

## Wonderful 406: Horny, Sad, or Bored

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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, a show we like talk about good we're into.  
*Hah...*

**Rachel:** Whoa, are you bringing a bit?

**Griffin:** No?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Okay?

**Griffin:** I'm really distressed.

**Rachel:** Oh, tell me about it?

**Griffin:** And depressed.

**Rachel:** Tell me about it, husband.

**Griffin:** I got passed up for the Grammys, again!

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** Again I get skipped over for the Grammys.

**Rachel:** Did you think your audio book had another shot this year?

**Griffin:** I thought the audio book we made for our podcasting how to book that came out, what, six years ago—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like, and there's no statute of limitations on that thing. You know what I mean? Like there's still—

**Rachel:** They can pull from any year.

**Griffin:** They can pull any year for certain genres.

**Rachel:** Wow. Okay?

**Griffin:** Because there's not like a lot of new wave funk happening, so they'll like, for the new wave funk Grammy they'll like...

**Rachel:** Uh-huh?

**Griffin:** They'll still give it out to, you know, George Clinton and like an older—and so like, I keep thinking—and this year, they even had the best audio book of a how to podcast book.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And we didn't—like, we weren't even like nominated. That sucks.

**Rachel:** Yeah...

**Griffin:** iHeartRadio is still out here giving us our flowers, year in, year out, for how good we do ad reads on MBMBaM.

**Rachel:** Yeah, you do very good. I wonder who your champion is there?

**Griffin:** Mm-hm...

**Rachel:** Because there's got to be somebody that's like, "Hey, hey, hey, hey, I know it's not gonna go to them."

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** "But can we acknowledge the good work of those brothers?"

**Griffin:** I mean, I don't know that there's like a rule or anything where like, if someone gets nominated for a thing a bunch of times but doesn't win, maybe they should stop nominating them. Do you know what I mean? Because it's like, we're wasting this spot on someone who could—

Like Leo DiCaprio, like it's crazy, he got nominated as many times as he did. You would think after like five or six nominations they would be like, "He's not—he doesn't have the sauce. And so, we need to stop wasting this spot on someone who could conceivably win the best actor Oscar."

**Rachel:** It's gotta help you guys though, right? Like, there are so few ads available in podcasting right now, it's gotta help you guys to be like, "Well, I don't know if you want to do this company that helps you build websites, but you should know that the McElroys, again, were nominated for best ad read."

**Griffin:** Yeah. And don't get me wrong, I do love, you know, my road dogs, Squarespace—

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You know, like my ride or dies, my true...

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** One and onyls. I don't know that it helps us as much as if one of us was actually kind of famous, or if there was a famous person on our show.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I do think that's the way that the podcast ad market is, I would say, trending.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Is if there is a famous person in or on or around the show—

**Rachel:** And you can get famous guests too.

**Griffin:** And if you get famous—oh, god, yes!

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Which like, you know, we've—we had Jesse Eisenberg on once.

**Rachel:** Well, you say we, not Wonderful.

**Griffin:** Not Wonderful, no. We had The Bachelorette Canada on.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** I think that might be—our friend Anna was a guest once.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And I think those are the only guests we've ever had here on Wonderful.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Do you have any small—

**Rachel:** Oh, Dave Shumka, in our bonus episode.

**Griffin:** Oh! Hell yeah, Dave Shumka on our bonus episode.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** What a fun episode, just talking about hockey.

**Rachel:** I know. I think about that sometimes, because I—we had a lot of questions, and I don't think we got to the bottom of it the way we had hoped to. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** No, and there was a lot of surprise that a lot of my questions were sort of based around like...

**Rachel:** Is it scary?

**Griffin:** Is it scary.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [chuckles] Scary to have big men coming at you on the ice, yeah.

**Rachel:** Well, that just leaves us room to have another hockey bonus episode where we talk to another—

**Griffin:** I don't even want to talk about hockey anymore after last night's freakin' game.

**Rachel:** Hockey person—I know. I know, it was heartbreaking.

**Griffin:** The Blues gave up a four-goal lead against the Predators.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Embarrassing. Do you have a Small Wonder?

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Enough about that.

**Rachel:** I mean, I don't know how people are doing it. We have snow here that has been on the ground for over a week now, and one of the like city rules is that you're supposed to shovel out your sidewalk in front of your house.

