

[Transcription]

Grief After Dark- Podcast
Season 1: Dark Waters
Episode 01: Maiden Voyage

[Gentle Piano background music]

Disclaimer

Micki: This podcast addresses death, difficult emotional content and contains profanity. Listen with-

D: Your own motherfucking discretion [laughs, coughs] Get your kids. This is Grief After Dark

Micki: Hi D!

D: Hi Micki! Welcome to our first joint, damn!

Micki: Season 1, Episode 1, sure to be a shit show! Thanks to everyone joining us!

D: [laughs]Yes, thank you all 6 of y'all!

Micki: Apparently this is going to be a thing now, I was standing at my closet looking at my clothes like I am getting ready for something more than a phone call. I've got full makeup on right now!

D:I put on a shirt!

Micki:You look lovely!

D:[laughs] I put on a shirt...

Micki:I'm not wearing pants so there's that [laughs]

D: Hey! [snaps] You put makeup on, bravo!

Micki:[laughs]Thank you very much

D: I should put something on my lips.

Micki:yep, moisturize! [laughs], This is Grief After Dark

D:Season 1, Dark Waters

Micki:Dark Waters, Episode 1 Maiden Voyage. Although before we get into that there are introductions to be made

D:Well yeah that's true. I am D. Anaya with Adventures of Grief Girl, founder and creative artist, and producer, mother, human of the world and such.

Micki:Tell everyone about Adventures of Grief Girl

D:Oooh, well it's my little heart love, shrine is dedicated to bereaved families, I feel like I tell more adultish stories but we are centered around bereaved parents because we are bereaved parents and so we kind of try to tell a lot of those stories, and make sure people are aware of what it means to live as a bereaved parent because there's no getting away from that and the work is dedicated to our daughter Phoebe Jade.

Micki:And Grief Girl is an actual?

D:Oh gosh Grief Girl, there's so many layers to Grief Girl. There's live characters that go out around town with masks, and then there's the writings and I guess you can say digital art. Certainly there's more physical art. Mostly we do a lot of digital work and we set up altars and do offerings for folks and honor babies and this year I started to honor more than just the

babies, because that work is just so heavy and having to read a lot of these stories everyday it's a lot. But, that's what we do.

Micki: Yeah, it's a multifaceted gem.

D:[laughs] Multifaceted is definitely the word I think. Tell us about Micki!

Micki:I am Micki Hassemer. I am a jeweler by day and by night it's none of your business

[laughs]

D:[laughs]

Micki:Uhhh, I own a little retail shop, I carry local art. I am very passionate about art. I am not one to shy away from the deep, dark waters of our emotional landscape and in the last handful of years just in myself, I have really felt how much of the deeper emotion I was trained to repress. And, when I realised that it kinda opened that pandora's box I really started to realise how destructive it was for me in my life and my interpersonal relationships. When i see something that destructive my first reaction tends to be to dive into the dark waters and push up against it and it has done really incredible things for me in my life and my relationships and my friendships. I mean me and D have been friends for damn close to 20 years now. I feel like swimming in dark waters is kind of our specialty at this point. We have always had a very fabulous open friendship and we have always been able to talk about absolutely anything and even in my most ridiculous, ignorant moments I would dare say, you've always been really patient and you know just full of love and information and why not carry that into everybody else's world I say. We're all swimming in dark waters especially, Jesus, 2021, we just had a hell of a year all of us together.

D:Collectively and separately, that's the important part for me to recognise is that collectively we have had this thing and separately we have had these other little things and that's just how life is. We don't all experience all the same things all at the same time, but 2020 was very special like that... So yeah

Micki:[laughs] Special is a word

D:HA! Special, to me, is a very flexible word...

Micki:Like fuck!

D:Mmmhmmm it's a flexible word and so I think in order to reframe things for myself like you said it is that work of realising that i'm being triggered and honoring the triggers and calling them out and doing the questioning about like what is this, and why is this so important to me or what it this impact that i'm feeling even just in general

Micki:Yeah, doing the work rather than running from it.

D: Right, right right. Doing that deep dive like you said and I feel like I have been doing that work for a long time, more so in the last five years, and i'm giving myself the last five years because in the first two years after our daughter dying we were all over the place it was just destructions everywhere, there was nothing recognisable about anyone in my life and there were those anchors, and you were one of those people like you said that we were able to talk about any and everything. So like while I was flailing around , you were like "oh come, come let us talk, here's some meditations, this is some stuff i've been working on for myself" and it was never forceful, it was just very gentle and loving place to land and that I think is worth sharing with all the people as well.

Micki: Yeah, indeed. It's funny we're talking about 2020 and that is a maiden voyage in and of itself cuz fuck, nobody knows what to do with any of this or how to cope with it. Everybody has a

lot of opinions right now about how everyone else should be acting and if that's not one of the worst pieces of grieving , I don't know what is.

