



# AT Banter Podcast Episode 250 - Darryl Lennox

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, vancouver, app, comedy, accessible, screen readers, darryl, sight, canada, yuk, big, process, blind, absolutely, life, travel, bit, ryan, act, voiceover

## SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Darryl Lennox, Ryan Fleury

- R** Rob Mineault 00:44  
Hey, and welcome to a another episode of AT Banter, Banter, banter. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault and joining me as per usual, Mr. Ryan Fleury.
- R** Ryan Fleury 00:58  
Hello again.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:00  
And, yeah, as we as we noted last week know Steve Barclay. He's still out there fishing somewhere.
- R** Ryan Fleury 01:07  
That's what he says he's doing.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:09  
Yeah. Well, who knows? Who knows about that guy? Hey, how are you doing?

- R** Ryan Fleury 01:18  
I'm doing okay. Really. I'm a little up and down with Steve away, but you know, it is what it is. So we'll make it through.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:26  
Yeah. I'm pissed off.
- R** Ryan Fleury 01:29  
Because of the article i sent you?
- R** Rob Mineault 01:31  
Yeah, I'm livid about that. I'm shot out of a cannon today. Am I okay, but before we before I even get into that, though. What are we doing today?
- R** Ryan Fleury 01:41  
Today we are speaking with comedian Darryl Lenox.
- R** Rob Mineault 01:44  
Yeah, I'm excited about this, too. This is this is really cool. I can't believe we got him. Like this is amazing.
- R** Ryan Fleury 01:51  
Well, that's what happens when you're pay people, right?
- R** Rob Mineault 01:54  
You're making more than I am, sir. I didn't realize were paying out. That's good. No, this is this is super cool. So Darryl Lenox. I don't know how people are familiar with him. But he's a really, really funny comedian. He's been on Conan, he's been doing stand up for years. Very well established. I think he's got I think he's got a couple Showtime specials. Is this a big get like this is a famous dude that we're talking to.



Ryan Fleury 02:23

I know! Thanks, Darryl



Rob Mineault 02:26

Yeah, so this is, this is gonna be a great show. Very excited about that. However, first off, I am pissed off as well, because of this article that you ruined my morning with, Ryan.



Ryan Fleury 02:43

Go ahead and let's discuss.



Rob Mineault 02:45

Okay, well, let's so I'll set this up for people. So this is out of the Vancouver Sun. From yesterday, I believe. New border rules will prevent air travel for people who are blind or unable to use the internet. The sub headline is Canadian border services says no excuses. People need to ask for help to file information before heading to the airport. That, out of probably everything in this article, that infuriated me the most and I'll circle back to that as to why but holy crap, okay. Anyways, the article goes on. Travelers who are visually impaired and people who do not have a smartphone or are unable to access the web could be blocked from flying into Canada when the rules change starting next week. Under rules enforced now fully vaccinated Canadians must use the ArriveCan app or its web portal if they want to avoid quarantine. Travelers who neither use the app nor go online to submit their vaccine status and COVID-19. Test Results are ordered to quarantine for 14 days, including three days at a government approved hotel, even if they are fully vaccinated. However, starting August 9, travelers who do not submit their information to the ArriveCan app or its web portal will not be allowed to board their plane to Canada, no matter what their vaccination status is. Travelers who submit their information online must print out and carry a copy verifying that ArriveCan has accepted the travelers information. So I'm going to skip a little bit ahead because I'm going to get to the infuriating part. Okay, so the CNIB has complained to border services that its app makes it impossible for someone who is visually impaired to upload the required information to arrive can cniv Board Member Bob Fenton's said the lack of forethought by the federal government is disappointing. Boy is that understating things. So here's the problem. Their stupid app is is not accessible. So and this is this is what gets my blood boiling because here we are, over a year downstream of the of the Accessible Canada Act, which dictates that government agencies have to have accessible services. And here we are the Canadian border services create this app that's not accessible. And their response to that is to say something along the lines of no excuses people need to ask for

help. Like, no, you know, it's no excuses. No excuses, is a federal agency building an app and a web portal that's not accessible. That's where there should be no excuses.

R

Ryan Fleury 05:41

Yeah, where's the checks and balances? Did anybody do any testing, obviously not. And it shouldn't have been approved, without any testing.

R

Rob Mineault 05:51

This is a brand new app. And they didn't even bother building it accessible. Like, this goes completely against what the Accessible Canada act is supposed to be doing. And once again, because we have this mechanism where well, they get to police themselves, in terms of, of enforcement, this just is gonna just skate completely through. It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous that they didn't take an accessibility pass at this app and make sure that it's accessible before they launched it. And, okay, I granted I understand that this the, you know, COVID-19 has made, has made us have to move on things sometimes. And sometimes things are a moving target. But I don't know, it's not that hard. Like, if you if you the article goes on and talks a little bit about what makes the app inaccessible. It's just, you know, it's typical accessibility stuff, that somebody who knows what they're looking for and knows what they're doing could probably go in and fix this in not, it would be a long process. So you know, they didn't even bother doing it. And that's just, that's what really infuriates me, is there's just the lack of will to actually think about accessibility at any stage of development. And it's this is still going on, it's and it's that mindset that needs to be changed. And that's what I find so angering, is that the mindset just isn't changing. People aren't taking accessibility into account.