**Griffin:** Okay, cool.

**Rachel:** Like, that's part of it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Which hasn't been enforced because of the snowcrete. Which is a thing that—

**Griffin:** Is that the term people are using, snowcrete?

**Rachel:** That's what people say, yeah, when it gets like so icy hard that you can't get through, they call it snowcrete. Anyway, a lot of people in our neighborhood are managing to get it done.

**Griffin:** I know.

**Rachel:** And I'm impressed by them. They do have significantly less sidewalk than us.

**Griffin:** True.

**Rachel:** And this is kind of like couched in my own guilt that our sidewalk is currently impassable.

**Griffin:** Today's the day, babe. Today's the day.

**Rachel:** Today's the day.

**Griffin:** Today's the day. I made certain promises on MBMBaM that I was gonna buy a pickaxe and get out there Minecraft style.

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** So that is, I think I do need to get that done today...

**Rachel:** Before it snows again? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Before it snows fucking again. Yeah, no, I also feel a tremendous amount of guilt. If I hadn't like fucked up my back and broken our shovel in the first attempt I made to tackle our sidewalks, then I would be more excited about getting out there. But it's, you're right, it's a dereliction of duty. No one really uses—

**Rachel:** This is not—

**Griffin:** People don't go down our street very much. Our sidewalk also doesn't connect to the street on either side, so it's not really—

**Rachel:** Yeah, but we do have a lot of school children that walk by in the morning, and right now they're walking in the middle. This was not, by the way, I know it sounds like I use this as an excuse to make Griffin feel guilty. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It does feel that way.

**Rachel:** But it was more that I was really impressed by these good neighbors who are taking it upon themselves to do this almost impossible task so the sidewalk is accessible.

**Griffin:** I know... we're getting there today, folks. Sorry...

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I'm gonna say—what do I want to say? What do I want to bring here? Have we watched anything good lately? Do anything? What have we been doing lately?

**Rachel:** We've had such limited time in the evenings, because our children have not been tired enough, due to the lack of school and the incredibly cold temperatures outside.

**Griffin:** Yeah...

**Rachel:** So when it comes time for us to watch our like 1.5 hours of television—

**Griffin:** If that, man.

**Rachel:** We don't have a lot of, you know, freedom.

**Griffin:** True. I'm just gonna say... we watched the Mel Brooks documentary.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** We've been watching a lot of documentaries about older comedians. Oh, I mean, just like straight up, Catherine O'Hara. I think as just sort of a— maybe this is a Big Wonder sort of topic—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Because her body of work is so astonishing. But maybe the— maybe—this is a weird tone maybe for a Small Wonder, because it's probably the saddest a celebrity death has—

**Rachel:** Yeah, right?

**Griffin:** It's up there with like Robin Williams and Bourdain for me, just like, I just keep thinking about it and it makes me so bummed out. But god damn, when you look at how much stuff she has done, it's—

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, and I will say what has been nice is that, you know, people are sharing her work a lot.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So, it has been very pleasant to get into my feeds and to see clips from films. A lot of Waiting for Guffman, which is phenomenal.

**Griffin:** [sings] "Midnight at the oasis." So fucking funny.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, that John Candy documentary, honestly, I hope we get a Catherine O'Hara documentary. Because like the John Candy documentary had so much footage from like their old like SCTV days.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And like, god, that stuff I could watch infinity of. Like we grew up watching a lot of SCTV stuff, and then, I don't know, because it wasn't syndicated in the same way that like SNL and Kids in the Hall were on Comedy Central—

**Rachel:** Yeah, no kidding.

**Griffin:** I feel like I didn't watch it for a long time, and—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I don't know, seeing that stuff is always just such a—such a nice reminder. Hey, I go first this week.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** This is a good transition, because you know, I mentioned all of this old comedy stuff that I feel like I inherited—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** From my dad and my brothers, stuff like Kids in the Hall and SNL and SCTV—

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

**Griffin:** Which I watched when I was like way too young to get it, but was certainly like hugely influential in what I think is funny. I treasure that stuff a lot. When I think about stuff like influences that I did not inherit, the thing I think about a lot is Homestar Runner.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** You're not familiar with Homestar Runner—