D:It's a coping mechanism, I can tell you right now

Micki:What, trying to be right?

D:Needing to be right. Not just the trying to be right, it's the need for stability and the need for predictability, that need for "I KNOW". That unpredictable space is always the danger zone for people because if you have no point of reference of how to deal with the thing then you feel powerless, you feel out of sorts even people who are loud and active and all of these things and who are seemingly strong, and we know for ourselves. I know that you have been called strong on so many occasions and I've even said it to you that you are super strong and so many people have said it to me but we're sitting there with a record scratch like eert... uhh strong, what do you mean?

Micki:Yeah, it feels really good when I feel strong and can acknowledge my strength. When I feel weak and vulnerable, saying that to me almost makes me feel ashamed for not being stronger.

D: Absolutely. That's exactly it.

Micki:Nobody can fucking hold that torch everyday

D:That's exactly where I was going with that.

Micki:And you don't gotta pretend that you do (have to carry that) . I think the world could be a much nicer place if people could put it down and be like well I feel really shitty right now...

D:I am experiencing some things...

Micki: [laughs] that's a nicer way to put it...

D:I'm not a fucking machine. You may not even be able to put words to the things that you're experiencing. And to deny them, I think that is an easy place to get stuck, because if you can't put a word to it , it must not be a thing, and nobody else on the planet must be feeling this. And that is one of the things that I dislike the most is that we are so programmed to believe that we are the only one doing anything. Are we really that detached from each other that we have to think that nobody else has gone through what we're going through, even though we are sitting here in a society that we were all born into. Come now.

Micki:Yes and that is one of the reasons I really wanted to do this with you. Everybody experiences these things. Everybody experiences these things differently and the more we can open up conversation, open up our hearts to other people and their experiences, the more unified we can be. The better we can understand one another, the better we can understand ourselves. Dude, I had book club this morning with three really fucking awesome girlfriends, and totally out of nowhere they started talking about a life experience that I am going through right now. I was not the catalyst for this ok, this was just one of those beautiful blessed universe saying "here Micki , here's just a little bit of cookie for you , because you feel alone in this" somebody else brought it up they literally spelled out every single thing that i'm going through right now without their willingness to be open and vulnerable about their experiences in it, I didn't even have to bring up.

D: Mmmhmm because that's a lot of the time healing can happen and you don't ever even have to talk about it... SO you might not be hemmed up in the psychologist's office, you might not be at your church or whatever, the messages are always there and the lessons are always there. I mean call them whatever you want to call them. Whatever you feel comfortable with calling it but

if we are truly listening outside of ourselves and inside of ourselves, things are just in alignment, they just are. The analogy for having a red car and then you see red cars everywhere. It's easy to spot things you have programmed yourself to want to see. So like something as benign as beards, I love a good beard and so I notice good beards always and if you're looking for trouble you're going to find it. If you are starting shit you're gonna have some shit, it's kind of always abundant.

Micki: Yep

D: And to be tuned into that, it's not really magic BUT it's also magical.

Micki: I like the word magic! [laughs]

D: Oh, I love me some magic...

Micki: I don't see anything wrong with that.

D: Well, it doesn't stop happening, to "quote" Shakespeare, A rose would still smell as sweet if you call it something else. A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet. So, call it whatever you wanna call it, it's there and it is constant and if it's not a constant in your life it's because you choose not to pay attention to it.

Micki: Yeah, I'm stalling here because that's complicated and it makes me think of a hundred different things, ahh shit that's a lot of branches!

D: There's so many branches but we have a lot of water to get through

Micki: Indeed, we have 8 episodes.

D: [laughs]

Micki: Well, I guess first, I would love to know how you feel today?

D: Uhh, today I feel pretty good. Surprisingly stable, which is always really nice because, I feel like I can breathe better. How are YOU feeling today?

Micki: I feel a little on the mend. I've had a difficult week. I had some shit come up for myself that I thought was one simple situation and it turned out to be a lot of baggage that I didn't know was still there. And honestly once I had a fabulous friend bring me to that awareness it really did kind of turn the lights on. So I started pursuing some help today and that feels like progress. Yeah, I feel a little more grounded today.

D: Yeah, I'm glad. Goodness forbid they catching on a day where we are both feeling fucked up [laughs]

Micki: Well, it's bound to happen, I mean.

D: Yeah it is bound to happen

Micki: Yeah bound to happen but we'll be honest about it when we do, I promise. You know what's had about living the honest life?

D: [chuckles] Tell me.

