

PODCAST Episode 437

Thu, Aug 21, 2025 8:44AM 52:21

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Pretty Blind, Jenny Bovard, Low Vision Moments, AMI Accessible Media, integrated describe video, goalball episode, blind community, scripted comedy, accessibility, production process, character development, feedback, media spots, tandem biking.

SPEAKERS

Steve Barclay, Ryan Fleury, Jennie Bovard, Shawn Marsolais

 Ryan Fleury 00:14

Hey and welcome to the inaugural episode of the Limitless Banter podcast.

 Shawn Marsolais 00:20

Woo hoo.

 Ryan Fleury 00:21

Banter, banter, banter...

 Steve Barclay 00:23

Well, it's either a single banter or it's unlimited banters, and we don't have time for that.

 Ryan Fleury 00:28

That's true. That's true.

 Shawn Marsolais 00:30

That would be a lot of banters.

 Ryan Fleury 00:32



Ryan Fleury 00:32

Banter, banter, banter. So yes, as you can hear, we have no Rob Mineault today. He decided vacation was more important than our show. So that's okay.



Steve Barclay 00:42

Awww



Ryan Fleury 00:42

I know, I know I tried, but that's all right. He deserves a break.



Shawn Marsolais 00:46

Once in a while he does. He doesn't really take a lot of vacation.



Ryan Fleury 00:50

That's true. We also have no Lis Malone today. She's often one of her mysterious Lis adventures.



Steve Barclay 00:57

I think she's a hit man.



Ryan Fleury 01:01

But stepping in and hosting today's show for our own Rob Mineault, we have founder of Blind Beginnings and host of the Limitless podcast, Shawn Marsolais with us. Shawn, welcome to Limitless Banter.



Shawn Marsolais 01:16

Thank you. I'm really excited to be here and really excited to talk to our guest today. So yeah, thanks for trusting me to host your show.



Ryan Fleury 01:25

Well, who better? Because Steve and I couldn't do it. And it's interesting this the reason for this episode is both the AT Banter podcast and the Limitless podcast have had today's guest on our shows, so she is familiar to our audiences. So Shawn, why don't you do the introductions?

 **Shawn Marsolais 01:48**

So our guest today is Jenny Bovard, who is the star of the new AMI show, Pretty Blind. She is a podcast host herself. I believe the podcast is called Low Vision Moments, and she's here today to talk about her new stardom with Pretty Blind and all about how that came to be. And I have so many questions. So welcome Jenny.

 **Jennie Bovard 02:11**

Thank you so much for having me. It's a total treat to be here off the top, a couple of things I have to mention. So number one, I love a crossover. So very happy to be part of that. Yeah, especially with these two podcasts coming together. Very cool. I am a habitual podcast guest. So yes, it's true. I may. I've been around the block once or twice and happy to be back. Thank you so much for having me.

 **Shawn Marsolais 02:38**

Yes, amazing. I love that we can do this, will this podcast will be, oh my gosh, what do you call it? Put out? What's the word? Released?

 **Jennie Bovard 02:47**

Yes, it's gonna drop.

 **Shawn Marsolais 02:49**

I'm just warming up here, guys, I'm just warming up. But yeah, we're gonna release it as a Limitless Podcast and as AT Banter. So double the exposure for you. Jenny,

 **Steve Barclay 02:59**

Best crossover since Scooby Natural.

 **Shawn Marsolais 03:03**

And there may even be a spin off podcast down the road called Limitless Banter. Who knows? Right? Like it could happen. It could so Jenny, for those listeners who maybe don't know you, can you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about Pretty Blind.

 **Jennie Bovard 03:21**

Sure. Well, I should mention you called me a 'star', and people keep using that word and my

name in the same sentence. I've yet to get used to that, and still makes me -

S

Steve Barclay 03:33

Fine, fine, 'Superstar', prima donna!

