

Wonderful! 420: We Put in the Work to Make the Good Love

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello! This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful! It's a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. Could be anything. It's a surprise slime bag—

Rachel: Big, flowy pants!

Griffin: Whoa! [makes an explosion sound]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You don't even know when they're gonna come at you! You probably thought you had a good minute or two before we started talking about good stuff, but Rachel's out here she's throwing fucking haymakers!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: From the starting gun.

Rachel: I wanted to say it before I forgot it!

Griffin: That's awesome.

Rachel: That's my Small Wonder.

Griffin: That's awesome! You've never done this before!

Rachel: [chuckles] I know!

Griffin: That's so cool. You just like had the—you—folks, you can see the moment the magic happens!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: People have never seen you have that inspiration strike, and now we've captured it live on camera. That's so exciting.

Rachel: Oh, I've got another one.

Griffin: Oh, shit!

Rachel: When you mentioned video, you know, the little clips of the video clips of Wonderful.

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: And everybody always says really nice things in the comments!

Griffin: Yeah, they talk about how in love we are.

Rachel: How in love we are.

Griffin: It's like... [chuckles] yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's true.

Rachel: Yeah. And I'm—I know the internet is a scary place, but it really restored my faith in social media, I guess.

Griffin: Well, social media didn't do it, we put in the work to make the good love!

Rachel: No, I'm talking about the comm—

Griffin: We made the good love, and everybody else is talking—

Rachel: I'm talking about the comments.

Griffin: And I'm glad people are recognizing it. I just want credit to go where credit is due, which is us doing the work for the good love we make.

[pause]

Rachel: Eh...

Griffin: Eh...

Rachel: I don't like that.

Griffin: I didn't like it either.

Rachel: We don't really say "make love" in this house. [titters]

Griffin: We don't. We don't make love. [chuckles] I didn't want to finish the line. Isn't that the line from Fifty Shades of Grey when he's like, "I don't make love, I F." You saw this movie! I did not see—

Rachel: No! I never did.

Griffin: I thought you went with like our friends in Austin?

Rachel: Uh-oh! New bonus content.

Griffin: I actually don't think I can.

Rachel: No, I saw—I saw Magic Mike 2.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: With friends in the theater. I saw The Notebook at somebody's house.

Griffin: Did you see a Twilight? One of the Twilights?

Rachel: No, never seen a Twilight!

Griffin: Oh, okay. Maybe I imagine this. Anyway, my Small Wonder—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: My Small Wonder, I se—I set that up. You caught me by surprise with your—with your sneak attack Small Wonder.

Rachel: I know, I'm sorry.

Griffin: I bought a new suite of virtual instruments called Omnisphere 3. I bought it while you were out of town. It was—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Pretty expensive. But I was looking for some inspiration, because I haven't been messing around with some of my other VSTs.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's pretty crazy, man! There's like 70,000 fuckin' sounds on this thing.

Rachel: Why did you think it was important to say that you bought it while I was out of town?

Griffin: I think that the... price of it, I don't know, when you weren't around, I felt like... mm—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm gonna by a sneaky little virtual instrument.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I mean, it's ostensibly for work, but I haven't had the most time to do music for TAZ lately. But also like, I don't know, I've been struggling to find sounds that excite me. And I realized that I like that sort of inspiration as a jumping off point for like making a song.

Rachel: It's a business expense.

Griffin: So, this is the one that like a lot of people were like, this is the big dog. This is the big dog leagues.

Rachel: What kind of sounds you got on there?

Griffin: Oh, man, got that one that's like [makes a boi-oing sound effect] and we got that one that's like [spoofs drum sounds]. So like, all the hits.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: All the big ones. No, it's like a sampler with like a bunch of sounds, but it's also, you know, a wavetable oscillator, with a lot of different capabilities.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: And so, I barely understand what that is.

Rachel: Okay, okay.

Griffin: For what it is worth.

Rachel: All right.

Griffin: Sound makes different shapes on a wave.

Rachel: I do know that.

Griffin: Sometimes it's square, and sometimes it's triangle. Sometimes it's a saw. Are there any other—circle waves? I don't think that's—oh, I've lost you. You're gone.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I—

Griffin: You just went to play a game on your phone while I was trying to explain—

Rachel: [laughs] No, I was checking for a text message. I feel like it's very probable that our five year old understands making music in the, you know, computer space more than I do.

