

01:00:09:10 - 01:00:20:20

Heather Taylor

Welcome to Braaaains, a podcast exploring the inner workings of our brains, mental health and disabilities and how film and television portray them. Hosted by me, writer director Heather Taylor.

01:00:20:22 - 01:00:38:06

Sarah Taylor

And by me film and television editor Sarah Taylor. Before we begin, we want to acknowledge that the lens 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. And we are thankful as guests on this land to be able to live, work and gather here together.

01:00:38:09 - 01:00:42:20

Sarah Taylor

We continue to learn about the history that came before us and encourage you to do the same.

01:00:42:22 - 01:01:00:19

Heather Taylor

In our penultimate episode of our second season, we're looking at the experiences and representation of Traumatic Brain Injuries or Tbis with our guest, Naomi Mellor. Naomi is an equine veterinarian and podcaster who not only runs a podcast production company, but also founded the Amazing International Women's Podcast Awards.

01:01:00:21 - 01:01:12:20

Sarah Taylor

We discuss how a TBI can impact you with symptoms like headaches, neuro exhaustion, double vision, depth perception issues, sensory stimulation overload, and how Naomi spent 23 hours a day in bed after her accident.

01:01:12:22 - 01:01:25:07

Heather Taylor

Lastly, we talk about the representation of Tbis in film and TV and how Naomi would love to see more stories about the subtlety and variety of the effects of Tbis and what the long term impact is on your brain, body and mental health.

01:01:25:09 - 01:01:44:19

Sarah Taylor

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 health care professional if you have any questions. And now, Naomi. Naomi, welcome to Braaaains. Thank you so much for joining us today.

01:01:44:21 - 01:01:46:11

Naomi Mellor

Thank you so much for having me. It's such a pleasure to meet you. And I will say just loved the conversation that Sarah and I were just having off air as well about project recommendations, which was so.

01:01:53:21 - 01:01:58:22

Heather Taylor

Good. Podcasters give podcast advice all the time, and this is what we're here for.

01:01:59:03 - 01:02:03:00

Sarah Taylor

To start things off, I'd love for you to just tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do.

01:02:03:05 - 01:02:17:17

Naomi Mellor

My name is Naomi, and as you may be able to tell from listening to me, I am based in the UK, so I live just outside London and I am qualified as a veterinarian. So I had been a an equine, a horse that for 15, 16 years alongside running a podcast production company for the last five years I started a podcast on a bit of a whim about six years ago, and I taught myself everything. Like so many people out there. And then I was asked to start producing podcasts for a few other people, and that kind of grew and grew and grew.

01:02:40:20 - 01:02:41:13

Naomi

So I was I've Been balancing working in podcasting, on Podcasts Doing bits and pieces, helping out other people. I run a community of women and people of diverse genders in podcasting, and I also founded the International Women's Podcast Awards three years ago.

01:02:58:01 - 01:02:58:17

Naomi Mellor

So I do all of that and then IDs from Baton Rework as well. Up until earlier this, what I was doing up until earlier this year when I had a traumatic brain injury and at the moment I am focused on podcasting until I am allowed to stop driving and to start getting back to life as normal, which will hopefully happens then.

01:03:19:00 - 01:03:24:03

Heather Taylor

So what causes traumatic brain injury and what does that look like for you specifically?

01:03:24:05 - 01:03:51:15

Naomi Mellor

So it's very variable. And I think that was the thing that I learned the most from the medical

professionals that I saw being in the hospital, being in and around the neuro trauma unit of the hospital I was in. I've subsequently heard a lot of stories. I'm sure you guys, both of you on this podcast as well. I've subsequently had a lot of stories from different people about, Oh, I had a concussive brain injury, I had a traumatic brain injury, I know someone who did.

01:03:51:15 - 01:03:56:06

Naomi Mellor

And it happened because X happened and I haven't yet heard the same story being repeated twice. If I'm honest. Mine I was in a quite a significant car accident and car accidents do crop up 100%.

01:04:07:11 - 01:04:13:16

Naomi Mellor

I was stationary in my car and somebody drove into me at high speed. Unfortunately, I mean, I'm not nervous to talk about it at all. I was cut out of the car and

01:04:17:16 - 01:04:29:13

Naomi Mellor

I lost ten days of my memory, so I have no recollection of anything. And I was very lucky that I happened to be driving near Cambridge in the UK. And for anybody out there who isn't aware, although I'm sure everybody is at Cambridge University, is a bit like Harvard, and if you end up in the hospital there, it's full of.

01:04:36:18 - 01:04:37:09

Naomi Mellor

International Specialists, which was pretty good. So that's why I was taken and I was very fortunate to have some Extremely good medical teams looking after me through the lovely national health system that we have in the UK. And I yeah, I am making a full recovery, which was unexpected at the time, I think it's fair to say. So I feel very lucky.

01:04:59:19 - 01:05:11:12

Heather Taylor

Well, you said you've lost ten days of memory, but have other people talked to you about that time or were you unconscious during that time? Like how did that kind of play out after you had had your injury?

01:05:11:13 - 01:05:33:20

Naomi Mellor

Yeah, So I was unconscious to start with. So initially I my understanding of what happened to me is entirely from snippets and conversations and things that the emergency services have told me. My husband didn't arrive till quite significantly later on because he was working away and some friends and family and people kind of give me snippets from the first day.

01:05:33:20 - 01:05:38:11

Naomi Mellor

But everything I know is what other people have told me. So yeah, I was unconscious and initially in an induced coma to begin with and they tried to bring me round from that on the first evening after the accident and they couldn't. But I actually brought myself around later on and I was remained in the intensive care unit to start with. But the funny thing or not funny, it's not funny at all.

01:05:58:21 - 01:06:14:20

Naomi Mellor

But the interesting thing is that once yhey came round from being unconscious, I was awake, I was talking, I was having conversations with people, but I don't have any memory until eight days later.

01:06:14:22 - 01:06:34:02

Naomi Mellor

And so the thing that scares me a little bit is I was making phone calls to people and I was having conversations with people and I was chatting away to people that came to visit me. And I had very restricted visitors in the hospital, but I didn't remember any of this now. And my my husband actually told me that a certain friend of mine had been to visit. I was like, I haven't seen her.

01:06:38:03 - 01:06:52:10

Naomi Mellor

And he said, she can't hospital. And I was like, No, she didn't. Yes, she did. And I just and he said you were chatting about blah, blah, blah and was able to tell me some of the contents of our conversation. I have no, I have nothing. I've got nothing.

01:06:52:10 - 01:07:00:10

Sarah Taylor

How have you reconciled that in your in your mind, like knowing that you've lost those days? Is that something that you've been able to, I guess, process?

01:07:00:13 - 01:07:27:14

Naomi Mellor

I view that as quite positive, actually, if I'm honest, and mostly that I have no recollection at all of the accident or the aftermath or in fact, the run up. I have nothing from that day or the day before, and I think not having any recollection of the run up in particular and then the subsequent events is probably quite useful from a trauma, however you would view it perspective.

01:07:27:14 - 01:07:53:06

Naomi Mellor

Yeah, I feel very fortunate that those memories don't hang with me and then I feel that for me the worst of that first week was for my family and that's the people that I when I think about it, that's the people that I feel had have suffered more than than I than I have at that stage. You know, I was I've had some problems since then.

01:07:53:06 - 01:08:00:00

Naomi Mellor

That's fine. But it was definitely with I feel that it was more difficult for them than it was for me who was just, you know, sleeping all the.

01:08:00:00 - 01:08:03:07

Naomi Mellor

Time and remember anything. So it's.

01:08:03:07 - 01:08:03:15

Sarah Taylor

Yeah.