J

Jennie Bovard 03:40

Much better. Now you're getting it. I have been a podcast host myself. I had the Low Vision Moments podcast for about four years with AMI Accessible Media. Inc. They've afforded me a lot of other really incredible opportunities over the years, which we probably don't have time to get into all of those, but they let me bring a lot of off the wall topics to TV and audio programming over the years, so I've had a really fun time with them over the years. And Low Vision Moments, the podcast is is, sadly, on a long term hiatus. I'm making air quotes with my fingers right now, because truly it's been canceled. It's not coming back in that incarnation anymore, but something hopefully will be happening soon with me getting to use this sexy microphone that I'm using right now. I don't know if I can use words like sexy on this podcast, but it happened, so I'll try to keep the language pretty clean, but Pretty Blind, is my most recent adventure with Accessible Media and a bunch of really amazing Canadian television icons, I would call them, people who I used to watch on television, both as actors and people who have written shows that I absolutely love. And I've enjoyed laughing at over the years. So Pretty Blind is a scripted comedy TV series, also a production for AMI that we created loosely based on my life and my podcast, the Low Vision Moments podcast. But if you've heard the podcast, you know that it's not all about me. It's very much about the wonderful guest I had to have on each month. And so I've drawn a lot of the stories and experiences, not just from my own life when it comes to writing Pretty Blind, but also all of the lovely connections I've made over the many, many years in different capacities, in the blind and low vision and albinism community. So we are telling these very real stories with a fictional comedic spin, and it's really all about my character, Jenny, who is not unlike me. She is stubborn, she is sarcastic, and she's just trying to go about her life have a job that she enjoys, and it's is fulfilled in and and she's looking for good friends and maybe looking for a little love somewhere along the line. And, you know, we she's living in a world where a lot of people don't really get it. They don't really get what it's like to go about life with low vision and albinism, and I'm not the only character living with blindness. On the show, we get to have a lot of other wonderful actors who are also living with sight loss and blindness. So that's been an amazing experience to bring other people into the fold as well, and we have done a couple firsts with Pretty Blind and one of the really cool things that we're proud of is integrated described video, so integrating the description into the conversation and and weaving it into the writing so that it's a little bit more seamless of an experience than your traditional descriptive video tracks. So we've done a lot of firsts with the show, but that's something that I'm really super proud of, and I don't think it's perfect yet, but the show has been an awesome sort of example of of granting access and creating access to the TV world that I didn't know we could have access to, necessarily. As you can tell, I'm really excited about Pretty Blind and everything that we get to do.

R

Ryan Fleury 07:25

I just want to make a quick comment about the integrated audio description, because it's funny. You mentioned that Jenny I've been watching it and I emailed Greg the

funny. You mentioned that, Jenny, I've been watching it, and I emailed Greg, the Communications Coordinator at AMI, and I said, there's no audio description in this program. It was so seamless I didn't think it was there. So it's very well done.

J Jennie Bovard 07:45

I think that's a that's a good thing, and we like Greg and I, and I hope Greg, I hope Greg responded with, you know, with tact and with a good explanation, right? Because I will admit, you know, having watched the show back, there are some there are little visual gags that do happen that I think we could approach maybe differently in season two, but you are hopefully, in my opinion, not missing any of the important jokes, right, any of the important story points, and that was our main goal.

R Ryan Fleury 08:23

Yeah, yeah, no, it's, it's woven in very well.

J Jennie Bovard 08:25

That's what happens when you have exceptional writers.

S Steve Barclay 08:30

Yeah, you mentioned Season Two. You How many episodes are you doing?

J Jennie Bovard 08:37

Season one, which has, is, has all, all six episodes of season one have aired live, and they're available now to stream at AMI plus.ca. Season one, six episodes. Season two, I think we're looking for at least six or seven episodes in there, but we're still pre, pre, pre production, so no promises.

S Shawn Marsolais 08:59

I've actually been watching on the AMI app. I guess maybe it doesn't release, because I've only seen five of the six, I think. But it's been great. I've been really, really enjoying them. They're awesome. I love that Goalball as an episode. I mean great exposure for Goalball as well, because so many people don't know what that is. So that was really awesome.

J Jennie Bovard 09:21

I'd like to drop a hot tip here. No shade to AMI, but a lot of folks, almost everyone I've talked to who've tried to use the AMI Plus app to stream the show, they've all had various different glitches. Okay, I would recommend visiting the AMI plus.ca website. It seems to be a lot more

gories. Okay, I would recommend visiting the AMI website. It seems to be a lot more reliable and just generally a smoother experience. So that would be, that would be my hot tip. You mentioned goalball. Oh my goodness, Shawn, we had so much fun with that episode. I'm so proud of it. That episode includes six actors who are blind and or also play goalball. So everyone that was there in that episode playing the rival team Paddy Wagon and my team Jennie and the Jets, they are all actual goalball players and members of the blind community. So I don't know that any other TV show has ever done an episode featuring Goalball in this way. So I'm so proud of it. It's hilarious as well. And I think some someone mentioned it was actually coach Linda, who's been coaching goalball here in Nova Scotia since, I don't know, probably the late 70s or early 80s, and she's an incredible human being. And she was at a screening that we did at CNIB. We invited the blind community, the goalball community, to come and watch that episode last week, and a piece of feedback that I heard was they love the way that we did the Jeopardy style questioning of the goalball rules. Yes, Linda was like, that was such a creative way to get the boring rules out of the way and to help people understand goalball. Not that they're boring, but I don't know. I think if you're explaining a sport, there's a fun way to do it and and I think, like you said, is such a nice way to get exposure for Goalball, because this word is growing, but it's, yeah, it's just super cool. And honestly, the crew, there are, everyone on the crew, it took three days to shoot that goalball episode in the basement of a gym in Bedford, Nova Scotia, the basement of a church, rather gym basement. And everyone that was involved from the TV world is now completely obsessed with Goalball.

