

# PODCAST Episode 370

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## SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Ryan Fleury, Rob Mineault, Tabitha Kenlon

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**R** Rob Mineault 00:19  
Hey, and welcome to another episode of AT Banter.

**S** Steve Barclay 00:24  
Banter, banter.

**R** Rob Mineault 00:25  
This is of course a podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault. Oh, and joining me today, Mr. Ryan Fleury.

**R** Ryan Fleury 00:41  
And yes, I was a band kid.

**R** Rob Mineault 00:46  
Yes, that's right. The audience missed our our band geek confessional session just before the mics came on. And hey, look who else it is. It's Mr. Steve Barclay.

**S** Steve Barclay 00:58  
I was not in band. I stayed out of it. So I suppose you could call me a resistance band.

R

Rob Mineault 01:07

Wow, see? Well, we did talk about having a bit of a intro segment - Steve's Dad jokes. So that fits. It fits right out of the gate. I like it. Well, and of course, I was a band geek, as well. I played trumpet. So for a hot minute actually considered becoming a band teacher. That's how much of a band geek I was.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:34

Hence the music minor.

R

Rob Mineault 01:36

Yeah, that's right. All right. Wow. It's hard to top that, we went dove right into band confessional. How are you guys?

R

Ryan Fleury 01:48

I'm thinking of a new podcast now called the Band Confessional.

S

Steve Barclay 01:54

And I'm doing just band-y.

R

Rob Mineault 01:58

Wow, it's on fire too. Two dad jokes within the first three minutes.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:03

He's been drinking.

R

Rob Mineault 02:11

Ah, all right. Well I have to say, I don't like these noon shows. Because I'm at the office, and so I'm not in my home studio. So if I sound weird, that's why. I've got these headphones that aren't my usual headphones. And I can't I can't hear anything as feels weird. My microphone isn't in the right spot. I'm on edge.

R

Ryan Fleury 02:38

- . . .

Excellent.

R

Rob Mineault 02:44

All right. Well, enough of my complaining. Hey, Ryan. Yeah, Rob? What the heck are we doing today?

R

Ryan Fleury 02:53

Today we are speaking with Tabitha Kenlon, who is the coordinator of the Audio Description Project over at the American Council of the Blind. Welcome, Tabitha.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 03:02

Thank you. Thank you for inviting me. I'm delighted to be here.

R

Ryan Fleury 03:05

Thanks for sticking around so far.

R

Rob Mineault 03:13

Well, you know, before we start, since we all have dove into the the band geek confessional pool, so let's pull you in with us. I'm sure the audience are on pins and needles. Were you in band?

T

Tabitha Kenlon 03:29

I mean, yes, I actually started this, the notes on band-ness discussions before the recording started. And yeah, I played flute and percussion. I played the xylophone and marimba. And before that, out of school, I started taking guitar lessons when I got to take seven or eight. And I remember watching The Sound of Music, and being completely amazed at Julie Andrews, the way she was just swinging her guitar case around because to me, this guitar was incredibly heavy. And then when I was, you know, like, older, and I was picking up a guitar case, I'm like, oh, this isn't as heavy as I thought it was when I was seven.

R

Rob Mineault 04:16

A lot of kids in band, when they switch instruments, it's usually because there's a gap in the band somewhere and the band teacher usually just says, hey, can you can you play bass clarinet instead of clarinet? Is that what happened with when you switched to xylophone?

**T** Tabitha Kenlon 04:34

No, it was kind of the opposite. My dad was in the Navy. So we moved all the time. And so I was at a new school. And I just I didn't really feel like I fit with the other flute kids. And one of the first people I made friends with was a percussionist, and she said, come play xylophone, I was like, okay!

**R** Rob Mineault 04:59

This is interesting. Was it it was a big learning curve?

**T** Tabitha Kenlon 05:02

There was because I hadn't even played piano so I had to learn the whole musical scales, obviously. But as well the, the layout of the keys and everything. But then yeah, it was it was fun and we were playing like, you know football games and stuff because it was American high school so there was football. You just basically just got to bang, it didn't even really matter who hit the right note.

**R** Rob Mineault 05:33

Well, hopefully this isn't put a lot of pressure on Ryan because now we have a professional percussionist in the room. Hopefully his cowbell playing doesn't get affected.

