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Transcript

Speaker 1

It's time for the Outspoken Cyclist, your weekly conversation about bicycles, cyclists, trails, travel, advocacy, the bike industry, and much, much more. You can subscribe to our weekly podcast at outspokencyclist.com or through your favorite podcasting app to listen anytime. Now here's your host, Diane Jenks. Hello and welcome to the Outspoken Cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Thanks for tuning in today. I don't think I've ever met a more fascinating person than adventurer Laura Killingbeck. For example, how many of us know from a very young age who we are and what we want from life and then follow that desire right into adulthood, especially when we are talking about a rather solitary and independent life? Laura Killingbeck is one of those people who did know, and her story is incredibly compelling. Laura is a naturalist, a hunter-gatherer, as she decided very early in life, and she has been on the move, writing and talking about her work ever since. Then in the second-half of the show, we take a 180-degree turn when my guests are Carlos Rogers and Robin Morton. Carlos is one of the partners who owns the Philadelphia Cycling Classic, and Robin is the race's director. After a 10-year absence, this iconic and well-loved event is back. And just like that, Philadelphia is the proud host of a professional cycling race again. We'll find out all about it a bit later in the show. Laura Killingbeck is a force of nature. She's an award-winning writer, storyteller, and speaker, and I was able to catch up with her while she was getting ready for a new project that's going to begin May 20th. In conjunction with the ORSA Credit Union, Laura is about to embark on her two-months-long Choose the Bear bike trip around the state of Michigan to raise awareness and support for survivors of domestic and economic abuse. It's just the latest in a long list of amazing adventures that Laura has been pursuing for most of her life. And what's with the bear anyway? Listen in. Hi Laura, welcome to the Outspoken Cyclist. Thanks for being my guest today. This is really exciting. How are you?

Speaker 2

I'm great. Thanks so much for having me.

Speaker 1

Well, you know, when somebody like you who leads the kind of life you do, which is fascinating to city girls like me, I think my listeners are going to be in for a real treat, too. So let's begin with the first comment on your website, which kind of will get you right

away, which is, quote, from a young age, I wanted to be wild, end quote. And I'm like, okay, what does that mean?

Speaker 2

Oh, that's a good question. Yeah, so I grew up in suburban Rhode Island. Both of my parents were naturalists, and they taught my brother and I from a young age to really feel very comfortable with nature. We went camping a lot. We had a backyard. And then as I was growing up as a kid, starting around age 12, 13, I kind of realized that I felt more comfortable in nature than in human society. Really, I can't explain it. Was just like there was this sense of looking at the outside world and just having kind of a feeling of like something's a little bit off here. I don't know if I'm ever going to be part of society. I can't picture myself having a 9 to 5 in that way. I can't picture myself in a lot of ways. And so from a young age, I decided that my career would be to be a hunter-gatherer. And I started studying around the age 13, 14. I started studying edible plants. So after school, I would go out in the woods near my parents' house with a little basket and my edible plants book and I would practice collecting things that I could eat. And I also started practicing tanning hides. And so I would actually collect roadkill off the street and take it to my parents' backyard and just practice, you know, skinning them. If something was fresh, I would actually eat it because, I was like, all right, this is what my life will be like. I am going to go to a forest and I'm going to live off the land. And this is the path for me.

Speaker 1

12 to 13.

Speaker 2

It was young. It started young. Yeah.

Speaker 1

That is young. So let me ask a question about education. Did you continue, finish your education? Did you finish high school?

Speaker 2

Yes, I did. I finished high school as well as college. Yeah. You did go to college? I did, yeah.

Speaker 1

So you decided to rejoin society for that much of it. Where did you go to school?

Speaker 2

Yeah, so after high school, I did end up leaving. So I ended up spending a year hitchhiking around the U.S. and Mexico and kind of just camping out wherever I landed. My original plan for that year had been to kind of like plot myself in a forest and see

what happened. But I ended up meeting someone who had a lot of stories about hitchhiking. And so once I started hitchhiking, I realized, you know, wow, this is actually a fascinating thing to do. I'm getting in these cars with all these interesting people. I'm hearing their stories. So I just kept doing that for that whole year. After that year, I came back to Rhode Island, and I studied philosophy and sociology at the University of Rhode Island.

Speaker 1

I think that I can hear people whispering in my ear, Was she afraid? And so, I mean, A lot of your life is based in this, I don't want to use the word feminism in the wrong way. I want to use it in the right way, and that is this female perspective, which I think is, it's what we need right now, number one. In my not so humble opinion, at the very top of society, we need more women. And so I'm wondering how you overcame, if it ever occurred to you to be afraid.

