

## [Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!

On this episode of Between Two Beers we talk to Sonja Grey.

Sonja is one of New Zealand's best known faces, most recognisable for being the Lotto presenter for the last 15 years, but she's much more than that, she's a model, actress and writer who starred in shows like Zina Warrior Princess, Shortland Street, Well of Fortune and Young Hercules, and she's acted in Sione's wedding, Lovebirds and the Netflix film The Royal Treatment.

Most recently Sonja has turned her attention to helping others. Sonja has ADHD and a neurodivergent

daughter and was the executive producer of a documentary which screened on TVNZ and gives a brilliant insight into the lives of families with kids whose brains work a bit differently.

She's also just released a 10-part podcast series that analyzes her lived experience of neurodiversity to better understand how we can support and celebrate the many Kiwis that fall under that umbrella.

In this episode we talk about all the best stories from Lotto to Cricket and Tana Umanga, Ryan Gosling, Well of Fortune and Shortland Street, and the second half delves deep into the world of neurodiversity, a really open and informative discussion which affects at least 20% of Kiwis. Sonja was a really cool guest with great chat and a hell of a story to tell. I personally was touched and learned a lot from this episode and am sure you will too.

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Sonja Gray

Hey hey

Welcome to Between Two Beers

Thank you for having me

Very excited to have you in the Export Bear Garden Studio. You've spent a bit of time in here over the last what year or so?

Yeah a couple of years probably. God fond memories in this place. This year actually, two of the greatest test victories I witnessed. Commentated, well can I say commentated?

You tell us

Well officially commentating the ACC but I love cricket and I kind of lose my professionalism sometimes when things are tight and so sometimes I just can't speak which is not great when you're actually meant to be a commentator or I get very very vocal and very emotional and disappear into the desk and all sorts of things go on. Go to the bear fridge, it's a common one in the middle of the over. But yeah we had some extraordinary wins and just I just felt so proud of our side. I just yeah

Were you a fan of the ACC before you joined as a commentator?

I was more your traditional commentary I'll be honest with you but as far as working it's so great to be because I'm not, I've never played cricket. Well I played one game at high school but I don't really understand why anyone would play it which is why I love it because there is so much failure in cricket. You're failing 95% of the time so to me witnessing the courage that those guys and girls have is you know courage is so inspirational and just there's so much to learn about the game so the traditional working for the ACC I can

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just say whatever. And I must admit that this year in our win against the English side, I got quite emotional. Michael Brace will ran himself out in a really really stupid way and I lost all perspective and dropped the f-bomb twice. Can I say what I said? Well I can't really remember it was, oh god it was terrible but I said something along the lines of what the f-ck just happened. I can't f-cking believe it you know with emotion. And then there was silence and I saw the other two looking at me and I was like oh my god I just did that out loud. And I think you know this is a funny thing as a broadcaster you guys would know too there's a line this imaginary line and you know it and you know that you do not cross that and I've been doing this for a long time and I just know where the line is and I lost it. And then that fear that maybe I'd be on Lotto and I'd just be like and there's your f-cking number nine. I really was, I just, and I went out to the let's call it a green room, not really a green room but you know let's call it a green room and Mike Lane the CEO of ACC I said Mike I'm so sorry and he was silent and he said and he said yeah I'm a little bit worried about the BSA, the complaints I don't know I'm just sort of thinking what I'm going to say and I thought I have totally screwed up. Not forgetting all the terrible things that I've said on the ACC but I was just like you know maybe I'm not allowed to do it I meant to be the good one.

Amazing.

He was kidding, he was kidding.

Very much so, very much so.

But I really believed him.

It's the commentator's perineum like if that's a line like that's quite a far line I feel like I'm saying fuck.

Yeah but I think this one was, it's on Skye.

It's on Spark, right?

Like the Spark where the old school that was just a hot radio show, the bar you talk about was a bit lower then.

The milk of the japside definitely wouldn't fly on Spark Sport RIP.

Yeah.

The cricket, I want to stick with cricket for a bit because you mentioned you played one game in high school and Shay has put in my notes that in that game you either scored 50 or 70 runs.

64 I said.

Yes, 64 not out.

I said that.

Sorry, I wasn't listening.

We should read the notes.

But how does that work?

You put one game in cricket and you scored 64 and you don't play again.

Yeah, well I you know I was thinking about my average and you know wanted to keep it high.

Yeah, 64 not out, all scored in boundaries.

Well no, after that innings, yes, after that innings I was like, I'm in new sport, hello, hello.

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We went out to field and that was a different story.

You know that high ball coming and you're like, oh now we'll do a forward back, forward back again.

Yeah, no, I'm not a fielder and you have to do both apparently.

Yeah, T20 would have been your game by the sound of it.

I just, well I was a sprinter actually in high school, sprinter and long jumper.

So that takes up a lot of time so there wasn't really you know spaced for another sport to drop in there.

But yeah, I have a healthy fear of the cricket ball too.

So that's what stopped me from playing.

Yeah, it comes at you so fast.

And it's hard.

It's very hard.

But you had no issues facing it when they were throwing it hard.

No, well it was for form girls, you know.

You're a living for the new listeners.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

It was a couple of years before they switched to the years.

It's just such an impressive CV for someone commentating the game.

What's your cricket history?

Wow.

Average of 64, yeah.

Exactly.

64, not out?

Was it out?

No, no, not out.

Not out.

Not out.

I've never been out in cricket.

You attempted to get back out there.

No, I played a bit of indoor cricket and oh, it's just, yeah, I don't know what it is.

I just, actually, I played that, you know, down at the Cricket Museum.

I was working on the cricket, the women's cricket World Cup.

And I did that, you know, that virtual thing where you get in and that was terrifying.

And it's not even a real ball.

And I put it on slow, you know, it was coming at me, I don't know, 60Ks an hour or something.

And I just, yeah, I was like, no, it's just not the game for me.

But then that makes my admiration of the people that play it even higher.

Yeah.

Because I'm like, God, you guys go out there and face Mitchell Stark and, you know, Jimmy Anderson and whoever, and you just, you know, and Mrs, God, I'm sorry, you're not going to be able to stop me.

There you go.

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It's the other thing I love about cricket.

You know, everybody has to bat.

You're number 11.

You're not in there for your batting, but you still have to be out there and face those fast bowlers and they will intimidate you and terrify you and bounce it straight at the noggin.

And, you know, like that's, that's, that's bravery.

That's war.

Isn't it?

Absolutely.

Yeah.

You guys are looking at me like, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm lost in this.

I want to say knowledge that, um, like high school cricket, there'd always be, if you knew this fast bowler on the other team, it would be terrifying, like a big unit that could really chuck it down.

You'd be shitting yourself the whole game, waiting to face that, that big bad boy.

And the thing is now the fast bowlers are not only fast, but they're clever, you know, they, they, they pick your weakness and they mix it up and they, um, I mean, that's what's so fascinating.

They're not just, you know, um, coming down at your 150 Ks an hour every time, they're just mixing it up and, you know, and someone like Tim Southey, you know, he might not be as fast as he once was, but he, I think is, um, bowling the best he's ever bowled because he's so clever, you know, using that crease and just every ball's different.

And like that sort of stuff is a joy to watch how he puts in over together.

Yeah.

Do you actually like cricket or are you, are you kind of, am I just going, are you like Tim?

I'm exactly in your camp.

So I never played it, but I love watching it.

Yeah.

I love everything about it.

I played Viv Richard's autobiography at like form two, year eight for the, for the new listeners.

Hey, just how do you know the years?

Oh, I don't know.

I'm just got a weird brain like that.

Oh, I only know the years up to where my daughters are at.

Right.

And I forget the ones before and I don't know the ones after.

And I just, I just know year 10 because that's where, what they're in at the moment.

Yeah.

Anyway, sorry, carry on.

You read Viv Richard's book.

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No, same as you, like a, like a cricket nerd, but like no skin and actually ever playing outside of the backyard.

It's just fascinating.

And I've read your, your spin-off articles, your op-eds that you wrote back in the day as well.

Oh, right.

Which are really great and talk to vivid memories of the 92 cricket World Cup, which was here, which is where I fell in love with the game as well.

So it's really like a unicorn to find someone like you that loves the game so much.

Yeah.

But doesn't have the skin in it.

Yeah.

And I don't know that, you know, commentator will say, oh, knuckleball.

And I'm like, was it a knuckleball?

How did you see, you know, all that sort of those real, those things that only people that have played a lot of cricket can pick up.

I don't have that knowledge and I don't really need it, I guess, but I just love that real.

The mental side of the game is fascinating.

And as I say, don't know why you'd play it.

Don't know why, you know, there's so much that can go wrong.

Yeah.

But I interviewed a Saudi a few years ago and I said, oh, love him.

Love him.

He's such a great guy.

And I said, you know, really, probably 80% of cricket is mental.

And he's like, nah, Sonia, nah.

I said, oh, OK.

I thought it was he goes 90, 90%.

And then they've got the social media, the crap that they get from.

We're not great.

I don't think as fans in New Zealand, we've got better, but we love to throw the shit when it doesn't go our way.

And, you know, they've got all of that to deal with as well.

We'll be right back after this short break.

We'll be right back.

I want to start charting the path and I want to start back in the hut.

Now I've talked to one of your best friends and she said, all true roads lead to the hut.

Oh, you've got this.

So wrong.

Oh, not so wrong, but it's just all roads lead to the hut.

All roads lead to the hut.

You know, like all roads lead to the hut, but all roads lead to the hut.

Yeah.

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Yeah, that's my saying.

And we could pick up high school and I understand you and Tana Umanga were voted best bodies in the seventh form yearbook.

Have I got that right?

Is that right?

I was, I read that as best buddies and then I reread it.

I was like, it's as best bodies.

Best bodies.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Like there's so much to unpack here.

Can you believe that they had a category for that?

Yes, I can.

If it was back then, yes, I can.

My mum actually found the old yearbooks and I looked up the phone.

It's the most terrible, grainy black and white photo.

Like we're both brown, obviously.

