

Wonderful 432: Wet Hair, Cult Leader

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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! This is a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. Just before we started, Rachel said that with her wet hair and the shirt that she's wearing, looks like a cult leader. I disagree with that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And if I didn't disagree with that, it's like a cool, like a hot look.

Rachel: I don't—to clarify, I don't think it's anything about wet hair in particular. It's just that my hair looks a little crazier than normal.

Griffin: Yeah...

Rachel: And like, I don't know, that kind of like... you know, what's she capable of—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Kind of look, kind of suggest like maybe I might rally some people and, you know, make some changes.

Griffin: But in a sexy way.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like, it's like giving Mary, Martha... Macy, May, Marlene... Macy, Mary, Marthy, Marlene. There's a movie and it had Elizabeth Olsen in it, it's about cults, and it's four women's names, but I can't—Mary, Martha, May, Marlene? No, Macy's definitely one of them.

Rachel: How do you have this knowledge?

Griffin: How do I have any knowledge, baby? My brain is a fucking garbage can.

Rachel: Okay. Okay, yes, I can agree with that claim sometimes. [chuckles] But this is a movie with Elizabeth Olsen in it about a cult leader.

Griffin: Yeah, why do I know of it?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I mean, you see a name on a movie theater marquee that has four women's names on it, all starting with M, and that's—

Rachel: Will you look it up now?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Because I'm too curious.

Griffin: Mary—I think it's Mary, Martha, May, mar... mare...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Mary, Martha, May, Marlene? Martha—[chuckles] Marth...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Martha, *Marcy*, May, Marlene! Marcy was nowhere to be found in my estimation of the film's name. Martha, Marcy, May, Marlene. It's not as good. I like mine better, honestly.

Rachel: And this hit theaters?

Griffin: This hit theaters. And it's got Sarah Paulson in it. I bet she's the cult leader.

Rachel: I mean, that's one heck of a cast.

Griffin: That is one heck of a cast.

Rachel: When did it come out?

Griffin: 19... 11.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Whoa, holy shit! Wow, a silent movie starring Elizabeth Olsen? She looks great for like 140—

Rachel: And Sarah Paulson, for that matter.

Griffin: Sarah—I mean, Sarah Paulson, that's no surprise.

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: No, I actually want to know when it came out.

Griffin: 2011.

Rachel: Oh, okay. [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, this came out a while ago. Do you have any small wonders? Mine's Martha, Marcy, Marley, Marlene, Marlone.

Rachel: So, in 2011...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You were...

Griffin: Old enough to see it. Are you wondering—it's R-rated. Are you wondering if I'm allowed to see it?

Rachel: [chuckles] I'm just wondering when you like walked by a marquee —

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And thought, hm, I wonder what that film's about.

Griffin: Yeah, I—

Rachel: It's a lot of women's names.

Griffin: I better remember it forever! Kind of.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I better almost remember some of the names in the title of this motion picture. I might need it for a podcast.

Rachel: I might need it to fill three minutes at the top of a podcast.

Griffin: I might need an intro to a podcast.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: [chuckles] I was going to talk about how we have ice now.

Griffin: Uh-huh!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Our freezer's been broke for a long time, and it's a load bearing freezer. [chuckles]

Rachel: Well, let's clarify again, the ice maker inside of our freezer has been broken, and it seems like a silly reason to get a whole new fridge. Even though we did look at that briefly, and then realized it was going to be a lot of work and our choices were limited. So—

Griffin: It's a weird-sized, German imported f—we didn't do this. I wouldn't —

Rachel: Yeah, this makes us sound—

Griffin: I'm a—I'm a Frigidaire man!

Rachel: This makes us sound very fancy. [chuckles]

Griffin: I would not do this. I would not buy—

Rachel: It's GE or nothing in this house.

Griffin: And so like replacing it is not possible, because it's like in a cabinet too, it's so fucking annoying.

Rachel: Or if we replace it, we're going to get the exact same thing. Like there's nothing really wrong with it. It's not the most practical choice for us. Anyway, this is a lot of information.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: All that happened is that I just went and bought one of those little countertop ice makers, and now we have ice.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that's—it's a game changer.

Griffin: It's so good.

Rachel: I drink so much more water now.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't, but I enjoy the water. I drink more, I'll say.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I like how the cubes aren't cubes, they're like little tunnels.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They're little... What's the name of that shape? Not a cylinder, but there's a name for the shape that's like a ring, like a three dimensional ring object. There's a name for that shape.

Rachel: Do you want to open your browser with Mary, Marcy, May, Marlene?

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, 3D—

Rachel: [chuckles] Look that up.

Griffin: Ring shape name is... it has a coo—a torus! Isn't that a cool name? A torus!

Rachel: Your brain is fascinating to me.

Griffin: Yeah, it's got toh—it's got—it almost has torus, it almost has the name of that Elizabeth Olsen film.

Rachel: [laughs] This is why we're going to be married forever.

Griffin: We will be, forever and ever. I—

Rachel: What's your small wonder?

