

Wonderful 431: They Can Tell We Have a Candle Going

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

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful! It's a podcast where we talk about the things we like, that's good, that we're into. They can probably tell at home, can't they?

Rachel: What?

Griffin: They can probably tell that we got a candle going.

Rachel: Oh, yeah, it's very smoky.

Griffin: Very smoky! Holy shit, what's going on?

Rachel: I think you're getting to the end of that candle.

Griffin: Yeah, I really rode it down to the hill. I might actually have to blow this out. This is our Poetry Corner candle, and it's great, but I mean, I guess I've used—that's crazy! That's too—look at all that smoke, Jesus!

Rachel: [titters]

Griffin: God damn!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's insane! I'm gonna set off the smoke alarm.

Rachel: Yeah, just to be clear, fine candle.

Griffin: It's a great candle, but I guess if you ride it to the fucking, to the hill like that—

Rachel: Fabulous product.

Griffin: Oh! The smoke stinks!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [chuckles] It's a great candle, but I, really, I guess it's mostly wick now, and it just burned!

Rachel: Maybe the best candle ever, but—

Griffin: It's really the best candle ever! I lit it because I thought maybe the vibe would be good, but instead I almost burned our house down.

Rachel: Maybe we should put something on the label that says, hey, when it's down to the last inch, just call it.

Griffin: I didn't know. It's been grea—a great friend. This n—hey, this never happens. I don't know what to say, it's a great candle.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I thought this was going to be a great spotlight for the Poetry Corner candle, and then it—

Rachel: That we don't sell anymore, I don't think.

Griffin: It turned on us. Anyway, this is Wonderful, a podcast where we talk about things—we had the candle energy. I don't have any other fucking candles in here, and now I don't know if I can trust a candle again.

Rachel: I didn't need a candle, unless you thought there was some sort of smell we were working against?

Griffin: I've been having this phantom nose smell where I smell smoke, and now I smell actual smoke. So maybe that's a way around it.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Maybe that's a way to sidestep the issue entirely.

Rachel: So you can like affirm your smoke—

Griffin: Yeah, now I know that it's not like some sort of weird neurological kind of failure.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's—now it's—there's real smoke. We all smell it!

Rachel: Yeah, it's true.

Griffin: We all smell it. Just check and make sure you're still really brewing a real witch's brew in there.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: So do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: Oh, I was thinking about this the other day, and I was like, oh, that's a good one. And then...

Griffin: Uh-oh.

Rachel: I forgot.

Griffin: Didn't... didn't get there.

Rachel: And now I can't remember.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Do you have one?

Griffin: We finished Da Bear.

Rachel: We did finish The Bear!

Griffin: I liked it! I liked the ending. I wasn't a big fan of the last couple seasons, because it got nasty! Everyone was so nasty to each other and I—you know that stresses me out.

Rachel: This one, it felt like they really tapped into like the most compelling part of their show.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which is like all of them in the kitchen, like trying to get stuff done in challenging circumstances.

Griffin: Yeah, that's basically all the season is. It's eight episodes of them in a—in a—in the—in the shit, in the foxholes.

Rachel: And then like pairing some like different characters together for like conversations, which was fun.

Griffin: Fun.

Rachel: It felt like a real gift to those of us that have watched the whole thing.

Griffin: A lot of great moments, a lot of great speeches, great performances. Jamie Lee Curtis only shows up for a little bit, but she like makes a face that's like, damn, she's acting the hell out of this.

Rachel: Do you... we can maybe talk about this in a way that doesn't involve spoilers.

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: There is a new career introduced.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Were we supposed to expect that coming?

Griffin: Well, no, I don't—not that I can remember, but—

Rachel: I'm trying to remember if there was some little token somewhere in the series that suggested like, oh, this is a career.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, I don't—I don't know why they made Jamie Lee Curtis' character become a rodeo horse rider, a horse girl.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: It does, I would agree, it came out of nowhere, where they were like, "Hey, where'd mom go?" And they say to the rodeo. To the wild west!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And then they went right back to cooking and it was like, are we just not supposed to ask questions?