Tana and I, you just can't make out anything.

We're in the shadow.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah, we were, um, yeah, we went to school to get it.

Tana didn't play rugby at school.

Is it a leagueie?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Might have played a little bit, but we had a terrible rugby team.

Terrible.

What school was it?

Parkway College.

Wow.

I didn't even.

Okay.

Got amalgamated, yeah.

Um, but great school.

Great school.

Not, not academically, you know, up there, but just, uh, yeah.

You mentioned you were, you were a long jump and sprinter.

National, like, did you go to go to the regionals and then go to the nationals?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Was it that sort of prowess?

Yeah.

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Yeah.

So I was in, just before I quit at 17, I was in the junior world champs training squad.

So then I had to make that decision, like, do I drop everything else?

And, like, focus on this?

Or do I not?

And I did not.

I went, um, 17, I'm going to university, boys, parties, over this side, training, which hurts.

And I didn't love it.

I didn't love it.

I was good at it.

And, you know, I think it's a different era now when, when I was a kid, if you were good at something, no one sort of said, do you like this?

Because if you don't like it, you don't have to do it.

They just went, oh my God, you're amazing.

Yeah, you're so fast.

You beat all the boys.

Go.

Yeah.

Harder, harder, faster, faster.

I think I had a great identity like Sonja the runner and I just, yeah, I didn't, it wasn't,

I love what, I'm a fan.

I love watching it.

I love the Olympics.

I love the world champs.

I love, you know, all that stuff, but I still even get a bit nervous.

Those old feeling, I used to get so nervous to throw out before finals.

Really?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Could peak Sonja take Tana in a 100 meter sprint?

What was your, what was your, what was your specialty?

100, 200, 200, 100, yeah, 118 was my bet, my PB, so I doubt it, I doubt it.

Well, you know, we'll need to say yes, because we can't...

We need the sound bite.

Yes.

Let me ask that again.

Could Peek Sonja beat Tana at high school?

Absolutely.

Nailed it.

Thank you, thank you.

Yeah, I hope Tana isn't listening.

I hope he is, I hope he is, and he comes out of the shadows.

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He can come in, yeah, yeah.

It's a rainy photo in the yearbook there.

But that friendship with Tana or the connection to him helped you out of a tricky situation in the 2000s?

Oh, yeah, yeah, so when I left university, I started modelling, and I was very much a D-list model.

Like, no, not D-list, I'm going to say B.

I want to be kind to myself and say B, but I wasn't like in Milan, and you know, I was kind of South Africa, LA, all the kind of lesser known modelling territories, so I spent a lot of time in South Africa, and I, yeah, I went, I had a visa there, and I didn't look at the fine print, overstayed my welcome and my visa, got, was threatened with an arrest, had to go to court, and was like, I know I can take my way out of this, and it was quite terrifying. This is a true story.

A guy came past me with a ball and chain.

This is, like, literally, I was like, I don't want that.

I don't want that.

Not a stag.

I don't want anything to do with that.

Yeah, not a, not a stag do.

No, actual massive steel ball.

What the hell?

So I'm sitting there with a court person, it wasn't a judge, but you know, someone that was going to decide, am I going to go, I don't think I would have gone to jail, but you know, I was going to be kicked out.

So I said, do you like rugby?

And he's like, oh yeah, of course I love rugby.

Good.

Yeah, yeah, my bro, yeah.

And I said, oh, I know a lot of, a lot of, a lot of All Blacks actually went to school with Tano Manga, great friend.

And he just went, whoa, everything just changed completely.

Oh my god, really?

And then we chatted about rugby, because this is what's great about South Africa, probably the only country in the world that loves to talk rugby as much as we do.

So we just chatted back and forth, and he was like, you know what, I mean, this is a bad offence, but if you leave within the next two weeks, we'll just wipe it.

That seems like quite an extension on an already overstayed visa.

Well, I explained to him, I needed time to get my stuff together, I say goodbye to friends and yeah, yeah, but they were not going to, you know, if I hadn't had Tana, thank you Tana, I wouldn't probably never have been allowed back in.

And so I did, you know, went back five times.

Yeah.

Yeah.

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Amazing.

Never overstayed my welcome.

Yeah, I met this girl in the airport.

She said she ran faster than Donna Oomongi at high school.

Yeah, he's bought the South Africa down again.

I'm with Madeline Sami, the South African accent, and I'm just using every opportunity to flex that out now as I can, it got some good feedback.

What did Mads say about it, because she's accent, she's that first thing.

She was good.

She said she wanted to hear Steven's accent again, the South African one, so if you could throw that.

I've only got one word.

Absolutely.

Yes, that's what I do.

Absolutely.

My broo.

If you say my broo.

My broo.

Your.

Sure.

I'm not as good as I once was at my South African accent.

How old were you at that stage if that's not too personal a question.

It was so personal.

How dare you.

God, I'm going to say, God, it was a couple of years ago now, so early 20s.

Yeah, right.

Because I just think the, to think on your feet in that situation on how to navigate your way out of that situation, was that something that came naturally?

Yeah, I think so.

I think, yeah, actually I've never thought about that, but yeah, I think I'm good in a crisis situation.

Yeah.

So when I go, whoa, brain, brain kicks into gear, yeah.

I've just sworn on a live broadcast, how am I going to get my way out of this?

Yeah, that's why I did it.

Yeah.

No, all goods are braced well.

That was a good decision in the end.

Do you know what?

Can I just be circling back, as they say in the corporate world, to that terrible F-bomb dropping.

I did feel terrible too, because I hate criticising our players and I'd done it verbally in the biggest way on air.

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And poor Michael Bracewell, like everyone has these moments, these brain-fade moments, and has just happened to be, you know, could have cost us the test.

But, you know, I thought, well, if I ever bang into him, I'll say, if you happen to listen back to that commentary, I'm really sorry.

But to flip it back, I reckon that would endear you to the audience of like, genuine passion and a natural reaction of someone who cared about the result and what they were seeing in front of them.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that is true, but I do, I don't know, I just think we're so hard on our players, and I don't want to be part of that necessarily, so, but if you're listening to this Michael Bracewell, I just want to say it wasn't you personally, it was just me in that moment, yeah.

I would love someone to pass us on to Michael Bracewell and for him to accept the apology.

Yeah, yeah, and to go.

Because I think he's probably been dark with me since that time.

I think so.

I mean, the great thing is they won that match in the most superb and splendourous fashion.

Thank you, Neil Wagner.

Thank you, Neil Wagner.

I made that word up.

Splendiferous.

Splendiferous.

Yeah.

Yeah.

In the Cape Town airport came up with that word.

Yeah, in Cape Town over there, you're a model, link us up to the acting side of work, because you sort of rose to fame in Shulin Street, but that wasn't your first job, was it?

Before that?

Was it Sale of the Century?

Oh, yeah, my first TV gig was Sale of the Century when I was at university.

So I had been...

Was Steve Parr still hosting that?

Yes, Steve Parr, lovely guy, yes, sliding in.

Yeah, there it is.

Maybe that's your accent that you can land on as the Steve Parr impersonation.

Is that your first time on Accent?

No.

No.

Yeah, so I was modelling and auditioned for this role as one of the... do you remember Sale of the Century?

They had the models and they said, to the gift shop with Jude we go and there's a model selling luggage or sewing machines or something.

We never spoke.

We never spoke.

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So my audition for this job was to sell one of those swinging desk chair things.  
What do you call those things?  
You know, the ones that...  
A desk chair that turns.  
A desk chair?  
I mean, it's every desk chair, isn't it, these days?  
Oh, I don't know.  
I've never had a proper job, so I had a desk chair.  
Anyway, so I had to... they said, right, we want you to sell this desk chair and, you know, I'm in my bikini without speaking.  
Now, most people... a lot of people would go, well, how would you do that?  
And I went.  
Like, this is me.  
Crisis situation went, bring it on.  
So I just lay over that chair, smiled, waved, used all my body, everything to sell that chair.  
I did really well.  
They said you did really well because it's quite a challenge, isn't it?  
And then they said, okay, now we want you just to smile as big as you can into the camera for 60 seconds without flinching.  
60 seconds is quite a long time.  
That's a long time.  
But again, I went, nah, nah, I can do this.  
You've got this on.  
You've got this.  
And did it.  
Yeah.  
Because... and the reason they do that is when the credits roll, you have to step out of the car, the Nissan Sentra, I think it was.  
Was it a Mitsubishi Mirage?  
I should remember that.  
You had to step out of the car and wave in your bikini and smile for the whole credits.  
Yeah.  
Yeah, I did it.  
Amazing.  
But that was the 90s.  
It wasn't, well, it was quite a long time ago.  
People listening to the Superbilla Club wasn't born.  
It's not that long in the grand scheme of things.  
And it's just crazy that, you know, that...  
Yeah, it's a weird throwback now when you hear it in 2023.  
Yeah, yeah.  
You were made to audition in a bikini and drape yourself over an innate object.

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Yes, yes, selling it.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But, you know, that was such a great job because I'm at university and we got paid \$500 a day, which was so much money at that time.

It's still a lot of money now.

Oh, okay.

Sorry.

Maybe not.

It made any better representation.

I'm sorry.

Yes, it is a lot of money.

It is a lot of money.

It was a lot of money when you're a student, so I'm living with my four best friends in a flat coming home and I'm shopping at, like, a workshop in Zambizi and, you know, I'm just living the dream.

Then after a few months, the show got canned.

I hope it wasn't my fault.

When you said you auditioned, I thought you might have taken over from Jude Kerr.

No, no, I wasn't.

No one wanted me to speak.

No, no, it was very clear.

You do not speak.

She had sometimes come in.

Steve would talk.

They'd talk to us, but we'd just smile.

We didn't respond.

We had no microphone on.

I just feel like it was a very much a dolly job.

Hopefully we can find some clips of that.

He slides in.

Was that his trademark?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He's coming sliding in across.

Yeah, no.

Was there any socks?

No, no.

They put something on.

I could find out for you and report back on that, what they put on that turf to make it slidey.

It was something that, yeah.

