



## [Ep 2 | Mariah Braun](#)

Hi friend. Welcome to the Magic Hour. That's annoying . Um, I'm excited to be chatting with Mariah Braun today. She is an incredible filmmaker located in Grand Prairie. We are just gonna bring her on. She recently, Launched her very own film called Abel. There she is. Hey. Hello. Amazing. Thank you so much for joining me.

Yeah, no problem. I'm so excited that you're here. You have such a relaxing voice. I could listen to you talk all day. Oh, that's such a great compliment. You're welcome. Like, you know, we all have our own opinions of our own voice, so , I mean, I don't like it cuz I have to deal with it all the time. But it's nice that you, um, enjoy it,

I love it. I'm so glad that you're here on the magic hour. Um, why don't you tell us a little about yourself, Maria. . So my name is Mariah Braun. Uh, I am a indie filmmaker and content creator, and I live in Grand Prairie, Alberta. Um, lived here almost my whole life. Mm-hmm. . Um, and I, yeah, yeah, I know. Um, actually in Grand Prairie we call those unicorns surprisingly, because everyone is Oh, you're also unicorn

I loved. , everyone is from somewhere else here in Grand Prairie, it seems. So there's not too many, uh, born and raised Grand Prairie. So, um, Yeah. And I own a marketing agency called M three M Marketing, uh, and we help, uh, small businesses, uh, create creative content. So we collaborate with them in order to do that.

So, yeah. Awesome. Very cool. Well, I heard that you've just released your exciting film, evil. And tell us a bit of your background. How did you get into the film industry? How did you become an indie filmmaker? Yeah, so it's kind of an interesting story. I was working in radio. I worked at a local radio station called Today fm.

It's the local hit station here, and I was there to sell digital advertising. Uh, they wanted to kind of diversify those digital offerings that they had and. Uh, the station GM Grantsburg, uh, he, um, was my manager and he just sat down, uh, a video camera on my desk and is like, well, here you go, . And I'm like, okay, , I guess I gotta learn how to use this.

And, you know, I had some experience with, uh, photography. My mom is an avid photographer. She's always had like cameras around us, so I was very familiar with cameras too. Oh. always idolize them and stuff, so. Mm-hmm. , oh, I looked locally to see if there was any kind of workshops that were going on or anything that I could train myself to use this new piece of equipment.

Um, and I found this one, uh, it was. Being held by the local film, uh, collective that we have here called Prima. Um, cool. Yeah. They were offering this free, um, workshop and you know, I thought, oh, I'll just go and I'll see if I can learn how some tricks on how to operate this . And to my surprise, when I got there, it was like a full film set, like set up in this like workshop area with, and the boom and like everything.

Right way. Oh my goodness. Right. Yeah, you might. Neat. Um, that's so cool. What a great experience for your first, like immersive. Yeah. Wow, that's awesome. Go through and like. We got to try every different kind of station. You could try the lighting, you could try operating the camera. It was just really engaging and I learned a lot and there was actors there and stuff, and I went away from there thinking I was gonna learn one thing and it just made me.

Curious about what filmmaking was even more, right? It just was like, mm-hmm , I really wanna do that again. Right? So from there, I just started taking some college courses, video production courses, um, where they, you know, there was some practical components where you had to make your own film and work with others to make a film.

And then from there, I just, I don't know. I got onto people's sets. I guess I'd met a lot of people through those courses and such and mm-hmm. , other story Hive sets other people's story hives and got to, you know, the assistant, assistant director once, um, d Yeah, yeah. Then it just snowballed from there. It was like, My friends were like, you need to submit for a story.

Hi, now, like, let's see your story. And so I gained the courage to kind of start applying to get funding for, for films. And here I am. Oh my goodness. This is amazing. I love that you had an expectation to like learn how to use a couple buttons on your camera, and then you go and you are immersed in this incredible creative world, meeting new people, finding out all the different technological things, and then now you're just like in love with it and it's kind of just gravitating towards you and you've just come out such a shining star in your community.

Oh, thank you. I really appreciate that. You're welcome. That's so amazing. How long ago was that, that you, when I first started, it had to have been in 2017 or so when I first started and stuff, and then I was awarded my first story. Hi. In. , it had to have been 2020 2019 I guess, cuz we were doing filming during the pandemic, so, oh wow.

