Can't wait.

**Rachel:** "Elon Musk is moving to Austin,  
& every grandpa's truck is the truck of my dreams. Forest green or yellow  
thunder;  
chromed out blue or rusty carmine. I love all the sun-dyed variations of red,  
really.  
I love the squeaky door handles swinging open at the twin liquor store on  
the old  
side of congress. By "old" I mean it hasn't been gentrified yet. I want every  
grandpa  
truck to stay owned by a grandpa & my grandpa to always have gap-toothed  
yellow



teeth. The silver caps shine brighter the longer you preserve them, I think.  
The trunk's  
dusty leaves—older than tech booms bringing a tampering white dream to  
all  
thriving populous cities. I want Congress to never be called SoCo again."

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** "And it'll never  
be by all those truck-driving abuelo's tipping their cowboy hats to me on  
Friday eves.  
They are my realm of possibility. When I grow up I want to be all their leaky  
motors  
& leather seats, combined. Tonight I'll be sure to let the cranky grandpa in  
first. Maybe  
we can link up after sip-shopping & yell at some clouds or I can listen to his  
audible  
history of what Austin used to be. We'll never be the tech utopia they want  
us to be.  
Not while men can still grow up to mirror their cars, not while Texas lights  
gleam on  
& grandpa's glow despite their cracking paint jobs, effortlessly."

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Isn't that lovely?

**Griffin:** It's really, really, really good.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** But what's it mean, though?

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** Gives me—giving me some real—some real nice goosebumps on that one.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Okay, so KB was the program coordinator of the Gender and Sexuality Center at the you—

[audience member cheers loudly]

**Griffin:** All right!

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** [chuckles] The University of Texas at Austin, where they founded the black and queer and trans collective, and co-led the president's LGBTQIA+ committee. KB runs a video series and a newsletter called Trans News That Doesn't Suck.

**Griffin:** Rad.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** KB has also released a memoir called *Pretty*, in 2024, which was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in transgender non-fiction.

**Griffin:** Rad!

**Rachel:** And they received their MFA in Creative Writing at the UT Austin New Writers Project.

**Griffin:** Wonderful.

**Rachel:** So, yeah, check out KB Brookins.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** A quick one, I do miss, with my whole heart, a very special place called Peter Pan Mini-Golf.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** I made this slide show. I fucked this one up pretty bad, I'll own that.

**Rachel:** [chortles]

**Griffin:** For seventy-seven years, Peter Pan Mini-Golf has been holding shit down, south of Town Lake, with its small-ass parking lot. [chuckles]

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** And its giant plastered dinosaur statues, and inexplicable BYOB policies.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You can drink, you can play mini golf, and Peter Pan is there. There's just a lot of aesthetic like symmetry happening that I really, really enjoy. Bonus points for being literally across the street from Butler Pitch and Putt, which is also a beer garden. So your opportunities to like improve your approach game while drinking, and then your short game while also drinking—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And then going over to Sandy's Hamburgers for a frozen custard, it's just like a perfect—

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** A perfect golf-filled afternoon. This one is not technically in Austin, but it was by living in Austin that I was given access to it. So, I would like to talk about the hottest, coolest time in Texas, Schlitterbahn.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** I love—

**Rachel:** Wait, can you—can you give me the...

**Griffin:** Sure, sure, sure. [sings] We're going to Schlitterbahn! Oo-way-oh! It's the hottest, coolest time in Texas!

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** You're welcome.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** I almost did as a segment how Dairy Queen can't make up its fuckin' mind on what it wants its Texas-based commercial jingle to be.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** Anyway, I love a water activity in that Texas summertime heat, whether it's casting off from Don's Fish Camp down on the San Marcos River...

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** With a—with a whole bottle of white wine decanted into a Nalgene bottle.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yes, yes.