Griffin: I mean, I want to talk about the new TV show that we've been watching.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: There was a television show on Netflix that had two seasons.

Rachel: We definitely have talked about it.

Griffin: That we've definitely talked about, called Hyori's Bed and Breakfast, in which Lee Hyori and her husband—she is a famous pop star, K-pop star. Her husband is also a musician. They turn their like retreat on Jeju Island into a B&B, and just invite people out, and then have to run the B&B. And it was so charming. It's so fucking chill. And there's really nothing like it that has that vibe—

Rachel: Until.

Griffin: Until Jae-seok's B&B Rules, may not be how you pronounce his name. I'm not very good at pronouncing words in Korean, despite how much Korean television programming we consume, which is a lot!

Rachel: I think it's been on Netflix for a while. I think we just...

Griffin: Are late to it, perhaps.

Rachel: We were kind of hopping around and, you know, like the trailer for a show will start playing when you hover over it.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: And so we just started watching and we were like, wait...

Griffin: Wait a minute.

Rachel: Wait, wait, wait, who is that?

Griffin: So, it's Yoo Jae-suk, who has done a ton of these types of like kind of funny variety shows, is the name of the format. One called I think busted, which we watched a little bit of. He's done like a ton of stuff, he's been like a

TV presenter for a long, long time. He is joined by three other very funny TV presenters, and they have a facility that they—the location of which is not really telegraphed. Which probably makes sense, because they had to stop doing Hyori's Bed and Breakfast, because people found out where it was and got really creepy about it.

Rachel: It looks like a rec center.

Griffin: It does!

Rachel: Like to be clear, it is not a home.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: But the guests have to go up like a long path to get there. And the idea is that these people have to be their hosts, and they have to handle—

Griffin: Run the B&B.

Rachel: The activities and the meals. And there's like some competition elements and teams.

Griffin: All very informal competition elements.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's so charming.

Rachel: Nobody's there to like win the weekend.

Griffin: Yeah. The reason we started watching it is because the first season, there's like two big batches of people who come in. And during the second half of the first season, Hyori shows up with her husband.

Rachel: And we don't know anything about what happens. It was just teased in the trailer, and that was enough for us.

Griffin: And that was enough for us!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We were like, yeah, we'll watch these two people, who we love so much, I love watching these two do fucking anything, help them, these clueless, hapless TV celebrities—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Run a B&B. It's so funny, genuinely, from like the moment people arrive, there's like a moment of realization on all their faces, all the celebrities' faces of like, "Oh, shit, this is going to be hard. We're going to have to cook a meal, and then as soon as we're done, start cooking the next meal."

Rachel: Yeah! We—[chuckles] we just watched basically the first full day, and they were all remarking like, "We haven't like taken a break. The only break we've gotten is to use the bathroom."

Griffin: They have to keep running out to buy stuff, so they'll be like, "There's no garbage cans." [chuckles]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There's no... "We need slippers so people can actually go to the bathroom. Oh, shit." And then they have to run and hop in the—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: There's a s—fucking hysterical sequence where they buy coffee. They have like a big coffee dispenser, they take it to a café and get it filled up, and then realize as they're driving up the mountain back to the center that the coffee is just spilling—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Out of the container, all over the car. It's so funny and so chill. The vibes are so good!

Rachel: Yeah. It's like a—

Griffin: Loving it.

Rachel: Big summer camp, like un—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Unlike Hyori's Bed and Breakfast, like this, because of the rec center locale, feels very much like a summer camp—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is delightful.

Griffin: I've been gasping, gasping for more Korean reality or variety television. I mean, all the new seasons of Physical: 100 coming out in Italy and the US, and Mexico I think is doing one? There's like a bunch of international—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Physical: 100s. I'm down. I'll watch all those.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You know it. I'm a freak for that shit, but...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Devil's Plan season 3 is still on its way. You know I'm stoked for that. Can't wait. This is—this is—*ooh*, this is hitting the spot. I go first this week!

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Didn't talk about Da Matrix.

[pause]

Rachel: The film?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: What else would it be—okay, if I was not talking about the film and I was talking about a sort of abstract matrix, then this would be a manosphere sort of podcast.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And that is s—you must know that's far from our brand.

Rachel: Well, and for all I know, there's a video game.

Griffin: The Toyota Matrix.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Was one of my first cars—

Rachel: Was one of your cars, yeah.

Griffin: And was a sick ride, actually. I like that automobile a lot.

Rachel: Now someone's going to be able to answer a security question about you.

Griffin: [chuckles] I do feel like I need to say up front that the—a lot of The Matrix has been co-opted by unsavory communities online.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Terms like red pill and what have you—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And the concept of like The Matrix is a very big manosphere thing.

Rachel: There is no spoon.

Griffin: There is no spoon—

Rachel: I don't know if that's manosphere or not.

Griffin: Is a big, huge—

Rachel: But again—

Griffin: Man—probably. That's not The Matrix's fault, I don't think? It's certainly not the Wachowskis' fault.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: They just made a kickass—one of the best action and sci-fi movies I think ever. I fuckin' love The Matrix.

