AT Banter Podcast Episode 280 - Ardra Shepard & Fashion Dis

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SPEAKERS

Lis Malone, Steve Barclay, Ardra Shepard, Ryan Fleury, Rob Mineault

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L **Lis Malone** 01:20

Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

S **Steve Barclay** 01:26

Banter, banter.

R **Rob Mineault** 01:28

Shoot, hold on, wait. 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, the legendary Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R **Ryan Fleury** 01:53

Hello

S **Steve Barclay** 01:54

We're not worthy.

R **Rob Mineault** 01:58

And of course, Mr. Steve Barclay.

S Steve Barclay 02:01
Hello. Hello.

R Rob Mineault 02:02
I'm sorry, you didn't get an adjective. I'll make it up to you next week. I'll give you two.

S Steve Barclay 02:07
Oh, goody.

R Rob Mineault 02:09
And, of course, as per usual, Miss Lis Malone.

L Lis Malone 02:16
Hey, everybody.

S Steve Barclay 02:18
Also no adjective, now he's got to come up with four. That's gonna be a lot of work.

R Rob Mineault 02:23
I'll be ready next week. How are you guys?

S Steve Barclay 02:30
Fantastic

L Lis Malone 02:31
Wonderful.

R Ryan Fleury 02:33
Legendary.

R **Rob Mineault** 02:36

You copied that? Excellent. Well, listen, I am really excited about today's show. I know I said that every week, but truly, I even dressed up I wear socks for this episode. Because Ryan, what are we talking about? Who are we talking to today? We are speaking with Ardra Shepherd who is the host of the show 'Fashion Dis' on AMI.

A **Ardra Shepard** 03:04

Thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited to be here.

R **Rob Mineault** 03:09

Really?

A **Ardra Shepard** 03:13

I really am! i I looked up your podcast because I thought I better see who these guys are before I'm a guest on the show and I was maybe like eight or nine minutes in to some kind of banter podcast that I was relieved to discover was the wrong one. we are starting on a first date or something and I was just like, I'm not sure what AMI is set up for me here. I think I'm in the wrong room. So um, so yeah, then I found your actual podcast and I did listen to some so it was great. I'm excited but also relieved.

R **Rob Mineault** 04:00

We did run into that problem. I did notice when we after we named the show, we did realize that man, there's a lot of podcasts that have 'banter' in the title. This could be a problem for us. And clearly it has been. Well listen, why don't we start things off by giving us a little background on on yourself. And then also just like a little bit of a snapshot of the show 'Fashion Dis' and what it is and how it all works.

A **Ardra Shepard** 04:29

Sure. So my name is Ardra I have multiple sclerosis, which is a disease of the spinal cord and the optic nerve. And it's like, I don't know, I hate explaining this disease. I suck at it. I'm not a doctor, but it's like basically, whatever can go wrong. might go wrong. Whatever your central nervous system controls, which I feel like is basically everything. I have lived with MS for 20 years. but it's a progressive disease. So for many, many years, my illness was invisible, which I mean, is like a weird way to describe illness when symptoms, I guess, aren't apparent to the outside world, although they're very obvious to the people living with them. And then, um, I would say maybe six or seven years ago, my illness started to worsen to the point where I needed mobility aids. And the experience for me of becoming visibly disabled was very jarring, because people responded to me differently. And it was a bit of an identity crisis, even just looking for fashionable role models who were mobility aid users. And so I feel like this is a super long winded to, like, get to the point of, of sort of how the idea for Fashion Dis, the show came to be, but it was really born in this early struggle that I had to see myself represented in the fashion and beauty world. And, you know, like, I gave myself a glow up. In the beginning, I hired a photographer and the stylist and a makeup artist, and I thought, if I'm not seeing these images of people, with mobility aids out there, I'm going to create some and, and I did that, and it was a really rewarding experience. I wrote an article for xoJane magazine back in the day. And I brought in a couple of girlfriends of mine who also had a mass and, and made them part of the experience, like made them over and included them in the photoshoot. And it had such a profound impact on all three of us. I was like, how, how can how can we give this to everyone with a disability? So that's kind of the long the long answer to your question.

R Rob Mineault 07:07

And so what exactly is the show? Like how what, what kind of genre would you kind of describe it as?

A Ardra Shepard 07:14

Yeah, so it's unscripted. The show is it's basically a makeover show. So we take participants who have a disability, and we give them a makeover. And then we do a photo shoot, like a high fashion photoshoot at the end, which is a really important element for us. Because you know, there's there aren't high fashion images, really, of people with disabilities that exist. So for us, it was about having this experience on television, but then also adding to the small but hopefully growing canon of high fashion images that do include people with disabilities.

R Rob Mineault 07:59

Now did you pitch the show to AMI, or did they did they come to you? Like how did that all work?

