

Wonderful! 405: A Celebration of Corporate Food Interests

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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 our show! It's called Wonderful! It is a podcast. It usually lasts for about 30 to 35 minutes. We are married, and we end up every episode talking about things we like, that's good, that we're into. A podcast is like a radio program.

Rachel: Griffin found out that we have a lot of robot listeners and—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: He wanted to give them a concise summary so that they could make their—

Griffin: Well, they get confused, don't they?

Rachel: Tabulations.

Griffin: They get confused, don't they? Because you think these guys have got it all figured out, they've been programmed and they can pull from the World Wide Web. And these guys—

Rachel: Like, "These two people have the same name, they must be brother and sister." No—

Griffin: They don't understand—but they do—

Rachel: No.

Griffin: They assume that, and then you can't get 'em off of it!

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: Have you seen these videos?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Have you—have you seen the—have you seen these videos where people ask an AI like how many Rs are in the word "raspberry?" And they just can't do it! They simply can't do it.

Rachel: Because they can't count or—

Griffin: They're like, "Two, definitely." And then you're like, "Spell it." And they spell it and you're like, "So, you heard you say the R three times?" And they're like, "No, actually, it is two." So, once these guys get stuck on something—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: You cannot shake them off.

Rachel: Yeah, or like, is the lady one his mom? Because she talks about being a mom.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So maybe she's his mom?

Griffin: And he acts—and sometimes he has a sort of boyish way about him.

Rachel: That is true. That's your brand, though.

Griffin: When it pulls it off of the web from the cloud—

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: It does sort of big generalizations. And one that people have made about me in the past is that I have a boyish way about me.

Rachel: I know, you do.

Griffin: Well, then you're not—I don't think that's true anymore.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, I'm pushing 40, we've got two kids.

Rachel: I think you still do, you're kind of a stinker!

Griffin: This is really surprising stuff—

Rachel: I'm not—that is not a negative thing!

Griffin: It's not a negative thing to be a *stinker*?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Because it has the word "stink" right there.

Rachel: You're mischievous! But in a—in a—

Griffin: You're helping reinforce this for the—for the robots and androids.

Rachel: [chuckles] Okay, if we're gonna litigate this, you are and continue to be on every episode of your flagship podcast, My brother, My brother and Me, the "babiest brother."

Griffin: First of all, my flagship podcast is 'Til Death Do Us Blart.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Second of all, that's a comparator against two other adult men in their 40s.

Rachel: And wouldn't you say, though, you've lived your whole life in comparison to your two older brothers?

Griffin: Absolutely, I have.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't have a leg to stand on. Do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't give a fuck if AI doesn't know anything—

Rachel: Did I ruin the vibe?

Griffin: No, the vibe is what it is.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: We've been trapped inside of our house with our kids for... 100 days? 200 days.

Rachel: Yeah. We went out into the world on Saturday, because we knew it would be our last—

Griffin: You're right, we did. We went ham. We went to a lot of places.

Rachel: Yes, because we were like, this is it for us.

Griffin: But then it was—that was it.

Rachel: But yeah, then it was actually it.

Griffin: Not so much the snow as much as how the snow froze, and then unfroze and then froze, then unfroze and then froze again.

Rachel: And will continue to—

Griffin: And will continue to do that, forming a solid wall of rime that has just absolutely made it impossible to go get anywhere.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So, we've been—we've made about 6000 blanket forts, and it's really sort of weighing—Rachel informed me literally seconds before we started recording that DCPS has gone ahead and canceled school for tomorrow.

Rachel: Which is today, if you're listening—

Griffin: Which is today, we're just sort of staring down the barrel of another one. So, the mental—the vibe is what it's gonna be!

Rachel: Can I make an observation very quickly?

Griffin: Sure thing!

Rachel: And I was having this conversation with some of their mom friends via text message, which is, how come we don't know the criteria for snow day?

Griffin: Dude...

Rachel: How come this is not published anywhere? How come like the district has not said if it's X number of degrees for X hours during the day, then you can expect your school to be closed. Like, so I can—

Griffin: It would be helpful.

Rachel: I can sit at home and look like, okay, you know what? Probably out through Friday. And then I know. Instead of like a small child, sitting in front of, you know, the television.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Wondering like is my name gonna roll across the chiron, and so I know I don't have school. Still!

Griffin: Boy howdy, I feel like you dated yourself a little bit there. I don't know that anyone still does it that way.