Speaker 2

It's an interesting question looking back because I think. My relationship with fear and especially my understanding of fear as a woman has changed over time. As an 18 year old girl, you know, yeah, there were a lot of things that I didn't understand about the world. I had a concept in my head that. Yeah, and I was. often in situations with strangers who I'd never met before, who were very kind. People picked me up, took me with them, helped me out. At that time, I was just kind of sleeping anywhere, so I often ended up in cities, sleeping in alleys with homeless communities. People always were very protective of me. But there were also situations with people that were scary, situations with men that were scary. And so I did have to learn on the fly how to discern someone's behavior, someone's attitude towards me, someone's tone of voice, and what that could mean and how to protect myself. And so it's been a process of learning that discernment. And I think that's actually something that women everywhere are dealing with on a daily basis. The world is a wonderful place and people are wonderful and... There's this extraordinary kindness of strangers that often comes from men, but there's also kind of a gray area sometimes where we don't know how a situation is going to turn out or what someone is going to do, and we have to really be aware and just practice a lot of discernment.

Speaker 1

Let me take a moment to reintroduce you, and then we're going to talk a little bit about your mom. And some of the other things, you've had so many amazing adventures, and we will tell people how to follow you and how to learn more about you because we're never going to get it all in this one show. We're speaking with Laura Killingbeck. She is currently in Colorado, but you can find her on the road. I think that you and Steve Hartman would have something to say to one another. Do you know who he is?

Speaker 2

I don't know.

Speaker 1

Okay, so Steve Hartman is this sort of personality on CBS, and he goes around doing interesting vignettes about people, like especially young people, you know, people who are struggling with one thing or another, whether it's a physical problem or a mental problem or just really, and it always turns out well. You know, he looks for always good things. But his program is called On the Road with Steve Hartman. Okay. you usually are on the road and you spend most of your time outdoors. The exception might be last year when your mom was ill, she had ALS, I think is what I read. And you spent the time with her. Are you an only child? No, you said you had a brother, right?

Speaker 2

I have a brother, yeah.

Speaker 1

So how much time were you able to spend with her and what was that like?

Speaker 2

Yeah, so my life has had a lot of different chapters. And yeah, so last year I did spend about six months with my mom at the end of her life. My dad and I were her primary caregivers, along with eventually a team of CNAs. ALS, you know, my mom's version of ALS was very extreme. She passed about seven months after her diagnosis. And so, yeah, it was a tough time.

Speaker 1

It is a hard time and something we all have to go through and it is never easy, absolutely never easy. So it took you off the road. Did it disrupt any specific project that you were going to work on at that moment that you've been able to pick up since or have you just gone in another direction?

Speaker 2

Yeah, so, I mean, I think that the time with my mom was really well spent. It was, you know, I think grief is a process. So I was wondering if I would start to cry during this podcast.

Speaker 1

That is fine with me, because if you don't, I probably will.

Speaker 2

Thank you, yeah. And I've just embraced it too, because it's just the human process. And like you said, it's like we all go through. loss and it's important to me to kind of

honor that too. But yeah, before I was was caring for my mom, I had a trip scheduled in Michigan and we ended up canceling that trip and rescheduling it for this year. So I'm actually about to to go on that trip in a couple of weeks.

Speaker 1

So you use the word we.

Speaker 2

Yes.

Speaker 1

I mean, you're not going alone.

Speaker 2

Yes, so the Michigan trip is called the Choose the Bear Tour, and it's in partnership with a credit union called Orsa Credit Union, which is based in Michigan, as well as a network of domestic violence shelters throughout the state of Michigan. And so for eight weeks, starting in May, I'm going to be biking alone and camping alone. kind of in a zigzag from north to south across the state while visiting domestic violence shelters and frontline workers and interviewing folks and writing about kind of these hard conversations about what the scope of violence against women really looks like, how that affects us, and also looking at what it means to be safe and also have autonomy.

Speaker 1

Do you expect to turn that trip and the people you meet and the information you glean into a documentary or a book or something that we can actually sink our teeth into. Important, important topic.