A Ardra Shepard 08:06

I pitched the show to AMI. Andrew Morris of AMI had become aware of me actually, because of that xoJane article. And I think this was like 2018, I want to say so in a very short amount of time, things have changed quite dramatically on social media, especially it is really a place where there is a lot of positive disability representation, that we don't necessarily seen mainstream media, but in social media, that movement has has grown so much, I would say especially in the last two years. But in 2017, I couldn't find any images. This was like pre Selma Blair at the Oscars party with her cane when she revealed her own MS. Like, literally, I was Googling like, cane style and pimp my walker and celebs with disabilities. And it was like coming up crickets. And so things have changed a lot since then. But when Andrew first approached me, it's because he had seen something that I had written and was interested in my point of view and said, like, hey, is there do you want to make a TV show? And I was like, No, I hadn't thought of it. It hadn't really occurred to me. And but I guess, you know, we had some meetings and some discussions and I thought, You know what, like this, this can be a good idea. There are a million makeover shows, and like this has never actually been done. And I feel like people with disabilities are actively excluded from this from this genre, and I think it's there was, there's place for it, and I think there's a market for it and the show has has done really well or it's doing really well.

Rob Mineault 10:01

I saw an interview with you that where you said something really interesting to me. And it sort of spoke to me because I feel the same way. You said that the best way to change hearts and minds is through storytelling. In the life of this podcast, and when we first started the podcast, the plan was, we were just going to make an assistive technology shows all going to be about technology and assistive technology, because that's where our sort of all our expertise was. And what we quickly found is that it was so much more rewarding for us and for the audience, when we started talking to members of the community and hearing people's stories, and, and having them share their stories. And really, that's, that's how this show has evolved. So that really stood out to me. Given that, and that you feel that way was the makeover part of of the show was that kind of always the plan? Because that really does, it really drives home, this idea of you're taking this person on this personal journey over the course of whatever a day, however, it however long it takes to film an episode. And you you get to see that person and in your transition and really react in the in this really personal way was that COVID kind of always the plan

Ardra Shepard 11:23

100% I think that, you know, we know the difference between right and wrong. Like I think we know, on some level what we're supposed to do, but we don't do it. And we suck as a society about accessibility, and about just making the world a better place for people with disabilities. And I think that the way to change that isn't by just like yelling and preaching that we have to do this, because it's the right thing, we have to make people care. And we have to make people care about people with disabilities. And maybe if you don't know, a lot of people, you probably know more people with disabilities than you think you do. Because I think our understanding of the word is a bit warped. But if you don't know a lot of people with a lot of different different disabilities, you might not be totally aware of what those barriers are. And I think media and storytelling and television and film are so powerful in the way that they let us feel like we know someone and then we care about them. And that's how things change. And I think we've seen this so powerfully with other marginalized communities that the disability community needs to tap into that a little bit. A lot bit.

Rob Mineault 12:53

How do you find the participants? Do they reach out to you? Did you put out a call?

Ardra Shepard 12:59

Yeah, I think so. We did a casting call. And, you know, we of course, we've seen disability stories in media before and this show for us was as much about what we didn't do as what we stories in media before and this show for us was as much about what we didn't do as what we did do. So it's a makeover show. But the show is not about fixing people at all. We set out a casting call to invite participants to apply and to tell us what their style challenges are as they relate to having a disability. So we already understand that there's a representation piece that's missing, but what are your particular style obstacles that that we can address. So for seated body types, there are considerations with fit and with seams. For people with dexterity issues, there can be issues with buttons and zippers, footwear is a nightmare for for somebody who wears a prosthesis or any any number of things that are not marketed to or addressed in in a mainstream way. And so that's part of the this the fashion story, part of it is is addressing those needs, but, you know, we weren't looking to use our participants stories to talk about their conditions, their illnesses or their disabilities. These are just, you know, I love quoting our producer Kara who always says, you know, if, if I'm overweight, then that's a barrier for me to sometimes find the clothes that I want to wear. You don't have to know why or how I gained the weight to know that I have a barrier to finding the clothes I want to wear. And it was the same for our disability participants. it's nobody's business, why somebody uses a wheelchair, or anything. So we, you know, there's no B roll sad violin music of somebody's backstory to make you feel sorry for our participants, it's really about celebrating who they are in this moment, and watching them discover products that are tailored and designed for them. And then seeing them celebrated in these high fashion images in the reveal?

R

Ryan Fleury 15:31

Well, you guys did a really good job of that as well, because, you know, I've watched all the episodes, and whether it's a pair of shoes that nobody thought was possible that they'd be able to wear find, or, you know, like you talked about, you know, shirts and pants, you know, shirts with magnets instead of buttons. You know, people talk about their experience shopping for clothing that is going to fit them, or their style or having to shop in, in the children's section at the stores. You know, it's, it's frustrating to hear these stories, but you guys don't dwell on the disability. You guys are looking at the champion of what's happening in the industry. You know, your clothing designer, I guess I'll call her Izzy talks about just doing a Google search. And year after year, there's more and more companies that are actually paying attention to adopt a fashion. So you guys did a really good job on not focusing on the disability, and focusing on the confidence boost that being able to find adoptive fashion is making in people's lives.