Griffin: I've seen him on GarageBand tweaking the attack value on a synth keyboard. And I've never felt prouder as a papa.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is a good jumping off point for my topic today.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: If I may. I'm really excited for this segment, because I worked really hard on it. By the time I finished prepping this segment, I had 15 Chrome tabs open on my computer—

Rachel: Wow! Okay.

Griffin: It was running hot. I would like to talk about Brazilian phonk.

Rachel: Wow! I bet you had to learn a lot, huh?

Griffin: I did learn a lot.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: This may—this almost certainly is a thing where we are—

Rachel: Did you find out, is it said "fonk?"

Griffin: I got everything you need, baby.

Rachel: Okay, okay.

Griffin: Do you really think I would prep this segment without learning about that?

Rachel: I just wanted to get to that quickly, because it seems important.

Griffin: It is. It is very important. This is—this is something that is very big and very, very popular online. And it's probably much larger than we can really comprehend. So, let me set the table sort of for folks who don't live with us immediately.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Our little son fucking loves Brazilian phonk!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It's all he wants to listen to. He's been—he's been like into electronic music since he could like walk. He loves dancing and he loves music. He loves Daft Punk, he loves Justice, he loves Skrillex.

Rachel: He was the one who really started aggressively saying in our house, "Here comes the drop." [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah! He's big into drops. And he's had like some, like Rachel mentioned, like he goofs around on GarageBand all the time.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And we've gotten him all these little kid synths, and he's like really into it. But now he sort of got into music YouTube through that space, watching like indie electronic artists. There's one called Beachcrimes that like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: We listen to a lot, and they sort of show their work on making that music. And I think it was through that vector that he became obsessed with a genre of music that the internet calls Brazilian phonk. And I guar—that's P-H-O-N-K. And I guarantee you, if you do not recognize that term, you would recognize a few of the genre's sort of top hits from the trillion TikToks and Instagram reels and YouTube shorts on which they appear. To prove this fact, I will play a little bit of one of these songs. This one's called "Montagem Xonada," by a London-based artist named MXZI. And just on TikTok alone, this song has been used in over three million videos, three million individual videos. Not views, individual videos—

Rachel: Wow, yeah.

Griffin: Utilize this song. A note to our editor, Rachel, don't turn it up very loud, because people might be listening like on their car speakers, and I'll explain more about that shortly.

Rachel: Okay. [chuckles]

["Montagem Xonada" by MXZI plays]

Griffin: So, there's a lot of recurring elements in the sort of Brazilian phonk chart toppers. That's a hard thing to get through. And even sort of like not knowing the width and depth of the space, just from our exposure to Brazilian phonk and how much are some wants to only listen to it in the car, you can probably sort of work out what those recurring elements are.

Like the incredibly distorted sort of kick drum and bass, the vocal samples and the sort of backbeat rhythms and that cowbell, that electronic sort of cowbell sound that's in like all of the songs. There is a lot of similarities between a lot of these sort of like big, have blown up on social media Brazilian phonk songs, which does, as an English speaking man who is not familiar with the Portuguese language, it does make it difficult to find the so—the song that our son is requesting a lot of the time.

Rachel: Yeah! No kidding.

Griffin: Because he can si—he can try and like sing it. He's like, "I want that one that's like [sings a tune]." That was almost Soulja Boy Tell'em, but like—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's the—it's hard to kind of like parse that. So, this genre of music, Brazilian phonk, is an extremely online sort of subcategory of music. It traces its roots back to a bunch of different places. But I really do en—I do enjoy it. I do enjoy it on a few levels, primarily just because Gus loves it so much and it provokes this wild dancing that is like my favorite thing ever. He cannot get enough of it. But it also like, I think it very much scratches an itch in your brain of like, "I want some hea—I want that heavy shit." Brazilian phonk does deliver.

Rachel: I mean, dance music, there's al—like, there's always something really kind of magnetic about it, you know?

Griffin: Yeah! And this genre has like exploded on these social media sort of short-form platforms, so they are designed to almost be like instant like—*fff*—like dopamine hit style stuff.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: And I think there's a lot of the... I don't know, the composition of these songs that makes them kind of perfect for that. So, here is a brief history of Brazilian phonk!

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: I want to thank Fader, who did a video charting the sort of origins of the genre a couple of years ago, because it is—it is a lot. So, we'll start with the Brazilian side of things, of Brazilian phonk. In the '80s, in the favelas of Rio, which is sort of the like more impoverished like hillside neighborhoods of the city, where you get like a lot of sort of incubation of

arts and culture, DJs started to mix bass and synth from like Miami hip hop records—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: In with like traditional Afro Brazilian sort of percussion and rhythms.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And this genre was called funk carioca—still called funk carioca. And that's where like, that's where you start to see like the DNA of Brazilian phonk kind of take shape. There is a rhythm employed in funk carioca called *tamborzão*, which is like a kind of fast-paced sort of swing beat that puts a lot of emphasis on the backbeat, that *dun-dun-da-da-da-da*.

