

10:00:09:07 - 10:00:29:19

SARAH

Welcome to our first-ever mini-episode. This season, we'll be bringing you an additional episode with further insight from our guest. If you're a fan of Braaains, we love for you to rate and review us. Before we begin, we want to acknowledge that the lands from which we recorded this podcast and from where you are listening are part of territories that have long served as a gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples.

10:00:29:21 - 10:00:39:06

SARAH

And we are thankful as guests on this land to be able to live, work, and gather here together. We continue to learn about the history that came before us and encourage you to do the same.

10:00:39:11 - 10:00:45:21

HEATHER

Today, we'll be deep diving into the series Crazy Ex-girlfriend with last week's guest and New York Times best-selling author Bassegy Ikpi.

10:00:45:23 - 10:00:55:12

SARAH

If you want to hear our full episode with Bassegy on bipolar two disorder and the representation of bipolar and depression in shows like Atlanta, Insecure, and Dave, we've included a link in the show notes.

10:00:55:15 - 10:01:12:19

HEATHER

A quick reminder to our listeners that this interview should not be taken as medical advice. And it is for informational purposes only because everyone's brain is different. Please consult your healthcare professional if you have any questions.

10:01:12:21 - 10:01:34:09

HEATHER

One of the shows that you mentioned to us that you want to talk about is Crazy Ex-girlfriend. Now, I don't even know how to start because I took it. So for those who haven't seen My Crazy Ex-girlfriend, is this Rachel Bloom's show and it is musical extravaganza. But it's really about a woman who finds her first love, who comes into her life again.

10:01:34:09 - 10:01:37:16

HEATHER

She meets him again and then decides to follow him to.

10:01:37:19 - 10:01:38:03

BASSEY

His home.

10:01:38:06 - 10:01:52:17

HEATHER

His hometown. But it's in West Covina. West Covina. West Covina in California, which is Elliot. She sent by quite a bit. But it's so great depiction as you will learn over time of borderline personality disorder.

10:01:52:19 - 10:02:18:03

BASSEY

I was late to the show because it's called Crazy My Crazy Ex-girlfriend. I was like, yeah. And then I don't know what happened. Something random happened and I started watching it and I didn't know where it was going until I found out where it was going. Like, I just rewatched like the first six episodes of season three when she starts, when she gets diagnosed and everything just felt so real.

10:02:18:05 - 10:02:44:10

BASSEY

And one of the things I like to love about the show is that it doesn't shy away from the ugly. She is hyper fixated. She's projecting. She's obsessive. She's compulsive. She's she's hurtful. She hurts so many people. She's so selfish and self-centered and and all these different things that are real life to to having some of these disorders.

10:02:44:10 - 10:03:07:00

BASSEY

Like, it's not just, I feel so bad for her or I feel great. You know, it's these other, like, things that that make you not the friendliest, the nicest person to be around. But the way that it showed it kind of crept up on you like it seemed like sort of regular, like, okay, show. And then when you start to realize and notice the scene where she's on on the plane, I cried.

10:03:07:01 - 10:03:30:21

BASSEY

I cried because it was so honest and it was so mean. I can't even put into words just how perfect the depiction. What I said about Atlanta was that it needs to be kind of surreal in order to get really into it. And Crazy Ex-girlfriend makes that very, very plain. You have to tell it in this way. The musical has to live in her head in order for us to understand what is going on in her head.

10:03:30:23 - 10:03:47:08

BASSEY

All of that is important, and you have to see it that way. It has to be in that kind of color. And texture in order for you to get the real, the honest experience, even the diagnosis, when she's like, no, thank you. After she's like, I'm so happy if I have a good diagnosis, then decides not to.

10:03:47:10 - 10:03:50:03

BASSEY

Even even the doctor saying, Please don't Google it.

10:03:50:07 - 10:04:07:10

HEATHER

Yes, Well, and then also and then they do a whole song. My when I hear it, I mean, there's so many good songs. One of my favorite songs is when they sing about medication and all the medicine, but not. But basically it was like to show that it's not just her on medication. Look at all these other people on medication and and how it's helping their life.