01:08:03:19 - 01:08:07:08

Naomi Mellor

You know, I just was having constant naps in my bed and that was that really.

01:08:07:08 - 01:08:20:02

Heather Taylor

So what is the impact afterwards? Again, traumatic brain injury can happen a million different ways. It can have different impact. So how has it impacted you, your life after that, that day?

01:08:20:04 - 01:08:44:06

Naomi Mellor

Well, yes. I mean, I think you're right, Heather, that definitely it's very different for different people. And the one thing that I consider myself extremely lucky not to have suffered from, given other people I've spoken to is significant headaches. And I think a lot of people who have post concussive syndrome or post concussive injury, the headaches and the light aversion can be really debilitating.

01:08:44:06 - 01:09:06:07

Naomi Mellor

And for me, it manifested once I was I was in the hospital for a couple of weeks and once I came home, extreme tiredness and neuro exhaustion is definitely a real thing that we can talk about a little bit, but that's just walking down the stairs would mean I had to go for a nap, you know, And I'm quite fortunate.

01:09:06:07 - 01:09:26:09

Naomi Mellor

I, I play sports and I'm quite a fit person. I run quite a lot. And that was just such a big change for me because normally I'm quite an energetic person. I sleep well at night and I go to bed early, but I, I never need to nap during the day. And I just spent, you know, 23 hours a day in bed to start with.

01:09:26:09 - 01:09:49:12

Naomi Mellor

And I would get up to eat and that was pretty much it. So that was a big, big thing at the beginning. And then the other big manifestation for me was of the effects on my vision. I couldn't see and I had multiple vision all the time in the first few months, and that was a big change. I mean, you can see anyone who's looking.

01:09:49:12 - 01:10:03:03

Naomi Mellor

At the video will see that I wear glasses and I've had shots for, you know, donkey's years. I've worn glasses since I was 11 or whatever. So, you know, I'm used to not being able to see super well.

01:10:03:05 - 01:10:06:06

Naomi Mellor

But I'm not used to seeing you know.

01:10:06:06 - 01:10:07:19

Naomi Mellor

Four of my dog or whatever.

01:10:07:23 - 01:10:44:19

Naomi Mellor

And actually that is quite tiring from morning to night when you see everything in multiple. And I think the other thing that rolls along with that was kind of depth perception, speed, perception, things like crossing the road, I would have been a person who would have been like, okay, said that cos coming, that cause coming, I've got, I've got time to nip between especially in London that you just kind of nipped between the traffic and you know, cross the red light carriage basin and now I am the person who I'm like right, there's nothing coming from the left and there is nothing coming from the right and I've got enough time to cross the right

01:10:44:19 - 01:11:03:18

Naomi Mellor

because actually what's difficult to judge is or was difficult to judge. It's got better now, but how quickly things were coming towards you and therefore how much time you had to make the crossing. For example, another good example is just taking the taking the underground in

London. Yeah, I've got escalators. Nightmare.

01:11:03:20 - 01:11:07:08

Naomi Mellor

You've got busy platforms, you've got busy trains.

01:11:07:10 - 01:11:25:14

Naomi Mellor

The doors open automatically quite quickly. Everybody piles on and off. It's I then you're looking down and I'm thinking, okay, so how big is the step? Is there a step down? How big, you know, how quickly do I need to go, What can I hold onto? My balance isn't great. I can't really see that. Well, I'm a bit unsteady.

01:11:25:14 - 01:11:45:14

Naomi Mellor

I'm so uncoordinated these days. Well, I was. And, you know, just putting all of that together makes one simple trip on the metro, which I would have done, you know, hundreds of thousands of times before taking the tube becomes a big deal. And it's like, is there a left? Is there someone to help me? Can I hold onto someone's arm?

01:11:45:14 - 01:11:49:09

Naomi Mellor

Are the doors going to shut on me? Oh, my God, It's leaving really quickly.

01:11:49:11 - 01:11:58:13

Naomi Mellor

You know, I think it's a thing all of a sudden. Heather, I know Sarah mentioned you lived in London, so you'll know all about what I'm talking about, but yeah.

01:11:58:15 - 01:12:20:03

Heather Taylor

Knew there was a really great app for a long time, and it doesn't work anymore, but it would tell you what car to get onto so that you can. Oh my gosh journey And it was, Oh, it was so amazing. It was the thing that saved because it's so difficult and there's sometimes some of the stations, as anyone who's been to London would know, it can be it feels like a 20 minute walk inside.

01:12:20:04 - 01:12:34:00

Heather Taylor

Yeah, yeah. Like I'm just inside. I'm like, I don't know where I am. I'm in some to somewhere in a tunnel. But yeah, it was one of the most amazing things. And I feel like it's but without it, it's pretty chaotic. Even if you've lived there for a long time. So.

01:12:34:00 - 01:13:02:02

Naomi Mellor

Yeah, well, the other thing I realized was then how far you had to walk within a big train station. So just using King's Cross as an example, which is one of the big train stations in London, I would have never thought twice about coming from the train to the tube, but actually that might be. I didn't even know how far that is to walk, but to get to some of the tube platforms, when you're a person who I can't see, that will be feels very tired and see doesn't have legs that work particularly well.

01:13:02:04 - 01:13:29:01

Naomi Mellor

That becomes really exhausting. And I think the thing that happened to me in the aftermath was I definitely gained an appreciation for people who don't find life that easy. But you can see it and everybody is in so much of a rush all the time that nobody looks. And now I find myself looking around being like, Does anybody need a hand?

01:13:29:01 - 01:13:37:21

Naomi Mellor

Can I give this seat, this spot, this handle, this anything to somebody else? Whereas I probably didn't have that awareness before, if I'm totally honest.

01:13:37:23 - 01:13:45:21

Heather Taylor

In your experience, do you know of any films or TV series that get the experience of having a TV? Right?

01:13:46:00 - 01:13:51:15

Naomi Mellor

I have thought about this quite a lot since you sent me the original email when we were discussing this.

01:13:51:15 - 01:13:55:22

Naomi Mellor

And the answer is no. And I think a.

01:13:56:00 - 01:13:57:16

Naomi Mellor

I mean, I'm not a great TV.

01:13:57:16 - 01:14:01:13

Naomi Mellor

Watcher, if I'm honest anyway, but I think.



01:14:01:15 - 01:14:21:13

Naomi Mellor

The one thing that has always frustrated me a little bit is I've always suspected that that kind of, you know, and open your eyes. Oh, they've arrived back in the world is probably not true. Yeah. And I can tell you in my experience was 100% definitely not true. I see. Because I don't really remember. I don't remember at all any of that.

01:14:21:15 - 01:14:36:12

Naomi Mellor

But I had a couple of small bleeds of my brain and I don't have any reference points in film or television of anything discussing having a traumatic brain injury in the way that I did. I suspect it probably wouldn't make like a.

01:14:36:12 - 01:14:43:20

Naomi Mellor

Super irritating plotline, but it's I watched a lot of Gray's Anatomy when I was younger.

01:14:43:22 - 01:15:14:22

Naomi Mellor

And I think that even you watch medical dramas, they they can't cover everything. And, you know, I was fortunate I didn't have to have surgery. But having read some books and watched some documentaries written by quite a well known neurosurgeon over here, I don't know that I've seen anything fictional that portrays quite accurately the way the trauma and the effect that a significant brain injury has on those around you.

01:15:15:01 - 01:15:52:12

Naomi Mellor

And B, the subtlety and variety of effects that it can have on the patient as well, because I think we tend to think of you have a massive brain bleed and you have an emergency craniotomy where they take out part of your skull to release pressure and it's all highly traumatic and etc., etc.. But I do know several people who've had more, I guess you would say less significant from an external perspective, brain injuries than it looks dramatic, But those have had really big impacts on people's lives for really quite long times.

