

AT Banter Podcast Episode 305 - LaMondre Pough and Billion S...

Fri, Sep 30, 2022 2:37PM 1:06:03

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

disability, people, organizations, talking, lis, movement, frugal, liquor, community, absolutely, honestly, hear, terms, south carolina, work, global, spinal muscular atrophy, world, country, listen

SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Ryan Fleury, LaMondre Pough

R Rob Mineault 01:55
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter,

S Steve Barclay 02:00
Banter, banter.

R Rob Mineault 02:02
Hey, this is of course the 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 we have a full roster, a full slate or roster, whatever just shut up.

S Steve Barclay 02:30
4 servings of awesome.

R Rob Mineault 02:34
That's right. And we have a giant heaping teaspoon of Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 02:39
Surprise!

R Rob Mineault 02:42
Very funny. We have, who do we have? We have Steve, Mr. Steve Barclay.

S Steve Barclay 02:47
I like to think I'm the carbohydrate on this plate

R Rob Mineault 02:50
And we have Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 02:54
Oh that makes me the vegetable.

R Rob Mineault 02:58
Oh man I'm telling you, see I'm not used to us all being here. Not used to this much energy in the room.

S Steve Barclay 03:07
Well we can we can try and slow it down for you.

L Lis Malone 03:11
Give us time, we can we can do it. We really can we can slow this down.

R Rob Mineault 03:15
Well how is everybody?

S Steve Barclay 03:19
Oh both the same as usual I guess these days?

R Rob Mineault 03:21

R Rob Mineault 03:21

Yeah. Yeah, I was thinking about this before the mics came on. I don't have any news I don't know really what to have anything to banter but other than it's really hot.

L Lis Malone 03:31

We got hurricane stuff going on.

R Rob Mineault 03:34

Do you? I was going to ask you about that because now whenever I hear that there's a hurricane or anything like that, I always think Lis is screwed.

L Lis Malone 03:40

Ya know there's that hurricane hitting Florida that's what's going to get the wall up first. And then it's going to probably make its way up and I think you know we got to see what the latest models say. But I'm sure the Carolinas, I mean we're supposed to get a ton of rain this whole weekend so at least we're going to be seeing the the corners of it at the very least. But I heard that that Eastern Canada got wild with some some storm activity.

R Rob Mineault 04:16

Yeah we did.

L Lis Malone 04:17

And that was like a first in like how long?

R Ryan Fleury 04:21

Wasn't the first, but definitely one of the biggest.

S Steve Barclay 04:24

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. That's what me that's on the opposite coast from us though. Yeah.

L Lis Malone 04:30

Oh, it's still your country.

S

Steve Barclay 04:33

Kate? What was the name of it?

R

Ryan Fleury 04:36

Fiona. Kate was an Olsen Twin.

R

Rob Mineault 04:41

Always good time to mix up hurricanes and Olsen Twins. Awesome. Great This or Than category. All right. Anyways, Ryan., save me from this. Let's, let's let's figure what the heck we're doing today?

R

Ryan Fleury 05:01

Well, today with us, we have Dr. Lamondre Pough, who is also the CEO of a nonprofit organization, representing people with disabilities called Billion Strong. Welcome Lamondre.

L

LaMondre Pough 05:15

Hey, thank you. Thank you for, for having me on the show.

R

Rob Mineault 05:19

Well, listen, we are excited to talk to you. We have been in the past year, we've been talking to a lot more organizations that are sort of tackling disability on sort of a higher level, on a global level. In the past, we've sort of concentrated on a lot of local organizations. And so it's been really interesting and sort of eye opening to sort of see what some of these nonprofits are doing on a much larger scale. So maybe just to start, maybe just give us a little bit of a background about you, tell us a little bit about the organization and how it came about?

L

LaMondre Pough 05:56

Absolutely, well, I am, I am a person with a disability, I have spinal muscular atrophy. And basically what spinal muscular atrophy is, in a really quick nutshell, is that my body does not produce a specific protein that is necessary for building healthy muscle. As a result, I'm a full time wheelchair user, I need assistance with all of my activities of daily living, bathing, feeding, getting dressed, and just live in this incredibly dope life that I live. And in terms of Billion Strong, Billion Strong is a global identity and empowerment organization. And really, our goal is to unite the global community of people with disabilities so that we can come together, speak with a solitary voice, a single voice, and really impact positive change. You know, it's great to hear you talk about organizations that are doing things on a higher level. And I really think that is, because of, or I think that so many organizations have made that shift now, because of the

pandemic, the pandemic really equalled up the playing field for, for, for a lot of perspectives, and a lot of views. And, and I think that's one of the reason that true reasons that you're seeing that.

S

Steve Barclay 07:17

Yeah, we've talked a lot about how COVID affected the landscape for people and allowing people to work more at home, and opening up opportunities for people who didn't have them before. But you're speaking about doing stuff on a higher level. We have here in Canada, for example, we have just huge strife within different disability communities. You know, there's a very large group of people who are disaffected around our national blindness organization, and there's at least four different organizations that are competing or vying against or actively campaigning against our national blindness organization. How do you bring about cohesiveness when you have these groups that are constantly angry at each other?