10:04:07:10 - 10:04:27:19

HEATHER

And it just was that idea about de-stigmatizing. It felt as hyper as she was in a lot of ways because of the musical elements and you were in her shoes and you didn't feel you're like, she's kind of bad, but you didn't really feel like she's bad because you're seeing her perspective of everything. Yeah. And in that moment, it was in the end of episode two was the church, right?

10:04:27:20 - 10:04:32:09

HEATHER

Was was season two right. Wasn't the when he was going to.

10:04:32:11 - 10:04:32:21

BASSEY

The wedding.

10:04:32:21 - 10:05:04:02

HEATHER

The wedding and she disrupts the wedding and everything and you realize how out of control she's become. And then with this point, like it actually instead of just being in that hyper surrealist place of musical, you then had actually real, real moments of people saying, you are wrong. Like what? And her being like, But I don't like almost not understanding because and us to like but we because we've been in her head yeah and then suddenly we're like being confronted with something just as she is to be like that.

10:05:04:02 - 10:05:06:06

HEATHER

Reality is not the reality.

10:05:06:07 - 10:05:31:12

BASSEY

And then when she she just attacks all her friends, they came to help and she just like just got in and down. And it's like taking whatever she knows and knowing that it's going to hurt them and

just flinging it at them. And then the shame spiral that she went on. And even though the the way that she couldn't sleep because she kept remembering these awful things that she said and done, like all of that is so real.

10:05:31:14 - 10:05:47:02

BASSEY

And I keep using the word real because I can't even think of another way to put it, because it depicted it in such a way that was so visceral. The scene in the plane, on the plane, when you're like, okay, well, she's mad at her mom. She's not doing great. And she's like, well, anxiety. So she's going take anxiety.

10:05:47:08 - 10:05:58:07

BASSEY

Who else Who has not taken a pill with with a glass of wine? Who amongst us has not? I mean, she still keeps taking them and taking them and taking them that she like I was like, my God. And it just it's a comedy.

10:05:58:09 - 10:05:59:00

HEATHER

Yeah.

10:05:59:02 - 10:06:10:01

BASSEY

It's a comedy. A comedy called My Crazy Ex-girlfriend has the best depiction of a mental health journey that I've ever seen.

10:06:10:03 - 10:06:25:23

HEATHER

Like, what I love is like when you get to the end, like, and you're. And you're falling along and you're in love with all this stuff. And then in the end, the word isn't brave, but say that word that they stuck the landing because they did not allow us to ever see an outside perspective until the final episode.

10:06:26:01 - 10:06:41:17

HEATHER

And they stuck the landing because it could have been so easy for them to have said, We're going to show what other people see, like even at the end or even at the end of season two with the like, we could have done that, but they didn't. Yeah, they waited to the last episode and you'd see her dissociate, you'd see her go off in her head.

10:06:41:17 - 10:07:02:10

HEATHER

But it wasn't just a moment. It was a period of time and people would be like waiting for her and

being like, What the hell's going on right now? Yeah. And then her coming back and then realizing maybe to help myself and to help other people, I need to take these songs out of my head and share them and really like emotion.

10:07:02:12 - 10:07:19:09

HEATHER

But understanding like the idea, like what you said to, like if someone could just say it, then I can be left alone or if someone just says it, then I don't have to be the one that breaks it to my family. This is going on. I can just be like, Hey, here's just watch this and then you get me.

10:07:19:09 - 10:07:39:10

HEATHER

And then I can like and then I feel this alone. And I think it's just like seeing that the whole show was someone saying, Be less alone. Yeah. And then at the end, her realizing and it's that moment of almost like this is the start of the show. So it almost came back on itself was a beautiful.

10:07:39:10 - 10:07:43:21

BASSEY

Yeah it is a perfect show. One of those shows was like I don't know why more people just.

10:07:43:22 - 10:07:47:16

HEATHER

Because of the title. It's the title is the title Deceptive is the title.

10:07:47:16 - 10:08:11:07

BASSEY

Yeah, I tried. I even wrote about it for Essence.com or something. I was like, I know the title is putting people off, but you have to watch this show. You must watch this show the route. Not not since you're right. It absolutely stuck the landing in a in a perfect way. Like it just it usually when things like this happens, it makes you like what was I watching?