**Rachel:** Well, here's the thing, so I had friends who would kind of share stuff with me.

**Griffin:** Okay?

**Rachel:** And so I'm aware of kind of the premise and the content, but I can't pull like specific references.

**Griffin:** For me, it's a timing thing I think more than—more than anything. Homestar Runner is, I mean, it's a lot of things, but it's primarily sort of an animated web series, portal—

**Rachel:** Can you talk about the time period?

**Griffin:** Yeah, so it launched in 2000, it was made by two brothers, Mike and Matt Chapman, who also go by The Brothers Chaps.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Who we've done some stuff with. They were on a JoCo Cruise, we—I think I played Quiplash with Strong Bad at a certain point.

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah.

**Griffin:** JoCo Cruise is lit, if you've never been. Sometimes you get to play Quiplash with Strong Bad. But it's kind of tough to summarize Homestar Runner. It launched in 2000 and was like, I would say, most kind of active in like the 2002 to 2007. Like that is I feel like when people were, I mean, that's when I was watching it like every week, seeing what was new. It's tough to summarize what Homestar Runner is, because it wasn't like one show, as much as it was a website with like animated one-off shorts and recurring segments and music videos and puppetry and flash games, and a lot of stuff.

**Rachel:** I know. And this is like early in the internet too, where you didn't see like full length shows.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** You know?

**Rachel:** There weren't typically like 20-minute videos, because everyone was still operating on like dial up. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Well, it was also, you know, pre-YouTube, right?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So it wasn't like there was a singular kind of platform that everything went on, and you knew that you just would go on there to watch stuff. If you wanted to watch some new, funny flash animation people were talking about, they would send you to, you know, fuckin' Albino Blacksheep or like some weird—You're the Man Now Dog, or some like weird old text portal. And Homestar Runner was a very, very unique sort of place in that era. There wasn't much in the way of like a storyline that you would expect from like, I don't know, a web comic.

**Rachel:** This is what confused me, is that I felt like I never had context when I would see clips, and I would—I would just be like, wait, so what, but why, and when did—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** You know? [chuckles]

**Griffin:** You sort of have to abandon that, because they did, right?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And there's like a pretty fun reason for why they did that, but you never really knew like, when the website would update, like what would be new on there. Like sometimes there would be a commercial for a fictional

marshmallow brand, and then they'd put up a music video for They Might Be Giants' experimental film.

Like, you really didn't know what you were gonna get, which is part of the fun. So originally, The Brothers Chaps created the core cast of characters of Homestar Runner, and there's a lot of them. They created this core cast for a children's book that they wrote. Almost in response to how bad they thought children's books were, sort of at the time.

That's where you get sort of Homestar Runner, who is a very—the very unserious sort of athlete, hero of the story. He had a big orange balloon friend named Pom Pom. And then you had the antagonist of the—of the book, who was Strong Bad, who wore a wrestling like luchador mask and boxing gloves—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** For some reason. He had an accomplice in the book, a little yellow rhombus called The Cheat. These were—these were the core cast of Homestar Runner characters. And this book wasn't published, they didn't really send it to anyone. They didn't know that their dad sent it to like 80 different publishers, who all turned it down, but sliding doors.

[both chuckle]

**Griffin:** But in 1999, The Brothers Chaps started to learn flash animation, because it was sort of like blowing up then, and they returned to their like sort of parody children's book for inspiration. The reason why there isn't much plot is because like the first flash animations they did for Homestar Runner depicted competitions between Homestar Runner and Strong Bad.

Homestar Runner being like the hero and Strong Bad was like his evil foil, and they would just do sort of silly competitions, and that was kind of as close to a core thesis as you really got with Homestar Runner. But those didn't really set the world on fire, and so instead, they decided to focus more on depicting the scenes between those competitions.

And with that being kind of the modus operandi, that sort of gave them the freedom to do whatever the fuck that they want. And so you're basically seeing a lot of like hugely informal scatter shot sort of scenes of these people who are between kind of story beats. [chuckles]

**Rachel:** Was there a bit—I feel like the only content I saw, was there a bit where Strong Bad would like answer emails?