L

LaMondre Pough 08:11

Honestly, that is one of the reasons that we exist, because we saw all the splinters within the disability community itself. And honestly, that I think is the hardest thing for us to overcome in terms of internally, within the community. And honestly, I believe that a lot of that is by design. Because if you if you present that resources are scarce, and that there is not enough for everyone, people began to siloed themselves off and go into their own corners and fight. They fight because they believe they're fighting for the same piece of pie, a piece of pie, as opposed to looking at it as all a pie and the fact that we have so many other things that are in common, so many more other struggles and issues that that we share that if we came together and overcame that, then we could affect so much more change for everyone. Now, how do you overcome it? I think that a part of what Billion Strong is about is about empowerment through connection is about getting people together and having the conversations not only having the conversations, but actually amplifying those that are doing good work, actually amplifying those who have been doing the work and are being effective in it. And instead of competing with them becoming their bullhorn, you know, becoming their microphone becoming their amplifier to help people see what it is that they are doing and realize that impact. So I think a large part of it is changing the perspective. From a we're all scrambling for the one piece of pie that exists to say, wait a minute, if we all come together, we can get the whole pie. We don't have to get a piece of it. And so I think that there has to be some real conversations about that. And some real letting down of the guards. I mean, honestly, in any relationship, when you're talking about moving forward, there's a level of vulnerability that has to it has to be there. And I think that sometimes, I think that sometimes we're so we're so used to having things stripped away, and having to fight for everything, that we don't even realize our real ally, when we see one.

S

Steve Barclay 10:30

I think you're right, I think, you know, I think a lot of these organizations could be playing a lot better together. And a lot of it just boils down to personality conflicts. And, yeah, you know, I don't, I certainly don't have the solutions. But you're, you make a really good point about, you

know, bringing a pie instead of a piece of a pie or, you know, maybe somebody can bring a cake.

L

LaMondre Pough 10:55

Right, right. Well, let me tell you something, Steve. And I do believe that sometimes it's about personality conflicts. But again, that goes because people have been finding so much that they believe that they own it, that they believe that it is theirs. And the problem when you become personality based, as opposed to purpose based, is that once that personality shifts, or that personality gone, that whole fight is over. A lot of times that movement dies with that individual. And my thinking is let's get more purpose based. Because here's the thing, when we really began to embrace the diversity that we really bring to the table, because I you know, and I know that this would be preaching to the choir, but the truth is, we know that disability knows no ethnic boundaries, disability knows no race, disability knows none of those things. In fact, disability is the only minority group that anyone can join at anytime. And matter of fact, most of the time, most of us will at some point in our lives. But the truth is, we think that that we're a monolith. We think that oh, if it didn't think like I do move, like I do talk like I do walk like I do, then it's not a part of me, when the truth is, disability is the very definition of what diversity and inclusion should be. And what happens is, when we focus only on personality, then our personal likes, and tastes come into play. And we abandon and forget the purpose of it all. This is about making the world a better place. This is about giving people access. This is about the ability for people to choose their own life and live their own life and have their own agency. It's not about your personality. It's not about who you want, but we've made it about that. So I agree wholeheartedly with that.

R

Rob Mineault 12:39

So I want to talk a little bit about how you sort of described the organization as a as an identity organization, can you speak a little bit to that, and just sort of what the the overarching sort of mission statement is, in terms of building some sort of a global disability identity.

L

LaMondre Pough 13:00

You know, a lot of times when we talk about disability, we talk about, you know, assistive technology, or we talk about the issues and the barriers that people face, or we talk about, you know, the economics issues, and all of those things come into play. But we rarely ever talk about disability as an identity. In fact, when you look at it, according to the World Health Organization, there are over 1.3 billion people on the planet with some form of disability. That's 1.3 billion. And honestly, we believe that that estimate is extremely conservative, I believe probably that is probably like 1.7 to 1.8 billion people on the planet with some form of disability. But one of the reasons that figure kind of is is such a wide gap is simply because so many people refuse to identify. So there are a number of issues. But that's one of the main reasons is that so many people refuse to identify and why? Well, because if you look at the statistics, in terms of the rate of poverty globally, I'm talking about of people with disabilities, if you're looking at the the issues that are associated with disabilities, who will want to identify, in fact, there is a stigma in many air in many instances, in different cultures around the world, where people see disability as a curse. Or when you add disability to something, it all of a

sudden becomes devalued, or less than. So there is a stigma associated. And the problem is, people with disabilities in many instances, begin to believe that stuff, they begin to believe that, oh, maybe I am less than or maybe I can't do it, or maybe I'm not as valuable. And it becomes a part of the identity. And let me tell you this, he I believe that identity is a two way street. It's not only about the way that the world sees you the way that the world says, oh, that's the laundry list. He's XYZ XYZ XYZ, but it's also about how are you see yourself? When I think of, of, of who I am, as a person, a male, I'm a black male. But I'm also a black male with a disability. And none of those things are higher than the other. And they all are a part of who I am not one of those things is the defining point of Lamondre. But all of those things are a defining point of who I am. And it is neither negative or positive, it is just simply a state of being. And so a part of the mission of building a strong is to help people develop a positive disability identity. And honestly, the other piece of our mission is to empower through connection. Because here's the thing, I remember when I was a little boy, and I've had my disability, all my life, I remember when I was a little boy, I didn't ever think that I could drive, and I'm a car nut. I love cars, I love cars. As a kid, I never thought that I could drive. But when I was probably about nine years old, I saw a guy in a wheelchair driving, and it opened my eyes. And it further deepened my love for vehicles. But here's the thing, I would have never, ever even had the inkling that I could, if I never saw him. So let's blow that up a bit. The idea behind this is that we could connect people from different parts of the world, from different regions, doing different things at different levels that their life and show them what can be done. And make those connection, create mentor situations, help even entrepreneurs with disabilities grow their companies and even say, hey, you can be an entrepreneur too, if you choose to. Or maybe you just want to work on professional development. You see, I really believe that many of the issues that we as a community of people with disabilities face are because of how the world sees us. But most importantly, how we see ourselves. And our mission is to raise how we look at ourselves, how we see ourselves, and ultimately how the world sees us as well.