Rachel: Did you see it like in theaters?

Griffin: Oh, hell yeah! I was—

Rachel: Yeah, me too.

Griffin: I was 12, I believe, when The Matrix came out. So you know, I had to go with an adult—

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: Because of the violence of it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think if you were not around in 1999, which is when The Matrix came out, March '99, it might be tough to like understand the footprint that that movie kind of left behind for like... It's such a landmark action movie in so many different ways. And it's really, I think, ambitious and interesting reading about like the making of the movie. The Wachowskis had all of these different inspiration points that were just kind of all over the map. Neuromancer by William Gibson, a very like famous like cyberpunk novel.

Rachel: I've heard of that.

Griffin: Anime stuff, Hong Kong action cinema stuff, real life hacker communities. Like they had all of these different inspirations and put them together into a movie that they really had to fight tooth and nail to get made.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's a miracle that it did, and you know, that it absolutely made such a huge impact. Hong Kong action cinema was like the biggest inspiration, I think. And probably the reason why it hit so hard is like the kind of martial arts fight choreography and wirework stunts that the film did were not stuff that I saw in a lot of action movies in the States. Wirework stunts being like, that's like how Carrie-Anne Moss is able to jump eight feet in the air and then stay there for a while.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like shit like that is so iconic and so cool, and was so—like I don't know, not something that I had been exposed to when I—when I first saw The Matrix, and was so rad. The big advancement production-wise was a process called bullet time, sort of informally.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is you know the scene where Neo has to dodge the bullets, and he goes back and things slow down, and the camera whips around him.

Rachel: I think about that scene all the time. Anytime I'm getting a lot of

new information at once, that's what it feels like to me.

Griffin: Yeah, it's—I mean, it's a very—it's been memed in so many ways.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it's such a fa... But it was like seeing that shit in theaters age 12 was like, *whoa!* You don't even realize kind of like how they did it, because it was practical. They had a special rig that was basically a ring of cameras that were firing at like 12,000 frames per second.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That then they were able to, you know, the actor could stand in the middle, and there's green screens around the whole thing—

Rachel: The actor Keanu Reeves.

Griffin: The actor Keanu Reeves could stand in the middle and then, you know, do his thing. And they were able to basically show slow motion with a camera moving not in slow motion.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: It was a completely practical effect. There—it was invented by an inventor named John Gaeta, and he credits *Akira*, the anime movie, for inspiring the effect, as well as the music videos of Michel Gondry, who directed *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And then did like a ton of really rad—he did some Daft Punk music videos—

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: He did "Weapon of Choice" by Fatboy Slim. All of this stuff like came together to inspire this inventor to make this bullet time rig, and it's like, I

don't know, such a—such a rad thing that this movie was the first—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The first one to sort of do. It invented a new way of shooting a thing, which I thought was so rad. The plot also of The Matrix seems so like, I don't know... obvious I guess now, but was—I—for me at least as a tween, like—

Rachel: Does not seem obvious to me?

Griffin: I guess not, may... There have been movies that have sort of explored this same thing—

Rachel: Yeah! I mean the like—

Griffin: And stories.

Rachel: Conspiracy kind of idea that like there is a world happening that you don't see—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: For sure. That's been around for a long time.

Griffin: But it also explored a lot of stuff about like consciousness and like existentialism and faith, in a way that was—

Rachel: Well yeah—

Griffin: Not really cyberpunk sort of coded, but, you know, lent a—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't know, a unique air to the thing.

Rachel: Yeah, just kind of the suggestion that there's really nothing inherently wrong with living in your kind of naive world. You know?

Griffin: Well, I mean, Morpheus would disagree with that.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Morpheus would like to have a word. You sound like Joey Pants right now eating that steak.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Being like, "I like the steak." His famous quote, "I like the steak."

Rachel: I like the steak! [chuckles]

Griffin: [eating sounds] I'll take the steak, please. I mean, just being a young person, this idea of like reality being a virtual world that you could hack superpowers into yourself with was so novel. I love the idea of just like being able to just, *boop*, press a button and now you know how to fly a helicopter?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So sick.

Rachel: I don't love the idea of being like jacked in, you know?

Griffin: That always did seem unpleasant.

Rachel: Didn't love that.

Griffin: The noise... some of the foley work done for the big needle going into Keanu Reeves' head—

Rachel: Yeah, and he's all slimy and he can't have hair for some reason.

Griffin: He really shaved his whole body for that. He also lost like 25 pounds, just for the—

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: That was the last thing they shot in the movie, was like the scene of him getting flushed down into the sewer.

Rachel: Oh, jeez?

Griffin: Because he like I... The Wachowskis had to like sell their vision of this movie to basically everyone. And the actors that they got, who like I can't imagine any of these parts, Hugo Weaving, I can't imagine anyone else playing Agent Smith. I can't imagine anyone else playing Morpheus or Trinity. I can't imagine any w—the... Neo was so like made for Keanu Reeves —

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: He's like so in his element. That role was made for him. But it actually really wasn't, because they also offered it to Will Smith, Val Kilmer, Nicolas Cage, Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio, who actually accepted the role for a little while before changing his mind thinking like, you know, "An action movie with this many effects is not a great way for me to follow up Titanic, so I'm actually going to back out."