10:08:11:07 - 10:08:28:17

BASSEY

Like I don't like the whole the only Atlanta did this well but they also had sort of projected it. But I don't like it when I'm watching this whole thing and it's like, no, Bobby was in the shower. Yeah. So, like, I was just like, well, how do we get here? But they really just showed you how we got there.

10:08:28:17 - 10:08:34:19

BASSEY

Yeah. And you know what else I didn't was I put it in the, the, the final episode of Fleabag.

10:08:34:21 - 10:08:35:05

HEATHER

Yeah.

10:08:35:05 - 10:08:54:01

BASSEY

When, when she stops talking to the camera, she's need us anymore. Yeah, she just walks off and we're just like, I was like, That's such a perfect way to, like, show that transition. Perfect. But yeah, Crazy Ex-girlfriend. I can't say enough about it. I wish it would have gotten more recognition, but they couldn't have called it anything else.

10:08:54:03 - 10:08:54:16

HEATHER

No, I.

10:08:54:16 - 10:08:55:12

BASSEY

Really couldn't have called it.

10:08:55:12 - 10:09:17:23

HEATHER

I do think it was it's weirdly like the most perfect title as well as the worst title at the same time, like to get people to watch it. But it is what it is for a reason. And almost in a way, it's like pulling apart our narrative of this idea of like, it's my crazy ass, whatever. Like, often, like women, especially women getting depicted like, that's my crazy ex.

10:09:17:23 - 10:09:24:00

HEATHER

And you're like, But you're not actually looking at what it is or what your part was in it as well. And like, how we can.

10:09:24:05 - 10:09:40:22

BASSEY

How you triggered it, how you I've, I'm not telling on my business, but I just recently discovered like emotional abuse. But because I'm used to being crazy, I like, I'm sorry, it was me. I must have been having a manic episode or this and that. I think it's like, No, no, this person is not a good person.

10:09:41:00 - 10:10:04:01

BASSEY

I probably didn't handle it the best, but this person is not a good person. But I also like what you said, like the way that she was calling over and over and over and over again and texting and calling. I remember a couple of years ago there was a story about somebody was taking their ex

to court or something, and part of it was like she called him 200 times in an hour like crazy.

10:10:04:01 - 10:10:05:20

BASSEY

I was like, manic.

10:10:05:20 - 10:10:08:09

HEATHER

Like, Yeah, yeah. It's always manic.

10:10:08:11 - 10:10:27:23

BASSEY

You know? And it's like it's you do the thing where it's like I'm calling. They don't pick up, I'm calling, they don't pick up, I'm calling, they don't pick up. They're mad at me. I'm texting. I'm texting. Are you mad at me? Yeah, I'm texting. They're not answering. I'm calling in case they block going back. Are you blocks going back?

10:10:27:23 - 10:10:44:18

BASSEY

I'm calling again just to check and see if I'm blocked. Okay. It's going through. Am I blocked? Go back at like. Like that's. That's how it happens. It happens like that. You're just wanting somebody like, pick up and, like, sort of acknowledge that you exist. And when they don't do that and they could just been like asleep or whatever.

10:10:44:18 - 10:10:50:11

BASSEY

But the way that your mind kind of just takes it and goes like, she didn't consider the fact that he just didn't want to talk to her.

10:10:50:16 - 10:10:51:08

HEATHER

Yeah.

10:10:51:10 - 10:10:55:02

BASSEY

Didn't even cross your mind. And that's the way that it is, because you're not thinking about like that.

10:10:55:02 - 10:11:13:06

HEATHER

And that idea of also like you, it's. Well, it's the thing of all of us that we are the center of our own story. And so we are in her shoes with her and we're not. We're thinking she's a star. The music, the star, the musical. And I think her psychiatrist on point says you are not the star of

everyone's story.

10:11:13:08 - 10:11:21:20

HEATHER

Yeah, but in her world she was. And that's because our world, we are like the center of the universe. Because it's our universe. That's right, obviously.