A

Ardra Shepard 16:39

Yeah, thank you. And it was, it was never about hiding disability or, or downplaying it. I mean, we definitely wanted ever everyone's individuality to come through in their photos, and to see the experience as positive and empowering. And also just to see that, you know, I think with as somebody with a disability, it's like, we are often expected to settle for scraps. And so it's really nice to become more aware of, of the nice things that are catered just to this community.

L

Lis Malone 17:19

Can you speak a little bit to your personal love for fashion and how you were inspired to take on a project like this?

A

Ardra Shepard 17:28

Yeah, I mean, I've always loved dressing up and fashion. I think anybody who wears eyeglasses knows that there are 1000s of choices, because the things that we attach to our bodies give us an opportunity to express our identities and to express who we are. And so I've always had fun with clothing and fashion. And just to circle back to the eyeglasses, you know, eyeglasses are a tool that help somebody see just the way rollator or walker is helps me walk. And we don't stigmatize that tool in the same way that we do mobility aids, and so I'd really love to see a shift happening there. And I'm working hard to try and make that happen. But I think that for many people with visible disabilities, it can be it's a point of frustration for me personally, when somebody doesn't, somebody I don't know, asks me what's wrong? Or what happened? Or can I pray for you and it happens a lot. And so I feel like my my instinct to dress with confidence. And even to be a bit extra is sort of it's it's even stronger, because, you know, if my disability is the first thing that speaks for me, I feel like it doesn't always have something good to say. And if I can use fashion to present an image to the world that says like, don't don't feel sorry for me, like I'm, I'm good. That's that's a little bit of armor for me, if that makes sense.

L

Lis Malone 19:20

And I think it's interesting to see how, how the fashion industry is really taking on that challenge because as as you know, you brought up the example of the eyeglasses and how there are 1000s of choices out there, but you know, it it's taken even a long time to get eyeglasses that fit different shapes of faces, like I have a very low bridge, a tiny little nose and so my glasses have to hang on for dear life I get around my ears. And it took me years until glasses maker start to say Wow, there are people who really have small bridges, and maybe we need to accommodate for different facial profiles. And as you know, as, as well as most women, especially that, gosh, like mean, you couldn't find like plus sizes in a lot of fashions or they thought like that, oh, if you make it for, you know, a small, a smaller frame, we just have to make it shorter. It's like, no, the proportions are all different. And for larger women's like, No, we don't need to just drape things on us. No, we want to have things that actually fit our bodies. So in that respect, there's been so much progress has been made. And now it is so promising to see that designers are making that effort to now look at the next generation of well, we need we need things to fit all types of body types, body abilities, different accommodations different, you know, as you said, adaptive equipment that we use. And it's I think it's it's it's amazing that your show is really honing in on that in such a such a very positive way and bringing more attention to such an important issue.

A

Ardra Shepard 21:11

I think the idea that there's only one narrow way to be beautiful is so antiquated. And and it's it's becoming less, less popular. I mean, I think that, you know, social media can be a garbage fire of a place, of course.

L

Lis Malone 21:30

But that's putting it nicely. I mean,

A **Ardra Shepard** 21:33

yeah. But it also has democratized who gets to say, you know, and so I think more and more the gatekeepers of who gets to say what's cool, are are changing. And so I'm not, that's exciting. I'm, I'm excited to be a part of seeing the culture shift in a way that is welcoming to everyone.

R **Rob Mineault** 22:00

I want to circle back and talk a little bit about something that you briefly mentioned before, because one of the things that really stood out to me when I was watching that differentiated it from other makeover shows is how much you involve the participant in the development of their own look. I've never seen a makeover show where they sit them down and be like, okay, look, what do you what do you want? Like, what's the, what's this interview that you want to bring out? How important is that to the process? And sort of how did that come about? Why did you think it was important to sort of go that route?

A **Ardra Shepard** 22:41

It's so important. And again, the show is was never meant to be about fixing anyone, really is a celebration of what is different? What is unique about you, and so it couldn't be prescriptive. It couldn't be us telling the participants, here's how to be beautiful. It's us saying, what do you need? And let us help you find it.

R **Rob Mineault** 23:09

Yeah, and I love that I really do. And I also think that that I think that helps in in a variety of ways. Not like a lot of these makeover shows you a watch. And they'll make over some guy, and he looks great at the end of the episode, but you just know that a week later, he's he's back in cargo shorts and flip flops, and you know, a ripped t shirt. None of this is really taken hold because it's not who he he is. He doesn't feel that ownership to this new look. And I feel like that's part of this too is that you're, you're sort of building something that can be sustainable for the participants.

A **Ardra Shepard** 23:50

I think what was the most important for me, because as much as I do love to get dressed up, I do live in my truck pants like 88% of the time. And so what I really wanted was for each of our participants to have those photos as a reference point and to also be able to share those photos so that the people that look like them can see examples of themselves and can say, Wow, she looks like a baby. I must be a baby too.

R **Rob Mineault** 24:23

How hard is it for you guys to find some of this adaptive clothing?

