

# PODCAST Episode 378

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## SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Ryan Fleury, Steve Barclay, John Stark, Lis Malone

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**R** Rob Mineault 00:24  
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

**S** Steve Barclay 00:29  
Banter, banter.

**R** Rob Mineault 00:31  
Hey, wow, listen to that strike. That was That was impressive.

**R** Ryan Fleury 00:36  
Thank you very much.

**R** Rob Mineault 00:38  
Ryan's been practicing. This is of course the podcast where we talked 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 Mr. cowbell himself. Mr. Ryan Fleury.

**R** Ryan Fleury 00:57  
Hello.

R Rob Mineault 00:59  
See, I see I gave you top billing because of that just because of that. cowbell strike. Hey, it's also Mr. Steve Barclay.

S Steve Barclay 01:13  
That's me again.

R Rob Mineault 01:14  
Yeah, here again.

R Ryan Fleury 01:17  
Two in a row.

R Rob Mineault 01:29  
Hey, look, who else it is. It's Miss Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 01:33  
Back in the cellar she goes.

R Rob Mineault 01:41  
How the heck is everybody?

L Lis Malone 01:43  
Good

S Steve Barclay 01:44  
Finer than frog hair.

R Rob Mineault 01:46  
Nice. I like it. I have no idea what that means. I don't either, but I like the sound of it. Okay.

See, we gave him we gave him crap for the other day because he always says dandy and we kind of call them out on that. So now he's he's changing it up. I like it.

R Ryan Fleury 02:02

I think that's a new song title "finer than frog hair".

R Rob Mineault 02:05

There you go. Ryan. That's your next assignment. Write us a song.

S Steve Barclay 02:13

I still haven't finished the Easter song. Give me a break.

R Rob Mineault 02:19

Which could be another song. Well, excellent. Yeah, it's it's I feel like Spring is finally here. It's beautiful day here in Vancouver.

S Steve Barclay 02:29

Yeah, wait 24 hours. I would like to point out that in typical Vancouver fashion, it is going to be beautiful all week and then rain on the weekend.

R Rob Mineault 03:07

Yeah, let's hope not. All right. Well enough for the weather report. Hey, let's get right to it because I am stoked about today's show, it's about one of my favorite topics. So hey Ryan?

R Ryan Fleury 03:24

Yeah, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 03:25

What the heck are we doing today?

R Ryan Fleury 03:27

Our guest today is John Stark. He currently sits on the media advisory committee for the audio

Our guest today is John Stark. He currently sits on the media advisory committee for the audio description project of the American Council of the Blind. He is also a moderator of the audio description community on X. And he does so much more. John, welcome to the show.

J

John Stark 03:46

Thanks for having me. I'm always glad to swing by and talk about accessibility and audio description movies and just talk.

R

Rob Mineault 03:56

Okay, well, let's let's just start give us give us a little bit of a background about yourself and then we're gonna dive into all of those topics and and much more. So maybe just a brief snapshot of, of who this John Stark guy is.

J

John Stark 04:11

Yeah. I love movies. And always loved movies always, always felt like I wanted to be a movie critic more than actually like working in film directing or producing or anything like that. And I was kind of casually doing that online. I went to school for it. I have a degree in film, the Cinema Studies track. And like, I could have done the other one, the production track, but I actually chose the Cinema Study. And I actually lost my vision, about seven years ago now. And I kind of hit a rock wall where I didn't know really what to do. I hadn't had a website up and I was reviewing and trying to do things trying to get my name out there because there is like 1000s of bloggers and movie critics and everything everywhere. And then I started watching things with audio description, and my world kind of came back together. And suddenly, I felt like I could watch new movies instead of just listening to ones I had seen before. And I really wanted to start talking more about the audio description, the accessibility and reviewing because there's, you know, quality differences in some audio descriptions from some really amazing human narrated tracks all the way down to some really awful text to speech stuff that gets thrown in. So I really wanted to actually put the focus on the audio description community. And because no one else was doing that at the time. And that's how people have found me. And things have kind of just rolled from there. But I think it's it's important to talk about audio description, accessibility and normalize it. So many people in working in movie theaters often don't know how to operate the equipment, when they hand it to us, there's just so many things. And I just love having a place where I can talk about it and be a voice for other people who don't necessarily feel comfortable talking about it online, or throwing up a YouTube channel or putting it on a website or anything like that.

R

Rob Mineault 06:31

So it is really interesting. I mean, we've been talking about audio description here on the show for years. And I really do feel like we've really been watching its trajectory as it as it's become more and more, more standard and more standardized. I mean, certainly we have a ways to go, but even if you compare it to say, five or six years ago, it has come a long way.

J

John Stark 06:57

Yeah, I think it continues to come a long way. But with that has come sort of a stronger advent in the AI technology field. And we just want to kind of make sure that we don't overuse that. Because at the same time, you know, movies and television, for a sighted person that's, that's entertainment. We sit down and we kick back and relax and watch the show. And we don't want to get into using robotic voices again, I don't need the same voice that's narrating doing my Narrator on my phone or my computer to also be narrating the movie.