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: And then we got Keanu Reeves. I can't fucking imagine any of those other dudes doing it!

Rachel: There's such a... I don't... there's like a vulnerability about Keanu Reeves. There's a gentleness to him.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: I feel like. I feel like even when he is doing crazy, outrageous stunts—

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: You feel like that's a sensitive man. [titters]

Griffin: And a—and a great sort of cluelessness—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: To him that really lent itself to this like Through the Looking-glass storyline of this guy—

Rachel: Like a—like an innocence—

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: That you wouldn't find like in a—in a Will Smith.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Like... you know, if Keanu makes something look good, he wouldn't tell you that he makes it look good.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: You know?

Griffin: That's true, Will Smith would be the first to inform you. And in fact, historically has been the first to inform you that he makes this look good.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: They—they may—the Wachowskis made all the actors like do reading, like assigned reading—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: On some like philosophical works. Jean Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation is a work from I think 1981, that explores digital consciousness.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They were like you have— "You all have to read this before we'll let you see the script." Because they really wanted to make sure that everyone really understood kind of the plot of the movie.

Rachel: No, that's a good point.

Griffin: Warner Brothers was like *really* hesitant to greenlight a \$60 million action movie from the Wachowskis, who at that point had only directed one movie, which is called *Bound*, with Gina Gershon and Jennifer Tilly in it, which was like a neo-noir—I've never seen it.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: Erotic crime thriller.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: And so the Wachowskis commissioned a 600-page shot for shot storyboard from like indie comic artists, that they then had this *enormous* bible that they showed Warner Brothers.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: They filmed the first part with Carrie-Anne Moss, you know, running and jumping from rooftop, and jumping up in the air and kicking someone, and then calling someone on the phone and disappearing. Showed that to them and they were like, "Okay, fuckin' A—"

Rachel: Oh, the phone thing.

Griffin: "Let's go." Yeah, the phone thing was cool.

Rachel: I forgot about the phone thing, that was cool.

Griffin: So like, in addition to the assigned—the homework that the actors got to read about philosophy, like they also went through hell because they had to condition their bodies to do the wire work, which is like super

demanding, super exhausting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I rem—and like everyone got injured at different points of making the movie.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I remember watching the—on the DVD, which was so fucking good, so many special feachies on this DVD, it was crazy.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But they had like a making of thing where they showed a stunt the... in the lobby f—like gun fight, where Carrie-Anne Moss runs up the wall, and she lands weird and injures her leg, and starts just screaming. Not because she's like injured, but because she's so upset that like she can't finish this shoot, like she can't finish this shot.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That level of like dedication is like so apparent from everyone, from —

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: From all the actors, from the Wachowskis, how hard they came out and sold it. This movie came out 27 years ago, and it's still just fucking rules, man.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like the action scenes are so incredible, the special effects are on another level. And the things that made it such a groundbreaking movie in 1999, make it still just so enjoyable to watch today. And I don't think the other Matrix movies are that good. There's some good Animatrix stuff. It was like part of this animated extended universe thing. And also the

Wachowskis went on to like screen write and direct a bunch of like great shit, like V for Vendetta and Speed Racer, which is—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So much fun. But like to me, The Matrix is just in this pantheon of movies where if I'm like at a hotel flipping through TV and I land—I see it playing on like TNT or whatever, no matter what part of the movie it's on, I'm going to park it right there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And just sort of enjoy The Matrix, because there's going to be some good shit happening sort of no matter what.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I like The Matrix a lot.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Cool, cool flick.

Rachel: I mean—

Griffin: There were some good games that came out.

Rachel: You are of an age where I would say 99% of people in your age range—

Griffin: Yeah, middle schoolers.

Rachel: Like that film. [chuckles]

Griffin: I will say there were some middle schoolers who got weird about it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Who maybe like saw the gun part of it and was like, "That's the shit I'm really going to focus on."

Rachel: So many Halloween costumes.

Griffin: So—oh, man, it launched a thousand ships.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: A thousand Halloween ships, this movie did.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But all that aside, man, it just kicks ass.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Kick ass flick. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: What you got?

Rachel: You ready?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: My wonderful thing this week is a bird nest.

Griffin: A bird nest.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: A nest for birds.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: A little home of sticks.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: I love these thi—I—okay, conditionally, I love these things.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: If there's somewhere where I don't want it to be, I don't like bird ne
—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I mean, I still like the bird nest and the birds inside of it, but like we had an air conditioner in our window of the house I grew up in, and pigeons would roost on it. And it was so loud and stink... stinked.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: And there was not much you could do about it that wasn't barbaric.

Rachel: We had a—in my room, I had a bird nest under an AC unit. And I think it's just because it dripped water—

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: And it was—and it was like very safe, obviously—

Griffin: Mine was on top, and it made me think like, that can't be g—when that kicks on? That's going to scare the little birds away, doesn't it?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I don't know.