A **Ardra Shepard** 24:30

I think the industry is growing all the time. And everyone we approached was super excited to be on board and to participate so not not that hard, I guess is like the surprising answer. Maybe I know you guys are going to talk to Izzy Camaleri, she's been designing adaptive clothing 10 years and I'm not sure but she's kind of The OG for sure, in this in this world, and it's just now in the last couple of years starting to take off more and more. But, you know, we had clothing and shoe brands and mobility aids and beauty tools and makeup and the products are there and, and everyone jumped in really quickly wanted to be involved in this project.

R **Rob Mineault** 25:25

What I love about it is that it just goes to really show you that almost anything can be adapted, you know, with a little bit of ingenuity. Just every we can, we can be making so many things accessible. Like just from the get go from the foundation up, that is going to appeal to everyone. Great example, I watched the episode with the fella in a chair. And we're talking about a dress shirt that had magnets for buttons, even though they you know, on the outside, it looked like they're their regular buttons, but they're actually magnets so that it makes it easier to take off and put on I thought, you know what, that's just how shirts should work. Like just all shirts, like, why not? If it looks like you're all buttoned up, who cares?

A **Ardra Shepard** 26:22

Think of all the time we would save.

R **Rob Mineault** 26:25

it's just ridiculous that it's not like that.

A **Ardra Shepard** 26:29

Sometimes, like, it does seem like things are just designed to be shittier like to be more to be right, like, yeah.

R **Rob Mineault** 26:41

And same with like, you know, stuff that I didn't even think about, like things like makeup, makeup tools and stuff. I call them tools, I'm sure they're not called tools. But but you know what I mean? Like adaptive makeup, there's so many things out there that could really you know, make a huge difference. It's just you just need to find the right manufacturer that's going to be willing to take the chance and and to start putting some of this stuff out.

A **Ardra Shepard** 27:08

Yeah, and just the creative brains behind them. And it's just even that point. With the the makeup brush that Bella makes in one of the episodes where the handle isn't round, it's got an edge. So when you drop it, it doesn't roll under the toilet and you find it six years later, I feel like that's like, relative in for everyone.

L **Lis Malone** 27:34

So that's where my makeup brushes are. Mystery solved.

R **Ryan Fleury** 27:40

I think ultimately, it's all about convenience. And, you know, are we starting to see any of these, whether it be makeup accessories, or clothing show up in any mainstream retail outlets?

A **Ardra Shepard** 27:55

I mean, I haven't been to a mall in a very long time. I wouldn't, I will give props to Fashion magazine, which is Canada's preeminent glossy fashion magazine. They do a fantastic job of incorporating all kinds of diversity in every issue. And they've there's something relevant to disability in every issue. And they're not. You know, it's not like this special once a year disability issue. It's just part of their MO now. And so yeah, and I mean, that's a super mainstream magazine. So I love to see that. Yeah, I think I mean, it's happening. I think the culture is changing bit by bit. But yeah, I can't really speak to that.

R **Ryan Fleury** 28:44

So we can't walk into sport check, though yet. Find a pair of shoes with zippers or Walmart and find a men's dress shirt with magnets.

A **Ardra Shepard** 28:51

I mean, one of the things that was surprising for me was how little our participants knew of a lot of these brands that are out there doing this work and the technology that does exist. So you know, a lot of these companies are small startups. And so to get like, that marketing that is targeted a niche is I can't speak to how how they're doing that, but it was surprising to me to know that you even somebody who has lived with disability, their whole lives are not as aware of these brands. So it was exciting for us to be able to share that information for sure. But it does need to be you know, I shared the show with my physiatrist and everyone thinks I'm mispronouncing psychiatrist. So she deals with spinal cord injuries and I describe her as if my neurologist treats my disease, my physiatrist helps me figure out how to live with it. So she works with people who have spinal cord injuries. And, you know, she can prescribe medications and different tools and things, but I think it would be great for her to know about some of these company. I definitely sent her the show. So she, she's on it, but you know, it's like, does it come from the clinic? Does it come from even the physician to be advising people of what is available, because, you know, these lifestyle interventions are not any fashion. We think it sounds like a nice to have, or like, superficial or whatever, but it's not. These are our identities. And I think people who are disabled, sometimes society can make it feel like disability is the only identity that we're entitled to. And that's bullshit. And so I think, like, fashion, and beauty and feeling seen, and being able to express yourself these things, and also to be comfortable and safe in your clothing, are really important parts of human experience and quality of life issues.

R Rob Mineault 31:07

Yeah, and I would say that, you know, this is, again, this is this is a really important component of the show. And the work that you guys doing is, is that education piece, we find that all the time with assistive technology, which is, which is where, you know, most of us are familiar with. A lot of times people don't even know that there are solutions out there for a particular problem that they're having. Because they've spent all their life not even realize it like just being told that there's no solution for their particular problem. And when you're told that all the time, you just stop looking. And so you don't you're completely gobsmacked when somebody presents you with Oh, yeah, there's hillock whether there are such a thing as magnetic buttons. And it can be something so simple that can make such a large impact in somebody's day to day life.

