



Library podcast

‘Seattle Walk Report’

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[00:00:38] I started at Sasquatch last May and I immediately started casting about for my first acquisition and one of the things we try to do at Sasquatch is look for cool books from here. So, duh, right. I saw an interview with Seattle Walk Report in the Seattle Review of Books with Paul Constant and The Everygrey within a week of each other. So I reached out to the creator and we set up a coffee date as the date approached. She sent me an email that read: this is what I look like for reference.

[00:01:09] It was a drawing of her being attacked by a crow, which many of you remember from the Instagram account.

[00:01:18] Not helpful, I thought. After I finally stopped laughing. But you can imagine my delight at meeting her in person. I found out she works at a branch of Seattle Public Library, is a lifelong Seattleite, and has even worked for a prepress printing production company. She designed a library card and she loves Summer Book Bingo. In other words, she’s dreamy. And, she has managed to capture her spirit perfectly within her Instagram posts and her digital persona. And at Sasquatch, we wanted to capture and expand upon that same spirit. And if you flip through the book, I think you’ll agree that she stuck the landing. My first acquisition at Sasquatch, she has really ruined me for future authors. But if there’s anybody in the audience that has a book idea. Come talk to me. She has been the most creative, speedy, together and all around delightful person to work with. And as you’ll soon see, she’s as wry and charming in real life as she is on your devices. So as Linda said, Seattle Walk Report will take us behind the curtain with a rad presentation that’s sure to include street trash and cute dogs. And then she’ll talk with Paul Constant. You probably already know Paul, but he’s the co-founder of the Seattle Review of Books. He has written cultural criticism and journalism for the Los Angeles Times, io9, The Seattle Times, The New York Observer and BuzzFeed. His comic book series,

Planet of the Nerds is now on sale and comic book shops everywhere. And I suspect *Planet of the Nerds* would happily sit alongside *Seattle Walk Report* on nerdy bookshelves everywhere. And then we'll close with a short Q and A so you can answer. Ask those burning questions and have the book signing. So without further ado, may I present Seattle Walk Report? Or as all the cool kids in the know call her. Susanna Ryan.

[00:03:20] This kind of hasn't felt real to me because there's been kind of this disconnect between this whole being anonymous thing and so it's really strange to see all of you.

[00:03:31] Thank you so much for coming here for the release of my book, *Seattle Walk Report: An Illustrated Walking Tour Through 23 Seattle Neighborhoods*. I took a couple days off of work to celebrate the launch of my book, so I'm so happy to spend my very first day off with the Seattle Public Library where I work. A little bit of housekeeping as I can't help but advocate for the library even when I'm off the clock. If you're doing the Seattle Public Library in Seattle Arts and lectures, summer reading book bingo this year and you, like me, have just entered your annual bingo panic mode. Worry not.

[00:04:03] My book is a versatile read that you can put under many categories, including set in Northwest, comics, published when the author was under 35. You may also find that you can't put it down.

[00:04:18] I don't know.

[00:04:20] Just sayin, I would like to take a moment to give you a give a huge thank you to my library colleagues who are here tonight, either working or who just came out to support me or who wish they could be here but couldn't be. I consider myself extremely lucky every single day to work for the Seattle Public Library. It really is my pride and joy. It's also great to be joined tonight by Paul Constant, author of the comic series Planet of the Nerds, co-founder of the Seattle Review Books and a fellow walker.

[00:04:50] As Jen said two years ago, the Seattle Review of Books was the first local media outlet to contact me and interview me and talk about my comics, so it's very special and fitting to have Paul here tonight. So thank you to Paul.

[00:05:03] One more person I'd like to think before I get started is named Sally Kilroy and Sally Kilroy wrote this drawing book we randomly had kicking around my house as a kid, called the

Copycat Drawing Book. I have no idea where it came from. I don't think anyone knows. At the time, Book Review magazine Kirkus Reviews called it cheerful but uninspiring and an early start in learning to draw the wrong way.

[00:05:33] Regardless, I spent countless hours poring over the pages as a kid. And for better or for worse, I honestly consider it my single greatest artistic influence. So I wouldn't be here today without Sally. Wherever you are.

[00:05:49] This evening is dedicated to you, Sally.

[00:05:53] With that out of the way, hello.

[00:05:56] I am so, so, so happy to be here tonight. And I'm so happy to see all of you. My name is Susanna Ryan. And for the last two years, I have been anonymously documenting my long walks through Seattle in an Instagram comic called Seattle Walk Report. When I started Seattle Walk Report, I didn't intend to be anonymous, but I also didn't intend on absolutely anything. I really never thought anyone other than my mom would follow along.