R

Ryan Fleury 07:17

Well, that's why I mentioned to you earlier this morning, that, you know, in some regards, we've kind of criticized the US for all the litigation suits that are filed against corporations or organizations for their inaccessibility or lack of accessibility. But when people do file a lawsuit, it brings attention to that that case, that situation, here in Canada, we don't have the mechanisms, we go through human rights, maybe we need to become a little bit more litigious, and start making some headlines about companies that are not meeting accessibility guidelines that we already have in place. You know, It surprises me 30 years after the ADA in the US, we still are having accessibility issues. And I don't understand what it's going to take, you know, obviously education isn't working, or if it is, it's very, very slow. And I think it's time to break out the big stick

R

Rob Mineault 08:17

But the trouble is, there's no stick, like there's a there's nothing, you know that you can't sue, you can't sue a company for lack of accessibility if they're not mandated to be accessible in the first place. So you can't say sue the government? Well, I mean, I guess, you know, maybe you can, I don't even know, I don't know what that process is like. But like, yeah, I mean, it's it's written right into the Accessible Canada Act that they're exempt from, from their own rules, even though the rules are for them. Like it makes no sense. And I remember it's speaking to that, when the Accessible Canada Act came in, and we were like, whoo, this is kind of weird. They're exempt from, from all of the enforcement yet the the act is supposed to cover them. So like, I don't know, that's weird. And here we are, like the there's, there's really, I mean, sure, maybe Border Services will work with CNIB, and they'll try to make a fix. I don't know. But the I don't know, the tone of this article just makes it feel like their their reaction to this is just kind of like well, you know, whatever. Like you just have to get help. Like, that's it.

R

Ryan Fleury 09:31

It would take an app developer, I don't know, probably an hour at the most to who knows how to fix these issues. It doesn't sound like it's a very complicated app. you're filling in information, their form fields, their drop down menus, it, I don't think it would be that difficult to do.

R

Rob Mineault 09:46

Yeah, from what I know about coding, you're right there probably wouldn't, but who knows? I don't know. But even if it is a lot of work, well, too bad. Like, that's too bad. Like, I'm sorry. That's your job. Your job is to follow the Accessible Canada Act and make your goddamn services accessible to the people that need them. And this is big, this is a big deal. This is travel this is, you know, this isn't a small thing. This isn't like ordering a pizza like this is this is a huge. A government service that's gonna effect 1000s and 1000s of travelers. And it especially with the Paralympics coming up,

R

Ryan Fleury 10:27

Well, how are seniors and the article talks about this that are not online? There are seniors that don't have mobile phones.

R

Rob Mineault 10:34

Yeah. I mean you're right. That is a whole nother issue. Like when whether or not that should be a thing where it's just there there require digitization of all the of all the forms and stuff like that. Yeah, you're right. There are there are demographics out there that don't, that is not a process that they can do they can do. Whether it's because they don't have a computer, they don't have a smartphone, they don't have a laptop. I mean, I don't know, I don't know what you know, if an 85 year old who doesn't have any of those things, is doing, you know, Jet setting around but still, I guess that's not the point. The point is, there should be all of this should be accessible to everyone.

 Ryan Fleury 11:12  
Have you ever been on a cruise?

 Rob Mineault 11:15  
No, it's good point.

 Ryan Fleury 11:16  
There's other people that are seniors who are retired who do a lot of travel.

 Rob Mineault 11:19  
Yeah, it's a good point. But I mean, yeah, it just it. That's the whole point, the point of having an Accessible Canada Act is having federal agencies be accessible, and all their services be accessible to everyone. Full stop. That's it. And they've completely failed at that with this. And nobody seems to be taking any sort of responsibility for that their their attitude just seems to be well figure out. So I don't know, I'm really disappointed this. I'm bummed out.

 Ryan Fleury 11:52  
That sounds like you're bummed out.

 Rob Mineault 11:53  
I am.



Ryan Fleury 11:54

I know you I can hear your voice. We're gonna snap out of this.



Rob Mineault 11:58

Yeah, but, but honestly, I kind of feel good, though. I've been waiting to vent. That was all pent up for the past couple hours. So I felt good to vent a little bit.



Ryan Fleury 12:07

Well, we'll have to watch that story, you know, and see if if CNIB or Border Services actually follow through.



Rob Mineault 12:14

And I have to say good for CNIB.



Ryan Fleury 12:20

Absolutely.



Rob Mineault 12:21

You know, they're that they're doing, they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. In this case. And and I think that it was great that they brought this to light and that they're working with these guys to try to fix the problem. So good job.



Ryan Fleury 12:36

See, maybe there's hope. There is hope, A New Hope, man.



Rob Mineault 12:42

I can't believe that though. Yeah, I mean, it's one thing if you're gonna have your app, not be accessible. That's bad enough, but then to just be like, yeah, and if you can't use the app, well, then I guess you're just out of luck. Like that's to have no sort of work around. It's that's it. That is just crazy to me.