That is like, almost every Brazilian phonk song has that kind of backbeat rhythm. There is a subgenre of funk carioca that is called—that originated in Brazil, called funk automotivo, which has a lot of the sort of fundamentals of funk carioca, but with super distorted, super crunchy, super nasty like bass and beats, designed to rattle or blow out the speakers of one's automobile—

Rachel: Oh! Okay.

Griffin: Hence the name. So, it is basically what the rest of the world calls Brazilian phonk, but very few people living in Brazil, from what I could tell, call it that. It is funk automotivo—

Rachel: Yeah! Okay.

Griffin: And it existed there—

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: It existed there long before this sort of like, I don't know, this other subgenre of Brazilian phonk sort of came about in the late 2010s or so.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Funk automotivo was very, very similar to this thing. So, the phonk designation, that's P-H-O-N-K, is like a misnomer in several different ways. Phonk, the genre, originally was a sort of subgenre of like lo-fi Memphis rap. There's an artist named SpaceGhostPurrp who pioneered the phonk space. And it's not that similar to like what you hear, specifically from Brazilian phonk.

It had like sort of distortions and '90s hip hop samples and these old sort of... what is it, 808 like drum machines. But it didn't sound too much like what the internet calls phonk, right? If you go—if you search that term on Spotify or whatever, you find like a million different sort of mostly remixes of different songs or genres done in this kind of like really distorted kind of crunchy style. That is a subgenre called drift phonk.

Rachel: Oh my god.

Griffin: Which came out of Russia and Ukraine and Belarus and other sort of Eastern European countries in the 2010s.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: You start to see that kind of blow up on your Soundclouds from DJs living in Eastern Europe largely. And that genre of drift phonk, which then just sort of got shortened down to phonk, even though that was already a thing, went sort of thermonuclear when folks started to use it in their—in their short form videos, right?

That is where you get those sort of like blown out bass lines, is from drift phonk, that's where you get that electronic cowbell sound, the chopped and screwed vocals. And then when some of those DJs started to incorporate elements of funk karaoke, the resulting music went sort of like hyper viral and was rebranded Brazilian phonk. But it was not sort of—phonk did not birth Brazilian phonk, right?

Like this sound existed as far back as the '80s in Brazil, and had this one specific version of it that was super-crunchy called funk automotivo.

And then these other DJs who were like making this really crunchy, crunchy, mostly remixed dance music in the 2010s in Eastern Europe started to incorporate some of those kind of rhythms and sounds from funk karaoke. And then it was called Brazilian phonk, even though that's not exactly accurate.

Rachel: I would love—because what you're describing is really like a global melting pot. And it makes me wish when I was working at World Market all those years ago, and they would play world music—

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: That this is what they played instead.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, man, I mean, I—working in a big box retailer to Brazilian phonk, that might be too much sort of exposure.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This was originally sort of—like funk automotivo was like music that you would have blasting on your car speakers while you, you know, drove through a street party or whatever in Rio de Janeiro. It was not as sort of—there is a sort of mimetic element, I will say, to Brazilian phonk, where it is—because it is—it came from the internet in such a, I don't know, traceable way.

Like there is a lot of kind of meme culture, and there are people who, you know, use this sort of drift phonk genre as a sort of comedy vector. Like making like a remix of the Spongebob Squarepants theme or the fuckin' Thomas the Tank Engine theme song, but in this like really funky, nasty sort of vibrating style. That was not sort of a hallmark of funk automotivo.

But there is a thing, if you are looking at a list of like the most popular Brazilian phonk tracks, a lot of them have this word "montagem," which

means "assembly." So basically, this was an element of funk karaoke where they would sample, you know, at parties and... in their sort of like remixes, they would take songs that did not have these like really, really heavy sort of Afro-Brazilian beats and rhythms, and would put them together, would assemble them in that style.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: So, that's where you get—if you search "montagem," you will find like another big song is "Montagem Hikari," which uses Japanese vocals, but has—

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: All of these different other—there's "Montagem Sonic," which I think uses Sonic the Hedgehog music.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But puts like this sort of other element on top.

Rachel: That's cool!