So I got my first story Hive then, and then my second one Able, which is, you know, why we're here today. So, which is why here. So what is Story Hive for people who are not familiar with this funding process? Talk a little bit about. Yeah, so Story Hive operates in British Columbia and Alberta. Mm-hmm. , um, and they basically seek to help emerging filmmakers.

Now by emerging, I mean people who have maybe never made a film before, maybe have a little bit of experience being on a set, or they just have a story to tell and, um, you know, they. filmmakers from BC and Alberta do that with this funding. Uh, they also provide, um, mentorship and training along with the funding with it, and really they get you used to the process of making a film.

They, they get you to submit everything that you would need to kind of do in your pre-production in order to create a film. You know, pitch a broadcaster or distributor, um, and then, you know, you go through the process and if you're successful, you have all the tools. In your toolbox to go and make the movie or make the film.

So it's pretty powerful. They, they help a lot of people that, um, want get in this space and, uh, they have a very, very good system of doing that. And I think I'm, I'm proof of their pudding, I guess. Uh, really? Cause I was totally green to all of this. Um, only in 2017. Oh my goodness. And so you've had two selected winners.

I feel like that's rare cuz it's quite a competitive competition. I'm lucky . I feel like I'm, oh my goodness. And you know, they're very, they're very inclusive. Uh, they want to see, uh, people who are different, uh, differently abled who are bipo indigenous. Like they wanna see those, um, filmmakers have a chance too.

Right. So they, that's part of the. . Um, and, you know, yeah, I'm very lucky. It's a, it's a competitive space. Obviously they get probably hundreds and hundreds of applicants. Uh, but yeah, I'm very lucky to have had two opportunities to make a film. Um, what is your favorite aspect about being a filmmaker? Now that you have all this experience, what are the things that you love the most when you're on.

Yeah, that's, it's hard to narrow it down just to one, but I think it's connecting with people to be, if I was to just like condense it down to one boiled box, I think yeah, it would be connecting with people, whether it's, uh, the subjects or the interviewees that we have in the documentary. or the people that are on my crew and just developing relationships that way.

That's probably the the biggest thing I love about filmmaking. And it's just this journey that it's, you can never predict it. You think you know what's gonna happen or you think you know where you want your storyline to go, and especially in that short document. Form. Mm-hmm. , uh, follow of the story. , uh, you know, for quite some time.

Like, you know, it took us a year to make able essentially, um, and you have to condense it down into this 25 minute thing, and you're just like, you wanna add these things in. You have to kind of be a little ruthless in terms of what you cut because it's a short format. Uh, there's, you have to get across your message in a very short amount of time, uh, and make the goal.

So it's, it's extremely challenging, uh, to make your own film. Challenging on yourself, challenging your leadership skills and your technical skills, and I think that's what makes it kind of exciting for me. Ooh, we have a question from the audience. What was the most eye-opening or, oh, I never knew. They didn't like that.

When you started to work on films, what kind of experiences did you find? . . That's a tough one. I guess it is that magic, that movie Magic. Mm-hmm. that never think about, um, that you would need to have happen in order to get certain shots. I think that's the mm-hmm. . Um, . Yeah. And then just the things that don't end up making it in the film, I think is, uh, you know, from a director's perspective, the things that you leave out, the things are that you think about.

Like, what if I included that? What if the story went a little bit in a different direction? Those kind of things. So yeah, I'd probably say it's those like weird things that you have to do to make a shot work. And I'm sure there are so many, like having your creative brain think about how you're gonna capture it in just the right way.

It's probably nothing like what we expect. It's not just a camera panning. Maybe you have a camera like on something that's rolling below somebody's legs or you're really up high. I can only imagine . P Our director of photographer, I think at one point had his camera on like just, um, like a cloth, like a kitchen cloth.

And, and basically he put it against the ground and he was just like following Keisha a certain way. And it, it's just like, I would've never thought of that to get that . Yeah. That is so cool. amazing. So when you're coming up with your idea for able, what was that process like when you were applying for a story hive, when you were kind of putting your board together of what the story's going to become?

Yeah. Well, initially, you know, story Hive made a call out. They wanted to hear about local heroes in different, uh, parts of BC in Alberta. Mm-hmm. . So I went online of course, uh, because you know, that's where people hang out these days and they, um, you know, grand Prairie is very loving community and, and we have a lot of heroes here, to be honest.

But I wanted to see. People were talking about. And so I just, uh, did some research and stumbled upon Keisha's story. Uh, and that is the main subject of, uh, Abel, um mm-hmm .



