

AT Banter Podcast Episode 267 - 2021 Parting Shot

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Lis Malone, Ryan Fleury

R Rob Mineault 00:56
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter

R Ryan Fleury 01:01
Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 01:04
This is of course, a podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault and joining me today is Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 01:20
Hey, I'm Ryan Fleury.

R Rob Mineault 01:23
And a collection of sirens that you can probably hear.

R Ryan Fleury 01:28
They're coming for you.

R Rob Mineault 01:29
I'm gonna wait for that to go by. Also joining us today. Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 01:41
Hi, I'm Lis Malone.

R Rob Mineault 01:44
I like that. That should that should be your catchphrase.

L Lis Malone 01:48
I just like to copy off of Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 01:51
I'm, I'm Johnny Cash. Well done.

R Rob Mineault 01:59
Hey, you -

R Ryan Fleury 02:00
Know what? We should just loop that. "Hi. I'm Lis Malone. Hi. I'm Lis Malone. Hi, I'm Lis Malone".

R Rob Mineault 02:10
I feel like that could be your new ringtone.

L Lis Malone 02:15
Okay, you can download the list Malone ringtone at www.atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 02:19
That's right.

R Ryan Fleury 02:23
We'll sell it.

L Lis Malone 02:24
No, no, no, I'm sorry. We'll pay you to use my ringtone.

R Rob Mineault 02:30
Ah, marvelous. Hey, how are you guys today?

R Ryan Fleury 02:34
Wonderful.

R Rob Mineault 02:36
That's boring.

L Lis Malone 02:37
Oh, no, no. I'm having a sucky day.

R Rob Mineault 02:43
Yeah, it is a Monday. For sure. I've been having some Monday, Monday issues myself.

R Ryan Fleury 02:48
But things are looking up.

R Rob Mineault 02:52
Yeah, that's true. But we should mention. I mean, there's probably a lot of people going out there being like, "Hey, what about Steve Barclay? Where's Steve Barclay?" We killed Steve. He's buried in a shallow grave on highway 17.



L Lis Malone 03:11
Let's have a scavenger hunt for Steve. Where's Steve?

R Rob Mineault 03:16
We could we could we could go down all kinds of rabbit holes. We could have a "where in the world is Steve Barclay?", but it's nothing that interesting. Steve is just not here this week. I believe he's on vacation, right?

R Ryan Fleury 03:29
He is. Yep.

R Rob Mineault 03:31
He is on vacation. So is he camping or hunting or fishing?

R Ryan Fleury 03:36
Him and his wife are over on Vancouver Island, going up and down, from to spa days. So I'm not sure what else they're doing. But just relaxing. I guess.

L Lis Malone 03:45
Wait, Ryan, what's what's the word you use before ... toodling?

R Ryan Fleury 03:50
Toodling up the Island? Like that word?

R Rob Mineault 03:52
Is "toodling" not a word down there in the southern part of North America?

L Lis Malone 03:57
I think toodling here is something dirty. I feel like it sounds like something you don't want to describe in detail.

R Rob Mineault 04:00

R Rob Mineault 04:09
No, it's definitely, we we definitely use that. But I could see I could see cases for both usages.

L Lis Malone 04:18
Yeah, like if I were to use it as a sentence in a sentence, I'd say "are you totaling your noodles?"

R Ryan Fleury 04:28
Oh, 1-900

R Rob Mineault 04:35
Sorry. Yeah, no. Okay, excellent. Well, we're off to a fabulous shows. So to sum up, Steve is toodling his noodle and that's it. That's That's how far we've come. We're four minutes in. All right, well, Listen, we should .. This is a big, this is a big episode. Actually, I'm realizing that this is this is our last episode of 2021.

R Ryan Fleury 05:11
Yes, this is our last live recording for the year.

R Rob Mineault 05:15
That's right. And I'm really excited for a variety of different reasons, not just because it's our last show of 2021, although that's a little bit surreal, because I feel like 2021 just started. I mean, it feels like just yesterday, were complaining about 2020. And how 2021 was going to be all was going to be so much better. And it was marginally better, but not really. But here we are almost at the end of 2021 already,

R Ryan Fleury 05:44
Oh 2021.

L Lis Malone 05:46
Oh, so long, so long, waiting for it to be over.

R Rob Mineault 05:50
But so it's our last episode, we thought we'd do something a little different than usual. Because

I don't know, it's sort of quiet, the holidays are in full swing, we didn't really have a guest. And we kind of have some big show news. So we kind of wanted to devote this episode to just sort of some housekeeping stuff about the show, and have a big announcement. And who knows what else we might delve into over the course of the next few minutes. So I don't know Ryan, what do you think? What should we do first? Should we make our big announcement?

R Ryan Fleury 06:31

Sure. Let's get that out of the way.

R Rob Mineault 06:33

Okay, well, I'm gonna let you do the honors. Tell everybody what the big show announcement is.

R Ryan Fleury 06:41

I am leaving the show again.