Speaker 2

Thank you. Yeah. So I'll be doing a series of blogs for Orsa Credit Union. I'll also be doing social media for my own Instagram and Facebook. and I'll be doing some outside articles as well. It's definitely something that I think is going to change my life in perspective. And so I think everything that happens will get wrapped into any future work that I do, for sure.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Let's take a short break, and when we come back, I want to talk about an article that you wrote that just lit up the internet about man versus bear. We're speaking with Laura Kellingbeck. Just a really interesting adventurer with a cool perspective. If you're listening to the Outspoken Cyclist, we'll be right back. We are back on the Outspoken Cyclist, and Laura and I took a little break so that we could gather our wits to talk about this really cool thing. So it blew up the internet. It was, would you like

to be stranded in the wilderness with a bear or a man? Give us the backstory on that, and then how the internet blew up with it.

Speaker 2

So this was a social media meme that started in 2024 and has really extended into the present. It started with a TikTok video in which a man asked women on the street if they'd rather be stuck in the forest with a man or a bear. And most of the women responded that they'd rather be with a bear. And so this was, and it made its way around the internet, and it caused this big social media debate with a lot of women expressing like, yeah, you know what, we actually sometimes don't feel safe around men, and so maybe we choose the bear. And then a lot of backlash from some men who felt very angry about that. And so I am not usually in the middle of social media memes, but for, you know, this one really caught my attention. because in my life, I've spent a lot of time traveling alone, often in bear country. And it really struck me that the question itself really had nothing to do with bears. It wasn't, you know, people weren't like trying to specifically analyze. what type of bear, like what, it's like we weren't, that's not what it was. What it was an open door to a conversation about the reality that when women are traveling alone, we often go through an incredible set of gymnastics for keeping ourselves safe. we are always thinking about that. We always have to think about that. And there's a lot of gray areas, especially when it comes to sexual harassment or little comments that I think sometimes men might not think are a big deal can actually feel like warning signs because they actually are warning signs in some situations. And so this is what I wrote about. I wrote about kind of my history traveling and kind of the idea that this question is really, ideally doesn't pit men and women against each other. That is not a good outcome for that question. I think the best outcome is to really see it as a moment when women can say something that's true and important. and express what we really want, which is safety, and really hope that men can listen to that conversation and empathize and be part of that safety that we're looking for.

Speaker 1

Are you still getting any feedback on that question? Do people still come to you and say, what's happening now with it, or are you going to revive it, or are you going to just kind of let it fade into the background?

Speaker 2

Yeah, so the the the bike trip across Michigan is called the Choose the Bear Tour, and so it's based in part on that story that I wrote and that meme. And I have seen a resurgence in that meme lately because there has been a resurgence of higher profile domestic violence and gender based violence incidents happening in the news. And so that that meme has been kind of active once again, which is unfortunate and. A lot of ways.

Speaker 1

Yeah, it is. It is. Let's take a left turn. I want to talk a little bit about bike packing. So a few years ago when I was talking to Grant Peterson and he was doing his like, well, just get on your bike and ride to the near park and just stay overnight, do a 24 hour trip. You can actually do that. And I think it's it piqued a lot of interest. You do a lot by bike. I know you do hiking too, but so When did you begin using a bike for your adventures? Did it start like right away?

Speaker 2

Yeah, so that actually started right after I graduated from college. So I had done that year of hitchhiking and then I kind of blew through college and I was in this position where once again, I was kind of trying to figure out my relationship with society itself and how that was actually going to pan out. And I just had this moment where I was feeling really kind of down and frustrated. And I kind of panic purchased a flight to Iceland because I found this like really cheap flight. And so I kind of panic purchased it and it was leaving the following weekend and returning a month later. And so then I had to figure out what am I going to do in Iceland? I can't afford to like, you know, stay in all these hotels and do all these things. And so I realized I had this bicycle. It was an old touring bicycle. And so I had never really used it very much. I, you know, I think I had biked like 20 miles on a bike path at one point. But I figured, okay, well, I can ride this bike around Iceland. There's one road that goes around Iceland. It's 8 to 10 hundred miles, depending on which parts you do. So I packed up the bike. I got on the plane and I got to Iceland, and there was really no other choice for me but to just bike, because what else was I going to do? So I just rode. I just kept riding around the Ring Road. I had my tent and all my camping gear. And this was kind of a while ago, so it was before there was such an influx of tourism in Iceland. And at the time, at least, it was legal to camp just about anywhere. So I just camped every night wherever landed and I think it was like June. It was in the summer, so there was almost 24 hour sunlight. So it was just this spectacular experience. I had no idea what I was doing, but I kind of figured it out well enough on the way. This was, yeah, before smartphones, so it was just, you know, me with a paper map and a bunch of puffins. It was great.

Speaker 1

Did you take lots of pictures?