Rachel: No, no, no, I'm saying—

Griffin: Watching the chirons.

Rachel: I'm saying it harkens back.

Griffin: Yeah. It does harken back to that, you're right. I don't think these boys are ever going back to school.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Again, a Game of Thrones-esque solid fucking wall, two foot thick of ice, un-budging!

Rachel: With no day in the forecast suggesting that—

Griffin: Above 20.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: No fuckin' way. Crazy, guys! Not even that fun to play in! Because you go out and you can walk on top of it like you're Legolas and you're like, "That's cool." But then you're like, "Let's make a snowball." And then you reach down and you break all your fingers, because it's, again, just a solid rock wall, just solid sheet.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: This is a real glasses half full Small Wonder.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: And it is the fact that we—there is a routine now where Small Son, I will get in bed, lie next to him, and sometimes, at least back when we had school, he would be tired enough to kind of drift off. But the past few days, it has—he has ordered a snack from bed.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Our children always say, "What are the options?" [chuckles]

Griffin: Guys... not many things are like a dark mirror that is held up in front of our own sort of parenting... let's call them what they are, failures, than, "What are my options?" What are your options?

Rachel: So, we have to, like a waiter, recite the specials, which are literally the same every day. Like I very intentionally keep our house stocked full of things that we know our kids will eat.

Griffin: "The Jimmy Dean's English sausage muffins are quite good today, sir!"

Rachel: "We have a Cheez-It, both in standard flavor and in cheddar Jack, which I know you don't eat, but I would like to let you know is still available." [chuckles]

Griffin: Cheddar Jack cheese, it's fucked, by the way.

Rachel: It's an intense flavor.

Griffin: It is, but I'm an intense guy. [chuckles]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Is your Small Wonder that our kid doesn't sleep and wants snacks?

Rachel: No, our—my Small Wonder is that... I don't know, there's something kind of charming to me about the fact that it will be like 8:45, and he is in

bed, and he will place an order for delivery. And I will have to pad downstairs and get a little bowl and put a bunch of veggie straws in it and carry it back to him, and he will crunch through them in bed. [chuckles] And then sometimes immediately fall asleep after.

Griffin: Yeah, sometimes it's just the missing piece.

Rachel: It's just kind of one of those things that I do not enjoy now, but I can tell I will think of fondly years from now.

Griffin: Yeah. I'm gonna say, gosh, Henry has been absolutely tearing through a series of Animal Crossing manga, official—officially licensed products. I don't know if they're by the same sort of—I don't think they're the same creator of the Kirby manga that he also kind of tore down. But I don't know, man, I guess just the whole kind of ecosystem of Nintendo manga adaptations, it's so far removed from anything I ever sort of like—I don't even know where I would have gotten something like that as a child.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I guess sort of just sort of published as a weekly strip in my Nintendo Power magazine.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Which was actually monthly, so... But man, it's so cute and charming and—

Rachel: Yeah, he has a little light above his bed, and when I'm going downstairs to get Gus his evening snack—

Griffin: You see it on and know he's tearing through those things.

Rachel: Yeah, I'll see a little light on and I just picture him like all snuggled up, reading.

Griffin: Reading his manga.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You go first this week!

Rachel: I do.

Griffin: What have you got ready for me?

Rachel: Well, ready is generous.

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Again, folks, we have a good, I don't know, hour and a half long window where we are able to record this podcast for you. So, coming in hot off the presses is Rachel McElroy!

Rachel: It was—it was one of those things I thought of and then was instantly like, this is what I'm doing. And then kind of thought, well, I'll find a couple good articles, and then I'll have enough, because it's just that rich of a topic.

Griffin: Excellent.

Rachel: And that is the great cola wars of the 1980s.

Griffin: Yeah, sure! It's so cute, I think, that you—that you sort of said they began and ended in that decade. It definitely I feel like is still a pressing concern.

Rachel: Well, no, I think what is happening is I am reading from an article on history.com—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: That kind of dates it as that time frame.

Griffin: History is not—.com is not allowed to talk about stuff now. So, a lot of the times they—

Rachel: Yeah. It doesn't become history until some kind of technology makes it...

Griffin: Obsolete.

Rachel: Obsolete.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That's the rule I just came up with.

Griffin: That's a good rule. I think there's probably a lot of anthropologists that would agree with that.