01:15:52:14 - 01:16:15:15

Naomi Mellor

And because they're insidious and long term and reasonably difficult to judge from somebody from the outside, I've never seen anything covered about chronic less severe, but still equally meaningful and and significant brain injuries.

01:16:15:17 - 01:16:29:04

Sarah Taylor

I feel like it's often that like the Gray's Anatomy is like, yeah, the surgery. And then they wake up

and then it's like stories over there are alive and or even like while you were sleeping, like the movie from was it from the nineties?

01:16:29:05 - 01:16:29:21

Naomi Mellor

Oh my gosh.

01:16:29:21 - 01:16:31:07

Naomi Mellor

Sandra Bullock I love that film.

01:16:31:12 - 01:16:44:09

Sarah Taylor

You forgot everything before that injury, but then everything's fine. You just forget, like you just move on. So we're not seeing that recovery, which I think is a really major part of traumatic brain injury.

01:16:44:11 - 01:16:56:16

Heather Taylor

You said that there is a lasting effect for people, but it may not be this traumatic moment of like, oh, they've had their brain opened. They, you know, just this kind of long, ongoing effect. What were some of those things?

01:16:56:18 - 01:17:32:01

Naomi Mellor

I think visual deficits and then headaches would be a big would be a big one. I think from a friend of mine who actually works in podcasting as well. Funnily enough, in the States, she had a traumatic brain injury in a car accident earlier this year as well. And she has had those light issues with light. So I think lighter version I mentioned earlier is a big problem and people having tolerance to sound light, visual and any kind of sensory stimulation is a really big deal.

01:17:32:02 - 01:17:43:04

Naomi Mellor

So we frequently talk about the effect of being in crowds or the effect of flashing lights, the effect of a lot of noise. The first time I tested.

01:17:43:04 - 01:17:50:09

Naomi Mellor

Myself from a sensory sensory stimulation perspective, you'll get a laugh at this. I went to see Bobby at the cinema.

01:17:50:11 - 01:17:52:10

Sarah Taylor

I love it. Yes.

01:17:52:12 - 01:17:53:18

Heather Taylor

That's a lot of stimulus.

01:17:53:21 - 01:18:13:16

Naomi Mellor

It was a lot of stimulus, but the film was just out and it was, you know, that the time when Bobby and Oppenheim were both out and we took a picture, we went to see Bobby, and it was yeah, it was a lot it was a lot like the the surround sound and the color.

01:18:13:18 - 01:18:21:15

Naomi Mellor

And just everything was was just felt bigger and louder and brighter and.

01:18:21:17 - 01:18:24:20

Naomi Mellor

Whoa. But actually, when I needed to or sitting in a.

01:18:24:20 - 01:18:30:17

Naomi Mellor

Dark cinema, I could just close my eyes for a second and that was fine. And, you know, I really.

01:18:30:17 - 01:18:35:19

Naomi Mellor

Enjoyed the film. I love Margot Robbie, and it was good. And actually it was a good test.

01:18:35:19 - 01:19:01:06

Naomi Mellor

Because then I felt like, okay, I can do this. And I think that's the other thing. When you were asking Heather about long term effects, nobody is really able to tell you because everybody is so different as previously discussed, is very hard for medical staff to tell you what your capabilities are going to be. Everything is a test of yourself and it's everything is a bit trial and error.

01:19:01:07 - 01:19:21:03

Sarah Taylor

I just recently finished reading Sarah Polley's memoir Run Toward the Danger, and she has a whole chapter at the end about her because she had a TBI and one of the doctors saying, You have to run towards the danger, like you have to do those experiments, like you said, with the Barbie movie and test yourself and see what you can do.

01:19:21:05 - 01:19:33:06

Sarah Taylor

And it's like feels like often the opposite of what we want to do. Right. So how did you decide, okay, I'm going to go to the Barbie movie. I'm going to test myself with this major sensory overload. Like how what made you go down that path?

01:19:33:06 - 01:19:34:23

Naomi Mellor

Well, I.

01:19:35:00 - 01:19:36:20

Naomi Mellor

Started testing myself with things.

01:19:37:01 - 01:19:50:01

Naomi Mellor

Quite quickly, mostly because I am self-employed as well. And so no doubt working equals zero income. And I.

01:19:50:03 - 01:20:11:00

Naomi Mellor

I haven't got back to anything significant this year yet, but I was determined that I wanted to keep trying to do something every day. And partly because then your life has no structure and I'm sure the two of you, you're busy women and you have a lot on in life and it's when you suddenly go from 100 miles an hour.

01:20:11:00 - 01:20:37:06

Naomi Mellor

Not that I really like going under balls an hour, but you know what I mean? And suddenly you're going zero and your life has lost all pattern, all structure, and you have nothing ahead of you on a day to day basis other than just get better. You need to rest. Which is true. Very true. And, you know, as as I mentioned, I spent a lot of time sleeping but actually having those little challenges.

01:20:37:06 - 01:21:07:12

Naomi Mellor

So today I'm going to walk out into the driveway tomorrow. I might walk to the end of my road, which is 30 yards or whatever, and the weather was quite nice here in the UK when I came home. It was quite sunny, it was warm, and so each day there was an incentive to try something. And because of my vision and the double vision, I was wearing an eye patch constantly on one eye or the other because I could only view single things out of one eye or the other.

01:21:07:12 - 01:21:32:03

Naomi Mellor

And so I couldn't watch telly or look at a laptop or use a phone at all in the first few weeks, months or whatever. And then gradually over a period of time that got better. But it would be okay. I'll reply to one message. I will look at one email, I will watch 5 minutes of something and then gradually it just started to build up.

01:21:32:05 - 01:21:53:03

Naomi Mellor

And then we were actually invited to go and see Bobby and we just thought, I just said, What's the worst that can happen? If his absolutely terrible will work out and we'll go home and we'll just drive back from the cinema, no biggie. It felt like a lot of the the many challenges, let's call them, that I set myself where things that could be easily remedied by.

01:21:53:03 - 01:21:57:14

Naomi Mellor

Going in if necessary, or that that could.

01:21:57:14 - 01:21:59:02

Naomi Mellor

End with a lie down if.

01:21:59:02 - 01:22:02:03

Naomi Mellor

Necessary. And so all of those things.

01:22:02:03 - 01:22:11:08

Naomi Mellor

Were quite carefully planned. And I think that was because Heather asked a question earlier about what was the impact on my life suddenly having to become queen of.

01:22:11:08 - 01:22:12:11

Naomi Mellor

Logistics was the.

01:22:12:11 - 01:22:17:00

Naomi Mellor

Biggest impact on my life because I am lazy.

01:22:17:00 - 01:22:23:11

Naomi Mellor

As an organization. I am I'm the kind of person who hops in my car and I just go and I'm ready.

01:22:23:11 - 01:22:40:22

Naomi Mellor

And suddenly I was like, Right, If I want to go to see my parents, I'm not allowed to drive. They live 3 hours away. So okay, I need to be a company to be dropped off here, a company to there. I need to book a ticket in advance for this. I need to find a train. I need to somehow get Microsoft across London.

01:22:40:22 - 01:22:57:06

Naomi Mellor

I need somebody to come with me. Someone's going to need to help me with my bag. Someone needs to pick me up at the other end, yada, yada, yada. You know, and all those things just became more significant and and still are to a degree, much less of a degree. But yeah.

01:22:57:08 - 01:23:07:21

Heather Taylor

And I can imagine how the people in your life close to you, of course, telling them that, but maybe people not as close to you understanding like but you seem okay, like you should. Can you go do this.