Micki: You fucking become incapable of bullshit

D: mmmhmmm

Micki: This is actually part of my situation of things that I went through this week. It would have been a lot easier for me in some ways to go back to my old self and just bullshit my way through it. I CAN'T anymore

D: We ain't got time

Micki: No but that's a way harder life, I need practice.

D: it is, and it's the practice part; how do you get to do anything really great? You practice at it. 99 percent of the time people don't just wake up good at something.

Micki: Yeah, you're right.

D: You know, give yourself a break

Micki: Thank you, I will! Thank you for the reminder

D: [laughs] honestly the reminder is for myself as well, and it's easier for me to hear coming out of my mouth right now than it is for me to hear it when I am in that place where it's like oh, I'm not doing enough or I don't do this enough. We have opportunities everyday to do it and we're not gonna get it right every single time. I frequently find myself using the reference of machines and even then machines need maintenance. There is no machine that we make right now that never needs to be tended to

Micki: It's true, everything needs tending

D: We should do our invocation and then we can move on to what brings us here to our dark waters and our maiden voyage as a matter of fact

Micki: Yes, this is from *Rising Strong* by Brene Brown there is a section of her book titled *Rumbling With Grief*. She talks about the Rumble a lot. Which I just like that phrase, I think it's just accurate. She says: As someone who has spent close to fifteen years studying the emotional landscape of the human experience, I can tell you that grief is perhaps the emotion that we fear the most. As individuals, we're afraid of the darkness grief brings. As a society, we have pathologized it and turned it into something to cure or get over. Owning our stories of heartbreak is a tremendous challenge when we live in a culture that tells us to deny our grief.

D: That's so beautifully stated

Micki: It's just so concise. It's hard to be so concise about such a complex thing. Thanks Brene Brown.

D: mmhmm thanks Brene Brown, thank you. My offering today is from Bell Hooks, *All about Love*, it's a condensed excerpt from Chapter 11 *Loss: Loving into Life and Death*. I picked this offering for our solstice gathering because it was just so important and so lovely. I'll try to keep it short and one of the parts that was so important and poignant to me is as follows: Our collective fear of death is a disease of the heart. Love is the only cure. Many people approach death with despair because they realise they have not lived their lives as they have wanted to. They've never found their true selves or they've never found the love their hearts long to know. Sometimes facing death they offer themselves the love they did not offer for most of their lives, they give themselves the acceptance and unconditional love that is the core of self love.

I didn't even get to that part during solstice

Micki: No you sure didn't. That was new for me. What is that from?

D: Bell Hooks, *All About Love*, Chapter 11 *Loss: Loving into Life and Death*

Micki: We'll put some links on the website to those two books

D: Oh absolutely. We absolutely must.

Micki: Thank you Bell Hooks!

D: mmhmm This is interesting because I am going back into the archives of my life and realising that I was shared with all of these authors of course. We had this really brilliant literature teacher in junior high who was very afro centric and things and so she introduced me to a lot of these writers and I had to be in seventh grade or something like that. Now looking back at that is like wow this information was far too heavy for me to be ingesting at the time even though I needed it. I really needed it because I wouldn't have anything to draw on now so in that sense I am very thankful but it also brings up how we perceive things when we are young and when we're

adults. So revisiting these things has been like a warm blanket for me because holy smokes, these beautiful human beings were doing the same work and are continuing to do the same work. So back to that thing I said about not being alone or not assuming that you're the only person that's doing it. I didn't even realise that she [Bell Hooks] had written a self-help book at the time that had some very close dealings with the things that I plan to write in my self-help book basically. So that was lovely.

Micki: Yeah she is unbelievable.

D: Which by the way we should share our Solstice Gathering with everyone. I have the recording

Micki: Yeah let's post a link to that on the website as well.

D: ok.

Micki: Dionne put together an incredible evening for the Winter Solstice this past one December 2020 and that was the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction as well. Lots of things lined up and it was an absolutely unbelievably incredible evening of beautiful, talented womxn just changing everything

D: That. It's so important for me to encourage people to really settle down in themselves and listen because it took me a really long time. SO long. I don't feel like I was encouraged to do that in my youth, with reason. It was always "sit your fast ass down" it was not about your (my) wellbeing, it's about what you can't do. "The reason you need to sit down is because you don't need to have your ass in these streets or you're not doing what you're supposed to do so get your ass over there and sit down", it was always more of that without the reasoning behind it and I guess being a parent now, it takes a lot of energy to have to give the reasoning but what I also realise is that they didn't have the information that we have right now

Micki: No, it's true and you know I keep saying one of my mantras is "we've come a long way and we have a long way to go" just keep doing the work. I was just talking to Tim this morning. My beautiful fabulous husband, who is going to come up all the fricken time because he's great. I was telling him about things that I am struggling with right now, these little demons from my past that have resurfaced, that I thought I had made amends with but clearly haven't and I was saying of course you respond differently because you don't have my baggage, we didn't grow up the same, not in the same house, our experiences are really different. But, he is also not a girl and hasn't been told repeatedly for over four decades that the answer is to be polite

D: That's what I'm talking about. That part.