Griffin: So like, it's cool. It's complicated, right? Because there is an element of the internet saying like, "Hm, this is Brazilian!" And there being a definite sort of pre-existing thing. It's basically kind of incorporating or appropriating, I guess, like a couple different things, both in the Brazilian side of things and the phonk side of things, to make this thing that isn't really what it's named. There's also a lot of people who are very annoyed by this type of music, because it is every—if you just scroll through—I don't know if you're on any social media platforms where you scroll through short form videos ever, but if you do, you hear nonstop these tracks.

Rachel: Yeah. Interesting.

Griffin: And I can see it growing a little long in the tooth, if that is the case. As music for our son to like put on at night when we're trying to wear him out and just have him dance like a man possessed?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You can do much, much worse. So, that is Brazilian phonk. It's a sub-genre I hope people at home are familiar with, just from exposure to the internet, generally speaking. But I didn't know anything about it—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Despite the fact that it's like on every other sort of—

Rachel: So it is phonk?

Griffin: It is phonk. Which is originally phonk which came out of sort of like the Memphis rap scene. It was ju—I mean, that was just a slang term for funk, basically it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: But it's not... I don't—I don't think it's that funky? Like fu—American funk has its own—

Rachel: Yeah, exactly—

Griffin: Like it's own different—

Rachel: That's why I like appreciate the distinction.

Griffin: So it's like, I don't know, the name is—the name is weird, but the music is pure and powerful.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad read]

Rachel: Are you ready?

Griffin: Oh, yeah!

Rachel: My Wonderful thing this week is Saturday morning cartoons.

Griffin: All right, dude! [sings] 'One Saturday morning!' I know the Saturday morning cartoons existed—do you know about [sings] 'one Saturday morning.'

Rachel: No?

Griffin: I think it was ABC?

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: It was like their shows. And they were all pretty bad, but they had like this packaging for—you know how ABC was all about like TGIF and like... they liked to package a bunch of shows together as one bigger product.

Rachel: Yeah, I mean, the—oh, it's Disney!

Griffin: Oh, was it?

Rachel: Disney did One Saturday Morning.

Griffin: Oh, yeah, maybe the... I mean, ABC—

Rachel: I didn't have Disney Channel as a kid...

Griffin: I really made myself out—I really sort of... I don't know, revealed myself as a one-percenter, I guess.

Rachel: [chuckles] People today probably don't understand, the difference like in your cable package, or lack of cable, was like a real talking point among friends.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because if you were going to go over to somebody's house, they either had like seven channels or 100.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I remember dad did like a remote or something for some cable company that had just moved to West Virginia, and we got a box. And for a year we had like all the shit. All the shit! And just for a year though, they were not going to cover it past that. So I had Disney for a year or so. Yeah. But then we definitely did pay for it a bit, because I had to have my One Saturday Morning.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Anyway, Saturday morning cartoons are great.

Rachel: So, I have really fond memories of Saturday morning cartoons. But I've mentioned this before, like I talked about Nickelodeon. Like, I love this idea that the television, which I loved so much—

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: Had shows made just for me! [chuckles]

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: It was like a real like delightful, curated experience that I didn't usually experience when I had to watch 60 Minutes with my parents.

Griffin: [yells out] Drag 'em!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You know they listen! Drag 'em, though! Read 'em for filth.

Rachel: [chuckles] 60 Minutes and Murder, She Wrote. Now, granted, I liked both of those.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I think it was because I didn't realize, hey, there's a whole world out there that's just for me.

Griffin: Yeah. You don't have to watch Andy Rooney yell at you.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yell at you a lot. He was 60 Minutes, right?

Rachel: Yeah! Oh, for sure!

Griffin: Okay. I never—I didn't watch the show. But I do remember, I think, that there's—

Rachel: Well, what did you talk about at school on Monday?

Griffin: [guffaws] Pokémon.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I'll get to Pokémon, by the way!

Griffin: Oh, yeah, for sure.

Rachel: So, cartoons were basically relegated in the like 1950s to like movies. When you went to the movie, they would show a little cartoon.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Or primetime. Do you know Flintstones and the Jetsons were like primetime cartoons?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That like blows my mind.

Griffin: Well, it had to be hard to make 'em. I think that—I think that it read more as a sort of like animated sitcom back then?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is where you get like a lot of the sort of laugh track sort of stuff from shows of that era. This didn't—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They didn't have another version of show to make, they just kind of animated I Love Lucy and called it a day.

[both chuckle]

Rachel: The first cartoon show designed specifically for Saturday morning was in 1949, called Crusader Rabbit.

Griffin: Holy shit?

