

Wonderful! 411: Boy Movement Equals Sleep

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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: [chuckles] And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Wonderful is this show, you're listening to it. It's a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. And folks, the year is 2026—

Rachel: What do you think the next thing is? So, okay, so first it was just audio, and now it's video.

Griffin: Snooze fest!

Rachel: And what's the next thing?

Griffin: Touch.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Podcasts gonna touch. I know we are—it's important to sort of set boundaries and avoid kind of toxic parasocial dynamics. But also touch is the next pod—is the next podcast thing. How is it gonna—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: How does it work?

Rachel: Well, hey, it's good that you and I have been working out, because they'll get some muscles.

Griffin: That's true. That's true!

Rachel: They'll get some muscles when they touch. [chuckles]

Griffin: You will know the touch of Wonderful, from the strength of—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: We're not dinosaurs. We're hip, young, *fresh* talent. And I wanna—you grimaced when I said that, and now people—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And baby, let me say something, because I do a little video stuff—

Rachel: It's just the word "young," I...

Griffin: I mean, compared—

Rachel: I don't know that it's appropriate anymore. [chuckles]

Griffin: I guess maybe not, but I am talent—

Rachel: Can you say "I am talent" sincerely?

Griffin: I am talent. When you do a live show, like all of the like... like the security people there refer to you as talent. And it always does make me feel *hugely* uncomfortable.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But it does also make me feel like the—

Rachel: Are you like—are you like, "Hey, Talent, was my father. Call me Griffin."

Griffin: Call me Mr. Talent. Call me Mr. Worldwide.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: No, I don't big time pretty much anyone ever for any reason. But it does make me feel like I'm the president and I have like a special code name. And I do like that part of it, the code name part of it.

Rachel: Yeah, no, that's a good point.

Griffin: Do you have any—do you have any Small Wonder, babe? Do you have any Small Wonders?

Rachel: I'm gonna say games that we can play with our children where we don't have to move our bodies.

Griffin: Wow, that's specific. Can you give me an example of what you're talking about?

Rachel: Last night, you were moving a little flashlight on the ground, and they were chasing it. [chuckles]

Griffin: Sometimes they like to pretend to be little kitty cats, and they—and we need them to move. Because, boy, movement equals sleep for us.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so, yeah, I'm not proud of it, but I was just shining a little flashlight around on the ground and letting them chase it like kitty cats.

Rachel: There was also a game where you were playing fetch with Gus. I walked in on that one. And you were very defensive immediately. [chuckles] You were like, "He asked me."

Griffin: He wanted to do it! I—

Rachel: "He asked me!" [laughs]

Griffin: I would never, ever, ever do that as a—it's so demeaning and dehumani—but like, he wanted to pretend to be a little puppy boy, and so, yeah, I'll play fetch with you, absolutely. It's the next best thing to playing catch with a kid, I think. Which is a classic sort of like father/child—

Rachel: We're working our way up there.

Griffin: Maybe. Maybe. I've seen them catch things before.

Rachel: Yeah. It helps if it's like a big thing.

Griffin: It does help if it's a big thing. I'm going to say, oh, we got these Lego smart brick Star Wars sets, and they're *okay*... I feel like they oversold a little bit like what the smart brick could do.

Rachel: What did you think it was gonna do?

Griffin: I don't know, man! They like talked about how it would be like, you know, "The Lego play of the future," and it will know what you're putting it on and make special sounds. And it does kind of do that stuff, but it's also like, I don't know, it has been a little bit hit or miss. However, Gus has gotten very into sort of like the Star Wars ships and droids and stuff.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Wanted to learn more about R2D2 and what have you.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I don't know, Henry never really showed a ton of interest in that stuff.

Rachel: True.

Griffin: Although, he was pumped when we saw that Mandalorian and Grogu trailer before—oh, Hoppers also! That could be a good Small Wonder?

Rachel: Yeah, we saw Hoppers!

Griffin: We saw Hoppers and it's good!

Rachel: I did not know—

Griffin: It was a fun flick.

Rachel: This movie existed like a week ago.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And my dad was telling me about it. And then Henry was like, "Oh, yeah, I wanna see Hoppers." And we were very excited about that, because we really like seeing movies with our kids. Because again, sit still. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. Not a lot of boy movement in that, so it doesn't convert over to sleep. You do have to like—

Rachel: True, I know.