**R** Ryan Fleury 05:47

Tabitha, you're welcome to join us each week for the cowbell.

**R** Rob Mineault 05:53

You guys can come up with a cowbell choir.

**R** Ryan Fleury 05:58

Probably exists.

**S** Steve Barclay 05:59

I got a bad band a joke if you like.

**R** Rob Mineault 06:02

Oh, please.

S

Steve Barclay 06:03

Yeah, I hate the key E minor. It gives me it gives me the E B G Bs.

R

Rob Mineault 06:22

All right enough silliness. We should actually talk to you about what we brought you on for, which is, of course, your the work that you're doing on the Audio Description Project. But before maybe before we dive into that, though, let's maybe just give us a little bit of background on yourself and how you kind of got involved at first with the ACB and the Audio Description Project.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 06:48

Well, let's see, I could take up the whole show.

R

Rob Mineault 06:51

That's perfect, I can take off my headphones and just kick back and relax.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 06:55

I've been saying that I have a checkered past. Worked in a few different industries, they have a few different advanced degrees. So my route to coordinating the Audio Description Project (or ADP) was not a straight one. But since you asked sort of multiple questions there, I actually was involved with ACB before I got the job as the Audio Description Project Coordinator. When the pandemic started in 2020, everything went into lockdown. ACP started, what they now call Community Calls, and they were just Zoom calls to keep members connected. And you're just having conversations and, you know, trying to battle some of that isolation that so many people have felt during lockdown. And it started out as just you know, like a few people doing like a little, you know, coffee klatch, and it just grew. And now there are usually more than 100 calls a week. And almost all of them are facilitated by ACP members. And people just sort of decide, hey, I want to have this call, I want to talk about this thing. So there are like sports talk shows and crafting instruction shows and trivia, and book groups. And that was my entree because my most recent career was as an English professor. So I was out of work in the fall of 2020 and staying with my parents and bored. So and I was missing teaching, I really enjoyed teaching. So I decided to start a book group. And we're going to talk about 18th century British literature, because why not start as Jane Austen something nice and light, get into the heavy stuff later. So I did that. Every week, we did one book a month and just kind of worked our way through it. So then I went to Dublin and got another Master's Degree, this one in international relations. And I was back staying with my parents in Virginia, looking for a job and still doing the book group. I kept it up even when I was in Dublin. And I saw the Audio Description Project Coordinator job come up and I thought, well, I know ACB and you know, I believe in disability

rights and equity and all that stuff. So let me apply and see what happens. And they hired me. So here I am. It's been about a year, so I guess they don't hate me. So for people who maybe who aren't familiar with the Audio Description Project, can you kind of give us a bit of a snapshot of exactly what it is and what you guys do there. So the ADP, which is easier to say than Audio Description Project, has been around for about 14 years. And it's kind of an octopus. It's got a lot of different things going on. It's mostly, you know, sort of advocacy and awareness and education. One misconception that I've run into a few times is people thinking that we create audio description, we do not. We do have a directory on our website of people who do, you know, writers and voice talent and sound engineers and companies and freelancers. So if anyone is looking for someone who can do that, you can, perhaps find someone on our website, but the ADP does not actually produce it. But we do, like I said, advocate for more and better audio description, our website is just chock full of information. And we are in the process of redesigning it. So if you go to the website and have any comments, let me know. I'll take that into consideration. But one of the big attractions to the website is our title catalog. Fred Brack, our webmaster has been collecting the titles of films and TV series with audio description, for more than 20 years. And there are now more than 10,000 titles of films and TV series that have audio description. So if you want to watch something, and you're curious to know if it has AD, you can go to the website and type in the title and we will tell you, yes, it has a description or no, sorry, it doesn't. And so that's a thing that people find, obviously, quite useful. And we like to, we try to build relationships with studios and industry and the people who are creating the content that we want to do description for and who are in charge of the budget, to let them know that this is a really important part of accessibility and inclusion. And, you know, we think that building those relationships and having conversations and communicating is the best way to do that. And part of that is a couple of awards programs that we run. The ADP Awards, and the Audio Description Awards Gala, which are just ways for us to recognize when people are doing description, right. You know, we always, you know, it's always so easy to point out when something is lacking, when we're not happy. But we also think it's important to, you know, jump up and down here, when when people are doing doing great, and being really responsive and proactive. So those are a lot of fun. And we also sponsor or hold two training institutes every year. And since the pandemic, those have gone virtual. So I think last year, we trained upwards of 80 people on how to think about writing audio description, and in trying to get more people aware of what it is and how to do it. And then the last thing I'll mention at the moment is probably one of my favorite parts. It's an essay contest for young people, students ages 7 to 21, but we separate them by age group. So we don't have the seven year olds competing with the 21 year olds because that would not be fair. And they we ask them to choose a video and then write a short essay, sort of critiquing the audio description. So just you know, trying to get their little critical thinking muscles going. Which, you know, this existed before I got here, but you know, as an English teacher, obviously I just am all over it. So I don't know - that that's a really big nutshell.

