

Stories from the brainreels podcast transcript

September 4, 2015

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Introduction

CHERYL: Welcome to Stories from the brainreels monthly podcast about brain injury and disability with a focus on art, culture, and disability pride.

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CHERYL: It feels like such an exciting time for disability in the media. Emmitt Thrower, Leroy Moore, and their co-collaborators are gearing up for the October release of "[Where Is Hope?](#)", their fantastic, multi-media documentary on police brutality and profiling against people with disabilities, especially people of color. [Superfest, the longest running disability film festival](#) anywhere, hits screens in November. And everywhere I look on Facebook, people are openly challenging stereotypes and tropes by continuing to share two beloved activists' TED Talks, [Stella Young](#) and [Maysoon Zayid](#). Maysoon, if you're listening: when people ask who I want to play me in my biopic, it's you. It will be an easy film to make because not much happens. Just be prepared when my office manager gives you a call. Or a meow, since he's a cat. (Side note, my "office manager" is not in this podcast episode, but someone else's makes a guest appearance.)

On today's show, I talk with two people from the hit documentary "[Becoming Bulletproof](#)," Theodore James and AJ Murray. It's been doing great on the film festival circuit, and it premieres in select theaters starting September 25th. I'm excited for this film. And since I've already written about it a couple times on [my disability arts blog](#), I'm going to keep this intro short and let you get right to the guests TJ, AJ, and AJ's nose. I mention AJ's nose because it was situated right next to his microphone, and his deviated septum makes some comments throughout the episode. Don't worry; AJ is not asleep and snoring. It's just his septum weighing in on some of the tougher topics and having its say.

The Interview

CHERYL: I wanna thank both of you so much for coming on the show today. And let's start out just by introducing yourselves.

AJ: Great. My name is AJ Murray. I'm one of the featured subjects in "Becoming Bulletproof."

TJ: And I am Theodore James. You can call me TJ. I produced the film "Becoming Bulletproof."

CHERYL: My office manager is a cat, and he's in here. Earlier, he was licking the microphone and walking all over it. So anything could happen at this point.

TJ: Skittles, come here. I got a little puppy in here.

CHERYL: [giggles]

TJ: Whenever he comes in, he'll start barking. So I apologize in advance.

CHERYL: That's OK! Seriously. My cat shows up on my podcast sometimes. You can hear him. So if your office manager is named Skittles, that's great. No problem [laughs].

Inclusion in the arts and this documentary

CHERYL: I came up with a bunch of questions that I knew I wanted to ask you guys. But something hit me yesterday that I wanna start with. AJ, you posted this amazing picture on Facebook just yesterday. And it had the Shakespeare quotation "All the world's a stage." And then there's a picture of you onstage under a ton of lights. And then there's a quotation by you, "All the world, includes disabled actors. We demand inclusion on the stage, behind the scenes, production, creation, and decisions of what takes place on the world's stage."

AJ: Yes! I just think that's so appropriate to me, my life as a performer. That embodies what the film is about. I want everyone with a disability--doesn't matter what their disability is--to be included in the arts in every facet, whether it's a film or theater or in front of the camera, behind the camera, whether they're big studio execs or stage hands, just everywhere. I think the arts is so, so important. And I think that we could be included in every facet.

CHERYL: Yeah. Definitely. You want the portrayals to be accurate. TJ, you are a producer of the film through the company SuperFilms!. How did you get interested in working on this documentary?

TJ: That was through Michael Barnett who is the director of the film. We were just finishing our last film called "Superheroes," which was about real-life superheroes. It was a documentary, and it was on HBO. And we were looking for a new project, and he was like, there's this really great camp that happens every year that I've known about for some time. I've been talking with them. I finally have the opportunity to go film. I don't know if it's a doc, I don't know if it's a short, you know. But I really feel strongly that there's something magical happening here. So he went out, and he filmed, I think it was--AJ, do you remember how long they were out there filming?

AJ: We filmed "Bulletproof" for about two weeks.

TJ: Yeah. So the documentary crew was out there for those two weeks. I didn't go onto set at all.