[00:06:19] Or maybe if I was lucky, an Instagram bot selling generic medications at unbeatable prices. As more and more people began discovering the comic, though, I just find it a little bit easier and more fun to keep my identity mostly out of it. We really wanted the comic to speak for itself. But there comes a point in the journey of every young walk reporter where they must choose between the joy of being anonymous with the joy of having their name on something they're super proud of. So here I am.

[00:06:51] The truth of the matter is, if you know Seattle Walk Report, you know me pretty darn well. I'd like to draw. I like walking. I'm a pretty big local history nerd and I have an unrelenting enthusiasm for life's most mundane offerings and cutest cats and dogs.

[00:07:06] Oh, the weird thing about being publicly anonymous is it seems like there's some sort of expectation that maybe I've been former Evening Magazine host John Curley this whole time, so I'm sorry to disappoint.

[00:07:21] I'm not John Curley.

[00:07:23] I'm just some random person who had an idea one day and decided to do something about it. You know, this comic really combines my interests and sense of humor into one convenient package. I just put it into action and decided to go for it. Drawing and making stuff is something I've been doing for as long as I can remember. Here's the only example of art I could find on my computer from when I was a kid.

[00:07:47] It features my dad, party in his shoes off, and he has a little red car on his shirt that Sally Kilroy taught me how to draw.

[00:07:59] But you could always find me up to some sort of creative pursuit from the moment I was able to hold something. I have worked for the Seattle Public Library since 2010, beginning at the West Seattle Branch. I got into working at the library as a student assistant, which is basically a special three year program designed for high school or college students, which basically involves shelving materials. At the time I just started a two year program at Seattle Central Community College, a short way in.

[00:08:25] We found out that the program had been basically cancelled due to budget cuts, but we wouldn't be getting our money back.

[00:08:32] And the first year is going to be a shell of its former self in the second year just wasn't gonna happen. And in order to be a student assistant, you need to be a student. So I was like, I gotta figure this out quick. So I basically just worked really, really hard in the hopes that when a non-temporary position opened up, I could apply for it and hopefully actually get it. And fortunately, that's exactly what ended up happening. And the rest is history. Outside of work and this comic, I love going to thrift stores, eating garlic and pickles. And when people in grocery stores lie about their whereabouts on their cell phone, like when they go, hey, I just got home, what's up?

[00:09:10] But I know the truth. I thrive on it. Anyway, enough about all that.

[00:09:17] I imagine that most of you here, at least somewhat familiar with Seattle Walk Report. But just so everyone is on the same page. Seattle Walk Report is a comic I started on Instagram two years ago after I fell head over heels in love with walking. The premise of Seattle Walk Report is pretty simple. I take long walks around the city, collect data, or make

notes about interesting sites as I go. And then I make a comic about it. Here's a recent example from an 11 mile walk I took from on Rainier Avenue from the I.D. to Renton.

[00:09:46] On this particular walk, I saw 31 buses, three guys in sunglasses carrying library books and a rude seagull dropped a piece of bread on my head. For the record, a couple of years ago, if I'd used 11 mile walk in a sentence, it would have been I would rather eat 10 bins of snakes than ever take an 11 mile walk.

[00:10:06] As I write in the book, I come from a long, proud line of people more likely to break world records in Tetris than in team sports. A former gym teacher called me the least motivated, least athletic student she had ever seen - to my face.

[00:10:25] Where is she now?

[00:10:32] But I never learned how to drive and therefore have never had a car. So walking, you're taking the bus.

[00:10:36] It was whether I liked it or not. That is until one fateful day in 2017 on a whim. One morning, this lifelong, avid indoor enthusiast decided to leave her Capitol Hill apartment without a destination in mind, with a single step out the front door. Something clicked instantaneously. I started seeing things even blocks away from where I started. That through the day to day slog of just trying to get where I was going as quickly as possible. I had never taken the time to notice before.

[00:11:03] Parks, public art, P-Patches, weird side streets, fun trash.

[00:11:08] It was like there was this secret world in my very backyard just waiting for me to discover. In the days, weeks and months that followed, walking was all I wanted to do. Feats, I would have thought, both completely impossible and awful. Suddenly became real. Like walking to Capitol Hill to Georgetown. I realize now that I had never just gone outside for no reason before without a destination in mind, with nowhere to be.