Rachel: Okay, so Coke and Pepsi. I think what brought me here is I was thinking about like corporate rivalries and how like kind of funny they are from the outside, but how clearly like life or death they are for the people like in the business.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And like we get to kind of be entertained by their like efforts to impress us.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And they create this very like intense divide that you wouldn't really even be aware of.

Griffin: Yeah, I learned the full scope of this during Munch Squad, during like the chicken sandwich wars—

Rachel: The chicken sandwich—mm-hm.

Griffin: Of just like, wow, guys, it's not that serious. No one gives a flying fuck, Church's Chicken, I guarantee you.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I'm so glad you're ready to go to bat, to die on this hill.

Rachel: And here's the thing, I don't know that I would feel inclined to make a decision, but they really force you into that.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because if I were to ask you right now, Coke or Pepsi, you would say?

Griffin: Coke.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Diet Coke. Coke Zero, probably. But that's just because Pepsi sucks. But Pepsi like, as a company like, they make Mountain Dew, and that's good.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So like, everybody can do their own—everybody's got their strengths.

Rachel: What I thought was interesting was that there was a period of time, particularly in this 1980s period, where Pepsi was the winner.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like was leading the field. So just for a very quick background, so Coca Cola started in Georgia, 1886. Pepsi started in North Carolina, 1898. So just like—

Griffin: 12 year head start is significant, I think.

Rachel: Mm-hm. As you may may recall for—I don't know that we've talked about this or if I've heard this, or I just feel like this is common knowledge, but Pepsi Cola used to be Brad's Drink. [chuckles]

Griffin: Brad's Drink, yeah, for sure.

Rachel: Okay, so—

Griffin: Until one day, a guy named—a guy not named Brad drank it, and they were like, "Well, fuck..."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "It can't be Brad and Mark's drink? Let's call it Pepsi."

Rachel: Yeah. Pepsi was, of course, his middle name. [chuckles]

Griffin: Uh-huh. "I'm Brad Pepsi Jenkins."

Rachel: Okay, so Coke started like the Santa Claus ads in like 1931.

Griffin: Dude, I was thinking about this in the shower today. I was thinking— you know what I had—I was taking my shower and—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is not a joke. I was taking a shower, and then all of a sudden, in my head appeared like a bolt of lightning. [sings] Santa packs are coming. Santa packs are coming. Santa packs are coming.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Which is like their commercial for when they had the Santa packs of the Coca Cola drink.

Rachel: Oh! I don't—I don't—I wouldn't be able to recall that unless you had just told me.

Griffin: Yeah, I was—I wouldn't be able to recall that with a normal functioning brain. But just like, a lot of people's shower thoughts are kind of like cool and insightful, mine are like, hey, remember Santa packs are coming?

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, that's wild.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I'm unwell!

Rachel: [laughs] Okay, so Coke is the leader, but then in the 1970s, this is when Pepsi introduced the Pepsi Challenge.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Which was the blind taste test marketing, where they would sit people down and they would have them drink, not knowing which was which. And people would say that Pepsi is sweeter, more syrupy, "I prefer Pepsi."

Griffin: Insane!

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: No way! The defining characteristic of Pepsi is that it is not as sweet as Coca-Cola.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: Absolutely wild!

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: Unless they change the recipe or something at some point, but—

Rachel: I still don't understand how that worked, like I... but it did. I mean, it was a real thing, and people did actually indicate they preferred it.

Griffin: Pepsi, to me, tastes like when you get Coca-Cola out of like a fountain drink machine, and something has gone terribly wrong with the syrup ratios or something. And it just is like a little bit less flavorful than it should be. And don't get me wrong, I can't drink a full-flavored, full-bodied Coca-Cola. It would—it would put me in the ground.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: I need that shit cut pretty shallow. But not Pepsi though, because it taste—it just kind of tastes like wrong Coke, to me.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, no, exactly. And that's, I think, what they were pointing to at the time, and luckily it worked out for them, is that Coca-Cola does have the stronger brand, and you can't really compete with that. But if people say they like the taste better, like that's just—that's just true. And maybe that'll help them reconsider.

Griffin: I mean, Coke also is like, a lot of people from where I'm from call all forms of soft drinks Cokes. So like, Pepsi's, there—I don't think there's a place in the contiguous United States of America where people are like, "You want a Pepsi?" And then they give you, you know, a Sprite, because they just call everything Pepsi.

Rachel: Here's a question, though, and I mean, you probably know this like from being a kid, but like, when you go to restaurants and they're like, "Is Pepsi okay?"