10:11:21:22 - 10:11:42:12

BASSEY

But also we have to, like I said before, we have to consider so much. We have to be so aware of ourselves all the time. How are we not the star of the musical? And I think that's why so many of us are in fields that require us to be looked at or to be to make us hyper aware of ourselves at all times.

10:11:42:12 - 10:12:03:21

BASSEY

Yeah, because we have to do that. We have to consider something like for me, am I sitting here because I'm in functional freeze or am I just being lazy today? Am I do I really like this person or my hypomanic? I'm like, I have to think about this. I'm like, no, I'm just being I'm just being really ridiculous right now.

10:12:04:03 - 10:12:21:07

BASSEY

It's not it's not related to anything, but I have to make sure that it's not me sad or my falling into this thing, am I? I'm not able to concentrate because I'm just not concentrating or like you have. Those are conversations that we have to have with ourselves that most people don't. So yeah, we're yeah, we're the star of this musical.

10:12:21:07 - 10:12:36:16

HEATHER

Also, is it easier for me to be in my head and just like, be in the musical. Yeah. That is actually deal with thing because like, I don't ever mean this for real, but sometimes I'm like, I wish I didn't know what was going on in my brain.

10:12:36:18 - 10:12:37:06

BASSEY

yeah even.

10:12:37:06 - 10:12:54:05

HEATHER

Though I know it's yeah, way better. Like my, even my husband's like you love yourself more and I but knowing that I'm always starting at negative two when everyone gets a sort of zero sucks just sometimes like, sucks. And I'm like, I wish I didn't have to know that I'm starting at

negative two. I wish I could just pretend that I'm at zero.

10:12:54:05 - 10:13:09:15

HEATHER

I wish I could just be in that musical. We're all dancing and we're all the same and also wonderful. But no, I'm at negative two and I have to do 50 more steps than everyone else. And when I can't do those steps, something goes wrong. And then I feel shame when I'm like, No, I just needed more help.

10:13:09:15 - 10:13:27:17

HEATHER

And I didn't ask for it because I would rather just pretend I just don't want to be a bother and I want to pretend that everything's fine instead of going, I need a better environment. Yeah, and that's the story of all of us. Yes. Anyways.

10:13:27:19 - 10:13:50:06

BASSEY

well, I think it's I think it's so important. Again, these conversations are so important because I don't think people people who are also have brains like ours don't give themselves permission not to be good at or not to like recognize that you don't have to listen. You got to start five steps behind. You got to start five steps behind.

10:13:50:08 - 10:14:11:12

BASSEY

Like it's just you can't push yourself and force yourself to be someplace that you that you go you're not ready to be. Yeah, I think that's where we get into a lot of trouble. A lot of trouble in that it becomes dangerous for us because we are forcing ourselves to do things that we are just physically, emotionally, mentally, not capable of.

10:14:11:13 - 10:14:13:05

BASSEY

Yeah, at that time, forever.

10:14:13:05 - 10:14:13:12

HEATHER

Yeah.

10:14:13:15 - 10:14:28:17

BASSEY

It's sometimes it has to, sometimes it's ever I know what it is that I'm capable of doing, what I'm not capable of doing. And I know what happens when I push myself to do something that I'm not yet ready to do. Yeah. So, Miles, just weight as opposed to, like, push. We have to start over anyway.

10:14:28:18 - 10:14:30:08

HEATHER

Yeah. The self-awareness is so important.

10:14:30:08 - 10:14:35:04

SARAH

So important. This is why we talk about this stuff and we have these conversations.

10:14:35:04 - 10:14:40:07

BASSEY

Glad that you do. Please invite me back every day. So much to talk shows.

10:14:40:07 - 10:14:40:15

SARAH

We'll do our.

10:14:40:15 - 10:14:57:07

HEATHER

Homework. Just thank you again. It is great to be able to dive a little deeper into Crazy Ex-girlfriend. Appreciate it . Braaaains is hosted and produced by Heather and Sarah Taylor. It's mix and mastered by Tony Bao, and our theme song is by our little brother Deppisch.

10:14:57:11 - 10:15:12:23

SARAH

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