It was quite a long microphone as well.

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Like the bottom of the mic came down quite a way, but that might be a phase fuzzy. You hear such a good, I was right here and I've got no memory of that. It might be completely wrong. I might be completely wrong. We're getting into acting territory now and I've got kind of half a story and I'm not sure where it's going to go, but we're going to try it out. Mainzla acting course, you and James McConie. Meisner. Meisner. Okay. Yeah, I knew. I knew. I thought I'd just throw it out there and see what we've got to land on. When you're typing freak, like, frantically. Yeah, Meisner. Meisner. She'll know what I'm talking about. You and James McConie, you're supposed to do an end of year rap and McConie's bailed on it and then you had to find a replacement at short notice. Oh yeah. So you obviously, you guys know James McConie. Yes. Yes. Friend of the collective. I love James. He's so useless. And so somehow we decided we'd do it. This is an 80 week course. It was long and hellish, but at the end we had to do this final end of year. Everything we'd learned in the 80 weeks culminated in one final kind of acting project. So James and I, we're doing it together, could not get hold of him, could not find him. But you know, it's getting to the final days. I'm like, we've got, we've filmed nothing. He's not, you know. So I brought in my dear friend, Nick Stakes and my other dear friend, Rowan Quinn to be part of my thing. And I called it, where the fuck is James? That was what our thing was. And it was just everything we did came back to where the fuck is James. We are, you know, where is James? Yeah. So he really let me down then. I hope he listens to this and remembers and feels terrible about it.

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Can I just add a little exclamation point on this?

Noting the name James McConie and knowing him personally, I reached out to him to get some Sonya Gray information and he didn't deliver.

Where the fuck is James?

I reached my case.

Amazing serendipity.

All right.

So you do the acting course and you come out the other side and link us up to Shortland Street.

Like, was that, did it go sort of sail of the century?

No, nothing is, there's no timeline for me.

I'm sorry.

I know you're trying to put this into some sort of linear thing.

No, I jump all over the show.

So no, that was, that was later when I was kind of like it.

So the acting course, I was like, maybe I do want to do acting again.

Give it a go because I'd never trained or anything.

I'd just sort of gone in and gone, oh, you know, here's some lines.

Say them.

They say something back.

You say something back.

I should learn about this.

Maybe I want to do more of it.

So no, previously.

So I was on Shortland Street, I think 99, 2000.

So that was that just kind of happened.

Another one of those things I just auditioned for and ended up doing.

Yeah.

Is that, I can't remember what your question was.

Does that answer it?

Yeah, yeah.

I was just trying to sort of.

Yeah, yeah.

No, you won't be able to connect the dots.

No, there's no, you can't, you can't.

I'll tell you now.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

That was.

No, you go, you go.

That role of the villain character.

I didn't watch a lot of Shortland Street, but I've heard you talk about it since.

Was this like, she's such a hated character, right?

And that sort of affected you off when you're walking down the street.

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People would sort of treat you as if that was who you really were.  
Yeah, yeah, be a thrown on you and, you know, I'm going to beat you up.  
And like, I wish she was a horrible, she was, but no, she was misunderstood.  
But yeah, how that came out was quite, quite mean.  
I don't think she killed anyone though, from memory.  
Did you get killed off?  
No, nope.  
So I could still come back.  
I lost my uterus in a terrible car accident.  
So I could not have babies just in case you don't know what that means.  
Yeah, yeah.  
Yeah, my character's dream was to get married and have children.  
So she hooked up with Nick, Nick from, I can't remember Nick's last name.  
Harrison.  
Thank you, Nick Harrison, who, yeah, Shortland Street.  
I'm closet Shortland Street guy, don't worry about me.  
Yeah, yeah, okay, okay.  
I knew about your uterus and I knew that you didn't get killed off.  
You just wanted me to say uterus and your uterus.  
Yeah, so her dream was to just have kids and settle down because she'd had a very terrible upbringing.  
They didn't go into detail on that, but you know, it was understood.  
And yeah, so that was quite devastating for her.  
And yeah, she was wheeled off to live in Australia with her mum and maybe she'll return, who knows?  
Oh, yeah.  
But it's that suspension of disbelief of fans of the show.  
That's a credit to your acting that people couldn't blur or couldn't delineate between fact and fiction, right?  
Maybe.  
I've got to say, it is so much fun playing a nasty character.  
It is so much fun because I'm I like to think anyway, I'm quite nice in real life.  
I don't like confrontation.  
I don't like losing my shit.  
It does not a comfortable place for me.  
But if I can do it in that environment, like it all comes out.  
So actually a couple of years ago, I went jump back into acting again off the timeline.  
I did a Netflix movie.  
Yes, with an accent.  
Yes, a flinch accent.  
It was a very good video.  
And again, played a nasty character and again felt that this is so great.  
And I remember looking into the one of the other characters eyes and just just totally

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

pulling her apart and seeing her flinch, like actually flinching and just going, yeah, I nailed it.

Like, it's so mean.

What do you draw on to go to those places?

What you're saying there, Seamus, is there must be some nasty in there, aren't you?

Is that what you're saying?

It's not what I was saying.

Your paraphrase is what I was thinking.

But is it really unnatural for you or are you able to when action, you're able to go?

I think we can all, oh, yeah, I can pretty much go there straight away.

Yeah, bang, bang.

And cut.

And are you like, I didn't mean that, by the way, just in case you were like.

Yeah, you always do that.

Yeah, yeah.

Oh, so sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry.

Do we run?

Yeah, thank you.

Sorry, sorry, sorry.

Yeah, yeah.

It's weird that this is like 23 years later and we had the same with Madeleine Sammi.

She's like, I was on Swirling Street for like six months and people still come and talk to her.

Yes, she was on before me.

We were talking about, you know, this tiny little was a two years, but it's left such an impact on people.

Yeah, it is.

I mean, it probably wasn't even two years, but yeah, I guess that was peak Shortland Street when everyone was watching pre-social media.

In fact, I remember we got our first mobile phones when we were all on Shortland Street.

I think I had the Alcatel.

Yeah.

I remember the Alcatel.

So ugly.

I wanted a Nokia, but I wasn't paid that much.

\$500 a day.

Less.

And yeah, and then we started texting.

I remember Carl, who played Nick Harrison, was like, hey, there's this thing you can do where you send this message, like you type it out and it's only, I think it was 10 cents and you can like meet and I was like, wow, that's so cool.

Like, this is how long ago it was.

We were all discovering this whole thing, just messaging.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

Indulge me for a second.

Was in the Alcatel with the pull-up aerial and the little bit that folded down that you could speak into?

Oh, God.

I don't.

No, no, that's stupid.

I was going to hate when I go down my tangents, but just let me say it when it was rabbit holes.

I don't think that was the Alcatel.

I think you were.

It was in Motorola.

That was Motorola.

It was Motorola.

Yeah.

My ex-boyfriend had the Motorola.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That was one of the early ones, wasn't it?

Yeah.

Yeah.

Quite a brick situation.

Yeah.

Yeah.

No, the Alcatel was just your cheap, ugly kind of.

Yeah.

Right.

It was amazing how they could make the pictures out of all the little symbols as well.

Like you used to get the Merry Christmas and it was a Santa Claus and they had like dollar signs and dots and all sorts of things.

You don't know how they did that.

I don't know how they do that either.

I don't know how they get music off cassette ribbon, but it's by the bike.

It's by the bike.

Yeah, no, no, no.

He's going to pull us back.

I'm going to try.

Oh, I see who you are.

You want to pull up?

I'm the path chatter.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And I go everywhere.

Yeah.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

I get some of the weeds.

I get pissed off sometimes that you can't be the one that just goes everywhere.

I thought you were going to say, do you get a bit pissed off with him?

I get pissed off with him.

Okay.

All the time.

Okay.

Okay.

No, but do you sometimes go, why can't I just be the one that like goes off on all the tangents?

Yeah.

Why do I have to be the grown up in this relationship?

Yeah.

Exactly.

Yeah.

I do a little bit.

Yeah.

I want to just be more.

Oh, that's because I'm emotional in that straight away.

Man doesn't have enough kind of cultural references to dig into the vault.

Oh, okay.

Okay.

I think just as a little experiment.

I didn't mean that, bro.

I really didn't mean that.

Yeah.

It was nasty.

Hmm.

As a little experiment, maybe you could change rock.

Not now.

I don't want to put pressure on you now.

I couldn't do that.

Oh, you couldn't.

Okay.

Serious stuff in me.

This is why you guys work.

It's a collaboration.

You've realized where your strengths are, I'm not saying you have weaknesses, but perhaps you do.

And you support each other and it's just beautiful, symbiotic.

Staying on task.

No.

Very deceptive.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

And you're the first guest that's picked up on that.  
Also, we got told that you often make diagnosis and you are likely to make a diagnosis in this episode.  
And here we are.  
I've already got one on you over here, Steve.  
Okay.  
Can we get that later on once you work me out?  
No, say it now.  
No, I shouldn't.  
I mean, I'm working in this space, so I shouldn't.  
But is there a slight dyslexic, um, leaning?  
I love dyslexics.  
No, I've never.  
Meltzner?  
I don't know.  
Meltzner?  
What is meltzner?  
It's not myzner.  
No, no, no, no.  
That was just because I was writing down, as your friend was saying it to me and I didn't have time to go back and recheck it.  
Okay.  
Yeah, no, no, whatever.  
You know, you can be in denial.  
I love you.  
No, I'm kidding.  
I'm kidding.  
It's got dyslexia of parking, but that's a different story.  
It's been a long day.  
It's been a long day.  
It has been a long day.  
All right.  
Next episode, I'll chop a path.  
We'll be right back after this short break.  
I want to talk a lot, and when we were lucky enough to have you on the guest, I said to say, I've got so many questions about Lotto.  
I've got so many questions about Lotto.  
Throw them at me.  
I've got a lot.  
Because you've been there 15 years?  
God, I might be 16.  
I am the longest ever.  
Yes.

## [Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!

I remember a time priest on you with Lotto.