Speaker 2

I took some, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

They're so cute.

Speaker 2

They are.

Speaker 1

They're so cute. Are they tame? I mean, will they like let you approach them at all?

Speaker 2

The puffins did not let me approach. I wished they had. I loved those birds, yeah.

Speaker 1

Sure, I would have loved that too. That would have been the whole thing for me. Puffins. So, do you have a different bike now?

Speaker 2

Yes, yeah, right now I have a Kona Sutra LTD.

Speaker 1

Yeah, Kona makes some nice bikes for that. So bikepacking, gravel riding, adventure, travel is not growing the way I'd like it to. Gravel is, but I think it's sort of a misnomer. And I'm really happy to hear that you are doing bikepacking. So this is a question I think that anybody who's listening is going to say, ask you, or at least think about, how are you supporting yourself? Because you know, this is, especially today, prices are so crazy. I know you're fairly self-sufficient, but still, you got to have some sort of income, I would imagine.

Speaker 2

Yeah, it's hard. Everyone I know is piecing it together as best they can. So in between journeys, I did work for 13 years on experimental communes. in Costa Rica and Massachusetts. And so I had kind of a home base where I had a little bit of income coming in as well as expenses covered, especially for nine years in Costa Rica. So I would go on trips. I would come back to these ecovillages. And so really the ecovillage in Costa Rica was an education center. We were kind of creating our own little society, our own little village, if you will, made-up of people who were also instructors teaching classes in solar energy, natural building, agriculture, and all of those different things related with sustainability. So I kind of went back and forth with that. I had other jobs along the way. And right now, I work as a writer. So I work as a freelance writer. Yeah, it's an ongoing puzzle, I think, especially for writers right now. We have to kind of keep adapting and keep changing and keep finding new ways to make income. So in the future, I'm sure that that will continue to change and develop.

Speaker 1

Yeah, podcasting isn't much different. Well, a year ago, I added a Substack, and that's been really helpful. That's really helpful. I mean, there are plenty of platforms out there, but that one seems to do well with the, you know, as sort of a companion to the podcast. So the last thing I really want to talk about is your feelings. If someone were to come to

you, a young girl who's say that 12 or 13 year old, if you can think back to that, which apparently you can, and say to you, Laura, I want to be like you. What would you say to somebody today? The world is very different in the last 20, 25 years if they wanted to be an adventurer like Laura Killingbeck.

Speaker 2

Oh, interesting. I mean, I think my advice is just to start where you are. Adventures can be big or small. And all of my adventures really started in my parents' backyard. I just was very curious about the animals and the plants. I slept outside a lot on the lawn because I liked being outside. And so I would just say start from wherever you are. And then I think a key part of this is finding your own source of validation. I think something that's happening to people right now is that they're comparing their adventures to folks online. And one of the great gifts that I've had in my life is that I was not online for most of my adventure life. I didn't own a phone for most of my adventure life. I was really just out there for my own reasons and grappling kind of with my own interior self and forming in a relationship with the world as it was appearing in real life. And I think that's very important, especially for women now, they're so... Make it for everyone, really for everyone. There's so much we're being compared to. And I would say, I think the essence of adventure is, you know, your own genuine relationship with the world and your own genuine relationship with yourself. And however, however that happens for you.

Speaker 1

So let's tell listeners how they can follow you. Are there, is just, let me ask you about this ride in Michigan for a moment. Is it a fundraising? adventure.

Speaker 2

So the Choose the Bear Tour, you can find more information on that at choosethebear.com. And that has a link to a fundraiser, which, so all of the proceeds for that will go to domestic violence shelters and survivors. There's also some clothing available for sale with the same thing, that the profits will go to survivors. And then if you'd like to follow me personally along that journey, I have Instagram and Facebook @laurakillingbeck and I also have a free newsletter that people can sign up for on my website, which is laurakillingbeck.com.

Speaker 1

It has just been such a pleasure to be able to catch up with you when you're not moving around and that you can take some time to talk with me. My husband's been following you for a while. He's just fascinated with your work and with who you are. Yeah, you know, we like adventurous people and people who sort of... march to their own drummer, you know, that's a good thing. We've been speaking with Laura Killingbeck. She is an adventurer. She's really an interesting woman. Please follow her at laurakillingbeck.com. You'll find it all on our website, outspokencyclist.com. And we will

follow your ORSA tour. That's so exciting. Choose the bear tour.org. Thank you so much for talking with me. I hope we get to catch up again.