**Griffin:** Oh my god, yes.

**Rachel:** Yeah. That's what I remember seeing and like really enjoying it.

**Griffin:** So, that was one of the first sort of like between competition scenes that there was, was Strong Bad answering an angry email, which was just sort of a one-off kind of thing. But people really liked it, so they turned it into a weekly series of Strong Bad emails.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Or speedmails, as true diehards of this website would call them.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And it is, by far, it is like the segment that put the—put Homestar Runner on the map in a major way, like that is the thing. And a lot of the stuff that people know from Homestar Runner come out of those Strong Bad email segments.

Like Trogdor the Burninator was like a joke that was made in one of the Strong Bad email things, and then spun off into like its whole world. Teen Girl Squad is like a series that came out of a Strong Bad email. Like, Strong Bad emails became the... like kind of the heartbeat of that whole website.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** The other main kind of like segments that they would do would be animated specials they would do around major sort of, you know, seasonal

holidays. So like you knew if you went on to Homestar Runner the week of Halloween--

Like they would have some sort of like silly, spooky character, like the aforementioned creepy marshmallow commercial. If you went in around the, you know, Christmas or the holidays, the winter holidays, like there would be an animated special for that. It was so insanely ambitious!

Like just that alone, a weekly animated thing made by, for the most part, two people. There were a couple other folks I think who they brought in to do other voices for the other characters. But like, that's *a lot* of animation to come out of that team.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But like on top of the animated stuff coming out of these two—they live in Atlanta. I don't know if they still live in Atlanta, but that is where Homestar Runner started. On top of all that you also had like, you know, games that would be on the website, and music and crossover projects with like other artists. Paul and Storm, our very own tour daddy, Paul Sabourin and Storm did a few songs for like a few of their animated things.

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** It was just like, it's insane—I have no idea how they kept up with all of this stuff, because they were making a ton, a ton, a ton of stuff on Homestar Runner, and a ton of merchandise. I loved me some Homestar Runner merchandise.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** They were—they were sort of making a living off of that. And then in 2010, after making these, you know, weekly animations for a decade, they, you know, had started families, and The Brothers Chaps went on hiatus because it was, I imagine, quite a—quite a mill to keep powered. But like while they were on hiatus, they did writing work for a bunch of other shows, like Yo Gabba Gabba and Gravity Falls.

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** And then four years later, in 2014, they sort of decided that they had the bandwidth to revive Homestar Runner, which they kind of slow rolled out. Since coming back, the website is still up, it still is getting updates. Not weekly, but like regular enough that like if you think like, "I haven't been on Homestar Runner in a while," and you go to it, there's some—there's definitely some new stuff.

**Rachel:** Oh.

**Griffin:** Especially around the holidays, that is sort of the main tradition that they have up kept. But it's really, really hard to kind of like talk about what works about Homestar Runner, because it's—I mean, for one thing like it is of an era, I think. Like that early flash animation on the internet era where like things could just be fuckin' weird, things could just be like really, really, really weird. Like Hampster Dance is a bad example, but like you know what I'm saying?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Like all those early—

**Rachel:** Peanut Butter Jelly Time?

**Griffin:** Peanut Butter Jelly Time! [sings] "Cap, I'm a kitty cat, and I dance, dance, dance and I—" Like all of that shit like—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I think that's sort of the world where Homestar Runner started. But then it got so like, the lore really built up and the, you know, the in jokes like really, really built up. And the tone of it I think matured along with kind of the website over time, especially during that first like decade where they were like in full production mode all the time. And it was so, I don't know, it was really absurdist. And like all my friends like loved it. All of my—

**Rachel:** Oh, yeah?

**Griffin:** Yeah, all of my like—my theater friends loved it.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** I will say, like—

**Rachel:** Because I feel like it was a test kind of, of how on the internet you were.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Because if you weren't super on the internet, you probably didn't know about it or have a lot of interest in it. But I feel like the people I knew **that** liked it were like really on the internet.

**Griffin:** And all—I mean, that's a very nice way of saying like, "The people who I knew who liked it were also like me, gigonzo nerds."

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Like huge nerds. And that's like a lot of the referential stuff that made it so like, I don't know, so funny. Like, there's one Strong Bad email where he talks about looking cool and futuristic, and then turns into sort of like an anime Mega Man style guy that would come back—I think it was called like Strong Bad 20XX, or something like that.