I don't remember who presented it before you did.

Harry Timmons.

Okay.

She held the record.

I mean, this is a record that's not official.

I just Googled it, locked it up, and went, hey, in 2022, which seemed like an eternity away back in 2015, I could overtake Harry Timmons as the longest-serving Lotto presenter, thinking I'd never get there, but putting pressure on the people that rolled my contract over to keep it going, so I could have that hold, that title.

Yes.

It's been a long time.

I started with a, I don't even remember Big Wednesday again, the Ultimate Lifestyle?

No.

I said yes, but sometimes I say yes when I don't.

You don't remember Big Wednesday?

I remember Big Wednesday.

Big Wednesday is still a thing, isn't it?

No, we kissed that goodbye about 10 years ago.

What do I play on Wednesday?

Keynote.

Okay.

You play Midweek Lotto.

Obviously, the marketing is not working.

I have a chance at them.

Yeah.

Oh, no, it's now Lotto twice a week.

Well, I know that, but I just thought Big Wednesday and Saturday was-

No, well, it can be, but there's not-

Interrupted the TV team really.

Remember all the prizes that came with it?

Big Wednesday had the two cars, the boat, the batch.

Oh, yeah.

Yeah.

Is that not a thing anymore?

No, that's not a thing anymore.

Again, I'll talk to marketing, because obviously the messaging is getting-

I just thought those were the things you could win if you won all the money on Big Wednesday.

Well, you could buy, sorry.

You could buy.

Oh, no.

Those are there for you if you want them.

But back in Big Wednesday days, you get the money, but you don't have to go, oh, where

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shall I spend it?

Because you've got the Audi and the Ferrari and the batch and the overseas travel and all those toys.

And then with the money, you can be sensible with it.

Yeah, right.

Well, it was the idea behind it.

Yeah.

So I genuinely thought it was still called Big Wednesday.

Yeah.

Like, I'm going to get a ticket for Big Wednesday draw.

Yeah.

That's what I say now, to this day.

You can say that.

Hey.

You can say it.

But how did you get the gig in the first place?

That's quite a big gig to get.

I imagine it'll be a tough audition process.

Did you have to sell the balls?

Oh, yeah, it was.

That's going to be in a bikini.

Sell the balls.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

No, that was, gosh, what was it?

2005, 2006.

So we're matured as a nation, and I did not have to get in a bikini.

No, I just, yeah, that's funny.

It must have been not that interesting, because I can't- I don't remember.

I went for a couple of auditions, but, yeah, I've just got the gig.

We were down- we filmed at Avalon then, so I was living in Auckland and flew down on Wednesdays, because it was Big Wednesday.

Big Wednesday, yeah.

And then flew back on the Thursday, so, yeah.

Just the point, is that the best gig in the whole of New Zealand?

Five minutes on screen.

Three.

Okay.

Three minutes on screen, and a day travel allowance, overnight in Wellington, and fly back again.

I did love it, yeah.

That's great.

Do you know when I especially loved it?

When I had kids.

Yeah.

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And that was, I just went to that hotel room and slept.

Yeah.

It's like starting a podcast.

Yeah.

This is my escape this day at Auckland.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So, but we moved to Auckland 10 years ago, and now it's great.

Oh, I thought we were still in Wellington.

Oh, my God.

All right.

We can't- I haven't got enough time to educate you on all the ins and outs of Lotto, so after we've finished, we'll sit down and just go through everything that you do not understand.

Is every draw live?

Hell yes.

Okay.

Just check in.

Just fact check in.

Hell yes.

That's why I say, Kia ora, and welcome to your live Lotto draw.

Yeah.

They're all on the internet too.

They're all on YouTube.

Yes.

Well, that's not live, but that's the recorded, that's the recording of live.

That's how-

That's a lot.

These things work.

Okay.

Yeah.

It has to be authenticity is the number one thing.

So, you know, yeah, there's a million checks and balances, and yeah, it's-

Other than this punishing Lotto chat, do you get punishing Lotto chat every week?

Yep.

Everyone wants to talk Lotto.

What are the winning numbers?

Like, what's the worst stuff?

Yeah.

Who's the best shop I can buy a ticket from?

Yeah.

Where is the best shop I can buy a ticket from?

It's random.

It's not the shops aren't random, but it doesn't really matter.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

That's a boring answer to your question.

A little bit.

Yeah, sorry.

Are the scrutineers real people?

Yes, they are, and I love them.

Do they have a-

A disk?

Well, I was thinking like a time frame.

Like, do you retire from a scrutineer after four years?

Well, interestingly-

Because your integrity may be compromised.

Yeah, yeah.

No, but we have a rotating pool from the Audit New Zealand, but Suzanne, who-

I mean, I shouldn't have favourites, but Suzanne is my favourite.

She was on the first Eva Lotto draw as a 20-year-old or something, and now she's like a big wigger at Audit New Zealand, so she has been there for Eva.

She's good.

Like, she just- she's like, nothing, nothing gets past her.

Because we have a lot of rules.

Most of them I'm not involved in.

Can you play?

Hell yes.

I wasn't sure, you know, again.

Pulling the curtain back.

Okay, okay.

So if I couldn't play, that would be like saying it's possible to rig it, isn't it?

Yes.

It's impossible.

Yeah.

It is impossible.

Okay.

You're looking at me like you don't believe me.

Well, it's because Stephen always says you've always got to give yourself a little wiggle room.

Like, never say anything's 100%, like, always 99, so there's a little-

I would say that about most things, but I've been doing this 16 years.

I- like, if there is a way to rig that, I- I- yeah, no, there's not.

There's not.

Good.

Good content.

How much prep is involved in what you're going to do?

Like, you know it so well.

Can you just turn up and go?

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

Well, we- we have three rehearsals, and then we go live.

Um, not rehearsing the ball.

I mean, we- we have rehears-

Good save.

Yeah, yeah.

So we have- we have a set of rehearsal balls, and then we have our live balls.

Um, a lot of balls.

A lot of balls.

Yeah, yeah.

Um, and so we do those rehearsals just to check that the machines are all working properly and everything.

You know, very occasionally, there'll be a little hiccup, so after the second rehearsal of, you know, the scrutiny or one of the reps isn't happy, then we'll swap the ball out.

You know, we have 15 minutes between each rehearsal.

Um, but, yeah, then, I mean, am I- I don't know the numbers, if that's what you mean.

Like, yeah, I've been doing it a long time, I still couldn't tell you what numbers are going to come out.

No.

So I'm not that good.

Yeah.

Hey.

Are there any times where you do it and you're like, ah, 27.

It's out again.

Yeah, yeah, occasionally.

I'm still- you asked if I can buy a ticket.

And one of the things that I said, this is one of the things I remember, actually, when I was offered the job, is I said, I have lotto numbers that I play every week.

And, you know, I play them all the time.

I can't miss it.

So I have to be able to play or I can't take this job.

Mm.

Because it's-

It's a good power move.

Yeah, well, I was just like, you know, yes, it's, um, well-paid.

That's wonderful.

You know, this is a regular gig, but that's not like winning multi-million, you know, millions of dollars.

So what if my numbers came up and I couldn't buy the ticket?

And they said, nope, you're sweet.

You're sweet.

Imagine that.

Yeah, it's not happened.

You're like, 17.

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40!

Fucking hell, no!

How good would that be?

Well, actually, I've always thought-

Oh, what's the biggest when you've ever had?

Can I ask you that?

I'm so unlucky.

I am 52 dollars.

Wow.

That's nothing.

It's terrible.

Yeah.

And people come up to me and they go, can you kiss my ticket?

You know what?

I'm like, do you don't want me to kiss your ticket?

I am so unlucky.

Mm.

But there were-

And I always thought, on the day, if it happened that my numbers come up, I'd be really cool.

You know, just totally.

And then, um, one day, a couple of years ago, the first person I met, I was like,

you know, just totally.

And then, um, one day, a couple of years ago, the first book came out, it's mine.

Eleven.

Second book.

Eighteen.

Third book.

Twenty-seven.

These are three of my numbers on one line.

And I said to myself, this is fucking happening.

And I just felt this cold sweat come up.

And I was-

I just lost all kind of sort of like the F-bomb dropping in the cricket.

Just sort of-

I mean, I did watch that back because I was like,

I hope no one could tell that I'd just lost all perspective on where I was.

Not calm in a crisis.

No, no, no, on live TV.

Unfortunately, ball number four wasn't mine, nor was five or six.

But I went to that place, you know, of this life's going to change.

What would you do if you won?

What would you do?

The most painful lotto channel.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

You're that guy.

Yeah.

Do you know that you asked me about, um, people giving me, you know, talking to people about lotto.

People do love to talk about lotto, but-

Yeah, we do.

It's a stupid question.

Like, what would you do if you won?

No, the most annoying thing, and I've put up with it for a long time, and now I'm just over it, is can you call my numbers out?

Yeah.

Like, can you-

Cross it off my list.

Like, you're the first person to ask me that.

It's like, what do I say?

Yeah.

Okay?

Yeah.

I mean, it will be a bit weird because the numbers that are your numbers won't be the numbers that are coming out, but I don't know.

I'm going to pull us out a lotto before she asks.

I'm out.

I'm out.

I only had one more, which was any genuine mishaps that have happened on a live draw?

Um, very, very rarely, but yeah, there have been a couple, but we have contingencies for that, so that's fine.

Yeah.

Okay.

I mean, the ball machines are amazing, but, you know, there has been once or twice where it just has been, you know, hasn't worked, and so we just go to abort, we abort, and then the draw is conducted off, under audit scrutiny.

I've seen that.

I've seen that before.

Yeah.

That did go viral.

I'm out.

I'm out.

Yeah.

I'm out.

All right.

Okay.

We're going to transition from lotto to young Hercules because you are the second guest we've had on who was on Young Hercules.

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Jason, were you?

Oh, that's right.

I forgot Jason was on that.

Well, I don't know if we ever did an episode together.

Do we have any scenes together?

No.

What was he?

He was someone.

He had a great character.