Rachel: It was adventures of a rabbit and his tiger sidekick.

Griffin: Sort of a Watership Down situation?

Rachel: I will show you... I don't know if you can see it from that far. It has like a Rocky and Bullwinkle kind of style to it.

Griffin: Oh, yeah, big time.

Rachel: But the little segments were like four minutes long.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So it was just a bunch of those like piled on top of each other. But people hadn't, at that point, really thought about Saturday morning as like a—like a hot rock block for kid viewers.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: But they had noticed that like in radio, the peak tune in hours for children were between 10 AM and noon on Saturday mornings, and 4PM to 6PM on weekdays. So, it was kind of like, it seemed like only—

Griffin: After school and—

Rachel: A matter of time—

Griffin: Yeah—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: And Saturday mornings. Crusader Rabbit wasn't really what jumpstarted everything. One of the next things to show up in 1955 was Mighty Mouse.

Griffin: Oh, sure!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: People love this guy!

Rachel: That ran for 12 seasons.

Griffin: Yeah. It's just a strong mouse, huh?

Rachel: Just a strong mouse.

Griffin: Could he fly?

Rachel: I remember him flying.

Griffin: I only, honestly, if it were not for the Andy Kaufman bit, I don't think I would—

Rachel: Yeah, good point.

Griffin: I don't think I would know much about Mighty Mouse.

Rachel: Yeah. And then we see Hannah and Barbera who did, you know, Flintstones and the Jetsons really start to kind of expand their arsenal.

Griffin: That's—is that where we get my man, Top Cat?!

Rachel: I don't know Top Cat?

Griffin: I think Top Cat's Hannah Barbera, ain't he? Yes! Whew! Top Cat.

Rachel: What is that?

Griffin: It's an animated sitcom produced by Hannah Barbera Productions and broadcast on the ABC network. I don't think it made it very long—yeah, one season, 30 episodes. You had to be there.

Rachel: Okay. [chuckles]

Griffin: You had to be there in 1961. [titters]

Rachel: What is it about though?

Griffin: Just a fucking cool cat, man.

Rachel: Cats were real big for a while there, huh?

Griffin: Yeah, for sure! He—Top Cat is the leader of a gang of Manhattan alley cats living in Hoagie's Alley.

Rachel: That sounds like Heathcliff.

Griffin: Yeah, but they were like—they were like criminals.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like cool about it. I don't think Heathcliff was a criminal.

Rachel: No, I think he was just kind of rough and tumble.

Griffin: Yeah, not like Top Cat, who was cool.

Rachel: Okay, so in the 1960s, when they started really kind of capitalizing on Saturday morning, that's when you saw like Spider-Man and The Fantastic Four and Iron Man, and then later Superman and Batman. That's where you see all the like comic book heroes—

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Like showing up in that time period. This is when I think people started to get nervous about children watching too much television.

Griffin: Oh, we can't let 'em have two hours on a Saturday morning.

Rachel: [titters] No, right? It's so—like, when I think back to that time, it's so similar to the debates about screen time now. Like people don't talk about your kids watch too much TV anymore because what they're watching instead is like an iPad—

Griffin: Yeah! Well, yeah, but that conversation was also for us about video games, about like—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't know, some—obviously, it is a much bigger topic of discussion now, but it—I think it's pretty similar to, I don't know, people looking down on anyone who watched as much TV and played as many video games as we did.

Rachel: Yeah. There was a parent lobbying group called Action for Children's Television that talked a lot about cartoon violence and commercialism. And then in 1969, the National Association of Broadcasters dictated that advertisements for toys would not be aired during the same show the toys were based on. [chuckles]

Griffin: That's very interesting?

Rachel: Uh-huh! So you couldn't watch like He-Man and then they immediately advertise a He-Man toy right after it.

Griffin: I'm trying to work out the kind of—

Rachel: That didn't last, by the way. That was relaxed a little bit. So, if you are not remembering that, it's probably because by the time—

Griffin: Yeah, no, for sure. I can imagine watching Big Bad Beetleborgs and then getting like commercials between every block of Big Bad Beetleborg action figures.

Rachel: [chuckles] There was kind of the next big movement, and I've talked about this before like when I talked about some of Jim Henson's stuff, but there was a big push for educational programming on Saturday morning, which is where Schoolhouse Rock really blew up.

Griffin: Fuck yeah!

Rachel: It started in the late '70s, early '80s, and then as you and I know, in the '90s, there was like a resurgence.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: The biggest, like one of the biggest, most successful shows was the Smurfs.

Griffin: Really?