Griffin: The answer to that is always no.

Rachel: Is it no? See, in my family, it was a yes. It was just like whatever.

Griffin: Well, yeah, you gotta say yes, you don't want to be a dick. But like—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: In my head like it's like, "No. That's wild."

Rachel: So, Pepsi was starting to kind of edge up on Coca-Cola. And then in 1982, Coke released Diet Coke, and then caffeine-free Coke and Diet Coke. And then there was a switch to corn syrup, which is kind of how it got the kind of more sweeter—

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Sweeter taste, as compared to Pepsi.

Griffin: I still love the original cane sugar Coke that you could get at certain Tex-Mex establishments.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Back in Austin. I don't think I've had one here. I'm sure it's not impossible to get it, but—

Rachel: I know, I don't even... I don't even remember. It's also where—around the time period where they develop New Coke.

Griffin: Yeah... You gotta—listen, you gotta—it's the cost of doing business. You gotta like try to innovate, even when it's like weird.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: Like Crystal Pepsi, like obviously failure to launch there. But like, you gotta try something. Because that's how we get—that's how we get—you know, NASA invented the microwave. You know what I mean? Like, sometimes you miss and you end up inventing the microwave.

Rachel: Yeah, exactly. Apparently, and I missed this, in 1992, they tried to rebrand New Coke as Coke II. [chuckles]. But it never took off.

Griffin: That's cool. I didn't know about that! Coke II...

Rachel: Yeah, I don't remember Coke II. And you can read a lot of—about this. Those were just some kind of—

Griffin: You got anything in there about Pepsi points?

Rachel: No, no, but I do have when Pepsi came out and did their whole "The Choice of a New Generation" campaign.

Griffin: Sure, yeah.

Rachel: The commercial was, apparently a young girl is upset about New Coke. [chuckles] And says, quote, "First they said they were the real thing, then they said they were it." And then she tries her Pepsi, and then the voice over says, "The choice of a new generation."

Griffin: That's cool. It's a bold advertising choice, huh?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Wouldn't you love to be in the room where they're like, "So, our I—whole idea is that the entire next generation likes Pepsi."
"Okay, cool. So like, what's the..."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "What's the like fiction or like what's the story that we're trying—" "The story we're trying to tell with this advertising campaign is that the next generation of humans prefers Pepsi."

Rachel: What I think is interesting about Pepsi, though, is Pepsi, like their whole campaign tends to be like, "Hey, look, we're second place—"

Griffin: "We get it," yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles] Like, and they don't try to like necessarily innovate on Coke as much as they're like, "*But...*" [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah. Do you know about—do you, my bride, know about Pepsi Man?

Rachel: Yes, sort of. Only in that I think the Simpsons did a parody of it.

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: And I was aware that it existed. I have no knowledge, though, really, about Pepsi Man. I remember Pepsi points. All of this is familiar.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I was not—I mean, as you might recall, I didn't have caffeine as a child.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And not for any like religious reasons. [laughs]

Griffin: That is probably where a lot of people's minds go!

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah, no, it was—it was just that they assumed I had some sort of skin allergy to caffeine, so I didn't have it for a while. So, we weren't a big soda house. We always had like caffeine-free Diet Coke.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But yeah, so your knowledge of soda far exceeds mine.

Griffin: Right. My knowledge of Pepsi Man is more because there was a PlayStation 1 game about Pepsi Man.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Who was a sort of living embodiment of Pepsi refreshment in a Japanese sort of ad campaign.

Rachel: Well, you know I love Cool Spot.

Griffin: He's way—he's way more interesting than Cool Spot.

Rachel: Was Pepsi like a weapon? Were like shaken cans the weapon?

Griffin: It was the weapon against thirst. If thirst was the enemy—

Rachel: But in the video game.

Griffin: The video game, you were just kind of running down the street. And you were—

Rachel: You weren't like firing—

Griffin: No, you were collecting Pepsi cans along the way, and you would give a Pepsi can to like someone in need.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: At the end of the level.

Rachel: One for one.

Griffin: Yeah, so, it was—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean—I mean, but that's also what happens in the commercials, the Pepsi Man commercials. He's great.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: He's huge and muscular, silver and blue man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: With no face.

Rachel: I mean, I'll do—you know, I could—I could bring back a part two for this.

Griffin: Yeah, bring back—

Rachel: Potentially.