[00:11:33] No expectations and no time restraints. Letting go of those things and being open to whatever lay before me was nothing short of life changing. Here I was, having the time of my

life in my own city on a random day off of work, and the only thing it was costing me was time. One day on a walk I had an idea. That's what ideas look like. What if I combined my newfound love of walking with my lifelong love of drawing to make some sort of illustrated personal Seattle travel journal? I figured I'd record my route, the mileage and whatever is memorable about the walk. Whether it was a park I'd stumbled across or cute cat I pet or especially delicious muffin I ate from some random coffee shop. So I went out with a notepad in my hand and did just that. After creating the first one, I felt something gnawing at me. Something told me that this wasn't meant to be a private travel journal after all. I realized on some level that the stories being told about Seattle didn't exactly mesh with what I was experiencing on my walks.

[00:12:28] The news articles seemed to sway between Seattle is dying for the one hundred and twelve year in a row or thirty newest Poke restaurants to try this weekend, and I felt like my experiences exist in some different category that didn't seem to be part of the conversation.

[00:12:44] I guess that's why I decided to share this comic I had just intended to keep to myself. I wanted it to be out there for other people to find, even if nobody ever did, to document this Seattle hiding in plain sight. So without any expectations whatsoever, I just went for it. This was one of the earliest installments of Seattle Walk Report on Instagram featuring a walk around Capitol Hill. I saw five free couches, one person on a solowheel who almost get hit by a bus because they were blowing through an intersection while taking a selfie.

[00:13:15] Some intriguing trash and I got to pet the world's most perfect corgi.

[00:13:20] When I first saw when I first started, I didn't spend very much time on the comic at all. I would take a walk, spend maybe 15 or 20 minutes, quickly drawing it up and then chuck it on Instagram, often the same day. As I kept walking and kept making comics about it, my readership grew fairly steadily through word of mouth and I'm sure a lot of algorithms. I started putting more work and care into the comic. Here's another more recent one covering the longest walk I've ever taken 30 miles from Seattle to Bellevue via Lake Forest Park, Kenmore and Kirkland. I heard on your left 35 times on the Burke-Gilman Trail.

[00:13:57] I got eight pebbles in my shoe and I saw a snake in Kenmore.

[00:14:03] A little less than a year into making the comic and posting online, the new editorial director for Sasquatch books did what the kids today call slid into my DMs. That is, she just

sent me a message out of the blue one day on Instagram asking if I'd be interested in talking about maybe doing a book together.

[00:14:19] And I was at work and I was like, oh, it was totally unexpected. And yet in some ways, I kind of feel like I had been preparing for it my whole life.

[00:14:29] It feels like from that day forward, the year that followed was a whirlwind of developing, walking, drying, writing, rewriting, editing and eating nothing but party subs. I probably shouldn't be alive. And all of this was possible without really knowing how to draw hands. What an inspiration. The two things I hear most often about the comic are, do you actually go on all these walks and actually see everything that you see? The answer to that is yes, I promise. The second question is from people wanting to know how I do it. Do I take pictures? Do I draw as I go? How do I decide what to feature? So now that my walking superhero origin story is out of the way, I thought I'd take this opportunity to give you a little behind the scenes look of Seattle Walk Report from walk to comic, using some of the pages in the book. All the drawings for the book were done by hand, scanned and then cleaned up in Photoshop. My trusty tools for creating the comic are grid paper, micron pens and the Pentel graphgear a mechanical pencil.

[00:15:31] It's like the Lexus of mechanical pencils. I don't know. Cars.

[00:15:39] Here's a page from the book from my eight mile walk around Capitol Hill, which I will now awkwardly read for you.

[00:15:44] Cranes seen from the top of the water tower in Volunteer Park, seven. Baby ducks in pond, eight. Oh, yeah.

[00:15:54] Overheard on Broadway. They may try, but they'll never take my eyeballs. Stickers on fire hydrants. I did a survey of 30 Capitol Hill fire hydrants and found that there is an average of 7 street art stickers per hydrant, sticking it to the man. And then I love the groans like, oh, so. And then from Seattle's favorite newspaper, The Seattle Daily Crier, the headline reads Scandal in Seattle. A Greyhound is spotted on a tennis court in Capitol Hill's Volunteer Park right next to a sign that clearly states no dogs allowed.

[00:16:31] On the left, you'll see one of the pages of notes I took during my Capitol Hill walk, which was the first neighborhood I walked for the book. I took a ton of notes and a lot of photos

on each walk to give myself plenty of material to work with, even totally mundane everyday sites like paper cups. I would write down in case it might be part of a larger paper cup trend later on. I'm walking slow. I'm writing fast. I'm trying to capture everything I can without really knowing what the final outcome is going to be. I did write on here cat battling a ghost because I saw this cat in a planter. Just kind of.