Rachel: Yeah, and I thought was there something in the episode where the woman gives birth where she's like, "You know what? Giving birth is like the rodeo."

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And that it's the best thing a person can do.

Griffin: Uh-huh!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't remember that.

Rachel: No, I don't either.

Griffin: Do you want... do you have a small wonder now?

Rachel: Oh, geez...

Griffin: It feels like you got—you kind of jumped on mine like so excitedly that you maybe forgot that you needed to come up with your own. Do you want to talk about our floral Lego zone?

Rachel: Oh, yeah, that's a good idea! We have taken up Lego in a pretty serious way, and that Griffin and I have found that in the evenings, when we're watching something and feeling fidgety, the best thing to do is put together an adult Lego set. And I started to have the awareness of like, we are running out of space for these adult Lego sets.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: And so we put up a shelf, and that has become our spot for complimentary Lego sets.

Griffin: Originally, you put the DnD castle up there, which was a—

Rachel: Yeah, we realized. [laughs]

Griffin: Huge fucking statement!

Rachel: We—[laughs]

Griffin: From you! I was like, *what?! This is the centerpiece you want in this room?*

Rachel: No...

Griffin: And the answer was no. I pushed back—

Rachel: I didn't realize, and you'd think I would, like to put somebody on a

pedestal is to elevate them—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In a way that suggests like you want to draw attention.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And when I put this on the Lego shelf, I realized like, oh...

Griffin: You don't want to own that life.

Rachel: There's nothing else in our room that would indicate that this is a reasonable choice for us.

Griffin: Yeah, unless I'm in the room, and then you can probably connect the dots, if you're like a stranger in our home for some reason.

Rachel: [chuckles] I just stand you right next to it all the time like—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know.

Griffin: Makes sense.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But now we have different stuff there.

Rachel: Yeah! It's like little floral sets and—[chuckles] a while back, my dad got me those Love Is Blind cups, you know how they're always drinking out of like golden goblets.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: So we have two of those up there too.

Griffin: Two of those.

Rachel: Which is surprisingly like very complimentary—

Griffin: And we have the sunflowers Lego painting.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: By... what's his face? Van Gogh.

Rachel: Van Gogh.

Griffin: It's cool. I like it. It looks nice.

Rachel: It does.

Griffin: I know—I like that there's nice ways to display Legos, and not just like shameful... I don't know. I've got Barad-dûr, the Eye of Sauron, just constantly kind of gl...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just looking over my shoulder as I record now. And I know that's not a cool look, but this looks cool!

Rachel: Yeah—

Griffin: And grown up—

Rachel: I think so.

Griffin: And mature.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: *Sophisticated? Legos?* I think so!

Rachel: Oh, well, I don't know that I'm ready to say that yet.

Griffin: The reviews are in!

Rachel: Okay. [titters]

Griffin: You go first this week.

Rachel: I do! Did you watch the clip I sent you?

Griffin: Hell yeah, dude!

Rachel: So there is a show called Fraggle Rock, which I have talked about before, kind of generally.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Very long time ago when we first started this podcast.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: More or less, because it was a very important show to me.

Griffin: By the way, I think we should be allowed to go back and redo old topics that we did like—

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: Four plus years or so ago. It just feels like, I don't know, it feels fair. Anyway.

Rachel: Anyway, so the episode I wanted to talk about very specifically is episode 507, and it is called Gone but Not Forgotten. So, this is an episode. There are—there are several kind of main character fraggles, and they all represent kind of different personality traits.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: And the indecisive one is named Wembley. And it's difficult for him

to do stuff on his own, because he tends to be so indecisive. But he goes on this little hike, like through the caves that the fraggles live in. And he happens upon this kind of mystical creature called a mud bunny. And the character's name is Mudwell.