R

Rob Mineault 14:10

No, that's perfect. No, I mean it is a big nutshell. I mean you guys do are doing a lot. It's great that it exists and it's great that Audio Description has been more prevalent lately. But for for you know the user on the ground, it can be really time consuming to try to figure out whether or not something that they're interested in is going to have audio description or not. And that's where this you know, what you guys are doing are is really invaluable. I mean, Ryan's talked all the time about his frustration with that very thing.

R

Ryan Fleury 14:45

Yeah, you start a title on Netflix and then you bring up the audio settings and see if it has audio description and you know, sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. You don't always know. And so that was my question is how do you guys know?

T

Tabitha Kenlon 14:58

That is the domain of our webmaster Fred Brock who has secret databases and algorithms and a coding language that only he speaks. So this is something that we're kind of trying to streamline as we redesign our website is trying to manage all that data. But we kind of go back to those relationships, we actually do get a lot of our data directly from studios, that, you know, they will just send us a spreadsheet or a CSV or something. And then, you know, here are the titles that are coming out this week with audio description. And, you know, sometimes that goes smoothly, and sometimes they're a little hiccups along the way. And Fred is fantastic about just sort of, you know, poking, when people need to be poked, and also just doing his own research and testing things. But, yeah, a lot of it is just those from those benefit from those conversations that that and relationships that we've built, and just getting information kind of straight from the people who are creating it.

R

Rob Mineault 16:18

Right. Well, yeah, and we should mention, too, that, you know, we're not just talking about the streaming services. You guys are also tracking DVDs, Blu Rays, TV, and even stepped into things like, where AD exists for things like museums or parks and stuff. So I mean, that's a that's a huge chunk of content that you guys are sort of trying to track. What's that like on a day to day basis? How big is the team? And how hard is it sort of be tracking all of this information?

T

Tabitha Kenlon 16:52

So first, let me thank you for pointing out that it's not just recorded media, because I was remiss in not mentioning that earlier. Audio description actually originally started in live theater. People who are blind were going to theater and you know, wanted to know what's going on on the stage. I love this live performance thing. So that's where audio description really got its start. And then I can really geek out on you and tell you that if you think about ancient Greek theatre and Shakespeare, there was a lot of built in audio description, into the scripts and into the dialogue and the things that people were saying, but I will, I'll save that for another show.

R

Rob Mineault 17:45

Actually, that we can we can hit on that. Actually, don't let me forget, because I do want to loop back on to that.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 17:54

And, but yeah, so so that is another piece of videos trying to say there's a section on our website, which I should also probably tease a little bit if you guys don't mind, it is [www.adp.acb.org](http://www.adp.acb.org). And I can say it every five minutes, it's a little bit of an alphabet soup. So we do try to also have that a list of theaters and museums state by state and internationally that, you know, places that we know, provide or have provided audio description in the past, and that one is a little trickier to maintain. So we're honestly still kind of working on ways to keep that maintained and up to date. Because sometimes, you know, a performing arts center might do audio description for one show, but not another show, especially if they've got touring companies come through. Those touring companies might be touring with their audio description and another one might not so it can kind of vary. And then a lot of live performances will have just have one or two performances that are audio described or, you know, sign language interpreted or whatever. Whereas when it comes to movie theaters and streaming services, you can generally count on them to to have audio description all the time. So yeah, so it is a lot. And I am the only paid staff, full time paid staff member. And my position is actually relatively new. The person who had it before me was kind of half ADP and half Grant writing. And she's now the full time Associate Director of Development. So she went and pursued that side of it and left to the ADP site open. We have you know, Fred our webmaster who is, you know, a wonderful paid consultant. We also I have Timothy Wynn, who does the research for the daily TV listing. So if you want to know what's on TV tonight with audio description in the US only I'm afraid sorry Canada - you can go on the website and find that out. They're a great team. But beyond that everyone are volunteers. Kim Charlson and Carl Richardson are the co chairs of the ADP. But they both have, you know, full time jobs and everything they do for the ADP is just sort of extra and bonus. They work incredibly hard. And we have I think, six or seven subcommittees that focus on different areas. We have one focused on media, which is really movie theaters and TV shows, and you know, studios and stuff like that. And we actually do have one focused on the Performing Arts, Museums and the Parks. And then we've got committees for the DSA contest, and the ADP awards and stuff like that. And all of those people just volunteer their time to attend meetings, and, you know, do do some work and try to keep promoting audio description.