Griffin: There is a comeuppance that comes after watching it. But yeah, it was nice, it was a nice movie. I feel like—I worry sometimes about a movie that, you know, it has a very, very strong sort of environmentalist message, and is all about sort of how we live alongside nature. And I always, I don't know, I worry sometimes that like that is going to be presented in lieu of like character development.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Or like as a shorthand for like, and now you have to—but they—I don't know, it was—it was just a fun romp from start to finish. Really, really—Bobby Moynihan turned in a killer performance.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just a fun flick, start to—start to finish.

Rachel: Really charming. We did see the trailer for the new Toy Story. How did that make you feel?

Griffin: Better than the initial reveal trailer for Toy Story 5, which is basically now there's tablets, and the tablets—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The tablets is the bad guys.

Rachel: And the kid doesn't play with the toys anymore because of the tablet.

Griffin: But then this trailer is like, "Yeah, we're really doing this. But you know us, you know Buzz. Now there's like 100 Buzzes! You love this."

Rachel: I was more worried that it was going to be a movie that I would go to and I would feel guilty.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And I would feel preached to.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And then my kids would still come home and want to watch screens anyway. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's—I mean, yeah, I think—what is a movie theater but a big iPad? And so, what, I'm supposed to go there and take my kids to the big iPad, so that Woody and friends can tell me what a bad parent I am? I don't think so, Woody and friends. You go first this week.

Rachel: I do. So, my topic, I think, started kind of general, and then it got smaller. Because originally, I was just going to talk about just musical guest actors appearing on Sesame Street.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because back when we got to watch Sesame Street—and I think we could again, we just have to get it in the algorithm.

Griffin: We do, yeah.

Rachel: There are some real good bops. A lot of like parody songs of existing like pop songs—

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: On Sesame Street. Everyone that goes on just seems delighted to be there. And then I feel like, you know, the characters are always a little winky about like, "We know who this guy is."

Griffin: Yeah, I've always loved that vibe. That is not what you are bringing—

Rachel: No.

Griffin: I would say, to this particular episode.

Rachel: What I am bringing is the first celebrity guest on Sesame Street.

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: And that is James Earl Jones.

Griffin: Yeah, I didn't know he was the first.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I didn't know that that was the—okay, that makes a lot more sense. Because the vibe of the segment that you brought to us today—and I do think we can play like a little bit of the audio of it, just to kind of give people a feel for what we're talking about, was so mesmerizing.

Rachel: Yes, exactly.

Griffin: And perplexing.

Rachel: Exactly. So, this is James Earl Jones on Sesame Street, reciting the ABCs.

[excerpt plays]

James Earl Jones: A... B... C... D... E... F... G... H... I... J...

[excerpt ends]

Griffin: I don't know how much of that we were able to play.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But you truly do need to watch it to see the facial expression—

Rachel: It's just him—

Griffin: He runs the gamut, man.

Rachel: It's just him barreling the camera, plain background. His head is shaved because he was filming a movie at the time that required that. And it's just him not breaking eye contact, in that deep James Earl Jones voice.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Reciting the alphabet like he is auditioning for a man that recites the alphabet.

Griffin: And he'll go on stretches like C through F, it's like, he seems pretty disappointed in the alphabet.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But then you hit I, and he gives you a little wink, and it's like, oh, we're just playing around. And then J—

Rachel: J, explosive.

Griffin: Is fucking—J is—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Jay looks like—his response—his sort of facial reaction to J is as if he is saying like, "Who, what? Me? J?"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like there's a like, a clasp of pearls and like a—[gasps] *hah*. A like... rearing backward during J. But then he get—then he starts getting—having some fun with it toward the latter letters. Just a truly, just staggering performance.

Rachel: What is really significant is that like space in between each letter is so powerful, and so like uniquely something that only he could really do.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: To like sit in the comfort of that, I feel like most people could not.

Griffin: There's like a weird reverse echo. I don't know if this was like—

Rachel: I noticed that! Maybe that was just the video.

Griffin: It could have just been the video, or otherwise, Sesame Street was on some pretty psychedelic shit.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Because like, you would hear before he says like, "P!" You were hear like, "P, P, P, P," right before he said it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And it would, I don't know, it was just a trip.