Rachel: I don't know.

Griffin: We got one in a Christmas wreath one time at our house, here.

Rachel: Here. Yeah, no, that was a nightmare.

Griffin: Because you had to open that door real fuckin' slow.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah. And it was just—it was just—it wasn't even like a real plant wreath.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: It was just an artificial wreath that they had turned into a home.

Griffin: It didn't end well, but not because of us, I think, because the wreath was not big enough to hold a bird nest. Just a note for the—for the pa—mama bird next time.

Rachel: Well, I've told this story before, I thought it was empty. We waited a very, very long time.

Griffin: We did.

Rachel: And then I went to take it down, and it was not empty. [titters]

Griffin: It was not empty, it was a sad day.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles] I think they made it, though!

Griffin: I do think they made it.

Rachel: I put 'em in a little box, and then they were gone.

Griffin: And you shipped them to Abu Dhabi.

Rachel: [chuckles] I assumed that—

Griffin: Just like Nermal.

Rachel: They had learned to fly and flew away.

Griffin: Absolutely, they did.

Rachel: Anyway, bird nests. I don't—

Griffin: Bird nests are cool.

Rachel: I didn't really realize, and this makes sense, of course, that specific types of birds make specific types of nests.

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: You know? Like when you will see a nest on the ground, versus in the tree, versus like what shape it is. I just always thought kind of birds were just, they were freestyling. [chuckles]

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: To an extent. And you will see that a little bit. What we're most familiar with is called a cup nest. It's like kind of what most people think of. The robins make—

Griffin: Not a bowl nest?

Rachel: A cup. Well... it's called a cup nest.

Griffin: I get what it's—I guess it makes sense, but it's just, if we're talking about kitchen... kitchenware that the nest looks like, that's bowl—I don't think about them getting in a tall, frosty tumbler. They're in a little bowl of sticks.

Rachel: Well, they're usually pretty small, though? And if—what is a cup if not a small bowl?

Griffin: A tall bowl! With tall sides.

Rachel: So it should be called a tall bowl?

Griffin: A bowl is a plate cup, if you took plate and you made it a little bit more cup-like. Do you understand what I'm saying? Everything's on a spectrum.

Rachel: A bowl is a plate cup.

Griffin: A bowl is a plate cup.

Rachel: I get that.

Griffin: Yeah. Anyway, I don't want to argue semant—I'm not a bird guy, I shouldn't get naming rights, but...

Rachel: Okay, I'm talking about the cup nest now.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: I won't change the way I call it.

Griffin: Don't.

Rachel: Just for your pleasure.

Griffin: I'd be uncomfortable if you did.

Rachel: Cup nests begin with a platform of twigs and grasses, including occasionally man-made materials. They're held together with mud, and then lined with finer materials, such as spiderwebs, fur, and hair.

Griffin: I love that. Did you ever do the thing where like you put out a bunch of sticks and straw and... string and stuff for birds to use for their nests?

Rachel: No?

Griffin: That was a thing, I remember doing that at like a camp, or maybe at church or something, where we would put out just like a big ball of sticks and string and shit.

Rachel: The group would come together to produce one ball?

Griffin: Yeah, it was like a little DIY nest kit, and we would, you know, put 'em outside. This is a very fuzzy memory, honey. It's at the edges of my—it got pushed out by Martha, Mary, May, Marlene, and I'm trying to fuckin' reel it back in.

Rachel: [laughs] And then you would just leave it there?

Griffin: Uh-huh, for birds to find and use.

Rachel: And would it continue to be there? Like...

Griffin: I don't know that I was so invested that I continued to check in on my garbage ball.

Rachel: It was just a 20 minute activity to get you—

Griffin: I think they just wanted—

Rachel: To the next activity.

Griffin: And I think that, honestly, maybe there was just—it was dirty, and they wanted the kids to clean up, and then turn it into a nest ball.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Well, it's got an important message about recycling.

Griffin: Sure!

Rachel: Which is—

Griffin: More for the birds, though, not for a... not for us.

Rachel: Yeah. No, I think—[chuckles] I don't envision a future where you put out a dumpster in front of your lawn that is just for birds.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: Okay. These kind of cup bird nests are often between branches, and are between eight to 20 centimeters, taking two to six days to finish. Traditionally, in the robin family at least, males gather nesting materials while females construct the nest, and the pair remains monogamous, at least through the breeding season.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: A neh—[chuckles]

Griffin: What? Was it the way I said "okay?"

Rachel: Yeah, are you skeptical?

Griffin: I mean, it's just like...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: The breeding season's over and now you're going to fucking dip? Like—

Rachel: Oh! I thought you were like, okay, they're monogamous. [chuckles]

Griffin: Oh, no. Yeah. That's, I guess it could—actually, I've never thought of it, but—until now, because I've never had to.

Rachel: Then how do you know?

Griffin: But like...

Rachel: It's not like birds have cell phones, you know?

Griffin: Yeah. Are they track—I guess they're tracking the bird—

Rachel: I mean, I guess they can kind of track.