CHERYL: Oh, bummer. It looked like it was so much fun!

TJ: It did! And at that point, when he was out there filming, I had no idea what it was. He was just like, you know, it's a bunch of actors. They're making a movie, it's a Western this year, could be good. That was the extent that I knew. And he was like, I feel strongly this is something that I just wanna do. And I was like, great. Let me see the footage after you shoot it, and we can go from there. Two weeks later, he came back. I was looking at the dailies that they had shot. And it was just, it was really compelling footage, really great characters, a really powerful message: everything that you want when you start doing a doc, just from those two weeks of filming them make the movie. So from there, after I saw the footage, I was like yes, let's move full steam ahead. And I only say this because with a doc, it's not like a regular film, especially for the producer. It's such a commitment to take on if you're gonna do it because it's not like six months, I'm done, and I'm on to the next job. This is now year three, going on year four, of working on this film. So it's not a commitment that we take lightly. It has to be a very powerful story and something that I really connect with and really resonate with. Once I saw what it was and understood what it was, I was totally on board. It was just all hands on deck, and we spent the last few years really continuing to work on it, continuing to film with the subjects from that initial two-week period.

Zeno Mountain Farm

CHERYL: Right, right. Now, AJ, TJ described Zeno as a magical place [chuckles].

TJ: Well, it seemed magical in the sense of community and being accepted.

CHERYL: Oh yeah! I mean, magical is a word that I think of when I've read about Zeno, read on the website, or looked at different posts. The word magical often comes to my mind. But I think AJ, for people who haven't seen this documentary, "Becoming Bulletproof," and haven't been to Zeno, how would you describe [Zeno Mountain Farm](#) in your own words?

AJ: Well, Zeno Mountain Farm is a place for people with and without disabilities to come together. Nobody pays to come to camp, and nobody is paid to work at camp. We're basically a group of very diverse people from all different backgrounds and ages. We're pretty much, at the core, we're all adults, but it's all different ages. Basically, we're just a group of friends hanging out. The core of the mission is to support lifelong friendships between the communities, so between with and without disabilities. Once you come to camp, you can come for the rest of your life. I agree with TJ that it is, it's very magical. One of the things that we say also as well is that camp is a bubble because you really see how things can come together and be so inclusive communally. And you're all working on a project, and everything just organically comes together. It's so much fun. And it's so much love, and it's so inclusive. And so we call it the bubble. When it's time to go back to the real world, it's really hard because you really see it is possible for everyone to come together of all different backgrounds. And in some cases, it's not all the time, have very different opinions. But you can come together around the projects in a very cohesive, positive way. We're very, very fortunate to have this very, very unique and rare experience. I've been very fortunate and lucky to be able to experience a lot of good things. But Zeno, by far, is the greatest organization that I've ever been a part of.

CHERYL: When you say that Zeno Mountain Farm is kind of like a bubble, it's happy. But it's also sad because the reality is that a lot of the rest of the world isn't like that: disabled people and non-disabled people are segregated. All the way back to special education, people with disabilities are segregated from the rest of the school. For a lot of people, it stays that way through their entire life. And what's so-- I'm gonna have to do it--what's so magical about the movie is that now everyone who sees the movie can find out, oh wait. This is possible. People with and without disabilities can have relationships that are not about just helping or curing or doing therapy and rehab. You can have real relationships. And I'm hoping that this film will sort of help that bubble expand. I mean, what do you think, TJ?

TJ: I hope so. I hope. I can only speak to that I had limited exposure to people with disabilities growing up. So this experience has been eye-opening for me. And I try to remember my attitudes and my thoughts before working on this film. And it just seems so silly to have all those weird preconceived notions. You know, Suzie Barrett says it very well in the film that you have to go back in your life and kind of reevaluated how you've marginalized groups of people, not just with disabilities. So it's so weird to go back and think that I felt that way. So I think that the power of this film is it really works for people like me who grew up being very segregated from people with disability to see it differently, to see it in this very inclusive environment. It's really powerful, and it has changed me. And I think it's changing the minds of a lot of people who see the film.