He is a C five C six quadriplegic woman, uh, 25 years old. Uh, at the age of 17. She was in a pretty bad accident, uh, that. , um, ended up causing her to be a C five C six quadriplegic.

And essentially, uh, ever since, like I, I looked at her story and she just had so many people engaging with her and, um, who were gravitated towards her story. Right. And so she, she had her YouTube channel, she's a content creator and. and yeah, I just reached out to her like it was the modern day cold call, like get on Facebook

Yeah. Popping in the dms . Yeah. Yeah. Um, and was totally like, Hey, you know, I came across your story. I, it seems to be resonating with a lot of people. I was wondering if you would like to chat about, uh, possibly capturing your story on film and. So open to it. Um, at first she, of course, she's like, Hey, is this real?

Like really messaging me. . Yeah. Are you, are you scammer? What's going on, ? Totally right. So, and you know, the process, uh, for applying to Story Hive, I mean, I had been through it once before, so I kind of knew what to expect, but mm-hmm. , you know, they write a log line, a. They, they get you to, to write a treatment, uh, which is like a script essentially for.

and yeah, they, they give you, they ask for all the things that you would need, uh, to make the film. So after that, getting the funding, it's just like you have to hit go. Cuz they have some pretty tight timelines. Uh, you know, it. We say it takes a year for a 25 minute film, but it really does. It is a lot of work.

Um, and it probably, it was probably a little bit longer than a year too, um, by the end of it all said and done. Right. So, wow. Yeah. Well, what was it like filming during the pandemic? , oh, that was was the most challenging thing. Um, we really, I had to be very selective with my crew. Um, you know, we found a really good core group of people and mm-hmm , we could only film with three people.

Um, so. . You know, usually on a set like this, it might be nice to have a fourth or even a fifth person. Mm-hmm. . So we were double duty. You know, sometimes I had the sound and I had to hold a gimbal or vice versa. The DP maybe had the, the headset on monitoring. Yeah. Um, it was challenging, but we, we tried to make it as safe as possible.

you know, we had to wear the p p e and we were limited to those people. And obviously we want to be careful about, um, you know, interacting with others. So, you know, I would choose between, you know, filming and seeing other people. A lot of the time when I was filming, I have to admit, I did not see many of my friends because I didn't want to.

uh, and possibly get people sick, right? So, uh, that was really challenging. And we did have a shoot in Edmonton. Um, and actually this is gonna be like, this is the first time I've ever

talked about this, but, um, oh my goodness. Exclusive here, . Um, we had a shoot in Edmonton. We were supposed to go and we had.

10 day break. And um, essentially I found out that I got Covid and I could not go to the Edmonton shoot that we had planned at, uh, which is a rehab, uh, facility in Edmonton that Keisha goes to. And, um, so I had to direct through FaceTime. I know part of my film through FaceTime, you. I had Covid. . Oh my gosh.

Gosh. Brett, a friend, a director, or sorry. Yeah, a director friend who was also a producer on the show. He went down instead of me shout out to Ru Jones. Thank you for saving my butt, . I so appreciate it. And my crew had my back 100%. And uh, you know, it was, Disappointing time because it was probably one of the biggest shoots we had, uh, planned for the entire film.

And of course I wanted to be there for it. Um, yeah. Uh, but yeah, interest, it was, it was very interesting. Um, but wow, we were safe. Way to adapt and persevere. Bringing technology into it. Popping on FaceTime. Yeah. We have a comment that says, oh my God, that would've been so challenging. Yeah, it sounds pretty challenging.

Yeah, unreal. Yeah. It was something big I had to overcome mentally and um, , you know, we all have been affected by Covid in some way. And, um, we, and you know, ke it's just funny cuz Keisha's story in itself just taught me that I can overcome that challenge, right? Um mm-hmm. . So yeah, there's a lot of learning about yourself and life's many situations that you get into and challenges and yeah, I overcame it, uh, and everything ended up perfect.

Yeah. Oh my goodness. Incredible. Um, so if there was someone out here listening who's just starting out in filmmaking, what would you tell them? Hmm.

I would say if you are even just curious about, uh, the filmmaking process or making your own film. , go out and do it. Uh, we almost, all of us have a cell phone now and mm-hmm. . Um, if that's what you have to create, um, your films, go for it. These iPhones are extremely powerful these days. Um, and I actually had my first mentor with Story Hive.