 **Shawn Marsolais 11:50**

I love it.

 **Jennie Bovard 11:52**

Obsessed. Their favorite part was watching us actually play at the end of the day. So like when we were filming, you're not really playing goalball, and all of us were just like itching to actually throw the ball at one another, and so at the end of the day, we they'd allow us to have a little scrimmage, and really it was entertainment for them.

 **Shawn Marsolais 12:10**

I was wondering about that, because how do you intentionally, you know, how do you score on cue or or be scored on because it's for the show and you need to get your ass kicked?

 **Jennie Bovard 12:24**

It's uncomfortable. I don't like letting goals in on purpose.

 **Shawn Marsolais 12:29**

I get it. Do you have a favorite episode so far, Jennie?

J

Jennie Bovard 12:35

I think the goalball episode is probably my favorite episode, and I think it's my favorite for all the reasons that that we mentioned and on a deeper level. One of the actors, Dan Barra-Berger, who plays Steve, my roommate and on again off, again boyfriend. Steve also lives with sight loss, and in real life, Dan was not a sports guy, and Dan has an eye condition where he's not supposed to get involved in any kind of impact sport. Well, nothing too jarring or jostling where he can get hit, and so he has been very careful and really had no connection or understanding of the community that comes with playing a team sport. And through those like three days of filming, he came out of that experience with this whole new understanding and whole new perspective of team sport and sport in general. And he was so grateful for that experience. It was really just an unexpected thing for him to get so excited about being able to participate in this sport, because we made it a really safe, obviously a safe experience for him, where he would not actually be throwing himself in front of a ball. You know, you can fake a lot of things for TV. You can tape things together and make things look like something completely different. So that was a really nice that was a really nice sort of unexpected thing with Dan and his experience. But again, just getting people excited about Para sport and and featuring real people and representing real blindness in that episode on such a big scale.

S

Shawn Marsolais 14:33

Are we going to see some tandem cycling in the show?

J

Jennie Bovard 14:36

Oh, I'm so glad that. The intro of the show where you hear that really awesome theme song, yeah, that that is actually me on the back of a tandem bike. And I think that's an area where we failed to insert some kind of description to say what's going on during the opening credits, because we're announcing the credits allowed, right? Super important, yeah, but I'm watching it, and I'm like, This footage is so cool, but the audience doesn't know that I'm riding around the back of a tandem bike. So yeah, I hope we get some tandem biking, some more stuff in there. It's, you know, it tends to come down to budget and what we have access to when we're writing the show, and we can have all these blue sky, big dreams. So I would love to have more tandem biking, more just people who are blind doing bad ass things. It's my goal for Season Two and more representation, more albino representation as well. More of my Albino Mafia Members, I would like to bring them in and have some fun storylines there too.

S

Shawn Marsolais 15:50

Okay, so are the other characters based on real people in your life, and if so, I'm assuming that their personalities have been enhanced for comedic effect, I hope. Because, I mean, yeah, there's all sorts of annoying in some of these characters, and I'm just so curious if they're based on real people, and if so, how are you not offending them by featuring them in the show?

J

Jennie Bovard 16:19

THE END - ALL DIALOGUE, SOUNDS, AND MUSIC ARE OWNED BY THE PRODUCER

THIS IS SUCH A GOOD QUESTION, BECAUSE FIRST I AS WITH LOW VISION MOMENTS WITH PRETTY BLIND I never want someone who doesn't have a personal connection to disability or blindness, or someone who maybe sees themselves represented in those characters who really don't get it. Those characters who maybe seem annoying to those of us who have experienced those interactions with your boss were like, they don't know how offensive they're being when they're like, hey, can you put the computer back to normal settings? That's highly offensive, but they have no idea, because they don't know what they don't know. And and that's sort of like I want people who are in the sighted world who don't have that real understanding of blindness. I want them to maybe, yeah, see themselves represented in some of these annoying characters and their misunderstandings of of the blind characters. And really just in in general, sometimes how to how to behave around people. I think if they see themselves and have, like, a little aha moment, that's what I'm going for. I don't want people to walk away feeling ashamed that they asked a question of someone with a disability. But I also don't want you to offer to pray for me on the bus. Yeah, not necessary. And so to answer your question, to bring it back to your actual question, Shawn, the characters are not they, I think, as with any TV show, film, really, anything? Books, really anything. It comes from somewhere in real life. It comes from a real, lived experience. And I wouldn't be doing the stories justice if they didn't come from real place. But the characters are not real people. So the, I mean, the boss, that's a composite of a bunch of bad bosses. Okay, example, my family, you guys, they are not nearly that unhinged.