Griffin: They're tracking—

Rachel: But once—

Griffin: The birds.

Rachel: You know, once those babies are there, who's to say? You know?

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know who's cutting out though in that scenario. Maybe both? Maybe it's like an agreed-upon, you know, just for—just for fun. Just to blow off a little steam. The kids are driving us wild.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Let's get out there and have—find some strange. Cool for the bir—good for you, birds! Open-minded.

Rachel: Hey, good for the birds!

Griffin: Not for—none for me, thanks! But for the birds? Go for it, guys!

Rachel: Birds and the bees.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: You know, that's something.

Griffin: You think they're getting together with the bees now?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Kinky.

Rachel: [chuckles] Nests, at least in the cup family, are—they can be reused, but often they are rebuilt—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: For each round of babies. Other kinds of nests, so ornithologists have defined 10 nest types.

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: This is from the Cornell Lab Bird Academy website. So, in addition to the cup, there is the scrape, which is the simplest nest form. It's just like kind of a dip in the ground where the bird will lay the eggs.

Griffin: Boo!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Not a good parent if you just—if you're getting a scrape. I get the times are tight, but it takes two to six days.

Rachel: If you're in a very—

Griffin: Build a cup.

Rachel: [chuckles] If you're in a very remote area, and there isn't concern about predators, I could see why you would just like, well, I'll just put 'em right here.

Griffin: In a dirt hole.

Rachel: Yeah, in a dirt hole.

Griffin: I'm just saying, if I'm a baby bird and I get born in a dirt hole, I'll be like, "Come on, mom and dad?"

Rachel: No, that's a good point. You look over at your neighbors and you're like—

Griffin: Uh-huh.

Rachel: They got like a whole thing in a tree!

Griffin: Yeah. "Also, my mom and dad are over at my neighbors, and they're drinking."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "They're wearing blindfolds and they're drinking. What's going..."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: "What's going on?"

Rachel: [chuckles] They're wearing blindfolds. They put all their bird keys in a little—a smaller cup nest.

Griffin: [chuckles] In a little small cup nest.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Why do they have keys? That's weird. I guess they stole them from a human.

Rachel: [chuckles] Other kind of nest, platform nests. And so this is the kind of nest a red-tailed hawk would make.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Which is you build up the nesting material into a mound with kind of a depression in the top for the eggs.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: Some platform nests are built on the ground, where others are, you know, up higher, like a red-tailed hawk.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Domed nests are essentially cup nests with a roof.

Griffin: Cool!

Rachel: And they tend to be used by species that nest on the ground, and need extra camouflage to protect the eggs from terrestrial predators.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So they just put a roof on it.

Griffin: Well don't camouflage it too much, because if they put it somewhere where I'm walking...

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: I don't want to goosh a nest because a—

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: It's so well-hidden.

Rachel: I will say that the website gives examples of birds for each of these nest categories. I only put the birds I'd heard of, which means a lot of these do not have examples. [chuckles]

Griffin: A lot of these ornithologists try to trick us normies.

Rachel: Because I didn't want to say confidently like, oh, and then this kind of bird builds a dome nest.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And make people think that I knew what kind of bird that was.

Griffin: That's what I'm saying, they set these little traps out to catch us normies, us civvies, us non-ornithologists.

Rachel: I know... I mean, good for them.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess, they gotta find their fun where they can.

Rachel: Uh-huh. And birds are pretty fascinating.

Griffin: I think so!

Rachel: Pensile nests tend to be a bit deeper than cup nests, and are often constructed farther out towards the tips of branches.

Griffin: Ooh?

Rachel: And they're kind of hammock like, and they hang from thinner branches. So they're more protected from like a heavier predator.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And—

Griffin: But also wicked not protected, because it seems like that's the most fallible of all the nests.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, it wouldn't be great for inclement weather, I'm assuming.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But if you—if you're worried about like a squirrel or like a snake coming out there, it'll fall right off.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? Pendulous nests—

Griffin: Ooh?

Rachel: Go even further out on a limb, and are in kind of a sock shape.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Which is time consuming to construct, but has the benefit of further cocooning the eggs, protecting them from predators and extreme weather.

Griffin: Isn't that like a hummingbird—I know hummingbirds do some weird shit. They get up to some weird nesting behaviors, right?

Rachel: I mean, if it were a hummingbird, I would have written it down, because I know that one.

Griffin: You do know that one pretty good.

Rachel: I will say I read a lot about hummingbirds that make little, tiny cup nests, like three or four centimeter, like little—

Griffin: Shot glasses.

Rachel: Little guys.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: Globular nests—

Griffin: Ooh?

Rachel: Enclose the eggs in a spherical shape, with a side opening. I don't really know how this is different than a domed nest. Because if a cup with a roof is a dome—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Then a spherical nest, how would that be different? With a side opening—

Griffin: This feels like an SAT question.

Rachel: Mm-hm. I know. Some birds, okay, this is another one I've heard, so the screech owl will often rely on a cavity nest, which is like in a tree or another structure. So like a hole in a tree.

Griffin: I love that.