Um, he made his entire film with an iPhone, uh, and I believe it got on Amazon, so like nothing. These days. Um, yeah. It's like he, he completely makes films just with his iPhone and he loves it. cool. Yeah. And so just go out and create, I would say if, if you have an idea of a story or, or something you want to capture, just go do it.

Just go try and see what worked, what did it, and then just repeat that process and improve along the way. Right. . Mm-hmm. . Yeah. It's just a huge learning experience. So yeah, definitely. I think that just overcoming the fear, letting go of the like, can I do this kind of mentality? And doing it just start is the secret to anything.

Definitely. Yeah. Just start for sure. Yeah. So you talked a little about, about your, um, interview. Person, what is the word? Interviewee? . Yeah. Yeah. Let's tell us about, uh, the story of evil. What is theory documentary? What is the storyline? What does it follow? Yeah, so it, it follows Keisha Master Dimus, um, the main subject of the film.

Um, it tells her story, um, from, you know, the accident to, um, overcoming that and, you know, I guess. hearing that, you know, you're never gonna walk again to this beautiful journey that she's gone through. Um, to become a community advocate for, um, people with disabilities and accessibility and, and those things, right?

So it's really a story of resilience. Um, I think maybe a lot of people when they see the title and, and, and you know, the thumbnail on stuff that. Maybe draw some assumptions, but I think a lot of people were just shocked as to how relevant Keisha's story was to them and maybe some of the challenges that they've been going through personally.

So no matter who you are, uh, what walk of life you're from, I think everyone can take away some kind of resilience piece from, from Keisha's story and, uh, use it in our own lives, I guess as, I think we just all need a little bit of hope, especially right now. Uh, we all are in this moment of, uh, radical change in life with covid and all these things have happened and we really just need to stay resilient as people, I think.

And the story just, it came out at the perfect time, I think. Um, wow. The world, so. Well, I have chills, definitely. Wow. Yeah, I can definitely agree that this was a story that we all need to hear in this day and age, year three of the pandemic. So much uncertainty, so much change has happened for all of us. It sounds like just the experience of creating this incredible film too was such a journey that helped you come to a lot of realiz.

Yeah. Um, yeah. Amazing. Is there any other messages that you were trying to resonate with your audience other than amazingly being resilient and coming away with that ? Well, um, another message is definitely, um, because we also did a behind the scenes program, um, which you can totally view on Facebook, and I should have it on YouTube shortly here.

and all of us able-bodied crew members spent some time in a wheelchair, uh, for a day. So I directed, uh, part of the film in a wheelchair I brought for a day. I experienced that and went through our city streets and, you know, I did all the pro producer like kind of duties, I guess on an indie film anyways, um, and got the crew and, you know, in my wheelchair and navigated some of the tough.

Yeah, there's just a lot of stuff you can look around and see, and if you aren't in that position, it's harder to see. I will say that it's harder to see until you're in that scenario yourself. So

even like seeing myself in the reflection of. Some glass at a local business, seeing myself in the, in the wheelchair, and it was hard.

There was like so many things that were like slanted curbs that I couldn't get over. And I just think these people, um, or there are people in general, , uh, that experience this on a daily basis. Like I am just really any lived experience, I'm just sitting in a chair for a couple hours. Um, and that's, wow.

Nothing like doing this either for the rest of your life or temporarily, or whatever the case may be. Um, yeah, and I just think that people need to look around, look at their surroundings. How can we make it more accessible for people? , um, how can we do better? Um, you know, it's, it's not e even people with dis just people with disabilities.

Um, it could be a mom with a stroller that it makes them, you know, be able to walk around our city easier or, or whatever the case gets easier. Um, and I know in Grand Prairie here we have a. Uh, grant that helps businesses even, um, make those upgrades. Uh, it's called the Barrier Free grant. And oh, great.

That's a great way for businesses to invest and, and make their, their place of business more accessible. So that was definitely another key message. Um, , definitely one of those messages I hope, uh, got through. And, and also that she did, she, no matter what Keisha was gonna end up doing in life, she was always destined to connect with people and you could just see that spark.

Um, and I think a lot of people, uh, got that message. I, I, I've gotten a lot of feedback on that one too. So. Wow, that resilience, that's the main piece. But there's all these other kind of storylines. Uh, when you watch it, you'll definitely see them. Wow. I can only imagine too. Grand Prairie being in Alberta, what I picture when I think of Grand Prairie is just like tons of snow.