R

Rob Mineault 17:12

You know, I really do love that. And I feel like that is a piece of the puzzle that a lot of organizations miss, because I think that you're absolutely right. Historically, people with disabilities, it's just - wherever they can a lot of people, and we hear these stories again, and again, on the podcast, they don't disclose, they want to hide a disability for as long as they can, whether that's through work or with friends, or even with family, in some cases, they will do it. And that's historically been, because of this stigma that that disability has brought with it, I and I completely understand that. And how how big of an impact that that would have on somebody's saved self esteem or how they they want they feel comfortable identifying. And that's I feel like that's a real missing piece that hasn't really been addressed. So I really love this, the the idea that, that you guys are addressing that. And this idea of living authentically and loudly about disability because it's almost like we're seeing something like 20, 30, 40 years ago with the LGBTQ community.

L

LaMondre Pough 18:30

Absolutely. And honestly, it is a movement, you know, this is we being as strong as not just an organization, we are a movement. Now, of course we have to organize, we have to do the things in order to in order to move this movement forward. But the truth is, that's what this is about. You know, it's interesting, because it and I have to pause just a little bit because this,

this is where it kind of gets bigger for me. I don't see just this just as a movement of persons with disabilities, okay. I look at this as a community movement. So if you are a person with a disability, you belong in this movement. If you love someone with a disability, you belong in this movement. If you simply support the concepts that will empower people with disabilities, you are a part of this movement. We are looking for allies, but honestly, I'm really looking for accomplices, people who will roll up their sleeves and show up and help do the work that's necessary. And the reason that I say this is bigger than just people with disabilities, because really, and you all know this, if you make the world better for people with disabilities, and I'm talking about accessibility, I'm talking about in terms of socialization in terms of all those things that that make us society. The truth is you make it better for it every single person on the planet. So my thinking is, if we do this, right, we make the world a better place. We impact the world if we do this, right. So it's, it really is, when I think about it, sometimes I shake, honestly shake when I think about when I think about the impact that this could really have. It scares me. But I'm ready for it. I'm ready for it. I like being scared sometimes.

S

Steve Barclay 20:34

Well, don't let the power go to your head.

L

LaMondre Pough 20:39

Well, I say it's not my power.

L

Lis Malone 20:45

So Lamondre, can I if I can ask you - I would love to learn more about some of the activities that your organization engages in to sort of foster this positive disability identity movement? Because you mentioned you're looking for allies and those to kind of roll up their sleeves and do the work. So I'm really trying to understand like, what is the work, so I to kind of get a bigger picture of what your initiatives look like?

L

LaMondre Pough 21:16

Absolutely. Well, first of all, we're relatively new. So we're still, we're still pushing this forward. But I want to give you just some foundational things that we're doing. First of all, we don't believe that we know it all, we don't believe that we can do it all. So right now we have over a 90 country partners. And I'm talking about countries all over the globe. I mean, there are over 22 countries in Africa, you know, we've got all the major countries out there, we've got representatives in Syria and all over the place. But the reason that is is because it's not for us to come in and say, hey, this is what you need to be doing, or this is how you need to do it. But no, the thing, the issue with doing things globally, is that there are cultural differences. They are regional differences, even within those different countries. And we can't go in and tell you how to do it. But it's to amplify what's already being done, to hear what's happening on the ground in those in those areas. So it's about uniting people. And we've got, like I said over 90 country partners in those areas. But the other thing that we're doing is we are working on a youth mentoring program where we're actually connecting young people. And we're partnering

with other organizations to do this as well. We're connecting young people with leaders who are who are like actual CEOs and top leaders in their industries in their in their realm of work. And we're having them, not just mentor them, but actually worked together on them to support things like the SDGs to support things like how do we make this sustainable. How do we work through that, and the idea is that it is an exchange, it is an exchange. So the other thing that we're doing, and this is one of the real crux of what we're doing with building a strong completely accessible platform, so that people with disabilities from around the world can converse and connect with each other. Because again, we believe in power, through connection, empowerment through connection. So we're working on that. And you know, it takes money for us to do that. So we're actually raising funds in order to make that a reality. Because as you all know, a large part of the problem is a lot of these platforms are simply not accessible. Even if they have some things that maybe it can work for some people, you really find very few platforms that are truly accessible to a multitude of people with disabilities. So we're working on that as well. The other side of that is that we're also working with corporations to connect them with people. Because you know, it's so many corporations out there who say that they want to hire people with disabilities is so many organizations that say that they want to do it. And they're sincere, in what it is that they want to do. However, a lot of times, the connections are not there. A lot of times, they just don't know where to go, or what to do. So a part of what we're doing at billion strong is helping people to connect with people so that they can gainfully employ folks with disabilities. The other piece of that is, as I said to you before, because of the stigmas and the identity issues, we're also looking at providing trainings and for people with disabilities who want to further develop their professional skill set. Also working with entrepreneurs, who want to work with these corporations who want to work with those who are looking at supplier diversity. So we're making a number of, of initiatives that are out there, but again, it's the kind of thing where as one at a time we're trying to knock them all down But we're getting it there.

R

Rob Mineault 25:00

And that's why I'm always amazed, you know, with the with the some of the organizations that we do talk to that are working on this higher this global level, because I don't know how you just don't get overwhelmed immediately when you look at, you know, sort of the landscape and realize, all of the moving parts, all of the different personalities, all of the different countries, like it must feel overwhelming at times. So what you're talking about in sort of just focusing in on one thing, and trying to figure that out, that that totally makes sense to me.