01:23:07:21 - 01:23:08:04

Naomi Mellor

Or.

01:23:08:10 - 01:23:12:00

Naomi Mellor

Oh my gosh, Heather, if anybody said to me one more time, you don't know.

01:23:12:00 - 01:23:14:01

Naomi Mellor

Like if it in a car accident, I was like.

01:23:14:01 - 01:23:16:12

Sarah Taylor

Oh my gosh.

01:23:16:14 - 01:23:25:00

Naomi Mellor

If I had a pound for every time somebody told me that, I would be so rich. And I guess I was like, Yes, now I don't, but trust me, I have.

01:23:25:02 - 01:23:25:21

Sarah Taylor

Yes.

01:23:25:23 - 01:23:50:04

Heather Taylor

Well, I, I was thinking about another film just because we were talking about it at one point. But concussion, I was curious if you ever saw that it's the it's different. Obviously not a car. It's to do with traumatic brain injury in terms of like continual concussion, but basically talking about a doctor looking for the truth to help the long term effects of repeated concussions on football players.

01:23:50:05 - 01:23:52:13

Naomi Mellor

Oh, yes. Okay. This is interesting. Yeah.

01:23:52:17 - 01:24:21:23

Heather Taylor

Yeah. It was based on a real person. It's a true story of doctor. I think it's Bennet Omalu. It's a bit of a thriller, puts him in danger, but he's like, We need to talk about this because we're killing people with this sport. And I'm curious, like, if that if any of the things resonate with you or is it more like this idea of, again, it's so quiet about this, everyone kind of, you know, it's something can happen and it's kind of put aside as if it doesn't have a long term effect.

01:24:21:23 - 01:24:32:07

Heather Taylor

It's just like it's like as you were sleeping, when he wakes up and he's like, I don't remember, but this is my fiancée, okay? I'll just marry her. I mean, that's really dodgy for many reasons.

01:24:32:07 - 01:24:33:06

Sarah Taylor

But yeah.

01:24:33:07 - 01:24:34:19

Naomi Mellor

It was the nineties too, you know?

01:24:34:19 - 01:24:37:19

Naomi Mellor

Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

01:24:37:21 - 01:25:00:07

Naomi Mellor

No, and I think that's really interesting. So I overhear we have the big conversations around CTE, which is the chronic traumatic encephalopathy that results, I think in the States. You have that with football we have we see it, there's big discussions in rugby and then soccer through heading of all all the time as well. And those conversations are ongoing.

01:25:00:07 - 01:25:14:01

Naomi Mellor

And I suppose if you my situation differently to that in the sense of I had one major blow to my head and I hopefully.

01:25:14:03 - 01:25:17:13

Naomi Mellor

Won't be taking any more subsequently and I.

01:25:17:13 - 01:25:49:22

Naomi Mellor

Hadn't taken any before. Nothing. Well, not anything significant that anyone was aware of. Let's put it that way. So I suppose I view what happened to me as one discrete incident as opposed to multiple repeated incidents over a period of time, which I think is what is seen in sports. But I think previous to this I had never considered the impact A for the long term on on my brain of of an injury such as this, because I never thought.

01:25:49:22 - 01:25:51:21

Naomi Mellor

That something like this happened to me.

01:25:52:00 - 01:26:18:07

Naomi Mellor

I as I mentioned, I think at the top of the episode have been a horse that for 16 years and I spent a lot of time driving and I worked out that I've driven somewhere between half and three quarters of a million miles at work just for work over the last 15 years. Well, and I have been very, very lucky that I have will have a terrible carbon footprint sorry world, but I also have not been involved in.

01:26:18:07 - 01:26:20:03

Naomi Mellor

Any serious or significant.

01:26:20:03 - 01:26:36:20

Naomi Mellor

Accidents. I've had a couple of little low grade bumps, but nothing serious. And I just didn't ever envisage that an incident such as this would have ever been a part of my life or have ever happened to me because.

01:26:36:21 - 01:26:37:10

Naomi Mellor

I'm.



01:26:37:12 - 01:26:50:23

Naomi Mellor

Like everybody. I just go along in your tunnel and you just deal with what's in front of you and I don't know, I just I've been a lucky person and a healthy person. And for that I consider myself very, very lucky previously.

01:26:50:23 - 01:27:11:09

Heather Taylor

Yeah. And I think it's what's interesting, too, is that, yeah, we just don't see it a lot. And in media, unless you're looking for it, like the idea that you said of the documentaries and with something, you know, concussion being around something that's that well, that's elite sports athletes, right? Those are the athletes. And they're putting themselves into this danger.

01:27:11:11 - 01:27:30:01

Heather Taylor

I mean, there's two other films, but again, I haven't seen them like the Look Out from 2007. That was a while ago. I don't know this one, but it's like about someone who has a traumatic brain injury and he struggles to hold down a job, but, you know, eventually finds a job as a night janitor at a bank and then there's an attempted heist.

01:27:30:01 - 01:27:52:23

Heather Taylor

I mean, of course, it's an attempted heist. And so he has to decide, you know, what's right and wrong. And I was like, I don't know why that is. This is just me, but it's supposed to be a good representation. So I guess check it out. And then another one called Patience, which is like a comedy drama, which is about a man recovering from a major sports injury that left him unable to take care of himself or partake in former hobbies.

01:27:53:01 - 01:28:05:03

Heather Taylor

So when he lands at a physiotherapy center, he forms a group of friends and they learn basically that even after an accident, every life is about the same thing. So and in this case they say dating, laughter, fun and friendship.

01:28:05:05 - 01:28:09:09

Naomi Mellor

So all this sounds wonderful. Lovely. That sounds really good.

01:28:09:15 - 01:28:17:19

Naomi Mellor

One thing I one thing I did look at quite a lot in the aftermath because I couldn't watch anything or look at a screen.

01:28:17:19 - 01:28:32:11

Naomi Mellor

Which was quite sad. When I had all this time, I could have watched a lot of Netflix and I could and I could. I just thought, Oh yeah, I've got so much time in bed ahead of me. This will be great. I'll watch lights and films and lights and series now. But what I did have a lot of time to do was.

01:28:32:11 - 01:28:35:09

Naomi Mellor

Listen to stuff. And so I started looking for.

01:28:35:10 - 01:28:38:00

Naomi Mellor

Podcasts, obviously because I'm a podcast obsessive.

01:28:38:00 - 01:28:38:18

Naomi Mellor

And I thought.

01:28:39:00 - 01:28:39:21

Naomi Mellor

This will be a really good.

01:28:39:21 - 01:28:46:12

Naomi Mellor

Time to learn. And one thing I really discovered and I think this is around the time that I probably started chatting.

01:28:46:12 - 01:28:48:03

Naomi Mellor

To you guys was.

01:28:48:05 - 01:29:09:12

Naomi Mellor

There isn't much out there about traumatic brain injury and there are a few long going podcasts. There's quite a big one in the States and one I discovered in the UK, which I actually have listened to, which is not specifically about brain injury, but it's called the Recess Room and is a very it's quite a scientific podcast actually.

01:29:09:12 - 01:29:17:18

Naomi Mellor

So it's it's not for the faint hearted listeners. If you don't like a bit of science, but it was it's very

well done and it's.

01:29:17:18 - 01:29:40:17

Naomi Mellor

A doctor, a nurse and an air ambulance paramedic who present it. So it's it's really scientific, really accurate and really good and they're great. And I found that a very useful resource actually of it's a British podcast. And so it had quite a lot of British resources attached to it. And yeah, I think that was the thing I was looking for that I that I didn't find.