But Ryan Gosling was, you remember Ryan Gosling?

Oh, I remember Ryan Gosling.

Yes.

Yes.

He was young then.

I think he had his 18th birthday on one of the episodes I did with him.

Yeah.

And so I played his sort of love interest, and I think we almost kissed.

There was spark there.

On script or off script?

Well, I was sort of like, no, no, no.

Well, on script.

No, I'm very professional.

But we got to that point where we almost kissed, and then there was a, you know, a ting ting.

It was like, oh my God, we could be brother or sister.

We realized, you know, I can't go into the full story, but the gods and every, you know,

Hercules, we could have, he could have been both of our dads.

And that would have been weird, sort of in this situation.

So we just, you know, all that chemistry, we had to let it go.

But then he became really famous, and I was like, bugger.

I missed that moment.

I should have just jumped in there.

Yeah.

I was like, hey, remember this bro?

Was this pre-notebook Ryan Gosling?

Oh hell yeah, yeah.

He was 18.

He was 18.

Yeah.

He'd just come out of Mickey Mouse Club.

Pretty much.

Yeah.

He's big time now.

Ken.

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Yeah.

Yes.

Have you watched it?

No.

No, me neither.

I have a funny thing with Barbie.

I just, I loved Barbies.

But I think for all of us girls that were brown back in the day.

Oh, and still now.

Really?

Shit, I've worked so hard on trying to get this.

Okay.

Yeah.

Still officially brown.

We all were like, we just want to be Barbie.

And we just felt really bad about the color of our skin and our hair and all that stuff.

And it's just a bit triggering for me.

Just going out here, making a movie about how, you know, and I know there's lots of wonderful messages in it, but it just put me back to that time of just hating how I looked in the color of my skin.

And my mum is blonde, blue-eyed.

And I was always like, you're so lucky.

Yeah.

I just want to be, you know, like you, that's what pretty is.

We're going to get, we're going to get there.

And I'm going to, I can't wait to get there to unpack some of that stuff.

Oh, okay.

Okay.

Just go, man.

Just go.

We're going to go there now.

Yeah.

Well, are you going to go?

You're going there?

I can't wait to go there.

Well, I watched DNA detectives last night.

Did you?

Because you just stumbled upon it or because you were, you were researching?

I was researching for the, I was researching for the episode.

Good.

Yeah.

Because I come from a mixed race background as well.

So English father, Solomon Island's mother.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

And like, I, I haven't watched Passengers, but I understand that was an interesting journey for you because for those that don't know, your father was Zimbabwean and came here when he was a teenager.

Like backfilling some of that knowledge.

How has that been for you?

Which bit?

Sorry.

Which bits?

Yeah, that's a very open, that's a very open question.

Usually I can try, I can find something, but you lost me.

Yeah, that's okay.

So you were raised by your mother predominantly.

Yes, yes, yes.

So then as you moved into your adult years and they pitched you this idea for a TV show to go to Zimbabwe or go to South Africa and kind of connect with your father's roots.

How emotional was that journey?

How was that journey for you?

And has it become stronger since you've got a connection with Taomaori through Kaesafari?

Hmm, interesting.

How was it?

Yeah, complicated relationship with my dad and yeah, wasn't really around.

He's passed away now, so he won't listen to this and be like, whoa, what is she talking smack about me?

But yeah, like a lot of dads just, you know, that wasn't his thing.

So he also didn't tell us a lot about his past and we always, you know, had lots of questions.

So the thing about DNA detectives is you don't know where you're going.

So you pack and you go to the airport and you get on the plane and you're like, oh, okay, it's going to.

I must be going there.

But then we were going to Melbourne.

I was like, oh, this is distinct.

But that was a different relative.

So then yeah, we couldn't get into Zimbabwe because of the problems at the time.

But I sort of walked across the border from South Africa.

But I think, yeah, what was quite emotional for me on that journey was that my dad had told the researchers a lot of stuff that he'd never told us.

And I was just like, wow, that's great to know it.

But oh, how does that have been to, you know, yeah, it was good.

But I think I can't, it's been a long time since I did that show.

But I think I might have said and it might have been in there that I kind of went on actually feel really connected to New Zealand after this.

And I remember saying to the director, she's like, how do you feel?

You know, we're filming that.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

How do you feel?

And I said, do you want me to be honest?

And she said, absolutely.

And I was like, I just, you know, it's nothing.

Like it's good to be here because I know that like I just, this is cool, but I love my country and I feel connected to the indigenous people there.

And yeah.

Wow.

That's that.

Has it stayed the same as well since the Teow Maori kind of connection that you've been into in classified?

Yeah.

Because what's the premise of that show?

That's just all about eating.

It's wonderful.

Eating, hunting, fishing.

What else?

Anyway, it's food gathering.

Basically.

With Pia Tere, who's one of the funniest, most wonderful people in the world.

So it was just a beautiful, wonderful time for me.

And they, those, all male crew bar me and they, those guys just wrap me up and I feel in love and just held my hand through it.

And yeah, I was just like, this is just such a beautiful world.

I was very, yeah, it really was the best job I've ever had.

Yeah.

In terms of connecting to like the land and the sea and.

Yeah, yeah, connecting to the land and the sea.

Absolutely.

But just really being in that world and going, this is what's important.

You know, this is what, and just feeling sad because I think we, you know, we obviously, Maori have been, we've lost a lot of that.

What's really important.

And just to, to really understand that, to really understand the root of it and go, God, we should all be living like this.

You know, where we just truly connect and are connected to the land.

I loved all that.

You know, yeah, it was, it was, it was wonderful.

I don't know if I answered your question because I can't remember where your question was.

It's all right.

We're just flying.

We're free flying.

Oh, free flying.

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I love it.

I love it.

I'm going to pull you guys back.

Pull, pull, pull in.

Yeah, go on.

Pulls back.

We'll be right back after this short break.

I'm going to pull you back because when researching this, I went on a bit of a journey myself, a bit of a trip and it started with watching your documentary, kids swired differently and then listening to your podcast.

No such thing as normal.

I've read some articles and I've got a six year old who I'm pretty sure is undiagnosed ADHD and connected really strongly with a lot of the things you talked about.

So there's so much to cover and I'm not really sure the best place to start.

Me neither.

But I really want to get into it in depth and perhaps it starts with 14 years ago you had two months and then over the last decade, that's been an incredibly difficult and incredibly rewarding and just an absolute rollercoaster of a ride.

And I want you to tell our audience about it.

Yeah, yeah.

So my little, yeah, so I've got twin girls and my little, my little Nezzie, about at the age of six, I think just stopped kind of just being able to, I don't know, function even just sort of went downhill really quickly, just was wearing the same dress every day, was just really angry and upset all the time and so many things.

But was holding it together at school.

So, you know, that's fine.

And then all of a sudden didn't hold it together at school anymore.

So there were a few years there where she was just running away all the time, you know, pulling classrooms apart, violent.

Just, you know, I had the quote unquote worst kid in the school and I was just, it was such a shock to me because up to that point I was like, I don't know if I ever consciously was aware of this, but I just thought naughty kids are the product of bad parents in a nutshell.

You know, like, what's happening at home?

So jumping there, not a parent.

That's my understanding.

Yes.

That's my take on it.

When I see that, I'm like, what's happening here, guys?

And like Steven suggested, I watched the doco in preparation for and I did.

And even in the 24 hours since watching it, I'm like, man, I need to take a kind of step back as a judgy bystander and actually ask and be more inquisitive in it as well.

Yeah, yeah.

Because I think, you know, we were very much at the pointy end of like things were so chaotic

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and so crisis level.

But there's a whole lot of people, there's thousands of families that are kind of in that it's some level and are just going, I'm trying everything.

I've tried the sticker charts.

I've tried more discipline.

I've tried the boundaries.

I've tried everything and nothing's working.

And everyone's going, it's me, you know, and it's very, it's so hard on so many levels.

And but, you know, now I kind of go and yeah, it's been a journey, but now I go, what a gift because I'm, I hope now a better, more understanding person and better parent because I now understand

that my daughter's brain is wide in a completely different way.

And she's, all those meltdowns and stuff is not her being malicious or trying to, I don't know, get her way all the time.

It's nothing to do with me.

It's just that the world is really fricking overwhelming for her, really overwhelming.

And she's in a way, I'm kind of proud of her for going, no, can't do it.

Can't do it because there are so thousands of kids like her who have got it going on in the inside, but they hold it together.

And then, you know, you see the problems later because that's not healthy.

So she was just like, I can't, I can't.

Yeah.

A big part of the documentary in the story was talking about the worst of it and hitting rock bottom.

There was an incident where she sort of ran away and there was a helicopter looking for her.

And yeah, it's your story to tell, but the helplessness after that where there was no, you thought, okay, someone's going to come in and help us and there wasn't anything there, which is the power of what you're doing now and bringing awareness to it.

Yeah, yeah.

That was such a pivotal moment because I was as terrible as it was.

For anyone that has had a kid missing, it is hell.

And you take yourself to terrible places.

And I remember the hearing on one of the cops radios, we got to search the waterways and just going,

oh, this is that I'm in like some CSI episode.

I don't know.

It was just horrendous.

But excuse me.

But what happened was I was like, okay, at least sorry, guys.

I'll start that again.

What happened was that I thought at least, you know, there's this little thing in my head going, at least now they'll believe us that this is real.

This is a thing.

It's kind of what I say to anyone.

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This is a thing.

It's not me being a neurotic parent.

It's not like the parent, it's just we're not coping and surely running away means that we'll have this team that swoop in.

You know, like, oh, okay, right.

And I said, we've got the psychiatrists, psychologists, the this, the that, the support, the whatever. And there was nothing except this guy that was just like, maybe you need to get a device implanted in you, like a GPS.

So I was like, what even?

What?

That was just kind of it.

And then I was like, oh, my God, they're sending us home.

And we still have to like try and help our daughter.

I'm not, you know, like one of the psychologists said to me, this is a PhD in parenting Sonya.

And I was like, hell yeah, because there's nothing.