L

LaMondre Pough 25:34

Absolutely. And I would tell you, we are overwhelmed. It's a scary thing, every time we wake up in the morning, and we approach this work. But just because you're overwhelmed, or just because you're a little nervous about it doesn't mean you don't move forward. And so that's, that's what we do. And the thing that we realized is that we can't do this by ourselves. That's why this is a movement. This is why we have country partners. This is why I think is to magnify what's already being done, and see how we can assist in those areas. And this is also why they're we don't compete, we don't compete, this is not a we're gonna want up you are we're going to do better than you are. This is our audience. And that is their audience. That's not what this is. This thing is, hey, you guys are doing that over there. That's good work. We're going to help support you in that. How can we link arms with you to help you push your agenda

forward? How can we do that? Now, of course, what that means is that there has to be a lot of courage in order to push that forward. Because I remember I was I was speaking with a large company. And we were talking about some of the initiatives that we wanted to do. And this was with a group of people with disabilities. And we were talking about the very issue that we started out with, we were talking about identifying, and someone asked the question, Well, are you going to help us sue people? And what do we do when people come up against us about this? It was like, you know, honestly, some of this stuff, you may have to take some hits on. Because in order for change to happen, in order for progress to happen, there is going to be struggle. In fact it was Frederick Douglass that said, power concedes nothing without a struggle. It never has. And it never will. And unfortunately, although we seem to have a lot of goodwill towards the community, as you know, ableism is a very real thing. And it rears its head in some unusual ways. You will have people that are yeah, we support you. And then at every turn, it seems as if they want to push against you. Well, the truth is, we have to buck against that. And we have to be willing to speak out. When it's not popular, we have to be willing to stand up when it's not. So it is overwhelming. It is scary. But it's us doing it and not just individuals it is us doing it, we are a movement.

R

Rob Mineault 28:06

You know, it's so interesting to hear you say that, you know, we've been actually talking on the podcast for a while now, talking about sort of the the disability movement at large and sort of lamenting how it really seems like in the past the say, decade, there have been a lot of equity seeking movements that have really made some large strides. And it really it feels like the disability movement really hasn't had their moment yet. And it's and it's sort of like, you know, how do we how do we make that spark? How do we get that moment? What's sort of holding us back?

L

LaMondre Pough 28:47

Rob there, that's a great question. And I will tell you, I think a part of what it is, is that we've got to show up. We got to show up. And what I mean by that we can't just show up when it's issues that concern disability. As I said to you, disability is everywhere, every single place, there is disability. So we need to show up in the art, we need to show up when we're talking about at the homeowners association. We need to show up in these areas, when there is not a direct correlation to disability and still be vocal and still show up and still show out. Because here's the thing, as long as we stay siloed over in our little corner, every time something comes up, it's got to be Oh, that's for them over there. That's for those people over there. No, we're those people, you're those people. So we need to show up in places that we traditionally have it and bring those issues to the table. In fact, this is how you gain allies and accomplices. And I'm gonna tell you just to, you know, when we experience the murder of George Floyd to broadcast over and over again, on television, I saw something different this time that I hadn't seen before. And when ahmaud arbery, was killed, just jogging through his neighborhood, I saw people who were not black, who were not African American standing up and say, Hey, this is right. This is a right, we need to we need to do something about this not what are you gonna do about it, but we need to do something about this. And see, I believe that that's what needs to happen, we need to be on the front lines of those movements as well. Because we're in it, we're in it. So a part of it, a part of it, is to show up, a part of it is not to beg for a seat at the table, but demand it, demand this seat at the table, show up, show up and contribute. You know, so I believe that

that is one of the things that's necessary for us to move forward. And I also believe, as I said, since COVID, happen, it has decentralized so many things, you know, before, and it's just the way of things before it was always okay, you got to go to this particular place and do this particular thing. Now, you've got platforms, and now people are more open to being able to do what they do right from their location. And people's mentality has shifted to where, oh, yeah, I can do this right here, I can be a part of this from right here, I think that we have to ride that momentum and use that momentum to continue to change people's perception of what it is, or what it is to be a power base, what's operate from a base of power. It's not centralized anymore, it is decentralized.

R

Rob Mineault 31:53

That is, that is really interesting that you that you put it like that, because I'm just kind of thinking, you know, part of the part of the struggle, you know, in terms of like, say growing up with a disability is that you there's a good chance that you're sort of growing up with this idea that you need to be cared for, or that other people will, you know, solve your problems. And I'm just curious to know, like, a lot of times, people take that with them into adulthood and into society. And even in the disability movement, there can be a lot of have an attitude of, well, the government just needs to go in and fix this, these to make things more accessible. You know, it's always like they need to solve the problem. And maybe it is sort of a an attitude shift that needs to happen of this of being loud and proud and authentic, and advocating for yourself.

L

LaMondre Pough 32:56

Absolutely. Absolutely. I agree with that wholeheartedly. And I've seen that, but I'm gonna tell you what was a blessing for me. My mother never allowed me to develop that when I was five years old and eight so well, when I was 18 months old, and I was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy they gave her you know, they gave her the worst scenario case, they told her I wouldn't live to be five to tell her that I wouldn't get married and tell her that I wouldn't go to school, they said that I wouldn't have gainful employment. They said all of these things to her. And they tell her take them home. Take them home. That's that's what she had to work with. But I love the fact that my mother was a child, who you know who, who was born in the 50s. And, you know, came into her own in the 70s. So she went through, you know, Jim Crow, she went through segregation, she went through all of those things that was happening. So her mentality was completely different. My mother was a rebel. And what she said to me, I wish the her her attitude. And I'll tell you what she said to me later on, but her attitude towards me was, it doesn't matter how much time we actually have, I need to raise you to be a good human. And as a good human, you are responsible for you. When I was about eight years old, in fact, I think I was happy I was I was having one of those moments because I was I was precocious little kid. I pretty much just did my own thing. But I remember one day my mother sent me that she said, Nobody gives a damn about you in that wheelchair. They'll patch on your head, they'll tell you how cute you are. But they will never respect you. They will never give you your own aid, give you your agency or recognize your agency, if you allow that to happen. So it's only you, you're gonna have to make it happen. And she proceeded to do things that made me say who? It really is on me. I miss my 8th Grade trip because I didn't do what I was supposed to do in order to make sure things were accessible for me. And yes, she could have swooped in and saved the day and I would have saw the Washington Monument but I would have not have had the lesson of sacrifice. And I will tell you a lesson learned the sacrifice is not easily forgotten. And