They made a whole text parser adventure game based on Trogdor called Peasant's Quest. Like a whole game, like King's Quest, or Quest for Glory, like any of those old sort of text-based adventure games. Like, it was—it was always so surprising and so impressive and so like inspiring, truly--

Genuinely inspiring to see all of this stuff come out of, you know, a handful of people, two brothers, especially, who are just making stuff that they think is fun and is funny. And I think left a truly like indelible impression on a lot of people who are content creators online now. This was back before that terminology existed.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** God dang, they created a whole lot of content, and a lot of it I hold in such high regard and have so many fond memories about. So yeah, that's Homestar Runner. It's such a... I guess niche thing. I don't think of it that way, because like all my friends kind of were into it. But then like I would go to school and I—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I would not talk about it with my school friends—

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Griffin:** Because I didn't know if they were cool or not.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So it was very much like a, I don't know, a secret speakeasy kind of passcode type of thing.

**Rachel:** Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:** But yeah. We've gotten to work with them a couple times, they— Strong Bad did a Candenights like message for us one time, for one of our specials.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And that's like crazy. It's truly, it's been an honor when we've gotten to work with them in the past. But that's Homestar Runner. Can I steal you away?

**Rachel:** Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Rachel:** Okay, so, this actually gives me an opportunity to provide more clarification on something we talked about a few days ago.

**Griffin:** Okay, which was?

**Rachel:** My Wonderful topic this week, mood rings.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you've got the bug, dude. You've got the itch.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] I blame Sydnee McElroy, because I had a conversation with her over Christmas. I noticed that she had been wearing this mood ring, and I asked her where she got it. And she's like, I told—

**Griffin:** COSI.

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Did she say COSI?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** She said, "I told Justin—" I don't remember what the occasion was, but it was some gift giving occasion. "I told Justin that I wanted a mood ring like the one that Anna Chlumsky's character—clump?

**Griffin:** Chlamsky.

**Rachel:** Chlamsky?

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I think it's Chlumsky.

**Rachel:** I think it's Chlumsky. Anna Chlumsky's character wears in My Girl. And so, Justin found it for her. She wasn't able to tell me where she got it, but we kind of assumed on Etsy. And it just got me thinking about that kind of mid '90s, early '90s period where mood rings were suddenly really big again.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And I had one, and I remember being kind of frustrated because it was kind of only one color ever when I was wearing it. But there was something like kind of magical about it. I didn't really buy into it as a...

**Griffin:** A device of—

**Rachel:** An indicator of mood the way that it is suggested to be.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But I just always thought like, how cool that you can wear something that changes color on your finger. And so anyway—

**Griffin:** I do love that.

**Rachel:** What?

**Griffin:** I love that! I do love that a lot.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] So anyway, I was like, I was talking to Griffin about my ring size, because I can never remember what it was, because I decided I wanted to get one. And then I thought, you know what? I should talk about this on Wonderful.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Because I have no idea how these things work.

**Griffin:** No idea how they work, or where they came from, or what it is.

**Rachel:** Yeah, yeah.

**Griffin:** So how does it—how does it—

**Rachel:** I'm guessing—

**Griffin:** I just assume they have hyper color technology?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Yeah, so that was kind of when it came back in the '90s, was kind of aligned with hyper color.

**Griffin:** Oh, was it really?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I bet a lot of our listeners don't know what hyper color is, because they aren't—

**Rachel:** I feel like we've talked about it on the show. It's such a wild thing to talk about, but it was this time period where you could wear a shirt that would look kind of tie dye, but would actually respond to heat. So if somebody came up and put like a hand on your stomach, your shirt would change colors where that hand was.

**Griffin:** Yeah. And then you'd be like, "What the fuck, man?"

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** "Why did you just walk up to me and put your hand on my tummy long enough to change the color of my—" Now you're gonna be walking around with a hand print on your tummy, and people are going to be like, "Who touched your belly like that?"

**Rachel:** When I was—when I remember being it popular I was in elementary school, and it was just kind of an indicator of how sweaty you got at recess or gym class.