So yeah, I that is, I guess, why I from that kind of thing.

Because the other thing is that I recognize that I'm in a position of privilege where I for lots of reasons.

And so just, I don't, I know that I can compose the emails and, you know, do all those things.

I will fight for my kid.

And there are so many people not in that position for many, many reasons.

So I have to be vocal for them.

And yeah, that's the documentary I guess came out of that and the podcast is, yeah, exploring things a little deeper.

But it's such a complex topic and no one story is the same.

And I think it's just kind of messages that you need to get out there that, you know, this is tough.

You were asking me about the other side, weren't you? Sorry.

I feel like I've gone completely a fair question.

It's good. I want to talk about putting yourself, because you didn't want like talking about the documentary.

You didn't want to be the front of the documentary and let people into your life.

No, no.

You felt a responsibility to do it.

And then once it went out and you could see why you had to sort of be the face of it, what was the response like?

What was the feedback you got?

It was so overwhelming after that documentary.

It was quite like, I felt overwhelmed in those few days and weeks afterwards because I got thousands of messages

and from people that were syncing.

And I was like, right, I'm going to answer all these messages and you just can't.

Because you answer one, you know, I'm so sorry and support.

And then they come back with another question and, you know, like it just, and I just was like, what

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else can I do?

And I, yeah, I hadn't really been planning to do anything else.

But yeah, there were a number of people that came up to me with really, really heart wrenching stories.

And I was like, OK, I've got to do more in this space because it's just, you know, when you're in those situations,

you're like, whoa, how did I not know about this?

And now I'm in it.

And people, no one else knows about it.

And I've got to tell people this is a thing.

And because the thing is, so many people don't feel like they can talk.

So you think you're the only person on this island struggling with your child and trying, you know, with a really unhappy child

or a child that's not coping in the world.

And then when you put the feelers out, there's so many, but no, everyone's ashamed.

There is so much shame.

And the sad and heartbreaking and tragic thing is that these kids are amazing.

They're just not in an environment that supports that amazingness.

And that's what's got to change.

What are the stats on how many kids or people in New Zealand this is affecting?

Oh, right.

Yeah, we've, that's another thing.

We haven't done stats in New Zealand.

New Zealand are amazing.

And they have done quite a lot of research recently, but we're kind of going by what's happening overseas.

We could say that 20% of the population fit the criteria for a neurodivergent diagnosis.

So you're talking ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, one of those.

I think it's probably more than that.

And then that doesn't factor in all those people that are close to a diagnosis but wouldn't meet it, but still have real issues that impact their lives every day.

They just think they're a bit crap, but they're actually, you know, brain just works differently.

So, and we just don't know about this stuff.

I mean, I got an ADHD diagnosis because my daughter's psychologist was like, hey, I screen all the parents and I'm like, yeah, I'm not, no, that's not me.

I'm not.

And I was like, just do the tests on you.

I was like, I'll do the test.

And then he rang me and he was like, he scored 100%.

And I was like, the competitive side of me went, yeah, note it.

The other side was like, oh, how does that work?

And he told me about an attentive ADHD and, you know, how that my mental filing cabinet just doesn't work that well.

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And yeah, my mum was like, that just explains a lot about your childhood.  
Has it changed since the diagnosis about you?  
Has it actually changed the way you do things?  
You know, I do the way I think about myself and the way I, yeah, the way I go.  
I don't expect myself to be able to do the things that maybe society expects of us necessarily,  
or I'll put things in place or put frameworks in place.  
And now I can't even think of an example for you, but I'll.  
I mean, I'm terrible with emails.  
I have 40,000 unread emails.  
Yeah, I just emails to me.  
I just, I just like this sort of stuff.  
This is easy.  
The email, no, you're amazing with the emailing, but I find that quite hard.  
Just going, what's the right thing to say here?  
Like this is weighing on me.  
I've got to, you know, I need to do this, this and this.  
And sometimes I over deliver because I'm just not quite sure.  
Or I just ignore it, which is bad.  
John Kuhn, we had John Kuhn on set the exact same thing.  
Emails just so overwhelming for him.  
You know, like a simple thing, which appears simple.  
Yeah, yeah.  
And people will be listening to this going, just like just reply to that.  
Just send the, type it, send it.  
That seems simple, but the ADHD brain.  
One of the big things that people don't know about ADHD is we cannot tolerate boredom.  
We can't contain tasks or using your brain in a way that's kind of has to think logically.  
And, you know, we're spontaneous.  
We just kind of bang, bang, bang.  
And so things like emailing taxes, taxes is a big one.  
Emptying the dishwasher, you know, stuff like that, that is actually physically painful.  
That boredom, boredom's not the right word.  
We have a lack of dopamine.  
The dopamine, which is your feel good hormone, just doesn't deliver in the right way.  
And so we can't, it's just really hard.  
I can't explain it.  
You were saying that your son is potentially.  
Yeah, and this is only a really recent, before we started looking into you,  
maybe only two or three weeks ago, my wife sort of said, like, one of my friends said their kid had  
ADHD.  
I went through the checklist, like, see if you think this was bow, and it was literally every single  
thing.  
I was like, amazing.

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And we've been having some issues with his behavior and regulating his emotions and all the sort of stuff.

So the question I wanted to ask is if you've got a kid who you suspect has ADHD, what's the next step?

What do you do?

Yeah, that's hard.

It's easier if you have money, which is terrible in this country, but it is a long waiting list if you don't. It's still long of your private, but I would, so the ADHD New Zealand website is amazing.

Yeah, go there first and go to your GP.

That didn't work in my situation way back with Nezzie when she was little.

They just said, oh, my GP just said, you've just got a hungry kid.

Just give us some juice after school.

So you know, don't feel that if you get that response, then you know, you have to believe them.

You know, you know your kid.

They are the expert in your child.

And if you know that something's not quite right, explore it.

Like, you know, the struggle is that some people do, and I understand this, like labels are a bit scary.

Hey, I don't know how you feel about that.

Are you a little bit like a little bit?

Yeah.

Yeah, I don't want to put them in a box.

No, no.

And that is the problem with this diet, these sort of medical diagnosis is that it does a little bit put you in a box.

But the positives, I think, outweigh the negatives.

And we're changing this whole stigma surrounding ADHD, autism, all the neurodiversities is changing pretty quickly.

Because these are really exceptional brains.

So she says, you know what I mean?

It's just like, it's needed.

It's just, yeah, what else can I ask what else with your son?

Because he's six and it might just be a fact, you know, you don't know.

Yeah, just there's two types of ADHD, right?

Yes, although I think they're blended in more than we think.

But yeah, yeah, there's the impulsive hyperactive.

So yeah, just can't control that, you know.

That's it.

Impulsive hyperactive.

And has school said anything?

School's fine.

Keeps it together at school.

Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keeps it together at school and then comes home and it's just, it's all over the place and it's, because

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I've got four kids.

So I know what, you know, the other ones, like you've got something to compare and contrast. And you're like, okay, he gets into these sort of situations and you just can't pull him back and you've got to sort of manage him differently.

And like, he's really different to the others.

Yeah, so there might be a bit of ADHD going on, which is a wonderful thing.

And that's just about learning, you know, for me, you know, very late diagnosed, but just learning about it.

And does he have a lot of meltdowns?

Yeah.

Yeah, so.

It's just at home, not out with other people, not at school, just.

No, that's sweet.

And I recommend episode eight if no such thing as normal podcast, the mechanics of meltdowns, that will change how you look at his meltdowns because that is, it's a physiological response to a threat.

That's perceived threat.

Are we going too deep into this?

No, not at all.

No, okay.

You can edit anything you want out.

No, no, because I, if I can jump in here again, I'm sitting on the sidelines.

But are you?

No, absolutely not.

I'm completely involved.

I'll diagnose you with something before we're out.

You'll be here on the playing field.

Well, you talked about like labels and things being intimidating.

And I look at the list of letters after your daughter, like that.

Must be intimidating as a parent to get this list of things before you have a better understanding of neurodiversity.

And that is, is that, is that a, is that a accurate assumption?

Yes, for some people, definitely.

But for me, I'm like, I want to get this sorted.

So I, she got one diagnosis.

I was like, this is not the full picture.

And I just keep, you know, there's more going on.

And so that's, I guess, how she's ended up with lots of diagnoses, all of them.

She's a little bit of all of them, but none of them describe who she is.

And, you know, from doing this podcast series, I've kind of gone, God,

I can see where the drawback with the diagnosis is because we have an idea of what we think, let's say autism is.

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Rain Man, you know, the movie, you know, like, cultural reference point.

Or just, you know, it's always male and it's always, and then, you know, Nezzie does have an autism diagnosis.

You know, there is some autism going on, but I kind of don't like to put it out there anymore because people have this idea of who she'll be and what she'll need before she turns up.

And she's, you know, she won't need like eye contact.

She won't like loud noises.

And she won't like this is like, no, she's fine with all that stuff.

And so that's where the box putting into the box problem starts.

So it's really tricky.

It's really tricky, but I think the benefits do outweigh the negatives.

But, you know, it's so interesting that there's still so much stigma around the stuff and people still feel very ashamed to admit that they, you know.

It's even, again, it's even like awkward to ask someone who's a parent about that topic.

Like, I would feel super awkward talking to you about it.

Super awkward.

Well, this is the first time I've said public.

I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say that I think my kid has ADHD.

You know, I'm not sure if that's all right.

Oh, oh, you mean where your wife wouldn't like it or?

Well, just that.

This is such a new territory.

No, no, that's okay.

Yes, okay.

If I'm saying in public to 20,000 people, I think my six year old has ADHD.

20,000 people, that is a big audience.

Congratulations.

Good flex, bro.

I'm not sure.

No, no, it's 20,000.

It is 20,000.

I'm very sure on that.

I think it's great.

I think the more people that, because what we have to change is that this whole negative idea about it,

that, oh my God, like, you saying that is saying there's something wrong with your kid.

There is something wrong with the environment for your kid, potentially, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with your kid.

So that's the shift we've got to make.

It's very difficult when you're talking about something which is, ADHD, what does it stand for?