Rachel: Well, I started to wonder, so, I tried to find information about this video. And there was an education researcher from Children's Television Workshop who said, "Mr. Jones' recitation of the alphabet takes a full minute and a half. At the time the sequence was made, his head was shaved for the role of Jack Johnson in *The Great White Hope*.

His immense, hollow voice booms the letter names ominously." And then he says, "The letter is shown on the screen a second or so before he says the name of the letter, and there is a pause. This pattern allows kids to say the name of the letter if they recognize it, and then have the name reinforced by Jones.

If kids don't know it, they repeat it after him." They coined this the "James Earl Jones effect," about talking about how if kids are more visual or have auditory processing issues, seeing the letter displayed, and then seeing Jones' clear mouth movements as he slowly says each letter are helpful learning aids.

Griffin: He does—he does—the way his mouth moves is really profound. He really makes a meal out of every sort of annunciation.

Rachel: He gave an interview, this is really funny, he talked about when he was first sitting down with the people that were putting the show together, because he was there in 1969, and he said, "I've got to warn you, the Cookie Monster and the Muppet characters will not work, because they'll terrify children." [chuckles]

Griffin: He said that about Sesame—

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: Oh my god!

Rachel: He was so certain that it would be like too much for kids.

Griffin: Hm. I think of all the... beings on Sesame Street—I mean, I don't know who was around in '69, but like Big Bird was part of the original cast.

Rachel: Yeah, mm-hm.

Griffin: That was a huge bird, like I think that's maybe, of the—of the original set, may be the scariest. Cookie Monster? No.

Rachel: Yeah, but he does eat everything like voraciously, which—

Griffin: No, he doesn't eat everything voraciously. He eats cookies voraciously, and I am not a cookie.

Rachel: Well, I don't think they introduced Cookie Monster with like a table of food and said, "Eat cookies." I think the only thing you saw was him eating cookies, so there was no reason not to assume he wouldn't do that to everything.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a fair point. He doesn't say like, [spoofing Cookie Monster] "Me no eat kids." He doesn't say, "Me no eat kids."

Rachel: [chuckles] He hosted a walking tour of Sesame Street in 1979, in honor of the show's 10th anniversary, and said on the special, "I'm proud to say that I was the first one they asked to help with the alphabet, and I did it without cue cards."

Griffin: Wow.

[both chuckle]

Rachel: He also says one through 10, if you're looking, that's on YouTube. [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, wow, okay, so—

Rachel: You could see him say—count to 10. I found it so delightful. I feel like James Earl Jones, because you know, like obviously he's been a

celebrated actor for a long time, he was—did theater, movies and television. Him in Field of Dreams is so amazing.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: That speech he gives, that whole like "people will come" speech.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, it's a—it's been played to death as almost like a proto meme. I feel like you hear that reference so much. But like I remember the first time I actually watched Field of Dreams after knowing that just via cultural osmosis and being like, wow, this fucking hits, man! Yeah, for sure.

Rachel: Yeah. Just like... that being the first guest appearance was so powerful, and I love it.

Griffin: I think a lot about the India Arie ABC arrangement.

Rachel: Yeah, gosh, that's a good one!

Griffin: That she sings with Elmo. The [sings] "ABC, ABC."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That gets—

Rachel: There was—

Griffin: That gets stuck in the old noggin from time to time.

Rachel: Feist did—

Griffin: Oh, Feist!

Rachel: One, two, three, four, naturally.

Griffin: Feist!

Rachel: Adam Sandler did his song for Elmo that's incredible.

Griffin: Classic.

Rachel: Yeah, there's a lot of—there's a lot of good ones.

Griffin: Gotta watch this performance, gang. Gotta see James Earl Jones absolutely make a meal of the alphabet.

Rachel: I will say, you won't be surprised in that it is the letters you know.
[chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, no, I mean, there's not...

Rachel: It's just—

Griffin: He doesn't come up with new—although he, I swear to god, he puts an extra syllable in W. The way he—he like puts a pause in there where he's like, "Double you."

[excerpt plays]

James Earl Jones: W.

[excerpt ends]

Griffin: Like...

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: And the emphasis, I don't know, it caught me by surprise, took my breath away.

Rachel: Just powerful.

Griffin: Just really powerful stuff. Hey, can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

Mark: Hey! What's up, everybody? My name is Mark Gagliardi, and I host We got this with Mark and Hal on the Maximum Fun Network. Would you like to introduce yourself as well?

