

Wonderful! 394: Chit Chat Pit Pat

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hi, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful, it's a podcast where we talk about things that we like, that's good, that we're into. I had cool voice surgery, since the last episode. I went into the doctor, I said, "Fatten my cords." He said, "What?" I said, "Fatten them, so it gets deep and cool. Fatten my cords."

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: And so he did, he went in there and he made each one thick. Big, thick, sinewy. So, you can really hear 'em slap together.

Rachel: I mean, listeners of the show have heard this Griffin before.

Griffin: That was when I was sick. Right now, I'm not sick. I am the picture—

Rachel: Oh, it's just—

Griffin: I am the picture of health.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But I like so much how I sound when I'm sick, because I can get in that like, [sings in a deepened voice] "baby back ribs." Like really down in the dirt.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: So, I guess just like, how... how do you feel about—I didn't really—usually, when we have big surgical procedures, we'd like talk to each other about it first, but this was—I wanted it to be a surprise for our anniversary.

Rachel: Uh-huh. I mean, I appreciate that the recovery time was zero.

Griffin: It was zero recovery, yeah.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But I'm tough. I was like, "No anesthesia." I said—I went in there and I said, "Fatten my cords, and raw dog it."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And the doctor didn't really know like what any of that meant.

Rachel: Said, "I gotta get home in time to play with my kids and my wife, and nobody can know about it."

Griffin: Yeah, that's exactly right. So, this is me now. This is just how it's gonna sound from now.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Just kidding!

Rachel: You are sick.

Griffin: I am a little sick.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: This is show where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we are into. And I don't know, man, we're on that—we're on that Christmas creep now.

Rachel: Are we? Can we not be?

Griffin: You don't want to be?

Rachel: Can we get off the creep?

Griffin: We don't have to be on the creep if you don't want to.

Rachel: I'm not ready. I'm not ready.

Griffin: Yeah, no, I mean, no one's really ready.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's a busy time of year for families.

[both chuckle]

Griffin: Do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: Can you imagine being a radio DJ? Like did you ever think about if you were to pursue your dad's line of work—

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: The ability to just chit-chat for hours at a time—

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: About things that you really had no investment in personally?

Griffin: I mean, yes, I went to broadcast journalism school, and like—

Rachel: [chuckles] Did you guys practice your patter?

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, you kind of have to. There was—

Rachel: Like, "That's a nice new blazer, Jean!"

Griffin: There's a whole like radio track, right? There was... I mean, when I was going to school, it was when like internet journalism was a new like track—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That wasn't even really formalized, you couldn't really major in it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So, it was broadcast, print or radio, were the three, and—

Rachel: Uh-huh, that's—I think that's what it was like when I went to school too.

Griffin: And you had to do a little bit of—

Rachel: We had magazine.

Griffin: Oh, that's interesting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: There was probably a periodical sort of like branch of the print side. But I was broadcast and—but you had to do it all, right? So, I did a radio show, I produced a radio news show, I did pieces for a radio news show. And like, yeah, obviously that was like a thing I thought about, just because of—

Rachel: Your chit chat?

Griffin: Just my chit chat, my pit pat. As we call it in the radio business.

Rachel: [titters] Uh-huh, uh-huh. Would they pull you aside and say, "Hey, Griffin, great out there, super professional."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, "Really informed."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: "Your chit chat pit pat, though..."

Griffin: It felt like if you wanted to really focus on chit chat pit pat, you had to be a like sports commentator. And there were—there was like four positions for that. And also, I didn't like most sports or know anything about them.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: So, I ended up where I ended up. Was it a mistake? Yes.

Rachel: [chuckles] I would say no.

Griffin: Do you have a Small Wonder, though? Trying to change the subject on me, get me all distracted.

Rachel: I immediately thought of something, and then I'm trying to back away from it, but I think I'm just gonna lean into it.

Griffin: Oh, boy.