Attention deficit hyperactive disorder.

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And I'm telling you, there's nothing wrong with it.  
And you're going, well, it's got disorder.  
Like, how can there be nothing wrong with it?  
So that is a problem.  
There's lots of hurdles that we have to cross.  
But now with so many people being more open,  
and I'm so grateful to all the people that have been on my podcast,  
because there is still judgment.  
But every time someone sees that, even you just saying,  
I think my son might have ADHD, that opens the door for someone else.  
Because people look up to you.  
You're cool.  
Ish.  
Ish.  
Jokes.  
Jokes.  
In that regard, was it a relief to start to talk about it?  
Because you're a public figure.  
You're on our screens every week.  
There's a social expectation maybe that you present-  
Sometimes twice a week, because Lotto's on twice a week.  
Big Wednesday.  
But you know what I mean?  
Yeah.  
You've got a public persona, but then from my research,  
behind the scenes was hell.  
Yeah, it really was.  
It wasn't hard.  
Yes.  
I think I just had to protect my daughter a little bit  
and go, this isn't all my story to tell.  
So that was really important.  
But it had been so, so hard.  
I mean, it felt so public anyway.  
Like she'd have massive meltdowns in them all, for example.  
And that's just so...  
Just on so many levels, it's so hard.  
And I was just like...  
It was more like I have to do it.  
It wasn't about even, you know, how do I feel about it?  
This is bigger than me.  
You know, this is something that's got to change.  
Somebody has to talk about this in a different way.

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Because the other thing was, I was, you know, I was like, okay, so there is this issue with Nezzie, you know, on Google, what do I do to help? And it was just like, there's nothing. And it's all really dusty. All the recent resources were, at that time, were just really like, whoa, and scary. And like every, you know, you're like, oh my God, I'm going to have a lifetime of hell. And yeah, I just thought, this can't be the story for people coming behind me. Go and watch the documentary on TVNZ, kids' word differently. There's some great examples of what we talked about. It's so hard to describe everything we're talking about, but when you see Nezzie, like fiddling with the pillows and the sort of five-hour routine of what she had to do every night and the curtains and things, there's another one where you're taking her to school and she doesn't want to get out of the car because you're wearing the wrong pants and you have to go home and change your pants. But that gives an insight into what you're dealing with. Oh, that was not actually the documentary. That was something else. Yes, yeah, another little thing that, yeah, yeah, yeah. And again, because I have to protect my daughter, we did not show that much. I have to run everything by her and she's very protected. Oh, you know, there's certain things she doesn't want. So that was just a tip of the iceberg. And she did actually end up in hospital this year because the OCD got completely out of control and she just stopped eating, drinking, doing anything. It was just straightening the pillows for three days straight. You know, this is the sort of stuff, and I know there'll be people listening going, well, what were you doing? Oh, what were you doing? Well, this was taking place and it's so complicated and so massive. So we were very lucky to get into Starship, Child and Family Unit. That's a whole other story.

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That's an amazing, full-on place,  
that beautiful experience because I stayed with her.  
But yeah, so that's, you know, it can get bad  
and I know I'm not the only one.  
But then along the way,  
there's other people that may not be at that level,  
but it's still hard.  
It's still like, what are we doing at this right?  
Are we doing, you know,  
and those resources aren't there.  
The support isn't there.  
You feel like you're on this island going,  
everyone else seems to be handling this whole parenting gig really well  
and I'm not.  
There's definitely, I think, a lesson in operating with empathy  
if you're sitting on the outside.  
Like, one of the confronting things from the doco  
was you talking about having physical bruising  
from, you know, your situation.  
And then I think the quote was,  
it's like domestic abuse, but you can't escape.  
And that fucking killed me, man,  
when I heard you describe it like that.  
And I'd never had that lens on it.  
And I can't imagine the household having to kind of go through that,  
but then having to front,  
like the shame and the stigma attached to it,  
that thankfully has passed for you now.  
But yeah, having to put a front on  
and then deal with those situations so publicly  
and being a public person as well.  
Yeah, man, so much respect for you,  
for using your platform and standing up for the people  
that maybe don't have a voice and don't know where they can turn.  
It's such an amazing thing that you're doing out there  
and I really hope by us putting a spotlight on that  
to a very, maybe different audience than what you're used to  
and help people kind of navigate those conversations  
and this area and territory.  
I've learnt shitloads in 24 hours  
about kind of how to approach my friends who are parents.  
Yeah, yeah.  
And your friends who also might be slightly, you know, shiny like me.

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Yes, yeah.

You know, I think a lot of us in relationships, they break down because, you know, the one doesn't understand the other's kind of, how their other's brain works.

And I think just a little bit of knowledge, you know, learning about your own brain.

This is for everyone, you know, not just those who are neurodivergent.

It's so helpful to go, okay, this is how I would have done it and what I would have said, but that's not what Steve is thinking.

He's not even in the same ballpark.

He's thinking about something completely different or whatever it is.

You know, there's so many things.

It's just, yeah, it's...

I've found it really liberating being able to go, okay, not everyone experiences the world like me.

And that's what you...

growing in my face, though, with a kid that is just, like, not coping with the world.

Well, and Steve asked me on the drive-up, like, do I have a history in my family?

Do I have any experience with it?

100%. I'm sure I do, but it's never been diagnosed.

It's probably sat particularly on the Pacific Island side of my family.

I'm sure it's an explanation

or an insight into why people are like they are within our kind of family unit, for sure.

Yeah, yeah.

And, you know, do you think if you look at the stats for people with ADHD, AST, dyslexia, the negative stats?

Like, dyslexia is the big one.

I'm just working on that episode at the moment.

And they...

Over 50% of our prison inmates are dyslexic.

But over 50% of our...

the billionaires entrepreneur, you know, top entrepreneurs in the world are dyslexic.

So that's kind of bizarre.

And it's like there's this fork in the road.

That's kind of... I find that so fascinating because the dyslexic brain is fascinating.

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But if that, you know, all the amazing things about dyslexics, if that's not harnessed, if that's squashed out because they can't read and write that well, then, you know, you can go take that other fork in the road. Which again, thinking back as a kid growing up, it's like, oh, someone says dyslexic. It was like, oh, don't waste your time hanging out with him. He can't be your friend because he's dyslexic. Like, there was such negative... And you really did think they were stupid. Yeah, 100%. And it was the opposite. They were actually amazing. But it just happens that reading and writing are this... you know, we hold them in such high regard. Like, you have to be able to do that if we can do anything. And all that creativity, all that, like, just amazingness. Like, NASA, over 60% of their... Sorry, sorry. Like, with NASA, over 60% of their employees are dyslexic. They seek out dyslexics because they see that visual spatial ability. They can see things in 3D. They can, you know, like, they actually seek them out. Like, but you've got to... In order to get to that point, you've got to get through all the exams. Oh, it's all... You know, you have reader writers now. That's great, but it's not really addressing the problem. By the time this comes out, the 10-part No Such Thing as Normal series will have been aired. So go back and listen to it. I'm certainly going to be digging in. But how was the experience of podcast? I mean, welcome to the podcast space. Thank you. There's not that... I was going to say there's not that many of us, but in a way there's thousands of us. Yeah, there's a lot now. 20,000 a month. But putting together 10 episodes of such a deep topic with lots of voices coming in, I don't think anyone that hasn't made a podcast actually really understands how much work has gone into it.

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I'm assuming it's been rewarding, but has it been worth it?

Yeah.

Oh, of course it's been worth it.

It's just been really, really, really, really full on.

And yeah, there's not enough seconds in the day to do all the things.

Yeah, so I decided to do a narrative style

because I just thought neurodiversity is diverse.

And if I just have one guest, then in each episode can I really do what I want to do?

And the producer and director of the documentary,

Kids Wide Differently,

is the executive producer of this.

And he looked at the first script and he was like, no way, you can't do this.

This would take me nine months to be able to do these 10 episodes if this is what you want to do.

And I was so dogged, so yes, I can do it.

And yeah, it's been great.

It's never as good as you want it to be.

Never can tell the full story of anything,

but yeah, it's been amazing.

And I've learned a lot.

I'm now a pro tools.

I'm not going to say whiz.

I'm going to say I can work my way around pro tools.

Yeah, more than, more than, definitely more than me.

I just come in.

Oh, you don't, oh, you just do the...

It's just the talent.

He comes in and goes down rabbit holes.

Yeah, pretty face, eh?

Thank you.

You're welcome.

Not like us behind the scenes.

Yeah.

I'll be doing an all nighter tonight.

Yeah, you said that.

Tomorrow, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Is it literally an all nighter?

You know, people say I'm doing an all nighter.

I usually do get about two hours sleep.

That's a long time.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

Thank you.

That's pretty much an all nighter, I think.

It is pretty much an all nighter, yeah, yeah.

So does that knock it off at four and then up at six?

Yeah, it varies, it varies.

No, I try and knock off a bit earlier,

but then I'll wake up and go, oh, I've got it.

I've got how, you know,

because it's getting that arc of the story,

because I want it, what do I want to do?

Sorry, hopefully I'm not going way too far.

No, no, no.

What I'm trying to do is actually reach out

to not just the neurodivergent community

and people who think they might, you know,

be in that territory, but to the whole of society,

because I don't think we're going to see change

until we get everyone on board.

And so I'm trying to create something that speaks

to the people that need it,

but also is interesting enough for the people

that are just like yourself on the sidelines.

And yeah, I'm trying probably to do a little bit too much,

but yeah, it's always that tweaking and going,

how can I tell that story?

Yeah, so that's what, yeah,

so four o'clock in the morning, I'll usually wake up

and go, oh, I got it, I got it.

You're doing a great job.

You're such a good person to be sharing the story.

I am a good person.

And so articulate and so upbeat and fun,

and like despite all the shit you've been through,

we're talking about like good energy people

that come into a room and make you feel good.

Oh, thank you guys.

It's so sweet.

You're still chastel over there going,

yeah, but she was so nasty on Short and Straight,

like, they're still a bit nasty, you know.