- R** Ryan Fleury 13:04  
Well, there's a workaround, you have to ask for help and have a paper copy that you take with you to the border. That's their work around.
- R** Rob Mineault 13:13  
Unbelievable. just unbelievable. So well. Yeah, we like you said we'll keep an eye on this. And we'll see where this goes. But we've Wow. Good times. See, we needed good news. Keep your eye open for good news articles to send me.
- R** Ryan Fleury 13:35  
Joining us now is Darryl Lenox.
- D** Darryl Lenox 13:38  
Gentlemen
- R** Ryan Fleury 13:39  
Darryl, how are you sir?
- D** Darryl Lenox 13:41  
Good. How are you guys doing?
- R** Ryan Fleury 13:43  
Well, thank you so much for joining us.
- D** Darryl Lenox 13:46  
Absolutely. I'm honored that you asked me to join in.
- R** Ryan Fleury 13:49  
We are tickled pink that you agreed to come on our little show.



Rob Mineault 13:56

Let's start out maybe just with a little background information. Tell us a little bit about your eye condition in particular.



Darryl Lenox 14:05

Well, I was born with myopic degeneration. I've lost the sight and left eye completely through detached retinas and whatnot. And then had a surgery in Vancouver to stem and get rid of a cataract, which was about 10 years ago. 2010 - Dr. Francis Law who's one of my heroes, I've got the best team in Vancouver. He did a surgery on me to stem, to get the cataract out of there. That was over the course of the past 10 years. About three years ago, I became allergic to the glaucoma meds. There was nothing about that and then as of last June, I went to zero vision. So now I have zero. So that's where I'm now navigating that process.



Rob Mineault 14:53

We talk all the time with with people who are in various stages of that, and it is a real process. How has that process been for you?



Darryl Lenox 15:06

Um, I don't know, I thought I was always prepared for it. I was afraid of it, actually. But I guess during the pandemic, and all this stuff, I was just kind of by myself through it. But I knew I wanted to kind of learn how to independent live. CNIB was gracious enough to come and help me set up my apartment. But it's, it's been a mental adjustment. I don't have a reference point. And so I do a lot of meditating and uses my thoughts for other things. But it's, it's been a process, I'm not gonna lie to you. There's some things that I just don't understand what's happening. Or, you know, riding in the car for very long. Gets me a little disoriented. I don't know, I've never done it before. So I've just going through it.



Ryan Fleury 15:58

Yeah, I totally understand. I'm totally blind myself, Darrell and lost it in a car accident. So I had full sight, and then boom, no sight. And so there's definitely a transition period that we all kind of go through in our own due time. And so, you know, it's interesting doing a little bit of research on you. I've listened to your comedy for the last few years. And didn't know your eye condition was degenerative, I thought you lost it in the club.

**D** Darryl Lenox 16:30  
Well, I I helped it along as well. Yeah, I was didn't help myself too much with that.

**R** Ryan Fleury 16:40  
But yeah, it is definitely a process that we all go through.

**D** Darryl Lenox 16:45  
And how have you navigated yours, if you don't mind me asking?

**R** Ryan Fleury 16:48  
Not at all. So like, like yourself, when I lost my sight, I had reached out to the CNIB. And they had helped me with orientation and mobility. Like I said, I have no sight. So learning to use white cane ... I started learning a little bit of Braille early on and didn't really continue. But I know enough that I can kind of label things if I need to label something. You know, I've got a screen readers on my computer. And just talking to people over the years, putting yourself out there and surrounding yourself with people who are uplifting, motivating, encouraging, make make a real difference. Being able to take a step back, and just kind of - what's the word - just, I guess, Gather, Gather your composure, you know. There's still times where I bend over and smack my head on a towel rack or smack my head on top or, you know, I slip on a stair or a kick a stair, I miss a handrail, you know, that happens, that's, that's gonna be part of life. And you can get angry and pissed off, but at the same time, life's too short. There's a lot of life left to live. And there's a lot of things that we can do. So you just kind of re evaluate where you're at, and go from there.

**D** Darryl Lenox 18:10  
So sorry, this was just you guys was supposed to be interviewing me, but you gotta help me out here. So here's where I'm at now. Yeah. So how's your body working differently? Like, I was such a visual dude. And so now I'm like, oh, man, like my eyes don't work. In terms of like, I don't know what I'm attracted to anymore, because my eyes dont tell me that - they don't work now.

**R** Ryan Fleury 18:32  
Jeremy, what's really funny is I get turned on by voices. Yeah, so I get a lot. Yeah, yeah, I can't see anymore. And so I may hear the sweetest, sexiest voice from a woman. And I

have no idea what they look like. But that doesn't matter anymore. It just doesn't matter anymore. It's more about character. It's more about personality.

**D** Darryl Lenox 18:56  
Energy.

**R** Ryan Fleury 18:56  
Yeah, absolutely. And of course, taste. I still remember what pizza tastes like and same with poutine.

**D** Darryl Lenox 19:05  
Right?

**R** Rob Mineault 19:07  
This this really, this is more of a comedy question than than anything else. I've always been curious. How much of your lived experience becomes sort of material for the act and and in that process, do you find that is is that sort of a therapeutic process for you?