Separation between special education and regular education in schools

AJ: I'm very familiar with that separation. I've sort of had the best of both worlds because there was a period in my schooling where I was in a special ed room. I got to go to other rooms. I had friends within

special ed, and we were good friends and we did things together. But within the school, we didn't have any able-bodied friends. But there was a period, one year in elementary school, and then I got an opportunity in middle school. My middle school teacher really saw my potential to be what they used to call mainstreamed. And so I got the opportunity to be mainstreamed and to go out into regular ed. And so I got more friends. I had friends that were able-bodied. But one of the things that I realized, particularly when it came to extra-curricular activities, was that a lot of times when it came to theater or chorus or anything like that, I was the only person involved.

CHERYL: What did it feel like to be the only one?

AJ: I'll give you an example. When I was in high school and I did theater, there was this very special thing once a year that the drama students statewide got to do, and it was called thespian conference. And it was over 2600 students. And it was statewide, and it was this huge conference where you could come to my school. And there was also directly across the street from my school, we had a theater. And so in the morning we would go watch these fantastic plays all day and then at night go across the street to the school and take all kinds of workshops. And one of the things that I noticed was I was the only person on wheels. And I had another friend of mine who was an amputee, but out of over 2000 students we were the only ones that were disabled there. I'm passionate about acting, and it's what I wanna do for my vocation and my career. But even if you're not gonna choose it as a profession, theater is so much fun. It was the best time I ever had in high school. I look back on those memories with the most fondest feelings. I had a blast at that time, and just from trying to learn your lines and everyone coming together and working so hard and having to do dress rehearsal and all that. I was just like, you know, this is so much fun. There should be more people with disabilities involved. And so what I wanted to do was try to pilot a program and sorta get it off the ground where the regular ed drama clubs would act with their counterpart special ed programs. Because it involves a lot and because I didn't have transportation at the time, I wasn't able to get that off the ground. But at some point, I wanted to go back and do that because even if your goal is not to do professional theater, it's just a lot of fun, and it teaches you a lot about public speaking, about not being shy, and it just gives you another outlet.

CHERYL: Yeah. You brought up transportation. One of the things that is particularly amazing about the documentary is that it allows people to see that the lack of people with disabilities in the media is not because we can't perform and we can't operate a camera and we can't make decisions. It's because there's not enough opportunities to do it, and transportation is a huge barrier. If you can't get to the place where the play or the film is being done, you can't be in it. And I think the film, because you see such a--I'm not gonna say magical, but--you see such a, actually, perfectly everyday, average relationships. You see people just hanging and out and working together. It doesn't even matter disabled or non-disabled. When you make the space for people with disabilities to participate, people with disabilities participate.

TJ: That's what I realized more while working on this film is that it's just really that easy.

CHERYL: Yeah, yeah. I'm reading a book right now on the history of the disability rights movement, and the book is called "[Make Them Go Away](#)." I mean, I'm having nightmares just reading this book. It's going all the way back to when the ADA passed, and just how everybody is fuss, fuss, fuss, fuss: Oh, it's gonna cost too much! And it hurts business! And we can't have the needs of people with disabilities overarch the needs of the regular people. I keep reading this, and I'm like, regular people? What?

AJ: The thing about it is that I hope that I do with my life, and the thing that I think that the film represents, and what I wanna say is we ARE regular.

CHERYL: Thank you.

AJ: Because this is our life. So this is regular, you know? I have different challenges, but we all do. Everybody has different challenges. But whatever those challenges are, it's just their--and this isn't gonna sound grammatically on point, but--it's just their regular, you know?

CHERYL: Yep.

AJ: So I don't look at myself as a disabled person as irregular, I know? I just look at myself as a person who happens to be in a wheelchair and who happens to need a lot of physical help. But that's not an issue, and that's not a problem!

CHERYL: That's right.

AJ: That's just something that I have to deal with. And I think we will grow leaps and bounds in the industry and in society if we just looked at disability--and this may be a really hard concept for a lot of people--but if we just looked at it as regular. We would move so far in this society if we just looked at it as normal and regular. We're just all together.