Jesse: My name is Jesse, and I am from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mark: Hi, Jesse from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Jesse, you are our Maximum Fun Member of the Month.

Jesse: I'm so delighted to hear that I'm the Member of the Month. Thank you.

Mark: Is there a first episode that you remember?

Jesse: The pretzel shape episode.

Mark: Yeah!

Jesse: That's pretty classic.

Mark: Both of us just killed off each other's answers and went with pretzel rod, which is clearly not the best.

Jesse: No, that is a terrible pretzel. [chuckles]

Mark: As our member of the month, you have a parking spot at Maximum Fun headquarters, as well as a \$25 gift card to the Maximum Fun Store. We say it at the end of the episode, we wouldn't do without you, and we couldn't do without you. So, thank you for that.

Jesse: You're welcome!

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[break]

[a phone rings]

Caller: Hello?

Benjamin: Hello, I'm calling on behalf of the Beef and Dairy Network podcast.

Caller: No, I'm sorry, no sales calls. Goodbye.

Benjamin: It's a multi-award-winning podcast featuring guests such as Ted Danson, Nick Offerman, Josie Long?

Caller: I don't know what a Josie Long is, and anyway, I'm about to take my mother into town to see Phantom of the Opera, at last! You are wasting my time, and even worse, my mother's time. She only has so much time left! She's 98 years old. She's only expected to live for another 20 or 30 years! Mother, get your shoes on. Yes, the orthopedic ones. I don't want that to carry you home again, do I?

Benjamin: Right, well, if you were looking for a podcast—

Caller: Mother, you're not wearing that are you? It's very revealing, mother. This is a musical theater, not a Parisian bordello.

Benjamin: Simply go to maximumfun.org.

Caller: I'm reaching for my Samsung Galaxy 4 as we speak. Mother! Mother, not that hat!

[break]

Griffin: I try to not bring too many topics to the show that I don't think you have like a ton of direct experience with. I try to do it as a sometimes food. But I've been thinking a lot recently about a sort of landmark event from my childhood, and that was the post-closing night cast party for one of the many community theater productions that I did as a kid. And so, I would like to talk about the cast party today, if I may.

Rachel: Oh, okay, not a specific... a specific one.

Griffin: Like one cast party that I went to, like one kick-ass cast party.

Rachel: The like end-all best cast party of all time.

Griffin: No, god, I couldn't even choose, man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They were also good and memorable in so many different ways. Remind me, your theatric—did you do tech for some stuff? Or am I misremembering that?

Rachel: I never did tech, I—

Griffin: You were in a production of The Vagina Monologues, I believe?

Rachel: [chuckles] That was in college, that was not in high school.

Griffin: I mean, that counts? You can go to a cast party in college, I bet it's even more lit.

Rachel: I did a couple one act plays with my friend, Cat Door, who you have met.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: They had like a spring one act festival.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And so, we wrote—I kind of used her to piggyback, because she was the big musical theater star.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And so, I kind of like snuck in with her and did that. But no cast party—

Griffin: For a one act play? I do think you have to have at least two acts in order to qualify for a cast party.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I don't—I mean, I don't think I've ever been to a cast party.

Griffin: Okay, well then this is—I'm gonna take you behind the curtain.

Rachel: But I have seen Lin Manuel's performance of *Crucible Cast Party* on Saturday Night Live.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, that was very, very—I mean, that's a classic sort of encapsulation sort of the experience.

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: I also think just a lot about that episode of *Pen15*, where—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I think it's just called "Play," where Anna is like the stage manager.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And Maya like, gets cast in the show, and there's like all this drama about like a kiss, and the divide between the cast and the tech.

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: It's really classic. So, if you've never traipsed across the boards, as they say—

[both chuckle]

Griffin: You maybe do not know. It is customary, usually after wrapping sort of the closing night of a production, to have a cast party for the crew, and the cast go out and sort of celebrate. The scale and location of that celebration differs, I imagine, based on the budget of the production in question. For me, growing up, First Stage Theater Company was the name of the company that we—I did most of my work with.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: The most common sort of locales for a cast party, that's either going to be Gino's Pizza Pub, which was like, man, this wild spot on Fifth in Huntington. I don't think it's still open, but like it had a big dining room, obviously pizza for days, but it had this dining room that was all like neon and like red vinyl, and like felt sort of Happy Days kind of esque.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like they were going for a '50s sort of sock hop kind of energy.