01:29:40:17 - 01:30:03:06

Naomi Mellor

But to be brutally honest, I couldn't look at my phone very much and so I didn't have the capacity to be doing deep dives into what was available for me to initially listen to and then watch and by the time I got round to being better enough to be watching things of any significant length, I was, you know, back to watching sex education or whatever with new on.

01:30:03:07 - 01:30:05:19

Naomi Mellor

Netflix everywhere.

01:30:05:21 - 01:30:07:05

Sarah Taylor

Going to the party movie.

01:30:07:07 - 01:30:11:23

Naomi Mellor

As you do. Exactly having a change of genre so.

01:30:12:01 - 01:30:22:05

Heather Taylor

How do you deal with the neuro exhaustion, which you mentioned earlier? How do you deal with that and the recovery process?

01:30:22:07 - 01:30:55:10

Naomi Mellor

I'm very fortunate, Heather and Sarah, that I now do not have neuro exhaustion in to any significant extent. Now I feel that my tiredness and my energy has returned to what it was pre accident. However, in the first instance, I mean that the neuro exhaustion lasted for months and was super significant at the beginning. And the way I dealt with that, Heather, was to only allow myself to make one small plan per day initially.

01:30:55:14 - 01:31:12:09

Naomi Mellor

So to begin with it would be like I said before, I'm going to walk to the bottom of the stairs and then even after that, if I had somebody coming to visit me, that was the days planned, they might have been coming for a cup of tea for an hour or something, but that would then be the whole day.

01:31:12:13 - 01:31:33:01

Naomi Mellor

So there was one thing per day which also gave some structure to me and gave me something to wake up for in the mornings, which was good. But I had such a lot of medical appointments. But each one was that was the day's plan. It was, I'm going to see this person for a cup of tea. I'm going to have an appointment with the physio.

01:31:33:01 - 01:31:58:03

Naomi Mellor

I have to go to the neuropsychologist, whatever. And that would be this is the diary entry for the whole day. Even if I know that that's only going to take 30 minutes and it's a 15 minute drive, That's the day's plan, because inevitably I will come back and I will just sleep and that's okay. And just really giving myself the grace to say you can go to bed at midday and that is totally fine.

01:31:58:05 - 01:32:40:02

Naomi Mellor

And yeah, I just I would often be awake for a few hours in the morning and then that was that. And anything after 6 p.m. was complete write off. And then gradually I started allowing myself to maybe do one thing in the morning and then one thing at home in the afternoon. So okay, this afternoon I might have a phone call with somebody or a lot of my friends rang or people I was very, very lucky that I have lovely, lovely friends and family and I would say, Can you call me on Tuesday afternoon at 2:00?

01:32:40:04 - 01:32:57:09

Naomi Mellor

Because I know then that if I've done something in the morning, I will just want to talk to somebody so I'm not lonely because that's the other factor that when you're used to going out all the time, then that will be the afternoon's activity. One phone call with an old friend. That's my afternoon.

01:32:57:11 - 01:33:04:00

Heather Taylor

Just as a follow up to that, you mentioned physiotherapy. What kind of physiotherapy did you end up doing?

01:33:04:00 - 01:33:11:06

Naomi Mellor

I was very fortunate. So I'm going to say this because I like a massive advocate for safe cars,

but I was.

01:33:11:06 - 01:33:13:04

Naomi Mellor

Driving a Volvo and if you live in Europe.

01:33:13:04 - 01:33:24:16

Naomi Mellor

Everybody loves Volvo for safety. They considered to be they used to be considered to be quite uncool these days, very cool. They're so cool, but yet they're so cool now. And also extremely safe. Volvo.

01:33:24:18 - 01:33:34:12

Naomi Mellor

The first brands to introduce seatbelts and and to really promote them long time ago. But yet I was very fortunate to be driving one of those.

01:33:34:12 - 01:33:36:10

Naomi Mellor

Which was my luck at the end of.

01:33:36:10 - 01:33:50:15

Naomi Mellor

The day. And I didn't have any other injuries apart from my brain injury. I mean, I've had some neck issues with my whiplash, but I didn't have any other serious injuries, let's put it that way. The hospital were.

01:33:50:17 - 01:33:56:11

Naomi Mellor

Bemused and surprised that I didn't have multiple fractures, but I didn't.

01:33:56:16 - 01:33:59:21

Naomi Mellor

And yeah, I walk I mean, I didn't walk.

01:33:59:21 - 01:34:11:09

Naomi Mellor

Because I was in a coma, but if I had not banged my head quite badly, then I think I would have walked away. So yes, I was very fortunate. But now just getting back to the physiotherapy, am I?

01:34:11:12 - 01:34:13:06

Naomi Mellor

I love my neuro physio.

01:34:13:08 - 01:34:15:08

Naomi Mellor

She was, I.

01:34:15:08 - 01:34:31:21

Naomi Mellor

Was sent to her at the beginning by a physiotherapist who I had seen previously for some just normal what I would call normal musculoskeletal physiotherapy, just sporting related and I rang her up when I came out of the hospital and she said, Oh, you don't want to come see me, I'm going to send you.

01:34:31:21 - 01:34:32:17

Naomi Mellor

To.

01:34:32:19 - 01:34:33:09

Naomi Mellor

A neuro.

01:34:33:09 - 01:34:36:02

Naomi Mellor

Physiotherapist. She was like, You need to see someone.

01:34:36:02 - 01:34:54:00

Naomi Mellor

Specialist And Libby, here is my neuro physiotherapist is just the best and she has been seeing me since I came out of hospital five months ago and she's still seeing me and she has pieced together, pieced me back together, along with multiple.

01:34:54:00 - 01:34:54:09

Naomi Mellor

Other.

01:34:54:12 - 01:35:22:03

Naomi Mellor

Specialists and paraprofessionals. But I love her to bits and she has been incredible, really, really incredible. And I didn't know really what neuro physiotherapists did because I hadn't had any experience of them. But just talking to her, her caseload is a very varied and be very different and she helps a lot of different people with a lot of different neurological conditions and she has been extremely good.

01:35:22:05 - 01:35:27:12

Sarah Taylor

Can you give us. Yeah, one example of of an exercise or something that she would get you to do as a in that.

01:35:27:12 - 01:35:29:17

Naomi Mellor

Yes. I as I've got better say.

01:35:29:19 - 01:35:39:11

Naomi Mellor

One of my remaining deficits up until reasonably recently has been ocular motor coordination. And so it's the coordination between your brain, your eyes and your limbs.

01:35:39:12 - 01:35:44:10

Naomi Mellor

Essentially. And so things like.

01:35:44:12 - 01:35:51:12

Naomi Mellor

Catching a ball would be a nightmare. Let's just use that as an example, because it's quite an easy one. My well, my.

01:35:51:12 - 01:35:52:16

Naomi Mellor

Eyes don't work well.

01:35:52:16 - 01:36:15:07

Naomi Mellor

It didn't work amazingly well. So then you're seeing three balls and it's coming at you. And even if somebody threw you a very gentle, very simple ball, maybe a tennis ball, that's nice. And, you know, relatively soft should be relatively easy to catch by the time your wonky eyes have communicated with your brain and that communicates with your hands, bang, it's on the floor and you're clapping it thinner.

01:36:15:09 - 01:36:17:08

Naomi Mellor

And so it's just.

01:36:17:08 - 01:36:48:18

Naomi Mellor

Things like that, just learning how to do exercises, passing things from one hand to another, looking at things in certain directions, focusing your eyes in order to get your brain to compute where your hand is in space, related to your eyes, related to the thing that you have in your

hand would be an example. And then one of the other things I struggled with for a while was grip strength.