Yes. And it's being cold, and I cannot imagine operating a wheelchair, going along the sidewalk. , what am I going to encounter? Oh my goodness. Yeah, absolutely. The snow is like I, I didn't use the wheelchair during winter, so that was another thing that I did not get to experience, but I could only imagine trying to navigate the snow this year.

There's so much ice and. , you know, and you know, getting cold again and then the amount is snow. That's in Northern Alberta for sure. It makes it challenging. So anything we can do to make it easier. Um mm-hmm. , you know, I think one of our crew members in the interview, in the behind the scenes footage, he said, You know, if we can land rockets on the moon, I think we can make it a little bit easier for people to get around in, in on earth here.

Uh, you know? Yes. . So I love this. Thank you. I was going to ask like, what other kinds of feedback did you hear from your team when they were experiencing this? Oh, they, they. Didn't think about like all the things you have to plan out in your day. Um, and you know, something simple as like, you know, our, our crew member, Jared, went and played some basketball and just that we are privileged to do every single day, um, that.

It's seen from a D lens when you're in a wheelchair, um, if you're differently abled, those kind of things. And um, a lot of them were just grateful for being able bodied. Uh, some of them came to those conclusions, like, you know, I think we can make it more accessible around here and. Yeah. And then like even our dp, uh, Dave, he's, he really tried to see the world, uh, through his point of view, right?

So getting down to the level and just seeing the world looks different. You know, you sit down, you look around it, it looks different from different perspectives and, um, mm-hmm. , I think that's incredib. . I mean, it's awesome. I love that it's just diverse, um, point of views and that we had the opportunity to kind of, um, observe Keisha and, and, and her point of views and yeah, it's, they just, I think overall we just noticed things that we haven't before, which I think is a good experience to.

It's incredible. I'm so glad that you and your team could have that experience. In addition to working on such an inspiring and incredible film. It's amazing. And that there sounds like there's a lot of growth for each and every one of you, which to me I think that's so important just rather than to walk away unchanged after a project.

That's not my goal in life. Yeah. So I can, that's really incredible. . Wow.

Um, so your films helped to showcase underrepresented individuals. How important is this to you? Um, and what have you learned during your filming? I think you covered this a little bit, Bob. Uh, yeah, that's okay. Um, yeah, I think it's important to me because I've felt like. Underrepresented individual myself in life.

I felt kind of like an outcast at times. Just feel different. Um, you know, growing up in Grand Prairie, uh, in my school, like other than my brother, there might have been a few other, like colored people, those kind of things. So I just think, I think everyone deserves a platform. Um, You know, they deserve a voice, especially when they're doing something so wholesome, like, like Keisha is.

And um, I just think, yeah, when people are isolated in certain ways, whether it's um, you know, Being differently abled or you're categorized as different somehow. Um, it just, it's a very alone feeling. And, um, I think these kind of people deserve to be heard. I think that, um, we deserve to have a voice and, uh, I think it's important to support one another, uh, through that.

So, . Yeah, I guess like in terms of myself even, like, I've always just felt like I wanted to be heard, right? So I feel like whenever I relate to my interviewee about that, um, you know, they just wanna be heard. They just want to hear, they just want to be heard, um, by other people, and they want to hear that other people have heard them, right?

So, mm-hmm. important. Oh, it's an important thing. . Yeah. It's beautiful that you can have this medium to share stories and that you can connect people through this way. I mean, looking back at 2017, Mariah, and to you now, yeah, it's amazing. So much growth. Oh my goodness. And I feel like you've probably come into your true creative self right now.

Yeah, it's bizarre. I never thought I would. in the spot. I don't know. It's just, but you feel like you're so at home, uh, doing it. And that's when you know, you just gotta keep going and you gotta keep, you know, growing as a creator and better and meet new people and experience different, uh, types of films and genres and all sorts of things.

Yes. When you were filming Abel, how rigorously did you stick to the script and the storyboard? Did you switch anything up or did you learn things in your discussions with Keisha and then kind of change your story? Yeah, there was a little bit of like development in terms of, um, even Keisha's message throughout it.

Like, um, like I learned eventually, Keisha's goal was never to walk again. Right. But you think that it's, it's maybe an assumption that that. They would wanna walk again or that Keisha wanted to walk, right. That they wanna be healed, they wanna be back to who they were before. But Keisha is comfortable with where she is now, right?