Rachel: And that is that you can buy hard-boiled eggs.

Griffin: You can just get 'em.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You don't have to get eggs and hard boil them yourself. You can just get hard-boiled eggs.

Rachel: [titters] There is a thing, for those of you that have tried to hard boil your own eggs, you know what I'm talking about.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But if you try and hard boil an egg that is too new, it is very difficult to get the peel off.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so, you have to wait to a certain point in the egg's life cycle to really have a successful hard boil experience.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then it takes some time, not a lot of time, but some time. And I want my hard-boiled eggs when I want 'em.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is something that I told you immediately when we first started dating.

Griffin: You really did.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I have a hard time with hard-boiled eggs, and seeing you making hard-boiled eggs, your little snack, without thinking of the Arrested Development bit.

Rachel: [chuckles] Anne.

Griffin: Where George Michael is describing how Anne like puts it in her mouth and then squirts a little packet of mayonnaise in there.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah. It's not a snack that you want to showcase, really—

Griffin: No.

Rachel: To a friend or a loved one.

Griffin: Uh-uh.

Rachel: But occasionally, I will buy myself a little bag of hard-boiled eggs, and I feel like it is the height of luxury.

Griffin: Yeah, no, I mean, I like an egg. I like a deviled egg. I don't really fuck with a hard-boiled egg that often, but I probably could. Like, I like the idea, right?

Rachel: Well, you gotta put like a little Cholula on it.

Griffin: You gotta put some stuff on it.

Rachel: Some salt and pepper.

Griffin: Spices. Sex it up. Physical: 100 is back, and we've only watched the first episode of it. It's called Physical: Asia, and it is a contest. They have eight teams, I believe, of six different athletes, from different countries around Asia. And Australia! There's an Australian team in there as well.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The Korean team has past competitors from Physical: 100, past seasons of Physical: 100. The Japanese team, I think, has two people from Final Draft.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Griffin: Which was like that kind of like Physical: 100 analog, that was like all retired athletes. Including, I think his name is Etoy. He's a baseball player, he was like our favorite dude.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It also has Manny Pacquiao, who is... not a great dude, but you know, another sort of recognized—

Rachel: But like, in a show of people from different countries in very specialized sports, it is wild to recognize someone.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. And we—the end of the first episode kind of sets up the beginning of the first challenge. And guys, just the production value is like fucking off the chain, through the roof, insane.

Rachel: So cinematic.

Griffin: Yeah. The first trial, the first quest, they call them, is like a king of the hill, get on top of these four like cylinders, on top of this mountain of sand. And there's this low-hanging fake sun in the room, that's like illuminating everything. So when they all kind of crash together, you just see their silhouettes, and it's so cinematic and so fuckin' lit. I'm very, very excited to watch more of it. Our cup runneth o'er a bit between that and Survivor, and the Love Is Blind reunion, and watching the Blues lose on our television—

Rachel: [titters] Yeah.

Griffin: Every night. Six game losing streak.

Rachel: We never finished Only Murders, we still have that.

Griffin: Still watching Only Murders. But you got it—how do you find the time when you gotta watch the Blues lose every other night?

Rachel: Yeah, and you only have two hours before bedtime.

Griffin: You have two hours before bedtime. It takes the Blues about two hours to lose. Last night, it took the Blues like almost three hours to lose.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And it's like, come on, guys, I got places to be!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: A tough time. Tough time out there for Blues Nation. Thomas and Neighbors both injured, not loving that. Not loving the six game losing streak, not loving that either. But you know, you gotta watch 'em when they're not doing so great, so that it feels good when they do do great.

Rachel: Well, and they have to break your heart.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: To unbreak it.

Griffin: Sure. They gotta unbreak my heart.

Rachel: That's what they say.

Griffin: That is what they said. Tony Braxton? Is that who sang Unbreak My Heart?

Rachel: I was not prepared with an answer to that question.