R Rob Mineault 06:43

What? Last time you left the show it was a disaster for like six months. I just have I have to say. I didn't even know if we had guests. We just sort of just doing the audio equivalent of looking each at each other stunned for 40 minutes.

L Lis Malone 07:04

That was your dark period.

R Rob Mineault 07:08

Don't even remember what we did have to go back into the archive and listen to a few of those shows. But in any case, no, you're not leaving.

R Ryan Fleury 07:16

No, I'm not.

R Rob Mineault 07:17

And we're not canceling the phone line yet. That's not the other announcement.

R Ryan Fleury 07:21

Nope. No, we've had a new voice on the AT Banter podcast now for the last few weeks and we thought it was time to announce the new member of the AT Banter podcast team. Lis Malone.

R Rob Mineault 07:34

That's the space for the thunderous applause. Maybe it's a surprise to Lis. I don't know, you did tell her before the show Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 07:47

No.

R Rob Mineault 07:48

Oh, okay. Well surprise!

L Lis Malone 07:55

I have to tell you the the balloons and the confetti falling from the sky. I was really over the top. So thank you guys for that.

R Rob Mineault 08:02

No, we are we are so excited to have you as a permanent .. Well, okay, I guess we can't say permanent because nothing's permanent.

R Ryan Fleury 08:13

Yeah, she can go whenever she pleases.

R Rob Mineault 08:14

But no longer in the status of you know, guest hosts or anything like that she will be a regular cast member of this podcast.

L Lis Malone 08:28

Well, thank you guys. It's it's really been a fun bunch of weeks having taking part in the interviews and getting to join your Motley little crew and it's um, I've really enjoyed it honestly.

interviews and getting to join your motley little crew and it's um, I've really enjoyed it honestly, like because I know today we are. We don't have a guest I gotta be honest with you. I feel totally naked. That I don't have interview notes. I'm like I'm in this really weird space right now. It's very I'm trying to like put myself into a mentally safe place right now. It's gonna be okay. It's gonna be okay.

R Ryan Fleury 09:01

Well you are playing both parts right now because as a new co host of the show, you are also the guest for today's show.

L Lis Malone 09:11

I am feeling very naked.

R Rob Mineault 09:17

I don't know if it's a good thing, but like I'm just like not I'm totally used to this .. this is how we do most of our shows.

L Lis Malone 09:23

Yup, naked. Toodling your noodle.

R Rob Mineault 09:32

Um, where do we start? Okay, well, I don't know. Right? Like do we want to preface this at all? Have we talked about why we wanted to bring on a new host? Maybe we should talk about that a little bit. So I don't think we have. Okay, well listen. So let me set this up a little because to some people this may be a little bit of a surprise and out of the blue. But really honestly, this is a conversation that Ryan and I have been having for a while now. Our you know, our grand scheme of the show has always been, you know, we want to, we want to, you know, try to always be pushing it forward. And to make it the best show that we, we can. And part of that early on is then this would have been way back last year at some point. But we've been talking about bringing a new person onto the show and sort of give it a new voice.

R Ryan Fleury 10:24

Well, I wanted to, first of all, have a female voice on the show, because it's been you, me and Steve, for the last six years. And, you know, a woman would bring a new dynamic to the show new opinions, new perspectives. You know, and that can only enhance it as well. And so I spent, you know, a fair number of weeks, probably even a couple months, there's not a lot of other female podcasters out there. And I did want somebody who had the interviewing skills as well. I didn't want just a voice on the show. And so when I found Lis, and I found her podcast, Breaking

Dishes, and the previous one she had done prior to that, I listened to a few shows. And you know, I think that's what I reached out to you, Rob, and said, hey, you know, I think we should get Lis on the show. And let's just see how she does. And, you know, as far as I'm concerned, you brought your A game every time and I think the shows are better for it.

R

Rob Mineault 11:24

Yeah, I would agree. 100%, we really, you know, we kind of had our own sort of idea of, of what we thought would be a good fit. And honestly, I wasn't really hopeful in finding somebody because it is it's a it's a tall, tall order to find somebody who's not only in the podcast sphere, but they're also in the disability community. They have a good knowledge base and good interview skills. And they also fit in with three goofs like us. So, so I wasn't I wasn't awful. And maybe that's why it sort of took a year to really to really do. But I'm thrilled at where we've landed. And I think 2022 is going to be a great year for for the show. I'm really excited. In any case, long story short, we're very excited. Welcome Liz to the team. And yeah, welcome to the madness.

L

Lis Malone 12:21

No, thank you. And it's like said it's, it's been so much fun. I love the the ease of the show that we can kind of kick back I love the humor that we're able to bring the spontaneity, the quick wit the back and forth. I really enjoy the format very much it's and it's such a big departure for from what I've done in the past. And I feel like the free form. Podcast style is very, very refreshing. At least from from from where I stand, and I think that I listened the bar is really high. So I'm going to do my best to always bring my A game.