Rachel: That's like already there.

Griffin: I love that, because it's displacing squirrels, I feel like.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: That's a squirrel house, a hole in a tree?

Rachel: Are you anti-squirrel? You just said you love it.

Griffin: No, well, I love birds sort of—I love birds and squirrels, equally. And I feel like squirrels are bullies, kind of, to birds, because they're bigger, heavier guys, sharper teeth—

Rachel: True.

Griffin: Any teeth. And so they are just like, "We get the holes."

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: But I like that there's screech owls, who are—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: One of nature's scariest birds.

Rachel: For sure!

Griffin: Who can say like, "Actually, that'll be my hole." And the squirrels have to obey. Because they've been hypnotized by the owl's magic eyes.

Rachel: Ooh? Are you writing a graphic novel?

Griffin: No, I'm saying screech owls have magic eyes—

Rachel: I'm saying if you want to do a children's graphic novel about a screech owl that has magic eyes, I would read it.

Griffin: I'm saying owl! Owls have psychic powers! And that's why the Tootsie Roll guy was able to get away with as much shit as he got away with.

Rachel: We're learning a lot on this episode.

Griffin: "Let me see that lollipop. You're gonna eat it."
"No, I'm not." [bouncy sound] Munch.

Rachel: Okay, I've just got two more types of nests here.

Griffin: Okay, great!

Rachel: The Atlantic puffin uses what's called a burrow nest.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Which is you excavate the ground a little bit, or you take over a burrow left behind by another animal—

Griffin: That's so puffin—

Rachel: And put your nest in there.

Griffin: That's so puffin. These guys are so fuckin' lazy.

Rachel: They're so cute—

Griffin: They're so cute, I wanna pick 'em up!

Rachel: I got nervous because I read the Atlantic puffin, and I was like, wait, am I thinking of the right puffin? But I was.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Last one, mounds. So, this is relatively rare, and it's from ground-dwelling birds. Again, I didn't write this down. I'm picturing like a—

Griffin: An ostrich.

Rachel: Like a flamingo or something?

Griffin: Flamingos fly, I think.

Rachel: Well...

Griffin: Ostriches, emu

Rachel: It says primarily ground-dwelling birds.

Griffin: I mean, they do s—I guess they do like to... I guess they do stand a lot. It's one of their favorite things. On one leg too. Fucking show off. I can't stand flamingos, that's the one that I don't—

Rachel: Wow? You have a lot of feelings about birds. [chuckles]

Griffin: Like almost all of them. I don't actually know how I feel about owls, because how can you be sure? They could just blast you.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: And make you think you like them.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: There's no way to tell.

Rachel: I wanted to talk about the bald eagle really briefly before we finish.

Griffin: Oh, sure.

Rachel: Bald eagle nests can weigh over a ton.

Griffin: I'm sorry... No, they can't.

Rachel: They will—they will use nests year over year, and continue to kind of add to them.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So they will get heavier and heavier. The largest eagle nest was 20 feet deep and estimated to weigh two tons.

Griffin: Why are you do—why are you—is... why are you doing that, bald eagles?

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: What do you need all that space for? You're one of nature's proudest animals and you can take to the skies and no one's gonna—the sky is your nest! Why do you need a fucking McMansion built onto the cliff side? I'm pissed off now. I don't like that. That's too big. That's dangerous! That could fall on me, or my kids, or another animal.

Rachel: I mean, good for them though, you know?

Griffin: Industrious, sure. I like that. It's just like, you don't need all that space.

Rachel: You were just complaining about like, "If I were a bird and I were born in a hole in the ground, I would think, what a bummer."

Griffin: Can you agree that this is a little extreme?!

Rachel: This—eagles can create nests reaching up to nine feet wide.

Griffin: How wide is an eagle?

[both chuckle] How wide is an eagle?

Rachel: Nobody knows.

Griffin: Nobody knows. No one's quite sure, you can't get one—

Rachel: That's why that's such a good thought exercise when you're trying to relax.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: How wide is an eagle?

Griffin: Can you imagine being like a pigeon or something who gets, I guess, wicked lost, and you find an empty, bald eagle nest?

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That's gotta be the craziest windfall. Such a huge boon.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I think, I mean, I could research bird nests. This could be like a four-part topic for me.

Griffin: Exposé.

Rachel: Because it was ju—it's just fascinating.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Like nobody teaches them how to do this, but they all kind of do it the same way.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And it's incredibly intricate. And it's fascinating to me that there's that much kind of planning up ahead. I mean, there's a reason people use the word nesting when you like—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Get your house all ready before you have a baby. But this idea of just like, I'm gonna need a safe place to put these things.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I'm gonna take a tremendous amount of time and thought and effort, and do it so that they'll be safe.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's very—it's very sweet and fascinating to me.

Griffin: I'm very—yeah, they don't get a fair sha—everyone thinks of beavers as like our nature's most prodigious, you know, const—

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Construction workers. But birds? I mean, every bird's out there doing it.

Rachel: Birds are family creatures, I guess.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And beavers are builders, they're constructors, they're trying to build—

Griffin: Innovators.