**Griffin:** Oh, man, we got hyper color T shirts for... not a mission trip, but like a church trip function. And I remember it was so hot and so sweaty that they were just like the one color, because it was so hot. And I think we all kind of like, I didn't know you could break a hyper color shirt, but they didn't—they didn't morph anymore after we had our way with it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I mean, that's the thing, there's a lot of sensitivity to the technology.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** And you know, a shirt can't be the best vehicle for it.

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** So, here's how a mood ring works.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So, the actual stone that kind of you see on the ring is actually a hollow glass shell, or it can be like a quartz. So, the whole the stone itself has no like color changing properties, what actually is making the difference is a thin sheet of liquid crystals. These are like thermotropic liquid crystals.

**Griffin:** Interest—so like LCD sort of crystal stuff?

**Rachel:** I mean, I don't know the technology that is involved in LCD, so I can't—

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Tell you if that's true. But it's kind of the same thing, I don't know if you've seen those strips, apparently this is where the idea came from, is

there used to be those strips that you could like place on a forehead, and it would kind of change color indicating like what the temperature was.

**Griffin:** Interesting? I've never seen that.

**Rachel:** And it's the same technology.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** What happens is there is a change in molecular structure that affects the wavelengths of light that are absorbed or reflected by thermotropic liquid crystals.

**Griffin:** It's crazy to me that you could buy these things for like \$3 at Gadzooks.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And it has that kind of like tech in it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I mean, if you think about—like, it's just a like a sheet of like these crystals.

**Griffin:** Sure.

**Rachel:** I'm trying to think of like another example. There used to be like a lot of stuff at like science centers or whatever.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** If you put your hand on it, it would change colors. It's that same kind of material, but it's under like a piece of glass.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it's responding to the temperature of your hand.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** So, the body temperature will change like the molecules and how they're kind of moving around on this sheet, and that changes the color. So the whole thing with the mood ring was that different temperatures of your body would kind of indicate what your mood was, and it would change the color. And then they would put all this mythos around like, well, dark blue means that you're happy or possibly romantic, because your body was super warm.

**Griffin:** That's some real John Edwards—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Crossing Over cold calling shit. You're either feeling horny or sad, or bored.

**Rachel:** And like black is kind of the resting state, and so it was typically like the coldest. And so they would say that you were stressed or tense or, you know, just kind of out of sorts.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Because your body was cold.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I am stressed because my body is cold. It is a chicken and egg situation.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] So, the original jeweler, at least like the kind of suggestion, is that Marvin Wernick, who made like kind of a lot of jewelry in that time period, came up with the idea in 1975 after seeing this thermotropic tape to a kid's forehead and thinking like, "I could turn that into jewelry." Around the same time, two New Yorkers, Joshua Reynolds and Maris Ambats, put together their own kind of mood jewelry. Apparently, Joshua Reynolds was in a Wall Street job and became very interested in biofeedback.

**Griffin:** Cool.

**Rachel:** This idea that like, you know, things would happen to your body when you were stressed. And so he devise the ring as a measure to gage what your mood was and how you could like address that through like meditation, or you know, different approaches to your life.

**Griffin:** I love that.

**Rachel:** Reynolds' version started out selling Wernick's version. Neither of them did any kind of patent.

[both chuckle]

**Rachel:** Which is why you saw these things everywhere. In 1975, 40 million mood rings sold in three months, coming to a total of 20 million in sales its first year.

**Griffin:** Wow!

**Rachel:** This is the '70s, which is sometimes referred to as like the Me Generation, because that's when like yoga became a thing, and meditation, and people started really trying to like address their well-being through like activities. Which at the time was called the Me Generation. [laughs]

**Griffin:** And not sort of the basic standard of kind of human wellness.

**Rachel:** Which is kind of, by that definition, every generation that followed. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure!

**Rachel:** But again, this was popular in the '70s, and then came back in the '90s with that kind of hypercolor trend.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Which is how kind of we know about it.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** But anyway, so I got one off Etsy. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Did you? Oh, great!

**Rachel:** I'm waiting for it to arrive. There's still—like you can find them, they're still relatively cheap, because I think the materials itself are not typically expensive. Unless you're talking about, you know, when we were kids, it was just like an adjustable piece of like brass that would turn your finger green.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Now you can get them like made out of like actual jewelry material.