R

Ryan Fleury 12:56

Yeah, if only we if we came to each episode with actually a game plan ...

R

Rob Mineault 13:08

it's a rough framework. As long as the schedule doesn't kill you too, because I mean, an episode every week, I know it can be a lot. So just let us know if you ever need some time off ... and we'll refuse.

L

Lis Malone 13:25

It's definitely ambitious. Like I love that you guys have been so dedicated to it. And I'm just so glad I don't have to edit this one. That was probably the biggest selling point I think I think I said one of my first questions to Ryan like do I have to edit and he was like oh, no, Rob edit Good. No editing on my plate.

R

Rob Mineault 13:40

R Rob Mineault 13:49

it's a labor of love sometimes for sure. But Well, listen. So for everybody out there. And you know, it's funny I was I was talking to somebody about an upcoming show that we're that we're planning. And they had listened to our ableism episode. And they were like, "Who's this Liz Malone? Like, tell me about her". And I was like, well, she is a guest co host. And she has RP. And she lives in the States. And she has a podcast ... and that's all I actually know about her.

L Lis Malone 14:29

She's really swell.

R Rob Mineault 14:33

So this is just building content for this episode. Because really, we are all going to learn together just who is this enigmatic figure Lis Malone. You're ready to get started?

L Lis Malone 14:46

Yeah, absolutely.

R Rob Mineault 14:48

Let's start with maybe just describing your actual eye condition and we'll go from there.

L Lis Malone 14:56

So as you mentioned before, I do have RP retinitis pigmentosa. And my progression came a little bit later on in my life. As you probably have heard through other podcasts or through your guests, I should say that RP one of the trickiest things about the diagnosis and finding a cure is that there are so many mutations. Last I heard was upwards of 200 different mutations. So it makes it very hard to sort of get your finger on that gene and figure out the best course. So fortunately, for me, if there is a fortunate part of having RP is that I did not become significantly symptomatic until my early 20s. And once I was diagnosed, the time between diagnosis and my early 20s, to becoming legally blind, was short of 10 years. So by the age of 30, I was declared legally blind. And that was due to the loss of my field of vision. So I had less than 15 degrees. And now a few years later, I won't say how many, I am still legally blind, because I don't I did not regain any of my peripheral vision, obviously. But now my acuity, the best correction is right at 2200. So I guess you could say I'm a I'm a twofer in the legally blind, sort of way of looking at it.

R Rob Mineault 16:35

So how like, what would what did it feel like your your vision deteriorated really fast during those 10 years?

L

Lis Malone 16:43

Well, when I when I was a kid, I did have some early signs of RP. But at the time, it they weren't really recognized as a symptoms. Because they normally don't measure children's eyesight beyond reading the eye chart and looking for, you know, corrective lenses. So I was actually losing nightvision, which is one of the earliest signs of RP. So when I, when I was a kid and I would be out like we were talking about, like on the Halloween show, like out trick or treating or playing with friends, and getting into any kind of mischief. My friends would be like running around and, and hiding and doing things like that. And I'd be the kid that would stand there because I was afraid I was gonna fall over like a tree stump, or actually just run into a tree. So I couldn't run away from the cops in the park or anything like that. So I was always just the one that was kind of stuck there, I couldn't see in the movie theaters, didn't realize that it was actually something that was symptomatic of a much bigger eye condition. So I think that with RP, it's so different from person to person. So there are children who are maybe, you know, three, four years old, that are already legally blind from RP. So in my case, when I was in my early 20s, and I started to notice some very significant vision loss. And then I went and I was diagnosed with RP, that time between diagnosis to becoming legally blind, it seemed to be stable, stable, stable, and then it just seems to kind of bottom out, like the progression seems to go, You're fine, you're fine. And then all of a sudden you hit a hit like a huge drop, and then you're fine, then you're plateauing again, you're kind of staying safe, and then you drop again. So that's one of the frustrating things is that it's not just say very, like slow and steady sort of progression, it usually tends to come in these waves, unfortunately.

R

Rob Mineault 18:50

And so what was that, like when you when you finally got diagnosed? And what did they kind of tell you? I mean, obviously, they tell you that you you know, you have this degenerative eye condition that can sort of just work at its own pace. So are you just kind of like for 10 years, you're just kind of waiting, waiting around for something to happen? Is there anything you can really do to prepare yourself? What was that 10 years like?