Griffin: He's... he's in—his vibes are impeccable.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's really beyond compare.

Rachel: And the episode deals with a challenging topic for a children's television program, which is grief and death. Mudwell, spoiler, does not make it.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So he is introduced, and then in the same episode, he dies.

Griffin: Can I have a moment?

Rachel: Yeah. [titters]

Griffin: Because you just like—

Rachel: I know, you're just finding out.

Griffin: You just like showed me Mudwell, and his vibes and his song, and I was like absolutely grooving to the max.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: And then you're like, "By the way..." And you really, I don't know, you really pulled the rug out, it feels like.

Rachel: I know, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but kind of the rest of my segment kind of depends on you knowing that.

Griffin: No, okay. Yeah, no, okay, I'm gl—I'm plugged in. I'm in the right—

Rachel: The episode was also called Gone but Not Forgotten, so I did kind of give you—

Griffin: I suspected that maybe something happened to Mudwell!

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: I suspected that maybe this man whose vibes were so choice was not going to stick around. But that's... but it's fine. I'm ready now. Because I imagine this episode takes you on a journey of acceptance.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I'm—you're going to now have to take me on that journey, because I can't watch the rest of the Fraggles Rock episode right now.

Rachel: I know.

Griffin: I'm recording a podcast with my wife.

Rachel: I know. I thought about sending you the whole episode, but it's like 25 minutes, and that's a pretty big ask, I feel like. Usually we don't send each other videos of that length prior to.

Griffin: I would! If it's Fraggles Rock, I probably would have—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You know, made time and space for it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But it's okay, I'll read a—like a synopsis later.

Rachel: Yeah, please. [chuckles] So, the song that I sent Griffin is called "Just a Dream Away." And I probably talked about this when I first

mentioned Fraggles Rock. The music on Fraggles Rock was exceptional.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: There's like really strong kind of singer-songwriter folk energy in a lot of the songs that they do.

Griffin: Big croshy—Croce energy on this one, on this track, I think.

Rachel: I don't know what that means.

Griffin: Jim Croche—Jim Croce? Gross—crosi... Croce? I think his name's Croce.

Rachel: I still don't know who you're referencing.

Griffin: Oh man, he sang "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown" and a bunch of other s—a bunch of other songs. What else did Jim Croce do? "Time in a Bottle."

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown."

Rachel: Yeah, I was thinking more Woody Guthrie, but—

Griffin: Okay, yeah.

Rachel: Kind of this—this similar kind of like troubadour, like writing songs about big life moments.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, Mudwell is actually voiced by Richard Hunt, who I didn't realize, but he also did Junior Gorg and Scooter and Statler and Janice and Beaker and Sweetums.

Griffin: Okay, so just royalty you're basically...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Muppet royalty.

Rachel: Back in the day. And he performs this beautiful song and it's all about kind of like the evolution of water and kind of moving through time. And then the chorus is, "It's just a dream away, you've got to leave to stay, we'll meet again someday."

Griffin: Should we play a little bit of it?

Rachel: Yeah, I would like to!

Griffin: Let's do it.

["Just a Dream Away" from Fraggle Rock plays]

Rachel: So the story is that Mudwell, like part of his creature's life cycle is that like when the mud reaches the right temperature in his little habitat, he will kind of encase himself and lay next to it. And then he will pass on. And this is not anything Wembley knows, because this is his first time meeting this creature.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And so he is on his hike and he meets Mudwell and they have a great time. And because Mudwell saves him from this like avalanche of rocks.

Griffin: I bet that is a *huge* health hazard in Fraggle Rock.

Rachel: Yeah. No, I know.

Griffin: It's probably the leading cause of Fraggle death.

Rachel: I know. [chuckles] I mean—well, yeah, if you—if you say—

Griffin: Or Gorgs—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If Gorg catches you.