**Griffin:** But—

**Rachel:** Yes!

**Griffin:** Fuckin' nothing beats Schlitterbahn, y'all. They have a water-propelled roller coaster slide, and a like infinite loop lazy river, and the scariest wave pool I've ever been in.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** And also like, five different swim-up bars.

**Rachel:** That is where Griffin and I had our first White Claw.

**Griffin:** That is true!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** Obviously, it changed everything for me.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Another bonus is you get to visit the big Buc-ee's on the way down there.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** Which does get its own carve out here, because Virginia just got its own Buc-ee's, its first Buc-ee's, back in June. But it is two hours away from us, and there's no way that the kolaches probably even exists there, so—

**Rachel:** Yeah, no, hundred percent.

**Griffin:** Special shout-out, that's... what a—what a frickin' drive! Hittin' Buc-ee's down to Schlitterbahn. Crazy, man.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Hey, let's extend our trip a good two to three days!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** We'll pull our kids out of school for the week!

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** We'll lose them forever in that wave pool.

**Griffin:** We'll lose them, yes, absolutely, we will. We did watch a kid go under for a bad amount of time on one of those slides, y'all.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Which I think is like a Schlitterbahn rite of passage, is saving a child's life.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh! [laughs]

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Yeah, that lazy river, you remember?

**Griffin:** It's like a—it's one of the lazy rivers, but it's like a downhill course, and then it has like, these little waterfalls you go over that splash down into these *whirlpools*!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh!

**Griffin:** That shoot—you see a kid go over the water slide just, *thloop*! Oh no!

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** [chortles]

**Griffin:** Feels great to save a kid, gang.

**Rachel:** It is true.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** What have you got next, babe?

**Rachel:** Okay, one of the things that I miss a lot about living here is when your grocery store takes care of you.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** I... I apologize for the image selection.

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** It was hard to find a great representative image of H-E-B Disaster Response.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That is not true! You could definitely have found something better than that.

**Griffin:** I feel safe with him!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** "He's gonna take good—what happened? What burned down? Don't—right this way. We've got all the flour tortillas you need."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** So, one of the last things that happened before we moved away, in 2022—

**Griffin:** Correct.

**Rachel:** Was the big freeze in Texas.

[audience exclaims]

**Griffin:** Correct response.

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** "Yeah... pretty bad." [chuckles]

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** I was eight months pregnant.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And we lost power and water to our house.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Rachel:** And it was very cold.

**Griffin:** To say the least, yeah, absolutely!

[audience chuckles]



**Rachel:** And then we left our house, because we found a hotel, and we came back, and our pipes had burst.

**Griffin:** Yeah...

**Rachel:** And flooded our master bathroom and bedroom.

**Griffin:** And another bath—it fucked up like a quarter of our—of our place, for sure. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** Yeah. And we... we were—we were doing the whole thing. We were melting snow so that we could flush our toilets. I mean, it was bleak. [titters]

**Griffin:** It was bad stuff.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] But you know who showed up?

**Griffin:** H-E-Buddy.

**Rachel:** [chortles] He said.

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] "Climb inside me! It's real warm!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** That's what he sounds like. You guys have never heard H-E-Buddy talk, but that's what he sounds like.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] There is—there is a story that I just like... I had kind of forgotten about, but when I was researching this—it's a story that happened in Leander, where a bunch of people were in H-E-B trying to stock up, and the power went out in the grocery store. And so, everybody is lining up, there's like twenty cashiers, the power is out, nobody knows how they're

gonna check out. And they just let everybody leave without paying with all the stuff in their carts.

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** And then they like, they verified the story on Twitter, but they like didn't turn that into like a big—

**Griffin:** A national news piece—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Yeah, for sure.

**Rachel:** Yeah. So, H-E-B has an emergency response team, and they have something they call their DRUs, or their Disaster Response Unit, which is a convoy of more than fifteen vehicles, which includes two mobile kitchens, water and fuel tankers. They're fully equipped with an H-E-B pharmacy mobile business services unit, which allows people to fill prescriptions, cash cheques and pay bills, and provide access to an ATM.