Rachel: Yeah. The Smurfs were kind of there, they debuted on 1981, and they were before like Care Bears and My Little Pony. Like it was—it was Smurfs out in the front.

Griffin: Can I be honest with you?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't get the appeal. I've never seen the Smurfs—

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: I didn't see the new Smurfs moo—I've never seen a single piece of Smurfs media that makes me even remotely get it. They're just little blue guys that live in the woods.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then there's a man named Gargamel who wants to kill them.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: He wants to kill all of them. That's it?

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, if you think about it—

Griffin: There's a girl one that's called like Girl Smurf, and... and then there's an old one called Papa Smurf. That one everyone—

Rachel: Like Smurfette is the girl one?

Griffin: Smurfette, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And—

Rachel: No, I didn't really enjoy it either.

Griffin: And that's it.

Rachel: But that was kind of—I mean, you know, if you think about I was talking about all these comic books, you know, this was like an original like imaginary world created just for this show.

Griffin: Yeah! Sure, I guess so.

Rachel: And then blew up into lunchboxes and backpacks.

Griffin: Yeah. I don't mean to offend you folks at home if you're a big Smurfs person, that's great. I've just never even got why it's a thing.

Rachel: Yeah, no, me neither.

Griffin: If they did like magic or if they were like—

Rachel: Maybe they do? Isn't there like a wizard one?

Griffin: Gargamel I think is a wizard.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: They've killed the moment—Smurfs is so toxic that it killed the momentum of this episode of our show.

Rachel: I'm just thinking of that movie that came out that we didn't have to see.

Griffin: That's a really—

Rachel: Is kind of—

Griffin: Good way of putting it.

Rachel: The way I'll phrase it. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because our children weren't even interested. I guess it was Henry at the time. We didn't have Gus yet I don't think.

Griffin: What if that movie made zero dollars at the box office?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Just a resounding—just a renouncing of this just America going—

Rachel: Of the Smurfs in total.

Griffin: "We don't get it! We don't get it!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Do they do magic?!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: They're just little guys that live in the woods and Gargamel wants to kill all of them? They're three apples tall? That's crazy. Why are we measuring stuff like that?

Rachel: Yeah. You know a fair amount about the Smurfs, it turns out?

Griffin: Yeah! I've been forced to learn a lot of stuff about the Smurfs! I know like three of their names.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I know Gargamel, I know they're three apple—

Rachel: Papa.

Griffin: Papa, yeah, they're three apples tall, they live in a mushroom.

Rachel: I feel like that was one that I watched. People talk about this a lot, that in our age range—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Of like, you would just watch stuff you didn't like because it was like on TV. And—

Griffin: Yeah! Dude, David the Gnome?

Rachel: Yeah! That's the one I always think about!

Griffin: You think about David the Gnome and you're like, I fucked with David the Gnome in such a major way. And then you watch David the Gnome now?

Rachel: Very slow.

Griffin: It's very slow!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It's very slow and it looks like the animation was done in like... like it was some sort of illuminated monastic sort of painting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's—that's cool and all, but like nothing ever happens on the show. Sometimes he falls down and he goes, "*Ooah*."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Now Gummi Bears, that was a fucking show—

Rachel: Well, yeah.

Griffin: About little guys living in the woods!

Rachel: Yeah, that's a good point. [chuckles]

Griffin: They had gummiberry juice, when they drank it, they could bounce super high and like—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Fight and stuff.

Rachel: A real like catchy song—

Griffin: [sings] Gummy Bears!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Started too high.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Couldn't go on.

Rachel: Pouncing here and there and everywhere.

Griffin: And yeah, I mean—yeah.

Rachel: They-

Griffin: I'm sorry for this rant, it's just the Smurfs really triggered me.

Rachel: Okay, so 1982, maybe unsurprisingly, Ronald Reagan was president, and he worked with the FCC to loosen programming and advertising regulations.

Griffin: All right.

Rachel: And one of the earliest cartoons to take advantage of that was Hanna Barbera's Pac-Man.

Griffin: *What?*

Rachel: Which was the first cartoon to be based on a video game.

Griffin: Ah.

Rachel: And then after that it was He-Man, Masters of the Universe, Transformers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. These—

Griffin: The Joe? G.I. Joe had to be up in there, right?

Rachel: Yes, G.I. Joe was in there too.

Griffin: G.I. Joe was a thing before—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Before that happened.

Rachel: Yeah. But the idea that like you have launched a television show and there's already merch available—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like at the same time.

Griffin: That's not a new idea! A lot of people give—

Rachel: But it was in the '80s.