Griffin: Part two Pepsi Man, Pepsi points, there's a lot of... a lot of scraps left on the table. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

Ella: Hey, Alexis.

Alexis: Hey, Ella!

Ella: What animal has the most teeth?

Alexis: I would guess a shark.

Ella: A snail.

Alexis: No, snails don't have teeth?

Ella: They have thousands! And they are freaky looking.

Alexis: No, I don't want that to be true, okay?

Ella: [chuckles]

Alexis: Did you know that the hippocampus in your brain is named after the half horse, half fish sea creature found in Greek mythology?

Ella: I didn't know that, but we're meant to be doing animal trivia, and hippocampus isn't a real animal.

Alexis: Well, that doesn't matter on Comfort Creatures.

Ella: You're right, it doesn't matter at all. [chuckles]

Alexis: Comfort Creatures is a cozy show for lovers of animals of all shapes and sizes, real and unreal.

Ella: If that sounds like your cup of tea, then join us every Thursday for new episodes on maximumfun.org!

[break]

Kumail: Are you a celebrity? Are you searching for meaning, connection and a little levity these days? Hi, I'm Kumail Nanjiani, actor, writer, and yes, a celebrity too. And I've got four words for you; Bullseye with Jesse Thorn. Are you tired of junkets? Red carpets?

Sick of the endless spicy snacks you have to eat? Do you want to connect with someone who gets your work, and laugh with you a little? Join me, André 3000, Tom Hanks, Tina Fey and many more, and become a guest on Bullseye with Jesse Thorn, from NPR and Maximum Fun.

[break]

Griffin: This episode is a celebration of corporate food interests.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay?

Griffin: Because today, I would like to talk about the Keebler Elves and all their fuckin' business.

Rachel: Oh, that's fun!

Griffin: I—there's—

Rachel: We have been trapped in our house for a while.

Griffin: Uh-huh!

Rachel: And so it really is just kind of looking around at what's close to us and saying, is that something?

Griffin: Well, I don't—we don't have any Keebler products in the house.

Rachel: We don't actually have any Coke or Pepsi right now either.

Griffin: No, we don't. We don't—

Rachel: But you can see kind of how we went down a path of like—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Snacks, drinks, drinks that people like, what about snacks that people know?

Griffin: I mean, that's not my process.

Rachel: Oh, really? How did you get to the Keebler Elves?

Griffin: I mean, there's a lot of—I usually generate a list of 10 to 15 potential topics, and then I will pray on it.

Rachel: [titters] Uh-huh?

Griffin: Winnow those down. Another round of prayer, more winnowing.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: There is a vast ecosystem of snack products that were such staple products in our household growing up that like I fully abandoned the moment I didn't live at home anymore. And I have so much nostalgia for all of these products, and that is the Keebler line of sweet and savory snacks.

Rachel: Now, were you in like E.L. Fudge environment? Or what was the Keebler product?

Griffin: I would say the two mainstays, the two all-stars, were E.L. Fudges, which were—

Rachel: Incredible.

Griffin: Sand—sandwich cookies.

Rachel: I just realized that E.L. Fudge is elf.

Griffin: Elf, yeah. And we're gonna talk about—you just realized that?

Rachel: Just never thought about it, just thought like it's probably named after a historical figure. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yes, the 13th President of the United States!

Rachel: Sergeant E.L. Fudge.

Griffin: President E.L. Fudge!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Reporting for duty. Yeah, no, I mean, those were two little shortcrust cookies, in the shape of a little elf. That didn't do it for you? That didn't—that didn't—

Rachel: I mean, they were the Keebler Elves?

Griffin: Yeah, I guess that's true.

Rachel: I just didn't—you know.

Griffin: Two shortcrust cookies—have like a little pâté of sort of chocolate squished between them. E.L. Fudges, love those.

Rachel: So good.

Griffin: Fudge Stripes I would say is the other one that I think I genuinely preferred.

Rachel: Yeah. Also good.

Griffin: These were little shortbread rings with a base that had been sort of dipped in tempered chocolate, with a drizzle of chocolate on top for good measure. Those are dope.

Rachel: Incredible.

Griffin: They have one called Dunking Dippers, which were a sandwich cookie that were sort of long. And they had a design on them that was like a dunk meter, so it was like how deep you dunk it in. Keebler had so many fuckin' wild cookies. They had—they had one called Magic Middles, which were basically like little cookie hot pockets full of chocolate.