01:36:48:18 - 01:36:58:10

Naomi Mellor

So my hands couldn't quite coordinate that. I needed to grip something. So I dropped a lot of stuff, not even things that were thrown at me, but just things I picked up. And then.

01:36:58:12 - 01:36:59:17

Naomi Mellor

Also I.

01:36:59:19 - 01:37:03:15

Sarah Taylor

Just I just imagined, like, you're just dodging balls, you're playing dodgeball.

01:37:03:17 - 01:37:09:22

Naomi Mellor

Right now. And this was like, I'd pick a charity out of the cupboard and drop it on the floor or something like that.

01:37:09:22 - 01:37:11:11

Naomi Mellor

You know, And or.

01:37:11:11 - 01:37:14:03

Naomi Mellor

I would go to.

01:37:14:05 - 01:37:32:17

Naomi Mellor

Take something off the stove and realize I couldn't lift a saucepan because I can't grip properly, or I would go to pour the kettle to make a cup of coffee or a cup of tea or whatever. And I would just pull half the kettle of boiling water on the side of the kitchen instead of into a mug. And so just aiming things.

01:37:32:17 - 01:37:36:19

Naomi Mellor

To live life was really quite difficult and say.

01:37:36:21 - 01:37:39:10

Naomi Mellor

Just having exercises to practice.



01:37:39:12 - 01:37:44:03

Naomi Mellor

All of those things together that didn't involve a kettle full of boiling water was quite useful.

01:37:44:05 - 01:37:47:08

Sarah Taylor

And yes, very good.

01:37:47:10 - 01:37:53:21

Naomi Mellor

You know, just making sure I didn't add to my list of problems. So yeah, just all those sorts of things really.

01:37:53:23 - 01:38:05:14

Sarah Taylor

You wouldn't think about that again. When we talk about what we see on TV and film, you wouldn't think that, oh, you had a brain injury. You're to have issues with grip like that just wouldn't connect. I don't think.

01:38:05:14 - 01:38:06:06

Naomi Mellor

Now.

01:38:06:08 - 01:38:16:07

Sarah Taylor

Until we hear a story or we see it happened and and that is yeah, that totally affects your life. I'm curious, how did having a TBI affect your mental health?

01:38:16:07 - 01:38:40:09

Naomi Mellor

So with that, initially when I was first released from hospital, I was so physically unwell or not myself that the mental side of things didn't really come into play to begin with. I was so conscious that I couldn't really see or walk or balance or, you know, get out of bed without falling over or whatever.

01:38:40:09 - 01:38:42:11

Naomi Mellor

Those things seemed to be the.

01:38:42:11 - 01:38:54:11

Naomi Mellor

Priority in the first few weeks, months. And actually it was my husband who said to me, I think

the time that come a time when you become frustrated that.

01:38:54:12 - 01:38:55:17

Naomi Mellor

You.

01:38:55:19 - 01:39:13:21

Naomi Mellor

Can do things, but you're not allowed to, or that you think you should be, that you should be able to do things, but you can't. And both of those things duly came into fruition. And the biggest thing for me, we live in a rural area so that we have to drive to the shops or have to drive to go to the train station, for example.

01:39:13:21 - 01:39:32:20

Naomi Mellor

And not being allowed to drive has probably had the most practical significance impact on my life, just in terms of being constantly reliant on other people. And as somebody who values independence and freedom along with adventure as part of my life values.

01:39:32:20 - 01:39:34:09

Naomi Mellor

That was quite difficult.

01:39:34:11 - 01:39:56:11

Naomi Mellor

But it's a learning curve and you like all things in life, you learn to to make the best of the situation that you have and to cope with the position that you're in. And I'm very lucky. My family don't live close to me, neither do my husband's family. But we have people around us who are generous and kind, and my husband is a flipping rock like.

01:39:56:13 - 01:39:59:16

Naomi Mellor

He is mega, but it's.

01:39:59:18 - 01:40:11:06

Naomi Mellor

It's it's been a transition to learn how to restructure my life, to allow myself to do the things that I want to do in a practical sense, as much as everything.

01:40:11:06 - 01:40:26:10

Heather Taylor

Else. If you could now with your experience and you're like, you know, and obviously we've looked at lists of it's not doesn't feel like there's a lot of representation both across let's say

podcast as well as from television as we do podcasts. What would you like to hear?

01:40:26:12 - 01:40:58:01

Naomi Mellor

See, I think I would love to see a representation of people whose lives have been irrevocably changed one way or another by a brain injury. And listening to a couple of your previous shows where people have talked about representation of mental illness and representation of other brain disorders, shall we say, I think is always about the story of people who've been in in that situation or another to be shown.

01:40:58:05 - 01:41:00:23

Naomi Mellor

And it doesn't. I think for me.

01:41:01:00 - 01:41:02:16

Naomi Mellor

Watching somebody who had.

01:41:02:17 - 01:41:09:20

Naomi Mellor

An injury like mine and the subsequent aftermath of that, a lot of it would be pretty boring for the viewer to be brutally honest.

01:41:09:20 - 01:41:12:23

Naomi Mellor

It's it's slow. It's quite.

01:41:13:04 - 01:41:14:11

Naomi Mellor

Like not much happens.

01:41:14:11 - 01:41:16:07

Naomi Mellor

Quite a lot of the time. It's the same.

01:41:16:07 - 01:41:42:21

Naomi Mellor

As rehabilitation from anything. You know, it's it requires work and it's hard work and it's upsetting. And there are days when everything is so painful that you just want to cry all the time. And and you know, that's that's not entertainment necessarily in the way that somebody might want or expect. But I think that there is a place for other people to understand the effects that having a traumatic brain injury can have on a person's life.

01:41:43:00 - 01:42:00:11

Naomi Mellor

And even if that isn't the immediate consequences of the accident or showing what that was like, you know, at the time or showing a huge car crash and being in hospital and waking up and or whatever you may be, it's maybe it's further down the line.

01:42:00:13 - 01:42:01:20

Heather Taylor

But yeah.

01:42:01:22 - 01:42:06:10

Naomi Mellor

I think there's a space for those people, whether that's in a long running TV show as.

01:42:06:10 - 01:42:07:18

Naomi Mellor

A as a.

01:42:07:19 - 01:42:13:20

Naomi Mellor

Repeated character or what, I'm not sure. But I think the space for stories to be told.

01:42:14:00 - 01:42:22:07

Sarah Taylor

Clearly we need more. Are there any resources that you would suggest to other listeners who maybe have experienced this or have the loved ones that have experienced it?

01:42:22:10 - 01:42:24:02

Naomi Mellor

When I was in the hospital.

01:42:24:04 - 01:42:35:22

Naomi Mellor

One of the resources that I was given by the doctors in the hospital was from a charity called Headway, which is a brain injury charity here in the UK, and they have.

01:42:36:01 - 01:42:36:18

Naomi Mellor

A lot.

01:42:36:19 - 01:43:09:10

Naomi Mellor

Of resources available for both traumatic brain injury sufferers, people who've had strokes, the

families and friends of people who have had brain injuries and everything is vetted and written really well and it's all kind of scientifically backed up and it's a lot of collaboration between the charity and hospitals and the charity and other professionals to really create resources for brain injury sufferers and their families and friends to bring it all together.

01:43:09:10 - 01:43:30:19

Naomi Mellor

And so headway was the place that I was firstly recommended. A lot of the books we were given in the hospital, we had, we were given printouts from the headway website to read and oh yeah, I know that my family took Major, took advantage of the resources that were offered there and that is a place that I have gone back to subsequently as well.

01:43:30:21 - 01:43:42:18

Heather Taylor

Is there anything that we've missed? I mean, we could probably talk for hours about things like in this short amount of time that we have on this earth together in this moment, Is there anything that you would like to mention that we may not have talked about?