A Ardra Shepard 31:59

It blows my mind how many things I've had to hack, and figure out on my own, I have a pretty healthy social media presence, and I share these hacks all the time and it and then I get the same response from people, things that they didn't know, existed. And yeah, it's really gross. And I don't know, if it's that, you know, the health care system is under resource. Do you have 15 minutes with your specialist? And they can't possibly go through all of these things. But yeah, it's really unfortunate when, when you find there are these things that can be really helpful, but we just need to know about them. I don't know what the answer to that is?

R Ryan Fleury 32:40

Well, I think most people look at the condition, right, not the identity, and how to either work with the condition. Identities not even mentioned, I'm assuming, I don't know that for a fact. But nobody's talking about, you know, changing your hair color, adaptive fashion, they're talking about, you need this type a wheelchair in this type of cushion. And you know, ABC, you're gonna need a ramp here, and so on and so forth. Nobody's looking at or talking to the person,

A Ardra Shepard 33:09

I would say that those conversations aren't even as thorough as they could be. So when I first needed a walker, I had to figure that out on my own. And I remember going to the medical supply store, and then finding like just this awful looking device, but it converted to a transport chair. And there were two there was one that was horrible and ugly, and one that was cool, and stylish, like it looked, it looked good. But I didn't buy it the first time I was there because the salesperson didn't know how to work. It didn't know how to set it up properly. And so when I tried it, I was like, if I put any bit of weight on it, it was tipping over. I was like, this is a piece of crap. Yeah. And so I left with the other device. But it wouldn't fit in the trunk of the car. It was like a whole, it was a nightmare. I took it back. And then I did more research, more research and and then I discovered through watching videos of the company online that the salesperson didn't know how to set up device properly. I went back, you know, another 45 minute drive to get it and eventually I got it. But just like the lack, that seems like a basic thing that you would have a lot of guidance and help with, you know, that. Yeah, and I mean, I think I'm a pretty resourceful person, but I think yeah, there's there's some problems in the system for sure.

R **Rob Mineault** 34:55

Yeah. Well, you know what I really do think at the end of the day, it's not the system that's going to really get us out o f this. It's it is things like social media, I think it's it's people sharing their own lived experiences and sharing stories and shows like yours. That's, that's, that's how you get the information out there and disseminated because, you know, the, the healthcare professionals or, you know, anybody else, you know, in the government or in any of the agencies, you know, they're, they're useful to a point. But then a lot of times you're, you're on your own. So it's really just, it's, it's more of a social solution, I think.

A **Ardra Shepard** 35:35

Yeah. And I love that. It doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to, like storytelling. Storytelling means it doesn't have to feel educational, you know, like our show is fun to watch. And you will learn some cool and interesting things that are helpful, whether you have disability or not. But at the end of the day, I think it's still the most effective messages will come across if it's entertaining and fun to watch. So we really tried to make that a priority also.

R **Rob Mineault** 36:08

It is fun to watch. And it is really like impactful. watching, watching the participants. You know, it's hard to not get choked up.

A **Ardra Shepard** 36:20

Yes, I know. Even I lived it. I watched I watched it before it aired. And I still was like, try to be tough watching. I mean, I think for me, the last episode with Ty was the one that really got to me. I mean, here's this kid who's 17 who is growing up in a different world than than I grew up in one that is arguably slightly less ablest. I mean, the word ableism. I don't think it existed when I was 17. No one, you know, and this kid has never question who he is, or his right to be center stage. He's he's one of the cool kids. And I just I loved that about Ty is a great episode.

R **Ryan Fleury** 37:09

So have you guys or do you do follow ups with the people who attend the show are a part of

So have you guys or do you do follow ups with the people who attend the show are a part of the show?

Ardra Shepard 37:18

Like formally?

Ryan Fleury 37:20

Yeah, like see how they're doing? Are they having any issues finding, you know, resources, accessories, adaptive tools, how they have them, have them back for follow ups.

Ardra Shepard 37:31

I mean, I think we're all sort of in touch on on social media. And seeing Melissa is pregnant, she's expected, which is very exciting. So yeah, we're all in touch that way. And it's fine to see them share their photos now that the show is out, and to see the reaction from their own communities. It's exactly what we want it to happen.

Rob Mineault 37:56

So how long did it take to sort of film that whole first season?

Ardra Shepard 38:01

Oh, gosh, I think I think we did it in about five or six weeks. Which is me, I think probably a little bit. I mean, listen, TV is very new to this world still. But we worked on a schedule that was COVID safe, and that was accommodating for people with disabilities, which I very much appreciated and needed, you know, because those 12, 14, 16 hour days that you hear about in television are not healthy, really for anyone. So but yeah, I think once we get started, things happen pretty quickly.

Rob Mineault 38:44

And are you guys working on Season Two?

Ardra Shepard 38:47

Oh my gosh, I don't know what's going to happen with Season Two. But I hope that somebody wants to pay for it and make it. I mean, they think you know, there's a lot of pressure with six episodes, to tell as many stories as possible. And to wrap as much diversity as possible. There's a million ways to be disabled, there are a million ways to be human. And so, you know, it's frustrating for anyone who's part of a marginalized community when there are so few examples. There. There's more pressure to to make sure that everyone gets seen and so there are a lot more stories that we need to tell and I really hope we get another season two do that. Well, I

R **Ryan Fleury** 39:31

think what we need to do is rally our audience we've had David Arrington on the show President CEO of AMI, everybody send him an email say we want to see Season Two of Fashion Dis.