Micki: Talk about indoctrination, I mean really. My mom was very literally, she cannot NOT say something that comes to the front of her brain. She is incapable, she has no filter. She says all the things, she is very blunt. She's very forthright. I usually appreciate it except when it hurts my feelings. My dad raised me saying "you can be anything" but the whole rest of the world still got me super convinced that the correct thing to do is to be quiet and polite. And, that does not fucking work for me. [laughs] for probably obvious reasons.

D: My experience was also very similar because it's a cross between "you have to tow the line very carefully when you are a black person" and 'black women of course notoriously the trope of angry black woman' ... while she definitely exists in my soul, like we've done a lot of work to hone, more than shush, but hone so that the accuracy with which I strike will be painful. It's how much can you tolerate before you get to that point.

Micki: It's also not all you are

D: And that's not all we are, exactly. But, that's been drilled in that's all you are and you need to watch yourself, you're asking for too much, you're doing too much, you're so extra, you're this,

you're that. It is consistently reinforced. And I think that is the language we should use because that is what it is. The reinforcement of, they're not putting it on us (now), they're reinforcing what was already done.

Micki: Yep

D: We were born into this, it didn't just start because I'm a woman or I'm a black woman or because you're a woman. We were born into this, this is long standing things. So when the changes are afoot, like looking back right now, what were some things your parents were allowed to do to you that you couldn't get away with doing to a child today.

Micki: Oh my god

D: right? So change is always inevitable, it's always inevitable. Just talking to my friend now, how people get upset with others for smoking weed, when I know, I was allowed to go to the store and buy a pack of cigarettes before I was 18 years old. This carding thing is really funny to me like it's been hysterical to me because back in the day are you kidding me

Micki: You know when I was 17, there was club 70's somewhere in Hollywood, somewhere I shouldn't have fucking been when I was 17 years old. I made a fake ID at KINKO'S, sorry Kinko's it was a long time ago so don't be distraught about it now. It was a total cut & paste xerox copy situation. That was my fake ID.

D: Exactly

Micki: Part of the maiden voyage conversation we wanted to have had to deal with being a kid and dealing with grief, or being a kid of parents dealing with grievous situations and reinforcement in that is huge

D: You know we're all carrying these things and we're all carrying them in different ways culturally. So you know our experiences, while they may differ slightly, they are very parallel in how we have arrived here [shuffles verbally] yeah I mean that is what brings us to these dark waters. My whole life there's some sort of grief story that is in nearly every year of my life. While, they vary in degrees of severity, they have been very serious as far as my mother dealing with her mother's death the year I was born and so I was two months old. Being a bereaved parent right now, today, informs me everyday about why my childhood was the way it was. I can see it so clearly now. And that is INTENSE, because it's reliving all of that stuff and it is also reliving it again in understanding.

Micki: Yes, YES. that's another parallel you and I have. My mom lost her dad when she was pregnant with me.

D: Wow, I didn't even know that. That's wild.

Micki: No wonder we like to hang out (jokingly)

D: And, also, it confirms that magic is just real (chuckles) I'm just going to say that outloud, folks can call it what they want to.

Micki: Yup because the perfect way that the stars aligned for us to even meet, was impressive.

D: mmmhm... that magnet you have on your refrigerator, you know the one

Micki: I do

D: All the things that had to happen for us to know each other, to be at this point

Micki: And I had the great honor of finding you

D: The honor. Lucky me.

Micki: lucky ME

D:[laughs] honestly, when I look at things like that, and the people I have in my life. That's just it, how life should be lived. Whether you've known somebody for twenty years or two minutes. I just know there are people that come into my life that might not see again, our interactions might be brief, they're going to be beautiful and the letting go of those types of relationships too. This is all. I can't wait to talk about all of that.