Rachel: A society.

Griffin: Yeah. Disruptors.

Rachel: Disruptors. [chuckles]

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

Rachel: Beavers love The Matrix.

Griffin: They sure do.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Madaline... Madaline or Madeline says, "My small wonder is my toddler's dinosaur rain boots. No matter the weather, she wants to wear her pink and green dino boots. It's the best thing ever."

Rachel: Oh my god, I love kid rain boots.

Griffin: I love kid rain boots so much! I'm gonna miss these blue and red ones. Probably neither of our boys can fit in that. But Henry wore 'em and Gus wore 'em.

Rachel: Aw.

Griffin: And now—I guess now they go in the landfill.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: For sale, baby shoes, worn a lot by two different, healthy kids.

Rachel: [chuckles] When we lived in Austin, I had a really hard time convincing myself that it was a reasonable purchase to get rain boots for our kids, because it did not rain very often.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But now that we live here, I happily bought rain boots, and it has been—

Griffin: You still don't need them that often, but when you do? Wow. Wow, it feels good to have rain boots—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: For the kids. Amy says, "My small wonder is salt and pepper. So simple, so perfect."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: This is that savory dirt.

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: That you can put on food to make it taste better. And I agree. Pepper doesn't actually taste like anything, it just makes the food look like you've seasoned it, which is cool. But salt? Oh! I love it.

Rachel: Sometimes talking to you is like playing like a game of Taboo.

Griffin: Awesome.

Rachel: When you're like, you know, the savory dirt that you put on food?

Griffin: I just want the folks at home to know—

Rachel: Like you couldn't say seasoning.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And you couldn't say like, I don't know, granulated or—

Griffin: Well, it's tough! You're finding out now that, right now—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Which is that you can't say it's the salty... Oh, shoot. You know what I mean?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like I want people at home to understand what we're talking about, and we can't just say the word? Otherwise I'll just be like, it's the salty dirt.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Salty little rocks you put on pretzels.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's the white stuff on pretzels that makes your tongue go crazy.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Thank you so much for listening to our show. Thanks to Bo En and augu—I'm in a silly mood today!

Rachel: You are in a silly mood. Probably because you've just been working a lot today.

Griffin: I have been. Thanks to Bo En and Augusta, for real, 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 maximumfun.org, the website and organization, for having us on the network. There's so many great shows there for you to go listen to. Give it a shot! I want to tell you about some merch we got up in the merch store. We've got a bunch of TAZ Amnesty stuff this month—

Rachel: Ooh! Okay?

Griffin: Which is very exciting. A bunch of stuff. And that's all over at mcelroymerch.com. And we got our Besties live show, our first one ever, in New York City, October 9th. [Bit.ly/bestiesonbroadway](http://bit.ly/bestiesonbroadway) is where you can go, and come and join us.

Rachel: There have been a lot of planning meetings for this. You guys are really putting your backs into it.

Griffin: We are! We're trying to make it a good show, because it may not happen again. But it may... we may do it again. It depends on how this one goes. We've never done it before.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: We stream every day, basically, over on our YouTube channel, at The McElroy Family. I wanted to give a shout out to on Fridays I do a video called Every Game Ever, where I'm putting together a spreadsheet of every video game I've ever played. And now we have a shareable form of the blank spreadsheet with all the games in it. And you can download it, and you can make your own Every Game Ever spreadsheet.

Rachel: Where are you at right now? What are you—

Griffin: I'm hopping around! So this Friday I'm gonna start the PS2, which I'm excited about.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: I love the PS2. There's so many good games on it. But there's also like 4000 games on it. So far I've only done systems—I think 1000. I did the original Xbox, had about 1000 games on it. That's about as ambitious as I've gotten. This one's way bigger. Some of 'em is like, the PC has like 200,000 games.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: So like I don't know what I'm gonna do there. But that's a later problem.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But yeah! I've only done like seven or so systems at this point, so it's not too late. Hop on, make yourself a s—it's been fun to go back and think about old games!

Rachel: Where are we—PS2, where is that in your life span?

Griffin: PS2 is like... like late middle school, early high school, I wanna say?

Rachel: Oh, that's like prime video gaming!

Griffin: Oh dude, it's prime time, dude!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: So many jammers on there, I can't wait. Gonna talk about fucking Gitaroo Man, gonna talk about fucking Persona, gonna talk about so much shit. I'm so stoked.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's every Friday at 11 AM. But you know, go follow The McElroy Family on YouTube, or McElroy Entertainment System on Instagram, because that's where we post whenever we're streaming. That's it for this show! Thanks for listening! Thanks for joining us. We'll be back with new—a new one next time. So until then... we're gonna—we're gonna go watch Mary, Marthy, Marthy, May, Marlene.

Rachel: And find out which pill she takes. [chuckles]

Griffin: Find out which one she takes. I bet the blue one.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I hear the blue one tastes better.

Rachel: I bet. Blue traditionally, I mean, if you're thinking about Gatorade.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Blue all the way.

Griffin: And I am.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Always.

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

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