Speaker 2

Thank you so much. It's a delight to talk with you.

Speaker 1

My thanks to Laura for speaking with me today. I still have a million questions for her, but this conversation will have to suffice for now. You can follow Laura at laurakillingbeck.com as well as on social media at Laura Killingbeck. The Choose the Bear Tour begins May 20th and runs through July 20th. For more information, log on to choosethebeartour.org. Let's take a short break, and when we return, we'll speak with Carlos Rogers and Robin Morton about the Philadelphia Cycling Classic. You're listening to The Outspoken Cyclist. We'll be right back. We are back on The Outspoken Cyclist. I'm your host, Diane Jenks. Mark your calendar, then plan your road trip to the City of Brotherly Love for the Philadelphia Cycling Classic. It's back after a ten-year pause, and it's going to be a momentous event in addition to world-class men's and women's pro racing on Philly streets. with equal prize money for both, I might add, there is a festival, a citizen's time trial, and just the pure joy of being in one of the most interesting and historic cities in the country. Carlos Rogers and Robin Morton have all the details. Hello, Robin and Carlos. Welcome to the Outspoken Cyclist. Thanks for being my guests today. How are you?

Speaker 3

Great.

Speaker 4

Thanks for having me.

Speaker 1

It is my pleasure to have you guys here. I'm so excited. So it's been 10 years since there has been a Philadelphia Cycling Classic. It's back. This is really great news for cycling in the US, and it's great news for me. I'm from Philly, so I'm excited about that. I'd like you to introduce yourselves and tell us your respective roles with the event, and then we're going to dive in. So go ahead, Robin. Why don't you start?

Speaker 3

So I am the race director, and a partner in G4 Productions. And we're responsible, G4 that is, for overseeing the race operations, the logistics, and the technical aspects as it pertains to UCI, USA Cycling, the teams, and things like that.

Speaker 1

Yes, UCI, that's a whole nother subject, right? And Carlos?

Speaker 4

So I'm Carlos Rogers, yep, and I am one of the event owners with my partners, Eric Robbins and former mayor Michael Nutter. And I am essentially the spearhead of the effort to resurrect this race.

Speaker 1

Yeah, you reminded me that I reached out to you a couple years ago and you said, I got nothing yet. And here we are. So it's a big race for the US. First of all, it's East Coast, which I really like because so many races have been either in Colorado or in California. And I like the idea that there is an East Coast race. Philadelphia is an especially exciting city in my opinion. So I'm very excited. I know there'll be some high profile names. In the past, there have been people like Eric Hyden, Greg Lamont, Lizzie Dagan, who's coming this year.

Speaker 3

Well, we don't have the rosters yet. We are just finalizing our teams. We have a great mix of world tour teams, pro tour teams, continental teams, you know, a really good mix. We're giving, I think, a lot of the U.S. teams a great opportunity to race at a very high-profile race, UCI race in Philadelphia, but we do not have the rosters yet. They haven't even submitted those to us, so that'll be Forthcoming, I think, in the next month or so.

Speaker 1

Do you know how many teams there will be?

Speaker 3

15 to 16 teams, both men and women.

Speaker 1

Yes. Can we talk about Purse?

Speaker 3

Sure. It was a must and very important both to the ownership group and the sponsor, our title sponsor, Amerigas, that we have equal prize money. So we have Prize equity, both the men and the women, the prize list is \$75,000 each.

Speaker 1

That works for me. I mean, I think it's just amazing that AmeriGas is a big company. How did you, Carlos, did you bring AmeriGas in?

Speaker 4

I did, kind of 6 degrees of separation. And I was, have been, and still am, slinging spaghetti, have the pot on boil all the time. And this was one of those instances where

my partners were introduced through another connection to the new CEO of AmeriGas, who happens to be a cyclist himself. So, right off the bat, he kind of gets it and got it at the time. And at the time was brought in to kind of pull AmeriGas up by its bootstraps a little bit and kind of lead the company a little bit stronger. And he thought this would be a great idea to not only elevate the brand, but to be a liaison and ambassador for the community.

Speaker 1

Is AmeriGas... headquartered in Philadelphia.

Speaker 4

So that's a great question. Amerigas is a subsidiary of a company called UGI, which is also based in this country, but has satellites over in Europe quite a bit. So Amerigas is a subsidiary. UGI, the main company, started in Philadelphia in the late 1800s.

Speaker 1

Go figure, right?