Micki: I never thought about the concept of inherited trauma until when you and I started talking about it. And I went on a little bit of a deep dive online and looked into epigenetic trauma which is really interesting. And it's gonna be amateur hour when I talk about it because I don't know a whole lot about it and I am not a doctor or an expert in, let's be honest, really anything. I can search some shit online and what I was finding is that the studies are in really early stages but it basically is theorizing that trauma is passed down through generations genetically. I found an article on the University of Minnesota's website and it's called: The Impact of Fear and Anxiety by Louis De la Gran. She said: the research in this area is still evolving but there is some evidence that it is possible to inherit the impact of trauma from our ancestors. For example, some children and grandchildren of holocaust survivors may have a higher risk for anxiety, depression and chronic fear. Descendants and survivors of other massive traumas especially slavery and attempted genocide often report symptoms that similar to the experience of the people that endured the trauma themselves. As a result, communities of African Americans, Indigenous people and other marginalised groups may experience a shared sense of grief and ongoing fear. This inherited trauma is also compounded by reality of ongoing discrimination and brutality

D: Whew [laughs]

Micki: One of the things that really struck me about that: it seems like there are a lot of cultures in the world, where if I went to you and said " Yeah I was reading this thing about genetically passed down trauma," they would look at me like i'm a fucking idiot. Like, "well duh! WE have always known that. We've always prayed to the ancestors, we have always respected them, we have always called them in and asked for help, they've always guided us because everything that we are stems from them". I feel like it's our little teenaged American Culture that doesn't quite grasp that.

D: yes, well, it goes back to that thing. We want things to be concrete and fixed, and we want that answer to be the one answer for all of time. And that is not what science is at all, it's really taking in all of the information, we wouldn't be here without all of those people, plain and simple, that is a concrete answer.

Micki: That is science

D: Yes, that is science. Also when you are raised by people to do things very ritually. And, I am going to use that term very broadly as well, because it's anything you do repeatedly every single day. It's a habit, a ritual it's whatever label you need to put on it that's what it is. We all know what that feels like even without a label. The comfort, the stability, the faith, the trust that gets built into the things that you are doing. The trust or mistrust. So just like we can hand down and eye color we can hand down a fear...

Micki: I like to dance between the little line of science and woowoo

D: Right but I think science is woowoo

Micki: Well yes, quantum physics! Come on! That shit's impossible!

D:it is, and so again we go back to that thing where we just need an explanation for every single fucking thing.

Micki: We do very much want science to explain it and I think Covid is a fabulous example of that

D:I can't explain why we all ended up here together, I don't even want to it's a waste of my time because it's taking away from the time I can be enjoying some shit

Micki:Yes indeed.

D:while I'm here, it will literally break your fucking brain. I don't have time for that

Micki:I had a friend, Tina Frederico, she worked as a professional psychic. That was her job. She was cool as shit, we lost touch, many many years ago, but she said, "you're such a fucking gemini, if I painted the words 'what if' over your bed you would never sleep again"

D:Never ever.

Micki:[laughs]

D:I mean I love the stability of a thing but I also love the newness of a thing, or maybe an experience that I have never had, I like that new part. It's like falling in love, that feeling you get I get it, I get it why people need that but is that something you actually need to do your whole life or is that something you want, that's a luxury at this point. [laughs] At this point... it's a luxury

Micki:The newness?

D:N, no, no I mean needing to know every single answer, needing to control the information, all of that, needing it to make sense. Whether it makes sense or not, it is. Racism doesn't make sense to me, but it is a thing and we've all gotten to witness that in the last year on a global scale, where it's not hidden and it's not a mystery anymore.

Micki: I don't know man. The paradox is somehow there are people who have somehow not experienced it at all.

D:Which is also very believable

Micki:Oh my god the psychology of it is fucking bonkers

D:It's bonkers, that's why it's survival of the fittest mind not the fittest body. Speaking of things that are always taken out of context, did anyone actually read Darwin's theory from cover to cover or did we only hear what we wanted to hear from that little snippet of information that we were given. The same with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the same with Malcolm X, the same with Martin Luther King, the same with ...

Micki:The Bible

D:The Bible

Micki:Blood is thicker than water is taken totally out of context

D:It's totally out of context, by the way there was like famine, murder, and children being sacrificed

Micki:"they said kill the gays" anyway, I don't want to offend anyone who appreciates the bible. My belief system is no less or more insane than everyone else's

D:I don't need anyone to believe in it nor change their entire life to get on board with what I believe in. What you believe is for you.

Micki:I wish everybody understood that

D:It's for YOU. And they will take it very literally thinking they have to force it on someone else. I don't give a damn, because you didn't make me, that's the first thing, you didn't make me.

Micki:Shit, I actually looked up the definitions of trust and belief at some point and I would encourage everyone to do the same because it was really interesting to me but belief, you end up in this space where you've coincide yourself that something is fact and when the line between between belief and fact starts to blur, we're going to have some problems because you're going try to convince me that your belief system is more right than mine, we're talking about made up concepts you guys. I'm not saying i'm right, i'm saying I get through my life better believing these things because it gets me through the day.

D:And I feel better, uh huh and that goes directly back to what we were talking about, when you're raised a certain way you believe that is the only way

Micki: Until you get old enough to see that there are other options

D:Exactly, until you go outside of your immediate family, you go outside of your extended family, you go outside of your city or whatever. How many times have I said living here in New Mexico, have I said that "I am from L.A.I don't know nothing about that, no offense". But there are things here that happen that are cultural.