L

Lis Malone 19:17

Well, I think the hardest part for me is that when I received my diagnosis at the time that retinal specialists that gave me the bad news, had the crappiest bedside manner and sort of laid it on me and just sort of walked out of the room. And I remember I was there with my mom. And I just started to cry because I was like, I don't even know what this like what is what does this mean? Like what did he just say to me? And when you're like 20/21 years old, you're at that age where you live your whole life ahead of you and you feel you're in that indestructible sort of frame of mind. And when you're given this, this news, I just I kind of felt like, like my world was just collapsing on me because I didn't know what to think what to feel what that meant for my long term, way of life. And the other tricky part about it is that that doctor had told me at the time that the prognosis was I'd be legally blind, probably around age 40/45. And that definitely wasn't the case. So it came much earlier. But when you're, you know, given that kind of news, and you're not legally blind, yet, you're you're kind of left with? Well, I don't know, like, do I have to learn braille now, like, what does this mean, like to be to lose your eyesight. So at that time, I kind of just said, I'm going to just go day by day, and when the vision starts to

deteriorate, then I'll start to make adjustments. And that's sort of what I did from day one. And that's still sort of my mantra today, that as things change, I just take it day by day, and make adjustments as, as they're needed. Because it's, it's because that's the thing is that you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. And you don't want to waste precious time, on something that may not happen at the right at that time. So I'm very much about living for the moment and trying to enjoy the time that we're given as much as as much as we can. And, and that's sort of how I've been going about ever since.

R

Rob Mineault 21:40

Well, you know, and it's interesting, we've talked to a lot of people on the show, and even Ryan has his own personal experiences as well. But I mean, there there is this period of grief that you go through, when you you do get a diagnosis like that. And for some people who have, you know, for some some eye conditions, it's a very fast process, where they, you know, they, they go from sort of functional vision to, you know, very, very limited vision in a in a really short period of time. And that's it, that can be a really intense grieving process. So how did you find that? Like, how did you navigate it, because it was over sort of 10 years, and it sort of went in waves, did you find that you kind of had to go through that process each time?

L

Lis Malone 22:29

I think that when you have a condition that is progressive, it's so in life, when I'm giving, given the control, I am very much a rip the band aid off kind of person. I don't like things drawn out if I know I'm like, Yeah, let's just you know, get get the pain over with now. So, in a situation like this, all of the control in that process was was taken away from me. So the grieving process for me, and I do completely advocate for taking that time that that you need to, you know, whatever time that is, in whatever form that is, and surrounding yourself with the right people who understand that is a is a huge part in in dealing with any kind of a Lawson is, especially with them facing a disability. And I think that because RP is progressive, I felt like I was grieving over and over. Like it just, I was I was losing pieces as I was going along. So when something significantly changed. I felt like I was again, like at that point where I said, Okay, now I have to get over that. I mean, when I To sum it made this might sound silly, but when I had to give up my driver's license, oh, my god, that was just agonizing. And I because I felt like that was one of the biggest pieces of my independence that I could possibly lose at that time, but then of course, then I will bigger piece is when you feel like you can't walk down the sidewalk safely without using a white cane. So every time I had a new stage, there was a new process to have to face it to grieve through it, to re identify myself. And, you know, almost find new reasons to love myself again, because it is so easy to kind of hate your life and hate the world and even, you know, hate yourself and feel that because you feel that way that the world feels that way about you too, which is really not not true. But it's so easy to kind of get caught up in your own in your own darkness that you kind of have to look for these opportunities to find light again.

R

Rob Mineault 24:58

At what point though, do you feel like - And who knows, maybe this maybe you're not there yet - but at what point did you sort of feel like, okay, you know what this is just this is just my reality and dammit, I'm just gonna suck it up and move forward?

L

Lis Malone 25:16

I think that you're, we're constantly re-identifying ourselves as we go through our lives, because aside from just the disability, you know, I mean, we go through other life changes that will run in parallel to it, which makes things much more complicated. So, let's say for example, you know, you're, you're dealing with losing your vision, and then during that time, you have the end of a relationship, too. So now you're, you're you have a, you know, my case, let's just say, you know, a blindness, and then now I'm single again, for example. So sometimes things that run parallel in our lives can almost, you know, be as big of a setback, along with having the progression of the disability, because then you're thinking, Oh, God, like, will anyone love me again? Will anyone think I'm attractive? Will everyone be embarrassed to be seen with me with, you know, using my cane? Well, how about I hide my cane when I go out on dates, and, you know, things like that. So, it just seems like there's, there are so many layers to, to just life in general that we have to deal with. And then adding the having the, the extra, I'll say, the extra burden of having, you know, something that's taken away from us, certainly will, you know, adds more challenged to, you know, what life is? I mean, I don't think life is easy. In any respect, I think life is very hard. I think life is challenging. And I think that, you know, what we do in this time that we have, is really what is our measure of, you know, how we live? So I guess, you know, when I think about some of those changes, you know, I think even some of the recent interviews we've gotten, I mean, look at how what can happen just in, you know, changes in your career and changes in your job and, and then having that extra layer of of concern with, how do you manage your disability with, you know, things that are just out of our control, just in daily living? So I guess, what I'm trying to get at is that, it's always going to be a process, the management of it. And even if we don't have a disability, I think that, you know, things that we deal with just day to day is hard, is hard enough. And so I definitely commend anybody who is dealing with many of the struggles that that we're facing. I mean, I use the parallel of like, when I when I hear about people and raising children, you know, I sometimes say, oh, my gosh, like, the things that people go through raising their kids is so much harder than what I have to deal with, with, with with living with blindness. So I think it's all relative, in terms of how we, we kind of, you know, view, what we're faced with.

