

**TAS Episode 56:
The Price of Showering**

E: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau

K: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian

E: And you're listening to another episode of The Accessible Stall

K: Emily, why is the audio quality such garbage?

E: Because we're recording on your laptop and we are in a hotel room in the middle of Virginia

K: Why are we in the middle of Virginia?

E: Because we're here to give a Keynote at a conference

K: What's the conference about?

E: It's called the, "I'm Determined Youth Summit" and it's for kids who are in the process of transitioning from one point in their life in their education to another point in their life and it's all about youth leadership and it's really cool so far.

K: Having said all that....What are we gonna talk about today, Emily?

E: So go figure this is going to be kind of a ranty episode but then again, what isn't with us? Um the reason why we're podcasting in a hotel room and not waiting until we get home from this trip is because we've already had so many adventures and misadventures in accessibility that I'm just sort of wiped out.

K: This is an Emily episode guys so...strap in!

E: Kyle factors in pretty heavily

K: Yeah

E: So I don't know, Where to even start?

K: How bout getting there?

E: I would say that getting here wasn't so terrible it was just a long and...

K: Convolutioned

E: Arduous

K: Train ride. Actually yeah, the train ride wasn't that bad

E: Neither was the ride here.

K: But then we got to our living quarters and that's when everything went wrong.

E: So we get there and we realize that there is no workable, accessible shower option for me. So by the time we figure this out it's probably like, midnight and we're thinking, what are we gonna do? So we had gone to get food, and while we were getting something to eat we saw that there was another place to stay across from where we were staying. So we ran over there and were like, "Shut up and take my money Hotel, so that we can shower."

K: Right. Note how the shower was the key objective in what we were doing.

E: So I had asked for a room with a roll in shower, we got a tub with a transfer bench. Or so I thought. This factors in later. But anyway, so just fast forward I guess to the nonsense that is being Disabled. Um, I was actually trying to put something down on my bed and I had lifted my armrest up and I forgot that I moved it from my wheelchair because I was trying to get into my bed. But then I needed Kyle to help me with something.

K: I don't even remember what it was

E: I have an ear infection and so he was helping me put ear drops in my ears

K: Oh, right!

E: And so this kid is about to help me put ear drops in my ears and I lean over in the other direction and then he is about to lean over to help me and suddenly one minute I'm in my chair...

K: ...And the next minute she's not!

E: Like I don't quite know how I managed this but I basically tipped off my chair in one fell swoop and found myself sitting on the floor kind of stunned and I had my knees sort of crunched under me. And I'm like extra, super, very disabled and so trying to get up from the floor is no joke for me.

K: It's very serious business and I'm not exactly the world's biggest help when it comes to that thing

E: On account of being disabled too.

K: So we had to MacGyver a solution

E: So first we grabbed the ottoman in the room. Which, do people like even know what ottomans are?

K: It's a footrest that usually doubles as a storage space, if you don't know what an ottoman is. Although I don't know why you wouldn't.

E: I don't know, some people have said, "What is an ottoman?"

K: Well now you know!

E: Not some people like our listeners. Anyway so...

K: No, we used it!

E: So I'm laying on the floor, Kyle had to move my wheelchair, and you know we're calm through all of this probably laughing more than we should've been at just the absurdity of the situation

K: I was

E: I was too! So he lifts the ottoman over my head and we position it up against the night table that's in between the two beds and I start to try to hoist myself as if I'm doing sort of a bridging motion but the problem is that that was not working so of course we had to quick think of Plan B because it's not like Kyle could just pick me up off the floor. So there was this thing in the bathroom, what was it?

K: It was a luggage rack!

E: So we ended up grabbing the luggage rack that was lower than the ottoman and we slid it under my butt and then I proceeded to do kind of a roll turn until I sat up while Kyle was putting all his weight onto this luggage rack. And then I pulled myself from the luggage rack into my wheelchair.

K: Yeah. Yeah, that happened. And then we went to sleep.