They're mobile kitchens, which have two forty-five foot long food preparation facilities, that are designed to serve up to six thousand meals per day. And are staffed with H-E-B employees, who are prepared to serve hot meals. It's incredible. There was a New York Times article in 2021, and there was a... a novelist and journalist who lives in Austin named Steven Harrigan, who said, quote, "It's like H-E-B is the moral center of Texas."

**Griffin:** [chuckles]

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Rachel:** He said, quote, "There seems to be in our state a lack of real leadership, a lack of real efficiency on the political level. But on the business level, when it comes to a grocery store, all of these things are in place."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** H-E-B should just make its own power grid, and you can—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** We'll run long extension cables, like a hive mind, from the nearest H-E-B.

**Rachel:** We have some good grocery stores in D.C., but nobody has helped us out when the power goes out.

**Griffin:** That's true. I do remember when Covid like first hit, and everyone was like, "Oh... oh, no." And H-E-B was like, "Don't worry, fam. What do you—what do you need?" And Randalls was like, "It's Mad Max: Fury Road."

**Rachel:** [chortles]

**Griffin:** "Everyone fuckin' get here fast! Oh, no, it's all gone!" Just kidding, Randalls was probably okay too.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** It was just the only other grocery store I can remember. [chuckles] I'd like to talk about, and I don't have like a huge eye for the arts, but I've always really, really enjoyed the Austin Studio Tour.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** It is because I don't have an eye for the arts that it was always such a great prospect for me, because you can really cram in a lot of art over the span of like one or two days.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm!

**Griffin:** They run the Austin Studio Tour for two weekends a year. It's coming up November 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, those weekends, this year, if you want to attend. And artists all across the city open up their studios and their galleries, and just invite people to come inside and see where they get to—where they do their stuff. And let them into this like super intimate look at the process, and also like sell them incredible works of art—

**Rachel:** Well, and that's what, I mean, people say when they go to galleries. When they leave, they're like, "Man, they really crammed it in." And that's like—

**Griffin:** [chuckles] They really crammed it in there.

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** That's like the nicest thing you can say, it's high-priced. [titters]

**Griffin:** Yeah, when I walk out of a museum, my rating is like, how crammed did I get in there? It really is like a great sort of primer every year, just like gaining this like rolling education of like what the art scene is and like what people are making, what it's like to work in an art studio, just learning about the like endless array of like mediums and styles. And it's just a nice cross section of local art and it's a great opportunity.

And I've seen this kind of done at other places we've been, in places we've lived, but never really on this scale. So, it's a really great opportunity. And I do also—I do also want to talk—my last thing tonight that I want to talk about is just a Titanic, monolithic figure that I miss a lot, even though the footprint isn't as large these days. And that is David Comey, the attorney—

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** [chuckles] There are so many attorneys in D.C.

**Griffin:** There are so many fuck—

**Rachel:** Just like everybody is an attorney!

**Griffin:** Everyone, everyone! And they don't want to know about your podcast.

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** We have no—if I got an automotive accident, hopefully not, but if I ever did, in D.C., no shortage of choices for legal representation. I can pretty much guarantee, none of 'em are going to be rockin' fuckin' corn dreads, that's for sure!

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** David Comey's billboards used to hang over—I didn't see it this time, so I don't know if they are gone, but they used to hang over the drive back that we would have from the airport, back into the city. And so when I would go on tour, or like when I was working at Polygon and I'd be gone for a week, and I would get back in town, and I would be greeted upon my return with that first—that familiar wave of cleansing dry heat that just sort of like purges all of your... your micro biomes and stuff off of you. [chuckles] But then also, his billboards, some of which professed, quote, "I may not look like an attorney, but it helps me sneak up on them." That's fucking crazy!