**Griffin:** Ooh.

**Rachel:** But I don't know, I mean, it'll probably be the same thing where I'll be super excited about it, and then I'll realize it's always one color.  
[chuckles]

**Griffin:** I don't—you truly swing through temperature ranges. Like usually Rachel runs pretty hot, it's—

**Rachel:** All the time.

**Griffin:** Like really—not—I mean, okay, yes, your bod is hot all the time.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** But your hands, I feel like sometimes they get cold? I feel like you—

**Rachel:** Sometimes. Not as often as most people, I would say.

**Griffin:** My wife—

**Rachel:** I feel like—

**Griffin:** My wife does this really quirky thing where sometimes her hands are warm, and sometimes they're cold.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** And that's just one of the special—

**Rachel:** I feel like my general state regularly is just kind of sweaty. I just feel like I'm always kind of warm and sweaty. So, this ring, I imagine, will not do a lot of swings to indicate any kind of mood. But I just, I don't know, I like things that change color, I guess is the larger takeaway from this segment. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** It is hard for me to talk about mood rings and not think about the song Mood Ring by Reliant K, which was a Christian—

**Rachel:** I don't know the song.

**Griffin:** Christian rock band.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay, that's why.

**Griffin:** If you—

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** They talk about it a lot on Good Christian Fun—

**Rachel:** Oh, okay?

**Griffin:** A podcast that I adore, as sort of—they have a long-running competition of the worst sort of contemporary Christian—

**Rachel:** Yeah, that's true.

**Griffin:** And mood ring was up there for a while because it's—I pulled up the lyrics, because I feel like you're gonna really appreciate 'em.

**Rachel:** Okay!

**Griffin:** "We all know the girls that I'm talking about. Well, they are time bombs and they are ticking, and the only questions when they'll blow up. And they'll blow up, we know that without a doubt, 'cause they're those girls. Yeah, you know those girls that let their emotions get the best of them." This sounds like an alt-right YouTube—

**Rachel:** [laughs] Yeah!

**Griffin:** This is 2003, Reliant K put out Mood Rings. "I've contrived a sort of plan to help my fellow man. Let's get emotional girls to all wear mood rings, so we'll be tipped off when they're ticked off, because we'll know just what they're thinking. She's so pretty, but she doesn't always act that way."

**Rachel:** Oh?

**Griffin:** "Her mood's out swinging—"

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** "On the swing set almost every day."

**Rachel:** Wow.

**Griffin:** "She said to me, she's so happy, it's depressing. And all I said was, someone get that girl a mood ring."

**Rachel:** Yeah, I mean—[chuckles]

**Griffin:** Welcome to Griffin's Poetry Corner.

**Rachel:** [laughs] This was the time period of like Blink 182 and like, you know, a lot of bands that were talking about women and how unreliable they were.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And so in a way, this is kind of wholesome in its take on it, but also like—

**Griffin:** The worst song maybe ever written. "If it's drama you want, then look no further. They're like The Real World meets Boy Meets World meets Days of our Lives. And it just kills me how they get away with murder. They'll anger you, then bat their eyes, those pretty eyes that watch you sympathize." You absolute fucking serial killer... weirdos.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That was pretty—wait, what was the last thing about sympathize? What was the last part?

**Griffin:** Those pretty eyes that watch you sympathize.

**Rachel:** That watch you sympathize.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I mean, definitely insulting. Kind of impressive though that they found a way to put that rhyme in there.

**Griffin:** Yeah. This was on Two Lefts Don't Make a Right... but Three Do, by Reliant K in 2003. And our—I bet—I don't remember listening to this song in real time, I was more of a switch foot guy myself. But it's really, really unbelievable. Here's what our friends at home are talking about.

Sophie says, "My Small Wonder is watching the snow fall from inside a greenhouse. I worked in a greenhouse in this huge East Coast storm, and I got to stand inside a warm glass building surrounded by plants, but still got to see the snow falling peacefully outside. Feels like I'm standing in a different world." I bet that is a cool experience.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I'd worry about the snow piling up on the glass greenhouse roof, because I ain't trying to get Hand That Rocked the Cradle in here or anything. You know what I mean?

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Have you seen that film?

**Griffin:** The Hand That Rocks the Cradle?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I've seen that film, yes.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** They did a remake of it I think last year, that I did not see.