E: For maybe five hours

K: Yeah and then we woke up. Maybe five hours later and got breakfast, went about our day. Which is probably gonna be a separate episode that you'll hear when we get back, it's awesome. But that then brings us to the point of why we're here.

E: So okay, long story short is, this morning we had the coolest adventure ever and we'll tell you more about it in a future episode. But we went ziplining today. Seriously, me! Crippled Emily went ziplining today. And I know you're probably like, "Yeah, disabled people do that cool stuff all the time." But like,

K: No they don't

E: I thought it was awesome!

K: Yeah it was. We can't wait to tell you guys about it.

E: So here we are thinking that ziplining is going to be the most wild part of our day...

K: And then we come back to our room you know, to shower. Remember, that was the goal the first night. That hasn't happened yet.

E: We needed a shower. We just wanted a shower.

K: Mhmm

E: Because we're sweaty because we just threw ourselves off wood planks.

K: Right. So obviously you'd want to shower.

E: So I get it kinda set up. And I get it that everybody's probably like, "What do you mean Kyle has to help you with the shower? Are you two dating?" (*mock laugh*). No. Kyle's just my best friend and he does what any best friend would do, right?

K: Which is like turn the water on in the shower because it's like three feet away from the seat.

E: Yeah because every hotel shower seems to have this problem where they like put the shower control on the opposite side of the shower from where the shower bench is.

K: You had clothes on, it wasn't that weird.

E: Yes I had clothes on. Anyway, people are already like "(Gasps) They're sharing a hotel room? Oh my God, taking a shower?"

K: Yeah we're saving water, we're doing it together obviously.

E: Oh my goodness, now we're getting risqué! Anyway, Kyle just needed to help me turn the water on. So he hadn't even managed to....actually thank God.

K: Yeah no, it's probably for the best right. So I hadn't even managed to turn the water on, I was about to. You know I wasn't standing outside, I had my hand up behind the curtain and I was about to turn the water on and there was a comically loud crash. ANd it was a TV show crash in lie an old 90s sitcom (*Emily laughs*) And it went on for a couple seconds, and I knew Emily was fine because she hadn't said anything

E: Yeah I didn't yell.

K: Right. But then it turned out that the transfer bench had slipped out from underneath you? What happened exactly?

E: It was not even attached to the wall!

K: Oh right, yeah.

E: So apparently I figured it would be fine because it was resting up against the bathtub which I've seen benches do that before. So I was sort of timid about it but okay. Although mind ou, my knees are already sore and rug burned from the last time I tried to get myself up which was less than twenty four hours ago. So I'm already a little bit shaky and transferring is not that easy

K: Right.

E: Yeah so the shower bench just completely came out from under me and all of my bath products came with it. And I'm like holding myself in the shower and I'm like, "Kyle? You gotta take this out from under me right now or I'm gonna fall in the bathtub."

K: And I did and she did not fall in the bathtub.

E: I had to like catch myself on the railing because magically this shower actually had a railing in a good spot.

K: Yeah that was pretty leigt. It saved you.

E: Honestly, if they have that I would've fallen for real for real but this time I just like half fell

K: Yeah

E: And so then I hoisted myself onto the ledge of the tub and from the ledge of the tub I hoisted myself onto my wheelchair. And my knees are killing me like my hips hurt, like my legs feel like I jammed them. But also my fingers feel like I jammed them. So we call down obviously to the hotel Guest Services or front desk or whatever and they send some guy up and he's looking at

the shower bench that I'm like, "Yeah this thing almost just killed me." And what did he even say?

K: He was like, "Yeah this aint right." It was so nonchalant, whatever he said. It was said completely carefree yet so acutely aware of the situation it was something like that.