Griffin: Well, now I have to look it up. [sings] "Unbreak My Heart. Say you'll love—" Tony Braxton! Fuck yes. Still got it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Today, I would like to talk to everyone, my segment, I go first this week, I'm gonna talk about a game series that's been dormant for a little while, but that I have always really, really loved, and have been thinking about a lot lately, as I've been getting into like retro game handheld stuff. Are you familiar at all, Rachel, with Professor Layton? Professor Layton and his series of puzzle games.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Okay. So, I didn't think you had any familiarity with Layton, but I do think you would dig it, because it is like the most like talented and gifted class kids-ass game ever. It is about Professor Layton, who is an archeologist and a professor, and also kind of a detective. And he has a little

kid sidekick named Luke Triton. He's basically Indiana Jones, if Indiana Jones was like British and super buttoned-up, and like extremely polite.

And in each game in the series, Layton and Luke travel to some location, usually like a town or village, where everything is just kind of weird. And they solve some big, grand mystery that unfolds over the course of the game. And while they do that, you are also solving like over 100 brain teasers. Like, true classic—what was the name of those things, they would sell them at Cracker Barrel, and they were like long, sort of a card stock thing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And they would have just like a bunch of brain teasers on 'em.

Rachel: I know what you're talking about.

Griffin: It's basically like that in video game form, with this like larger wrapper of like, you're solving a mystery about some strange locale as you go. So, you go to these strange locations, you meet all the inhabitants, you like sort of click around the village to like move between different locations. You can like click on little things that look weird and find hint coins that you can use to like help you out with the different brain teasers as you go. But the brain teasers are really, really great. They run the gamut between like, you know, language puzzles, math puzzles, geometry, just old-fashioned riddles, and like everything in between.

Rachel: Are you playing this like on your phone? Or...

Griffin: So, the original game came out on the Nintendo DS, which was dual screen handheld. Which was great because you'd have like, you know, a little writing area for you to write your answers. And then the top screen—

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: You would have like the puzzle and stuff on it. But then they were adapted. You can play, I think, most of them on your phone. They've come out to iOS. And they're really, really just super charming, really lovely little

games, that are just kind of—challenge you to pick up and play a few little brain teasers, and then you can put it back down just as easily.

All the puzzles were designed by a Japanese psychologist named Akira Tago, who was a professor himself, and an author of a series of puzzle compilation books in Japan called *Atama no Taisou*, which translates to 'head gymnastics,' which is very good. He sounds like a very interesting dude. He passed away in 2016, which is about when the Professor Layton games stopped coming out.

But the games were all designed by—they were all created by one of my favorite Japanese game developers called Level-5, which has made entries in like a bunch of my favorite RPG like franchises, like *Dragon Quest* and *Dark Cloud*. But Professor Layton is really singular, because it, first of all, is like of this genre that the series more or less created.

Like, puzzle—brain teaser, puzzle mystery games was not necessarily a thing before the Layton series came out. They have a really distinct art style that I actually learned the name of for this segment, and I'm not going to do a good job of saying it, but *ligne claire*, or clear line, which was a style that was developed by Hergé, a Belgian comic strip artist who created *Tintin*. So, if you've seen *Tintin* or anything with *Tintin*—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You kind of know the style of the Professor Layton games. Very flat colors, not a lot of like contrast or like hatching. Very, very clear lines, as the name would suggest. It looks... it looks really, really nice. And like old Nintendo DS games, the hardware wasn't like strong enough to have like cut scenes and like a lot of stuff that you would see in like PC games or, you know, Xbox games, or whatever.

But these Layton games would have these like animated cut scenes that looked like out of a French like animated film. The soundtracks for these games are all really, really unique. They feature a lot of French and Spanish kind of influences. A lot of upbeat waltzes and tangos, with like accordions and—

Rachel: How many of these games are there?