A **Ardra Shepard** 39:41

Yeah, no, I support that.

L **Lis Malone** 39:47

We do have we have one small request that Ryan, we think Ryan would look just stop In a pair of chaps,

A **Ardra Shepard** 40:02

I mean, I feel like talk to Izzy, I feel she makes dream come true.

R **Ryan Fleury** 40:09

We'll be talking to her in May. And I'm sure, I'm sure that will come up.

R **Rob Mineault** 40:15

If Liz is on the show, it's gonna come up,

R **Ryan Fleury** 40:18

we're not having Lis back.

L **Lis Malone** 40:22

I'm getting dumped. You heard it here first folks. I know, I, I think that the idea is just so amazing. And so our job would you have a chance, check your email, and I actually sent you a photo because I did something similar to what you did a few years ago, I had a photographer, professional photographer, take some photos of me with my cane. So that I could, you know, use it to promote some of my podcast work also. But it was really important that I had photos where I felt like me feminine in my way, the way I want to feel. And still, you know, have my mobility device as, as an extension of me. And so, yeah, so I mean, I It's, there's a lot of relatability that I have with, with what you're doing with the show,

A Ardra Shepard 41:15

I love that you did that. And thank you for sending me the photo, I can't wait to look at it, I I didn't wake up like this, you know, I was kicking my cane out of photos, like hiding it behind walls, and just be like, be holding on to friends arms or, or whatever. Because I bought into the eye. And not only that, you know, it took me I waited too long to even start using mobility aids, I waited until I fell and broke my elbow. Because there's not a lot of support always from the people around you who who want you to fight who want you to not give in. And so the the internalized ableism that comes from feeling like these tools diminish us is strong and real oh my god query real, won't be seen in a wheelchair. Because she feels like she would be diminished by it. And so, you know, there came a point when I was like, no, like, this isn't who I am. And I'm not going to let the world tell me who I am. I'm going to tell the world who I am. And I'm going to embrace these things. I'm going to own them, I'm going to find the best looking ones that I can. And thank God for me that now especially with walkers, stylish ones do exist. But you know, they need to exist at a different price points to they're not being designed and made in North America. These are European designs. And that's a whole nother story. But I mean, like our government funding won't find anything but the like the bare minimum. And so even if the device I use is safer, easier to use, it's lightweight, it's carbon fiber, nobody's gonna get funding for it because they can get something cheaper from the government. And so and there's no innovation, there's no there's there's not the impetus to design, better looking devices for for mobility, eight users. Now I'm on a rant, it's so hard to walk the line of like, focusing on all the awesome positive ways that are changing with like the frustration of the things that we still have to bump up against.

R Rob Mineault 43:37

100% Trust us, we go on many rants. We're used to it. And it is hard. It's really, you know, it does feel in ways. You know, one one step forward, two steps back.

A Ardra Shepard 43:51

Yeah. Yep.

R Rob Mineault 43:54

You know, we saw one problem, and then two more, two more pop up.

L Lis Malone 43:58

So even though we're making progress, we're still not where we need to be. So we still need to keep that fire in our bellies going. Yeah.

Ardra Shepard 44:07

I think I think we will, though, I think this idea of you, I think it really starts with having a pride of community. And that is something that has been able to increase exponentially through social media also, there's strength in numbers and it's easier to advocate for yourself when there's community and and you're advocating for each other. And I think like, you know, if I am slamming myself for, for using a cane or a wheelchair Walker, like I would never, I would never say that about somebody else. But if I'm saying it about myself, then I am saying it about somebody else. But the opposite is true, too. If I can say like, look, this can look cool. I'm not just saying it about me. I'm saying it about everyone.

Rob Mineault 44:58

I mean and sometimes making progress, you know, that uncovers more problems, but really, I mean, what else can we do? We just got to keep plugging along. And, and solving things as we go.

Ardra Shepard 45:11

Yep, yep. Yeah. I mean, the nice thing is that, I think, hopefully we're starting to see more rewards.

Rob Mineault 45:22

Yeah. And I really do think we have, I mean, we've been doing this show six years. And I can tell you that even in the lifetime of this podcast, things are very different now than they were before. And for the better in a lot of ways, and it gets better every year even Heck, even even the since the advent of of COVID. I would say that inclusion and and diversity in the workforce, it's all getting better. It's all improving, the more corporations are, are taking it seriously. And, you know, I think that we just got to hang in there and keep pushing and keep pushing for solutions and keep telling stories. Ardra, we would like to thank you so much for stopping by and chatting. Fashion Dis, it's an amazing show. You guys are doing amazing work. And thank you for all the hard work that you've put into it. And best of luck with with Season Two. I really really really hope that it happens.