E: Yeah like the guy realized that this hotel doesn't even have the proper shower equipment! And so I'm injured, I want to take a shower, I haven't taken a shower. And I'm not dramatically injured, but all I wanted was for them to go get me a shower bench, the proper kind of shower bench which you can pretty much get at any kind of drug store or pharmacy or health care store or whatever. And also it's not like a random time, it is like during the day. So while we are waiting for the one thing that I want which is to take a shower, also to get a working ice packs for my fingers because the ice packs that I've been using (To Kyle) Feel that...It's already, it's warm already!

K: Yeah, it's already warm

E: So anyway, what should show up at our door....I'm telling you it's not a shower chair!

K: No, no, what should show up at our door but a beautiful array of flowers which we will show you pictures of, along with a tiny box of delicious chocolates which we've already consumed. Now that's all well and good, but it just seems to me that it should be harder to get a dozen flowers that are ornately arranged and are beautiful than a shower chair, right?

E: Yeah I mean it's almost one of those comical things where it's like, "Do you think that I said 'flowers?' I said 'shower!' Like I just can't even wrap my mind around it. And like, your flower bouquet doesn't really fix the fact that now my body is killing me and I could have really been more seriously hurt, especially if I was by myself!

K: You would've been! Because you would've had to give up eventually, like you couldn't have gotten out of that situation. You might've been able to lower yourself in the tub, but then you'd be stuck.

E: Yeah and I just don't see why it's so hard for hotels to have a roll in shower or to have a safe transfer bench. Why is it so hard? And now I'm sitting here with a beautiful smelling bouquet of flowers in front of my face that does absolutely nothing to fix the problem. They're also comping me the night. But again, like I wanna pay full price for a hotel.

K: It doesn't matter if you can't use the room! Almost

E: Like this just happened...

K: Yeah

E:When we traveled to North Carolina for our friend's wedding and I booked....Did we already complain about this on the podcast?

K: I don't think so

E: I booked in January, a room that was supposed to have a roll in shower and then called a week before to confirm and was told somebody else was gonna be in that room well beyond the time that we were staying in the hotel and it turned into this whole big thing...And again, their resolution was to give me this loosely attached transfer bench...

K: That was way more attached than this one though!

E: But it was still kind of treacherous

K: Right, but at least that was bolted to the wall

E: And it was dirty, remember that?

K: Yeah, but they cleaned it

E: I know, but the whole thing was like....So then, of course because of that trouble we got a hefty discount where we only paid something like fifty dollars a night. Which like again, I love a good discount. This is not why I want one!

K: Right. Although it did take the sting away. That one did. That one helped a lot

E: That one did. But now this is getting old.

K: No, this is different, this is different. Like that was a really big slice off where it was like okay, if I have to take a shower in a less than ideal situation I can deal it at this price. *This* is still, I can't take a shower.

E: And it wasn't so unsafe

K: Right

E: I mean at least when I got on it I knew that it wasn't gonna fall off. This I kinda knew right away but I sort of already transferred and I thought I could make the best of of it, cause I really wanted to take a shower. And like I know I sound whiny, like I'm listening to myself and I'm annoying myself but honestly I'm just so tired of this being a constant thing and like...

K: The best part is the hotel sends out an errand boy to go buy a shower bench or a shower chair...I don't know which one they're gonna buy...Per Emily's recommendation no less. And it's been at least fifteen minutes...

E: At least fifteen

K: Oh, I'm just going by when we're recording!

E: It's been about two hours.

K: There ya go, it's been about two hours. And I know this is a small town but I know there's drugstores somewhere.

E: We're not...We're not in "Bumble!" We're right.

K: Yeah we're not.

E: And I'm just so fed up. Like okay, the reason that we told you the whole thing about me falling last night? That was nobody's fault

K: Right

E: And that was just to like preface the nonsense that is this trip. But this shower thing could've been avoided and should've been avoided. You know?

K: Yeah

E: It's one thing when we have to put our heads together to figure something out because accidents happen, but this is just so much more exasperating than that. And I feel like every time I go to a hotel I'm worried that I'm not going to be able to take a shower. I'm worried that I'm not going to be able to do one of the two most basic things you are supposed to be able to do in a hotel room-sleep and shower!