Griffin: I believe there have been eight.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: The first three are kind of like a trilogy set, that all came out on DS. And then the next three, I believe, came out on the 3DS, which were prequels, showing you how like—

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: Professor Layton and Luke like met and got into the like brain teaser puzzle solving business.

Rachel: Is this like a Back to the Future, like old man, young boy situation?

Griffin: No, they—well, eh, kind of? Kind of. I mean, it's more... I mean, it's sort of like Sherlock and...

Rachel: Watson?

Griffin: Watson.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But Watson is like a little boy, right?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's really, it's... Professor Layton is such a great character. He's a really, really great character, because he is like... He spends all these games like tutoring Luke in the ways of like being a puzzle solver—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And like in the ways of critical thinking. And shit will happen where like they'll come across a dead body, and they'll be like, "Oh my god,

Professor, what is that?" And Layton will be like, "This reminds me of a puzzle!" And then you have to do a brain teaser.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But he's also like... a gentleman, and he spends a lot of the games like teaching Luke how to be gentlemanly.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: And how to—how to like... But then like something will happen and shit will pop off, and now Professor Layton has to like get into a fencing duel with like a—with like a Dracula or something.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's like, oh, shit, okay, this kind of makes sense. He's just a really great character because he is so like straight-laced, and you know, pinkies up, tea sipping sort of intellectual. But then it's like, you don't doubt that he's very good at fencing, because he's a very smart, fancy man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So, of course he would be good at fencing a Dracula. That makes sense to me. I just really love these games. There have been so many of them, and so many of them are old enough now that I can go back to them and play them, and I won't remember a single one of the brain teasers—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is really satisfying. Because there's something like 120 to like 150 brain teasers in each game. And there's been a lot at this point—

Rachel: You haven't really said what you mean by brain teaser.

Griffin: Brain teaser is, I mean, okay, so, it can be anything from...

Rachel: Is it like a word problem?

Griffin: There'll be word problems, there will be mazes, there will be... untangle these strings, right, to see like who goes with what.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Or... there's a family with five kids. This one is twice as old as this one, who's seven years older than—

Rachel: Yeah! Okay, that's what I was picturing.

Griffin: Or this guy lives in a blue house, but he also owns a lawn mower, but he doesn't live next to somebody in a yellow house. I mean, literally anything, right? There's 120 brain teasers in the first game. So like, it's every imaginable discipline of puzzle or riddle that you could possibly think of. And it is because they are so varied that like, I don't know, you will hit ones that are like... Like I suck shit at spatial reasoning puzzles, so ones where it's like, here's half a pyramid and some blocks are missing. How many blocks would you need to complete the pyramid? Like...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it really, really does feel like you are taking... not an SAT test necessarily, but like maybe a placement—

Rachel: And if you get it wrong, what happens?

Griffin: So, you get a score for how you solve each puzzle. The scores are called picarats. And it's like purely a like, I mean, an inconsequential score thing. So, if you get the puzzle wrong, you lose how many picarats you earn for getting the puzzle correct the first time. But I don't think there's any like, you don't get like the good ending if you get like enough picarats. It's just like, again, a way to challenge and punish overachievers—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Who got placed in talented and gifted classes in school, and feel this need, this compulsion to get everything right. I just, I really, really love this

series. There's really nothing else quite like it out there. The last—the first Professor Layton game came out in 2007, the last one came out in 2017. So, it's been a minute since a new Layton game has come out. Again, I think probably some of that is because the... what they called the Puzzle Master, Akira Tago, passed away in 2016.

But there is a new one coming out on Switch 2 next year, called Professor Layton and The New World of Steam, which I'm going to be all over. But I just really like these games, and I really think—if you've never played them, they are on your phone now, and they are so charming and so like... I don't know, it's very compelling to like pick up a puzzle and have to finish it.

Rachel: Yeah! No, that sounds like my jam.

Griffin: And there's a lot of them out there. So, that's Professor Layton. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Great.