R

Rob Mineault 07:37

Yeah, well, we had Colleen Connor on and she she runs a an outfit called Audio Description Training Retreats. And, you know, we had an interesting conversation about AI where AI could say, work with audio description, in terms of the process of creating your audio description. Where we want it and helping on the, on the technical side, when it comes to say, lining up a script or even, you know, helping develop that script. But, you know, I think that everybody pretty much agrees that something like AI voices, at least in their current form, it just isn't something that we want because it's just, it's too too artificial still.

J

John Stark 08:30

Yeah, I think there's also a place for it in helping a lot of people who create short form content on YouTube and Tiktok and stuff like that. If we can create a program that would allow them to easily apply AI audio description, it could open up a whole lot of videos from people who are not going to put audio description on their video otherwise and then suddenly, we're opening up another venue for blind and low vision people to be able to enjoy content. So yeah, I don't disagree that there are places for AI. But Netflix has the money to pay for humans.

S

Steve Barclay 09:12

True. I was actually just down at CSUN last month and saw a company down there that was using AI to to do more not not the full job of audio description but just to create an outline for the audio description and then you could go in and edit it and if you wanted you could record it yourself but but it also was using synthetic speech and some pretty I was it was the most impressive synthetic speech I'd heard to date. But even they were you know of the opinion even with this product, this is this is just a tool this is this is not the end all be all. This is a tool and and they were definitely targeting a lot of that stuff that you know the legacy stuff that is not audio described.

J

John Stark 10:01

Yeah, and and, you know, I mean, these companies - I've heard them talk before and representatives from the companies and they have this massive back catalogue of stuff that that hasn't been audio described, they obviously don't want to spend all that money on getting an audio described. And then looking at can we use AI to get all these movies from and TV shows from, you know, pre audio description eras caught up, and I get the need for that. But

some movies, I think have more of a present feel to it. Some things like Back to the Future and the Indiana Jones and Star Wars, you know, I mean, like, there's certain films you don't want to make, like less than the quality of the film. Description, it's a weird, it's in a weird place where theoretically, it could work. But also theoretically, I've heard audio description where, at the same time, they seem so competent in digital quality. Like there's a film on Netflix right now called the Wages of Fear that uses AI audio description. The way I found out is, well, first of all, they're able to use variable speed on the voice, they speed it up and slow it down, which is how they set the audio descriptions or places. But then they said Grenada launcher, which a human would have caught. They wouldn't naturally say grenada launcher, they would have said grenade because they're a grenada launcher isn't a thing. So

S

Steve Barclay 11:37

I don't know, I've seen them launch a Toyota. Maybe Ford, Granada there isn't a big enough catapult.

J

John Stark 11:44

So I mean, there's little it's little quirks that AI isn't quite ready for just yet. And, you know, the human performance of an audio description, there's some narrators that do truly exceptional work, and they actually complement the piece. And when you listen to their voice of its cast, right, it can actually really sort of round out the experience in a way that I'm not really sure I can yet. I gave Dave Wallace who narrated The Regime for Max, I was able to give him praise directly for his fantastic narration performance, because he uses tone and he uses these like really specific pauses. And he feels like he's in the show, you know what I'm saying? Like, it feels like the description is not intrusive description, but he's aware of what is happening on screen. And he, he matches it with his voice in certain ways. It's very creative. And I really liked what they did with it. And it's a thing that AI wouldn't have been able to pick up on. It's something that somebody who's also a voice actor would think of, you know, little things, little ways of saying things and holding a word out, while, you know, while we're kind of waiting for something and he kind of stretches the line a little bit. And, you know, he does stuff like that. And it's, it just added more. And I don't think AI can do that. But there's a place for it.

R

Rob Mineault 13:15

Sure. We've, we've had this discussion on the show before, you know, we're talking about how impactful like really good audio description can be to a piece of content. It can add value to just anybody who's consuming that content, whether they be visually impaired or not. Especially when you think about things like the script writers are using particular words to describe the action to sort of enhance, say, the emotion that this that particular scene is trying to portray. So if it's a sad scene, or if it's a tense scene, you know, the writer, you know, is using specific words to try to enhance that. And to the same degree, a voice actor can do very much the same in that voice performance. I think that really what the push is to try to elevate these these these tracks above just, oh, well. This is just somebody who's describing what's going on, like they can become a character in the piece or another layer of that content if it's done well.

 J

John Stark 14:24

Yeah, absolutely. I agree. Yeah, it absolutely can enhance a piece and can really make or break a film sometimes. Sure. Because really bad narration has turned me off of things before especially if I'm already not really into the film. And then I've got this audio description track. It's problematic because humans can produce problematic audio description too. Not everything is not equal out there. But that great audio description track can actually I mean, there have been movies I didn't like, but I love the audio description track. Man this description track it's fire. So, yeah, I've just been impressed and I just kind of focus in on the audio description. I'm like, man, they're doing great work here. If I become interested in something that I'm like, I don't really like the movie, but the audio description for this is great.

 R

Rob Mineault 15:20

Yeah, it's funny you say that because I was thinking about this today in preparation for the show. If you had a really good audio description track, it could actually elevate the movie. Like, you could have a movie that has like say it has a good story but it has like really shoddy effects. And so something so somebody who's like, watching this movie be like, oh, this, this, this movie is garbage. But if you take that same movie, and if you had a really good audio descriptive track, and you have a good story, that could be a really super engaging, a great movie for somebody who's enjoying it in a different way than say, you know, watching it. You don't have to worry about like bad effects or were anything else.