CHERYL: Yeah. I recently got trolled. Oh man, some people found my YouTube and were just misogynistic and ableist toward me. And they were so awful. And one of many insults they lobbed at me was how dare I suggest that society flex and adapt to allow disabled people to participate fully. It's us who have to adapt and get over it. And I'm like, I think this is a troll. Why is it that certain people have to change? You cannot be accepted as you are? And other people can be accepted just as they are? I just think "Becoming Bulletproof" also shatters that troll-y kind of question too cuz everybody just seems to be perfectly accepted just as they are. TJ, you can't see me. But I see you nodding your head in agreement.

TJ: Yeah. The film just captured what Zeno Mountain Farm does so perfectly. So I can't take any credit whatsoever. We were just there at the right spot to capture the work that they do.

CHERYL: And captured it extremely beautifully, I might add.

TJ: The director, Michael Barnett, is also the cinematographer. He's very good, and it's very visually pleasing too, to look at.

CHERYL: It really is.

Being in a documentary film that resonates with audiences

CHERYL: What was it like, AJ, to be the subject of a documentary film?

AJ: Well, it was very surreal and amazing and very exciting. At the same time, it was a little bit nerve-racking, in a good way, I suppose, only because I know that Zeno is a very, very special place. And it means a lot to me. And when they said that they were doing a documentary, I knew the potential of what it could mean to a lot of people to show and display onscreen and explore what we do. I knew that that would mean a lot to a lot of people because it's such a rare, unique thing. But it made me nervous because I knew that I would be a voice for a lot of people.

CHERYL: Mm. Mmhmm. Do you like that role?

AJ: Yes, as it turns out, I like the role. We've gotten a lot of really, really good, positive response for the film. And people have come up to me and said, "Thank you for being so transparent and so honest and vulnerable at times." This one couple came up to me. They were grandparents, and they said that their grandson had CP and that they were non-verbal. But because they saw the movie, and they saw me, saw my story, they kinda got a little bit of a sense of some things that he could be going through. That meant a lot to me. Another friend of mine who is, he's not non-verbal, but he has speech delay. So he's a little bit difficult to understand. There's this part in the documentary where I talked about a relationship and some of my frustration. And he was like, "I could totally relate." And he got a little emotional. And so that made me feel so good that I was able to sort of--I don't wanna get too highfalutin about myself, but--I was able to play a little part in that. So I'm very grateful for that.

CHERYL: Yeah. Well, and this is what we were talking about a little bit at the beginning, that you need to have accurate portrayals and accurate representations. But I think what we didn't touch on earlier was what it means to grow up never seeing someone who looks like you onscreen and how devastating that is because the cool people are in movies, the beautiful people, the talented people. And if you don't see someone like you onscreen, you are receiving the message that you're not beautiful, you're not talented, you're not worth being onscreen. To me, it's so powerful to give people a place to see someone like themselves onscreen. It's really cool. Yeah. TJ have people come up to you with stories like that?

TJ: You know, it's been very positive. I've worked in documentaries for 10+ years. This is the first film-- and I've worked on many award-winning films and one that was even short-listed for the Academy Awards--but this is the first one that I can honestly say is really resonating with audiences. We may have a challenge of getting people to see this film. And that's one thing that I've noticed is getting people to go see it has been kind of a challenge because they see what it's about. They're like, "Oh, I know that story already," or "I don't wanna see a depressing film."

CHERYL: Huh.

TJ: And then, once they see it, it's completely different. This film, it's really resonating with audiences and connecting with people in ways that I've never experienced in other films that I've produced. It's a really great film.

CHERYL: Right. So they're coming away and going, "Oh, that wasn't a depressing storyline that I already knew."

TJ: Exactly.

Disability representation in the media

CHERYL: Cool. People who read my blog and listen to my podcast hear me talk about disability in the media all the time. I would love to hear your perspective on how do people with disabilities usually come across in the movies or on TV?