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

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[break]

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[break]

Griffin: What are you discussing today?

Rachel: Okay, my thing this week is a thing that we may have to explain to some of our listeners, depending on their age.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: But that's not anything new for us,

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And it is DVD extras.

Griffin: Oh my god, yeah, dude.

Rachel: I was thinking about this the other day, because you were talking about Wayne's World.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So then we went and watched Wayne's World. And I was thinking—

Griffin: Fucking slaps, by the way! Still so good.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Good call, us.

Rachel: Still very good.

Griffin: Really, really, really, rips ass. So funny.

Rachel: And I was talking to you about how the DVD had this like cool menu, where it was set up like... another thing that we might have to explain, but like the guide is on like a cable television, where you can like scroll through the listing of channels.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And what's on at what time.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But they would list the like extras that way. And there used to be, with any DVD that came out, just all of these little extra features, usually like in the style or art of the film itself.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, there would be like audio commentary, which would be like the director or different actors kind of talking about the film, as it was playing in the background.

Griffin: And that's still definitely—like, if you rent a movie, if you buy a movie on like your Apple TV, like you can, most of the time—

Rachel: Sometimes. I don't think most of the time?

Griffin: Sometimes, you can—

Rachel: I don't think most of the time it's true.

Griffin: Well, I think it depends on the—it depends on the flick, but—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But yeah, and then... you know, just other little things. Sometimes there will be like a making of, what they would call like a featurette, which would be like a—like a 20 minute thing in itself, that was just all about like making the movie. And that, yeah, DVD and Blu-ray, that used to be like a thing that would be—it would kind of motivate you to go out and get it, because if you really like particularly like an old movie, you would go like look at the back and see like, okay, well, can I see Tom Hanks talk about Castaway while I'm watching Castaway?

Griffin: For sure.

Rachel: And I always used to love that stuff.

Griffin: Oh my god, me too! The amount of work—it's such a short-lived period in like cinema history, where DVDs were—so much work went into the DVD menus, to like make it... I don't know, design it to look kind of like in-world sometimes, or to like hide little things and like fill it out.

Rachel: Yeah! The Simpsons seasons used to have like Easter eggs, where if you like would click on the right thing or do the right sequence, you could find like additional content.

Griffin: Yeah. I remember the Lost in Space DVD had a bunch of those. That was I think the first DVD I ever bought, was for the Lost in Space movie, with Matt LeBlanc and Lacey Chabert.

Rachel: [chuckles] But I do remember, and your dad probably did this too, but there was this thing of like my dad being like, you know, "I got X DVD, do you want to watch the director's commentary tonight?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And we would just sit quietly. [chuckles] While the silent film like played, and we'd listen to like directors be like, "Yeah, so for this one, originally, we were gonna go with a green shirt, but we noticed that the character in the time period would not have had a green shirt." And I was like, tell me more!

Griffin: I never—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I never—the first time I can remember watching commentary through the whole like runtime of a DVD was The Goonies, because they got—

Rachel: Oh, yeah!

Griffin: They got the Goonies cast back together—

Rachel: Right.

Griffin: To like talk about—and it was, I mean, really, really, really fuckin' illuminating stuff. At one point—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Sean Astin had to leave in the middle of the commentary to go do Lord of the Rings stuff.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And so, I think it was Corey Feldman got out a little Samwise Gamgee action figure he had brought with him to put up in Sean Astin's place. It's really, really, really good, like next-level good shit.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: But I didn't really have the patience, or mostly interest, to like sit through and not really watch a movie while I let the cast and director sort of talk about it.

Rachel: There are some kind of like famous commentaries. Not all of these are ones I'm familiar with, but—so, for example, with *Spinal Tap*, they got Harry Shearer, Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, to do the commentary. And they start doing the commentary as their characters—

Griffin: Oh, that's good.

Rachel: While watching the film.