R

Rob Mineault 21:11

Wow, okay, well, that blows me away. Because there's a lot of content here. And it's only growing every single day.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 21:20

But yeah, I mean, we've even heard that people in the industry will come to our website to see what's audio described.

R

Rob Mineault 21:35

So now you've only been there a year so I'm not sure if you'll know the answer to this, what's the past year or so been like? Has, it has been really busy, because we keep hearing more and more about audio description and more? More studios are jumping on board and are realizing that it's this is something that they need to be doing. So have you been feeling that?



T

Tabitha Kenlon 22:01

I think so. If we, you know, our title catalog, Fred knows exactly, you know, how many titles are in the catalog, and it exceeded 10,000 in the Fall for the first time. So it's kind of a big deal. And it does change because, you know, when a movie or a show goes on to a streaming service, it doesn't always stay there forever, which is kind of irritating. But that's a whole beyond my purview, but so you know, the number will sort of fluctuate, and it doesn't necessarily mean that, you know, fewer titles of audio description, it might just be that there are fewer titles, in general, if that makes sense. So, you know, the number is never the same month, even week to week. But, you know, it got above 10,000 and it stayed there. And I think it is starting to just become much more ubiquitous. I think, this year, all 10 nominees for the Best Picture Oscar have audio description, and that's the first time that's ever happened. I think last year, it was all that like one or two, and then it's your it's all 10. So, you know, stuff like that is just really, really great. To hear every week when when ACB has a staff meeting or like whenever there's a committee meeting, you know, somebody is always talking about a movie that they saw and, you know, it's just a tangible demonstration of the importance of audio description, and of inclusion. When you have sort of these mixed groups of sighted people and people who are on the blindness spectrum and they're all talking about the same cultural thing - they were all able to participate, and, you know, talk about this movie, or what's really been increased in the last year as well has been audio description for live events. So I, you know, it was kind of like there might be the Presidential Inauguration, but it's just, again, becoming much more commonplace that people are just sort of expecting it. You know, so it was like, No, that was a big deal. A lot of Americans are crazy Royal Watchers. So there was a huge flurry of excitement for the Coronation and then here with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and just the, you know, all of these sort of big events. It's slowly becoming, you know, you kind of are starting to feel like I can maybe count on this. And there's still some outliers, there's still some things that people get grumpy, that aren't described, but I really think it's just a matter of time. Because when it as it approaches, ubiquity, you know, it's just going to be something that people expect. And and the studios are going to hear about it if they don't.

R

Rob Mineault 25:14

Yeah, I do feel like it's definitely moving in that in that way. I mean, we've been talking about it for years on the show, and I definitely feel like in the past year or two, there really has been a shift into being more prevalent, and I think it's more of an outliers that actually don't have audio description. I mean, Ryan, you're more dialed into a lot of the streaming services and stuff and watching stuff on there. Do you find that? Do you find that that you're, you're running into more and more shows that actually have it now?

R

Ryan Fleury 25:46

Even just on Netflix alone, the more shows I watch, the more I hear about companies providing the audio description, like IDC in Europe, and, of course, Descriptive Video Works here in BC, and more companies all the time that I'd never heard of before. So, you know, I think it is being adopted at a really, really fast rate. Yeah.

R**Rob Mineault 26:10**

And like you you mentioned that's the goal, right? The goal is to make it exactly the same as closed captioning. I mean, you don't you don't find anything without closed captions. I mean, you just don't. You'd have a huge uproar, if something was released with with no closed captioning options. So, you know, that's, that's where we need to get to. But I mean, I think that the Project really does raise a good point is that well, and until it is ubiquitous, I guess, we still need to know what is and what isn't for the, for the end users. So you know, this is where the Project is still really important.