**Rachel:** I have not seen this film.

**Griffin:** I think—you haven't seen it?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Oh.

**Rachel:** I don't know—I don't even know the reference you're making.

**Griffin:** Oh, spoilers.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** Julianne Moore gets fucking *shredded*, bro!

**Rachel:** By a greenhouse?

**Griffin:** By a greenhouse that falls down. It's like a trap set by... the hand that rocks the cradle.

[both chuckle]

**Rachel:** That was a real mom thing you just did, where you—where you took somebody's joy and you made them a little bit scared. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I don't think—well, okay, in the movie, the thing falls on her because it's a trap set by the hand that rocks the cradle.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Sophie, unless you have a hand that rocks the cradle in your life...

**Rachel:** [chuckles] Just shoveling snow on top of your greenhouse.

**Griffin:** Yeah! Then I think you're probably okay and I don't want to take this joy away from you. It's just the only sort of association with greenhouses that I have.

**Rachel:** Mm-hm.

**Griffin:** Fee says, "My Wonderful thing this week is seeing little kids wearing costumes instead of their normal clothes. I work at a library, and always love seeing the toddlers who clearly dress themselves and decided today was the Elsa princess dress day. Bonus points if they're wearing the costume over their normal clothes, in what you can tell is a compromise between them and their parents."

**Rachel:** Yes! That's wonderful. Like where it's like the costume itself would not be warm enough for the weather until you see like a pair of like leggings underneath and like a long sleeve shirt. [chuckles]

**Griffin:** I love that. I love that. We don't get a ton—I feel like they have like special PJs days at like the boys' schools, where you get to see a little bit of that—

**Rachel:** Yeah. I mean, I think if Henry had an option, he would wear a cape and a mask pretty frequently.

**Griffin:** Yeah, he would wear his like Snorlax onesie pretty much on the reg.

**Rachel:** Small Son doesn't seem as into that.

**Griffin:** No... but he's into other stuff.

**Rachel:** [chuckles] That's fair.

**Griffin:** Hey, thank you so much for listening to our show. And also, 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! Maximumfun.org is where you can go to check out great shows like Stop Podcasting Yourself, or Triple Click, or any of the other wonderful programs that they have over there. We have merch over at the McElroy Merch Store, quite a bit of McElroy Family Clubhouse stuff, some Miggy memorabilia—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Up there, over at McElroy Merch. And 10% of all our merch proceeds this month will be donated to the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. We are doing a bunch of streaming now over on the McElroy Family YouTube channel, every Tuesday, most Tuesdays, we're playing games together in a show called Super McRoy Brothers.

And then the last Tuesday of every month, we're doing a McElroy Family Clubhouse. But then like on certain days of the week, like Justin streams on Mondays, Travis streams on Wednesdays, I'm streaming a new season of Trial by Fieri--

Where I'm playing the Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask in a randomized, very foolish way. That's if you follow the McElroy Entertainment System on Instagram, you can get pushed all of our gaming content. Two last things real quick, two books coming out this year. I wrote—

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** I wrote one, it's a Choose Your Own Adventure book. It comes out in a little over a month. It's called The Stowaway. It comes out March 10<sup>th</sup>.

You can pre-order it now if you go to [bit.ly/griffinstowaway](http://bit.ly/griffinstowaway). And it would really mean a lot and help me out a lot if you would do that. It's like 10 bucks, so, it's—and it's a fun romp through outer space.

**Rachel:** Are we gonna get one here? I assume we will.

**Griffin:** Pretty soon. Yeah, quite soon. We also have the last Adventure Zone graphic novel, which comes out in July, *Story and Song*. And I'm so, so, so proud of it! You can pre-order that at [theadventurezonecomic.com](http://theadventurezonecomic.com).

**Rachel:** In my head, they came out at the same time, so I'm glad that you clarified.

**Griffin:** They absolutely don't. They do not. There's a pretty big—pretty big gap. You don't want to compete with yourself, you know what I mean?

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

**Griffin:** That's it for the show this week, thank you so much for listening, and we will be back with a new one next time. So, keep it locked and stay cool. Have a great summer. Love you like a sister. And...

**Rachel:** Take care of those beautiful eyes.

**Griffin:** And take care of those beautiful eyes. I signed your crack. Bye.

**Rachel:** [chuckles]

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

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