01:43:42:23 - 01:43:44:03

Naomi Mellor

I think my my.

01:43:44:03 - 01:43:51:20

Naomi Mellor

Previous perception and I guess this does come through through films and TV over the years was that people who suffered.

01:43:51:20 - 01:43:58:04

Naomi Mellor

A traumatic brain injury always had a fractured skull or needed neurosurgery or, you know.

01:43:58:04 - 01:43:59:05

Naomi Mellor

Had a piece of the.

01:43:59:07 - 01:44:00:15

Naomi Mellor

Brain.

01:44:00:17 - 01:44:02:18

Naomi Mellor

Piece of their skull removed or whatever.

01:44:02:18 - 01:44:14:03

Naomi Mellor

And I think I had never previously considered, probably because of the things we've discussed, that you don't tend to see very non dramatic brain injuries represented.

01:44:14:04 - 01:44:16:14

Naomi Mellor

In film and television. But I.

01:44:16:14 - 01:44:20:22

Naomi Mellor

Think I had never considered the impact of something.

01:44:20:22 - 01:44:28:12

Naomi Mellor

That was a little bit I mean, might don't get me wrong, what happened to me was cause you might take something kind of slightly less than less.

01:44:28:12 - 01:44:33:04

Naomi Mellor

Dramatic than half my skull missing. That might happen to another person, you know.

01:44:33:04 - 01:44:34:01

Naomi Mellor

So.

01:44:34:03 - 01:45:04:04

Naomi Mellor

I think you don't see what's not in front of you. And everybody has their own thing in life. And there are lots of different medical conditions and there are lots of people who suffer with various physical and mental ailments during their life. Be that what they may and people have personal interests in certain things because those have cropped up for them, their family, their friends, people close to them, whatever it may be.

01:45:04:06 - 01:45:08:18

Naomi Mellor

And I guess traumatic brain injury has unexpectedly and.

01:45:08:18 - 01:45:09:23

Naomi Mellor

Slightly unwanted.

01:45:10:01 - 01:45:11:08

Naomi Mellor  
Fallen into my lap.

01:45:11:09 - 01:45:14:12

Naomi Mellor  
And now that's where we are.

01:45:14:13 - 01:45:18:19

Sarah Taylor  
Well, where can people find you online and maybe plug your podcasts?

01:45:18:23 - 01:45:35:06

Naomi Mellor  
So. Well, this is the other thing that was slightly awkward was I was in the middle of a season of my own podcast, which then went out the window subsequently. And yeah, I've got recorded interviews that haven't gone out yet. So most of the podcasts I produce.

01:45:35:08 - 01:45:38:19

Naomi Mellor  
For clients and they're quite often quite niche. The one.

01:45:38:19 - 01:45:40:05

Naomi Mellor  
That I do myself is called.

01:45:40:05 - 01:45:48:01

Naomi Mellor  
Smashing the Ceiling, and that is interviews with women with unusual and interesting careers.

01:45:48:03 - 01:45:50:04

Naomi Mellor  
It's yes.

01:45:50:06 - 01:45:51:01

Naomi Mellor  
But the main say.

01:45:51:01 - 01:45:51:15

Naomi Mellor  
Of what I.

01:45:51:15 - 01:45:52:09

Naomi Mellor

Work on these.

01:45:52:09 - 01:45:53:00

Naomi Mellor

Days.

01:45:53:00 - 01:46:13:13

Naomi Mellor

Is the International Women's Podcast Awards, which are happening quite soon. And if you want to see that online, we are at I do podcast awards on pretty much all platforms. So yeah, and the social media platform on which I only ever really spend any time myself is LinkedIn. So if anyone's interested in connecting, then just find me the Naomi Mellor.

01:46:13:19 - 01:46:16:07

Naomi Mellor

You'll find me. I think I'm the only person on LinkedIn.

01:46:16:07 - 01:46:17:20

Naomi Mellor

That describes myself as a podcast.

01:46:17:20 - 01:46:18:23

Naomi Mellor

Producer and veterinarian.

01:46:18:23 - 01:46:19:21

Naomi Mellor

So.

01:46:19:23 - 01:46:20:14

Naomi Mellor

I need.

01:46:20:16 - 01:46:22:01

Naomi Mellor

Skills that will find you.

01:46:22:07 - 01:46:29:16

Sarah Taylor

Well, thank you so much for taking the time to tell us your story and to share all things TBI with us. Really appreciate it.

01:46:29:18 - 01:46:34:08



Naomi Mellor

You're very welcome. It's lovely to talk to you both.

01:46:34:10 - 01:46:56:22

Heather Taylor

So I was talking to my friend about this episode right after we do our interview, and she told me her sister had a TBI. And I said, Oh, yeah, we couldn't figure out shows that were really great presentation. And then she reminded me of the film Causeway. It has Jennifer Lawrence in it. I saw her watching it. It's about somebody who has a TBI from an accident in Afghanistan when she was serving.

01:46:57:00 - 01:47:02:22

Heather Taylor

And it from what I was told, what we were told in this interview, it's spot on.

01:47:03:00 - 01:47:03:13

Sarah Taylor

Oh, cool.

01:47:03:18 - 01:47:30:16

Heather Taylor

It's so good. She's also having trouble with PTSD as well, which would happen if you're in a major accident. But, well, you're exploded basically. But it was done so subtly and they didn't do the thing that often happens in films that like throwing in the flashback, none of it. You just see her experiencing these things and subtle, like she's on the bus and it turns and the light hits eyes and she kind of like just kind of you can see a reaction, but it's so subtle.

01:47:30:18 - 01:47:33:02

Heather Taylor

I'm like, Oh, this is the film.

01:47:33:03 - 01:47:34:06

Sarah Taylor

Mm Great.

01:47:34:06 - 01:48:14:02

Heather Taylor

And so sorry that we didn't talk about this till this moment in time, but I totally forgotten that it was in my mind that film was more I thought it was around PTSD, but the description of the film is like an woman serving in Afghanistan has a TBI. I'm like, it's just it's, it's so, yeah, I think a lot of things we're talking about films of the past, but such a great film to look at and little subtle things like she's playing the memory game in her bed, like she's supposed to continue doing all the stuff and then, you know, having to deal with rehab when you don't have money and you live

in a

01:48:14:02 - 01:48:36:14

Heather Taylor

country that doesn't have a health care that's provided to you or and is trying to just also not admit that something's wrong because they're only for them. Their life was about serving in the military. They're part of the Corps of Engineers and wanting to go back and their specialty was water systems and go back and do that work.

01:48:36:16 - 01:48:56:15

Heather Taylor

Yeah. And it's so interesting to watch and like how you heal with a community and how you heal with people in your life that can help you and not everyone in your life can help you. But to find those people who can be a support to you in some capacity. And I think that's really important for everything, whether it's a brain injury, it's mental health.

01:48:56:15 - 01:49:15:23

Heather Taylor

It's just like everything, like there is people in your life that can be a support in some capacity. Even just being that person listens is just so important. So Causeway is, is, I think from what we were told, seems to be a very good reflection on what a TBI can be.

01:49:16:01 - 01:49:19:07

Sarah Taylor

Cool. Well, what a great find. I have to go at it.

01:49:19:09 - 01:49:21:23

Heather Taylor

It's been very good. I want to read the script now. So it's that.

01:49:21:23 - 01:49:28:00

Sarah Taylor

Good? Wow. Do you do that often where you watch a film that you really like? You'll go, Oh, yeah, for the script. Yeah, very.