**D** Darryl Lenox 19:23  
Absolutely. I've you know, I've talked my way through every aspect of my life. You know, whether it be growing up weird, or you know, getting divorced or whatever -- the microphone saved my life. And so that's what I've always gone to. And so now I'm in this process now, of the no vision and so I'm back on stage and not being able to write was a big thing. And so I have to remember everything. I used to go for walks to get my ideas so my subconscious mind can create. So now, everything is just an intellectual pursuit. And so now it's talk it all out on stage, I just work my way through it on stage and talk it out. And it starts to take shape. But yes, every aspect of my life is being expressed on that microphone.

**R** Ryan Fleury 20:20  
So we're gonna have a Blind Ambition 2?

**D** Darryl Lenox 20:23  
there's an album that will be coming out in this next month, or so called Super Bloom was is the sequel to Blind Ambition. And I'm really excited about it. And I think from there, that album will probably turn into more likely an HBO special. And so that'll be interesting too, I have I sit on a stool now with my little walking stick. I'm not, I'm not strong enough in my mind yet to get to the white cane, right? Because I'm afraid I'm afraid to walk out by myself. So I, of course, always have people around me. So I just had my hand on my shoulder and an adjustment, though, just that way. I do the same thing.

**R** Ryan Fleury 21:06  
When I lost my sight, I was living in the interior British Columbia. And so I was Yeah, and so I realized that I was gonna have to go back to school. So I came to Vancouver went to BCIT. And I've never taken any mobility lessons since I've moved here. So I don't travel independently with my cane here in Vancouver, I go sighted guide, or I'm in a cab or an Uber and have somebody meet me on the other side. Yeah, I totally understand that, you know, traveling with a white cane is terrifying. Unless you get your training.

**D** Darryl Lenox 21:37  
Right. Right.

**R** Ryan Fleury 21:39  
And the confidence.

**D** Darryl Lenox 21:42  
Yes, well, you know, when I'm walking, I'd like to, you know, be able to think not have to be so conscious of everything, you know, the steps and the lights. And so that's, that's slow. My brain is too full for all of that. So, but it's still a process.

**R** Ryan Fleury 22:04  
Absolutely.

**R** Rob Mineault 22:06  
So when when you sort of you're coming up with sort of material for the act, and you're

incorporating a lot of the lived experience, like the visual impairment part of it - Is there ever a concern that like, of how much you talk about it? Or how much you lean into that, like, do you ever sort of when you're developing content, you're like, well, I don't necessarily want to be defined by this particular material. But at the same time, it is your lived experience. And so I'm sure that you do want to talk about it, is there a little bit of a balancing act when you're when you're developing material like that?

D

Darryl Lenox 22:42

In terms of the actual, you know, story, or bit, I just keep going until I feel I'm finished. But then, as the world is happening around me, I'm still able to comment on that more so on how people describe to me what's going on now. Because I, you know, I'm not a news, I don't protect the news, and, you know, newspapers, so I get my news from people, everybody else. So when people tell me what's happening, Oh, wow. And then I formed my opinion, or humor based upon the messenger of where this came from. So I have, you know, friends on both sides of the countries and both sides, political parties. So to me, that's way more entertaining, and potential for humor, to listen to how somebody you know, and choanal has their opinions on, you know, the capital, overtired, then to listen to the guidance again, and talk about it. So, that's how I do it. So I use, you know, I use the world around me as a scribe by the world around me. And so that is have given us that a lot more balanced than opposed to just and here's another thing that I missed, or fail or a on accident, there's more balance to it.

R

Rob Mineault 23:51

And I think you You touched a little bit on this, but I just want to, I'm just curious about this. And maybe you can expand on it a little bit more. But So how has your your writing process changed? Or is that sort of still in the process of of changing?

D

Darryl Lenox 24:11

It's, it's still in the process. It's before , this is what happened to me. And then, this is what I think when I say that, I thought this when I heard this on the news, I heard this, I think about this when, you know, those are all thoughts. But now the process is much more of a feeling. You know, I'm feeling you know, I'm feeling you know, a little offbeat, sometimes I'm feeling a little scared, I'm feeling like, so it's become much more of a, an emotional, creative process. So as opposed to a very intellectual, write it out and rewriting and rewriting. Write it now it's just more of a, well, I'll just kind of feel and wait through this experience. And then I can connect more with the audience. And I've become a lot more interactive with the crowds now. Whereas before, I just wanted to do my act, and just want

to be the best comedian ever. So I just did my act. But now, you just process, I'm enjoying being more interactive, because I can't see them, but they can see me. And my face does whatever it does. And so people want to people seem like they want to talk more to me than ever before. And I'm enjoying that process. So they're helping me create more.

**R** Rob Mineault 25:34  
So in a way, it's, it's really evolved the act as well.

**D** Darryl Lenox 25:41  
for myself, very, very much. So I'm really enjoying the process of what I'm becoming on stage. At the end of every week, I was asked myself, if you could take the pill and see again, would you do it? And it's been more no than Yes.

**R** Rob Mineault 25:58  
Really? Wow.

**D** Darryl Lenox 25:59  
Yes. Yeah. Good for you, that I'm learning about myself as so much more than I would have. Without the distractions or the everything else, which I think is gonna make me more impactful in my pursuit of business and comedy.