No, I can separate fact and fiction.

I'm nearly done.

One little bit moving away from that

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is your friend suggested that you used to have a party trick.  
And it was, if you didn't want to go to a party  
and be there for very long,  
you would arrive at the party, go large, and then leave.

Oh, yeah.

Sorry, I was looking at you really quizzically  
because I was like...

Where's this going?

A party trick.

Oh, it doesn't sound like me.

Yeah.

Oh, yeah, no, I recommend this to anyone.

Sometimes we don't want to go to parties,  
but we feel like we should, you know,  
because it's our mate or we just haven't been out  
for six months or so.

So the thing to do,  
and everyone has different versions to this,  
but my thing is you go in, you go big.

You make sure everyone sees you.

You're dancing.

You're loud.

You're funny.

If you can be funny,  
don't try and be funny if you're not funny  
because it won't work.

I'll just ask questions.

Oh, it's good.

So much truth in this episode, finally.

138 we got there.

I think you're funny, Steve.

Thanks.

In a quiet way.

She also said I was a pretty face,  
so just take it with a grain of salt, mate.

Yeah, so you go...

Yeah, it's called go big and go hard.

And then go home.

So you can do this in sometimes 15 minutes.

And people think you've been there for five hours  
because everyone's seen you.

When they're debriefing the next day,  
they're all like, oh, yeah, Sonya.

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Yeah, yeah, I saw her.  
She was dancing.  
She was on the table.  
Yeah, she was on the table.  
A table is great.  
Go to table earlier rather than later.  
Buy people drinks.  
You know, just be really visible.  
And then you can...  
Then you slide out.  
Peacocking.  
Peacocking at a party.  
Yeah, yeah.  
You could call it that.  
Yeah, yeah.  
But it really works.  
Don't just sit in the corner wasting time  
talking to someone boring, you know?  
That is an experience play.  
What is next for you?  
Like, what are...  
What's your broadcast...  
Broadcast?  
What are you?  
Do you have a label for yourself?  
No.  
My kids asked me that the other day  
because they were doing Korea's night.  
And they were like, well, what's your career?  
And I was like, I hate the word Korea.  
I always have because it suggests  
that you should stick to something,  
which I...  
Well, I've stuck to Lotto.  
But other than that, I'm not very good at...  
I get bored.  
But what am I?  
I guess broadcaster.  
I guess, yeah.  
Yeah.  
I'm not sure.  
I don't need a label.  
That's kind of the great gig though.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

You've got this anchor piece that ticks over  
and you're able to branch out  
and do all these other bits and pieces.  
Yeah, I'm very lucky.  
You took your toe back in with the Netflix production.  
Yeah.  
Any more acting on the horizon?  
I don't think so.  
If the right thing came up, I'd always look at it.  
But I don't love acting enough to be like,  
yeah, this is what I'm going for.  
So what was it about the Netflix?  
Oh, it was just so cool.  
And how can you not be in a Netflix movie?  
What does that look like?  
What are the nuts and bolts of that?  
Oh, that is amazing.  
Also, it was in COVID, so it was very heavily...  
But I mean, it was a rom-com.  
That was just so lovely.  
It was just wonderful experience.  
I loved it.  
And does it open the door for people to say,  
oh, Sonia, would you be interested in doing  
some more bits and pieces or was it...  
Well, yeah, someone I don't know.  
I didn't really do it for that.  
I'm not very...  
Yeah, I don't have a five-year plan of that's what you're asking.  
No, I wasn't asking.  
I was more interested in what you pick and choose to do.  
Yeah, yeah.  
I mean, look, it's not like people are knocking down my door  
with scripts, but I just...  
It has to fit in with my lifestyle, where I'm at.  
And it worked out really well  
because I was working on the cricket then as well for Sparks.  
So that was in Dunedin.  
The movie was shot in Dunedin.  
I was like, cool.  
I'll finish on the cricket  
and then I'll jump across to the next day.  
I'll go and start on the movie.

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

So that, you know, with my schedule, that worked out well.

Next up for me, I'm writing a book.

Oh, wow.

Yeah, I haven't started yet though.

You're a bloody good writer.

You read some of your stuff.

Oh, thank you.

Your writing is fantastic.

Oh, it takes me a long time.

I'm really slow, yeah.

But yeah, yeah.

Oh, books should be no problem.

What's 80,000 words?

It's nothing.

Can you say what the book's about?

It is about neurodiversity

and, yeah, about my life.

I'm kind of funny.

I don't know.

It will be my story,

but I kind of want as little about me as possible,

but the publisher wants it to be...

Yeah, so we're still deciding,

but that will be after I finish the podcast doing that.

And we've got another series of passengers

which is going to be slightly different.

My family mystery is called.

And so, yeah, we'll be...

We're looking for people with a family mystery,

something that they kind of, you know,

a photo or an earloom or something

that they just want to know more about.

So we'll be doing a call to action very soon for that.

Oh, awesome.

Storytelling or helping people tell their story

seems to be something that's constant

through a lot of your work.

Is it?

Yeah.

There's a power in that as well, right?

Oh, my God, yeah, I've only just realised it.

Like, in the last...

I think when I did passengers, I was like,

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

man, I love people's stories.  
Like, I'm more invested in those passenger stories  
of, you know, the passengers for anyone that didn't watch it.  
You should have watched it.  
But for anyone that did it,  
I took a descendant whose ancestor  
had a really interesting immigration story  
arrived on a boat  
and something they knew nothing about.  
So we were retracing the steps.  
And I just got so into it.  
I had the family tree.  
I just found it so fascinating  
and learning about, you know,  
how different cultures struggled,  
like the Chinese here treated like shit.  
Like, that was hard.  
But, yeah, just tearing people's stories  
but giving people a platform to tell their stories is awesome,  
which you guys do.  
That is essentially what we do.  
I was thinking, as you were saying that,  
I was like, we are so invested in telling people's stories.  
It's all we want to do,  
tell people's story to the best of our ability.  
And the storytelling and creating a narrative  
and joining the dots  
and then getting to the deepest stuff is, you know,  
that's where the goal is.  
It is where the goal is.  
And it's great.  
Like, what you do is wonderful  
because you're great facilitators.  
It's not an easy thing.  
Like, it's a skill to be able to help someone  
tell their story.  
But you're also...  
It's such a gift you're giving to that person,  
you know, to be able to...  
I mean, I've had the opportunity to tell my story a few times,  
but a lot of people don't, you know.  
And you also, you know, I've listened to a few years.  
You get things out of them.

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They haven't necessarily...  
The public don't necessarily know if they're well-known,  
which is another skill.  
And a few painful questions about Lotto.  
You know what?  
I'm used to it.  
Steve, I just go,  
okay, this will be over soon.  
Five questions, four questions, three questions.  
Because I'm a numbers person, obviously,  
because I work with them.  
I'm a comedian as well.  
I like another string to the bow.  
This has been so cool.  
Thank you so much for coming in and giving us your time.  
It's...  
I wasn't really sure what to expect,  
but I think there's some real, real goodness in here,  
which I hope is going to help people,  
like Shay said, having perhaps been in this space before.  
Yeah, it's so hard because everyone's story,  
you know, everyone's journey is different,  
and you want to kind of go to everyone and go,  
yes, you, you know, you'll...  
Yeah, anyway, yeah, it's...  
I didn't do the shout-out to my friend Bec, but that's all right.  
Do it now.  
Who's your friend Bec?  
Yeah, who's your friend?  
Bec. She's Bec.  
I don't know.  
I can say your last name because she might be embarrassed.  
Does she follow us on socials?  
Yes, she loves you guys.  
So this is a shout-out to Bec.  
I know you're listening, Bec,  
because you listen to these guys every episode.  
And I know you're very excited about being here.  
So I just thought I'd have you...  
And Bec could be anyone.  
This is, this Bec knows.  
She's single too.  
And she's hot.

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She's a great catch.

All right.

We'd be happy to promote her on Between Two Bears Socials if she wants to.

Yes, girl.

All right.

Thank you guys.

This has been amazing.

Shea?

Yeah, it has been amazing.

And I want to thank not only you, Sonya,

for what you're doing to bring neurodiversity to light.

For people like myself who have never really encountered it and it feels really confronting to normalise the conversation.

It's weird.

Like I can talk about racism.

I can talk about sexism.

I can talk about alcohol.

I can talk about all these topics, which are all seem hot topics.

Getting to neurodiversity and it's...

Because maybe you can't see it.

It's quite...

It's an interesting one to navigate.

It is.

And it's just like we were at that place with sexuality and racism not that long ago, really.

And we pushed through that.

And I think we can do that with this stuff.

And I think it's important that we do do it.

But I'm glad...

Thank you for being honest about it.

Because I think a lot of people feel like you.

It's like, oh, this makes me uncomfortable.

And sometimes I do like to see that uncomfortableness in people because I know I'm getting them.

Yeah.

And to Steven's point, like the energy that you bring in as well.

Amazing.

Great.

You've lit up the room.

But I also, for this episode,

I want to tip the cap to my friend on the left for his bravery and sharing his situation

**[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Sonia Gray: Behind the Scenes of Lotto, ADHD Diagnosis, Neurodiversity, and more!**

and his journey as a parent and the difficulties.  
We have an amazing platform that we're able to share people's stories,  
but we're also building our own story  
and sharing our own story as we go through kind of our lives.  
And I think it's a wonderful example, mate,  
for other parents, particularly other men,  
other dads that are out there,  
that maybe don't feel comfortable to talk about that situation.  
So I'm going to give you a little tip of the cap  
and one of those moments that we've kind of bottled.  
You're going to doff the cap, as they say.  
You're going to bring everything back to cricket.  
To bring a cricket analogy back into it.  
So this has been a really rewarding experience  
and I hope a lot of people get a lot out of it.  
So thank you very much for coming in and spending some time.  
My pleasure.  
My pleasure.  
Thank you guys.  
Cheers, Sonia.  
Cheers.  
Hey guys, thanks for tuning in.  
To see short form videos of all the best moments from the set,  
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