Rachel: Gorgs, for sure. But he wakes up the following day and Mudwell is trying to like push him out of his habitat. In the kind of like, "Just get out of here!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Kind of way. You know, where it's like... at the end of a movie, if you're like trying to get a dog or something to leave and you're like, "I don't like you anymore!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, and in a way—[chuckles]

Griffin: I hate that, I hate that in movies.

Rachel: [laughs] I know, it's so sad.

Griffin: "Just go!" Jojo Rabbit. "Just get out of here!"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: "You stink!"

Rachel: [chuckles] Trying to kind of push him out, because he knows that like his time is coming to an end—

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And he wants Wembley to leave before that happens. And then Wembley goes back, he talks to his friends, and they all have different ways of like communicating with him. And then Gobo's like his—Gobo, who's the big explorer, it's like go back and get a reason behind this. And when he

goes back, he talks to Mudwell for a second, and then he passes.

Griffin: Oh? Okay.

Rachel: And then Wembley is very upset and confused, and he goes back to his friends, and they all kind of try and help him grieve in different ways.

Griffin: Yeah. Does Gobo apologize? Was he like, "I fucking blew it."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "You should not have gone back. Wow. Sorry."

Rachel: Well, Gobo's whole point was like, you know, he owes you an explanation.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Which I don't think he was wrong about.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: Anyway, so Mokey does some kind of like earthy... like let's do some kind of celebration of Mudwell's life. And Boober's like get under a... blanket and scream real loud.

Griffin: These are all fantastic...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Suggestions.

Rachel: And then Gobo is talking to him about his pet, what he calls a thimble bug. Again, just like a thing that exists in Fraggle Rock.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And he talks about how this thimble bug that was very important to

him disappeared, but that he left his nest, and having the nest is like a piece of him, and it like reminds him of him. And then Wembley gives the best line like that I've ever heard in kind of—to talk about kind of the early stages of grief. Which is, "I don't feel like a part of him is alive, because I'm not used to all of him being gone."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I'm like watching Fraggles Rock and crying, you know. [laughs]

Griffin: Like this is like today—this was like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Did you hunt this episode down because you remember it being sort of poignant about grief?

Rachel: Mudwell! I always remember Mudwell. Mudwell really sticks with me, because of that gorgeous song.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And Fraggles Rock was so good at bringing in different characters to kind of serve a specific purpose. There was a song called like "Convincing John," that was a character Jim Henson played. Like they have all these kind of traveling characters that show up and—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Kind of serve the purpose of an episode. So I, yeah, I thought that was such a beautiful, like succinct way to kind of talk about like the place that he was at.

Griffin: Mm-hm.

Rachel: So, he goes back to kind of like pay his respects to the place where Mudwell was. And then like a little new character like hatches out of the place where he was, that has no knowledge of him. And they sing that

song together and it's very sweet.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's kind of like a suggestion of like reincarnation, but you know, it's like a nice way to end the episode.

Griffin: You know Jim Henson fucked with that s—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You know my man Jim Dogg was like... spiritual in that way, I bet.

Rachel: I know! I know, it feels like a very like ni—I mean a very challenging episode for Fraggles Rock.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But like a nice way to end it, and kind of in line with the song of like things continue and it's all part of, you know, the experience of living.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Richard Hunt, who did the voice of Mudwell, actually passed away in 1992 of AIDS, in a time period when a lot of people...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Were dying of that. His partner had actually died shortly before this episode aired, when they were kind of filming it in 1985. And apparently, and I don't know if this is still the case, but the Muppet Christmas Carol is dedicated to Richard Hunt.

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: Because it came out, you know, not long after he had passed in 1992.

Griffin: You think they, like on Disney Plus, they like rem—[titters] they like removed it?

Rachel: [laughs] Well, I don't know if dedications last forever?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know, on—

Griffin: If they do like a remaster, then they're like, this one's—

Rachel: Films—

Griffin: Not... no longer dedicated.

