

Episode 40 | Chelaine McInroy Pt. 2

Bryden Veinot 0:11

I'm going to bring it back to something you mentioned earlier. You said you had tropical blood in you.

Chelaine McInroy 0:17

Yeah, so I was adopted when I was a young child, but originally, and all my ancestry is from Indonesia, at least on my biological mother's side. I still am not sure who my biological father is, but on my biological mother's side, it's Indonesian all the way up. So yes, the tropical blood through and through. Yeah. Love the heat again. This is what we were just saying, you know, when you hear a voice, you can't tell, but I am very dark skinned, dark hair. It's kind of funny because I was adopted into a family that's the exact opposite.

Bryden Veinot 0:52

The McInroys [Laughs]

Chelaine McInroy 0:52

Yeah, right, it's a Scottish name. You know, it's funny because I love it now, but as a child, I hated it. It marked me as different, right? I've learned to embrace it.

Bryden Veinot 1:06

Yeah, I was gonna mention that. What was it like going to school and stuff? Was it kind of weird or different?

Chelaine McInroy 1:13

Yeah, um, so for the early, like, elementary years and stuff, I was from a very small town, a very predominantly Caucasian community. You know, most people there blonde hair, blue eyes, kind of very fair skinned. There's a few people that you know had the darker hair, but still very fair skin. I was definitely the literal black sheep of the family, of the community. Yeah, it's kind of sad, actually. My parents tell me a story. I think I was about five years old. There was one summer I would go and I'd roll in the sandbox so I was white like the rest of my family.

Bryden Veinot 1:56

No way. Aw.

Chelaine McInroy 1:59

It's sad but kind of funny. Now, I'm the jerk that, you know, we do our Mexico trips and stuff as a family, right? We'll go down there and they're all burnt to a crisp within an hour, and I'm like, "Haha I'm just starting on my tan line." I will be that dick that goes around and smacking all of them right on their burn, making fun of them for it. I've really learned to embrace my heritage now. [Laughs]

Bryden Veinot 2:21

Yeah, that's hilarious. So, yeah, you're able to handle the heat definitely.

Chelaine McInroy 2:26

Oh yes, I love it. I mean, obviously I also love being able to jump into a lake because I live so close, right? Or I'll be hosing down the horses and I'll just turn the hose down on me.

Bryden Veinot 2:37

Yeah? No, that's definitely not the luxury we have out in the city here.

Chelaine McInroy 2:37

Yeah, no, I don't envy you guys at all. So my condolences. [Laughs]

Bryden Veinot 2:47

Yeah. I know the heat wave. I think it's coming on pretty soon.

Chelaine McInroy 2:54

Growing up on our ranch, we had a pool and a hot tub, so, I mean, I've been swimming my whole life. I still swim. I kind of swim in circles now, but yeah, it's fantastic. I love it out here. I've travelled the entire world, and I've still never wanted to call anywhere else home. Armstrong will always be my home.

Bryden Veinot 3:16

Oh, that's cool.

Chelaine McInroy 3:17

I love traveling, don't get me wrong, but I always want to come back here. This is where my life is.

Bryden Veinot 3:23

Yeah, and the horses. [Laughs] Where did you travel? Any like, highlights?

Chelaine McInroy 3:34

Well, I travelled a lot with my ski team, and then with the family. We've travelled lots. I've actually been to 27 different countries so far.

Bryden Veinot 3:42

Wow, that is more than me. [Laughs]

Chelaine McInroy 3:45

At point or another. I wouldn't say currently, but one point or another, I've been fluent in six different languages.

Bryden Veinot 3:51

Wow, which ones?

Chelaine McInroy 3:54

English, French, German, Spanish, Thai and Sign Language. Seven, if you count sarcasm. [Laughs]

Bryden Veinot 4:01

Yeah [Laughs], you're definitely fluent in that, from what I gathered, yeah. Did you like learn them as you were in the country?

Chelaine McInroy 4:17

Well, okay, so English, obviously, is my native language, first language, French, growing up in high school, you know, we have to take a second language, being from a bilingual country, you know. I took French, but I only had high school French, and then when I made it to the National ski team, again, representatives of a bilingual country, and we trained a lot in Quebec, so had to become fluent very, very quickly. Yeah, so that Spanish from traveling to Mexico, so much with my family, right? German, my best friend growing up, she was German. She came here when she was about 10, I think 10 or 12 years old, she spoke English. But back at her home, they all spoke German. So if I wanted to be involved in conversations, I had to pick it up very quickly. Thai, because I did spend a significant amount of time in Thailand, which is just north of Indonesia, right? So spent a lot of time there, and I also looked very similar to their culture, yeah? And people just kind of assumed when I was there that I was Thai, and they just started speaking to me in Thai, and I'm like, "Uhh."