Yeah. She loves her life. Mm-hmm. and, um, she's making change and I think that's what she's always been destined for. And that's what's the, what is important. That's the key point, right? Um. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. . Oh my goodness. . Yeah. Um, , who are some of your role models and did you have any inspirations when you were working on Abel?

Hmm. . Oh, I wanted to say something about the script. I'm gonna go back. I'm sorry. Yes. Go back. Go back. That's okay. Rewind, that total rewind. Um, the script. So with a documentary, it's so hard to like script it out. Like you have ideas for certain shots, which is great for a storyboard and, and such like that, but like literally the story changes and you have to be okay with that.

Um, it's so hard to. Speak to a script necessarily, or a treatment even, um, as everything evolves, like the storyline changes and, yeah. So I mean, I had a pretty good idea of where the story, uh, was going, but yeah, it had to be tweaked, uh, and molded into mm-hmm. was like, I think initially we wanted to. Kind of look at like rural accessibility, but honestly the format is super short.

Like the only aspect of rural um, accessibility was what had happened in Grand Prairie and Keisha's experiences and stuff like that. So, So that was definitely one thing that was like scrapped because it was just too big. . You can't just like, I don't know, talk about it a little bit and then just leave it like you're, the audience is just gonna be like, wait, what?

right? And 25. Yeah. Whiplash. Yeah. Yeah. What's going on? I want more of that. Right? So, mm-hmm. some sacrifices in terms of the content you might. , you know, especially the short format, you have a very limited time, um, to get a message across. So a script in documentary almost probably never goes the same way.

Uh, I'd be very surprised if it did though.

So cool. . Uh, okay. Fast forward. Back to our other question. Who are some of the role models and inspiration that you used when you were working on this film that are both in the film world or just in regular everyday life? Hmm. Well, first of all, my mentor Wendy was incredible. Um, she opened my mind to so many different ideas, like even just having her as a sounding board.

when I was struggling to like piece together the story and such. And she had, um, so she has so much ex industry experience and, um, she just, she just pushed me to be better. Uh, and she, she helped me along the way, which was incredibly inspiring. And to this day, she still, you know, messages me, calls me making, making sure things are.

pay and all those things, um, it's like a relationship that's totally priceless. Like I, I could never repay her for, uh, the amount of value she's created for me. So that's definitely one person. Um, and just Keisha herself, it's just so, she's just so inspiring. Um, she, and every single time I talk to her, we'll FaceTime sometimes and just talk and, um, hash it out.

Like just see how our day is going. Like that's another friendship. Um hmm. Glad for, uh, and every single time I talk to teaching me something new. And that's, uh, incredibly powerful. But in terms of like filmmakers that might have inspired me, . I did see a, uh, documentary locally here. It was screened. It's called us and Them, and I believe it was, uh, filmed in Vancouver.

Um, it's been a while since I rented it, but, um, I should, I should rent it again. Um, but the Krista Lotton and she, um, she followed four homeless individuals, people who were struggling, uh, with homelessness or houseless. Um, and you know, it's the, I think the log line is something along the lines of a woman sets out to help for homeless people, but they end up helping her and, oh, like the epitome of why I make films, cuz I'm on a healing journey myself of learning about.

overcoming traumas that I've experienced, those kind of things. So, um, it was, it's, it's just one of those things. I saw that and I was like, I wanna be like that. I wanna, I wanna talk to people, I want to give them a platform. I want to connect with people. Um, so that was a huge thing when I saw that screening.

I was like, that's so interesting. I want to do that. I want to make a film about a topic, about people and get their message out. Holy baloney. You are so inspiring. . I'm getting a little emotional just listening to you,

Wow. Um, so you're an amazing champion for diversity and inclusion. How has this impacted your life?

Um, well, like I said before, kind of, I've always just felt like an outsider. Kind of wanted to be heard in some way. Um, and I guess just seeing, um, seeing people like myself or I guess the lack of seeing people like myself in certain spaces and um, certain roles and those kind of things, um, I, I would love to be that person to, you know, maybe there's a little girl out there, um, who sees me making a film.

They think to themselves, you can do this. Right. Um, so diversity inclusion is huge in my life. Um, I've always wanted to be accepted by people around me. Um, and obviously throughout life that has changed and evolved. Right. You know, it's great to see people. Playing together for things like Black Lives Matter and things like that.

That's happened, uh, in, even in Grand Prairie. I think we had a thousand people, uh, rally together. Um, so obviously conversations are happening. The, the changes happening, uh, are we there yet? Um, with, you know, making sure our spaces are diverse and, and include all. . Yeah. We have a lot of, I think, but, um, it's good to see the progression.