honestly, that that is what she gave to me. But I didn't see that with some of my friends. I didn't see that they literally like, it was literally Yeah, somebody else is supposed to take care of that. In fact, I remember about 10 years ago, I do a lot of advocacy work here in the Columbia area. I live in Columbia, South Carolina, in the area where I live, and it was a transportation issue going on. And my wife at the time, was also a caregiver for a gentleman who was who had quadriplegia. And he knew me, but he said, yeah, there's there's transportation thing on the monitor and needs to do something about that. But what, what am I supposed to do about abre? You're the one with the problem. So shouldn't you be right here beside me doing this, if we're going to do something about it. So there is a pervasive mentality, in some instances, where people feel like, yeah, the government should take care of that, or you should take care of that, or somebody else should take care of it. But there's also a new attitude that rise and up that saying that it's on me, is on me, and I'm taking responsibility for it. And you know, what, I'm living authentically in this. So I think that things have shifted some, but there is, there is, there has not been a really good process of passing the experience along to the younger generation of what it was like to live pre ADA of what it was like to live before many of the laws that were in place. So a lot of them don't have a clue as to what it is to fight on that level for it. So we've got a lot of work to do. We've got a lot of work to do.

S Steve Barclay 36:43

Do you think social activism, the way that it was, you know, back in your mom's time is practical these days, because everybody seems to be so intolerant of dissent of any kind these days.

L LaMondre Pough 36:57

I think it still has its place, though. And I will tell you, a part of what we've lost is civility. It's like, I can't disagree with you and still see that you're human. I can't disagree with you, and still see that you matter. So we've lost that. But I think that I think the way to get that back is to continue to demonstrate that don't get me wrong, may have demonstrated which dukes up, you may have to fight. But in the end is still the kind of thing where we have to begin to demand that were.

S Steve Barclay 37:37

That's a tough place to be I will demand civility from you until you punch me in the face.

L LaMondre Pough 37:42

Right. Right. Right. Right. And so but he here's the here's the funny thing about the reason that that I pause is because I think that sometimes. All right, I believe that we've created an environment where everything should be in a perfect. And perfection is the way that I see it. Perfection is everything coming from my perspective, perfection is it being the way that I have it in my head. And anything outside of that becomes so far and so unacceptable. Until, until it should not exist anymore. And this is the issue that I have with, quote, cancel culture. And I say quote, because I don't necessarily like saying that. But I'm trying to make it clear, so that

people understand where I'm coming from that, like, there's no coming back when people make mistakes, or the understanding that you realize that times have changed. Things are different now. So we have to allow space for that. Nope, one and done, you're out. Well that's not even human. A part of our learning process is through trial and error. So you have to allow for error. And I will tell you, the disability community has been so heavy on that, I swear the disability community is one of the communities that eats their young. You know, it's like it's it's no coming back. But the truth is, this is a human experience. We learn from that. So I think that we have to push that forward and it is hard. This is not easy work. This is not easy work at all.

S

Steve Barclay 39:24

But yeah, I think you make a really valid point about our your tend to get more polarized these days. And I believe it's social media and allowing people to take random potshots at each other without considering consequence. But you know, and and it's frustrating because that's a tool that can be such a such a positive benefit and could be a real organizing tool to get people together. But it's also the space where people tend to shout each other at each other the worst

L

LaMondre Pough 39:58

All right. And let me tell you this man, I think the other problem with social media, is that it absolutely right. Not even just social media, but just media in general the way that it is now, you can absolutely live in a world where you don't hear anybody else's perspective, but your own. And, and and if, if, if, if you believe something, you will, the only things that you will see are things that support that belief, no matter how erroneous it is. And that's scary, because then you don't have diversity of thought. You know, you don't have diversity of opinion. And I think this is one of the contributing factors to the lack of civility that we have. I remember and I saw this coming. I did I remember, I was at a large national disability conference. And this is when Al Gore was running for president. So that was a long time ago. And I remember, in the middle of this meeting, that we were talking about getting people out of nursing homes, right. And this was like a conference of probably about a good 1000 people or something. And one lady went to the microphone and started talking about in some instances, nursing home placement is a good idea. I never saw a crowd turn on someone so fast. I mean, literally, they were a hissing, I mean, grown people hissing. It was like a production of Cats. It was it was wow.

S

Steve Barclay 41:39

And she's not necessarily wrong. It depends on the circumstances,

L

LaMondre Pough 41:43

Right? Well, listen, my thing was at least allow her to finish her point. And they actually screamed her down to where she could not finish her point. So it was like, Oh, my God, even though I did not agree with anything she was saying. The way that she presented with the little bit that I heard because they shut her down so quickly, did not agree with anything that she

was that she had the opportunity to say. I felt like she had the right to say, I felt like she had the right to, to voice what it is. And then I knew I was like, Whoa, this is this is scary. This is scary. And and we see it magnified so many times over today.