Rachel: Yeah, I don't know. [laughs] I don't know. That's probably not true. But I haven't watched Muppet Christmas Carol in a while and I don't remember...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: If that's still the case. But yeah, I mean, he played such a huge role in a lot of those early Muppet characters. So yeah, I just think that's a beautiful episode. I love that song, that "Just a Dream Away" song. The episode's called Gone but Not Forgotten. It is available on YouTube if you want to watch it. And I just feel like it is an incredible way for a children's show to address grief.

Griffin: Yeah, I do appreciate when kids shows... I'm trying—Bluey, obviously. I'm trying to think of other ones that kind of tackle the subject with a deft hand. Dinosaurs, I feel like—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Has the episode where the grandma doesn't want to go into the tar pits.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: That's pretty much the only ones I can think of, but I'm sure there's lots.

Rachel: Oh, well, you know, The Simpsons, when Maude?

Griffin: When Maude. Yeah, but that's played for mostly giggles, I think.

Rachel: Yeah! But I feel like there's some tender moments in there.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And Simpsons are—you can argue whether or not that's actually a children's show. [titters]

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, just because your parents let you watch it as a kid—

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: That more speaks to how cool, you know, your parents were—

Rachel: [titters] Oh well thank you.

Griffin: To let you do that.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: I appreciate your topic. I feel like it was very vulnerable and very open, and I am going to do the same thing right now, because my topic that I'd like to talk to you and everyone else about right now is old-school

LiveJournal.

Rachel: Oh, gosh. You know, I have one.

Griffin: You have one?!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, that's great. I didn't know. I suspected you might.

Rachel: I haven't checked, are they—is it still up?

Griffin: So, here's the deal. I put "old-school" on here because LiveJournal is still a thing, and I have not kept up with it or its policies or its reputation—

Rachel: Yes. [titters]

Griffin: In the year of our Lord 2026. From what I understand, a Russian media company acquired it in like 2007.

Rachel: Wow?

Griffin: That's like... run by some sort of oligarch. And s—but I didn't... I'm just saying from the years 2003 to 2007, LiveJournal was my fucking jam.

Rachel: I definitely used it maybe until like 2005.

Griffin: Yeah. That's—

Rachel: I remember shortly after moving to Chicago, I kind of discontinued.

Griffin: It really was something I used... I don't know, I was writing in it four or five times a week.

Rachel: Wow?

Griffin: I was—I was a frequent poster. And when I think about like the way I use that website, it makes me feel like I'm pondering the memories of like

a different person that had been implanted into my head/

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Because it's so fucking foreign from how I—

Rachel: So you didn't look to see if you can still find yours?

Griffin: I did. I found it. I found it.

Rachel: Okay. Well yeah, then that means mine's still out there.

Griffin: Yeah. You can adjust the privacy settings of it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: If you want. So let's talk about LiveJournal first, because there's probably a ton of people listening who did not have a LiveJournal, because I don't know, maybe they had a Tumblr, or one of the other things—

Rachel: Or a Blogspot.

Griffin: Or Blogspot. So, LiveJournal is a sort of early social media/online like blogging platform. It came out in 1999. It was created by an American programmer named Brad Fitzpatrick who made it as sort of a way to keep up to date on the exploits of like his high school buddies. Which is great, because that's also what I used it for. And the whole setup of LiveJournal, at least back in the, you know, early to mid aughts, was pretty straightforward. You could like customize the look of your LiveJournal in a bunch of different ways.

Rachel: You could upload pictures.

Griffin: You could upload pictures. Everything was in reverse chronological order, so it was like a blog, right? It was much more bloggy than a MySpace page.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Which was like, here's my... profile. That wasn't the thing that—like you could have a profile or whatever, but otherwise it was a blog! You were blogging. And all the content on your LiveJournal was yours. Your friends weren't like posting in your LiveJournal. They could comment on the things that you wrote.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And you could look at your friends' posts, but it wasn't like they were posting on your wall or whatever. Like it was your space to write whatever you wanted, it was your own sort of curated thing. And for all the time that I used it, whenever you wrote a post, there were four fields that you had to sort of populate.