Griffin: God, that's good.

Rachel: Apparently, they—when they did the commentary for *Tropic Thunder*, Robert Downey Jr. like slid into his character, as—

Griffin: Yeah. What about, I'm curious—I would actually love to do the *Waiting for Guffman* commentary, if such a thing exists.

Rachel: Yeah, I'm not... I'm not sure? Christopher Guest, you know, like he's not... he's not a laugh a minute, usually, when he's like giving interviews and talk—you know, like, he's not—

Griffin: Yeah, but I'm still—like, I don't know, that movie has—is such a big part of the canon of my like theater experience growing up.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I don't know, I've never really learned a whole lot about the making of it.

Rachel: One of the like more famous ones, as I was researching this, is Armageddon. It's like notorious, because Ben Affleck was invited, and he just like pokes holes in the film throughout.

Griffin: Like the plot?

Rachel: Yeah. Like suggest that he asks all these questions, like why would they get a bunch of drillers? Like, why would drillers be more qualified—

Griffin: Oh, man...

Rachel: To take out a—[laughs]

Griffin: You fuckin' dummy! It's because it's easier to teach drillers to be astronauts than to teach astronauts to be drillers. They fuckin' say that in the flick, Ben! How are you gonna get your big break, Ben? Armageddon and then poke holes in it.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: With a thing they say explicitly.

Rachel: Apparently, all of this like commentary as a like, a purchase item, was started with Criterion Collection, unsurprisingly.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And I guess with the Criterion Channel, you can still access it. As far as streaming services, obviously, this is not something that's easy to get.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But the Criterion Channel supports audio commentaries on a lot of their films, which I didn't know—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Existed. But the first one was a Criterion Collection laser disc of King Kong.

Griffin: Wow. Who did they get to—wait, the new King Kong or the old King Kong?

Rachel: Old.

Griffin: Who did they get to talk about old King Kong?

Rachel: So, 1933 King Kong, they got a film preservationist at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, okay. Okay.

Rachel: In this article I read off of Tedium, they listed some of the texts, and it's this film preservationist saying, "I'm going to take you on a lecture tour of King Kong, as you watch the film. The LaserDisc technology offers us this opportunity, and we feel it's rather unique, the ability to switch back and forth between the soundtrack and this lecture track." [chuckles]

Griffin: I... I don't—I don't know if you feel the same way, I imagine you do, and I imagine a lot of people in our sort of age bracket do, I have so much nostalgia for that era of like wonderment, of what digital video discs are capable—like, you show me any kind of like intro animation of like a laser fuckin' [spoofs a laser sound] *bdjshh* across a CD.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And just like the future comes out of it. And the future is, you know, Mike Myers and Dana Carvey talking about like the making of Wayne's World 2. It really, really... I don't know, that's a good future. That's like a great future that they found and were promoting.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And then the future like went way beyond that, way fast.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: But for a perfect little moment, it was like, "Here on this disc, the future is waiting."

Rachel: Yeah, well, the idea that physical media was still going to be a thing, and always going to be a thing, you know?

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Rachel: But now, we have this futuristic-looking, you know, physical media.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, the question always is like, why, with streaming platforms, why aren't they just including this?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And the suggestion might just be that, you know, with contracts and licensing, it may be an issue. There's like this—there's an article on The Verge that says like, "There's 80 different parties that own 80 different facets of this. If the title is a Focus Features film, and they're trying to figure out who owns the director's commentary that they did 20 years ago, and they're trying to figure out how to figure out how to incorporate it, you're going to run into some rights issues."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, that's part of it. There are some platforms that have started releasing audio commentary tracks as podcasts.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: I guess Netflix did this recently with Glass Onion, with Rian Johnson. But there's some syncing issues, you know, between the podcast and the film.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it was a kind of frustrating experience, apparently, for a lot of people.