L Lis Malone 42:26

I just had a very interesting conversation with somebody and this exact topic about diversity of opinions and thoughts. And, and that it seems that today, there is no such thing as a dialogue. It's just monologue. It's become the new accepted, normal, and just listen to the person who's shouting the loudest only.

L LaMondre Pough 42:55

Right? And I'll tell you, I believe that the art of conversation is gone. It's gone right now. And we have to have the conversations. This is why I appreciate this podcast and what you guys are doing with this because it's the conversation is talking about those things that are uncomfortable is talking about those things that may ruffle a few feathers, but still allowing it to live and breathe and just talk, you know, so we got to have those conversations, and we can't be afraid to voice different opinions. I believe that are part of our identity movement, is that helping people understand that their voice matters, helping people understand that their opinion matters, and that they have the right to voice it just like anyone else. So be brave enough to do that. And give space for it to live. And honestly, sometimes that means you you may have to take a couple of shots. You do.

R Rob Mineault 44:01

Yeah, that's right. I mean last week we had a very uncomfortable conversation about Ryan and chaps, so we are used to conversations because all uncomfortable

L LaMondre Pough 44:14

Y'all keep that.

L Lis Malone 44:19

I'm just gonna let you all exist where you are right now you

R Rob Mineault 44:23

it's ok, they were Brailled chaps it was it was there was there was purpose behind it

L LaMondre Pough 44:31

I was just about to say to each his reach

L Lis Malone 44:40

For accessibility in all its forms.

R Ryan Fleury 44:43

Absolutely.

L LaMondre Pough 44:44

Don't want access to those chaps.

R Rob Mineault 44:50

No, you know what, so much of this makes so much sense to me. A couple real quick questions, I know we're getting short on time but I'm curious to know. So in sort of the grand scheme of things, where do you see the the first bit of work needing to be done? Is this something that we need to sort of build this disability identity among the disability community? Or is there an aspect of we need to educate sort of the the mainstream? What do we do first?

L LaMondre Pough 45:27

Well, here's the thing, I think we have to do that simultaneously. I think that work has to happen together, because so much of the cues that we get in the disability community came for the quote, mainstream, okay. So many of the ways that we view ourselves comes from the quote, unquote, mainstream and the reason I say, quote, unquote, is because of the numbers, man if you're telling me that you have a portion of the population that is anywhere from 1.3 to 1.7 billion people, I am mainstream. I'm your mainstream. This is me right here. So the truth is, the rest of society has to realize that and began to deal with it. So I think both of those things have to happen simultaneously. I think it has to be education, from for, for general society, but also a really shift in perspective, from within the community as well.

R Rob Mineault 46:19

The other thing that I'm curious about that you mentioned, and that I see as something that is really integral is hitting the youth? Because that's where it seems to me that that's where

S Steve Barclay 46:33

You can't do that anymore.

L LaMondre Pough 46:34
You're going to jail.

S Steve Barclay 46:41
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I had to blow that up. It was too easy.

R Rob Mineault 46:45
Luckily, nobody listens to this podcast. No, but so. So is that do you sort of see that as as one of the focuses? And how, how is billion strong sort of leveraging that?

L LaMondre Pough 47:01
Absolutely. It is a fact that, first of all, the youth are extremely important to this process. Because, you know, it was I can't remember exactly who said it, but but the quote is, basically, it's easier to have a baby than to rebuild broken men. And the concept behind that is if we can, if we can help young people see a different perspective out of the gate, then that happens. And so we partner with a youth oriented programs that were not necessarily focused on disabilities, but wanted to include that, for example, there's an organization called a young guy. That's, you know, the its focus is youth oriented. And this is a this is a group that we partnered with, in terms of pairing young people with, with seasoned executives and administrators, and, you know, those who run nonprofit organizations, not just so that they can be mentored, but so they can come up with solutions together to figure out how we move things forward. So yes, that's that's ample. And that's, that's a top priority for us.

R Rob Mineault 48:08
Well, you know, you guys are doing incredible work. Over the last hour, I mean, I am inspired, and I'm excited to see where the movement goes. I'm happily inviting you back to come speak anytime with us. It's been a great conversation, anything that we can do to help, we are here. And yeah, we just like to thank you for taking some time out of your evening to talk with us.

L LaMondre Pough 48:39
Oh, well, thank you. And I'll tell you what you can do. Go to www.billion-strong.org. Join the movement. It's free. Join the movement. Let your voice be heard. And we can change this world together. Thank you.

L Lis Malone 48:54
Cheers. Speaking of cheers LaMondre you and I are going to have to do a liquor run.

L LaMondre Pough 49:02
Cognac.

L Lis Malone 49:05
Nice. They got cognac there.

L LaMondre Pough 49:08
All right, it's calling me.

R Ryan Fleury 49:11
Now what was the name of the store again?

L Lis Malone 49:12
Frugal MacDoogal. And you know what? Listen, I you know, I must like the place because I never plug anything I was just get about

L LaMondre Pough 49:26
It sounds like sponsorship

R Rob Mineault 49:31
Contact them on Monday.

L Lis Malone 49:34
Frugal MacDoogal.

S Steve Barclay 49:36
McDoogal or MacDoogal?

L Lis Malone 49:38

I think it's MacDoogal. In terms of spelling. I know. I know. I know for Rob to spell things correctly, you have to say it.

R

Ryan Fleury 49:52

Say surprised.

R

Rob Mineault 49:53

No.

L

LaMondre Pough 50:10

Right. Okay. Listen, I really do appreciate how warm you all are. And I really do admire what you're doing. I love the depth of questions that you asked. I know, sometimes I can kind of be long, but I certainly do appreciate.