It's good to see the conversations are starting. Um, and it's, it's like films like this just allows you to open your mind to think about it a little bit more. Right. Which is also, you know, one of my missions, I want people to think about different people and you know, diversity doesn't just have to be people with disabilities.

Bipo, it's different age groups. It's just people of. walks of life, um mm-hmm. , and that's important to bring to a team, uh, to our communities and all that. Um, yeah, I, it's huge in my life. It's, it's something I want to advocate more for. Um, and, and yeah, I hope that even if it just changes the mind of one individual, it'll be worth it.

I'm sure you already have. I am positive . . Unreal. . Uh, well that kind of goes into my next question. Um, do you think there is progress in the recent years looking at world events and looking at the Black Lives Matters movement and so on, and what do you think that we can do to be more inclusive? . Yeah, I definitely think that there has been progressions.



Um, I, like I said, I don't think we're there yet. I still think there's a lot of work together. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . Um, and that work, I really think it's just having conversations, uh, no matter. , no matter what everyone's journey's gonna be different. Like you, the way that you, um, make change with it might be different.

The way I make change. Uh, it's all about the personal journey and how you wanna make an impact on that, um, and what you would like to learn about, um, having conversations, you know. Even. Yeah, I just, I honestly think it's starting conversations like my friend and I for Black History Month. We always, um, you know, watch different films and talk about, uh, different historic things about, uh, certain Black History Month films.

Um, and we start conversations. We, uh, support black restaurant owners here in Grand Prairie. Um, we will do that. So, It's, it's all a personal journey and what you think, um, you're best suited, what your role is in that. And is it just learning a little bit more, educating yourself or is it out there pounding the pavement and, and making change that way?

Or is it, you know, like someone like myself making a film, uh, that might address that question or address those questions, um, and those thoughts and provoke different thoughts, right. So, , it's, that's such a hard question to answer because Yeah, if, if we knew the answer, I would hope that we were there already.

Right. So you'd hope, but here we are putting people on the moon, as you said. Yeah. . So you'd hope. . But yeah, absolutely. I think that having conversations even just like this was so important and I really value your perspective. So thank you so much for sharing this with us and everyone listening. Um, but now I wanna know, would you mind sharing some of the films that you've been watching for a Black History month?

Would you have any recommendations? Well, we've not started. I've been so behind. Okay. Okay. , no pressure. like, Terry's probably like so bad. She's like, she hasn't messaged me back with her list , but I'm getting Mariah's exited the group chat. I'm sorry, Sherry

That's too funny. , do you have any recommendations or resources that, um, you would think that people should look into if they want to learn more about diversity? . Yeah. Like es, especially Black History Month. Obviously February is Black History Month. Um, but with anything that's diversity or inclusion, I think there's a lot of, um, online workshops that are going on or different panel discussions.

just sit in, listen and watch and then mm-hmm. , get that information. Uh, see what actual people who are experiencing these things, um, have to say and see if you can contribute to making, uh, your community a better place. I think that's all you do really. Um, you know,

there's local libraries that do Black History Month things like different panels and those kind of things.

read different books, listen to different stories, support black-owned businesses, um mm-hmm. , uh, there's always something going on where you can educate yourself. We, we have this worldwide web that, that's at our disposal, right? Um, and you can learn so many different things if you just open your mind car a half hour, an hour to focus on it and, and learn something new.

So, yes. So true. It's time to stop watching cat videos and it's time to search something different and educate yourself. If you're listening, , stop, scroll time to turn. Or you could do hashtag bipo, you know, you could go down the TikTok train, you know, find those kind of things. Oh my goodness. The TikTok train.

I could get sucked right in . Wow. . It's like hours have gone by. Okay. Okay. Okay, we're moving on . Time to get up and start my day. Um, So I would just love for you to have a space to share with us some of your greatest achievements to date. Tell us how amazing you are. I already know it. Everyone's listening already knows it.

So give yourself a little pat on the back. I mean, you've launched your second story. Hi, documentary, which is incredible. Tell me what's going on with you. . Yeah. So what's next for me is kind of, um, I'm developing a film called The Heroes Project. So, um, I did submit for the black creators. I was unsuccessful, but, um, that's okay because I think I'm going to see what other kind of funding is available, um, and see if I can develop that.