Griffin: It doesn't seem like it would be that hard to like... Different platforms have different ways of like handling this. Like, if you buy a movie on Apple TV, it like has a splash screen before it starts where you can choose like bonus features or whatever, if it has any.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But like on Netflix, it seems like you could just choose an audio track—

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: That would be the director's commentary?

Rachel: That was the argument I saw, like if they—if they have a film in like five different languages, why couldn't you choose audio commentary as one—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I think it's, again, it's like a rights issue.

Griffin: Well, and it's also like a... I don't know, a platform issue. Like, Netflix doesn't have that splash screen situation, so like—and neither does most of the other streaming platforms, so like, why would you make that stuff, if it's not going to be available? Yeah, it's a fuckin' mess.

Rachel: I will say, also, another thing, apparently, if you search on Spotify, some users have taken it upon themselves to upload director's commentary. So, you can find like Superbad and Scream, and Do the Right Thing.

Griffin: Oh, man, I think I've listened—I think I actually did watch the Superbad—I think Bill Hader—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Is on the Superbad commentary. That and Anchor Man, I definitely, definitely watched with commentary.

Rachel: Yeah! I mean, that's the thing, like when you have these films with these like really amazing actors, the opportunity to sit for like an hour and a half and listen to them talk about the movie? Like, that's incredible.

Griffin: All the Judd Apatow ones were great, because the bonus features had, I think it was called like Riffamrama, or something like that?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Where they would just show—

Rachel: Do one line over and over.

Griffin: Yeah, they would do one line with a different punch line, like over and over again. Fuckin' Anchor Man, they made so much of that movie that they packaged a special version of it, that I think was like a Best Buy exclusive DVD?

Rachel: Yeah. [titters]

Griffin: That was a completely different fuckin' film!

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: I feel like I maybe dreamed this or something, but it was like a totally different plot, totally different ending.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it was a Best Buy exclusive DVD, it was so strange.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, I think that's what—I mean, you know, there are a lot of people in our lives that are still holding on to a lot of these like Blu-ray and DVD versions, and a lot of it is because of that.

Griffin: Right, yeah.

Rachel: You know, like it's hard to get rid of that, knowing that like you might not ever see it again.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: And it's such a shame, because like that stuff doesn't have to go away, just because of the transition from physical to digital media.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like, there's so many ways to preserve that stuff, there's so many ways to keep doing it.

Rachel: I think it's—I mean, a lot of it is probably like a clear financial reason of like, you can't really track whether adding the audio commentary... I mean, I guess maybe you could. Like, is that really adding value? Like, are you getting more hits because of the fact that you added that, knowing that you paid a bunch more to get actors to sit down and do it?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? Like, I don't know.

Griffin: I mean, it's also complicated stuff of like, what do you own? Like, what do you own in the digital... in your digital movie collection?

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Because it's not going to move around with you forever, so like having this packaged thing—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If that package doesn't work—

Rachel: But those—

Griffin: If you move it to another platform, then—

Rachel: Those DVDs used to cost more.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: You know? Like you could buy just the film for like 10 bucks, or you could get like the special bonus version for like 20, that had all this extra stuff.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? I don't know.

Griffin: I wish—we purged all of our DVDs, I think, at this point. Like we got rid of basically everything.

Rachel: Yeah, I feel like we put some in a little zipper CD case.

Griffin: Maybe.

Rachel: But maybe that's not true.

Griffin: I wish I would have held on to some of that stuff. I wish I would have held on to like some of the movies I knew like, oh, these DVDs have like really great shit on them.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Not that I think I'd ever watch them again, now that I think about it.

Rachel: Yeah, because we don't even really have a DVD player?

Griffin: No, I think I have a PS3 somewhere still in my office closet.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good one. You want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Essie says, "My Small Wonder is untranslatable words, things that have one single word for them in one language, but not in any/most others. The one I'm currently enjoying is from my native language of Finnish, where we have the term 'ruska,' which means the phenomenon of leaves turning colors in the autumn. The ruska has been very beautiful this year." I like that a lot. I do like—

Rachel: Yeah, me too.