L

Lis Malone 50:49

Before you, you signed on LaMondre, they were asking me about the difference between North Carolina and South Carolina. And they're like, why isn't there just one Carolina? Like, aren't you? Aren't you guys all the same? And I'm like, not exactly.

R

Rob Mineault 51:04

Just like because sometimes there's a rivalry, you know, like between North and South or like, you know, here in Canada it's Vancouver and Toronto. Like we always we always give Toronto sort of the business.

S

Steve Barclay 51:16

Well its kind of everybody against Toronto, I think every every city and well no, every individual city in the country views themselves as having a rivalry with Toronto because Toronto is the biggest city in the country. They want to they want to measure up to the champ right. Not that I'm admitting anything about Toronto status.

L

Lis Malone 51:39

But I haven't seen a rivalry between North and South Carolina, other than just like sports teams here and there. But I think I think like where there are rivalries is more like city sometimes like New York versus LA, like, but not really neighboring states.

L LaMondre Pough 51:57

But completely different, completely different ways of thinking. You know, South Carolina was the first state to secede from the Union. So we're separate this year. And unfortunately, what happens is, I think that people are still fighting that war. I mean, literally, they're still fighting that war here. And so it can be kind of wild sometimes, but geez, yeah.

R Rob Mineault 52:18

We've had a lot of learning going on in this episode. Certainly never heard of Frugal MacDoogal's.

L LaMondre Pough 52:25

Never heard of Frugal MacDoogal and apparently it's just right up the road and you got Lis buying up all my liquor.

L Lis Malone 52:37

I'm not I'm not a cognac drinker, but I'm certainly open to suggestions. Gotcha. What do you drink? Um, I like bourbon. I like beer. I like wine. Oh, I do. I like tequila. If it's good tequila, like, yeah, yeah. I recently had some Don Julio 1942. I'm a fan.

L LaMondre Pough 53:04

All right. 1942. Okay.

R Ryan Fleury 53:09

Steve where was Becky from? Was it Virginia or Carolina?

S Steve Barclay 53:15

No, West Virginia.

R Ryan Fleury 53:16

Okay. Nevermind, I was gonna mention the Tarantula.

S Steve Barclay 53:20

Oh, they might have a Tarantula. Azul, tequila. It's blue. It's so good. Citrus, citrus flavored tequila.

R Ryan Fleury 53:28

But they also have other flavors like strawberry and mango.

L Lis Malone 53:37

Yeah. All right. You have to post some photos. I'll be in there taking pictures and then I'm gonna get some guy saying, what do you doing? You work for the State Liquor Board? What do you do?

S Steve Barclay 53:49

While you're looking around, find yourself some Irish whiskey. Drink it thinking of me.

L LaMondre Pough 53:54

Oh, here we go. All right. Good. This. Good. Thank you all. This has been great. And I certainly will turn up the volume on it.

R Rob Mineault 54:03

Thank you. All right, you take care, sir.

L LaMondre Pough 54:07

All right. Y'all have a good night.

S Steve Barclay 54:11

That's pretty cool. You know, you think back to our interview with with Deborah, this all got kicked off because somebody said that her kid wouldn't be able to do things. And now she's yeah, front and center of the international global movement.

R Rob Mineault 54:30

Several global global organizations that are doing incredible work. Yeah, fantastic. It is. It's It's It's funny how life works. But I'm i I'm telling you I don't have a lot of the global organizations that we've talked to, I'm most excited about this one. I'm not gonna lie.

S

Steve Barclay 54:51

And he's such an articulate spokesman for them. I mean, my goodness. He's very clear, concise, lays out. Really great points. And, you know, yeah, I'm expecting good things from these guys.

R

Rob Mineault 55:04

Yeah, I mean, it's not that, not that I'm knocking any of the other organizations that we've talked to, they're all doing incredible work. But I feel like for me as somebody on the ground, a lot of times when we talk to these organizations, and they're even their, their mission statement, or their mandate is sort of above my head, it's like, above my paygrade, I don't necessarily grok what they're, what they're actually doing, or how it all works. And with Billion Strong, I really feel like, I get it, like I understand. And they're, they're focusing in on making some some real change on the ground, because I also feel like there is a bit of a disconnect with global organizations and local organizations or even the person on the street. But what, what what they're talking about is, is very grounded, and, and totally makes sense. It's all about attitude. And that's both internal and external. People have to be loud and proud, because that's who gets the attention. And I think that he's absolutely right. That's some of the things that need to happen in terms to to make this a movement, that that gets traction, it needs a spark, it needs people to show up, and to be loud, and to connect on both like a local level as well as a global level. So, you know, I'm excited to see what the future has in store.

L

Lis Malone 56:37

I like how he was referencing that we need to demand a seat at the table. And my take on it is very much in line with him. I don't say demand, I say you just go in and you just take a seat at the table. You just take it. You don't have to even you shouldn't even have to demand it. You just go in there. You crash the party, and you sit yourself down and you make your point heard.

R

Rob Mineault 57:01

That's right. That's right. Yep. Yep. So there you go. Hey, did you know that Frugal MacDoogal, they have a rewards club. Are you are you a member of that Lis?

L

Lis Malone 57:13

I'm not a Frugal MacDoogal rewards card member.

R

Rob Mineault 57:17

You should really remember only pricing on select brands. So I would recommend it, if I were you.

L Lis Malone 57:25
iYou know what now that you're saying that I well now it's all coming back to me. They do have two prices on things. Okay, so they're probably that you know what they are, but they're they're different prices. They said they they charge different prices. If you pay cash versus credit.

R Ryan Fleury 57:42
You guys keep mentioning them. And they aren't a sponsor of this podcast. I think you better make a phone call Lis. Say if you listen to episode 300 and whatever this is, you were mentioned 16 times. You need to pony up some sponsorship.