Speaker 4

Exactly. And Amerigas, it's a subsidiary, is located in King of Prussia, maybe about 10 or 15 miles outside of the city.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I know where King of Prussia is. Well, that's really interesting because I know my husband uses or has used Amerigas. He builds custom bikes, so he's got tanks. And that's where they come from. Let me take a moment to reintroduce you, and then we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of the event a little bit. We're speaking with Carlos Rogers and Robin Morton. They are part of the Philadelphia Cycling Classic. This is so exciting. The race is going to be August 30th, but there's some other events around it, I am sure. So we're going to talk about that. Let's do that. Let's talk about the events themselves. So there'll be the main event, which of course will be the big professional race. What else is going on?

Speaker 4

Yeah, well, I mean, that's obviously the highlight and we're thrilled to have both the women and the men participating on the same force consecutively. But we wanted to, bring it back in more than just a race and have a reason for people to come to Philadelphia and stay here and also enjoy the sport. So we're having a two-day fan fest, which is just off the side of the art museum, right maybe about a quarter mile from the start finish, if that. And there'll be tons of vendors, music, DJ, food, giveaways, activations in that area. And locally, also, we've aligned with a local club to put on a time trial on the West River Drive, which is not part of the course. It's just on the other side of the main part of the course. So that'll be great to get some local riders out to participate.

And then we also have an activation on the day of the race on Lemon Hill through our local kind of NICA representatives here in Pennsylvania. They're bringing in some of their local groups to put on a skills event for riders 18 and under to participate in those skills, and, at the same time, watch world-class riders in between. And that will be on Lemon Hill, one of the marquee viewing points of the race.

Speaker 3

Pretty historical with the race. We have -- on a closed circuit before the race starts, We've aligned ourselves with the American Association of Cancer Research. And so we have a charity ride that will do at least one lap on a totally closed circuit. That again is in Lemon Hill, which is an area, it's a big spectator area with lots of hospitality, lots of clubs, like very big fan fest scene on Lemon Hill. And that will be... A part of that will be the start and finish of the charity ride, which, as I said, is the morning of the race before the race starts.

Speaker 1

What's the length of the charity ride?

Speaker 3

It's one lap or as many laps as they can finish before the race begins. So it starts at 630 and it ends by about 8 o'clock. So and it's a 14.4 mile circuit, but with at least one very hard climb, which is the Manionk Wall. So it's not an easy or a fast ride, but yeah, so we're excited about that.

Speaker 4

A great opportunity for local people to ride the same course, not unlike races in Europe, same thing.

Speaker 1

No, I think that's a really cool idea. People will tune in to see a race, maybe, and we're going to talk about media in a second here, and then they don't know that other things are going on around it, unless you're there, or unless you're one of those crazy people who stand next to the riders and throw things in their face, which is unbelievable. So Let's talk a minute about the classification. So there's the main race, which is the pro race. What is the length of the pro race? How many laps is it?

Speaker 3

The women's race, which is off first, is 63 and a half, 64 miles, which is...

Speaker 1

100K.

Speaker 3

Yeah, exactly. Four large laps of the 14.4 mile circuit. And then a few small laps of a closing circuit that doesn't include the Manioc wall, just Lemon Hill. And the men's race is 200K, and that is eight large laps of the 14.4 circuit and two small laps at the end.

Speaker 1

So would you consider this a circuit race as opposed to a road race?

Speaker 3

Yeah, I mean, well, it is a road race, but it's not a point-to-point road race. It's a circuit race, but a road race at the same time. Yeah.

Speaker 1

Okay, so cool. So the date is August 30th. What do you think the weather's like in Philadelphia on August 30th?

Speaker 4

I've already heard Hank Greene say, oh, it's going to be so hot. But, it could be, 90 degrees and 90% humidity, or it could potentially feel like a spring day. I mean, the weather here in Philly is unpredictable. So, the weather will be what the weather will be. We've already talked to the forecasters and they said there won't be any rain. So we're comfortable with that. But it'll be what it'll be.

Speaker 1

You have a direct line to that.

Speaker 4

Yeah, exactly.

Speaker 1

I get it. Listen, we race rain or shine, I take it.

Speaker 4

That's right.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Okay. So let's talk a minute about coverage. The thing that is holding bike racing back in this country, in my opinion, is the fact that there is very little television coverage, and everybody wants to see. Now, I know YouTube, people are watching more online than ever before, but I still watch golf on television, and I still watch as much as I can when I watch the Guardian's baseball or the Cavaliers' basketball on television. What kind of coverage will the race have? Will people be able to see it? and not be there.