01:49:28:00 - 01:49:46:00

Heather Taylor

Cool. Yeah. Because I want to see how they wrote it because everyone contributes. But I like to see like how different people gave direction in their writing or if you watch *Haunting of Hill House*, but you read the script, it's very different because good acting can erase bad writing.

01:49:46:02 - 01:49:46:21

Sarah Taylor

Yeah.

01:49:46:23 - 01:50:04:00

Heather Taylor

So it's like looking at something down to its bones to me is really interesting. Or like, I'm not saying hunting class is bad, I'm saying hunting our house is scary. So if you take away the sound and that type of thing, I was like, Oh, there's only three moments of ghosts in it in all of the pilot.

01:50:04:01 - 01:50:08:00

Sarah Taylor

Yeah, but the whole time you're the whole time I was sitting there hiding under the blanket because this.

01:50:08:00 - 01:50:24:07

Heather Taylor

It's scary because you're waiting for it, right? It's anticipation. The dread like that's the whole point of that. Just. Yeah, that's the whole thing. Yeah. And so I really love to look at that are like, this is very old now, but 500 days of summer is sold out of order. So like, how do they do that? How do they think about it?

01:50:24:07 - 01:50:33:20

Heather Taylor

How do you look at emotion or like looking at transitions, how people do, like how do you get out of scenes? And I think it's just that's an important part of the craft.

01:50:33:22 - 01:50:39:03

Sarah Taylor

Yeah, that's really smart. I like that insider writing room tips here from Heather Taylor.

01:50:39:05 - 01:50:57:08

Heather Taylor

It's interesting because like happens to you work with a showrunner and there's quirks to their writing and then you pick those up and say, That's a really great tool that goes in your writing. And then I sometimes, often forget how to do intercuts, even though I do them all the time. Like it's when people are like, Oh, this person's on the phone and call someone that intercuts.

01:50:57:10 - 01:51:12:18

Heather Taylor

Yeah, and everyone strikes them slightly differently. And then I'm like, How did that go again? And then I'm like, John August has a website and, and you Google things and it comes up anyways. And I'm like, There you go. I don't know why There's certain things that I like my brain doesn't like. Will not remember. I'm like, This is how you do it.

01:51:12:20 - 01:51:26:17

Sarah Taylor

I do that. That's not not the same, but kind of the same. What order does 5.1 audio go? When I get my audio mix for my sound person and I need to I need to mix it into the edit. I have to make sure that my 5.1 tracks are in the right order and pan to the right direction.

01:51:26:17 - 01:51:36:19

Sarah Taylor

And every time I've done this like hundreds of times, I feel like, But time I have to go look up and make sure I do it in the right order. So some things just don't stay stuck.

01:51:36:21 - 01:52:02:00

Heather Taylor

I know. It's really fascinating. I was reading someone's tweet the other day and they're like, a lot of times she finds a difference in sometimes attitudes between different groups of people who she works with in terms of giving notes. She finds that the thing that we we see in business as well, that often she'll find her male clients will be a little bit more like, Well, I'm fine and maybe this note isn't right.

01:52:02:02 - 01:52:24:20

Heather Taylor

Whereas like she was giving someone notes who didn't really understand structure very well and it's really just more formality. But the writing was good and she's like, Maybe I shouldn't write it anymore. Like, No, no, no. That's is like, it's a very plausible. But this idea of like, women won't apply for a job unless they have 100% of qualifications where this is physically correct and a lot of not all.

01:52:24:20 - 01:52:52:07

Heather Taylor

And again, nothing is ever all because nothing is completely one or the other. But a lot of male applicants will apply for something. They may only have half of the qualifications for because they have a belief in themselves, because you are encouraged to. But just try. You'll see that in certain groups of people, especially marginalized communities, you'll see that it's not only a belief of it is often a necessity.

01:52:52:09 - 01:53:06:13

Heather Taylor

So but it does mean that they don't apply when they maybe could have gotten the job because they actually did have the right qualifications. They just weren't in the guy, the right guys, as it were. So everyone just apply for things.

01:53:06:15 - 01:53:31:10

Sarah Taylor

Yes, I had I've had this exact conversation with my therapist about how I often attach my whole self to what I'm doing, and I think someone's hired me because of me as a human and they're trying to explain or try to like I'm sure some of it is about whether or not they like working with me, but most of it is because they've hired me for my skills.

01:53:31:12 - 01:53:50:03

Sarah Taylor

And that's the most important part, is that they hire me for a skill because if I didn't know how to edit, I wouldn't be getting the job because I need to edit to do the work and having a certain personality or being whatever other non skill things are a bonus. But that's not necessarily that's not the only reason I'm being hired for something.

01:53:50:03 - 01:54:05:11

Sarah Taylor

And I think sometimes I get stuck on that. I think it might be an anxiety thing. It could also be a gender thing where I need to be well-liked and perfect and always in order to be accepted. And it's like a mind fuck to try to work it out.

01:54:05:13 - 01:54:24:17

Heather Taylor

Yeah, I think too, there's something when you are in creative roles, especially when you're in all creative roles, I'll say. But like when you're on the writing side, someone was talking to you the other day we had a coffee and they're saying, I'm really bad at selling myself because I don't want to bring myself down to one thing because often me come and you're like, Well, Emma, this, this, this, this, and this.

01:54:24:19 - 01:54:51:01

Heather Taylor

Because we are actually sadly selling ourselves on who we are, but not who we are as a three dimensional being. It's that stereotype, what they believe in. So it's like, Oh, I'm this. So then therefore they expect certain stories, but they don't. That isn't necessarily true. It's again leaning into stereotype or leaning into, Well, I want this one thing from this person without looking at all of the things they can provide.

01:54:51:01 - 01:55:09:10

Heather Taylor

And so I can understand being like, whoa, I don't want to just be boiled down to one thing or I'll see things. I'm like, Whoa, I have so much experience about that. But does anyone know that? And that's hard too, because sometimes you just don't know what it shows even about and when you're going up for, let's say, for staffing or something like that.

01:55:09:10 - 01:55:30:17

Heather Taylor

So sometimes you don't need to sweat the small stuff and it is about figuring out who are the best people to work with. Yes. But also like figuring out that balance between like, I'm not just one thing, but like really showing here all the here's as many dimensions of me that I can show in this time, including my skills.

01:55:30:19 - 01:55:53:11

Sarah Taylor

Yeah, yeah. It's a balance. I think being in the creative world is just can be hard not to connect your whole value because what we bring to the table is our values and our beliefs and we put ourselves into the work we do. So it's hard to like sometimes unmask yourself from what you create, but there has to be times that you need to know like this is my skill.

01:55:53:11 - 01:56:15:00

Sarah Taylor

I'm using my skill to do what I whatever I tend to do with it for the show. But I can still be a whole human. There's actually was a quote that I need to actually go back and listen to an Elliot Page's memoir. He says, I've come to the place in my career that I can be in a film that can be amazing or can bomb, and I'm still okay.

01:56:15:02 - 01:56:23:13

Sarah Taylor

And that is the thing I want to achieve, is that I can be okay. I've done I know I've done what I can do and. And that's okay.

01:56:23:15 - 01:56:26:12

Heather Taylor

Yeah. Agreed. Let's all be okay.

01:56:26:13 - 01:56:35:06

Sarah Taylor

Thank you so much for listening to today's episode of Braaaains. Braaaains is hosted and produced by Heather and Sarah Taylor, mixed and mastered by Tony Bao, and our theme song is by our little brother Deppisch.

01:56:35:10 - 01:56:53:23

Heather Taylor

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01:56:54:04 - 01:56:56:09

Heather Taylor  
Until next time. I'm your host Heather, and.

01:56:56:09 - 01:56:58:08  
Sarah Taylor  
I'm your host Sarah. Bye.