**R** Rob Mineault 26:16  
That's, that's, that's so interesting that you say that? Because we've had, we've had people on the show that and that's a real big debate in the in the blindness community, you know, people talking about that, you know, if there was a cure developed tomorrow, would they take it? And for a lot of people who have lived with blindness for so long, it's, it's it's part of who they are. It's, it's how they've structured their life. And just suddenly having vision again, would would dramatically be a big change. And so there are people out there that Yeah, we they absolutely would not. And it's it's such a fascinating conversation.

**D** Darryl Lenox 26:51  
Yeah, it's, you know, I would always like to see, you know, one of my sisters smiled again, or maybe my dad, but again, the depth and gross that I've had as a human being, and the

impact I feel like I'm having on people now is way different. It feels like, this is pushing me more to my capabilities than my normal goal driven way of doing things before. It's almost like I have to let I could trust the wisdom of what's going on around me. I here's an interesting story, if you don't mind. So I was in. I'm in Florida right now. And so I'm going sit in a bar, and I suddenly bump the guy next to me. So excuse me, sorry about that. Sorry, and I can't see. And so if I bump I apologize. No worries. So but I could tell he was really tense around me. So I had a bartender by pamaj, recommend drink? He goes, No, thank you. So I said, my name is Darrell. And he's obviously goes, I'm Bob. But it just didn't feel right. So after a little while, and then he goes, so you can't see at all I go. No, I can't. And he goes, Well, how long? Has that been a little bit about a year now? And he goes, huh? So he goes, What's that mean? So I said, I have to trust everybody. That's trust every single person in this room in my life have to trust them. You got quiet. And he goes, That's incredible. I go, yeah, that's what I have to do to trust everybody. And so he goes, I'm a police officer. And I go, Well, you can't trust anybody. And he goes, No, say goes, I look, I look for things to go wrong. And I'm with it. And I'll be honest with you, when you sat next to me, I just tend to not Phelps, I have to be on guard. And I said, I get it. And so he said, this is making a big impact on me right now. And so he says, He says, I lied. My name is Bob. He said, my name is not Bob, I have of course your name not Bob nobody. But we are there's really big conversation, you know, this guy from South Carolina. And you know, he just openly admitted that he just because I'm you know, big black guy. He got nervous. And then once he found that I couldn't see and I had to trust everybody. It was like this big wall came down. And so those kind of things happened to me all the time, though. And so I have to literally just trust that and that I'm going to be okay. And so it's almost like, you know, without being without having gravity, you just hope that you're going the right direction, emotionally, especially physically. So I don't know if I'd give that back now.

R

Rob Mineault 29:25

So that must also be a bit of a challenge for the job because I'm sure stand up comedy. I mean, you're you're traveling all the time, I'm sure.

D

Darryl Lenox 29:34

Yes, obviously, during the pandemic, there was not a lot of travel, but I have been going a lot back and forth between Vancouver and Florida. So this is a hard thing was even though I knew I was deteriorating, I just didn't want to accept any kind of help. So I just get to our good airport three hours late and just squint my way through the gates. And then finally, an airline pilot Smell said, Listen, you know, just just take the wheelchair, take the wheelchair. And, and I did, and it made things so much simpler. And then when I became alert to the glaucoma meds, I knew I was getting ready for it, then I decided to find asking

for help to be an asset, as opposed to, you know, a liability. I have to help myself to let people help me. So travel is not an issue for me anymore.

**R** Ryan Fleury 30:32  
Yeah, you know, I used to get off the wheelchair all the time, too. And if I'd traveled by myself, occasionally I'd still will happen, but I'll tell them no, I can walk just fine. But there are benefits to being blind. You know, I'm a card carrying member and I can get pre boarding...

**D** Darryl Lenox 30:47  
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I get disabled part. Yeah. So my drive. Oh, yeah. Wait a minute. Can you do that?

**R** Ryan Fleury 30:58  
If people drive around? You can get the sticker. I've got it a disabled parking permit for my wife's vehicle.

**D** Darryl Lenox 31:06  
You can park?

**R** Ryan Fleury 31:06  
Yeah.

**D** Darryl Lenox 31:07  
Wow. Okay. Cool. Yeah, this is this is this is something, you know, the reason why I did agree, was because specifically for this conversation, because I just haven't been able to talk about at all to anybody except on on the stage. All but this is almost something that I needed to do. For me. Sure, if that makes any sense.

**R** Ryan Fleury 31:39  
We all need someone to talk to.

D Darryl Lenox 31:41  
So I really appreciate it.

R Rob Mineault 31:44  
And that kind of leads me a little bit into the next question. So have you? Maybe you've already answered this, but so have you have you had a chance to sort of step into any sort of the blindness or the partially sighted communities? Have you have you been able to sort of interact with the community in the past?,

D Darryl Lenox 32:09  
The last interaction I had was when the CNIB came in, to my house to help with independent living, and that was probably two years ago. And then with the pandemic, there was just, you know, yeah, there was no place for me to reach out to thing and I couldn't go see Doctor Law. And so I just said, Alright, well, I guess I just keep living my life. And so I had to get on a plane to come to Florida and help, you know, keep running my businesses and stuff. And so no, the answer was I haven't I haven't done have that or really have reached out to reach out to anybody. I know how to get ahold of them. But I just haven't haven't been enough in Vancouver. haven't been back over Christmas. I've been here for the whole time. I tried to come home. And they opened the border in March. So I haven't come home yet.