**Rachel:** [chortles]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** It was a balm for my soul. I felt like immediately this incredible sense of place, this sense of home. I tried to research David Comey to see what he was up to now, and it was difficult to do so, but every single like article comments or like Reddit thread, or anything I found about him, was full of people saying like, "Yeah, he used to manage my band. He's the nicest guy ever."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Or a lot of, "He whipped my ass at pickleball. He's fucking cool."

[audience chuckles]

**Rachel:** Oh my god.

**Griffin:** And this is one quote from a comment on one of his old commercials that said, "My grandma lived next to him. I fished in his pond." Fucking coolest!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** The coolest ever, David Comey. I don't know where you're at now, but I hope you—I hope you're doing well.

**Rachel:** Do we have time for one more? Or—

**Griffin:** Do you want to do one more?

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** We might want to—it's up to you, babe.

**Rachel:** I mean, this was—I just wanted to say, it's—man, I really miss having like a hundred restaurants and breweries that have playgrounds.

**Griffin:** It's so convenient!

[audience cheers]

**Rachel:** Yeah, it's unbelievable. It's not something that we can really find anywhere in D.C. I've googled it endlessly since we've moved there.

**Griffin:** Real estate is a bit tighter there.

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's the thing. So, Texas, there—unfortunately, a lot of places did not survive the pandemic, but the ones that do have the landscape. So, like Austin Beerworks, for example, opened up a 64-acre location that has a dog park and a disc golf course.

**Griffin:** Crazy.

[a few audience members cheer]

**Rachel:** Meanwhile, Brewing in South Austin has a playground, food trucks, a mini soccer pitch, a stage and a sand volleyball court.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** There was this article in Texas Monthly, by Richard Santos, who I believe used to be the executive director at Austin Bat Cave. But he gave an interview to Texas Standard and said, "You know, this past Easter Sunday, I was looking for an egg hunt for me and my five-year-old to go do. And there were eight different local breweries doing egg hunts."

**Griffin:** [guffaws]

[audience laughs]

**Rachel:** And I just missed that, man.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I missed that a lot.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I miss—I miss going to Home Slice, where they just have The Shire in their front yard, for some reason.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** Always lovely. I had one other thing that we don't really have time for, so maybe we just run down the list of just all of the many local businesses that we miss so very much, like BookPeople and Dragons' Lair and Toy Joy and Terra Toys, and H-E-B!

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** And the Chili's at 45<sup>th</sup> and Lamar.

[audience cheers loudly]

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I really, I genuinely like, more than any other place on Earth, Austin is the place that when I visit it, I feel like there is just too much to see in one trip. And what's really cool is like now our kids are older—we moved away when Henry was five. And it's really incredible to bring them back here, for a lot of reasons, but to take them to these places. We took Henry and Gus to Terra Toys yesterday, and Henry saw the big dragon bust thing that's like hanging up over the entrance, and started to talk about how nostalgic he was.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

[audience chuckles]

**Griffin:** And we went inside, and he was talking about being like nostalgic about the smell of Terra Toys. And like, genuinely, I got pretty choked up. And I think it's just so rad that like this is his hometown, and it's—and it's Gus' hometown too. Because it's like, I don't know, there's so much incredible stuff to do here, and so many incredible places to like take them back to, and see that sort of spark. It's really lovely. We miss you all tremendously, and thank you so much for coming out tonight and for having us back.

[audience cheers]



**Griffin:** I want to say 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 our episode description, I just said to a live audience of people. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** [chortles]

[audience laughs]

**Griffin:** A hyperlink, online. We have posters out in the lobby, that were designed by John Barlow, that kick ass. We signed a bunch of 'em. I believe we are sold out of the Paul Sabourin Memorial Canned Food Drive challenge coins. But if you do want to make a donation to Hope Food Pantry Austin, you can still do that out there as well. But thank you all so much for coming out and listening to our podcast.

[audience cheers]

**Griffin:** Is there anything else?

**Rachel:** Nope.

**Griffin:** Okay—

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** Bye!

**Rachel:** Bye!

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

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