 J

John Stark 16:06

Oh, yeah, absolutely. I love. I love what I'm about to watch a horror movie and it ends up being William Michael Redmond. I'm like, this dude's voice is so perfect for this genre. I love him. I love his wife on horror films. It's just he's got kind of a tough voice. And he has taken some really mediocre to terrible horror films and made them more entertaining because of the way he narrates a horror film. And he just feels right for it. Like Netflix's latest Texas Chainsaw. He narrated that, and he was better than the movie. I really enjoyed it. I think there's so many reasons to do it that way. Because then I can walk away from a film going well, oh, the audio description, it gives me a reason to recommend it instead of no reason. Because if I don't like the movie, then I have no reason to recommend it. But if I have the audio description, and I and I'm talking to other blind people, I can at least say, you know what, this has a great audio description track and, you know, opinions are subjective. And you'll end up liking the movie. At least I know the audio descriptions is great.

 R

Rob Mineault 17:22

So yeah, in fact, you know, as somebody who's sighted, like I'm I would be totally curious, like, I would actually rewatch that movie and just listen to the audio description. Because it was a terrible movie. But, yeah, right maybe, you know, watching it like that maybe I would actually enjoy it if I didn't have to watch the terrible acting and effects in there. And Everything else about it.

 J

John Stark 17:50

**J** John Stark 17:50

Yeah, absolutely. You might, you might actually do that. The other one that I'll give a shout out to actually, I did a list of my favorite audio description tracks from last year. And I think this one I gave like a C minus, which if I was if I was a rotten, it would be like rotten if I was on tomatometer. But it was it was No One Will Save You.,It's sort of like an alien plot. I kind of like the gimmick. I didn't think was well done. But you know, the the audio description track is just so well done for that film, and I just, I just thought it was, it was great. It's written by Jeff Heck, keep just giving people shout outs. So Jeff Heck did the audio description for that. And there's like almost no dialogue. So the whole film hinges on audio description when you're blind. And while I thought that director failed in terms of because he has dialogue, so it's like the people can speak so it just becomes weird that they don't. But that's what I found so weird about the film. I was like, so they can, they're just not. Silent Night did a little bit better. John Woo, he really did avoid speech in Silent Night. But with this one, she even sings and it's like, why would she talk? So bizarre. They never really answered. I felt like the director never answered that question. But the audio description because of that, because there's nothing to talk and I was even I think when I did my review, I pointed out basically for a long chunk of the film, she's in the house. And I felt like Jeff did such a great job of describing the house because at a certain point, you kind of run out of things to describe. You're like, well, we've been in this room before. What else do I say about this room? You know, you've got one protagonist, so there's only just so much you can describe about But I always felt like he was finding new layers and levels of things to describe. And that's what I really loved about that film. So, yeah, it's got a really solid audio description, not a great movie, but on a description is fire.

**R**

Rob Mineault 20:12

So yeah, well, and that's, that's really interesting thing. And that's why I think that what needs to happen to really drive the industry forward is to really get the creatives involved. If they really understood that hey, like, there's there's this, you know, audio description that can really give you another layer of content.

**J**

John Stark 20:32

Yeah, I also wonder what would happen if, if Hollywood creatives actually got involved, and knew about audio description? There's a, there's an interview out there with Kevin Smith, where he accidentally stumbled onto audio descriptions for one of his films, and just kind of started watching, he didn't even know it was his. He's like what is this? And like, it took him a while of finding it. I mean, he ended up you know, liking it and and appreciating that this existed because it allowed he understood why it was there. I was like, if more people could do that, I feel like that would be you know, then they could maybe join in on the process. And first of all, they'd be really concerned about the quality. And there wouldn't be any of these robots, narrating anything. I mean, Scorsese is not going to let an AI voice anywhere near his movie, though. So they're going to, they're going to want to make sure that it's the highest of quality, which only benefits the audio description community, I would think because then they're actually getting supported by the creatives to make the best audio description that they possibly can, instead of doing things like, now we have a couple of shows that are running that are that have one Narrator on them, doing all of the voices plus the audio description. These are like shows that are technically considered American English language shows like Tokyo Vice and Shogun, which have characters that speak in another language. Both of those are narrated by one person who does all of the voices, including for the female, which is, is disappointing



and depressing. But I feel like if the people who actually made that show knew the audio description was like that, that they would be like, Wait a minute. No, you know, I feel like somebody would step in. And the only reason that people get away with that is because I don't think enough people know, you know, I don't think they've ever listened to an audio description track these directors and producers and writers and stuff like that in Hollywood, I think they, you know, unless they themselves need to use it. They don't know what exists. That's right.

R

Rob Mineault 20:32

Yeah, that's what I get the feeling of too. I think that, you know, for a lot of them they've already sort of they're done with the film, by the time it gets to one of the production houses that actually, you know, make the the audio descriptive tracks. They're sort of long gone from the process by that point. So, yeah, it's the key is, I think, you know, is is educating the up and coming generation of filmmakers and creatives to say, hey, this is something else that you can think of, and it's actually exciting. And when we were having a conversation with with Colleen, Lis came up with with a brilliant idea, she was like, you know, what needs to happen is that they need to make an award for it. And the creators will be all over it, because, you know, we know how much they love getting awards.