R Rob Mineault 33:03  
So is there any sort of a, an agency that's like the CNIB in Florida at all?

D Darryl Lenox 33:11  
I think it's called Lighthouse. So I have my CFO trying to bridge that relationship for me. So I can, you know, kind of be able to do the same things that I do with CNIB. I got my card and, and know how to fly with them and all the other things, you know, the office, but I don't have that relationship with the people in the US yet. But I will.

R Rob Mineault 33:34  
Well, hey, listen. The company that Ryan works for they have a virtual pub night, every Thursday, Thursday nights.

- R** Ryan Fleury 33:44  
We postponed it for the month of August because Steve's away. But there is another one that others are carrying on. We're going to restart it up in September.
- R** Rob Mineault 33:52  
See, there you go. Virtual pub night.
- R** Ryan Fleury 33:54  
That's right.
- D** Darryl Lenox 33:56  
I don't even know what that means.
- R** Ryan Fleury 33:58  
Well, basically, during the pandemic, there was a lot of people like like ourselves, who couldn't go out places businesses were closed, and how are we supposed to write social distance when we can't see and, and so we decided to have this virtual pub night using zoom. So we would send out a weekly invite to our email list and then they would share it with their friends and people they knew who were blind or partially sighted and then they would connect on to the zoom meeting Thursday nights. And we're all just having social conversation just a virtual pub night.
- D** Darryl Lenox 34:34  
Okay, so I my phone is obviously my lifeline. But there are some things I just can't do with it. I can only voice commands so many things, but they're like, you know, I have to have somebody around helped me do certain things that I could not have gotten this call today. without, you know, my project manager down the buttons for me, is there are other ways to do that. Like how do you get on yours? How do you get on your zoom meeting by yourself?
- R** Ryan Fleury 34:57  
Well, again, I can either do it from my own I have an iPhone. And yeah, iPhone has a screen reader built in called voiceover. And so if you enable the voiceover functionality on

your phone, as you drag your finger around the screen, a voice tells you what it is you're touching. And right in the iPhone itself, there are gestures, it'll walk you through how to tap, double tap, what two taps means three taps, and so on. And so I can double tap on the zoom app, it'll open it up, and I can swipe to the left, or I can drag my finger to the right and find out what's around the screen, what's on the screen, a little virtual keyboard will pop up that I can move my fingers around the letters and type on the screen. Or I can use my computer, there's screen readers out there called Apple, but jaws for Windows is one of them. And then NVDA is another. And they give those of us who are blind and partially sighted, pretty much full access to the Windows environment. Or if you're on a Mac, they have again, a screen reader called voiceover built in, which will allow you to use a computer independently.

**D** Darryl Lenox 36:04  
So it's all voice dictation? Or you type in the

**R** Ryan Fleury 36:07  
Well, it's all typing. Voice dictation for the blind is pretty complicated and very time intensive for training. And it's not always accurate. So you need to be able to go back and make corrections. So times definitely keyboard navigation is definitely going to be way more efficient. Oh, yeah, there's lots lots of tools out there for sure.

**R** Rob Mineault 36:30  
And you know, and that's, that's really interesting, too, because we find that like, we both worked in the assistive technology field for four years. And what's interesting about assistive technology is that not only do people in the mainstream, they just this technology just isn't, there's no education on it, like nobody knows it exists until the day that you need it. And even then, a lot of people don't even realize the full scope of the technology that's out there that can help. So it's a real problem in the assistive technology field, we really need to really push education and to, to really get the word out there that a lot of this stuff exists that that can be really game changing technology in terms of what you can do.

**D** Darryl Lenox 37:15  
Yes, you think I have an Android. And so the CNIB came on help me tried to use that. And the Android is terrible. On the app are all terrible. So I have a friend of mine, who was a tech officer, he just built mine, he just built me an app. That really helps me read my stuff

a lot more efficiently. It's very interactive with me, but this stuff is out there is just terrible.

R Ryan Fleury 37:41

Really depends on on the phone, the version of your phone, the version of the software, the talk the screen reader for Android, the popular one is called talkback. And it uses the similar gestures as the voiceover on the iPhone. And it is usable. And it is functional. There's a lot of blind people that are using Android phones successfully. So it can be done.

D Darryl Lenox 38:03

So knowing I guess, because my phone is so but it's very annoying. Very annoying. Yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 38:10

It does make a difference on the on the device you're using for sure. Yeah,

R Rob Mineault 38:14

I was saying so. And, and you know, and this is the fight. The other fight that always happens is, is it also depends on what app you're trying to use. You know, we just before you join the call we were talking about, we were kind of venting because the Canadian border services have now come up with this new app that you have to use in order to prove vaccination. And the Government of Canada. This is something that's mandated, supposedly, by the accessible Canada act. They're everything, all their services are all supposed to be accessible yet, they've built this app. And they found that it's, it's not accessible on a lot of phones, we're using a lot of screen readers. And they don't seem to be really, the cniv is working with them to try to address the problem. But I mean, this is the problem that always happens is that accessibility and building apps properly so that the screen readers on the phones and on the computers work well with them just isn't something that is high priority for a lot of developers and it's it's things that like that, that really drive us nuts on the show.