Rachel: There was a place in St. Louis called Happy Joe's.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: That, I think, largely had burgers.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: That I went to once after a football game—

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: When I was in marching band. [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean, that sounds amazing. Gino's Pizza Pub also had like a little stage in the dining room, where sometimes they would hire someone to like—

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: Sing. And they, I remember every time I went there, like a guy would lead everyone in doing the YMCA. He'd be like, "Get up. We're doing YMCA dance." And I remember thinking like, "I gotta get out of here."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Because there was also a huge arcade at Gino's Pub, so it made it like kind of the perfect spot for a cast party.

Rachel: Oh... I always assumed the cast party was at somebody's house?

Griffin: So, that is the other kind of—the other one is Applebee's. That was just for us.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, that—and that always felt like last minute like, "Oh, shit, we didn't play anything. Let's just take the kids to Applebee's."

Rachel: That's, yeah, I went to their—I went there and like Steak 'n Shake after a lot of football games.

Griffin: Yeah. And it was like whatever. But they—the grown-ups usually paid for all the apps and `sserts and stuff, so like that was all right.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But yes, someone's house was kind of, for me, the most kind of exciting cast party opportunity. Because like that's sort of a weird vibe for a kid, I think, to be going to like a roving party inside someone's house, usually someone involved with—I mean, always someone involved with this show. Where people kind of just hang out in small groups, in different rooms, without much parent like direct adult supervision.

Rachel: Yeah. Because your experience with like a house party prior to that is like a birthday party.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And birthday parties are very structured.

Griffin: Very, very, very structured, right? Like, it's not like you're at a birthday party where you're going to the gym factory to bounce around on the trampolines, or you know, doing it at Gino's Pizza Pub and going to the arcade.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like it's not—it's just kind of how adults hang out in a house at a party.

Rachel: Yeah, that's a good point.

Griffin: And that was like pretty exciting. The stuff that happens at a cast party, lots of singing, in my experience. Either music from the show that was just concluded, or from *Rent*, which I imagine is still part of the repertoire of theater people.

Rachel: Like karaoke? Or just—

Griffin: I don't even think we—the machine was not necessary. I feel like—

Rachel: You would just stand around—

Griffin: I would not. This was not usually my—I would not usually lead us in song or prayer.

Rachel: Even when you had the lead role?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In *Seussical*.

Griffin: If there was a piano and someone was like playing it and doing songs from the show, like yeah, I'll get up in there. I'll do a little bit of it. Please, don't make me sing. Please, don't make me sing.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But it's like, you know, a natural sort of thing that theatrical sort of minded kids want to—want to do. And they just finished doing it on a stage, so like yeah, they're gonna keep singing at the cast party, of course.

Rachel: This is something I've talked to Griffin about recently, is that it's hard for me to reconcile theater kid Griffin with the kid I know now. Because theater kid Griffin, I associate with what I understood to be theater kids, which was just very like comfortable being in the center of attention, just like very... loud and expressive. And like the theater kids I knew like announced themselves proudly.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I just feel like you're... you're not that guy?

Griffin: No, I didn't—I wasn't so much. I don't think so. I mean, I'm not gonna tell tales out of school. Like, I loved—I loved, I don't know, the feeling of having attention.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I was—I was, and remain, like pretty nervous about performing, about being in front of people and performing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But like, there was and still is like something very exciting about kind of like tackling that anyways.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That I always really liked. But mostly for me it was just like... there is a—there is a sort of energy that I think most theater kids kind of possess, which is this sort of flair for the—for the dramatic. Like being very kind of like in touch with your emotions.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Being like hugely sort of romantic about events or people.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And so like, doing theater definitely did that. And also, at the cast party, like there is that incredibly bittersweet sort of last day at camp energy.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That is just the sweetest ambrosia to someone like me as a kid.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Where there's, you know, you're wiping tears on your matching show T shirts and like talking about how you'll never forget this experience, when odds are, you're all going to audition for the next show in a couple months anyways.

Rachel: To me, I envision like an I can't hardly wait situation where you're like, "This is my last shot."

Griffin: Oh, I mean, yes.