R**Ryan Fleury 26:47**

Well, it gets to that we're hearing and seeing more of the studios and the art projects and live theater, but we're still missing a lot of the independent filmmakers. There's still a huge market of non describe titles out there.

T**Tabitha Kenlon 27:03**

I was gonna say, that's just so many goals, so little time. But but one of the sort of long term goals is to think about ways to introduce integrated audio description into film school curriculum. You know, because if you go to film school, and you learn about casting and lighting and planning your shots, and you know, all of the technical things, but nobody mentions audio description to you. Then, you know, chances are, you're not going to know about it until, you know, somebody does. So if it was just a standard part of the curriculum, where these are the things you need to think about when you are making your movie and thinking about your budget. And, and especially the one thing that we we really advocate for is, is that, you know, having that the audio description, and just any sort of accessibility feature, part of the process from the beginning. The analogy that I think a lot of people use is that we've all encountered those ramps that are just sort of a glob of cement, you know, between the sidewalk and the steps, that you're, you're like, how is anybody actually supposed to get a wheelchair over this thing? It was just so obviously, you know, thrown on there at the last minute, because you had to, you know, tick the box, oh, yeah, we're accessible. But it's not really meaningful. And, you know, obviously, Audio Description is pretty much always useful. But, you know, ideally, it's not just something that's tacked on at the end, and squeezed in where, you know, where convenient. But rather it is something that is thought about throughout the entire process, and it's really integrated into the whole creative process. Because I think that audio description, and accessibility is an opportunity. Rather than regarding accessibility as a burden, as an obligation, it's something boring and heavy and tedious. It can be another opportunity for creativity and imagination. And I think the more people embrace that, and have it part of their creative process from the beginning, I think the better it's going to be for everyone.

R**Rob Mineault 29:44**

Yeah, that raises a really interesting point. Because, you know, we talked about that in terms of accessibility, like in the in the technology realm as well. Like we're always saying in order to make something really accessible, what needs to happen is It needs to be thought of at the development stage. The app or soft piece of software or whatever is being developed, it's much

easier to bake in accessible features at that point then building the thing and then tacking on your accessibility after the fact. And I feel like that's a really great way to look at this as well. A few weeks ago, for the first time I heard this term, integrated description, which is the idea of instead of producing a show and then producing audio description around it, is that you again, you bake in that audio description into the script into the way that the show is shot. And I mean, it may be unrealistic to think that that's something that everybody's going to do. But I mean, it's certainly something that I think that maybe would start to happen if we started to do what you're talking about, which is bringing this idea of, of audio description into the creative process and into the sort of the germ of the initial idea, rather than just waiting to solve that problem after the fact.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 31:15

And it quite new nicely loops back to the idea of the ancient Greek theater,

R

Rob Mineault 31:21

I know.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 31:27

You've done this before. Yeah. It's something that I explored for a conference on disability and the creative arts at De Montfort University in the UK last year. And Joel Schneider, who is actually the founder of the Audio Description Project, and he was the senior consultant for a number of years. And he's just kind of stepped back from that role at the end of this past year, but he is staying on as a volunteer on numerous committees. And he's also the one who teaches the Audio Description Institute, which is now open for registration. By the way, in case anyone is interested, it is virtual. You can participate wherever you are. And we do have people on the blindness spectrum and people who are sighted in the classes. I have low vision myself, and I audited the class last year when I started, and it was fascinating. We had group works, which are group projects where we work together to create audio description for a short script. And, and I think it was actually really useful for the fully sighted people to have someone with low vision in their group, because they sort of gave me a quick, you know, off the cuff description, but then they would talk about details that they had all seen that I didn't know were there. So I was like, wait a minute, what are you talking about? So it was a lot of fun. But Joel and I and Susan Glass, who is on our the Essay Contest committee, she's one of the co-chairs of that committee, and she's a retired English professor and a poet. So also a lover of words, but we did a presentation for this disability in the creative arts conference last year. And I talked about, a little bit about audio description in Shakespeare, and, you know, in Hamlet to the scene where the, the players that are catching the conscience of the King. Ophelia and Hamlet are telling us how the king is reacting. You know, "he starts, he stands up". you know, like, they're telling us what's going on. And so you don't actually need an audio describer to tell you the King stands up when a character in the play is telling you. tYou think about the the ancient theaters, like nobody had opera glasses, there were no microphones. And, you know, I was lucky enough to be in Athens a few years ago. But yeah, there are these huge open air amphitheaters. And you know, if you're sitting up on the hill, having your picnic, you probably can't see everything that's happening on the stage. And that's what the course does. The