D Darryl Lenox 39:23

What happens now, am I supposed to have an app to come home in a couple of weeks?

R Ryan Fleury 39:27

Well, you can't because they arrived can app is accessible. So what, what the headline

says is that you're gonna need help filling out the form, either online or through the app. Okay, I think to bring a digital paper or a paper copy with you to prove vaccinations.

R

Rob Mineault 39:44

So wait, so you're coming back to Vancouver in a few weeks?

D

Darryl Lenox 39:46

Yes, yes. So I'm been in the process of -- I'll give you a little backstory. So after I did Conan and, you know, they approached me, Conan And Brent Butte of Vancouver, we're going to team up and we're going to do a sitcom about my life. And so as I sat there, and in the trailer working on getting ready to do the shooting, same as I'd be in my head that what if the show doesn't work? You know, what are you going to do, because I just don't want to be traveling as much, because I knew I was going to be at some point deteriorating or more rapidly. So I had the idea that I wanted to acquire the Yuk Yuks franchise. And so I went through that whole process. So I've been negotiating with them for a little while now. And then that led me to realize this, during the pandemic, there's a lot of comedy clubs in the US that just weren't gonna make it. So now I've been in this whole process, I really want to revolutionize the Comedy Club industry. It's kind of changed what we're laughter. And so that's what I've been working on, as I'm registered into Canada to buy Yuk Yuks, and we're doing our due diligence with them now, all the 15 clubs, and then some here in the US, we're doing our close, closing our first one here in Florida. And so that's become my new passion. And so, we're about to build out for the new club here in Florida. And now Give me some time to come back home to Vancouver, and get on my house and relax and then start the process with Yuk Yuks all over again. So that's why I'll be coming home in a couple of weeks. But it's been exciting. I love every aspect of it. And I can't wait to get home because I do miss Vancouver quite a bit.

R

Rob Mineault 41:35

Do you really enjoy sort of that the back end business part of that or for is it seem like really foreign to you, because you're so used to performing.

D

Darryl Lenox 41:45

It's been an adjustment, I've always had a bit of a business brain because you know, self producing self financed blind ambition, and that really got me started on being more aggressive on the business side of things. But the comedy club part of it, I've just always lived in clubs, clubs, and it's such an old template. They're all so not Runwell. And so I

thought if somebody could just run these things like a real business, it could be really something exciting about this. So I do love the CEO aspect of the game. And then it goes through a while I've gone to the zero version is more challenging, but same time, it's a lot more interesting. More doors have opened up now. You know, being a blind black comedian, businessman, it's there's a lot of things, it's so it's just interesting. It's a good news story for a lot of people and stuff. And so I'm really looking forward to, you know, rolling this out in a PR machine, because I think we have a lot of impact. And I think people want to last and I think they can see that. I'm genuine, was my intention and my purposes.



**Rob Mineault** 42:51

Well, and I feel like Vancouver has been sort of ripe for the picking in terms of comedy venues as well, because historically there there haven't been that many. So I feel like that's definitely something that that Vancouver could be hungry for.



**Darryl Lenox** 43:09

Vancouver's again, you know, probably one of my favorite cities in the world. I love it so much. But I do plan on moving head office from Yuk Yuks from Toronto to Vancouver. So I want Vancouver to be the epicenter of Canadian comedy. And as well as that that Pacific Pacific corridor is very rich as well. Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, LA. That's a very very very, very comedy rich environment. That corner is really powerful. So I want to Vancouver to become the epicenter of comedy. So that's that's the focal point.



**Rob Mineault** 43:47

Well, listen, hey, we will help in any way cuz any any chance to stick into Toronto we're in.



**Ryan Fleury** 43:57

Just don't don't ask us to tell jokes.



**Rob Mineault** 44:02

Thank you so, so much for for talking to us. It's been really, really super cool. And I'm really excited. I'm excited for you to get back and I want to go to one of your comedy clubs.

**D** Darryl Lenox 44:13  
Absolutely. Absolutely. We will do a bunch of events, have you come in to do a live broadcast.

**R** Ryan Fleury 44:20  
There you go Rob the live show. Finally. Live Show.

**R** Rob Mineault 44:27  
Whoo. It sounds absolutely. Cool.

**R** Ryan Fleury 44:32  
Ok gentlemen. Thank you very much. Thank you so much for your time,

**R** Rob Mineault 44:36  
And we'll talk soon.

**D** Darryl Lenox 44:38  
Thank you very much, talk soon.

**R** Rob Mineault 44:42  
Wow, that was awesome. It was so cool talking to him. But I it must be such a hard experience to be looking at that transition like that, like his vision loss is so new. Yeah, I can't really imagine what it's like, but I'm sure Ryan, you know exactly what he's going through.