Rachel: Like if I had a showmance that the other person maybe didn't know about. [chuckles]

Griffin: Thank you so much for bringing up the showmance, because as a—as a young romantic—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The cast party was sort of like a major inflection point. It really was a speak now or forever hold your peace, if you want to—if you want this showmance to happen!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And usually I would never, ever act on it before the cast party. For me—

Rachel: Unprofessional.

Griffin: No, absolutely.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You don't want to—the art comes first.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: That's all there is to it.

Rachel: No, I know.

Griffin: But also like, isn't it even more romantic to start up a showmance that lasts for about an hour and a half until the cast party is over.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And then you break up on AOL Instant Messenger like two days later. Isn't that better? Isn't that so much better that way? I think so.

Rachel: Well, you can use it, you know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You can use that tension in your performance, and it can really power you to a level that maybe you couldn't get to otherwise.

Griffin: No, absolutely. And then maybe, you know, maybe you hold hands behind the piano, where someone's playing Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, or whatever.

Rachel: Is this true? Is this—

Griffin: No, it's a—it's an example.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But it's one that feels true, doesn't it?

Rachel: It does! [chuckles]

Griffin: It feels very true. I don't know, I am hesitant to sort of project my own stuff out there, but I felt like the thing I loved most about doing theater was the people that I did theater with. And some of those people are still, you know, my closest friends.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I think that one of the reasons that like theater kids bond so much, especially during cast parties and things like that, is like... I don't know, I had this very strong desire to have meaningful, dramatic things happen to me in my life.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I didn't really have much of an avenue for that elsewhere. And I also like, you know, at church or at school or whatever, like I wasn't really seeing a lot of other kids that were feeling that way. And so, being in an environment where like that is something that everyone is kind of striving for all at once, like made me feel very... normal and made me feel very like, like I was fitting in in a way that I maybe didn't get in a ton of—in a ton of other places.

Rachel: I had such a complicated relationship with it because I was really drawn to it, because I wanted to find people that were funny and creative, and that was kind of like the easiest like shopping mall of people that were funny and creative. [chuckles]

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But I also was so incredibly introverted.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That like I couldn't really feel like I was fitting in, you know?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, I was enjoying the company and the people, but then I also felt like, I can't match this. [chuckles]

Griffin: No, yeah. I would—yeah. I mean, you could have done tech? You could have done tech.

Rachel: That—eh..

Griffin: You would have been great. You as a prop—a props—a props manager?

Rachel: The people that did tech were not...

Griffin: Careful. Hey, please be very, very careful.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Please be very, very, very, very careful. Not for me.

Rachel: It's too far the other way, I guess.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I guess. I'm definitely not an extrovert, and I am introverted, but not at the point where I want to like wear all black and like hide behind a curtain, I guess.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I want to be somewhere in the middle.

Griffin: Yeah. The loneliest—

Rachel: Where do I go?

Griffin: The loneliest job was spotlight operator.

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: I was spotlight operator, and you're just like up in the balcony, by yourself.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: For long stretches of time. At least stage manager, you get that cool fucking headset, and you get to like talk to other—that was always like, I don't know, such a—that's why that episode of Pen15 absolutely kills me.

Rachel: Oh my god, it's so good.

Griffin: But yeah, I don't know, I—the cast party is such a—there's so many hormones kind of just sort of coursing through the, you know, drywall of the house where the cast party is taking place. Like they're pumping it in through the HVAC systems.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And I just have so many kind of like memories from that, for so many reasons, because it's kind of just this like culmination of all the reasons why I was doing theater as a kid. And knowing that I was like at a

party with people who were kind of feeling the same way. Like, if I had brought one of my like church buddies to a cast party—

Rachel: Yeah, too much.

Griffin: There's no way, dude.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: They could not hang, they simply couldn't.

Rachel: No, that's intense. Well, and they wouldn't know the songs.

Griffin: They would not know the songs. They would probably enjoy some of the Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat stuff, until it got a little bit too...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know... interpretive, I guess.

Rachel: Can you sing the order of the colors when they—when that coat...

Griffin: I gotta work my way up to it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: [sings] It was red and yellow and black and green and blue and... violet and...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] Orange and purple and... indigo, and...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: [sings] Crimson and cerulean and—

Rachel: No, it can't be cerulean—

Griffin: Brown! And gray and... yellow and—did I do yellow already?

Rachel: Yeah, I think so. [chuckles]

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

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Sarah says, "My Small Wonder is a ginger beer that is extra spicy. I don't want a ginger-flavored soda, I want an assault on my senses. I want to sneeze from the effervescence of this spicy beverage."