J

John Stark 23:44

Well, you can give them an award, the American Council of the Blind gifts has been giving out an award for audio description through the Audio Description Project now for a while. So there's been a way to win an award for that. I think it's another way to win an award.

L

Lis Malone 24:00

Well, I was thinking more like bigger, like more like the Oscars.

J

John Stark 24:04

Right, the Oscars and stuff. But you know, what's really funny about audio description is that the talent involved used to be able to get credit for doing it on IMDb, but the industry balked at it. And so they all got their credits removed, so we actually went the other direction. So now there's another website that sort of is like self aggregating and trying to keep people's credits up, because they can't actually be on IMDb with their audio description credits. So it would be nice, but it seems like the industry doesn't want

R

Ryan Fleury 24:42

We've spoken to people at Descriptive Video works and they've actually started in the last year and a half or so, listing the describer as in the in the credits as well. So they are they are being credited somewhere.

J

John Stark 24:56

No, yeah. I mean in the credits in the film, but on IMDb, they can't be credited for it on IMDb, you can't claim as an audio description Narrator. So, whoever, whoever you are as a narrator, the work that you're doing, you can't list it. If you're a voice actor. Like for example, if you look up Laura Post who, if you've ever listened to audio description, you've heard her voice like 1000 times. Her IMDb is really small, because it only is the things that she's done as a voice acting. It doesn't include her audio description work. So that would be a easy example, somebody to look at and be like, Wow, because if you're familiar with how much audio description she puts out on a regular basis, her IMDb page should be like insane. But it's not. It's pretty tame. But I do agree they shouldn't give an award like they shouldn't try to make it more of a thing.

L

Lis Malone 25:58

Well, you you might be a little more familiar with the Strike didn't they make some changes with audio description, or at least the actors when they I guess renegotiated the contract. I mean, I don't know all the details of it at all. That's but I thought that there was an aspect to audio to that new contract, or at least it was maybe on the table at one point.

J

John Stark 26:22

I don't think it had to do with audio description, because I know that these narrators worked through the strike. So it didn't cover what they were doing. They don't consider audio description to be voice acting. And where the fine line was being drawn was on shows that have foreign language, like non English language that would normally be dubbed, because dubbing is considered voice acting. But if you're doing it through audio description, that it's an audio description narrator that's providing the work. So they were trying to figure out how to define that. I think that's probably what you heard. And there's this really fine line as to whether or not you use the dubbing actors, and then an audio description narrator underneath it, but whether or not you allow the audio description training team to also create and basically read subtitles is what they're doing. So but I think there are parameters within that. And often what you get is you'll be lucky if you get more than two voices on a project. Usually get like a male voice and a female voice or at some of the higher movie budgets and stuff have had the ability to hire more talent to cover more characters. Zone of interest, I think had like six total narrators covering all of the voices, but you still have voice actors that are doing multiple roles.

R

Rob Mineault 28:04

So okay, so let's talk about Mac The Movie Guy, the YouTube channel, the website. How did how did that all start out? And what's the deal with Mac The Movie Guy? Like why the name?

J

John Stark 28:20

Yeah, it's actually kind of a really depressing story. It's something that I just want to hold on to and not give up. I kind of lived like in a small town growing up, and I didn't have internet right away. And I had a friend that my parents were friends and I was visiting. And he already had

internet and when I was kid and so he took it upon himself to sign me up for for an email address. And so I had an email address, but I don't even have a computer with internet so the only way I could do it would be a checkout at the library in my town - the only place had internet. But he signed me up for this ridiculous thing that I felt immediately silly telling people that my email was mackdaddyNLS. And NLS at the time stood for 'no limit soldier' cuz he thought he was really gangster. We were like 13, 14 or something like that. So it was yeah, the super, super tough. And yeah, so I as soon as I got my own internet, I was like I don't want to keep John Mack Daddy NLS. Like every time I tell an adult this I'm just like, this is a terrible email address. And I was I was starting to play these online movie related games and signing up on message boards and talking on websites like Ain't It Cool news and stuff like that. And I was looking for a name and I came up with Max the Movie Guy - I kept the Mac part as a tribute to him and I it'd be like, well, you know, I kept your Mac. So I retired the other one and I went with Mac The Movie Guy. That's what a Mac comes from. And my friend passed away a couple years ago. So I really just didn't want to change it. Because I was Mac The Movie Guy for so long. And now to change it, it's it's like this weird like last gift that he gave me. Everybody knows me as John Stark and my channel is Max the Movie Guy. And I'm like, you know, not everything needs to make sense in life.

R

Rob Mineault 30:43

Everybody has their their moniker right? Now, what's BB King's real name? It wasn't BB. Actually, no.

J

John Stark 30:54

That's a music question, man.

R

Rob Mineault 30:57

Anyways, my point is, is that yeah, listen, nothing wrong with having monikers.

J

John Stark 31:02

You need Mac the Music Guy for that question.