K: And yet somehow we were able to zipline today....

E: Yeah! Which is the whole point of this episode. We ziplined...Ziplining is not an access need!

K: Yeah I mean honestly, if ziplining were a thing that was never accessible, then no one would complain.

E: Someone would complain

K: Of course, but I mean it's nowhere near as important as a shower!

E: And meanwhile at no point did I feel unsafe, at no point did I feel excluded, at no point did I feel that it was something I could not do. It's like, this was not the episode I wanted to be making! I wanted to be making an episode where we were like, "Oh my God you guys we like threw ourselves off a giant plank of wood and it was AWESOME!"

K: Oh we're gonna make that one two but that's not for today

E: We're still gonna make that one. We have vide too, it was so cool! But just the juxtaposition of like, what should be so difficult.

K: Yeah. The access thing that was difficult was the shower and yet that seems so obvious. And yet this thing that seems impossible which was ziplining somehow was the more accessible thing. It was just ironic. So ironic that we had to podcast immediately .

E: Well I really wonder if people can relate to this. I mean, I know so many people who can relate to the shower accessibility thing but I mean, has there ever been an instance...I'm sure there's been other instances in my life, I can't think of them right now, where something that I shouldn't have been able to do I ended up figuring how to do. I guess like in 2011 I took a trip to Israel and went rappelling down a mountain and was totally able to do that! But I can't take a shower! And it's just kinda...it's getting old. (*Sighs*) I don't even know what I'm saying anymore...what is even this rant, where is it going?

K: I think there's something to be said about (*sighs*) like we say that taking a shower is simple, and it is. but it's only because it's something that's expected. And when you juxtapose that with something that you don't take for granted like zip lining because you never do it, you sort of get caught in that weird thought process where it's like you know, showering is something that I take for granted and it's something that everyone does at some point, and it's like if it's so universal and ubiquitous surely access shouldn't be a problem because everyone does it, including people with disabilities. An yet, in hotels, in the Accessible rooms....not the regular rooms, this is an ADA room.

E: Like it definitely is.

K: Yeah that's the problem. Like if we were just in a non ADA room because we needed to sleep somewhere in a pinch, we would not be talking about this. But this is a room that's supposed to be ADA compliant, and it's not.

E: And it's a brand new hotel.

K: Right. And to the hotel's credit, this was the only thing and there have been many, many worse only things before, but this is also a pretty big only thing.

E: This is also like an actual dangerous only thing.

K: Right

E: And I feel like they're trying to you know, butter me up so I'm not gonna leave a bad Yelp review or something. And the reality is that I don't even have the energy to leave a bad Yelp review. I'm just...

K: I mean, we have the energy to leave a podcast but you know....Still! It's just disappointing you know? There's Closed Captioning on the TV, you know...the door doesn't lock so you can't accidentally lock yourself in the bathroom

E: I don't know that that's an ADA feature, I've never heard of that before

K: Neither did I but it was in Brevard, too!

E: I didn't think about it.

K: I don't know, you tell us! If you use an ADA hotel room when you stay somewhere, you tell us? Does your bathroom door lock? Cause ours don't. At least they haven't when we've traveled together. Um....you know, the doorways are wide, there's plenty of room between the beds for wheelchairs to go, I mean it's clearly an ADA room. And yet we can't...Well, Emily can't shower, I can shower. But still, you know it's unfair.

E: Well this is also holding you up now because we're sitting here not knowing when this person is going to come back.

K: Right so I can't show either until this person comes back

E: But then, I mean they had time to bring us flowers and chocolate.

K: Right, obviously

E: An *arrangement* of flowers!

K: Yeah not just flowers, like this is...

E: With a card that says, "With my sincere wishes that you feel better quickly." Like, I don't want to feel better quickly, I wanna smell better quickly!