Speaker 4

Yeah, and we're fortunate that we have a media partner in Channel 6, ABC, that historically broadcasts the race prior. Not unlike Robin, who has years of experience with the race here in Philadelphia, the ABC team has years of experience prior as well. And some of the same production people are still around and are super excited to use a new platform to showcase the race with new technology. And so they will be streaming it live through ABC. and YouTube, so that'll be accessible through the Philadelphia Cycling Classic website. And we're also, they're also under the umbrella of ESPN and Hulu. And is that right? I think it- ESPN and Disney. ESPN and Disney. I'm sorry, apologies. And so there may be streaming platforms there and YouTube as well.

Speaker 3

But they are also, and why they're just fantastic, fantastic partners, aside from as Carlos said, you know, streaming of both events in their entirety. They're also doing a lot of local promotion, which obviously we need because the event hasn't been around for 10 years. But day of, they will also do show the start of each event, have cut-ins every hour with their own talent around the course, and plus show the end. So that will be locally shown on television as well as streaming for everyone to see.

Speaker 1

Do you know who your announcer is or your announcers?

Speaker 3

Yes.

Speaker 4

Yeah, sure. I'll let Robin speak to that.

Speaker 3

So ABC obviously has their own talent that we'll be working with, but we have, I think, a great team of announcers. We have John Eustice, who is a former pro, former US pro champion, has ridden in the Philly race many times, has done a lot of commentary for the Tour de France, NBC, you know, he's worked on the race before. So he'll be our lead cycling expert. Then we have Fred Rodriguez, who is a former US pro champion three times, I believe, right?

Speaker 4

Four, actually, four, yeah.

Speaker 3

Three times, I guess, from Philadelphia.

Speaker 4

From Philly, yeah.

Speaker 3

Someplace else. He'll be working with John on the men's race, and then Mari Holden, who is an amazing athlete and person. And, you know, world champion, Olympic medalist, was a director in the event, participated in the event. So she'll be working with John on the women's race commentary. And then we also have Rahsaan Bahadi, who is an ex-pro, has his own foundation where he does a lot for inner city youth in LA where he lives, and he'll be our roving guy on the motorcycle.

Speaker 1

Wow. That's terrific. That's terrific. Yeah, Mari, I haven't spoken with her in a long time, but she's great.

Speaker 3

She is great.

Speaker 1

Yeah. It just sounds so cool. It's like, if you've ever been to professional bike races, this sounds like it's just going to fall right back into place where it always was. With modern stuff, probably drones, they're going to probably use drones.

Speaker 3

They have drones, they have helicopter. I mean, we'll do a lot of coverage. So they use Starlink technology. They have drones, they have a helicopter, they have, you know, a lot of stationary cameras. So as Carlos said, they're a great partner, very excited to be involved and the lead producer. And part of his team have worked on the event before. So it's sort of just like plugging it in and here we go.

Speaker 1

How many years did the event actually happen before it disappeared? Do you know?

Speaker 4

So yeah, it's 31 years. It started in 1985 and the last edition was in 2016.

Speaker 1

And what happened?

Speaker 4

Well, you know, it's a, that's a loaded question. any event that requires sponsorship, it's always, finances is one of the major factors in this, notwithstanding, the city alliances and sponsorship partners. Robin could speak a bit more to that, but ultimately, things

come and go and it's hard to keep things sustainable when there really is a poor income stream. with this model. And so that's in the past now. We're just trying to rebrand and focus on the future.

Speaker 3

Well, I think it had a great run, probably almost as long as any other race. Maybe the course classic was around longer. I'm not sure.

Speaker 1

I don't think so.

Speaker 3

No, it was probably the longest running professional race. I know there's a lot of criteriums that have been around for a very long time, but the longest running professional race, it went through a couple different iterations. Finally, in the last four years, There was work being done on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and whatever, so it did not include the parkway. It was a shortened course, which only the start and finish was in Manionk. But as Carlos said, you know, sponsorship is a very challenging part of the race promotion organization, and the city government had different priorities. things change and you know to have the race around for 31 years was pretty amazing but it was always something that was near and dear to the hearts of the people in Philadelphia and you know they've just really embraced it both the city I mean the current administration couldn't be more excited or more cooperative or more energized about bringing the race back and I'm sure the residents of Philadelphia and the surrounding area are going to be the same way.