AJ: I don't know if you would find this similarly. In the movies, we're either portrayed as very inspirational or a hero or an angel or something like that. Or, on the complete opposite side, we're either kind of angry and bitter about being in a chair or bitter about being on a crutch or something. There's no middle ground. There isn't anybody going through regular, everyday life. But I don't know if you find that same experience, but it's either you're a heralded angel, or you're a bitter cripple.

CHERYL: [giggles] Right.

AJ: So there's a whole lot of in between. And I'm not saying you can't be bitter or bad. You can be a bad guy, or you can be just like a regular blue-collar person. But there doesn't seem to be any middle either in film. On TV, see this Very Special Episode!

CHERYL: [laughs]

AJ: And it's like somebody dying for something, or either they're going through cancer. I remember one time there was an episode of "Glee," and there was a character--

CHERYL: Oh! Oh! Excuse me, sorry. I hate that show so much. All right. Continue please [laughs].

AJ: You know, Artie.

CHERYL: Ugh.

AJ: The character that plays him is able-bodied. But there was this one episode where there was a character who actually had a disability. He was in a bed, and it was a Very Special Episode. He couldn't leave the room, and they came to the room and sung to him. Yeah, so like I said, we're either inspirational, aspirational, or we're really, really bitter and resentful.

CHERYL: Yeah, or pitiful. That particular episode of "Glee"--I mean, I was mad enough about Kevin McHale tilting one of his feet over to the side and tilting his knees over and being like, look at me! I'm paraplegic cuz my leg is funny! I just cannot. I will talk y'all's ear off about how much I hate that Kevin McHale got that role. But that episode where the real-life quadriplegic guy was in bed, and they came and sang to him, there was a wheelchair in that character's room. So why on earth he was lying in bed with no shirt on, when he had a wheelchair? Why was he lying in bed? Every time they came over, he's always just lying in bed looking sad. But they used him cuz Rachel had laryngitis, which by the way, she did not do a good job portraying laryngitis.

AJ: [laughs]

CHERYL: But anyway, they went to this young man's house basically to teach Rachel a lesson: Hey, buck up! Don't feel sorry for yourself and your laryngitis! You could have it so much worse. You could be like this loser stuck in bed, and he can't play football anymore. And you know, they used a real-life quadriplegic guy, but I don't think that gets them off the hook for using him as a prop for her to feel better about herself. And like you said, that makes him so irregular. I just. That episode was so grotesque. [laughs] I can't even.

AJ: Let me tell you a story about "Glee." Now, I know your feelings, and I have the same feelings about Kevin McHale, the Artie character. I had those exact same feelings. But because I'm a theater geek, and I'm really into musicals, I was a big fan of "Glee." That's a separate thing. Actually, because I have a friend who was a part of camp, and actually his cousin played a character on "Glee." So because of camp, we were able to visit the set. Me and Jeremy were able to watch a scene being filmed, and I just thought it was so, it was kind of funny to me, I guess in an ironic way. Because every time he wasn't in a scene--Kevin McHale--he got up out of his wheelchair.

CHERYL: [laughs] Gawd.

AJ: And in my mind, I was like, you know, why don't you just stay in it? Because I have to! I'm not trying to be like a bitter cripple, but it was just so funny. I was right behind him, and he just got up and walked around. He didn't have to be in the chair, you know?

CHERYL: Right.

AJ: But I've had issues with the show as well. There's this one particular episode where he goes into a fantasy sequence.

CHERYL: OH GAWD! Ugh [laughs]! Oh.

AJ: So it's a dream, but it's obvious it's a dream. But he gets up out of the chair and walks. And I really, really didn't like that. And I'm not trying to say that we're all monolithic or the same.

CHERYL: Right.

AJ: But it sort of implies that your dream, as a chair user, is to get up out of the chair and walk. There's two points about it: because he's able-bodied, they're able to write that in. If he wasn't able-bodied, there would never be able to write that scene in.

CHERYL: Right!

AJ: They're able to do it because he's able-bodied. And so I was really, really shall I say, chafed about that.

CHERYL: Mmhm. That one chapped my hide for sure. And I'm not even a chair user, and it chapped my hide.