R

Rob Mineault 31:06

He's on next week.

S

Steve Barclay 31:07

He's Riley B King.

R

Rob Mineault 31:09

Okay. Well, so he's he's close, but I'm sure there are other people that have monikers.

J

John Stark 31:20

Vin Diesel, that's not his real name. Yeah. Last name is not diesel.

R

Rob Mineault 31:27

Probably not. But tell us about then a little bit about how the channel has evolved? And what kind of things do you kind of cover on on the channel?

J

John Stark 32:48

For me, I I try to cover as much as possible and get the content out there. So I do movie reviews. And I've been doing TV, at least TV pilot reviews. I don't like binge watching TV shows. Like it's just not a thing. I enjoy that cliffhanger. I enjoy sitting on a cliffhanger for at least a hot minute and like you worked, you went to the trouble of making a cliffhanger. I don't want to spoil it by immediately going into the next episode. So I try not to binge any series. So I usually just do pilot reviews. But I do recap a couple of shows that I'm really interested in. And I talk about the awards, as I have fairly good knowledge, which has allowed me to bring in some other blind film critics. So we have like a little collective of us so shout out to Alex Howard who has the Dark Room podcast? You can find their podcast and listen to it. I've had them both on my channel throughout award season and we talked with them and predicted the Oscars and I've been on their podcasts as well. And yeah, I've interviewed, I've done 20 questions which is I've had people within the narration community on my channel like Roy Samuelson and have gotten some other people a couple times have sat in and just had kind of fun. We've talked not seriously but opened up more about who they are so that the you know the people who you listen to them all the time. So they can know a little bit more about who they are not just asking them about like audio description but asking them about like what's what's your favorite color, Skittle or just dumb questions like that. And, but mostly it's it's all just like film and TV related. I want to kind of present myself as a serious film critic so that I can show that blind people can be on the same level as everybody else. My goal is to hopefully be in Guilds with sighted critics. At some point, I would love to show that we can be there and that we have stuff to contribute to the conversation. So, but I also talk a lot about audio description, and if a title has audio description when I watch it, I tried to talk about what I liked about it. And if it doesn't have audio description, I usually try to talk about why it needed it. And almost every single time as movies get in unwatchable grade from me, because there's usually too much missing. For me to be able to give it a grade or recommended or anything like that without description. So yeah, that's sort of everything that I do on the channel. My website is basically just typed out versions of reviews and kind of the TV shows that I'm watching on a daily basis, because I don't want to put all my TV content on YouTube.

R

Rob Mineault 36:09

But well, you know, and I think that that the important part of this is, and this is what I think that

but well, you know, and I think that that the important part of this is, and this is why I think that your channel is great. And why we need more of it is that, again, it sends that message to the creatives that hey, there are people out there that are going to engage with the content and get passionate about the content, enough to create a YouTube channel where you're spending time reviewing reviewing movies and reviewing TV shows, and it's going to spread the word about things like audio description.

**J** John Stark 36:42

Yeah, yeah, like I'm here. Somehow I got here, so yeah, I'm not even monetized. I'm not even at 1000. So yeah, hopefully, you got a lot of followers that can help.

**R** Rob Mineault 36:59

Oh, are you gonna see a spike in your analytics.

**J** John Stark 37:02

Subscribe to me, please. I have to say like I because I haven't been blind for as long as some other people. I've met people who have been blind longer than me and don't know audio description exists. And that concerns me. So if my voice can get out there to anyone, it might reach a blind person who isn't listening to or watching anything but your podcast, and suddenly they're like, audio description. What is that? And then they'll figure out and they'll ask their friends, how do they turn it on? And, and they'll just open up this whole new world for them.

**R** Rob Mineault 37:40

So yeah, it really does. You know, you brought up the point earlier with with movie theaters. And, you know, we hear stories all the time, up here in Canada anyways, that a lot of these theaters, you know, you'll go to the theater and the staff won't have been trained on the the audio descriptive headsets are anything or they're all broken, that's historically been a real problem.

**J** John Stark 38:07

It's theater to theater, it depends on where you go. And a lot of the people that I know that are cinephiles that really go on a regular basis that are also blind, find that it's helpful if you commit to it, and go regularly and make sure you introduce yourself so that that way your theatre knows that you're not like an anomaly and that you're not just like one blind person who stumbled in one day off the street. Like I will be coming here a lot, please make sure your equipment works, you know, that kind of thing. So that seems to work for them in certain places. And then in other places you were still getting you know, this film is advertised online as having audio description doesn't have to theater that happens sometimes the equipment doesn't quite work. There's some really interesting devices that are made for both hearing impaired people and visually impaired that you can actually wear and it will give you like an

audio booth for if you're hearing impaired. And then you can also control the the audio description volume at the same time. So you can sort of actually do two things, which I think I think those are really cool headsets. There's an entire theater, the prospect of theater that's a nonprofit that runs that is run by staff fully with people with disabilities and that every every movie they play has audio description. That's a 100% commitment, audio description. All their staff knows how to operate all the equipment and they always make sure it's working. Yeah, really great stuff. There's some stuff out there when people really want to do it. They really want to commit to it. You can, you can do it. It's possible.