Griffin: Yeah, fair.

Rachel: Yeah. So, by the '90s, the big three major networks began

replacing their Saturday morning programming with weekend editions of their morning news programs. Which we kind of... what is it, CBS Saturday Morning is one of them.

Griffin: Sunday mor—I thought it was Sunday morning.

Rachel: Sunday? I thought it was Saturday morning.

Griffin: The one with the sun face and Mo Rocca?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Sunday edish—Sunday edition.

Rachel: It is Saturday morning.

Griffin: It is?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: What happens on Sunday, Meet the Press? I don't know.

Rachel: I think that's a different network. Anyway, and a lot of that was because, you know, cable television and, you know, people having video games and other things to do at their fingertips.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And not really turning to a network television station to watch cartoons.

Griffin: Yeah. To go outside and play in the sports league that your dad signed you up for.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's something that you can do too instead of watching Pokémon.

Rachel: Pokémon! So, I mentioned how in the '90s, Saturday morning was starting to die down.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But the—in 1998, the Pokémon anime had become the highest-rated syndicated children's show during the weekdays.

Griffin: In the US or just sort of globally?

Rachel: North America.

Griffin: Okay. Crazy.

Rachel: So, the WB and Fox entered a bidding war, and it ended up going with Warner Brothers.

Griffin: Yeah. Maybe the wisest business decision Warner Brothers ever made.

Rachel: I know!

Griffin: In its illustrious history.

Rachel: And so February 1999, Pokémon launched on the kids WB television station, and it was the most watched premiere in kids WB history.

Griffin: Not a joke, it was a—it was a fuckin' thing. I was in... sixth grade, I think, around this time, and like I would have sleepovers with my buddy Clint, and we would—

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: Not my—not my dad, my actual buddy Clint. Like Friday night after school, go over there and crash. Sometimes they would show Pokémon at like four o'clock, so you could get a couple episodes in there. And then you just wake up Saturday morning and watch the next episode of Pokémon.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It was fucking lit! It was so dope.

Rachel: I was—I was in high school at that point, and I remember turning it on and just feeling like, did I miss where they—like, I'm so lost—

Griffin: Where they explain what is—

Rachel: Like—

Griffin: Happening to—

Rachel: Yeah! I felt like they were starting in the middle of an episode every time. I had no idea what was happening.

Griffin: You get about 70 seconds of narration at the top of the first episode.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: "This is a world called Pokémon. The creatures here live alongside humans, and they are trained for helping and fighting. Here's a young trainer named Ash Ketchum, let's check on him, how he's do—" That's it. That's all that you get.

Rachel: And there's bad guys?

Griffin: Team Rocket.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Jesse and James. This is a bonus episode.

Rachel: [laughs] I'm not gonna—are you asking me to watch the Pokémon anime show?

Griffin: Don't threaten me with a good time!

Rachel: Oh... I don't think it—I don't think I would like it?

Griffin: Maybe not.

Rachel: So, the CW Network was the last station to air Saturday morning cartoons, on September 27th, 2014. Now you can see them on networks like MeTV.

Griffin: Great!

Rachel: You know, that are like specialized on—

Griffin: We—so—

Rachel: Old programs.

Griffin: We do not watch live television, period. Mostly because the cable box we got from our cable provider doesn't work very well.

Rachel: No, it does not.

Griffin: So, we just kind of stream our stuff, and you can watch whatever you want to whenever you want to, and that's sort of the modern reality that we live in. I'm guessing that shit like Toonami or like these live blocks, these live sectioned off blocks of television program—are those still happening anywhere? Or is that just like not a thing anymore?

Rachel: I mean—

Griffin: I'm asking—

Rachel: Prime time, I think>

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: I think, you know, all those like shows on Fox—

Griffin: But do they call it TGIF, right? Like it was packaged—

Rachel: No, I don't think so.

Griffin: These things were packaged in a way that made it so that, on Friday, you knew—

Rachel: Yeah. No.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't think so.

Rachel: No, I mean network television is—

Griffin: Crazy.

Rachel: Not what it once was. But I will say, this is when I watched Saved by the Bell—

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: Pinky in the Brain.

Griffin: That's a good one.

Rachel: Gosh—

Griffin: I mean, anime—

Rachel: Doug was on—

Griffin: Animeaniacs, in general, across the board, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah. Tiny Tune Adventures, Bobby's World, these were all favorites for me.

Griffin: Beetlejuice.

Rachel: I didn't really watch Beetlejuice.