Micki:I just had a whole conversation with somebody from New Mexico and of course Tim's family is from New Mexico. And I was saying how weird it was for me going back to that, how big your world is or isn't. Growing up in a place like L.A. You can grow up in a really rough poor neighborhood and outrageous affluence is literally blocks away. I can walk to mansions and live in total squalor and it can be really frustrating of course for those things to live side by side. But on the other hand if i'm stuck in it, I can see, the possibility is tangible, to me. Where as in some of the parts of New Mexico in some of the places it's so isolated, the world is so small, that opportunity ends up being for everyone else and then your family shames you to death if you ever leave it. It's so hard to leave it,

D: and then they blame it on the land," it's the land", it's the people and their mentality. It's the people and their mentality, the land has done me right.

Micki: the land has been biased

D:hey [Chuckles]

Micki:the land don't give a fuck

D:Zero fucks, and so that's exactly it you need to go outside of what you've been doing for this long and we all do. Me living in LA doesn't make me exempt from needing to go outside of the things that i'm doing. While we were very cultured, and exposed to a lot of different cultures and we know not to be disrespectful even if we don't believe in the thing, it's not about being disrespectful. That was something that came up for me growing up in our religion I felt like it was very disrespectful and dismissive and I can't follow that because I don't like to be disrespected, and I don't like to be dismissed, why would I do that to somebody else?

Micki:Yes and I'm also uncomfortable with how a lot of belief systems don't encourage the questions and actually feel that you questioning it is disrespectful to it. That seems really unfair to me.

D: It is unfair, anything you believe in if you live by it or truly or whatever, there's nothing anyone can say that should destroy that for you. You should be able to answer any question in how your faith or belief or that it works for you without the expectation of somebody else believe what you believe in or otherwise it's not true. Going back to that thing I said earlier that dichotomy of things we need things to be validated by an outside source

Micki:Yeah

D: We've come to consensus even in our societies like we don't do xyz ergo we have laws. It's all shit we've sat around and decided that is unacceptable. Going back to evolution, some things can be acceptable. We've found out now, discipline is not a bad thing, corporal punishment is a bad thing, but having discipline that's not a bad thing. Being able to tell your kids and set boundaries for yourself as a parent with your children, that is not a bad thing because that teaches your how to go forth and set boundaries for yourself with other people. If you can't do it with your family, you're going to have a hard time out in the streets.

Micki: What you just said is the message that has been beating me over the head in my life right now . Everybody is bringing it up to me on accident and it's so amazing

D: Yeah I happen to have been thinking about that earlier today, because a friend of ours came by and we talking about our youth and all that. My son is going to be ten, and I just in the last year and a half have just let him go places by himself. Or let him stay home by himself. He's going to be ten years old.

Micki: Is that late? I don't have kids [laughs]

D: [laughs]

Micki: How old is an actual human child when they are able to be left at home? I don't actually know.

D: We were talking and we were recalling, I was at home alone at 7, I could make dinner and call folks, walk down the street. That's the kind of things we were reflecting on and being able to walk and get cigarettes, or in some places buy booze or whatever. Depending on who or where it was. I don't know if they're doing that these days

Micki: HELL NO!! It's lawsuit fucking city. In the early 80's when nobody sued anybody unless it was catastrophic and you burned someone's house down, as long as you said it was for your mom, they would sell you whatever. [laughs]

D: [laughs/jesting about 80's mentality] 'They're cool, you want that duct tape and them ropes, it's good "

Micki: "you want some bleach too or?" {laughs}

D: [laughs more] "you want that salt peter, go ahead! Don't blow up the house!", yeah so that has been a lot of our conversations, how things have changed and how we have accepted these changes. In my case, it's like shit man, if I leave my kids at home, the running commentary in my head is: that's all i need is for some shit to go down while i'm not home and the fucking onslaught of shame that will befall me for leaving my kid, my capable ten year old, we know how capable my ten year old is.

Micki: I was just thinking about that when you were talking you guys making your own dinner, I am pretty sure that either of your kids could make me breakfast by the time they were 5

D: Yeah, Stellabelle can make you some eggs. She's totally into eggs right now. She just learned how to make potsitckers/dumplings and um

Micki: One of my favourite forever memories of your house is watching you guys and your kids on stools so they can reach the stove to stir things. Like the way they help in the kitchen, and I know they help everywhere but like, -

D: They don't, they don't help everywhere

Micki: They do more than some

D: They do more than some, just because again, it's a requirement, it's not an unspoken expectation in our house

Micki: Accountability is big over there

D:Accountability, is real big over here

Micki:My question for you, because we were talking about you know growing up as a kid, and I was a latchkey kid too. I was twelve or thirteen and my parents got divorced. My mom's place was like my safe space, my dad's place was not unsafe but as a person he was a lot more unpredictable and that's difficult for a kid. How do you feel like that experience affects you today? In how you live and how you make decisions and what your home relationships are like?