S

Steve Barclay 40:12

Okay, I got one here for you. Because I went when I was reading up on you, I went in to see what you've reviewed. And so I was looking up some of my favorite movies, and I couldn't find a review for The Princess Bride. So I can't judge you on that. But, what I did find was I found a movie that I watched recently. And your review of that, which was Napoleon. So yeah, you gave it a B. And that kind of surprised me. Because I really thought the the acting fell flat on it. And that amazed me to say, given who the actors were.

J

John Stark 40:57

I thought it was I thought it was really sort of quirky and odd. And that's I think what I liked about it. A lot of people didn't like Joaquin Phoenix's performance because he felt out of place. And I get that, and Ridley Scott picked somebody who was an American actor, and put him in this film, and just let him just do his accent. But there are so many different accents in that film and all these people are supposed to be playing a Frenchman and no one really sounded French. They also like whatever country they came from. From Rupert Everret it was his strong British accent, Vanessa Kirby with her strong British accent you know, I mean, like, everybody had their own accent, but everybody just gave Joaquin crap. I'm like, no one sounds French in this film. Just like they did the same thing with the Ben Affleck, Matt Damon in The Last Duel. You know, those people with their accents. Everybody was all about the accents of the Ridley Scott movie. I'm like, well, if you take the accent out of the equation, I don't think he's doing a bad job. I just think he's a weird casting choice. But I thought he was I thought he did fine. He's a good actor. And I thought he really tried to give his best and Napoleon was just a bizarre casting choice to begin with. But I think he tried.

S

Steve Barclay 42:31

Yeah, you know, it's funny, because I never, you know, I never twigged on the accent thing as being what was bothering me about it until I read your review. It's like, yeah, you know, you're right. It never crossed my mind.

J

John Stark 42:47

It bothered a lot of people. That is what he sounds like.

S

Steve Barclay 42:56

Yeah, so I think I picked up something there that I didn't pick up on. And maybe that's really what was at the back of my head going, ah, this isn't very good.

J

John Stark 43:03

But the battle sequences in that ... I mean, Scott does that really well, he does great battle sequences, I thought the audio description was really good on it. And just, you did a really good job of the battle scenes and showing you where a cannonball could go. And yeah, I generally, I'm here because I like movies, so I try to walk in every movie with like, a favorable opinion of it going in, and then it'll work its way down. I don't like giving bad grades. I tend to skew mostly positive. I try to accentuate the positive. So if I don't like it, look, I really didn't like it. I mean, like, I it happens. I find movies that just like this is awful. God awful. But in general, I'm really trying to find the stuff that I enjoy that to that cinema magic. That that always gets me caught up, though. I found some of that Napoleon not a lot, but I mean enough to give it a B, which I would say is above average. I love Princess Bride, by the way. I would love to review that with the audio description.

S

Steve Barclay 44:26

Yeah, it'd be interesting to hear what the audio description was on that.

R

Rob Mineault 44:29

Yeah, no, I'm thinking about Scott. And I just feel like all he's really done in the past 10 years has given us movies that we didn't really ask for. Like prequels we each didn't need, like Prometheus. Answering questions that nobody was asking. And now Now they're doing Gladiator 2.

J

John Stark 44:56

Which has been kind of hit and miss. I did really like The Last Duel though, I did actually that was one of my favorite films of the year came out. I really got it. I was really into it. I thought she did a fantastic job in that film, and probably deserved a an Oscar. Her name escapes me now but from the girlfriend Killing Eve. Oh, yeah, she did an exceptional job in that. It was an interesting film. It's one of the better things he's done in the last 10 years. But yeah, the rest of the stuff, you're right. Gladiator 2. I don't know what he's doing. I don't understand why we're getting that.

S

Steve Barclay 45:48

I really hope that it turns out to be a great because I love the first Gladiator. That was that was really where I began to appreciate his ability to do the battle scenes because the battle scenes and in that are so intense. But I loved him before from from Blade Runner. You know, that was

the one of my one of my favorite films. And yeah, when Prometheus came out, ugh.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:12

Yeah

**J** John Stark 46:15

Some absolutely heavy hitters in his resume. And it's very sad to think about that he is going to die without ever having won an Oscar for direction for the films that he's directed. It's very sad that he has never managed to get that trophy.

**S** Steve Barclay 46:35

Oh, that's crazy.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:36

That is crazy. It's true. Okay, well, let me ask you this, then. What have you seen lately, that's kind of surprised you that was either a lot better than you were expecting or a lot worse?

**J** John Stark 46:49

A lot better or a lot worse. I would say, based on the fact that I don't typically like Ari Aster, I liked Beau Is Afraid a lot more than I thought I was going to interesting. I think he tends to just go for shock value in his horror movies. And Beau, kind of had him back off a little bit. And it was just a better concept. And it wasn't just a straight up horror movie. It was more of this weird, existential thing and I thought that embraced his talents a lot more. And he wasn't worried so much about showing you the most shocking thing he could show you in terms of gore. There were things in that film that are absolutely bizarre, but the whole film is this weird Odyssey through life that really surprised me. I just I've never really been an Ari Aster fan. Other things that I thought I might like and then ended up not liking I don't know I actually liked the Expendables films. So in The Expendables 4 wasn't good. I was actually one of the few people I kind of thought after everybody else. And I was like, I'm probably gonna like it, and I like the first three. I know these films are dumb, but I think they know they're dumb, but 4 was legitimately terrible. And then so was the Meg 2. I liked the first one, right? And then the second one was just like, what are we doing? Who did this? It was like Warner Brothers was like, well, we don't have Jurassic Park. Can we just make Jurassic Park into The Meg? No, you can.