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: They were just like little dumplings, basically, cookie dumplings full of chocolate. We got our Chips Deluxe, not to be confused with Chips Ahoy, which sucks shit by comparison. I think we can all agree.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They had so many different cookie products. Their cookie dominance, I think, is proven out by the fact that in 1936, Keebler was named the official baker of Girl Scout cookies, and to this day, one of their subsidiaries, Little Brownie Bakers, is one of two companies still making them.

Rachel: Yeah, there is a very interesting story behind girls cut cookies, because there are two different companies that in different regions make—

Griffin: Different—well, the same—

Rachel: Basically the same cookie.

Griffin: Same cookie, sometimes with different names, yes, absolutely as well. But like, Keebler also has done some real sicko shit with savory products too, and I don't think any of them are still around. But I'm curious if you have any fondness for Munch'ems? Munch'ems, which was—they came in a box, and it was a confusing little like cracker chip hybrid. I think the tagline was like, "A cracker with a crunch like a chip!" And they tasted like potato chips, but they were crackers, and that was wild. And—

Rachel: I don't remember that. I thought you were talking about the bag that had like a mix of like Doritos and pretzels and—

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Weren't those called munch... maybe they were munchies?

Griffin: Those might have been crunch'em—those Munchos. Munch'ems is in—is different.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Let me hit you with O'Boises.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Spelled like the city, O'Boise. And these are potato chips, but they're like—have like a weird crackling sort of texture going on.

Rachel: I can almost picture—

Griffin: They're like full of bubbles.

Rachel: I can almost picture the bag a little bit.

Griffin: Crunchy as fuck. They didn't make it very long. The one I like really think about a lot and is, as far as I can tell, like the one that the most sort of ink has been spilled on petitions to get them back in circulation is Tato Skins.

Rachel: Oh, I remember those.

Griffin: Tato Skins were made of a Pringle-like reconstituted potato mash, right? So not like a chip in the formal sense, they had been shaped into these ovals. But they were *thick as fuck*. They had a firm and toothsome sort of crunch about them that were so confusing to chomp into. But man alive, they—almost sort of a Melba toast sort of consistency to these, again, potato crisps.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Melba Toast, absolutely baller. Absolutely baller product, gone. Gone by the wayside. The history of Keebler is so fucking boring.

Rachel: c[chuckles]

Griffin: I'm not going to go too deep into it. It's old as hell. It was originated from a single bakery opened in Philadelphia in 1853, by Godfrey Keebler, who then joined forces with other bakeries around the country in 1927 to form the United Biscuit Company of America. Which in 1966, they just changed the name to Keebler, because it sounded—

Rachel: Mm-hm. What was their national anthem?

Griffin: [sings, spoofing the cadence of The Star-Spangled Banner] Cookie time is the best.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] Tato Skins is the best.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] Munch 'em down with your mouth, 'cause our cookie the best now. We have elf in a tree, don't come fudge one for me.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] Chomp it down with your gum, 'cause the fudge goes on cook.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: The rest of it is the national—the regular American National Anthem.

Rachel: Yeah, well, I mean, you know, a violent—a violent start for those elves.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure!

Rachel: There were—there were bombs in tree and—

Griffin: There were bombs in midair, yeah, but they were safe in their—

Rachel: And the flag—

Griffin: In their tree.

Rachel: At the end was—

Griffin: I haven't even gotten to these fuckin' elves. Anyway, after it became Keebler in 1966, it was bought and sold like 100 times, and now is owned by Ferrero SBA, like every other snack company ever invented.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: But like damn, dude, look—the track record that we have gone over here, just like heater after heater, so choice. And beyond all of their god-tier products, we do have the advertisements featuring the fictional creators of those products, the Keebler Elves. Which as an idea, the concept was created by an advertising firm called Leo Burnett Worldwide in 1968--

Which came up with the idea of the Keebler Elves making trees inside of the "hollow tree factory." Which is, I think, a pretty wild place to have a baking factory. Like they didn't feel the need to explain why there was so much sort

of, you know, open flames happening inside of these big hollow trees, which are—

Rachel: Yeah, well, I mean, you know, an oven, like, it's not an open flame.

Griffin: No, it's not, but it is hot. It does produce heat.

Rachel: I guess I'm assuming this tree is like wired for electricity, which is probably not reasonable.

Griffin: Yeah, you know what? Yeah, no, it's possible.