R

Rob Mineault 28:22

Tell me a little bit about when did you decide both to sort of start to step into the advocacy space? And when did you decide to start podcasting?

L

Lis Malone 28:36

So, back in my former life, as a sighted person living in New York City, I worked in media and marketing, and more specifically, I started my career in the radio business. So I've always been fascinated with communication, communications and mass media and things of that nature. So, being in that environment for so many years, I've always been attracted to that type of work. Now, I never pursued being in front of a camera or even behind a microphone back then, because in all honesty, I, I thought I was someone who was really good as like, kind of being a creative mind and working in the back and, and, you know, making money for for businesses in terms of the strategic marketing and the sales. And so I never really saw myself as being that kind of person or, you know, I guess you could say a personality that anyone would give a

damn. And so once I started to get into the disability space, and I sort of needed to kind of hit the reset button and figure out like, what am I what are my skills and what might I be good at and I felt that Well, I mean, I could be really good at doing advocacy work, because I'm really passionate about it. I like to use the media, I like to communicate, I enjoy telling the storytelling. And I'm just, I'm genuinely interested in people and their stories. So that's sort of what was the, I guess, the driving factors of how I sort of migrated into the space. And so I first started by figuring out, like, who should I partner with, and what kind of areas might be good for me. And I kind of felt like, I wasn't finding anything that really were my voice was coming through. And I knew at that time, I didn't necessarily want to just be a contributor to somebody else's vision. So that was sort of the impetus for me to start my podcast, which was access point. And I think that crushed Africa, I think that was back in 2014, I think was my was my first podcast, and, and that was 100%, dedicated to showcasing stories of people in the disability community, or who were advocates in disability, and really hone in on doing very, very meaningful interviews where I felt that it was a story in a conversation that could be attractive to both members of the disability community as well as those who were at the time. Well, now we use the word allies, but we didn't really use that term back then. And that's much more of a newer term. But essentially, you know, those in mainstream who might be interested in understanding more about some of the conversations of our community.

R

Rob Mineault 31:58

Wow, okay, so yeah. Wow. When did we start? Ryan? I guess we started in 2016? Wow. Yeah.

L

Lis Malone 32:04

Yeah, that was back before there was really any podcasters distribution. So it was really just about using like some of the I think it was SoundCloud. So I mean, yeah, I was very old school.

R

Rob Mineault 32:20

Oh, absolutely. I mean, yeah, we were on SoundCloud for I think the first year, maybe maybe even the first two years. For sure. And, you know, there wasn't there also wasn't a lot going on in in the disability / accessibility space, either. Because when we first started up, you know, we looked into that we looked at, you know, we did some research and to see what else was out there. And there was a few other things going on in certainly in the accessibility space, but not a lot. So, yeah, it's it's so nice. Now, you, you know, you type in disability or accessibility or inclusion into any sort of podcast app, and you got tons of different podcasts that are out there now.

L

Lis Malone 33:07

Yep. I think that the, that there is tons of room for all kinds of voices within our community. And I love that podcasting has created a platform for anyone to put interesting content out there, regardless of what it is. So I know that some people might say like, oh, gosh, do you really want other disability podcasts? I'm like, Heck, yeah. Like, I think it's, I think it's fantastic that there are a lot of conversations out there. I think that it's very, especially when you have podcasts,

you know, like AT Banter, which is, you know, something that I found so appealing about your show, is that you guys have a very distinct format. I think I said this before, but you guys have this easy handed way that you approach these topics. Without feeling like I'm being you know, listeners are being lectured to or spoken down to. It's extremely approachable. And I think that that type of format and that kind of content is extremely appealing. And I think it's needed, especially in disability.

R

Rob Mineault 34:16

Yeah, I mean, I totally agree. I mean, in terms of, of having as many voices out there, and, you know, people giving their, what their lived experiences, like, is incredibly important, especially in the disability community, because everybody is so different. Even amongst similar disabilities. I mean, you you know, you could talk to three different people who have RP and they're gonna have completely different experiences. And, and that's important to get out there into the mainstream, I think.

L

Lis Malone 34:54

Yeah, absolutely. And in addition to the variables In terms of the lived experience, there is I, I think Ryan, you would definitely back me up on this there is there was an anything monolithic about the disabled community, I mean, everything. And we touched upon this with, with our conversation with Amy about ableism. I mean, people can't even agree about what language is appropriate, what, how things are categorized, how things are addressed. And so it's it, there's just so many, so many views, so many opinions, that it just really runs the full gamut.