Griffin: And we have to stop there.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: We cannot say it a third time, because you know what happens.

Rachel: [laughs] I'm so glad you caught that!

Griffin: Me too! I've been tricked too many times!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: By BJ.

Rachel: [chuckles] I don't love that soundbite.

Griffin: I've been tricked too many times by BJ! You don't like that soundbite?

Rachel: No, I don't.

Griffin: Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Hannah says, "I, a teacher, was organizing a textbook into sheet protectors, and I had the perfect number of sheet protectors to finish the job!"

Rachel: Oh! I love that!

Griffin: Best! The best.

Rachel: I love that.

Griffin: I—there's a—there's like a... a world of people whose job is to open packs of like Pokémon and Magic cards online. I don't know how it's—here's a whole industry around it.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: It's a complicated thing, but there's people who are like content creators who's like opening packs, and they put 'em in their little sleeves. Oh, it looks so nice! I've never put a card—I had a little book that I put the things in, but I didn't ever have like individual little card sleeves.

Rachel: You never did?

Griffin: I never really did that, no.

Rachel: Huh.

Griffin: Yeah. Probably would have made a lot of money if I'd held on to those. I can't go back down that well. Emma says, "My Small Wonder is the aglet, the plastic tip on shoelaces. We take them for granted until the cat eats one and you can't lace up your boots. Also, a great Wordle starter." I didn't occur to me until I said that word out loud that isn't an eyelet the hole in like—

Rachel: Yeah! Yeah!

Griffin: And so an aglet is like the thing, the—

Rachel: How is "aglet" spelled?

Griffin: A-G-L-E-T.

Rachel: Huh.

Griffin: Cool!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I agree! I've had shoes where the—you lose the aglet, and then it's a non-functional shoe.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You have to like lick your fingers and like twist up the thing to get it through the eyelet.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Sorry. This show's finger licking good, that—leave a review on iTunes and say that.

Rachel: Oh, no.

Griffin: Don't say that, you'll attract an unsavory element.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You'll poison the well. Thank you so much for listening to Wonderful, we've had a great time here today and we hope that you have as well. I want to thank Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song 'Money Won't Pay.' It's such a great track. Despite the fact that like it opens up our show every episode, I still like have it in a couple of my playlists—

Rachel: Aw.

Griffin: Then whenever it pops up, I'll listen to that shit all the way through.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: With the vocals and everything, it's a great fuckin' track! So, we're really happy that we get to keep using it for our theme song. And thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great shows that they have going on over there! Been listening to Triple Click a lot lately, a gaming podcast. But there's a ton of other stuff over there that's gonna tickle your fancy. We have new merch in the McElroy

Merch Store! We have sticky notes, "Make it stick" sticky notes, designed by Evan Crews. We have a new shirt with a "You're going to be amazing" design, from TAZ Balance. It was designed by Sabrina Volante.

Rachel: Who comes up with the ideas for this merch?

Griffin: I mean, our sort of merch liaison lead, Sarah McKay—

Rachel: I'm always—

Griffin: Does a lot of the sort of—

Rachel: I'm always so impressed.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because like the "Make it stick" sticky notes? Of course.

Griffin: Oh, it's brilliant.

Rachel: It's right there.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, we've worked with a lot of folks, a lot of like really talented artists and designers and, you know, from what I understand, some of 'em pitch stuff, and then McKay goes out and sources a lot of stuff, and...

Rachel: Love it.

Griffin: Yeah, she's very good at her—at her job. So, yeah, both those things, over at mcelroymerch.com. And 10% of all of our merch proceeds this month will be donated to Lambda Legal. All of the proceeds from the "You're going to be amazing" shirt are going to be donated to Lambda Legal, which is a national organization working to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people, and everyone living with HIV, through impact litigation, education and public policy work. One last thing, The Adventure Zone graphic novel, the final one of them, Story and Song, comes out in just... five weeks, six weeks? It's a—it's a big, meaty tome that you're gonna love—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Tearing through as you complete the story of TAZ Balance. You can pre-order that over at theadventurezonecomic.com. Barnes and Noble and Books-A-Million have exclusive editions of it available, so there's plenty of opportunities. Pre-ordering it helps us so much in ways that I did not really understand before I published books, but that is a—that is a big deal.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: In the literary sort of business. So it would help us out a great deal if you think you're gonna—if you're gonna read it. That's it! What if we stopped there? What if we were brave enough to just—

Rachel: No... we're not.

Griffin: We're not, are we?

Rachel: No.

Griffin: But maybe we are?

Rachel: [chuckles]

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

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