Ardra Shepard 46:32

Oh, thank you so much for having me and thank you for your enthusiasm about the show the response from the community has been just really heartening. It's really exciting work and yeah, it's it's just a warm and fuzzy thing so thank you very much.

Rob Mineault 46:50

No problem if there is a Season Two you have to promise to come back

No problem if there is a Season Two you have to promise to come back

Ardra Shepard 46:54

1,000,000% Yes.

Ryan Fleury 46:56

Okay. If possible. Will you share your social media with us? Where can people find you?

Ardra Shepard 47:01

Sure I'm on Instagram at MS_trippingonair. I also write a lippy blog called Tripping on Air that's www.trippingonair.com Way more swearing than what I like restrain myself for for this podcast.

Ryan Fleury 47:19

I got to start sending out invites saying you do not need to restrain yourself.

Rob Mineault 47:23

That's true. Yeah. And, and of course, if people are interested in in seeing episodes of Fashion Dis it's available on AMI they can just look up fashion dis on the website? And I think they can stream it? Right?

Ardra Shepard 47:40

Yes, you can stream it now. It's going to be on TV again in I can't I think in May but I'm not sure of the date and time. But anyway, if you go to www.ami.ca And you can find this you can find it and watch it.

Rob Mineault 47:58

Highly recommended. Thank you again so much. And we will see you soon for season two announcement.

Ardra Shepard 48:06

Thank you so much. Great show, guys. Yeah, I will keep listening. Yeah, thank you so much was really a pleasure.

R Rob Mineault 48:16

Thank you. Thank you. We got another listener Whoo.

R Ryan Fleury 48:24

She gets to Episode 3.

R Rob Mineault 48:28

We should have asked her which episode that was. I wonder if she listened to the Shocker episode.

L Lis Malone 48:32

Are you gonna start quizzing our guests?

R Rob Mineault 48:34

Maybe when they say that? Maybe I should? Because I would like to know I'm curious to know that what episode they listened to and then still came on the show.

R Ryan Fleury 48:43

When I do think I need to send the invite out saying you know do you do not have to be filtered. You don't have to filter yourself on our show. We can do any editing that it's necessary that come on and be yourself. Buck Yeah, sounds absolutely. Show us your true identity.

L Lis Malone 49:02

As we were saying "There once was a man from Nantucket".

R Rob Mineault 49:10

I mean, we did start the show by Ryan wishing that he could just walk around like a goose and poop while wearing chaps.

R Ryan Fleury 49:20

If you're like a sketchy bus station or an airport, bathroom, you just walk around just let it go and just keep going like in a bus station.

R **Rob Mineault** 49:32

What kind of society would you want to live in like where you just you have to watch where you're walking? You're gonna carry on poop bags for yourself?

R **Ryan Fleury** 49:44

No, I'm a goose. I'm just gonna let it drop.

L **Lis Malone** 49:48

Let me just say I spent many years living in New York City. I've seen many a pooping and they were not. They were not geese.

R **Rob Mineault** 50:03

Okay, anyways, yeah, it's, uh, you know, I, I'm a big fan of Fashion Dis, I love the show, I'm gonna watch the rest of the episodes, I've watched three now. Yeah, I really highly recommend it, you certainly don't have to have a huge interest in fashion to enjoy it. You know, again, it's all about, it's all about the storytelling. And, you know, it's really funny that she talked about the fact that they don't dwell on the disability at all. Like, they don't even really tell the quote story of the participants at all. And it's, it was really refreshing, because I just felt every, as I was watching an episode, I was just like, man, if this was on, like, a mainstream TV network, there would totally be that there would be like, 20 minutes of the person's story with the violins. Yeah, like, you know, B roll footage of them at home and stuff like that. They don't, none of that shit in this thing. It's just like, here you are, boom, here's the situation, here's what you want to do. Here's some of the challenges that we that we have to find something, something that's going to work for your particular body type or your situation. And boom, they do it. It's a 25 minute episode. It is so refreshing when you you are watching something that is sort of made by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. It's a much different experience than when you're watching something mainstream. Yeah, yeah. Sure, leave me hanging. You left me hanging last week. Are you just doing it out of spite Yeah, I really hope they're Season Two. i It's a shame that they don't just greenlight these things.

R **Ryan Fleury** 52:04

I mean, I think it comes down to funding like she said, but I really think our audience if they enjoyed the show, have seen the show or gonna check out the show, send an email to AMI and let them know you want to see more.

R **Rob Mineault** 52:14

And what else you watching go watch it right now? That's right. Don't waste your time on Netflix. Or the Oscars.

Ryan Fleury 52:26

All that don't get me started on the Oscars.

Rob Mineault 52:28

Oh, what's going on with the Oscars and Ryan? What's the matter?

Ryan Fleury 52:31

I'm a little pissed off that one of my idols Will Smith smacked Chris Rock on stage.

Steve Barclay 52:38

Yeah, that was a little surprising, though.

Lis Malone 52:40

I was waiting for the bubble POW.

Ryan Fleury 52:45

Yeah. A little miffed at Mr. Smith for doing that and his lack of apology.

Steve Barclay 52:53

He apologized to Chris Rock today.