R

Rob Mineault 35:36

That's why it's always been important to us. And especially over the last few years, I mean, really, the show's evolved quite a lot since we its inception. I mean, radically since inception, because you know, we we started out, we were just going to talk about assistive technology, because that was the industry that we were in. And that's really the only thing we knew about. But funnily enough, in doing the show, we learned so much about advocacy, and different agencies, and, you know, talking to different people in the community, that was so much more interesting than just talking about, oh, you know, the new Braille Note is out, and it has X,Y and Z features. And we quickly discovered that we didn't want to do that. And I think that even in the last few years, we've evolved a little bit more, because I really, I really think that doing things like talking to different agencies and organizations and spreading the word about even different podcasts that are out there is really incredibly important, because it's, it's really easy for a lot of these organizations to get lost in the shuffle or to have people who actually need their services to never even know that they exist. So really, I kind of see the show these days as sort of a little bit of a megaphone, that we can do our part to help spread the word and get people the information that they need, as well as the whole component of just trying to educate the mainstream about some of the the importance of some of the the issues that we talk about.

R

Ryan Fleury 37:18

One of the things I find that helps keep the show fresh is Rob, you and I have been in the

One of the things I find that helps keep the show fresh, is Rob, you and I have been in the assistive technology field for over 20 years now. And there isn't a month that goes by when I'm looking for guests, or you're suggesting guests that are even here in Canada that we'd never heard of before. There are so many organizations, so many groups out there, trying to promote accessibility, inclusivity, and diversity. It's so easy to keep the show fresh and bring new faces to the community. And new voices.

R

Rob Mineault 37:52

Yeah. And I know, I remember sitting around the lunch room years and years ago, you know, and saying, like, how are we ever going to find guests on a weekly basis for this? Like, there's no way we'll run out of people in a month and a half. And here we are six years later, and you know, we're still going. Yeah, it's it's incredibly exciting. And it's, it's very fulfilling. I mean, I think that, you know, I'm not gonna I'm not gonna lie or mince words, man, like me and Ryan are both lazy as hell. And, you know, if we didn't find this incredibly fulfilling and rewarding, this thing wouldn't have wouldn't have lasted more than three months.

L

Lis Malone 38:35

It's a true labor of love. Because I think when you have a good podcast, it sounds like it's so easy. And I mean, I've had people say to me, like, "Oh, I'm thinking about doing a podcast" or I heard one that you did, and I and I'll explain to them, "Well, I do a lot of editing and there's like a lot of you know, prep work that I have to do before you know an interview or, and you know, you it's not just flipping on a microphone". Now, don't get me wrong. There are tons of podcasts out there that people do flip on the mic and they record and they are one take wonders and they are just brilliant at it. I'm not one of those people i i fully can admit that my podcasting talents are, are limited to a certain, you know, format. Yeah, but for sure that I think that you know, especially if you're going to do something weekly, like you guys are doing and you've done for several years, it's a very ambitious thing and there's got to be love there in order to make it work as well as you guys have and I think it really shows.

R

Ryan Fleury 39:46

Oh, there's bitterness, too. There's weekly phone calls between us.

R

Rob Mineault 39:49

Yeah it's not all glitz and glamour. Honestly, like sometimes sometimes we record a show and I'm just like "that was awful, like we suck, we're terrible". Which I'm sure all podcasters do, but no, you absolutely like I, you know, I have so much respect for people who can even do a podcast live. Like Ryan's been pushing this idea of a live show for ages now, and it scares the shit out of me. Just, you know, I don't feel confident in what we're doing to not have that safety net of editing. But we'll do it. We'll do it. Because you know what that's we advocate. We talk to people all the time who are doing stuff that's scary. And they're out there doing it. So, you know, we can suck it up and do a live show.

L Lis Malone 40:40

But it's only strength in numbers. You got four voices on there. Stronger.

R Rob Mineault 40:44

Yes. Yeah, no, there are some people out there that you're right, like can just turn on the mic, and they can just go and it can sound professional and polished. And that's amazing. You know, that's, that's not us, either. But the flip side of that, though, is that, you know, it depends on what your content is. And, you know, if that's what the really important thing is, is that is is somebody who's listening, getting something out of the content. And that's also very important and tricky, and at least like to think that we're able to deliver that on a weekly basis. Anyways. As long as it has value to somebody.

R Ryan Fleury 41:24

Yeah, and I think too, we get we get stuff out of the podcast we learned from our guests as well. So that's what kind of keeps it fresh as well as we know going in that we're going to come out of it knowing more than we did going into it. So yeah, it is we it is for our audience, but at the same time, you know, we all walk away from it being better people.

L Lis Malone 41:45

Well, thank goodness for you guys and your podcast. I would not have known what a Turtle was.

R Ryan Fleury 41:50

Toodle? That's right.

R Rob Mineault 41:52

No, no. Turtle.

R Ryan Fleury 41:53

Oh that's right.

L Lis Malone 41:53

But a turtle ... isn't this isn't this Christmas Turtle season?

R Ryan Fleury 42:01
Yes. Chocolate. Nuts. Yeah, my love turtles.

L Lis Malone 42:06
That sounds like a Snickers

R Rob Mineault 42:08
it is. It's very Snickers- ish.