What "Becoming Bulletproof" shows about the disability community

CHERYL: So how do people with disabilities come across through "Becoming Bulletproof?" Or what will audiences see about disability?

AJ: Hopefully, they see that disability is in some ways like it's just a part of everyday life, and it's OK, and it could be celebrated. As far as making a film or making art, great art can still be made, and disability can be incorporated. And also, like in the movie "Bulletproof" that "Becoming Bulletproof" is about, everyone that has a main role is disabled, featured in that role. So they're a main feature, everyone that's disabled. And there's a whole range, so there's a diversity within these disabilities. So we have physical disability and CP and spina bifida, but we also have intellectual impairments as well. So everyone that's disabled has a starring role. The film shows that that's possible as well. But it also shows just a group of everyday people coming together as a family and as a community, as a creative community, making a film.

CHERYL: Yeah. Regular people [chuckles].

AJ: I've heard that this makes casting agents and studios a little bit hesitant. The other thing that the film shows very well is even though the majority of the cast is disabled, there are long hours involved for everyone. In spite of those long hours, and in spite of things changing and having to wait around on set and dealing with different challenges, we were still able to make a professional film that has went on to win several awards as a short film at film festivals. I've heard that some of the excuses giving for people with disabilities not being able to handle roles or be onscreen, well, they're concerned that they might

have to pay for more insurance, or people with disabilities may get sick or have several health challenges or just might not be able to cut it, or the set isn't accessible. But this film shows, and I can tell you, on the set of "Bulletproof," the average shooting days were 8-12 hours. It was a lot of hours, and there's a lot of hurry up and wait, and you have to say your lines over and over again. I had to sit in my chair, and sometimes it was physically grueling. But we still had a lot of fun, and we still were very professional, and we were able to get it done. So you can't have the excuse that people with disabilities, they might be kinda tired or they won't be able to handle it. There are all kinds of people, a part of our community, that, if I could be transparent on their behalf, but there are all kinda people in the community. I have to take medicine for spasms. Other people have, because of their Downs, they have heart conditions. But we still made a film.

CHERYL: Absolutely. And I'm hoping that "Becoming Bulletproof" motivates people to recognize that because I see that too. That happened in my community where a bunch of plays where all the characters had disabilities, they were put on--all these one-act plays. And they were only non-disabled people cast in them. And the disability arts community here in Portland contacted them: Hey, what's up? Can any of us audition for your play? And they said no. They actually said--without meeting these performer friends of mine--they actually said, "People with disabilities can't handle the strenuous, rigorous schedule that we have and the demands that will be placed on actors." And then, oh, so, they asked them though, "Well, you guys can come for intermission and sing 'I Can See Clearly Now'." Like a side show.

But here's the deal: I went to see these plays, and I was mortified. The physical effort that people put into pretending to have some kind of fake, bizarre, unrealistic disability? I was like, dude, my friends with CP coulda pulled off this character with 1/4 of the energy that you guys exerted pretending to have something CP-like. It's just a ridiculous argument. But aside from how much energy it takes, it is so discriminatory--and I don't think people mean to be malicious--but it is very discriminatory to hear the word "disability" and say, "Well, they can't. They won't be able to. There's no way." Like you, AJ, I hope that when people see it, they can say, "Oh, I was mistaken in thinking that. Yeah, I see that people with disabilities absolutely can put on an amazing show." And then all the disabled people in the audience are gonna be punching their neighbors: "I told you. I told you." I hope that happens!

AJ: One of the things that's exciting about the film is yes, I think that the thread throughout the film is disability. But one of the things throughout the film that I love about it too is at the core of it, there is so much layer to the film. But as far as the aspect around being behind the scenes and making the film, it's a group of people making a film.

CHERYL: Yeah!

AJ: And I think two things: I think there's a lack of awareness. And this is why this film is so important and more media representation is important, because there's a lack of awareness. A lot of times I try so hard to put on the other person's shoes or try to look through something through another person's lens. And to some person, honest to goodness, could come by the thought maybe people with disabilities can't handle it. There's a lack of awareness, and then there's also a fear that, because let's keep it real: it's show business. And it's about time and money. And there's a fear, out of ignorance, that we won't be able to cut the mustard. But what "Bulletproof" showed is it's integrated with cast and crew, and some of us are working 8-12 hours, and we rose to the occasion. Now, it's not like awww, these people with disability made this film! The film is good. The value production is high. And it's funny.