Rachel: So I—when I think of the Keebler Elves, I think of like a main elf.

Griffin: Yes, so, in—when it first launched, there was a king elf named J.J. Keebler. E.L. Fudge's cousin, J.J. Keebler.

Rachel: Is that—is that the one that I like—

Griffin: No, you don't know that one. He ran a crew of unnamed subordinates.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But I guess people were uncomfortable with that level of like class separation in the baking elf community. So, he was dethroned by Ernie Keebler in 1970—

Rachel: That's who I know—

Griffin: That's my dude with the green jacket—

Rachel: Ernie!

Griffin: The white hair

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: You know, Ernie, he's affable. He is a man of the—an elf of the... elves. And...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, he is the kind of guy that like, you know, he knows what's happening with the other elves at the factory. Like, he—

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: He's like, you know, checking in with them like, "Hey, I—you know, I heard that your wife is sick and—" You know what I mean? Like he—

Rachel: [chuckles] And older gentleman, like a real statesman.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely! Dignified. But also like understands the inherent dignity that is owed to all of the elves who work at his factory.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And the org chart for the hollow tree factory did expand, I would say, dramatically after Ernie Keebler's sort of supplanting of King J.J.

Rachel: There was kind of a goofball one, right? That was always messing stuff up?

Griffin: I'm gonna now list off all of the Keebler Elves.

Rachel: Thank you, please do.

Griffin: What's fascinating is that most of them were responsible for either a step in the cookie assembly line or their own product entirely, which I have to imagine is like you gotta work your way up to being a rep for a product.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is from Wikipedia. Other elves were Friar Tuck, who promoted Munch'ems, Ernie's nephew, Zoot, and J.J, who I guess... I didn't even think about, that's originally the king?

Rachel: J.J. Keebler.

Griffin: The king elf was the nephew of Ernie?

Rachel: So, is Ernie... is Ernie a son, and then he, in tribute—

Griffin: I don't know where—

Rachel: He named—or I guess his brother, if it's a nephew, his brother—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Or a sister named—

Griffin: I think J.J. was disenfranchised because he headed up Pizzarias Pizza Chips.

Rachel: Oh. [chuckles]

Griffin: Which really didn't set the world on fire.

Rachel: J.J. was always, you know, swinging for the fences.

Griffin: Yeah. So we got Ernie's mother, Ma Keebler.

Rachel: Yeah, that sounds right.

Griffin: Nepo Mama.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: We got young Elmer Keebler. Elmer, I feel like I know him.

Rachel: Elmer, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: There's one called Buckets, which is a cool name. Buckets, do you know what Buckets' job at the Keebler factory was?

Rachel: Was he pouring fudge?

Griffin: He dumped fudge on the cookies. We got Fast Eddie, who wrapped the products. We've got Sam, the peanut butter baker. Roger, the jeweler. I don't know why...

Rachel: Huh.

Griffin: They needed one of those. Maybe that's what they called the guy who put the M&M's up on the Chips Deluxe. We got Doc, the doctor and cookie maker. That's crazy, that he has both those jobs, don't you think? A little bit.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We got Zach! That's a crazy name for elf, I think. The fudge shop supervisor. Flo, the accountant. Leonardo, the artist. Elwood, who ran through the dough. I don't know what that fuckin' means, Wikipedia. He ran through the dough...

Rachel: I mean, was there—

Griffin: Maybe that's how the E.L. Fudges were shaped, is because Elwood would smash his body through the dough to create the elf shape.

Rachel: [chuckles] Maybe. Actually, that sounds believable.

Griffin: And then there's Professor, Edison, Larry and Art. Those are the last ones—

Rachel: Did they have roles? Or—

Griffin: Those were not detailed.

Rachel: Just...

Griffin: Professor, I have to imagine, educated the—like there was like a—

Rachel: He was a consultant, maybe.

Griffin: Maybe. So, what I like about that is that if you had issues with any of Keebler's products, they had a patsy on hand.

Rachel: True!

Griffin: Ready—like if Munch'ems had—like if there was like a dysentery outbreak from the Munch'ems factory—

Rachel: Yeah, we got rid of Fast Eddie—

Griffin: We said—well...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean, it was Friar Tuck who was in charge of Munch'ems.

Rachel: No, I'm just saying like an example, if there was a product—

Griffin: Fast Eddie is the backbone of the company. He's responsible for packaging. I don't know how he would be—

Rachel: Yeah. You did choose the word "wrap," which did make me think we were going to get into an elf that did have a rap career.