Rachel: Oh?

Griffin: The title of your post—

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: The body of your post—

Rachel: Yeah?

Griffin: An emoji encapsulating your mood—

Rachel: Oh my god, I forgot about the emoji.

Griffin: This is how I learned about the word quixotic, is from this.

Rachel: Yeah! You're right!

Griffin: I got a comment from someone like calling me out for that, I think during the most recent stream we did, where they were like, "You only know quixotic, you've used it for the last two streams. Are you like a LiveJournal guy?" And I was like, "Fuck, you got me."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And the fourth one was a field to input whatever song you're listening to.

Rachel: *Oh?*

Griffin: I adore the idea of boiling down the entirety of my late teenage experience into like, here's my thoughts, here's how I describe my mood, and here's the fuckin' Switchfoot song that I'm listening to right now.

Rachel: That's kind of the Instagram kind of does that. And they the—they let you pick a song for your post.

Griffin: Yeah, this wasn't even like playing the song. You would just say, "Currently I'm listening to—"

Rachel: Oh! Okay, I didn't know if it would link to—

Griffin: "Dare You to Move by Switchfoot." There was probably a way to do that, but I don't know that I had the... internet acumen to understand how to link shit.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Everything that had like links and... I don't know, that I had gotten from somewhere else are all broken. Like none of that shit still works.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I can only get at my text. My LiveJournal filled a few roles for me back in those years. It was my first like social media platform, you know, allowing me to sort of stay in touch with my friends, because they all had LiveJournals too. And could, you know, keep up to date on this window that they were providing of what was happening in their lives with their LiveJournals. And it gave me a place to post photos that I was taking with my like ancient digital camera.

Rachel: Can you tell me where you were at in your life when you were posting?

Griffin: So this was 16 to 20, basically.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Is what we're talking about. So we're talking about, you know, probably sophomore year high school—

Rachel: *Wild.*

Griffin: Up until... probably the summer before my sophomore year of college.

Rachel: *Wow.*

Griffin: So, pretty big years.

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: All things considered, right? This is—this is... this is what I... I'm so glad that I thought to talk about this, because I did go and find it. And I did go and read it—

Rachel: Did you read it?

Griffin: I did! I read it. And it's not readable...

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It's not super readable. It is a tough read to get through.

Rachel: Ah.

Griffin: Mostly just because of the things that I would write. Awesome sauce, stuff like that.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Things I look at now and I'm like *ugh*...

Rachel: *Ooh!*

Griffin: This is getti— "This is gonna have 20 different kinds of awesomeness! You gotta come—" Like...

Rachel: *Oh...*

Griffin: Just a lot of saying "awesome" in like different ways that I would not presently.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But also like, I wrote with such a shocking amount of like vulnerability and—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And candor. And a lot of that was like probably not the healthiest. Like a lot of that was... you know, playing it up from time to time to like get some sort of... sympathetic, emotional outreach from my friends who were like on it. And so like—

Rachel: Yeah, of course.

Griffin: Quite a bit of vying for attention in that way.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But like it's also the period of time where when my mom died, and I don't like—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I really... Because of like sort of the trauma of that, like I—my

memories from that—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Era are shot. They're really, really quite spotty and bad. And so I have this record of that time that is cringeworthy as all get out to read. But I am like super-duper glad that I have it. Even though like, I don't know, I struggle with journaling now. I've never been able to keep up with it after this. Because like I find myself incapable of writing in a journal in a way where it doesn't feel like I'm trying to like entertain an audience.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which feels like disingenuous and probably speaks to like some bad, fucked up thing going on deep in my—in my brain. The live journal era allowed me to sidestep that concern, because that's like exactly what I was doing. And it's also what everyone else was d—like I was not the only one using LiveJournal in this way, like all of my friends were doing it in the same way.