Bryden Veinot 5:21

So, yeah, no other choice.

Chelaine McInroy 5:23

But I have found the more languages I learn, the quicker it is to pick each one up, because it's not even learning the language, it's learning how to learn a language, right? I also have an almost photographic memory, which really helps.

Bryden Veinot 5:37

Oh yeah. Well, of course that would help.

Chelaine McInroy 5:40

And then sign language, because my mom, when I was growing up, worked in the school district with special needs kids. She specialized in non verbal autism on the spectrum there, and a lot of her clients being non verbal, they signed and my mom took some courses. She needed someone to practice with. She made the mistake of asking me to practice, I very quickly surpassed her in it. I'm the one that's fluent.

Bryden Veinot 6:05

Made her feel bad, yeah.

Chelaine McInroy 6:06

She had basic conversation skills. Yeah, that I'd say that's the one language I absolutely fell in love with because of how expressive it is. You use your full body, really connect with someone when you're having a conversation in sign language.

Bryden Veinot 6:21

True, yeah. That is really cool, actually. And it's one of those things where people from different countries can speak it, right?

Chelaine McInroy 6:29

Well, I'm fluent in ASL. So I mean, certain things, just like all Latin based languages, right? They have that root that's the same. So with all the different sign languages from around the world, similar, but they're still different languages. So it, I don't know, when you're talking to someone in sign language from a different country, it more turns into a game of charades. You can easily kind of get your point across. I've pretty much stuck to only ASL and signed English, which, so with ASL and signed English, they are very similar, mostly the same signs, but it's the structure of how you put it together. Signed English is typically those signs, but in the same word order as you would speak it, right? Whereas ASL, I it's

actually a lot more similar to say French or Spanish in how the sentences are structured, right? Even though they're the same or very similar signs to Signed English, there is still the difference there.

Bryden Veinot 7:33

It's almost like you can do more with less, right?

Chelaine McInroy 7:38

Yeah, exactly, and there's just different focuses on what is important in a sentence, right?

Bryden Veinot 7:45

Cool. Well, yeah, way more fluent than me, that's for sure. Okay, one, one last question before we hop off. Did you, okay, Axel had his service dog vest on when I first met him.

Chelaine McInroy 8:01

Yeah.

Bryden Veinot 8:02

Did you get Axel in 2016 or did you have him before that? Oh no, because he's young. He's super young.

Chelaine McInroy 8:09

Yeah, yeah. He's almost four now. I got him at the end of 2018. You know, it does take a while for them to go through the program to get certified and stuff, right?

Bryden Veinot 8:22

Yeah.

Chelaine McInroy 8:24

So, yeah, I got him after the original amputation, but I've had him throughout this most recent one, and he's been absolutely instrumental in my recovery and keeping my sanity.

Bryden Veinot 8:35

Totally, yeah.

Chelaine McInroy 8:38

Or much sanity as a horse girl can have. [Laughs]

Bryden Veinot 8:40

Yeah. [Laughs] Way to bring that back around, yeah. What was that first, like, week like with him?

Chelaine McInroy 8:50

The first week like, when I first got him, or the first week after the amputation?

Bryden Veinot 8:54

Oh, when you first got him.

Chelaine McInroy 8:55

I mean, it was definitely an adjustment. You know, he had his training, and he was so good. But I do have other dogs. Well, now I have two other ones. At the time, I had one other dog, you know, and him coming to my home, kind of getting settled in, getting used to my other dog. Now, they're best friends, they're inseparable. My other dogs aren't service dogs. They're just, they're working, you know, ranch dogs and they're pets, but they're not service dogs. So it was just, it was an adjustment. I didn't, never really asked anything of him service wise for that first little while, because I just wanted him to kind of settle in, not be stressed. I did get lucky with him. He knows when his vest is on, he's working. The vest comes off and go be a dog. I want him to have that on-off time, so that he's not always working, right? Yeah, when I'm in a safe environment, you know, where I don't need that medical alert, just go be a dog, right? Because then I feel like when he is working he's actually more focused on it, because he knows it's not all the time. He knows, you know, "For these few hours I'm working, I'm paying attention to her," so he does actually focus on me more, I feel, than if it's just all the time, because no animal, person, anything can be focused 100% of the time, all the time.

Bryden Veinot 8:57

Totally, yeah

Chelaine McInroy 9:43

Right? It's a lot easier when it's only a few hours at a time. Vest is on, "Okay, I'm working. I'm focused," because he knows that eventually the vest is coming off and just go be a dog.

Bryden Veinot 10:21

Yeah. Was there any, like, part of his training that surprised you, or like, you're like, "Whoa, you can do this. It's incredible."