D:Wow ok so that's a big question. Uhm a quick background is my parents were 19 and 20 years old respectively. So my mother was 19 and my father was 20 when they met and got married.

Micki:Babies.

D:And so they were involved in a faith and went to a bible class and i think that that played a role in why their relationship was even culminated in the first place

Micki:Were they Christian?

D:They were not Christian. It was based in the Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research. My mom was twenty when she had my brother, and twenty two when she had me and I mentioned she had lost her mother that year as well. In October of 1978, and so I was two months old, again looking back, I know for a fact that so many of the things that were feared or ingrained anxieties, definitely played a role in how I was raised and it was repetitive. A list of you cannots and will nots, on top of the cultural things, on top of religious things on top of the grief of losing her mother and we never got to talk about that in depth because I was very young and then now we're estranged so we are not going to have that conversation, but I can guess. I am a really good guesser . I can guess how that affected her because I can look back at how she treated me and my parents got divorced when I was five years old. So at that time, divorce was never something that was on the table for me, but single parenthood was.

Micki: And, you lived with your mom?

D:I lived with my mom and we went to visit with my father whenever it was convenient for him

Micki:This is why you were home alone all the time?

D:yeah, my mom had to work. At any given time my mom had like three jobs or something like that. My dad was a functional alcoholic before they got together, which is a thing that was never talked about in my family. Because of his childhood trauma, you know my grandparents were also very young, they had a lot of kids, my grandma did some things, my grandpa did some things and he (my father) didn't grow up with him after the age of twelve, and he was the oldest black man in his family at the time so that is a lot, he isn't just an absent dad. He's a dad that's filled with trauma, he's a dad that you know, has had some horrible shit happen to him in his childhood that was never addressed because it was never afforded to us to say hey this is a big deal. It was common because if you go back to slavery, kids were being taken from their parents, it was a choice, they were being taken. If that's not gaslighting I don't know what is? You're going to now condemn every black man on the planet for being absentee, and for some shit that was established before they ever even flourished.

Micki: That's an excellent point

D: Isn't it?How does that not affect how you grow up?

Micki:How do you feel like that has changed the way you function in your home now? Was it liberating? Was it fear in you seeing? Does it cause more or less trust with your kids or does it not really affect it?

D:Uhhh...It's all of those things honestly, so the things that my husband and I, Adam, have talked about so often even before had kids. I was asking those questions, like dude how were you raised because that's really gonna affect how we do things here and was that something that you wanted to do? What can I expect here? Honestly that experience and my mother getting remarried, that whole thing, all of that affects how I do things right now to this day in an adverse way and also so many positive ways too.

Micki: This was unexpected, because I thought that both of us were going to come up with the negative repercussions of being a kid with too much responsibility and too much independence too young. That might be because i'm a 44 year old 90's kid in like a latchkey generation and everybody kind of grew up in my scenario. ANd I happen to know that our generation is outrageously resilient regardless of how we are collectively raising our kids which I'm hesitant to have an opinion on. But growing up with a lot of responsibility for me when I asked you and then I kinda looked back at myself and I don't have much bad to say. There were times where I feel like I probably should have had a parent around that probably would have been better. I think any kid would end up in that scenario

D:[laughs]absolutely, my issue with my childhood is not related how much responsibility I had

Micki:I actually feel like everything I took from that was kind of good

D:yeah because it set me up so perfectly for what I'm doing right now

Micki:So I thought we were going to talk about

D:Yeah you were saying that negative impact[laughs]

Micki:No,I'm fucking about to wrap it up right now

D:oH!!You're wrapping it up, cool![laughs]

Micki:I thought, whew we've been talking for a long fucking time already as it turns out.

D: As usual

Micki: AND this is my job, I get to be the micromanager of this group

D:Please do cuz I don't do well [laughs]

Micki: I thought that Maiden Voyage was going to be talking about embarking on grief, and we talked about embarking on life.

D:Well because grief is life

Micki:100 percent. I don't feel bad about it at all. It was a fantastic conversation. I still want to do a rapid fire round

D:We must

Micki:I'm ready

D: alrighty, the title of this segment is Who Are You. we do a rapid fire questions grab bag, we do 5 questions. Originally it was 10 but you can catch those in the bonus episodes or something, you know we talk too much already [chuckles]. 5 will work! Rapid fire grab bag here we go. Who is a person you look up to right now?