course is explaining to you what is happening. So I love that, that we're kind of coming full circle when it comes to accessibility. Obviously, assistive technology is fantastic and wonderful and useful. But in some ways, thinking about the way that things were accessible for before we can borrow some of those techniques and use them today.

R

Rob Mineault 34:54

Yeah. It doesn't have to be a burden. You know, it can be part of like a creative process. There can be really some really interesting content, I think developed if you put this idea into the hands of the creatives. And who knows, who knows what they might come up with? And really, I mean, you're absolutely right, in the sense of able bodied people can use all of this stuff as well. I constantly use subtitles now, like I'm all about subtitles and closed captioning, because I find that I engage with the content and I pick up on things that I don't when I'm not using them. Same thing for for audio description, I mean, somebody's in the kitchen, and they can't actually see the TV, they can still watch something because they can just turn that track on, and continue to, to chop up vegetables for their dinner. They don't have to worry about seeing the screen. So there's really, this idea really benefits everybody.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 35:58

Yeah, and we've heard stories about you know, obviously, people on the blindness spectrum are the first people that you think about as an audience for audio description. But also language learners, it can be really helpful for people with learning differences, people's sort of, you know, processing differences, like maybe they just can't take in all of that action on the screen and process it fast enough. But if someone is telling them, you know, this is what's happening, then, okay, I keep up. I can't remember who it was, but it was somebody in the ADP. They mentioned in a meeting that they were taking an Uber or something like that. And the driver was actually listening to movies while he was driving around, you know, waiting for his next client. And he turned on the audio description tracks that he could, you know, listen to the movie while he was driving around, and, you know, obviously not, you know, watch the movie and drive. So it's good. And I think, you know, this is, you know, you mentioned closed captioning. And and, you know, they did sort of face that a similar struggle, initially, and, you know, now so many people it is taken for granted. And, you know, you go into a noisy sports bar or something and close captioning is on because nobody can hear what's going on. So, you know, the, it's kind of that Universal Design sort of idea is that, you know, if it's helpful for this one population, chances are it's going to be helpful for a lot of other populations as well.

R

Rob Mineault 37:33

Yeah, that's right. So I want to talk a little bit about the training aspect of this, because this is also something that do. Do you get the sense of the training part of of audio description has really started to pick up as well? There seems to be a lot more schools and like places where people can go and there seems to be sort of a curriculum that has started to really be developed. What's your impression of all of that and do you guys really get involved in that part?

T

Tabitha Kenlon 38:02

Yes. So that the Audio Description Institute is what we call our training. And it has been around for a number of years. Originally, it was held in person at the ACB Conference and Convention. But in the past, I guess for years now, it's moved online, and you know, some people miss the in person interaction. But we're just able to reach so many more people. Registration opens earlier this month, and I think we have people from five different countries, you know, so it's just really great to have the the range. But yeah, there there are more. I've talked to other people who are developing are already running their own training sessions. You know, Joel Schneider wrote the wrote the book called The Visual Native Verbal. And it is that kind of history of audio description that also provides, you know, some some training, and everyone who registers for the Audio Description Institute gets a free copy of the that book. And this has been going on for a number of years before I was involved, but have they been working on a certification program, that that audio describers can can go through and take a test and be certified. You sort of write those audio description scripts. And that is something that, again, as a teacher, I've been fascinated by the education side of things and apparently, there's, there's a debate going on about how present the audio description should be. You know, like, can it really be subjective? You know, report very journalistic, just the facts? Or should it be a little bit more interpretive and emotional? And so there's, there are these these two camps. And, and I think that's actually really exciting because 15 years ago, that conversation could not have taken place, because everybody had to put their energy into getting the audio description done in the first place. But now, since, you know, there's still obviously, as we've discussed, there's still work to do to get to that level where it's even more prevalent, but that we can have those conversations about what makes for the best audio description. And, you know, I think that's, that's really interesting. I personally am a classic film, buff. And so talk to others, you know, people who really love film, and the one thing that that I've missed as my eyesight has gotten worse is, I used to love the, you know, the film noir and the black and white movies. And I used to love to notice the shadows and the shading and the physical positions of the characters, then you who has this, back to the camera, and you know, which is all of those super geeky details, which you don't get an audio description. We've had conversation where we're like can we get sort of the audio description, extended geek track sheet, where you actually sort of pause the movie for a minute, so they can tell you exactly where everyone is standing. Because like, he's by the window and she's by the door, and you know, whatever. So, you know, I don't know that that's going to become common. But I do think it's a lot of fun. And I think it's a really good sign that those conversations are happening.

R

Ryan Fleury 41:55

Well, that could happen. They've got director's cut, the extended director's cut, and the Super Extended Director's Cut, right.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 42:02

And they've got the commentary, and people are talking over the movie telling you, it reminds me I'm dating myself here, but I don't know if you remember the VH-1 pop up videos. Yeah, sure. Yeah, a little like trivia bits would come up. But you know, obviously, you'd need that to be audio. But yeah, I think something like that could could be a lot of fun. And I think that's something again, that could appeal to film buffs and film geeks regardless of the sight level.

R

Rob Mineault 42:22

I think it's really interesting, too. And this is where I think why it would be important to get this being thought of at that creative stage. Because you know, for a lot of filmmakers, the way they framing the shot, their lighting the shot, all of these things they're doing to create a certain tone or a certain mood. or They're trying to emulate an emotional state that maybe the main character is feeling, or trying to unsettle the viewer, and some of that stuff. If it's just a script writer who is just literally just kind of taking and describing the action, and there, they don't have an insight into what the filmmaker is actually trying to do, that stuff kind of gets missed. So it would be really great to have these tracks written at that creative development stage, because I think that you could really, really create some really engaging content if you did start to do that. And again, you know, maybe that's it's shooting for the moon to dream that this is going to be ubiquitous. But I think would be really interesting if filmmakers and studios, you know, started to take a crack at this and to really do some out of the box creative thinking when it comes to audio description.

R

Ryan Fleury 43:55

We wouldn't want to get the jumpscare described to us before the jumpscare.

R

Rob Mineault 44:07

Cat jumps out.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 44:11

My favorite one, you hear the sound of a door closing and then the audio narrator says he closes the door.

R

Rob Mineault 44:30

You're absolutely right. I mean, it is I think it is great and it signals that we've moved into the next stage in that we're not fighting for audio description, now we can get into the fight for good audio description. If people do want to check out the Audio Description Project, and I know you've already done this, but I'm gonna make you go to work again, but where the heck can people find it on the web and use this really amazing resource?

T

Tabitha Kenlon 44:57

Thanks for asking. The your web address is [www.adp.acb.org](http://www.adp.acb.org) and you can find out all sorts of fun things about audio description. Check if the latest show your friends are obsessed with on Netflix is audio described. You can sign up for our audio description email discussion list so if you want to continue and just geek out about audio description, those are your people. So yeah, join us.

R

Rob Mineault 45:34

Excellent. Well, listen, we want to thank you so much for coming on and talking with us. And thank you for all the work that you guys are pouring into this because I really do see this as a really important resource. And not only that, like just working in this field and getting audio description out there and to spread it. I think it's really been invaluable.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 45:55

Well, thank you for inviting me. It's great to be able to highlight the project and all of the great people who have been working so hard for so many years and continue to make it what it is.

R

Rob Mineault 46:07

Excellent. And please come back because we're going to be putting together a woodwind trio.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 46:13

No, I want to play the marimba.

R

Rob Mineault 46:15

Okay, all right. Perfect. You can be the percussion section. I'll teach Steve the clarinet.

S

Steve Barclay 46:22

Good luck with that.

R

Rob Mineault 46:25

Okay, well, great. Well, thanks again. And please come back anytime.

T

Tabitha Kenlon 46:30

Thanks. It was it was fun. You guys are great. Appreciate it.

R

Rob Mineault 46:36

Bye.