Rachel: Oh...

Griffin: "I want to feel the ginger in my sinuses. I want the drink to fight back and leave its mark of my taste buds."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "I think that's just wonderful."

Rachel: Was it—was it the Maine brand? M-A-I-N-E?

Griffin: Maine had some spicy shit, but there was a place in Austin we would get from the farmers market.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That was not—I don't think that was—

Rachel: Oh, yeah! Yeah, yeah, I know—I know what you're talking about though. I don't actually enjoy typically like a very kind of low-level ginger beer, I also like the super-intense—

Griffin: I need it spicy.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't drink really a ton at all these days, but I would—I fucked so hard with ginger beer as a cocktail mixer.

Rachel: Yeah. Because of your tummy.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, it helped the tummy, but also like you can't taste the yucky.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Because of how incredibly assertive the ginger beer flavor was.

Rachel: Yeah, it's true.

Griffin: Shannon says, "In honor of last week's episode, my Small Wonder is a hockey celly I witnessed as a teenager. It came from a 14-year-old girl on the opposing team. She flung herself down in an upright sitting position, slid across the ice, and used her stick to paddle like she was kayaking. It was random, I forgot to be mad she scored on me."

Rachel: I've seen like a version of that.

Griffin: Yeah. Like all these ones where you have to squat down, the core work and like the leg muscles—

Rachel: Muskles. [titters]

Griffin: Seems like it would have to be crazy.

Rachel: The presence of mind, you know? I mean, I guess if you get used to scoring goals, you're able to recover quickly. But when I think about scoring a goal, I feel like I would just kind of be so elated.

Griffin: I'd lose my mind, yeah.

Rachel: I would forget like to do a fun little thing. [chuckles]

Griffin: I would drop to my knees. I would absolutely—

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: There would be just a full kernel panic, like I would—I would cease to—cease to function. Gosh, I bet it feels so good to score a goal.

Rachel: I bet it feels incredible!

Griffin: I bet it feels so good!

Rachel: I still remember in my gym class in elementary school when I scored a goal, when we were playing street hockey.

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Rachel: It happened from the other side of the like "ice."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I just like shot towards the goal, and it went in. And I like raised my arms in jubilation, and then I realized nobody saw me do it, or realized it happened. [chuckles]

Griffin: Can you imagine how good William Eklund felt after he scored that crazy goal where he was like upside down and he like batted it out of the air?

Rachel: Oh my god.

Griffin: Folks, if you do not watch hockey, please watch the goal, the San José Sharks player named William Eklund scored a few days ago. It is the craziest shit I've ever seen in my whole, whole entire life.

Rachel: Yeah, it's not uncommon for a player to hit a puck out of the air, but this man was also like falling to the ice—

Griffin: In midair, yeah.

Rachel: When he did it.

Griffin: And he pivoted a full 180 degrees to turn around and bat it.

Rachel: Amazing.

Griffin: It was so fucking cool. 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 thank you so much to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great stuff they've got going on over there. I've been listening to a lot of Triple Click lately, it's a gaming podcast that is very insightful and just a really enjoyable listen.

We got merch over at mcelroymerch.com, and I have a book out. I'll probably only talk about it for another couple weeks here, but it's called The Stowaway. It's a Choose Your Own Adventure book, it's 10 bucks, bit.ly/griffinstowaway is where you can go. And I'm doing a couple of events to sort of like talk about the book, one here in DC that's actually sold out, which is very exciting.

Rachel: Oh, wow!

Griffin: So, yeah, please think about grabbing that book, because I'm real proud of it, and...

Rachel: It's so good, guys. It's so good. Our big son really fell into it the past few days, and it's so wonderful.

Griffin: It's great. He's given me a lot of feedback. [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs] He just has ideas, right?

Griffin: Yeah, no, it makes me very, very excited. Like yeah, I'm—oh, I get very emotional sort of like thinking about it, so...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And you know I love that shit now, that I've talked about cast parties.

Rachel: You like to go to whole parties where people are emotional.

Griffin: I do like to go to emotion parties.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Anyway, that's it, thank you so much for listening. We'll be back next week with a new episode. So, keep it locked, stay tuned. Be good, be nice, and have fun, and goodbye.

Rachel: Goodbye!

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

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