Speaker 1

That is so good to hear Because if without that cooperation, you have the problem of getting permits and getting streets closed. And I mean, it's a people don't really, unless you've been in the trenches, don't necessarily know the details that go in. to producing an event of this magnitude. Even small events take a lot of work. Well, I'm really excited about the event. What else would you like my listeners to know? And the one thing I didn't ask is, there a... host hotel. Is there one specific hotel that is sort of locked in with the race?

Speaker 4

Well, we have a race headquarters. All the rooms are pretty much accounted for. That's the Logan, and that's right off of Logan Circle, which is the end of one side of the course, if you will. And of course, there's many other hotels that people can book a night or two to come and watch the race. But we're excited to have the Logan. It's the first time that We've had a hotel so close to the course. We think that'd be great for our sponsors, great for our riders, great for Robin and her team to effectuate the happenings of the race and be so close to the start-finish. So we're excited about that.

You know, this has just been, you know, a very long project, but there's no way I would have ventured into this if, and I've used this metaphor before, it's like there's a bike sitting in a closet. Everybody know what a bike is. It just needs some pump up the tires, add a little air, a little lube on the chain, dust it off and go off for a ride. So it's not like this concept came to me in the middle of the night. It already existed. And with a 30-year history, like Robin said, bringing this back is not a new concept. new to some people who've never seen the race, but even people who live in or near the area maybe have heard about it and they'll get an opportunity to see. And of course, there's people who've been around for a long time who remember the race and are excited to see it back. So there's a lot of buzz in the air about this because as one of my partners pointed, it's the people's race. There's a certain amount of ownership that the residents here in Philly and the business community take on about this race, different front. It's like the Eagles or the Phillies, right? They rally around their team while there's multiple teams, as we know, in cycling. The one team that everyone rallies around is the bike race. And that's what they support. And so we've not run into any roadblocks. Everybody's super excited. And I'm super jazzed if this is coming to a reality and can't wait to see 100,000 fans or more on the parkway.

Speaker 1

That would be so cool. So cool. So we have been speaking with Carlos Rogers and Robin Morton from the Philadelphia Cycling Classic. It is back after a 10-year hiatus, and it is August 30th. Plan to get there a day or two ahead of time, I would imagine.

Speaker 3

Well, I think too, if I could say that, aside from everything that's going on around the race, all these really tremendous ancillary events and activities and the Fan Fest Expo, Just to come to Philadelphia, there are so many great things to do in the city. And on the parkway, if you're staying in Center City within walking distance of the start/finish line, there's four or five amazing world-class museums that are open that weekend, not to mention the Rocky exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. But yeah, no, there is a lot to do, and it's just a great city to come and hang out in and also come for the bike race.

Speaker 1

I think that's terrific advice. It's like having a race in Washington, D.C. There are a few other things to do down there. But Philly in particular is just such a wonderful old city. And if you like cities and you've never been there, I would highly recommend going.

Speaker 3

And it's a big booty town too, which people may not know, but.

Speaker 1

Yeah, that's true. That's true. Food, bike racing. I don't think it gets much better than that. Museums.

Speaker 4

Beer. There's lots of beer in Philadelphia as well. A lot of craft gear houses in and around the city.

Speaker 1

That's great. So the website is philadelphiacyclingclassic.com. You can find out everything you need to know there. And it is coming up August 30th. So if you're planning a vacation this summer, why don't you take it in Philly and go to a real first class bike race? I think it's just so exciting that it's happening. Thank you so much for talking with me today. And I wish you guys so much luck with the race. We'll talk to the weather weather gods on our end too and make sure that it's good. I have good luck with weather. So far I've been doing pretty well over the years.

Speaker 4

We'll hold you to it. We'll hold you to it.

Speaker 3

We hope to see you there.

Speaker 4

Thank you so much, Diane.

Speaker 3

Yeah, thanks.

Speaker 1

It's my pleasure. My thanks to Carlos and Robin for giving us the scoop on the Philadelphia Cycling Classic. And to learn more about the race and keep up with the news on who's coming to the event, log on to PhiladelphiaCyclingClassic.com. By the way, if you're planning on going, I might suggest you book a hotel sooner rather than later. Thanks for listening today. I hope you enjoyed the show. Join me next time when I'll be talking about Trek Across Maine's long history with the Lung Association. It's the next episode in our series about interesting rides around the U.S. this summer and fall. Remember, we have links, photos, and a written transcript of the show at outspokencyclist.com. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, and subscribe to the podcast on your favorite app. Follow my Substack for expanded commentary on a variety of topics, usually related to the show, but you just never know. Please stay safe. Stay well, and remember, there is always time for a ride. Bye-bye.

Speaker 2

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