R Ryan Fleury 42:17
Is there is chocolate caramel and nuts?

R Rob Mineault 42:21
Okay, you're right. It's caramel. Caramel.

L Lis Malone 42:23
I'm gonna have a turtle off.

R Rob Mineault 42:25
But But yeah, there's there's no nuts. I think Snickers has nuts, right?

R Ryan Fleury 42:31
There's nuts in turtles. And there's nuts in Snickers.

R Rob Mineault 42:34
Okay. I'm not a big caramel fan. It's way too rich. How the hell why are we talking about Turtles? Welcome to the show. This is what happens when we on't have a guest. We just were talking about heavy stuff. And then we're talking about Turtles.

L Lis Malone 42:54
I got distracted. That was my that was all my fault

I got distracted. That was my that was all my fault.

R

Rob Mineault 42:58

All right. So we'll say it again, Liz, we're very excited to have you on board. We're gonna have the best shows in 2022. I think.

L

Lis Malone 43:07

I am truly honored with all joking aside to have been invited to guest host and even more honored and flattered and all the above to to be invited to be a full time permanent, semi permanent, regular, whatever you want to call it a member of the AT Banter team. So I'm really looking forward to this coming year. So thank you guys so much again.

R

Rob Mineault 43:33

Yeah, you're very welcome. And I have to give Steve actually, we have to tell Steve to actually send you a cowbell.

R

Ryan Fleury 43:39

Yes. Yes, we have AT Banter cowbells.

L

Lis Malone 43:42

Yeah. And a box of Turtles.

R

Rob Mineault 43:45

Oh, okay. Yeah, that's right. That's right. And make notes. All right. Well, you know, here we got a little bit of time left. I mean,. I just thought you know, since given this, this is the last episode of the year, I thought maybe we could spend a little bit of time just reflecting on some of the episodes that we've had this year. And Ryan to see if you had any ones that stood out to you is that you really enjoyed or Liz, I don't know if you've listened to anything other than what you've been on. But if you have any thoughts, any any favorite things?

L

Lis Malone 44:25

Well, if you don't mind, I'll go first.

R

Rob Mineault 44:27

Right? Sure. Absolutely.

L Lis Malone 44:28

So my my, my mental Rolodex of all your shows is definitely not as deep as as Ryan's from the past year. But an episode that stood out to me that I was able to listen to was you interviewed Jessica and she wrote a book, my Spring Fling. And yeah, so I I found her to just be so fascinating, her her positivity, and it was a very moving discussion that you guys had and I think I think that you guys were equally as as moved just during the interview.

R Rob Mineault 45:04

Yeah, that was and that was a scary interview to to do, because we weren't really sure how it all come together. We didn't we didn't really get a chance to talk too much with her and her caregiver too much before we turn the mics on. So yeah, I remember being really sort of scared about that show. But holy cow did it. come together really well. And it was just it was it was really an honor for us even to just do what we could to help spread the word about her story. And about the book.

R Ryan Fleury 45:40

I mean, have to go back and listen to that episode again. I vaguely remember it

R Rob Mineault 45:44

We done good, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 45:46

Yay.

L Lis Malone 45:48

Done good that day, boys. Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 45:51

Ryan? What do you what do you anything stand out to you?

R Ryan Fleury 45:54

Yeah, I think the highlight for me this year was the fact that we got Darryl Lennox, who's a blind

comedian, very well known around the world. And it went a different route than I thought it was gonna go because he came into this pretty new to blindness. And that's not the direction I thought the show was going to go in. So it was an interesting discussion we had with him. And he was very open, and honest and vulnerable on that show, which is aside you don't see in his comedy shows. So I was that was I was tickled pink when he reached out. And I do also want to say that one this show gets released, he would have already released his latest comedy album, which is being released December 17.

R

Rob Mineault 46:47

Yes. Yeah, that was a good show. And that was Yeah, with you, Ryan, like that. One was really, it went in a direction that we were not expecting. And it was very raw, and it was very open. And he was very honest. with it. In fact, you know, we after after we turn the mics off on that show, I think I call the Ryan immediately. And I was just like, Man, that was That was intense.

R

Ryan Fleury 47:11

One of the things Darrell said was that he came on the show, basically, look at the ask us for help. You know, he's his big, courageous, bold comedian, right. And he makes light of his blindness and just seems to carry on and you think everything's going great, but then you have this open conversation with him? And it's a whole different story.