**R** Ryan Fleury 45:07  
I do. Like, and even in the conversation, we talked about how we all kind of go through and deal with these emotions, on our own times on our own schedules. And it's important to surround yourself with your supportive people, encouraging people, people who are going to give you the strength, motivation and competence to, to carry on. But you know, that'll happen when, when, when the time comes. But he also did say that, you know, one of the things this is blindnesses brought attention to is how, how much I don't want to put

words in his mouth, but how, how much more maybe of a human we've become, I know, for myself, I was, I was an asshole when I had sight, and I became a much better person. After losing my sight. I became less vain, I became less arrogant, I became a better person. I didn't use my site for the vanities of life. Right. I I rely more on sounds I really rely more on experiences, emotions now sight. Yeah, as nice as it was to have isn't everything. And Darrell, Darrell said that, acknowledge that. And that's an important step to take is being able to acknowledge and accept the fact that, okay, my site is gone. But that doesn't mean my life is over. There's still a lot of life left to live. And he's coming around to that. So yeah, I got to give him a lot of credit for this strength.

R

Rob Mineault 46:43

Yeah, absolutely. And I mean, you know, it is such I'm sure, it's such a transformative experience, like you said, like, going through all kinds of different emotions, but it does change not only I think, who you are, but also how you do things. When it says it's also such a hard conversation to have, because it's such a personal and really raw time for somebody who's experiencing that type of vision loss that early.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:11

it's terrifying. Rob. You know, as I said, in the interview, I was angrier than angry. I just, I was pissed off. I was depressed. I, you know, that whole range of emotions, right. I was sad. Tears like, it's, it's devastating. It's Yeah, stating, right. But with with the right supports in place, you can come through the other side and still be a successful, competent person and carry on with life.

R

Rob Mineault 47:47

I think I think that you're absolutely right. I think that really the key to that is just having a good support system in there. Having a you know, getting dialed into the right community that can that can help support you on the bad days or, you know, give you information that's vital. You know, even even the question some of the questions that Daryl asked for somebody who's been living with with blindness for a long time, there's like, oh, wow, like the EDS forget that there are people at the beginning of their journey that don't know these things that don't, you know, aren't comfortable navigating something like talkback, or VoiceOver on their phone, yet, like that those skills take take a while to build up and I can see it, you know, being at the beginning of that, it can be really hard. So, you know, I think it's so important. It just, it really drives home the idea that, you know, community is really key.

- R** Ryan Fleury 48:38  
Absolutely. And there's no shortage of information out there now that we are living in the greatest times ever. We have information at our fingertips.
- R** Rob Mineault 48:48  
Yeah. So I'm excited. I'm excited to dial Darryl into our community and he's going to be our friend.
- R** Ryan Fleury 48:54  
Yeah, I'm gonna go for a beer with him.
- R** Rob Mineault 48:56  
Yeah, totally 100% that his comedy club. Can't believe he's buying yet. Yuk Yuks, has been like a franchise here in the Lower Mainland for for ages. I used to there. I live up the street from a comedy club here. And it used to be a Yuk Yuks. So I think it's an I forget the name of it now. It's just something like, I don't know, Bob's Comedy Barn or something. Like it's just, it's it's not a big chain. I don't think but yeah, that would be super cool. And the fact that he's gonna move, he's gonna make Vancouver, the comedy hub of Canada.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:31  
Yeah.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:33  
That's all very exciting.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:37  
Very cool. And it just goes to show you, you know, again, we just talked about having the right supports in place. It sounds like he's got a great team of people around him that are helped lead him or guide him in the right direction. So kudos to you, Darryl and your team looking forward to having you up here.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:53

You know, it's what's also really funny is how well it played into the the story that we talked about at the top of the show above. This stupid border app. Yeah. Perfect. You'd get Darryl is a perfect example of somebody who this is really gonna affect and it's not if he if he didn't have a you know sort of a production team and people that to help him, he'd be screwed.

**R** Ryan Fleury 50:19  
Yeah, he'd get to the border and be turned around to get

**R** Rob Mineault 50:25  
And yeah, they're just they're, they're just out of luck. Yeah, it's crazy. So, FU. CBSA and screw you. whoever else. I don't know whoever else is responsible for this. Jerks. All right, well, Hey, Ryan.

**R** Ryan Fleury 50:46  
Rob. Where can people find us? They can find us online at [atbanter.com](http://atbanter.com)

**R** Rob Mineault 50:53  
Hey, they can also drops email at [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com)

**R** Ryan Fleury 50:58  
And they can find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

**R** Rob Mineault 51:04  
You know what Steve would probably kill for like, if if Darryl bought up a bunch of those comedy clubs and then like had open mic nights. Steve would be there like a shot. I feel like Steve would love open mic nights. I wonder if he's ever done one? I don't know. That's a good question for him.

**R** Ryan Fleury 51:26  
Is he that funny?



Rob Mineault 51:29

Well, yeah, I think Steve's funny. To look at maybe. Whoa. All right. Well,



Ryan Fleury 51:40

How would I know I'm blind? Remember?



Rob Mineault 51:45

True. Or were we Oh, yeah, we got to do the so yeah. We're also on some Instagrams and Twitter and some Facebook.



Ryan Fleury 51:52

I said that.



Rob Mineault 51:54

Did you? That's the second week I've done that. I used to work in hard news job too. But okay, fine, then that is probably going to about do it for us this week. A big thanks to Darryl Lenox for joining us today. And we will see everybody next week.