Chelaine McInroy 10:30

I mean, he kind of surprises me on a daily basis. Sometimes it's "Whoa, you can do that," and other times it's like, [Exasperated tone] "Really? Really?" I mean, I did a lot of research with him and stuff, service dogs in general, so I kind of knew what I was getting into. Honestly, what surprises me is how much of a different dog he is when that vest is on versus when it's off. When the vest is on, he's super smart, he's super well behaved, but it's like he focuses all his brain cells on the service aspect of his life. Because when the vest comes off and he's just a dog, he's so stupid. [Laughs] Like, I love that dog, but yeah, it's like the few brain cells he has he's used for the service end of things, because when he gets to shut that off, like he plays, he runs into door frames, he face plants off the couch. His one kryptonite is squirrels. So when he sees a squirrel, I was actually when I was recently at GF Strong, we were coming to the lobby, and there's some glass sliding doors, and he saw a squirrel on the other side. Well, the doors didn't open fast enough for his liking, and he face planted into them and ripped them right off the hinges.

Bryden Veinot 11:39

Oh my gosh.

Chelaine McInroy 11:41

People will say, like, "Are you sure that's a service dog?"

Bryden Veinot 11:44

Yeah. it's a good place to pick up.

Chelaine McInroy 11:50

Yeah. So I was, I was recently at GF Strong, and I had Axel there, and, you know, kind of between my programs or whatever. So I had his vest off. We were just going to go outside, and I was gonna let him run around for a bit, and we were coming to the lobby, and there's some sliding glass doors, and yeah, he saw a squirrel on the other side. Squirrels are his kryptonite, for sure. Um, he bolted after the squirrel, and the doors didn't open fast enough for his liking. So he face planted into that door so hard, ripped it right off hinges. And of course, that's like the fullest I've ever seen the lobby with people. And everyone was like "Are you sure that's a service dog?"

Bryden Veinot 12:28

Oh my gosh. Yeah?

Chelaine McInroy 12:34

Yeah. He leaves the vest behind, as well as his few remaining brain cells, yeah.

Bryden Veinot 12:40

Oh my gosh, that's hilarious.

Chelaine McInroy 12:42

Yeah, he's special.

Bryden Veinot 12:45

Definitely, he's a little special. But when he does have the vest on, though, he's a smart guy.

Chelaine McInroy 12:49

Oh yeah, when the vest is on, he's super well behaved, super focused. He's great, yeah.

Bryden Veinot 12:55

Wow.

Chelaine McInroy 12:56

Just kind of like us, right, when we clock in at work, you know?

Bryden Veinot 12:59

That's true, that's what I was thinking earlier. Like he was treating it like an actual job.

Chelaine McInroy 13:04

Yeah. And, I mean, he can't read a clock or anything, but when the vest is on, working. When the vest comes off, he's definitely not.

Bryden Veinot 13:11

Yeah, takes the vest stuff, "Oh, I hate my boss so much." [Laughs]

Chelaine McInroy 13:15

[Laughs] Yeah, he has a few choice words to say to me.

Bryden Veinot 13:20

Yeah. Oh my gosh. Well, anyway, thanks so much Chelaine for coming on the podcast today.

Chelaine McInroy 13:26

Yeah, thanks for having me. This was great.

Bryden Veinot 13:28

Yeah, really appreciate you telling the story and letting our listeners know about who you are and what you've done.

Chelaine McInroy 13:35

Well, hopefully you weren't too disappointed.

Bryden Veinot 13:36

No no, definitely not, for sure. And for anyone who doesn't know, we worked on some songs together at VAMS and hopefully we'll potentially put those out on our VAMS YouTube channel at some point.

Chelaine McInroy 13:52

Yeah, I'm sure we can figure something out.

Bryden Veinot 13:54

Yeah, sure, we can figure something out. They're pretty much ready to go. So had a lot of fun working on those. So thanks again.

Chelaine McInroy 14:00

Yeah, it was fantastic. Yeah, I had a lot of fun. It was always my favorite part of the week while we were working on that.

Bryden Veinot 14:06

Mine too. Well, music is always the best.

Chelaine McInroy 14:08

You only say that because you got to hang out with Axel.

Bryden Veinot 14:11

What are you talking about? No, no, that's not it at all. [Laughs] Okay, maybe part of it, just a small part. But anyway, we'll get back to a new song soon enough.

Chelaine McInroy 14:22

Yes, that'd be great.

Bryden Veinot 14:23

Awesome. All right, Chelaine, we'll talk to you later. And thanks again.

Chelaine McInroy 14:27

Okay, sounds good. Thanks, Bryden.