Griffin: It seems very convenient to have one word for that. Chase says, "Hey, just felt like reporting a Small Wonder—" I like "reporting" as the active verb there.

Rachel: Yeah! Thinking about we have all these like people on the ground.

Griffin: Our folks in the field. Chase—

Rachel: Sending us the top stories.

Griffin: Yes. Chase says, "My Small Wonder is when you open a bag of tortilla chips, and every chip is a full-size chip, no breakage in transportation, full dipability."

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: We got a—we got a bag of lime... a hint of lime chips that—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: These are the biggest, wholest tortilla chips I've—like I'm struggling to get through these things in like three bites. There's so big.

Rachel: I haven't even gotten in there yet?

Griffin: Oh my god, they're huge. You could build a little sailboat for a mouse with these things.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's it, 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. Thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great shows they've got popping over there. We are doing Candenights, live in Huntington, again, December 6th. You can get tickets for that at bit.ly/candenights2025.

You can also get a streaming ticket. We're going to be putting the video on demand up, I believe, on December 19th. We're going to be in the live chat for that, when that airs. It's a really, really wonderful show, wonderful time and for a wonderful cause, because all the proceeds go directly to Harmony House, which works to end homelessness in the Huntington, West Virginia area.

We've worked with them a lot, it's really great organization. Two book things, I've got to Choose Your Own Adventure book coming out March 10th. It's called The Stowaway, it's a sci-fi, outer space Choose Your Own Adventure book. And you can pre-order that at bit.ly/griffinstowaway. I'm very excited for it.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And I'm just very excited for it to be out there. And then in July, The Adventure Zone: Story and Song, the final Adventure Zone TAZ: Balance graphic novel adaptation, written by all of us, and illustrated by Carey Pietsch, is going to be coming out. We revealed the cover for that a couple weeks ago, and you can pre-order it now at theadventurezonecomic.com. I remembered all those URLs without looking at my phone.

Rachel: You really did.

Griffin: I'm fuckin' locked in right now.

Rachel: You really did.

Griffin: Dialed in. So, please consider pre-ordering that. The pre-orders really, really, super-duper help us out. And I don't know, you're gonna want to read this book. It's gonna be—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm usually not one to... I eat a lot of humble pie, it's one of my favorite foods. But this book's gonna absolutely kick your ass, and I'm so fuckin' excited for it.

Rachel: Yeah, it's one of—like pre-ordering is one of those things where you think like, "Oh, it's gonna be so far from now. Like, why would I do it now?" But then it's also like, "Well, I know I'm gonna get it."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then that way, I don't have to think about it.

Griffin: And it helps us in like the back, the sales end of thing—the business end of things.

Rachel: Yeah, it's—you're creating hype.

Griffin: Yes! Please. That's it. Thank you so much for listening, hope you had a great and very scary Halloween, and we'll be back with a new episode next week. And hopefully, I'll be coming at you from just a different register entirely.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: What if I got sick in a way that made my voice get like really high? That could be fun. I don't know what that would look like, but... And maybe you could try something out new next week? We've gotten some feedback like, "Rachel's voice is always the same pitch. What's going on?"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Why does—

Rachel: I feel like I have been ill when we have recorded and had a different voice?

Griffin: Not—but almost never. You're so—your constitution's so fuckin' rock solid.

Rachel: I have the immune system of, I don't know, like an ICU nurse or something?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I don't know, it's remarkable.

Griffin: I have the immune system of a four-year-old boy.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Which is appropriate, because we have one of those.

Rachel: Here's my theory. I have worked out in the world for a very long time—

Griffin: Not me.

Rachel: And you have been working from home exclusively for, gosh, I don't know—

Griffin: From my hermetically sealed... dork chamber!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Bye!

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

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