Micki: You know it's cringe worthy, it's my husband-

D:It's not cringe worthy, that dude's dope!

Micki: It's Tim, I have been floating in the ethers of insanity for days and he is so grounded and chill, he's a non judgemental listener. He's a very clear thinker and he is very logical. When i'm

losing my mind and when I'm stuck in a terrible emotional whirlwind he is my touchstone of, he grounds me.

D: Cheers to Tim. And now that you've said Tim, I kind of have to say Adam for the same reasons, [laughs] So I will honorarily say him, but there's also a lot of really beautiful women who are doing some beautiful work that I admire and I have been honored to continue to work with.

Micki: Well let's talk about them when we get into self care.

D: Next question, what food is romantic to you?

Micki: I think last time you asked me that I said doritos [laughs] no, lies, there's NOTHING fucking romantic about Doritos. What food is romantic to me is anything honestly that I make to share. It's not a particular type of food, it's the love that I put. I'm not a particularly nurturing person. [chuckling] I'm good at helping people take care of themselves but i'm not a caretaker [laughs] i'm not. I don't have kids. My husband takes care of the animals and me. One thing I have to offer, I am a good listener and i can cook a fucking meal for you

D: You really can, because i've had many

Micki: I put so much love in my food and so when I cook a meal for Tim. we are notorious for, we will cook steak and baked potato and cheesy bread and have a bottle of really fancy wine or champagne or both on a random Tuesday because we're happy to be alive. We don't need a special occasion to share a nice meal. So for me, a romantic meal is something we made with love for each other

D: Here, here. Cheers to that. I am going to say I love fruit covered in chocolate. Fruit covered in chocolate is so sexy to me. Except for bananas, I fucking HATE bananas-

Micki: i also don't like bananas!!

D: I know, like don't fucking come near me with no bananas covered in anything

Micki: Ugh EW and then the frozen banana that's dipped in chocolate

D: [guffaws] with the nuts on it?

Micki: The consistency of that is SO GROSS

D: AND with the nuts on it, NO THANK YOU. I don't want it. What is a book or movie that has inspired you in the last year?

Micki: Daring Greatly by Brene Brown

D: [chuckles] it's so funny, I knew you were going to say that.

Micki: Am I a broken record with her right now? I suck at vulnerability, it changed my life!

D: [laughs]

Micki: No melodrama here, it was a fucking game changer. It's still changing my life. You?

D: [laughs] yes. Well like I said, I have been revisiting some things and uhm Octavia Butler has really been very inspiring to me and N.K. Jemison

Micki: Dude N.K. Jemison, that Broken Earth Series

D: Yes that's the one, what I was just about to say

Micki: She is unbelievable! A balck female author in the Sci-Fi genre

D: YES! Preach

Micki: Makes me just, so soo happy!

D: Alright, next question what's one thing you can easily live without?

Micki: Uhm in my life? In my personal life or in general? I can't answer that. What's one thing I can live without... Bananas!?! [laughs]

D:[laughs] Here fucking here.

Micki:You?

D:uhm Complaining

Micki:YES!!

D:GOD, I can easily live without complaining

Micki: Yeah

D:What is your favorite hiding place?

Micki: My bed or my work studio. You?

D:uhh my mind, probably my bed and the library

Micki:mmm was that four?

D: that was five actually...

Micki: Thank God!

D: [laughs]

Micki: I gotta go make dinner or i'm going to be in trouble. I'm on dinner duty tonight.

D:[laughs]

Micki: Did you have fun? I had fun!

D: I had a blast

Micki:Thank you for hanging in there with us

D: yeah really

Micki: D, i'm happy to be on this boat with you

D:I am happy to be on this boat with you as well

Micki: I came here to talk, listen and learn. I definitely did all those things today

D:Same, same. Listen and learn. What a beautiful maiden voyage [laughs]

Micki: Indeed. It sounds sexy when you put it like that [laughs]

D: Right? [laughs]

Micki: Listen at your own-

D: Motherfucking discretion

Micki:Yes

D: That's what you do, moderate your motherfucking self, get your kids, get your life. We ain't got time . we ain't got time. [laughs]

Micki:On that note, I love you.

D:I love you! Peace out y'all [laughs]

D: I want to dedicate today's episode to my stepdad Alan who really was the prime example of what I liked and what I thought was beautiful in a male human being. He showed up for me when he didn't have to. He gave me everything I was missing, at exactly the time I was missing it.

Micki:And you were how old when he died?

D: I was 18

Micki:So i'll dedicate this episode to my dad. Because he was my dad and for all his faults he taught me and gifted me with some invaluable shit. He died when I was 17. Cheers.

D:mmhmm cheers to that. Cheers to them.

D:

Micki:

