

S2E8 DEXTRA HOFFMAN

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SPEAKERS

Ricki Cummings, Dextra Hoffman, Elle Billing

E Elle Billing 00:00

Hi, my name is Elle Billing. I am a chronically ill queer femme, and I'm tired. I'm here this episode and every episode to dig at the roots of our collective fatigue, explore ways to direct our care and compassionate and sustainable ways and harness creative expression to heal ourselves and our world. And welcome to Hoarf: Radical care in a late capitalist heckscape.

R Ricki Cummings 00:49

Hi, it's Ricky again doing the intro Elle's guest this week is Dextra Hoffman. Dextra Hoffman is an artistic force of nature living in Lexington, Kentucky. She's been a portrait artist, comic book nerd slash lover slash artist, singer, actor, social media menace, pioneer in human cloning the original Overly Attached Goth Girlfriend, and the Goddamn Bat Bitch. She has been cursed with an interesting life, and has been doing her best to survive and thrive. If only out of spite. You can find her and her work at patreon.com/dextra. Welcome, Dextra Hoffman.

E Elle Billing 01:30

Hi, welcome to Hoarf

D Dextra Hoffman 01:31

Hello, I am glad to be here.

E Elle Billing 01:33

I'm so excited. You've been on our list forever.

D

Dextra Hoffman 01:36

I know. And I've been wai-- I've been waiting for this moment.

E

Elle Billing 01:40

Yeah. Like I think between me and Ricki, like you knew that eventually one of us would ask you to do this. So. Oh, yeah. No, I think Ricki and I talked about it a while back. But yeah, definitely something that I wanted to do ever since you started. I'm so glad. It was one of the easiest asks, I think it was like text you do you want to do this? Yes. Can you do it this week? Yes. Awesome. I will send you a question.

D

Dextra Hoffman 02:05

When do you need me?

E

Elle Billing 02:07

Yesterday!

D

Dextra Hoffman 02:09

Yeah, I can make things happen. So great. And it's good to see you. Our listeners don't get the videos, but like we actually see each other while we're chatting and recording. And it's you know, we talk often, but not usually by video. So it's, it's good to see you. Yeah, it's nice. Yeah, I've actually started video chatting with some of my friends more lately. It's mostly my local friends, because we all have jobs and busy lives and whatnot. And we have started abusing the video chat function on a like a Sims kind of app called Bunch. And it has a video chat function. So we all get on there and you know, get in our little group chats and just hang out. It's kind of nice, because you know, we're all in our, between 30 and 50. So it's easy to just chill at home and just talk shit with your friends.

E

Elle Billing 03:06

Yeah, I was in an art mentoring group A while back. And we used Marco Polo, which was good because I was, I think the only one in Central Time and everybody else was on the East Coast. And my I don't get up in the morning. And so I'd wake up in the morning, I had like, 12 messages. I'm like, I was so great that everybody got to do this while I was in bed. But I didn't realize I mean, I know I talk a lot, but I didn't realize like how long I talk at one time, until there was a timer that was recording me. I was like, I need to break this up into smaller chunks. So asynchronous video chatting was I think, good for my self awareness, but also good for the fact that like, it's really difficult to for people our age, especially a lot of them had kids. I don't have kids, but I have Nancy.

D Dextra Hoffman 03:58
Right?

E Elle Billing 03:58
You know, just because when do you get together to talk? It's really difficult.

D Dextra Hoffman 04:02
But yeah, it's hard. It's really hard. And I know like, I'll be at work some days and because I work you know, a nine to five and or eight five in my case. And you know, like I'll see people like this person's online. This person's online, it'd be like, most of my friends are online, but I'm sitting at work so I can't get on and I've just got like a huge case of FOMO I mean, are they talking about me? No? I know they're not

E Elle Billing 04:31
if we are it's only good stuff. Like how awesome you are.

D Dextra Hoffman 04:35
Yeah. Yeah,

E Elle Billing 04:37
I think my-- I turned my phone on silent and it's still buzzed, and it came across as a whale fart. And it wasn't supposed to do that. Okay.

D Dextra Hoffman 04:46
It turned to0-- I did not hear that.

E Elle Billing 04:48
Oh, I did. I'm just like, hyper aware of like, the sounds that come through

D Dextra Hoffman 04:52
Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 04:54

Because Ricki hears them more than I do. Like, I don't always notice them. And then Ricki goes, this was a tough one to edit. And I was like, really? I thought I did pretty good this time. But there are sounds in the background that I didn't notice. So that's why I'm not the editor.

D

Dextra Hoffman 05:11

Yeah, right. Yeah. No, I've done some video editing in the last couple of weeks for work. And yeah, that's that's a definite skill that I am probably not going to pursue.

E

Elle Billing 05:25

Yeah, the only video editing I really did before having to do it for reels and stuff was with my students, and they're all deaf. So we would just like take the sound out.

D

Dextra Hoffman 05:35

That makes it so much easier,

E

Elle Billing 05:37

right? Like it doesn't there doesn't need to be sound. Which did help a lot, actually, because deaf schools are not quiet places. There's always noise everywhere.

D

Dextra Hoffman 05:45

Oh, I'm sure

E

Elle Billing 05:46

which surprises people. So I guess I'm gonna just pop in with my first question. Which is the first question I ask everybody. How have you received care this week?

D

Dextra Hoffman 05:58

Um, that's a good question. I mean, I mostly, I mean, I live alone. So I care for myself more than anybody else. Because obviously, I have to, nobody else is gonna do it for me. So one of the things that I really love about my job is that I am around lovely essential oil scents all day long. Like I come home smelling like a spa. And that, and just the fact that I work for a small

business. And I get to be right next to where this stuff is made. It actually has turned this into one of the best jobs I've ever had. Like, I feel lovely going into work. I don't get anxious, like I used to at my previous jobs. And also I can take a free product.

E Elle Billing 06:55
Incredible.

D Dextra Hoffman 06:56
Like you see those boxes on the floor?

E Elle Billing 06:59
Yeah.

D Dextra Hoffman 07:00
Okay. That's full of stuff. You're getting a box.

E Elle Billing 07:03
Yay. I love that stuff. I have some from one of the Good Morning America sales.

D Dextra Hoffman 07:09
Yeah, it's some more of that stuff.

E Elle Billing 07:11
Oh, I love that stuff. Yeah, I do. I do share a bathroom with Well, I the upstairs bathroom is my mom's bathroom. And the downstairs bathroom is my dad's. So like, I do all my usual stuff upstairs. But I shower downstairs because I don't like stepping into a tub if I don't have to. So like those shower,

D Dextra Hoffman 07:29
shower bursts,

E Elle Billing 07:30

the shower bursts. When I whenever I use when my dad's like, you put one of those stinky things in the bathroom again. I'm like, Yeah, but I feel so good, right?

D Dextra Hoffman 07:40

Yeah, I know, I've got a whole basket of offsets, damaged, damaged goods in my bathroom, because we can't sell them because they're too messy looking or whatever. So I get to bring them home

E Elle Billing 07:55

but they still work

D Dextra Hoffman 07:56

Yeah, they still work just fine. They're just not as pretty as what we would put on a shelf. But yeah, having all that helps. And then also, I've been putting reminders on my phone to, you know, remind me to do things to take care of myself, like, I have to remind myself take a shower, or maybe you should eat a food. Because yeah, the ADHD kicks in, and I get in to like a tunnel when I'm at home, and I'm on my computer, or I'm drawing or whatever. And I'll just completely forget. And I -- this is a problem with that, because I have ADHD and I also have diabetes. So I forget to eat. And then the next thing I know, my blood sugar is starting to drop really low, and I'm feeling like crap. So I have to do that so that I remember to do those things to take care of myself.

E Elle Billing 08:56

Yeah, that-- I'm not diabetic, but I have the issue of ADHD making other things I have worse. So where for you, it's the ADHD means you you get hyper focused on the thing you really want to be doing.

D Dextra Hoffman 09:08

Right,

E Elle Billing 09:09

it means that you forget to eat, which means it triggers like diabetic issues for you.

D Dextra Hoffman 09:14

Right, basically, my blood sugar drops, and then I have to remedy that quickly. Or, you know, I'll black out which is just not good. So yeah, yeah, it's a it's taken me a long time to figure that

I'll black out when just not good. So yeah, yeah, it's a it's taken me a long time to figure that out. You know, because the ADHD is a kind of a self defeating condition to have, especially if you have other chronic illnesses. Because I mean, you you know,

E Elle Billing 09:46
Yes!

D Dextra Hoffman 09:47
you know, you know, very well.

E Elle Billing 09:49
Yeah, because, for me, it makes everything else worse and I have PMDD and so like the combination of ADHD and PMDD is awful. It's so bad. So yeah, I'm a different person. And we've now after 25 years of hell with my menstrual cycle, like we have it mostly livable.

D Dextra Hoffman 10:13
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 10:14
But like I still I'm still a crazy person. And I don't use that as like a an ableist. Like, oh, isn't that so crazy? No, like I am more mentally ill between ovulation and menstruation than I am during the rest of the month. Oh, it's because ADHD amplifies all of that stuff. Like as soon as I get my period, it's like, oh, I'm me again.

D Dextra Hoffman 10:33
Yeah. Yep. I know exactly what you're talking about.

E Elle Billing 10:37
And it makes migraines worse, it makes my fibro, worse. And then people who menstruate, like, we're often not diagnosed with ADHD,

D Dextra Hoffman 10:47
right.

E Elle Billing 10:48
Early or correctly or at all. And so we live with this hell.

D Dextra Hoffman 10:54
Exactly.

E Elle Billing 10:55
Until we're adults. We're like, ohhhhhh,

D Dextra Hoffman 10:57
yeah, because like my, my brother and I were two years apart. And I remember when we were very young, probably, I think I was in kindergarten, or first grade. My brother was, you know, preschool. He got diagnosed with ADHD at like the age of four. And I did not get diagnosed with ADHD until I was in my 30s. So I have a little bit of resentment about that, not towards my brother, but just towards the fact that they didn't identify ADHD as in girls. Like, because it presents so differently in girls and and with other people who menstruate. But yeah, it is an interesting experience to know that, what it's like when, you know, one group of people is treated a certain way. And another group of people with the same condition are treated a different way just because of body circumstances, you know. So my brother's ADHD was taken seriously. And I was just lazy and disorganized. And I didn't care that you know, I'm just remembering, like, all of the things on report cards that teachers would write, and

E Elle Billing 12:21
you had great potential.

D Dextra Hoffman 12:22
Oh, God, I hate that word.

E Elle Billing 12:25
Yeah, yeah,

D Dextra Hoffman 12:26
I hate that word. So much like I, whenever I get praise, and somebody says, you have such great potential to do more, I'm just like, No, no, please. You're giving me so many flashbacks

right now. Because I was also a gifted kid, when I was in elementary school, so I got to skip over to the high school a couple days a week, and do classes over there. So I was expected to do basically double the workload because I had some high test scores at one point in my life. And they also recognized that I had some artistic aptitude. And they wanted to push that for me. And so hearing the word potential, especially reminds me of that time in which is very stressful, and not something I would ever do to do a child. Because like, I have twins, you know this. They're, they're adults now. But when they were in kindergarten, first grade, I remember being asked by their teachers, if I was interested in including them in a gifted program, and I was like, No, I would rather not. I know that they are a little advanced for their age. But I feel like it's important for them to have the same experience that other kids have.

E

Elle Billing 13:55

And I totally get that.

D

Dextra Hoffman 13:57

And I didn't want that kind of undue stress and pressure to be on them. And they they I talked to them about it since then. And they were both totally fine with it. So yay. And my daughter actually graduated with a business degree last month. And she was also like, president of her sorority and leader and co founder of a couple of campus groups and like she's such an overachiever, and I'm glad that she is, but she did it on her own

E

Elle Billing 14:33

right. She didn't need a gifted program to do.

D

Dextra Hoffman 14:34

Right. Right.

E

Elle Billing 14:35

So you mentioned that, you know, they recognized your artistic aptitude when you were young. And we actually met because of a piece of artwork that I saw on Facebook and then purchased, which was fan art of Jillian... Dr. DOCTOR Jillian Holtzman from Ghostbusters 2016 And are we-- turns out we share love for Kate McKinnon and by love I mean thirst.

D

Dextra Hoffman 15:04

My future ex wife?

E

Elle Billing 15:06

E Elle Billing 15:00
Oh, yeah. Get in line.

D Dextra Hoffman 15:12
We could share it's fine.

E Elle Billing 15:13
So yeah. no, yeah, we share well, actually

D Dextra Hoffman 15:16
we do!

E Elle Billing 15:20
So can you tell us a bit about your creative practice? Actually, other people won't see this but I see a bunch of your artwork on the wall behind you.

D Dextra Hoffman 15:29
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 15:30
I see David Bowie. I see The 12th Doctor.

D Dextra Hoffman 15:34
Yeah, and River

E Elle Billing 15:35
and River Song. Yeah, those are the the other ones have some glare on them.

D Dextra Hoffman 15:38
The other ones are not mine. Just those two.

E Elle Billing 15:41
Oh, okay.

D Dextra Hoffman 15:41
Yeah, I don't have as much of my art up in here as I do other people. Because I see my stuff all the time. You know, like, I like to see other other artists' work around me so that I have a little bit of inspiration. So yeah. So my artistic process? Is that what you're asking?

E Elle Billing 16:05
Or your, your art practice? What do you do? What do you do?

D Dextra Hoffman 16:08
So I mostly these days, I do a lot of portraits. Mostly, I do very photorealistic digital painting. I mean, I also draw on paper and paint on canvases and all of that when you know time and finances allow. But I mostly work digitally. I use a actually, I'll show you. I've got it right here. I have a Wacom One tablet. And yeah, just comes on. I've got a little thing that I was working on there. How has this handy dandy little pen stylus. And it is probably the best thing that I've bought since my first Wacom tablet which I got back in 2010. And this was my upgrade a few years ago. So I draw on that which for those of you at home is a drawing tablet with a screen that I draw on the screen directly.

E Elle Billing 17:19
Nice

D Dextra Hoffman 17:19
and actually, I found out by looking at tutorials with the thing is actually pronounced Wacom. Wacom Wacom.

E Elle Billing 17:27
That sounds like something Fozzie Bear.

D Dextra Hoffman 17:28
Right. That's what I thought. Yeah, so yeah, I just I refer to it as my tablet anymore, because I just think that's a silly word.

E

Elle Billing 17:37

It is a silly word. Yep. I always in my head. I always said Way-comm.

D

Dextra Hoffman 17:41

I did too. For the longest time. Yeah. And I still do on occasion. But yeah, it's, uh, apparently pronounced Wah-com.

E

Elle Billing 17:49

Okay.

D

Dextra Hoffman 17:50

Yeah, sure. Whatever. But yeah, I mostly draw on that. And then I used to do commissions. I'm not doing commissions right now. I still have a queue of commissions from way back that I'm still working through. When I have time, which I have had very little of in the last year, due to several things as you're aware.

E

Elle Billing 18:13

Yeah.

D

Dextra Hoffman 18:14

So yeah, that was what I was doing. For a while I was doing commissions these days. I'm just drawing for myself at the moment, taken a little bit of time to get back into the swing of things. Because I was out of, really out of the loop for a while due to in the last year, I have had bad living situation, going from that to being temporarily homeless. And then after I get myself settled again, then I got thyroid cancer. So yeah, it was a, 2023 was not my year.

E

Elle Billing 18:51

Yeah, it was a lot. It's nice to see you like in a stable, safe environment now.

D

Dextra Hoffman 18:59

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 18:59
And like able to just kind of relax.

D Dextra Hoffman 19:02
Yeah. And also just kind of remembering who I am. Because, you know, in my previous living situation, I just felt so beaten down and treated unfairly by the people I was living with. And I don't want to go too much into that, but

E Elle Billing 19:23
oh, yeah, you don't have to.

D Dextra Hoffman 19:24
Yeah, it was. I was not doing my best during that time. I did have a lot of mental health issues during that time. And, you know, I had to do my outpatient program for a few weeks in 2021.

E Elle Billing 19:40
Has it been that long?

D Dextra Hoffman 19:41
Yeah. Yeah,

E Elle Billing 19:44
time is weird.

D Dextra Hoffman 19:44
It is weird. No, yeah, it was 2021. I was like, wait a bit. I don't know what years already more. COVID ruined my sense of time.

E Elle Billing 19:54
I didn't have a very good sense of time to start with and then COVID made it worse.

E Elle Billing 19:54
I didn't have a very good sense of time to start with and then COVID made it worse.

D Dextra Hoffman 19:58

I know. Yeah. All the isolation just made it so much worse. And for for like 2020 I was living alone. And I was also working from home, because my company decided to send everybody home. And yeah, so I was mostly alone for an entire year. It was the worst, like I saw a human being maybe like once every few weeks, the rest of the time, it was just people delivering things and leaving them at my door.

E Elle Billing 20:31

Yeah, and that was-- the isolation was, it sucked. But it was also really important for you because you do have,

D Dextra Hoffman 20:38

yeah.

E Elle Billing 20:39

immune compromised situation, right.

D Dextra Hoffman 20:41

And I'm actually glad I was able to do that. And I actually avoided COVID altogether up until, yeah, just this past about a year ago, just this past January. It wasn't due to my actions. I can say that. I know that. My old roommates brought it into the house. And it Yeah, it was bad. Thankfully, I had already been vaccinated. So it wasn't as bad as it could have been.

E Elle Billing 21:12

Right.

D Dextra Hoffman 21:13

So I had I had a couple of really bad weeks, though.

E Elle Billing 21:16

So in The Time efore, because that really is like such a huge demarcation line for our entire society. Really. We went to Comic Con. Yeah. In Denver, and that was my second con. But the first one I dressed up for



D Dextra Hoffman 21:32
Yeah! You looked amazing.

E Elle Billing 21:35
Oh thank you. I dressed up as Holtzman. Of course,

D Dextra Hoffman 21:39
I was very happy about that.

E Elle Billing 21:42
Yeah, we took pictures. I'm gonna have to pull them out when we

D Dextra Hoffman 21:45
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 21:46
So it was really fun though. Because you had a booth. Yeah. So I got I hung out with you at your merch table. People were geeking out about your art. I think I think the favorite humorous-wise was probably the Thor in the Pikachu onesie. Oh, yeah. Yeah, that one was people. People really noticed that. Oh, yeah. They noticed that

D Dextra Hoffman 22:04
especially because I hadn't stuck to a candle with glitter all over it.

E Elle Billing 22:09
Yes. And that's where I got the idea for my St. Winkus candles, though. Oh. Yeah. Winkie needs to be on a candle,

D Dextra Hoffman 22:16
of course.

E Elle Billing 22:19

Elle Billing 22:19

So and while we were there, we talked a lot. And I got to know more about like your background and how you got into comics and stuff.

D

Dextra Hoffman 22:25

Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 22:26

Would you be willing to talk about that a little bit? Maybe? I don't know how far back you want to go. Maybe just the grandpa story?

D

Dextra Hoffman 22:34

Yeah, let's just do the grandpa story. Because

E

Elle Billing 22:37

yeah, that's fine. You don't have to get into the industry stuff.

D

Dextra Hoffman 22:39

Ya no, the industry stuff like,

E

Elle Billing 22:42

oh, no, not industry stuff. Like just your love of comics.

D

Dextra Hoffman 22:45

Oh, yeah, that's totally fine. Yeah. So I learned to read at a very early age, I was about three years old when I first started learning to read. And my grandfather was actually the one that taught me to read with first it was the newspaper comics. And then he would pick up just random comic books off the little spinny rack at the pharmacy or the drugstore. Because we still, we still like in the early 80s. We still had, you know, the drugstore with the lunch counter and all of that, it was super cute. And I miss it, because I remember getting lunch there all the time. But my granddad would often go look at the comic book rack, and would grab me one occasionally. And I remember being with him, I was probably about three or four years old. We were at the drugstore. And I saw the spinning rack and I ran up to it. And I was like, you know, grabbing what I could reach, which was like the Archie Comics down at the bottom of the rack where they always were. And, you know, I was like, Can I get can i get? I really wanted it. And he's like, No, if you're gonna read a comic book, you're gonna read a real comic book. I can't

remember if it was an Avengers book or a Captain America book. But it Captain America was featured on the cover. And so he grabbed that and he said, you're getting one of these. And I was like, Okay, I didn't care. But the reason why he grabbed that was because, so my grandfather was in the Army during World War Two. And prior to that he had been working on farms in rural Kentucky. And he only had a first grade education, because back then, you know, workin' the farm was more important than going to school. So he had a first grade education and then in his 20s, he went into the Army, went off to fight in Europe. And during that time, the soldiers would all get you know, regular ration boxes, and sometimes they would get like extra treats. like chocolate or cookies, or comic books, you know, other little items that they could use while they're out in the field. And a lot of times comic books would be included, because, you know, it was part of the war propaganda. You know, Captain America, while it was a comic book character, you know, it was also used to sell war bonds. So it was a very much a military propaganda kind of character. But that's beside the point, he's still iconic. And my granddad taught himself how to read with Captain America comics during the war. Because he and his buddies would, whoever was the most well-read would read the comic aloud- aloud, and then they all would have the same issue. So they can all read along together. And that's how they learned. And so when I show- started showing interest in reading, when I was about three, he was like, I can teach this kid how to read. And so we did. And so, ever since then, I've always had a really big attachment to Captain America. Even after my grandfather passed away, when I was 14. It's always been a big place. In my heart, I've always had some kind of Captain America book, or comic or merchandise around, and I have a tattoo on my wrist, you've seen it. I think it's a combination of Captain America and the Winter Soldier. And it says, with you til the end of the line underneath it, and my best friend that I have the same tattoo because we really bought bonded over Captain America and Winter Soldier. And also, we just kind of see ourselves in those roles.

E

Elle Billing 26:45

Yeah,

D

Dextra Hoffman 26:46

you know, like caps always been my guy. Bucky has always been their guy. It's just interesting. I really just love all the memories that I have attached to this character and how it can, you know, the character can still be fluid and still do different things other than what I've, you know, come to know of that character and continue to grow and continue to do other things and still always going to be relevant to me, if no one else,

E

Elle Billing 27:11

right. I think it's interesting how, you know, those important people in our lives end up influencing our artwork.

D

Dextra Hoffman 27:17

Oh, yeah.

E Elle Billing 27:18
I mean, I think that's true for a lot of artists.

D Dextra Hoffman 27:21
Oh, definitely.

E Elle Billing 27:23
I for a long time, I said, I'm not a floral painter. I'm not a floral painter. Soon as my grandma died, all I wanted to do was paint flowers,

D Dextra Hoffman 27:30
right?

E Elle Billing 27:32
And now like I did a series last year, that was all on like, botanical symbolism. You know, it was like, I can't get away from any I can't get away from them. you know. I hate that. I hate that. But I love it also, because -- like, okay, yep, I'm a --

D Dextra Hoffman 27:47
Yeah, like, okay, yeah, we're doing --

E Elle Billing 27:49
I'm a floral. Like, I'm still not exclusively a floral painter, but they're always gonna be there.

D Dextra Hoffman 27:53
Yeah, that's like, I have phases where sometimes I get stuck on a certain style, like, like with my Bowie piece, the, the white on black. Or sometimes I'll get stuck in a certain intellectual property, like specific groups of Marvel characters, or, you know, a movie that I like. And I'll just work on that for weeks on end until I find my new obsession.

E Elle Billing 28:22
.....

That's also the ADHD. I think

D Dextra Hoffman 28:24

that is, too. It's that too. But yeah, like I did, the three main characters from The Witcher, and that black and white style. And I still love going to Tumblr and looking at the Geralt of Rivia piece and just reading through the tags, because people got so mad

E Elle Billing 28:45

THIS IS TOO GOOD

D Dextra Hoffman 28:47

this is witchcraft. How dare you like those- Those are the kinds of responses to art that I love. I love that. Like, because I have a few artists that I follow that like I see their stuff, and I just get instantly angry. Because like, How dare you be so good. Like, I just want to throw my pen away.

E Elle Billing 29:08

Like, okay, fine. I'll be over here doing my thing and being good at that. But I still want to be as good as you.

D Dextra Hoffman 29:13

Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

E Elle Billing 29:16

You also did-- I remember you said the black and white and as soon as you said that I remember the the one of Carrie Fisher.

D Dextra Hoffman 29:22

Oh, yeah. Yeah. After she passed away in that that same like glowing? Yeah. Her I gave her eventually a like a blue glow like Force ghosts.

E Elle Billing 29:35

Force glow. Yeah.

D Dextra Hoffman 29:37
And I did a few like that. Like I did more of Chris Cornell as well because God that man was talented. And yeah, I don't know.

E Elle Billing 29:47
Did you give him the Force ghost too??

D Dextra Hoffman 29:49
No, no.

E Elle Billing 29:50
Oh, okay. I was like, really? I don't remember that? I remember the picture though.

D Dextra Hoffman 29:54
Yeah, you know, I'm trying to not do as many Memorial portraits these days. just because that takes a toll.

E Elle Billing 30:02
Yeah, it's really emotional

D Dextra Hoffman 30:03
it is. That's like, well, after my late boyfriend, Mike, when he passed, I did that one really detailed portrait of him. And it took me months, when, you know, something like that, like with, with a Bowie portrait, that one, all in all took me about 10 hours. But doing that portrait of Mike took six months, just because I would open it up. And sometimes I would literally just open up the file and immediately close it again. You know,

E Elle Billing 30:33
nope, can't do that.

D Dextra Hoffman 30:34
I'm just like, No, I can't, or I would get five minutes in. And the next thing I know, I've got tears drinning down onto the tablet you know and especially after I you know kind of healed from

snapping down onto the table, you know, and especially after, you know, kind of healed from, you know, that grief and the trauma of that, you know, his death. I wouldn't say I'm completely healed, but I am in a much better place with it that I was when it happened eight years ago. But yeah, doing things like that, even if you're not personally attached to a person, like, I've never met David Bowie a day in my life. But that was still a hard piece to get through. Because I'm like, you know, I love his music. And, you know, I have a lot of good memories associated with it. So, you know, I felt really sad that I was drawing that because I'm like, it's kind of like that regret you get when someone you really care for passes, and you wish you had done more with them. It's kind of like that, like, I wish I had done more art of him before he passed.

E Elle Billing 31:38
Yeah.

D Dextra Hoffman 31:39
You know,

E Elle Billing 31:40
some people have asked, you know, because I'm in this caregiving situation with my mother and I live with my parents again. There's a lot of emotions, like, Well, do you art about it? And I'm like, Well,

D Dextra Hoffman 31:52
funny, you should say that.

E Elle Billing 31:54
I did do like a very meditative series on memory and dementia. But like, you'd have-- I have to tell you, that's what it was about.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:03
Right?

E Elle Billing 32:04
Like, it's very abstracted, it's it's rocks. Yeah. I did a, like 85 to 100 watercolor paintings of stones.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:14

Wow.

E Elle Billing 32:15

But you don't look at it and go, Oh, yes. This is a meditation on memory.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:19

Right?

E Elle Billing 32:20

I have to actually do the artist statement to say, this is what I did when I was Yeah, thinking about things.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:26

Well, I mean, I kind of do that as well.

E Elle Billing 32:29

Anything. Anything less abstract is too close.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:32

Yeah.

E Elle Billing 32:33

Because I'm still living it.

D Dextra Hoffman 32:35

Exactly. And it's, you don't want to expose yourself that much as well. I feel like, especially if you go into too much detail about, you know why you're doing a piece it kind of I mean, it also is good to be that vulnerable. But you know, maybe you don't want to necessarily share the deepest parts of your soul. But you want to give the feeling of it. Yeah, that makes sense. Like I was talking about that portrait of Mike, like, I had a hard time with that one. But the one the piece that took me a long time, and meant actually more to me, than the Mike portrait did is 12th Doctor and River. Because I did that as kind of like my own personal tribute. Like I do a lot

of like pop culture art. But sometimes it has a deeper meaning to me that I don't necessarily convey in the work itself. Like, the reason why I did the 12th Doctor and River Song portrait is because Mike and I used to say to each other I hate you / no, you don't all the time, you know, just like, he would be texting me like on Friday afternoon, like, are you here yet? And I'm like, No, I'm just now leaving the office. I hate you, no, you don't, you know, just like things like that. So like when that episode, I think that was a Christmas special. But when that episode aired, it was probably about a year after he passed. No, it was that same year. And I saw that episode and I was just a mess. Because I was like, Oh my God, there's what we said to each other. So that was kind of my own cathartic way of working through that. I put you can tell I put a lot of detail into that one. So, you know, that was me spending a lot of time working out feelings in doodling a lot of hair.

E Elle Billing 34:34
Yeah.

D Dextra Hoffman 34:35
A lot of hair. river song has a lot of hair.

E Elle Billing 34:39
She does.

D Dextra Hoffman 34:40
And but it was it's therapeutic. It's kind of like the Geralt of Rivia piece I mentioned. I think when I posted it that I spent way too much time on that hair because like I literally drew every single strand one by one and but it was therapeutic for me.

E Elle Billing 34:59
Right Sometimes when you get into that flow state, yeah, and it's working, you just keep doing it.

D Dextra Hoffman 35:04
Yeah. And it's, it feels satisfying. It's kind of like physical am ASMR in a way. It also I can hear my, my pen making little soft scratches on my tablet at the same time.

E Elle Billing 35:18
That's how I feel about pulling like gel prints.

D Dextra Hoffman 35:21
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 35:21
it's the rolling, the smoothing and the peeling. It's just that repetitive. I get just like almost in a trance. Then, I use those for collage papers in my paintings.

D Dextra Hoffman 35:31
Yeah, yeah, that's exactly what happens like, well, I call it tunnel vision. But yeah, it's a very focused state. And when I lived with my old roommate, who is an author, they constantly had to bring me food and just set it on my desk and walk away because they knew I was in the zone. And just

E Elle Billing 35:53
Yep

D Dextra Hoffman 35:54
and I would do the same for them. You know, one of us or the other would constantly be going up and down the stairs. Have you eaten today? No, have you? don't remember, okay, yeah, we should probably go put some food in our faces before we die.

E Elle Billing 36:08
Yeah, I had, I used to paint in silence, because then my mind could go wherever it wanted to go. But then I realized I had no idea how much time was passing. So I started making playlists. So I would start the playlist, and then I would get to work. And then I could figure out how long I'd been painting by what song was on. So then I could just, I wouldn't overdo it. And then I would know how long I've been working. And if I needed to eat,

D Dextra Hoffman 36:35
that's smart

E Elle Billing 36:35
because I would just get into that, like, super focused.

D Dextra Hoffman 36:38
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 36:39
Because I have a hard time judging the passage of time anyway. And then when I'm really into a project, there's no way that I know,

D Dextra Hoffman 36:47
right, I have very much the same way, you know, I get the tunnel vision. And like, I would come home from work at like 5:30 and sit down and start drawing at seven. And if I don't have some kind of cue to tell me to stop, I'll keep going till 3am. Because I once I'm in the zone, there's no stopping it.

E Elle Billing 37:10
I can't do that anymore. Because the fatigue is too heavy all the time. But I still I'll overdo it like anything more than two or three hours, and then I'll feel it the next day or two, I won't be able to do anything

D Dextra Hoffman 37:23
Oh, yeah, I used to like I can't I should not be doing that. For sure.

E Elle Billing 37:27
I have to I have to limit myself. I have to stop before I think I'm done.

D Dextra Hoffman 37:30
Yeah, I'll end up you know, staying up too late. And the next day, I'm miserable, because I probably have to get up and go to work. And then have to go through the day just being groggy mess. And then I'll probably also be sore because typically, I started drawing the lower I get

E Elle Billing 37:48
power pose.

D Dextra Hoffman 37:49
Oh, yeah. My neck will be jacked.

E Elle Billing 37:51
When we-- like I started out, my first real like art was was sewing. my mom taught me to sew starting when I was seven. And we did what we call it the power hunch.

D Dextra Hoffman 37:55
Yeah,

E Elle Billing 37:55
like it doesn't actually make the sewing machine go faster. But like you end up looking like Quasimodo and you're like, trying to force the fabric through go faster. No, it doesn't help. It just hurts.

D Dextra Hoffman 38:14
Yeah, and especially if I get really intensely into what I'm doing like I clench. Like my clench my shoulders up, and, or I'll have my neck turned at a weird angle, because I'm like, I have to look at it at a certain angle or, which makes no sense. It looks the same no matter where I look at it from

E Elle Billing 38:31
and you got to like stretch your jaw.

D Dextra Hoffman 38:34
I find myself clenching my teeth and you know, scrunching my face.

E Elle Billing 38:38
And yeah, I actually have something under my desk. It's like one of those wooden rollers. It's like there's like six rollers on it. It's supposed to be to massage your feet. Oh, it's just so I can stim while I'm working.

D Dextra Hoffman 38:40

D Dextra Hoffman 38:49
Oh, yeah, for sure. For sure.

E Elle Billing 38:51
It keeps me from getting too tight. Because if I can move my legs.

D Dextra Hoffman 38:54
Yeah, that's something I noticed I do a lot when I'm when I was doing live streams for Patreon. I haven't been in the last couple of months just because of you know, all the recovery and all that.

E Elle Billing 39:06
Oh, yeah. But

D Dextra Hoffman 39:08
whenever I do live streams, or whenever I'm recording video for like podcasts or something like that, like I'm always stimming in some way like I'm picking at my hoodie string right now. And like I started recording myself singing a lot more recently. And I've noticed like, either I point my camera at my computer, so that I'm not on camera while I'm recording. Or if I do record myself. I look like I'm doing something horrible to myself under my desk because I'm under I have my hands under my desk. And I'm like, you know, like, fidgeting. and yeah, yeah, you know, absolutely stemming. I'm like, tapping along to the be you know, I'm doing like diva singing motions. So

E Elle Billing 39:59
Oh yeah,

D Dextra Hoffman 39:59
and I have like, I realized that I was doing it and I'm like, why am I hiding it? Like? I mean, I'm just doing these videos for myself, mostly. And if I get something good out of it, yeah, I might post it. Not likely it not today, especially God, do you hear me? Starting to sound like Marge

E Elle Billing 40:26
or Roz or run out from Yeah, yeah.

D Dextra Hoffman 40:28
[in ROZ voice] Mike Wazowski

E Elle Billing 40:31
Well, we're about time to wrap up. So

D Dextra Hoffman 40:34
okay,

E Elle Billing 40:35
that's a fun note to end.

D Dextra Hoffman 40:38
Yeah, yeah. I, yeah, I make lots of dumb noises a lot of the time. So it's fun. makes life fun.
That's something a lot of people miss out on in life is fun. So yeah, I just prefer to keep things
silly.

E Elle Billing 40:55
One of my favorite studio moments in the last two years since I moved home and moved my
studio into my old childhood bedroom, was I was dancing it out one day, like a song came on.
And I was like, I can't paint right now I have to dance.

D Dextra Hoffman 41:07
Yeah.

E Elle Billing 41:07
And my dad came upstairs and my studio is like across the hallway from my parents bedroom.
And he just he didn't interrupt me. He just stood and watched, and he just had this like, really
satisfied smile on his face. Like, because he told me one time he's like, all I want is for you kids
to be happy. And I must have looked really happy.

D Dextra Hoffman 41:25
Yeah, that's awesome.

E

Elle Billing 41:27

Like he didn't he never said anything about it. He didn't. Like sometimes he'll tease me if he catches me doing something really dorky, right? I'm a big dork. But like, he just he didn't say anything because he could tell that it just it was important. It was important that I was dancing it out. He wasn't gonna say anything. He was just like, Hm, Okay, well, you look like you're having a good time. Yeah, if that's part of your process, do what you got to do. Right? Yeah, probably explained a lot actually.

D

Dextra Hoffman 41:55

Yeah,

E

Elle Billing 41:56

that's, that's okay. Well, thank you for chatting with us.

D

Dextra Hoffman 42:04

Yeah.

E

Elle Billing 42:05

The roy- with the Royal Us, the Royal We

D

Dextra Hoffman 42:07

Yes, the Royal We.

E

Elle Billing 42:11

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Dextra Hoffman 43:46

sorry, Ricki, you're gonna have to edit my grunting out