K: I wanna take a shower. It's like my goodness...Aw man!

E: And I am hurting! Hot water would be good right now!

K: It would, wouldn't it? It would.

E: Good, Lord people! I mean, we're preaching to the choir here but my God, sometimes it just feels good to rant it out.

K: I just...it's...There are worlds separating what we found today to be accessible, and what we found today not to be, I mean, they're not even in the same universe!

E: And I guess that's why everytime I sit here fighting for Accessibility, sometimes I get so frustrated about it because it seems to be the most basic things. You know, accessing the Subway system in New York City. Transportation is something that everybody needs to use everyday. I mean, a generalization but almost everyone in New York City has somewhere to be!

K: Everyone in New York City has somewhere to be, yeah.

E: And can't get from Point A to Point B most of the time! It's just stuff that you need to function in life is the stuff that's not accessible. Going to stores, going to restaurants, you know, maybe like going to a movie theater. Like basic things that people do everyday are the things that should be accessible first.

K: Right. And to that point, I understand where we were was a niche thing, you know? It's not like you can go ziplining everywhere and have it be accessible, I understand that. I understand that this course that we were at, you know it was real but it was built to be accessible.

E: And there were people who knew what they were doing.

K: It was built in such a way that didn't hinder the experience for people that didn't need the accessibility which I appreciate, but at the same time you could say the same thing about a movie theater you can't get into!

E: If somebody can be trained in the literal specialty of someone who can't even stand on their own...me...

K: Right, yeah!

E: ...To safely zipline

K: Surely there's a way to get you to take a shower in a hotel room or get into a movie theater or restaurant or what have you. It's just such a strange thing. It's like...

E: Yeah we can't get over it. And there's just no...

K: I know we sound like a broken record but the purpose of this episode is to take you into our heads and to really try to make you guys appreciate how strange and bizarre this feeling is that we were able to zipline today, and Emily can't shower today.

E: I'm really, really hoping that somebody else has a story like this

K: Oh I'm sure, yeah...

E: Like, "I was able to go horseback riding but then I couldn't go to dinner afterwards!"

K: Exactly. There's gotta be, there's gotta be.

E: I'm sure so many people have weird stories like this. Anyway, I'm getting kind of nauseated by the smell of flowers in my face now on account of you cannot rub them up against yourself and call yourself clean. Which is all I wanna do, I wanna take a shower!

K: Yeah but, you can't. We're probably gonna be gone by the time the dude shows up.

E: Yeah we're just gonna have to tell him to let himself in the room. I was really hoping he would knock while we were recording this episode.

K: Yeah me too. That's not gonna happen.

E: And I need more ice packs. And maybe a Vicodin, and a Xanax and a nap and a drink?
(laughs)

K: Well we can't do any of that

E: I actually don't want any of that I just would like to...TAKE A SHOWER!!!!

K: I know, it's so much to ask for, right?

E: Okay so, well anyway this has been a strange episode of *The Accessible Stall*.

K: That's saying the least but yeah, we'll come back with fuller, more content filled episodes soon. But if you have a story in which you encountered strange accessibility differences I guess? I don't know, what do you want to call them?

E: Yeah absolutely!

K: Please Tweet at us and let us know

E: Or post on Facebook, send us an email, seriously I think we just want to feel a little bit better about this.

K: I mean Emily does, I feel fine. But you know, because I'm her friend I have to feel bad by proxy, you guys know how it is!

E: Okay, I really think you went through this one with me though.

K: No, I definitely did.

E: Kyle, I mean, when I say "Saved my Ass" I could not mean that more literally. Poor guy had to see my butt. Poor guy, poor guy.

K: Send flowers. Actually, in lieu of flowers send a shower chair

E: *(Laughs)* Right!

K: Yeah, that's it for this quick episode

E: I have no pride left

K: Yup. Anyway goodnight everybody!

E: Thanks for listening!

K: See ya next time

E: Bye!

K: Bye