 S Shawn Marsolais 18:25

Okay good. I am a counselor. I was worried about you if your parents are actually like that, well, especially your Dad.

 J Jennie Bovard 18:38

But the truth is, particularly with the family episode, and with each episode, there's usually, like, an overall story, an overall theme that we're trying to drive home. And with the the family episode as an example, that is unhinged, that is not healthy. And certainly, I think we've all had experiences where you expect someone in your life to maybe have a better understanding of what you see and what your access needs are and and maybe you don't always get the understanding that you expect. Or maybe they are not hearing you when you say that Crocinole is not low vision friendly for you, even though you say it over and over, right? These are not things that actually happened. Although I have a sister that owes me money, she knows who she is. She okayed it, all right? She okayed it, you know, the family in the show very little in common with my real family, but what we were trying to drive home is like, oh, my God, there's people in our lives that should really get it by now, because they're either your family or they're your best friend who's known you forever, and they still don't get why you don't want the furniture moved around in your home.

 S Shawn Marsolais 19:59

Mm hmm.

 J Jennie Bovard 20:00

All these things. It's, it's a real composite of experiences and of people to answer your question. I don't want anyone to be offended and think, Oh, God, that's me exactly, because that's certainly not the case.

S

Shawn Marsolais 20:16

I'm so curious about, I guess, the feedback that you're receiving from people who don't live with vision loss are, do they get it? Like, like, some of the things seem quite exaggerated a little bit to make sure that it hits home to the viewer. But like, like, even the putting it back to normal settings the computer. Like, would somebody who isn't blind understand watching that that was offensive? You know what I mean? Like, are people getting the ableist stuff do you think?

J

Jennie Bovard 20:55

I'll be totally honest, the majority of the feedback that I've had so far is from people who are in my Albino Mafia community and but on the flip side, there are a lot of there are a lot of actors in the show who have shared with their families and their communities, and I'm seeing the response from them and the response is, wow. They're blown away at some of the stories that are being told, because they're like, wow, people really behave like that? So there are, there is hope for people who don't have a real personal connection or understanding to blindness. I think one of the biggest tells for me was back in July, I did like 15 media spots, so 15 interviews, or morning TV show appearances, evening news, all these kinds of things. And while I'm not hearing a lot from individual viewers who don't have that personal connection, all of the people who were conducting those interviews had actually watched the show, and they were getting it, and they were asking me questions and engaging in conversation, that led me to believe that the message is getting through and and that's, that's all I can hope for, right? Because AMI is traditionally a network, traditionally broadcaster for people in the disability community, and I think that we're reaching more people by doing these media spots and getting the word out. But yeah, I really hope. I really hope, yes.

S

Shawn Marsolais 23:02

Yeah, there's some really cool - like, one of my favorite moments was when you're playing the pirate board game, that's not, is that a real game?

J

Jennie Bovard 23:13

Oh, everyone wants it to be a real game, and maybe it should be. It's not yet.

S

Shawn Marsolais 23:18

Oh, man, you were so convincing.

J Jennie Bovard 23:21

Shut up Pirate is very cool.

S Shawn Marsolais 23:26

Well, it could be your next business. But I love that you knocked over the pieces a couple times, and the reaction was so not a non reaction. And you also were super chill about it all, and that can, like, so there's like, those little subtle moments too, that I don't know, like, I don't think, I don't know if a sighted audience would get, how great that is when somebody doesn't have a big reaction and they just carry on. And it's just part of the experience of playing with someone who's blind that sometimes things might get knocked over, and it's no big deal. You know, I don't know. I just really appreciated that.

J Jennie Bovard 24:06

I'm so glad that you appreciated that, because that's why we included it. So for us, it's refreshing to have a non reaction. No big deal. Yeah, pick it up and move along right and and the Eve character, that's his character throughout the show, and certainly that is one character that shares a lot of characteristics with the real person in real life. Eve, in real life, happens to be my husband and and and he mirrors a lot of those traits. You know, he's just understanding, and he's just there for what I need, and and, and doesn't expect sainthood at this point, just for being there and being a support.

S Shawn Marsolais 24:58

Yeah, and it, it actually provides really good contrast with the other characters to have, right? Here's the example of the one who's doing it right, who gets it, and here's all these other people that don't.

J Jennie Bovard 25:13

Precisely.

S Shawn Marsolais 25:14

So what are your hopes? Like, where do you hope this will go? Is there any possibility of, like, a network outside of AMI picking this up, getting it on mainstream television. Like, where do you hope this will go?

J Jennie Bovard 25:29

The further that we can share, Pretty Blind, the more people we can get to enjoy it. That's what I want. Obviously, I want all eyes and all ears on Pretty Blind as much as possible, and I can't

say what exactly we've been doing in the background, but there have been some exciting conversations going on overseas. I know that someone on our production team was overseas at a conference talking about pretty blind in a room full of people in the film and TV industry and getting them excited about some of the things in particular that we did to not only make the show accessible for the viewers, the people enjoying the show, but also the production process. As you can imagine, in television, there are a lot of real, tangible barriers and real problem solving that had to be done to execute this, to make the set accessible and safe, to find cameras that didn't require as much light as traditionally to look good, because I am so extremely light sensitive and so there have been a lot of really great conversations happening. I would love to see this on a streaming service, you know that everyone has in their home, and I think I would love I will say yes to anything. So someone comes to me and they're like, hey, we have this opportunity. I am more most likely to say yes, let's try it and see what happens. And that's how I fell into this. I just kept saying yes to things and trying things and figuring out what works and what doesn't, and relying heavily on the people that do have the experience in this industry to lead me in the right direction. Like when we were filming, when I was trying acting for the first time in this whole thing, I really relied on on all the folks with the real experience to point me in the right direction. If I was a stray so I have a lot of really great people in my corner and and we're, I think, as as a whole team, super proud and excited about what Pretty Blind has done already.

S

Shawn Marsolais 27:47

Okay, I'd love to know about the process of filming an episode, like, what what is your role? Are you involved in the writing? Or do you write? Are you the writer, you know, how much input do you have? And then all of the like, what what have they had to do to make it accessible for you and anybody else who's visually impaired and on set?

J

Jennie Bovard 28:13

I'll try to keep it down to a short story and not a whole novel, because it started really from pre, pre production. It was really productive conversations, right from the beginning with the Director Jonathan Torrence, with producer Jenna McMillan of Club Red Productions, with Brad Rivers and Mike Sofchesky from the very get go. I was having conversations with all these people, Director of Photography, so the person in charge of picking the cameras, picking the lights, how is the show going to look? How are we going to make it look good but Jennie is not squinting because there are bright lights being shone in her eyes. The conversations right from the get go were very productive, and I really and to be honest, guys, I had had these conversations before on different projects, and felt in the moment, like I was being heard and understood. And then when it came to execution, when it came to the actual production, when it came to the actual day, it wasn't executed, they didn't actually get it, and it did create some barriers. So I went in this hoping to be proven wrong, and I was. And so when it came to writing, we got together in the writers room. It was me, Mark Forward, Jonathan Torrens and Dan Barra-Berger. We wanted to have more than just my voice as a woman living with low vision and albinism, I wanted to have another person living with a different type of sight loss there, so that it's not just about me. We needed to get second, third opinions and represent the community accurately. And so we had all these folks in the writers room, and when we were done after a couple of weeks, it was like, these people knew me better than I knew myself, because it was a lot of questions about, How do you do X, Y, Z, in your day to day as someone with albinism, and it was really a lot of educating the people in the room, the writers with the

TV experience, educating them about, like, what, what is day to day, life with with albinism, and it was they were blown away by really things that I would think are basic. Like me simply self advocating to say, hey, is it okay if we switch seats, because when I'm facing the window, you're just a big silhouette, and I'm it's getting uncomfortable on my eyes. That was like, wow, I never would have thought of that to them. Or like, oh, you're only a part time white cane user. What the heck does that mean? What's an ID cane? It's, it's these little things that they would never think about. And so it was a lot of education in the writers room so that they could build this world around the low vision moment, stories around my life, stories around the things that we wanted to make sure we included. We all came together to educate and sort of build this universe, this Jenny Bovard's universe. That's the character's name, very close to mine, I know and and they, when I say they, the experienced writers, Jonathan and Mark, went away and polished things up and actually wrote out dialog. And I was able to have the scripts with lots of notice. I was able, I had to ask for them in different format than they would normally send them, because you can't manipulate them and print them the way you like, yada yada and so, you know. And then Dan, his scripts were in a completely different format. He preferred his on his mini iPad and and so really, the process from the get go was understanding us and our needs and our world, and then when it came to actual production, it was like a dream. You guys, you know, in a TV set world, every hour or so, the whole thing moves. All the equipment moves. You might be moving to a new location. The scene's completely different. The lights are in different places. The equipment's extremely expensive, as I'm sure that, you know, I don't want to be tripping over it and breaking things. And so there was time, anytime the set would get moved, there was time to get ourself oriented in the space. There was time to say, hey, that light's not going to work for me. Hey, we need to cover up that window. The grips had nearly all of the windows on every set all covered up for me so there was, you know, little to lessen the chance of getting an eye strain headache, getting a light sensitivity headache. The real logistical things were really they actually listened, and there was always a clear path on set. Their cables were kept out of the way, which I think is just a good practice on any set. I don't know why they weren't doing that to begin with. Why would you not have clear paths of travel? I don't know. And, and, and always a guide on hand if need be, and really just asking us what our needs were day to day. Because, as you know, my eyes might be more light sensitive tomorrow than they were today. It just depends on what's going on. And so the whole process was really wonderful. We filmed about an hour outside of Halifax. The majority of the filming happened in Truro, Nova Scotia. And that, even with that, it was posed to me, you know, what's going to work best for for me in terms of, do I want to commute every day? What's going to be most strenuous? Because transportation is a thing. They don't let us drive. And in the film and TV industry, traditionally, you've got to figure out you have to have your own reliable transportation. And so the drives were taken care of. I had a driver, and everything was really so seamless and so smooth. And I think it became clear to me pretty early on that this is going to be a great example of how to provide access to this industry.

R

Ryan Fleury 34:59

When AMI reached out, looking for someone to direct this, produce this, and so on, was Jonathan's group the first ones that were approached? Because it sounds like they were pretty excited to learn and work with the disability community. So was this their first foray working with this community?

J

Jennie Bovard 35:18

Jonathan Torrens, Mark Forward these production companies. It is their first time working with accessible media. It is not their first time working with actors, telling actors living with a disability, telling stories about disability. Jonathan Torrens also helped direct a show called Roll With It, which is available on a local Bell network here in Nova Scotia. And the lead actor from that show, Brian George, he's a wheelchair user. He then went on to, after doing a season or two of Roll With It, he went on to act in a series called Volleys, which is not specifically about disability. He just is someone in the cast who uses a wheelchair and so certainly not Jonathan's first experience working with actors living with a disability, but he they had really no understanding of blindness or albinism going into this, but a real, genuine want to share these stories. And, you know, there's in the final episode of the of the series, Jonathan makes an appearance as a character. He I don't want to give away too much if people haven't seen it, but you know, there's some things that he says, in a really touching scene where he's inviting me to take part in an opportunity within that's scripted in the show. And he says, you know, your stories made me laugh. And I really think people, more people, need to hear these stories and this kind of content that's relatable to a certain community. This needs to be done. This needs to be made, and it needs to be done, right? And he has such a way of being an incredible mentor and leader, but also getting everyone on the crew on board and understanding what it is we're doing, and truly everyone on set understood the assignment. There was not one person that didn't get it.

 **Shawn Marsolais 37:26**

Do you memorize your lines? Then I'm guessing, well, obviously ..

 **Jennie Bovard 37:33**

it is so lucky for me that I have a brain for memorizing things. I don't know if you all are like this, but I have my credit card numbers memorized. I've got the important phone numbers memorized, and I think it comes with years of memorizing routes and just, I don't know, I think living with low vision. I use my memory more than someone maybe that that doesn't so, yes, I had to memorize my lines, and I didn't really struggle with it. It was just about putting the time in. And so each night, I would know what scenes we would film the next day. And certainly they're not in order, in chronological order, which makes things extra fun. But as long as I allotted myself a couple hours each night, I was able to memorize my lines and and they were all very impressed with that. And I was impressed with myself as well, if I'm being honest. But it went very smoothly. With with memorizing scripts, I prefer hard copy, large print, large large print, and I can color code, and I can do these kinds of things that make it easy for me, and avoiding screens was helpful, helpful for me. I've also tried listening to scripts, and that didn't work for me for memorization. So I tried all the things, large print, hard copy, tangible, that was the way for me.

 **Shawn Marsolais 39:06**

And is there ever a time when you're like, I just would never say this. Like, this is not my personality. Or like, can you give input if they're making Jennie do something that isn't really right?

J Jennie Bovard 39:20

1,000% yes. Yes. The thing about this project is everyone on set, not just me, the person saying the words, everyone was welcome to make suggestions. And so, yeah, absolutely, I was able to improv sometimes and add my two cents. I can't think of a real specific example, but you know, one, one thing I do recall is I don't remember. There's an episode where I say, what the honk would I talk about when Yves is suggesting that I write a podcast, and I'm like, Yves, what the honk would I talk about? Well, where that came from was that I accidentally read the script wrong. I thought it said what the honk, but it said, what the heck. We just ran with it.

S Shawn Marsolais 40:16

Oh that's funny. Well, the Shut Up Pirate game seemed really natural, like, I was like, is that, are you guys just playing this game and it's just coming out? I don't know. Just like you could see your personality, it didn't seem like other times. It seems like maybe it is lines, but I don't know that didn't so I was just curious, are you ever ad libbing? Are you improving? Are you just being you, memorizing?

J Jennie Bovard 40:44

That's super flattering. Some of certainly some of that episode was the script would say one thing, and then when you start saying it out loud and interacting with the other characters in the scene, it's like, yeah, no, people don't talk like that. That feels fumbly and awkward. And so some a lot, particularly in that episode where it's like, okay, you're just playing a game. So get excited. You know, some of the direction was just to, just to say something silly, you know, say something along these lines, right? And and so they would really like, let us sort of ad lib and have a lot of fun. Like, I don't think this made it into the show, but we were, we were testing different lines where Yves, at one point, comes in, and he's wearing a top hat that is my top hat that he got from the back of my closet, and I think we ended up sticking with the Abe Lincoln line, where I'm like, hey, is that the top hat from my Abe Lincoln Halloween costume? But it was a lot of fun. I threw in, hey, is that the top hat from my Shania Twain Halloween costume? Because there's a music video, and she's wearing a top hat. And then another line was, I think Mr. Peanut, because he wears a top hat. So there was a lot of it. It was too much fun and and really, acting alongside Jacob Hemphill, who plays Yves. He again, made it really easy. And Veronica is played by Jessica Barry, who is another really talented actor in her own right. They, they really their skill and their experience, I don't know they it made it easier being around real actors to just sort of go for it. Because, again, I feel like they would tell me if I didn't know what I was doing. Just being around them, really, I think, built up my confidence and the ability to just like, kind of give her.

S Shawn Marsolais 42:58

Have you been recognized on the street since the show aired?

J Jennie Bovard 43:01

Thank god, no. You know, it's funny. I think, I think, because I go out now, anytime I leave the house, you guys, I'm typically wearing a hat and sunglasses, and I'm incognito.

 **Shawn Marsolais 43:15**

Yeah.

 **Jennie Bovard 43:17**

It's not intentional. I'm just light sensitive, yes, and, and I'm all covered up, you know, particularly in the summer, and I guess as it gets colder too, I'm hiding from the sun or I'm hiding from the snow. So I don't know. I hope I don't get recognized, because it's I don't know if I'm ready for that.

 **Shawn Marsolais 43:36**

That's good. So no paparazzi is following you yet.

 **Jennie Bovard 43:40**

Not yet.

 **Ryan Fleury 43:42**

Where did the music come from Jennie?

 **Jennie Bovard 43:45**

Oh, I'm so glad you asked. I wish I could list all of the super awesome bands. They're all local. They're all from Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island, and the opening song, our theme song is from these two guys from Out of Controller, James and Terry. And the guys, they are so frigging good and so talented. They also did the theme song for the Low Vision Moments podcast right before it got put on hiatus. So anywho, yeah, all of the bands are local. There's Skunk Motel, there's a bunch of really talented artists, and there's, in fact, a Spotify playlist, if y'all are interested with all of these super, super cool music that's included in the show.

 **Ryan Fleury 44:38**

Wow that's cool, if you share that with us, we'll put it in the show notes.

 **Jennie Bovard 44:43**

Yeah, I'll send it

S

Steve Barclay 44:46

So we're doing a crossover on the podcast here. When are you going to do a crossover with Trailer Park Boys?

R

Ryan Fleury 44:53

My favorite show of all time, still listen their podcast.

J

Jennie Bovard 44:58

I would jump at that chance. I feel like, I feel like Bubbles and I could get into, get into some stuff. I've always wondered. You know he's, he's clearly low vision, okay, he's got a prescription similar to mine. Okay, he's driving vehicles. He's firing weapons. They trust him with things that you should not. I, you know what? I'm not going to put limitations on on what people can do. But I don't know some questional, questionable behavior there, but I think we could, he and I could really get into some stuff. And obviously J-Rock too for bringing Jonathan Torrance into the mix.

R

Ryan Fleury 45:40

Know what I'm sayin'?

S

Shawn Marsolais 45:47

Because I don't watch it on AMI TV, but for anyone who wants to check out Pretty Blind, when are episodes released? Is there a certain day and time?

J

Jennie Bovard 45:58

They were coming out on Tuesday evenings. But all six episodes have already aired live, so now you can go and watch them wherever, whenever you like, at amiplus.ca. And we really only start shooting Season Two sometime in 2026 so we'll all have to be patient for Season Two. But boy, we are working on it.

S

Shawn Marsolais 46:23

So right now, is this a full time job for you? Are you working on this all year?

J Jennie Bovard 46:30

I wish. You know I have just joined the actors union. I'm in ACTRA now, so I'm looking to do more of this. But the short answer is, no, I don't get to do this full time. I still work with APSEA by day - the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority - and I work with them as a mentor, and so I'm doing that as well. And still lots of volunteering with Blind Sports Nova Scotia, putting butts on tandem bikes and enjoying that.

R Ryan Fleury 47:03

Cool. So any time to get back into podcasting?

J Jennie Bovard 47:07

I know, now that the media blitz is done, I have so many ideas I don't know what to do with myself.

R Ryan Fleury 47:16

Hit record.

S Steve Barclay 47:20

Special guest host, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 47:22

Absolutely.

J Jennie Bovard 47:24

For sure!

S Shawn Marsolais 47:28

Well, well, good luck, Jenny. I think that the show is fantastic, and I think it's going to raise a lot of awareness and open people's eyes, pun intended. So thanks. Thanks for putting yourself out there on behalf of the blind community. We needed a show like this. So thank you.

J Jennie Bovard 47:46

Thank you so much. Those words mean so much to me and make me want to keep doing this and just to keep doing more and making people laugh. And I the the really cool thing about

and and just to keep doing more and making people laugh. And I think the really cool thing about Pretty Blind is that we're raising awareness, but we're doing it with the magic ingredient that is comedy. So thank you for saying it's funny and that you're enjoying it. And thank you so much for having me on. Always such a pleasure talking with all of you rock stars. And yeah, let's, let's talk again sometime, I'll come back. I'll co host. I'll do whatever you want.

R Ryan Fleury 48:26

One more question before we let you go. I should have thought of this earlier in the Goalball episode. How did the character who grunted through the game feel about playing that role?

J Jennie Bovard 48:37

Oh. Alexis Butler, shout out to Truck. She was so hyped to play that character. And originally, Truck was written as a male, and Stinky Patty was written as a female. And we ended up casting, you know, we ended up casting people in a way that it had to be swapped around. And it worked out so well. She relished the opportunities to grunt. And in fact, she was told, grunt, grunt, more grunt, more aggressively. We really want to hear you. And so it was for language for a time. And you know, people embracing it a goalball practice, because we, she and I, we play goalball together. We play on the Nova Scotia Provincial Team, and she's on the Canadian National Development Team. So shout out to her for that, too. She's pretty baller.

S Shawn Marsolais 49:34

Well, thanks again, Jennie and thank you, Steve and Ryan for trusting me to host today, and let me be part of this. It's been a real treat.

S Steve Barclay 49:45

You rocked it. Thanks.

J Jennie Bovard 49:47

Thanks for letting me ramble on. And honestly, I really enjoy these conversations. So anytime you're looking for someone, I will take any chance to talk into my microphone.

R Ryan Fleury 49:59

Okay, thanks so much. Thanks, Jennie and the Jets.

J Jennie Bovard 50:11

On that note, I'm out of here. Bye!

S

Steve Barclay 50:18

Before it turns into carpool karaoke.

S

Shawn Marsolais 50:25

Cool!

R

Ryan Fleury 50:26

Well, I guess we'll just say, well, that's going to about do it for us this week on Limitless Banter.

S

Steve Barclay 50:32

Banter, banter, banter...

R

Ryan Fleury 50:34

Where can people find you Shawn?

S

Shawn Marsolais 50:37

They can find me at blindbeginnings.ca. Or email me at limitless@blindbeginnings.ca

R

Ryan Fleury 50:45

Excellent. And Steve, where can people find you?

S

Steve Barclay 50:49

Well, they can find me at www.canasstech.com or the AT Banter podcast www.atbanter.com

R

Ryan Fleury 51:00

And wherever you listen to your podcasts.

S

Steve Barclay 51:04

absolutely. And if you want, even on social media, like Facebook, for example, because, you

know, that's one of the ones I pay attention to, you can just, you can just ignore the rest of them.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:15

And Steve is looking for friends.

S

Steve Barclay 51:16

That's right. Constantly trolling for friends.

S

Shawn Marsolais 51:21

You got one more with Jennie.

S

Steve Barclay 51:23

So awesome.

R

Ryan Fleury 51:26

Well, that's gonna do it for us this week. Thanks everyone for joining us, and we'll see you next time.

S

Steve Barclay 51:34

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52:09

you.