Ryan Fleury 52:55

Oh, did he? I didn't see it on Twitter.

Rob Mineault 52:57

I don't see it.

Ryan Fleury 52:58

I didn't see that. Yeah, I know. The LA police asked Chris Rock if they want if you want to file

I didn't see that. Yeah, I know. The LA police asked Chris Rock if they want if you want to file charges. He said no. And I heard wills apology to the academy and everyone else but yeah, I didn't hear him apologize to Chris. Good on him for doing so. Yeah, well, a little late now. It is. Yeah.

Rob Mineault 53:14

But how would you apologize to him when they'd like half a million or however many millions of people were watching?

Ryan Fleury 53:20

Well, Linda was saying that he looked like a crazy man. Like, there must have been something going on with him because he just didn't look right last night, I'm told.

Rob Mineault 53:29

Wow. I don't know. I mean, listen, they take themselves way too seriously. That's part of the problem. The whole Oscar thing is getting them taking themselves way too seriously.

Ryan Fleury 53:40

Well, I guess you're really offended Jada.

Rob Mineault 53:41

Right, so that's what comedians do.

Ryan Fleury 53:48

Yeah, but is that right?

Rob Mineault 53:50

Yes.

Lis Malone 53:51

Well, I mean, I don't think it warrants getting physical with them.

Ryan Fleury 53:56

Ryan Fleury

No, no, I didn't learn that for sure. I didn't like to have

Rob Mineault 54:00

It wasn't even a good joke.

Steve Barclay 54:04

Are we are we really supposed to give him a pass because his wife has, what does it alopecia alopecia. Okay. So so we're, he's making fun of something that is about her that she doesn't particularly like or which is unusual. Think about the number of jokes that there have been about say, Stevie Wonder Ray Charles. Yeah, they're joking about their disability. Yep.

Rob Mineault 54:30

Thank you.

Steve Barclay 54:30

And that's okay.

Ryan Fleury 54:32

Well, that's what I'm saying what Chris Rock did wasn't right. Well, you know, it isn't right. Okay. He makes a living out of that. We talked about ableism and attitudes. And the next minute we're saying it's okay. No, it can't You can't have it both ways.

Lis Malone 54:46

Oh, is it okay that everybody whoever gets offended by a joke that our reaction is just take a swing at them?

Ryan Fleury 54:52

Yeah, no, I don't agree with that either.

Lis Malone 54:54

That's I mean, I yeah, I think that it that's really what was so shocking. about I mean that's handled for sure. I don't know. California law. But I mean, they without Chris Rock pressing charges or not in some states, you could have a DA that says Listen, we witness everybody in the world saw the assault. You're getting arrested. Yeah, you don't need to you know, because there are women who are beaten by their husbands and then they say, Oh, I don't want to press charges and the DA will say don't worry, we'll do it for you right yeah. So he's so honestly he's very lucky.

R Ryan Fleury 55:36

Oh, for sure.

R Rob Mineault 55:38

I hope so. I was jerky thing to do

R Ryan Fleury 55:41

Absolutely

R Rob Mineault 55:43

And really like it just you know, comedians are there to push buttons and yeah, maybe it wasn't it was it maybe it was a lighter, edgy or whatever. Like but you know what, that's what comedians do they're edgy. Like honestly like if you want to if you want your little award ceremony to be taken super seriously don't they don't invite Chris Rock to come and do like a little set and and present an award. Get somebody safe that

R Ryan Fleury 56:07

I think the bigger story maybe the unfortunate story is you know, we had disability representation win an Oscar and it was overshadowed by will completely

R Rob Mineault 56:17

1,000% You're right, right. Yeah, that's the real piss off too. Right. Coda won Best Picture and nobody's talking about it.

R Ryan Fleury 56:25

Screenplay and Best Actor or something. I think it was a Supporting Actor.

R Rob Mineault 56:29

Yeah. Went to a deaf actor.

Lis Malone 56:31

yeah. Supporting Actor because Will Smith. Ironically won Best Actor. That's right.

Ryan Fleury 56:37

Yeah that was unfortunate.

Rob Mineault 56:39

Yeah, it was I just feel bad for like, what would Chris Rock was like presenting I think the Best Documentary award and you know who's gonna ever remember that? Who won that one? Like, how would you like to follow that? But anyways, I don't know. It just it's just so it's ridiculous. It's all ridiculous. Hey, Lis.

Lis Malone 57:04

Hey, Rob.

Rob Mineault 57:05

Hey, where can people find us?

Lis Malone 57:08

We are online. www.atbanter.cpom.

Rob Mineault 57:11

Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com

Steve Barclay 57:22

That was a good one. And I bet they can hear that ringing all the way over at our accounts on Facebook and Twitter if people want to find us there.

Rob Mineault 57:34

Well played, sir. Well played. Absolutely. Just for that you can leave early. Okay. All right. All right. Well, I think that is going to do it for us this week. Thanks, everybody for listening in. Big right. Well, I think that is going to do it for us this week. Thanks, everybody for listening in. Big thanks, of course to Ardra for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.