**R** Rob Mineault 48:42

Yeah.



**J** John Stark 48:43

So yeah, the Meg 2 is just - and I'm down for dumb films. You know, Snakes on a Plane was a great theatrical experience. Back when I saw that with an audience, watching that film at that time, we knew exactly what we were getting ourselves into. And that was a fun experience.

**S** Steve Barclay 49:03

Really? Like Snakes on a Plane. They thought they were gonna get Snakes on a Plane.

**J** John Stark 49:08

No, but just from the, from the very beginning, when you watch that there's something that you watch it with a group of people, that group of people, if you get the right group of people, it's just like, a blast.

**S** Steve Barclay 49:26

I'm willing to give a lot more lately to movie that suspend your disbelief right at the beginning. Like if they, if they right at the beginning of the movie, do something audacious that's obviously impossible. It's like okay, this is a romp. I'm gonna settle in, and I'm going to enjoy the romp. But I hate when a movie goes, and it tries to be extremely serious and deep and scientific, and then at the end blows it out with something stupid, right? For me that that just wrecks the experience.

**L** Lis Malone 49:57

Well, if I can piggyback on question, John, what movies are you looking forward to that are on the horizon that are coming out?

**J** John Stark 50:05

I'm definitely more of a stay at home and watch films on streaming service, so I don't have to deal with the headphone nonsense. But I there are two films this year that I know absolutely for certain I really want to see in theaters. One of them is Deadpool and Wolverine. I just, I'm a huge X-Men fan. I love Deadpool. The first two movies were fire. I am. That's probably my most anticipated film of the year.

**L** Lis Malone 50:36

That's a summer release, right? That's coming out in June?

**J** John Stark 50:39

It's a summer release. Yeah, I think it's the only Marvel film this year. Actually, Inside Out 2 is the other film I'm really looking forward to. I'm hoping that Pixar actually does a good job with it and it becomes like a Toy Story 2, you know, or at least as Incredibles 2 because they've done a couple of sequels that have worked. Or even really worked like Toy Story 2, actually. And I think the the premise for Inside Out 2 allows itself to be good as they explore different emotions as Riley grows up. I think Inside Out 2 has a lot of potential. So I'm really excited for that as well. Those are the two films I'm probably most excited for this year.

**R** Rob Mineault 51:26

There's a new Mad Max movie, Furiosa, coming up. And I'm not sure if that's a summer release. Or if that's a next year release.

**J** John Stark 51:30

It is a summer release. It actually comes out in May. It's like a memorial day weekend. US holiday but I don't know what it is in Canada. But uh, yeah. end of May.

**R** Rob Mineault 51:47

Yeah, I'm excited about that. That'll be great. Hopefully. Yeah. George Miller.

**J** John Stark 51:54

Yeah, hopefully. Hopefully, it'll be great. I'm just not crazy about prequels.

**S** Steve Barclay 52:07

I know. Don't make Prometheus again.

**R** Rob Mineault 52:10

Yeah, exactly. Prequels very rarely turnout.

**R** Ryan Fleury 52:18

Why don't we talk about audio description and porn while we're here? Where the hell is it?

**S** Steve Barclay 52:44

I thought Pornhub was one of the largest producers of audio description?

R

Rob Mineault 52:50

I don't know if that was a limited run thing. Or if they're still doing. I don't know.

S

Steve Barclay 52:58

They're still doing it.

J

John Stark 53:03

Probably whatever titles they started with, and then depending on how, you know, if there's no metric to you know, I mean, if no one's using it, because they could see whether or not anybody's using it. And then why would they? Why would they create it? You know what I'm saying? So, and this is such a weird topic, but porn is very much subjective, in that people have different tastes. So unless you're gonna describe a lot of it across various genres, you won't really know if you have an audience for it. If you're just kind of taking very specific like, you know, like, these TED videos, audio description. People I'm, you know, if only a couple of people in the community are watching those, it's, it's gonna be a small audience.

R

Ryan Fleury 53:55

So yeah, catch 22. Catch 22 Right. You don't know if it is out there so nobody's talking about it. So we're, we're not an audience anyway, because we don't know about it. If they want us to know about it, they need to look at it.

J

John Stark 54:10

It's weird because it's like we do have the audio description project but I don't think we've ever like broach the subject of linking to the porn videos. We have all the other audio describes content.

R

Ryan Fleury 54:23

That's the problem. Nobody's talking about it.

J

John Stark 54:28

I mean, I I've heard about it. So like I know people are but I wouldn't know which titles are you know? Sure. I don't even know how to turn it on.

**R** Ryan Fleury 54:39

Turn it on.

**S** Steve Barclay 54:42

Usually, it's just the music that tells you to turn it on.