CHERYL: Yep.

AJ: That's one of the things that my mom said when she came to see the show. She said, "This film is actually funny."

CHERYL: Yeah.

AJ: You know, the spirit of Zeno, and the thing about this movie is that this isn't in your uncle's backyard, or it isn't just a happy scene: watch these people with disabilities make a film. Even my best friend, and she's my best friend in the world, and she's so kind and honest and very, very good. When she came to see the film, she was blown away. But she also had to admit, and she admitted to me, that the standards for people with disabilities are low.

CHERYL: Mhmm.

AJ: And so one of the things that I think the documentary does, and "Bulletproof" does, is it pretty much says people with disabilities can do this too. They can be a part of the game, and they can be a part of show business. It is doable and possible. And speaking of all hours, I've been doing all hours forever. When I was in high school, and I did theater, sometimes because I had my school days, and then I had my theater, my longest day I went to school at 7:30 in the morning because I had a choral rehearsal, and then I had class all day, and then I had to get ready for a show. I was at school from 7:30 to 9:30. And those are long hours, but I did it because I love it, you know?

CHERYL: Yeah, yeah.

Where can you see this film?

CHERYL: So tell folks about when they can actually see this film and where.

TJ: All right. So the film will be released in theaters September 25th. We're gonna be playing in New York Center at the IFC Center. And then on October 2nd, we will be playing at The Music Hall in Beverly Hills in Los Angeles. They will be there for week-long run, playing four or five times a day. And then we're also gonna be in San Francisco the following week at The New Parkway Theater. You can check our website for upcoming festivals. I think we've got about 15 upcoming film festivals that are gonna be in September, October, November. Early next year, look for us on video on demand. If the film is not playing in your town, you can go to our website and host your own screening in your own theater in your hometown for free through a website called [Tugg](#). And you can access that on our website, [becomingbulletproofmovie.com](#). The way Tugg works is that you request a screening at your theater, and you have to get so many people to pledge that they would come. And if they come, then the screening happens. And even if they don't come, if you don't meet your threshold--is what they call it--say you have to get 58 people, no one gets charged. It doesn't cost you anything for just trying to have one. So it's a really great platform for independent films.

CHERYL: Yeah, so you don't have to wait for it to come out on video on demand and watch it streaming. You can go to a real movie theater in your town or city and watch it on the big screen.

TJ: With all your friends and families and partner with other organizations in town. There's a lot of information on the website. And we are also here to help facilitate any kind of requests. So I hope we get some people interested.

CHERYL: Yeah, great. Is there any last thing that you wanna leave the listeners with?

AJ: I just think that this film can be, it is the catalyst for all of us in our different diversity of disabilities to be a part of pop culture. So everyone, if you're clicking on and if you're listening to this podcast, thank you very much! And please support us. If you wanna check out the trailer or learn more about the film, please check us out at becomingbulletproofmovie.com.

CHERYL: Yes, and the film is Closed Captioned and Audio Described. So it is accessible in a lotta ways. So yes, yes, yes. Anything else from you, TJ?

TJ: No, I can't say it any better than AJ.

CHERYL: Yeah.

Wrap-up

TJ: Just thank you for having us on. And when you do see the film, I hope you guys enjoy it.

CHERYL: Thank you both for coming, and it was great to meet your office manager, Skittles. That was awesome. I really appreciate your time, both of you, and your generosity. And I'm excited, personally, to be a part of the "Becoming Bulletproof" project myself on the kinda the outreach end. It's quite an honor, and it's real exciting. So thank you both, and good luck on your theatrical premiere.

AJ: Thank you.

TJ: Thank you.

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CHERYL: Thanks for joining me for another episode of Stories from the brainreels. Find more handy info on brain injury and disability art and culture on my disability arts blog, WhoAmItoStopIt.com.

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