Rachel: Yeah, no, I still remember my friends that had a LiveJournal.

Griffin: So like, I don't know, as a record of my mental state, I don't know if the emojis I selected and put forth for everyone to see were truly representative of my actual experience. But like there's stuff enshrined in there that is just, it's a treasure trove. Just like writing about cast parties that I went to—

Rachel: *Wow.*

Griffin: Or like... I found a post that was talking about, it was like a week after mom had passed. And I went over to Justin's, and we all went out to Sharky's. And I did karaoke for the first time ever. And I sang—

Rachel: *Whoa.*

Griffin: It wa—I sang "Alison" by Elvis Costello.

Rachel: Whoa?

Griffin: And that was my first time doing it. And then I found a post about the time that we were all going to King's Island and I fell on a sewer grate, and I gave myself a lumbosacral strain and had to go to the emergency room.

Rachel: Oh, I don't know that story?

Griffin: And then I found like the schedules of all the Bonaroos I went to.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like with all of the different acts that I went—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: To go see. Like... I'm really glad that I have that stuff that I, you know, I really only kept to show other people, that I was writing to show other people at the time. And that's so kind of antithetical to how I think about writing about what's going on in my—in my life. Obviously, like I do a podcast or two where I talk about shit, but this was just a s—just this encapsulated era of my life, that I never really returned to.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I never really would, I don't think, go back to like blogging about myself in this exact way.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I'll be damned if it—it's like 500 posts or something like that.

Rachel: *Wow.*

Griffin: Over the span of like three and a half years.

Rachel: I mean, the things that changed for you are pretty dramatic in that

you started writing for a living.

Griffin: It's exactly—it's exactly then. One of my last posts was like, "Yeah! And so now I'm writing for the Herald-Dispatch about video games, and they just got acquired by this other place that doesn't have like a video game writer, so our video game posts are gonna be like up on the front page."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then, "Oh, Justin got hired at Joystiq! Isn't that cool?" [clap]
The end!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "Now I get paid, bye!"

Rachel: Yeah, I mean, I think once you start having to share your writing on the internet as part of your job, I imagine that changes how you think about writing on the internet.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: And also kind of the more feedback you get from strangers, I would say the more self-conscious you would become.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. I don't—it's such a weird thing, man. It really is a weird thing. I was like looking at the comments too like, which was kind of lovely—

Rachel: *Yeah.*

Griffin: Like seeing a—one of my—also one of my last posts was I wrote about the time I got robbed at GameStop.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I got like held up at gunpoint, and the just... there were a lot of comments from people who were being very, very sweet, and cracking jokes and... I don't know, it's—it is a thing I'm so glad that I have. Even though it

is—it is truly difficult to read. Not from an emotional standpoint, like I'm glad to have the stuff that is there, you know, really around the time that mom died. Like I'm so glad to have that stuff. Mostly from a prosaic standpoint—

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: It's a tough read sometimes, but—

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Yeah, man, old-school LJ, there's nothing like it.

Rachel: You should like, I don't know if you can PDF that or something? I'm worried that you will just lose—

Griffin: Time's ravages will—yeah.

Rachel: You just lose access. I used t—so my email account, I used to have an Excite email account.

Griffin: *Ooh!*

Rachel: That doesn't exist anymore. And it just kind of happened without me realizing it. And so now every email I had in there is just gone.

Griffin: Ah, bummer.

Rachel: And there's really no clear way to get it back. And so it's like, oh, well maybe...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Maybe you should put this in some kind of folder.

Griffin: Yeah. It's like my Rockstar Games account was tied to my Polygon email address, which I can't even get at anymore. So I may—

Rachel: Oh no?

Griffin: I might not even be able to play the new Grand Theft Auto. It's the exact same situation.

Rachel: And all of your... your stats and your—

Griffin: All my stats, all my—all my achievements.

Rachel: Oh, no.

Griffin: And trophies and accolades, all gone.