S Steve Barclay 58:02
Hey, folks in Nashville, Tennessee, that's 701 Division Street.

R Ryan Fleury 58:07
South Carolina. What are you talking about? Wrong state.

S Steve Barclay 58:17
We can do one location a week.

L Lis Malone 58:20
Part of the same Frugal MacDoogal family.

R Rob Mineault 58:22
Yeah, apparently, it's a chain. Just look for the giant, tacky looking Scottish person on the side of the building.

L Lis Malone 58:32
So the nickname for Frugal MacDoogal is Tippy MacStaggers. So, we so I actually had to think about what is their real name? But and that's how their business is listed. But everybody calls it Tippy MacStaggers - that is the little guy, that that Scottish looking guy.



S

Steve Barclay 58:58

Cheap Scottish guy in a kilt selling liquor. That's that's a pretty accurate stereotype.

R

Rob Mineault 59:07

Yeah, I mean, listen, I'm surprised there's not plushies. They onto something here. This is this is touched a clearly touched a chord with us.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:17

I really think you need to count how many times their name has been mentioned in this episode. And somebody should send them an email through their contact us form. Or pick up the phone and call them and say we gave you free marketing free. Send us a T shirt.

L

Lis Malone 59:32

Yeah. I'll go in a liquor rundown there and I'll personally tell them Hey, check this out. Like we got this is you know, we mentioned Frugal MacDoogal's X number times and all you got was this lousy t-shirt.

R

Ryan Fleury 59:52

T shirts and the MacDoogal bobblehead.

S

Steve Barclay 59:55

I'm gonna. I'm gonna put a logical pause in here for editing purposes. And we also support people who stagger.

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:07

I'm gonna make sure that Frugal MacDoogal in the episode description just so if someone is be like, Hey, I Googled ourselves on Google and he came up with his podcast. I don't know what the hell's the deal.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:22

Who needs AdWords?

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:25

Listen. I want you to go in. I want you to walk up to the counter. I want you to ask for Justin

Listen, I want you to go in, I want you to walk up to the counter. I want you to ask for Justin Sellars, who's the liquor manager. And just say, we sent you.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:40
That's great.

L Lis Malone 1:00:41
Say we're gonna send our regional person down there. Her name is Lis Malone. Yes, our regional representatives.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:49
It's our roving correspondent.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:51
I mean, can you really go wrong when you have a 21,000 square foot liquor warehouse?

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:00
Well, then they've got swag. They can they can spare some swag.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:02
Yeah. So there you go. Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm.

S Steve Barclay 1:01:10
Their weekly specials, should be talking about their weekly specials.

L Lis Malone 1:01:17
Now, you know the one in South Carolina though I think it's close on Sundays. Because you have to remember this is just the Bible Belt.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:25
That's right. Open Monday to Saturday. So there you go.

L Lis Malone 1:01:31
Don't wait till Sunday, buy your liquor early.

S Steve Barclay 1:01:34
So glad we live in civilization where we can buy booze all week.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:41
Right? There's a there's a thin line between Saturday night, and Sunday morning.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:47
Oh, we are an important part of this. We have our own global initiative that we need to work on. There needs to be more accessibility to booze, seven days a week. I think we need a Frugal MacDoogal in Canada.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:20
Ya know clearly, if they're looking to expand. I mean, listen. Could be our big our big thing. And if we can't get the rights to it, we'll just open a Topsy MacSwaggers or whatever.

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:43
There's a country song in there.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:46
Oh, you can write the jingle.

R Ryan Fleury 1:02:49
Glitter and spangles.

R Rob Mineault 1:03:05
Alright, we better get out of here. Yes. All right. Hey, Lis.



L Lis Malone 1:03:14
Yeah, Rob?

R Rob Mineault 1:03:15
Where can people find .. Frugal MacDoogal? No, where can people find us?

L Lis Malone 1:03:24
You can find me at Frugal MacDoogal's. But you can find us www.atbanter.com.

R Rob Mineault 1:03:32
I realize that that's kind of our trademark humor that we just take something and then we just beat it to death until it's bleeding mass on the ground.

L Lis Malone 1:03:45
We are a sponsor's dream.

S Steve Barclay 1:03:49
We are, but it would probably grow old after a few episodes.

L Lis Malone 1:03:53
Well, you know,

R Rob Mineault 1:03:55
Maybe anyways. They can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 1:04:11
I got it on the right prompt that time when you're talking about.

L Lis Malone 1:04:14
It didn't come through

R Rob Mineault 1:04:15

You know, it's fine.

S Steve Barclay 1:04:19

There you go. You know what else see if I could find us on social media. We're on Facebook. We're on Twitter. We're on Instagram. We're all over the place. But only one of us is at Frugal MacDoogal's.

R Ryan Fleury 1:04:31

And you can find that location at - Steve can you read the address again?

S Steve Barclay 1:04:35

Oh, I don't know. I closed that website. Oh, 701 Division Street, Nashville, Tennessee. If you're in Nashville, I was looking at the wrong store.

L Lis Malone 1:04:45

Fort Mill, South Carolina.

R Rob Mineault 1:04:49

I'm actually I'm on their Instagram page right now. They have a nice Instagram page and a lot a lot of pictures of liquor. Oh listen, they've got they've got sparkling water called Liquid death.

R Ryan Fleury 1:05:01

Nice, nice.

R Rob Mineault 1:05:03

Anyways, we're what? That's it. That's it. We're done. Okay. Well, thanks everybody for listening in. And of course a big thanks to LaMondre Pough for joining us and we will see everybody next week.