**T** Tabitha Kenlon 46:36  
Bye.

**S** Steve Barclay 46:36  
Bye. Take care.

**R** Rob Mineault 46:39  
Wow, well, that's cool. This is an incredible website, I have to say, the sheer volume.

**R** Ryan Fleury 46:46  
The only resource directory that actually list the titles and platforms where you can find any audio described program

**R** Rob Mineault 46:53  
100% You know, so kudos to them. So but this is great. I didn't realize that all that all of the all of the Academy Award nominations for Best Picture had audio description. That's that's, that's amazing.

**R** Ryan Fleury 47:06  
For the first time ever, she said, yeah.

**R** Rob Mineault 47:09  
Which is great. So yeah, when you know earlier in the year, there was that Netflix show, "All the light that you cannot see" ..

**R** Ryan Fleury 47:20  
Yeah, there's a new new series on TV called Sight Unseen or something? With a with a blind or partially sighted private investigator who uses actually an app similar to Be My eyes AI. She has a virtual assistant.

**R** Rob Mineault 47:39  
Yeah, I heard about that. Is that in Netflix show?



**R** Ryan Fleury 47:42  
No it's on TV.

**R** Rob Mineault 47:44  
I did hear a little bit about that. Yeah, that's interesting. So you know, we're starting to see more and more audio description. We're seeing some representation. Things are happening. So hey, Steve, So are you are you set up over there in the in the greenroom? Is that Is that where you're recording from?

**S** Steve Barclay 48:00  
No, I'm actually right at my desk.

**R** Rob Mineault 48:02  
Oh, no way. Okay.

**S** Steve Barclay 48:04  
I just told Greg to shut up.

**R** Rob Mineault 48:12  
That's great. Yeah, how's the how's the open house preparation coming along?

**S** Steve Barclay 48:18  
Good. We're pretty much ready we're just waiting to you hear how many people are coming and you know, looking for RSVPs. I'm going to send out another another round of invitations.

**R** Rob Mineault 48:31  
Well, I mean this hey, this episode is going to come out before March 7, so you want to you want to plug the open house case anyone's listening who's in the Vancouver area that wants to come by?

**S** Steve Barclay 48:43

Yeah, absolutely. So our Open House is going to be on March 7 between 12 and 7pm The doors will be open there'll be snacks and drinks and people are welcome to pop in and check out the place. We we have a ton of stuff here now, from simple as white canes and you know things like talking thermometers through to you know virtual reality based headset magnification systems. We have wearable OCR systems. We've got computers here, braille display, more video magnifiers that you can shake a stick at. Optical magnification, specialized lighting systems, sunscreens. Oh, gosh, what else is out there? There's a lot of stuff here now a lot more than than we even have on our website. Yeah. Which, yeah, which we need to address as well. But that's for another day. That's right.

R

Rob Mineault 49:58

I think we need to rename Canadians Assistive Technology to something like Crazy Steve's Assistive Technology Emporium.

S

Steve Barclay 50:08

Everything Must Go! Including me, we should probably wrap this up.

R

Rob Mineault 50:15

Yeah, fair enough. Oh so what's the address if people are interested in heading on down?

S

Steve Barclay 50:21

The address is unit 106- 828 West Eighth Avenue in Vancouver. And if people want instructions on how to get here they can go on our website, I believe it's on our contact page towards the bottom of the contact page, there's information on on how to get into the building and so forth to there are some pretty good instructions there that Greg spent days ruminating about.

R

Rob Mineault 50:50

Shut up Greg.

S

Steve Barclay 50:52

Yeah, so yeah, come on down. Come on down. We need bodies in the place we're getting bored in here.

R

Rob Mineault 50:59

And if that isn't an incentive enough, three quarters of the cast of the AT Banter Podcast will be on hand to meet as well. Signing autographs. so come on down! Okay. anything else?

on hand to meet us well. Signing autographs, so come on down. Okay, anything else.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:16

No, they can find us on Facebook, Mastodon and atbanter.com

R

Rob Mineault 51:21

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

S

Steve Barclay 51:28

Wow, that was that was ruthlessly efficient.

R

Rob Mineault 51:31

I know Ryan did that last week too?

R

Ryan Fleury 51:33

That's gonna about do it for us this week.

R

Rob Mineault 51:35

Wow. Okay. You don't have to go home but you can't stay here. All right, everybody that is gonna do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course to Tabitha for the for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.

S

Steve Barclay 51:55

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