R

Rob Mineault 47:33

Yeah, I mean, that really, really also shines the light on the difference between being partially sighted and then being blind. And he was, you know, he was very, very, very new to, like, being blind. And you could hear it in his voice. I mean, he was probably a month or two, on the other side of it. So he was he I, you know, and, and oh, my gosh, like, it was such a powerful show. And it was, it was actually really, really moving. And, you know, we actually, after the show, I mean, we reached out to him and was like, listen, is, was there any part of that, that you're not comfortable with? Like, do you want us to cut it? Like, because we were really concerned that was so raw, and so open and honest about where he was at. And he said, No, he said, don't cut it at all. Yeah, another really, really great show. Well, let me see, oh, Jesus, so many. You know, what was a really fun one, actually, that I really enjoyed was talk description to me when we talked to JJ Hunt and Christine Malec. We talked to them about their their podcast called Talk Description to Me, I thought it was it was not only was it really fun to talk to them, and talk to these professionals that just have great voices and great two podcasters, and can just turn the mics on and talk. Those two are amazing. They're just amazing. And so that was a real thrill to talk to them as well. And I really loved the show, the podcast itself, because it's such a really unique idea, this idea of taking different things and and putting audio description to it like so, in news, events, or topical issues, or just whatever. Like memes, like everything, like they'll the they'll they'll cover and talk about. And I don't know, that was just a really fun episode. To me that really stands out.

R

Ryan Fleury 49:37

Yeah. it's always hard to pick one when we do this each year because there have been some

Yeah, it's always hard to pick one when we do this each year because there have been some really great shows. And it's, it's great that people you know, some of them are returning guests. They keep coming back. So yeah, makes me happy.

R

Rob Mineault 49:50

No. And you know what, what excites me to about about the coming year that I really want to lean into to is is talking to and finding more organizations out there to talk to and put in the spotlight, and, and get a feel for just what have you know, the battles that people are fighting out there in terms of advocacy and inclusion and accessibility. Because we do, there's still so much work to be to be done, so many people to educate and that's including ourselves. You know, I think that I look back on on all of the shows that we've done. And goddamn man, I'm a much smarter and better person than I was six years ago for sure. So I continue to thank everybody who comes on the show and teaches us and helps expand our not only our knowledge, but the way that we view the world and we view disability. So Yeah. How's that for a parting 2021 shot?

R

Ryan Fleury 50:50

Good bye 2021.

L

Lis Malone 50:52

So long.

R

Rob Mineault 50:54

Alright, well, closing thoughts, anything? What do we got?

R

Ryan Fleury 50:58

Nah, I'm just looking forward to what 2022 is going to bring us

R

Rob Mineault 51:04

Maybe more variants.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:06

Yeah, that's guaranteed.

R

Rob Mineault 51:08

Rob Mineault 51:30

You know, hey, you know, sorry, sorry, tot sort of a side topic. But Ryan and his wife, very graciously came over to my place over the weekend to drop off a little, a little Christmas spirit in the form of a lovely bottle of our favorite tequila ... Tarantula.

L

Lis Malone 51:31

Yeah, I'm learning so much on this show. I thought I was gonna be learning more about advocacy, but I'm really learning about booze and candy. So totally works.

R

Rob Mineault 51:46

So yeah, so thank you for that, Ryan. But you know what was weird about that, that that Ryan picked up on immediately, but I hadn't .. He's like, we haven't actually seen each other in like, in two years.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:59

Two years, we hadn't been in the same room together.

R

Rob Mineault 52:02

Yeah, it's so and that was that blew my mind at the time was like, wow, you're right, like, man, that's crazy. Yeah. All right. Well, uh, hey, I think people that we should just get out of here. What do you think?

L

Lis Malone 52:16

Alrighty.

R

Ryan Fleury 52:17

All right.

R

Rob Mineault 52:20

All right. Well, hey, Ryan. Rob. Where can people find us?

R

Ryan Fleury 52:26

I don't know, Liz ... where can people find us?

L Lis Malone 52:30
They can find us on the web at www.atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 52:34
That's right. They can also send us an email to cowbell@atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 52:41
Okay, we're gonna have to rehearse because I forget it, this completely changes the outro. I gotta .. Okay, so wait, so now I got to do the socials. And so people can also find us on Facebook and Twitter.

R Ryan Fleury 52:59
And then and if they have a comment topic suggestion for the show. They can call us toll free 1-844-996-4282.

R Rob Mineault 53:16
I don't no longer know my place in the world anymore. I'm completely -- We'll have to practice that over the Christmas break while we're off.

R Ryan Fleury 53:25
No, it was just one-fer.

R Rob Mineault 53:28
But we have to., we have to find Liz's spot in the whole outro.

R Ryan Fleury 53:31
Absolutely. And you got to change the AT Banter feed as well. Because when it shows up in our pod catchers, it says Rob Mineault, Ryan Fleury, and Steve Barclay. You need to add Lis Malone in there now too.

R Rob Mineault 53:43
And we got to do all this work now.



Lis Malone 53:45

Oh my God, the horror.



Rob Mineault 53:50

O kay, well, wait, did we? Do we really successful I don't even know.



Ryan Fleury 53:55

Yeah. Right. That's it. That's all she wrote.



Rob Mineault 53:59

That is all she wrote. Well, listen thank you, everybody, for listening for the past year. We hope everybody out there has a wonderful and safe New Years. 2022 is going to be great. And we will see everybody next year.