**L** Lis Malone 54:47

Listen, wait, we like how we get on to the porn topic. And suddenly everyone I don't know I don't know how to use audio description. I don't think that there's a switch for it anywhere.

**R** Ryan Fleury 55:06

Email Pornhub and get them on our show.

**S** Steve Barclay 55:10

So just found a catalogue by searching audio description on Pornhub.

**R** Ryan Fleury 55:15

Okay, there you go.

**L** Lis Malone 55:19

Yeah. Resident porn expert.

**R** Rob Mineault 55:23

Invite them to the show. Yeah, if if no one's talking about it, maybe that's that'll be a topic for a future future. And we'll have John back. John, we want to thank you so much for coming on and sticking around. We really appreciate it.

**J** John Stark 58:21

If I wasn't here I'd be on YouPorn looking for audio description. That's right.

**S** Steve Barclay 58:28



Steve Barclay 58:20

We'll give us a full report. You can come back on for the next episode.



Rob Mineault 58:32

That's right. Yeah. We'll make it a weekly bit. No, tell people in the audience where they can find you online and yeah, how can they can they can help the channel?



John Stark 58:47

You can find me at my YouTube channel - Max The Movie Guy is the handle so I guess it's [youtube.com/macthemovieguy](https://youtube.com/macthemovieguy). My website is [macthemovieguy.com](https://macthemovieguy.com). You can follow me on Twitter, Instagram, or threads at Mac The Movie Guy. Yeah. And that's that's it.



Rob Mineault 59:14

Awesome, all right, John. Thanks again. And we'll keep in touch.



John Stark 59:21

Thanks. Yeah. Thanks. And we'll talk to you guys later. Thanks, John. Great to meet you, John.



Rob Mineault 59:44

Well, listen, I think you know, I think that more channels like this that are out there. Only help the audio descriptive cause.



Steve Barclay 59:57

I think it's funny him talking about there's people out there who have been blind longer than him who are not aware of audio description. That surprised me. I thought most people in the community would be aware of that by now, but I guess I'm wrong.



Ryan Fleury 1:00:14

But it's only by word of mouth. Nobody talks about it.



Lis Malone 1:00:17

Through the services that you have access to.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:00:20  
Yeah, right. Right.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:00:21  
If you bring up Netflix, it doesn't say check out our audio description. Good luck here, right? No, it's true. You have no idea.

**S** Steve Barclay 1:00:29  
You have to go hunting for it. Yeah. needs to be more front and center.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:00:33  
Which is really dumb, right. Like, you know, Netflix, and you know, all the studios are doing the work and paying for these tracks to be to be built. But they're not pushing them in the marketing. It's all just in the background. So yeah, it is kind of weird. I don't know, I think I think again, I think the key is to get those creatives involved. And yeah, just start doing some some creative things with it.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:00:58  
Well, like when we had the Audio Description Project on the podcast a couple of months back, you know, it's kind of the only resource guide for you to find out what's on what platform that has audio description. And that's a shame. Yeah, it is.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:01:13  
Well, any thing else to say about that, or shall we get out of here?

**L** Lis Malone 1:01:19  
Let's get out of here.

**R** Ryan Fleury 1:01:21  
Wait, why? No. Breaking news from Steve. Dad joke of the week.

**R** Rob Mineault 1:01:26  
We demand it. Our audience demands it. Our ratings demanded. Yeah.

the demand for our audience demands for our ratings demands? Team.

- S** Steve Barclay 1:01:54  
Okay, I got it. I got it. I got Okay, here we go. So every morning every morning, before work, I announced loudly to my family that I'm gonna go jogging, but then I don't go. It's a running joke.
- L** Lis Malone 1:02:09  
Wow. I love it.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:13  
Feel those ratings going up?
- S** Steve Barclay 1:02:14  
Got another running theme. I recently ran an ultra marathon in northern Sweden. I realized that I had gotten way off course as soon as I crossed the Finnish line.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:31  
Nice. Okay, everybody, you got two for two.
- R** Ryan Fleury 1:02:35  
Well, we haven't had one for a couple of weeks.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:38  
And it was themed and everything. So that's pretty impressive. Nicely done. Pretty damn impressive. All right. Hey, Lis?
- L** Lis Malone 1:02:47  
Hey pickle toes.
- R** Rob Mineault 1:02:50  
Where can people find us?



Lis Malone 1:02:53

They can find us at [www.atbanter.com](http://www.atbanter.com).



Rob Mineault 1:02:56

Hey, you know what? They can also drop us an email if they so desire at [cowbell@atbanter.com](mailto:cowbell@atbanter.com).



Steve Barclay 1:03:06

Well, he's two for two. That's that was again a solid strike.



Rob Mineault 1:03:13

Well done. Wow. Yeah, he's been she's been practicing. spending the week down in the guitar dungeon.



Steve Barclay 1:03:22

Practicing his progressive maintenance.



Rob Mineault 1:03:27

Hey, where else can they find us?



Ryan Fleury 1:03:29

They can find us on Facebook and X and Instagram. And Mastodon.



Rob Mineault 1:03:41

All right, that is going to go do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course to John for joining us and we will see everybody next week.



Steve Barclay 1:03:51

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