Rachel: And then all you'll have left now are your real accolades. [chuckles]

Griffin: Like tears in the rain!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I saw Z-rays through the Horsehead Nebula.

Rachel: Oh, this is lost on me.

Griffin: It's lost on me too. I've only seen Blade Runner the once. So, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Steven says, "The wife and I went yesterday to Great Waves Water Park for Labor Day, and it was truly such a wonderful way to end the summer. We live in the area and love our Nova water parks, but had never been. Thank you for talking about this."

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: You're welcome, Steven. Tastemakers!

Rachel: Yeah, we influenced.

Griffin: We influenced, didn't we?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: And for good. I'm glad nothing bad happened to Steven and his—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: His... and his family.

Rachel: Water parks are very treacherous.

Griffin: Absolutely, they are!

Rachel: So, I hesitate to recommend them to anyone.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I'm glad that that was fun.

Griffin: This next one's a club banger. Yvonne says, "I love when contestants on Jeopardy do a fun design with their name. My husband and I are watching through Jeopardy Masters and we love all the fun designs Paolo has done so far. It's such a fun flair for them to be able to show off a bit of their personality."

Rachel: Huh? I don't know if I've ever noticed that really.

Griffin: I love that, when they do a little doodle or a little flair, or like they make their name into like an ambigram, or they like do some—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Some sort of crazy stuff?

Rachel: I know—I know you do that for your name, and then like when it's like final Jeopardy or whatever, you'll like write down your thing. And sometimes people are like, "Hi, Julie!"

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Because they realize they're going to lose. [chuckles]

Griffin: And Ken will let that shit slide, Alec would not. He would be like, "The answer is not Niagara Falls Hi Julie."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: He was like a total stickler for that stuff. That is it for us today here on Wonderful. I want to say a big thanks to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that song in the episode description. And I also want to say thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go over to maximumfun.org, check out all the great stuff they've got over there. Shows covering every topic, every conceivable interest you might have, they've got something for you, you're going to find something you like.

Rachel: Animals, video games, wrestling... books—

Griffin: Nerd shit.

Rachel: Brothers.

Griffin: Brothers!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Wonderful! Whatever, it's all there.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We've got merch over at mcelroymerch.com, we've got a new Utilidrink Tumblr, inspired by the My Brother, My Brother and Me all-in-one über-beverage.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's got everything you need in it. And there's a few other items, new, and you know, a bunch of other merch for all the shows, mcelroymerch.com. 10% of all merch proceeds this month will also be donated to the Midwest Food Banks Disaster Relief Fund. One last thing, we're doing a live Besties episode in just about a month, October 9th, at the Town Hall in New York City. If you go to bit.ly/bestiesonbroadway, you can get tickets to that right now. Thank you for listening to our podcast! We hope you enjoyed. We hope that you... got something out of it, grew. I think I grew this one!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think I grew this one.

Rachel: No, I think we leaned into growth, and we achieved that.

Griffin: Let's take a flyer next week. I'll do like yo-yo balls.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Or Madballs.

Rachel: I don't know what Madballs are.

Griffin: They were the balls that had *crazy* faces on 'em. You could squish 'em and they'd be like, "*Blah*."

Rachel: Oh, okay?

Griffin: One would be like a mummy or some shit.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: Some vile shit.

Rachel: I bet there's a lot of information about those online.

Griffin: So you do yo-yo balls, I'll do Madballs, we'll do a flyer to recover from this one.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Okay. So, that's a... it's a promise.

Rachel: So we just basically told everybody like, hey, you're probably not going to get a lot out of the next one. [chuckles]

Griffin: You're not going to get a lot, you're not going to grow from the next one. Unless you have a lot of core Madballs memories!

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Maybe in your inside out brain space, it's all Madballs items.

Rachel: AO?

Griffin: You just hit me with an AO like our kids do.

Rachel: Like—yeah.

Griffin: Whenever we say "balls."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I love you.

Rachel: [chuckles] I love you too.

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

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