I. I'm, this year I'm kind of trying to do less. The, the big motto is do less because making two during a pandemic is pretty stressful. , yeah. Want to do something a little bit more artsy and get out in nature. And, um, I, I kind of wanna experi, uh, experiment with some soundscapes like capturing. Wilderness and like landscape images and really focusing on the audio and, um, it sounds really artsy, , probably nobody's gonna, no, I love it.

I'm so into it, but I fit one of the, I love to fish and so we go to these remote places and I just wanna capture the sounds. There, so that sounds incredible. Yeah. One of the creative businesses that we work with, um, her name is Stephanie Patula. She's an artist of Edmonton and she recently went to Iceland over December and did just that with her partner, and she was capturing the soundscapes of Iceland.

Um, Iceland connected with that. Yeah. Yeah. I'll the number one, she's amazing. Fuck out. Right. Amazing. Wow. That's, she's incredible. Um, so tell us everything about Abel. Where can we find Abel Online? Okay. Can we see it in the theater? Like what's going on? So we have a little bit of a window between when, um, story hybrid releases it in the summer.

Now, uh, to do festival, uh, run. So right now we're just exploring what festivals we could submit to. So we don't have it public, but for followers, uh, they can just message me on Instagram and I will provide them with and a password to watch it. Um, so only the followers of you? So they have, okay. Only if you're listening to this

Yeah. So then okay. Just. Message me, get in my dms and I will send you a link and a password to watch it. It's a light watch at 25 minutes. Um, and I, you just have to let me know what you think of it after you watch it. Easy done homework. Achieved . So are you submitting to festivals? Yeah, I'm hoping we can.

Uh, we've been looking at a couple of , you know, festivals. , um, some pretty strict rules on, you know, premieres and all these different things, so it's kind of another beast. Yeah. Interesting. I've not had a lot of experience in, so I'm gonna check it out, um, and see if there's any film fest that we are interested in.

And then, yeah, in the summer, uh, able will be available, uh, online. Right now it is available through TELUS Optic tv. So if you go to that section, uh, you can watch it there. So, um, That is exclusive to Tellis Optic tv. Uh, but like I said, if you wanna watch it online, just DM me and I'd be happy to give it to you.

Amazing. What's it gonna look like when Story Hive releases it? Do they do a big shaba? Yeah, they put it on their YouTube channel. Um, and yeah, they give us this year so that we can do the festivals cuz they have all those strict rules, um mm-hmm. . But yeah, they definitely promote it. They promote the fact that, you know, another edition has been released but they release quite a bit at once.

So yeah, you'll just have to look for able in there. Um, I will . , it's pretty easy. Abel is the title. Yeah. So to search it, um, you know, I don't have an exact date yet, um, but it will be sometime this summer. Cool. And Abel has its own social platforms, I believe. Tell us. That's where we can find it. Yeah, so you can follow us at Able ab film on Instagram.

Facebook. Uh, Facebook, you'll find that behind the scenes footage where all of us are able, body crew members are, you know, using a wheelchair and experiencing that for the first time. And then Keisha directs, um, our interviews. She asks us the interview questions and all that sort of stuff. Oh, my of perspectives happen there.

So I definitely recommend everyone check that out. Um, yeah, so, you know, Instagram, Facebook, you can find us. . Amazing. Awesome. Is there anything else you would like to add? I've just asked you a zillion questions. . No. Anything else so much for having me on on magic. Everyone was like you and like I was just like, yeah.

I'm super excited for Magic Hour because I've been following your account for a while now and I just love, um, hello Unicorn and everything about you and I love the chats. And you all are like the people I wanna hang out with. So keep doing what you're doing, girl. We'll be hanging out, I'm sure maybe one day we'll come to Grand Prairie.

I mean, I don't know , but if I do, I'll let you know. And if you're ever here in Vancouver, absolutely. I Vancouver every once in a while. Okay. So I'll probably, uh, find in your dms and ask for a . . Yes, please. Oh my goodness. I just have to share the story that you showed up on my Instagram, because you heard of a Magic Hour with Neil, a past guest.

Yeah. And it's just like this beautiful, amazing circle. And now you're here. And I am so, so thrilled. Neil, this was great. Thanks for connecting. old great people. . Good job. Neil , you are incredible. So inspiring. Thank you so much for sharing your time with me this afternoon. I am really excited to go watch Abel.

Um, I really appreciate everything. Thank you. No problem. Have a great day. Hope. Yes, you too, my dear. Take care. Bye bye.