Griffin: Oh, don't worry, these guys have been around for long enough, there's definitely some incriminating sort of commercials about them, probably from the early to mid '90s, where they did a sort of hip-hop—

Rachel: Probably elf with a gold chain.

Griffin: Yeah! Something sort of—

Rachel: If I had ot bet.

Griffin: Poorly kind of thought out.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Anyways, I haven't eaten an E.L. Fudge since the fuckin' Bush administration, but I bet they still slap. So—

Rachel: Yeah, I feel like you can still get 'em?

Griffin: Yeah, some of—some of the cookie products are still out there, they're still rockin'. Again, like it was like sold off to Kellogg's I think at one point, and then it ended up at Ferrero. Which, again, just sort of runs—

Rachel: Can't you—

Griffin: Everything.

Rachel: If you think a little bit, can't you just hear the sound of that plastic packaging?

Griffin: Yeah, it's pretty loud.

Rachel: Like when you reach in there to like grab a couple?

Griffin: I mean, I can... when I close my eyes, I think about the sound of a Tato Skin just shattering... shattering in your mouth. That's the sound that I come back to. Do you know what our friends at home are thinking about though? It's not Tato Skins.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Max says, "My Big Small Wonder is plow drivers! I thought I had it rough because I had to sleep at work after a 12-hour shift. Then I looked out the window and saw those powerful heroes working all night to make sure I could get home in the morning. Big shout out to all the plowers and shovelers in the Wonderverse."

Rachel: Oh, what a timely shout out.

Griffin: Very timely shout out. Obviously, coming from Austin, where there wasn't a—

Rachel: Yeah, oh my god.

Griffin: Sort of a network of snow maintenance professionals. I'm very grateful to live in a city that is well prepared for the elements.

Rachel: Yeah, that you see people like proactively in advance salting.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then like sometimes you will wake up in the morning and your street has already been plowed.

Griffin: Incredible. Incredible.

Rachel: It's just amazing.

Griffin: Tasneem says, "My Small Wonder is having a small tupperware full of crisp, washed blueberries to enjoy whenever I want a snack or little sweet treat. I love how crisp and refreshing they are right out of the fridge."

Rachel: Blueberries are so wild because it's something that I kind of forget about.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then I will get a little container, and I will eat all of them in two days.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then I will promptly forget about blueberries again.

Griffin: They're so choice, they're so good, full of antioxidants and just little, juicy morsels.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know why that made you laugh...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Why did it make you laugh? It's true, they're juicy little morsels.

Rachel: No, I know, I just don't know that I hear you say "morsels" a lot.

Griffin: I say "morsels" all the time. I always say stuff like that. Hey, thank you so much for listening to our show. Thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay! You can find a link to that in the episode description. And we got some merch, some new merch in the merch store, a lot of Miggy stuff. Miggy Mackerel—

Rachel: I saw that!

Griffin: Got a Mickey Mackerel hoodie, got a good— "It's a good day to watch a fish die" hat.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That is...

Rachel: It's like camo.

Griffin: It's camo, it's got broad appeal. 10% of all of our merch proceeds in the month of February will be donated to the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. That's all at mcelroymerch.com. And we are streaming so much on our YouTube channel. We're doing McElroy Family Clubhouse as a monthly show now, the last Tuesday of every month. Every other Tuesday, we're doing Super McElroy Brothers, where me, Juice and Trav play games together. And then like Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we're doing individual streams, just us.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I'm starting up a new run of Trial by Fieri, my sort of poorly thought-out randomizer Zelda series. So, that's going to start out this Friday, and then it's going to run and I'm just gonna be streaming every Friday.

Rachel: You guys—you guys are really leaning into your gaming interests and ability.

Griffin: It's true, it's—guilty as charged. That's all over at The McElroy Family YouTube account. And then all of our gaming stuff, if you follow the McElroy Entertainment System on Instagram, you can be updated for when we're doing all that stuff. So, think about it.

Rachel: You guys should release your own console. I'm just saying.

Griffin: It's a—

Rachel: You're practically there.

Griffin: And the market is fertile for it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Thank you so much for listening! We'll be back next week with a new episode of Wonderful. And stay safe and warm out there, truly and genuinely. And we'll talk to you in a bit, bye!

Rachel: Bye!

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

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