[00:17:05] But sometimes the jokes just can't make it in because by the time you explain it, like, you know, it's basically just a process of gathering a bunch of material and seeing what rises to the top at the end.

[00:17:17] I did take a picture of Capitol Hill's mystery Coke machine and then two days later it was gone.

[00:17:25] I know. Rest in peace.

[00:17:28] After the walk was over, I would sit down and write, rewrite the best or most interesting of my findings, looking for ways I could group things together or how I could display them in an interesting way because I'm drawing and writing stuff. I've actually seen Seattle basically creates the content for me. Score. I just record it and interpret it in my own way. I've always been interested in taking little overlooked mundane things and breathing new life into them. In the fourth grade, just for fun, I wrote a six page tell all biography of the cereal mascot Captain Crunch called Behind the Hat.

[00:18:01] The True Story of Captain Crunch, where it was revealed that he was just a normal guy who adopted a captain persona to win the affection of his withholding mother, Cindy Crunch.

[00:18:14] My fellow 9 year olds were thoroughly unimpressed, but the same principle guides Seattle Walk Report - take something most everyone knows or can relate to and use as the basis for something unexpected. During this brainstorm process, I thought a greyhound on the tennis court. That's totally scandalous. Where do scandals go? In newspapers. Because I'm like 80 years old, I guess.

[00:18:37] So I should draw a newspaper and put a little greyhound on the cover. Much of the book happened this way with me taking something I saw and running with it or walking with it.

[00:18:50] Thank you.

[00:18:54] So here you'll see my progress of the page from the pencil draft on the left, to the final version on the right. I do my drafts in this fairly neat manner because I don't really understand how to sketch. So I just try to get as close as possible to how I want the final version to be so that when I'm inking it, it just is pretty much all there for me.

[00:19:15] Here's another page from the book section on Downtown featuring this very building. I'm really glad that the Central Library is super easy to draw because this page was a total breeze and I didn't struggle with it in the slightest. It was totally fine. The page says the Central Library. There were three people washing the windows and then in a speech balloon, I'd say the Seattle Public Library's Central Library is made out of nine thousand nine hundred ninety four pieces of exterior glass.

[00:19:42] Originally I thought about making nine thousand nine hundred ninety four tallies on the page, but even I have my limits. I happen to take this walk on a day where the windows were being washed. You can sort of make out the people in this very zoomed in photo I took. On the right, you'll see my draft of the page and here's from draft version to the final version. One thing that got revised between the draft and the final version is the text of my speech balloon. I looked in the library catalog and learned that the Central Library had five hundred and fourteen books about glass. But given the thrilling, unpredictable world of glass books at the library, apparently that number had changed by the time this was being reviewed and was bound to continue to change. So it was decided I should leave it out. Here's a page that was developed in a slightly different way. It shows Canton Alley and Maynard Alley in the International District. In a speech balloon, I say Canton Alley and Maynard Alley were the first two officially named alleys in Seattle. Even now, very few Seattle alleys have names. Here are some photos I took of the alleys during my walk. I knew I wanted to include these in the book, but to give the page a little bit more oomph than just drawings of two alleys, I decided I need to do some research. So I went where I always go when I need fun facts about alleys,

[00:20:53] The library. Using the library subscription to the Seattle Times historical database.

[00:21:01] I found this article from February 8th, 1964 titled Bilingual Signs Posted, In it I learned that Canton Alley and Maynard Alley were given bilingual Chinese and English bilingual Chinese and English street signs in 1960 for a full fifty years before a wider effort to install bilingual street signs in the I.D. in 2014. It was a cool discovery and I was happy to be

able to include it in the book. So here's the process of that page from pencil version to final version. I had drawn the draft at the wrong size. So I ended up redrawing it because life is fun. Here's a page from the section on Downtown called The Wonderful World of Standpipes and was built almost entirely from photos I took during the walk. It says, Once you start noticing the dizzying array of standpipe styles on buildings around Seattle, nothing in your life will ever be the same. This is completely true. I 100 percent recommend doing some standpipe spotting the next time you have a free day. You will not believe your eyes. This page lists the location of each of the standpipes, and in the corner it says I think there was one of the gum wall. But honestly, who can say? These are photos of the standpipes included on the page. It's so cute to me that these were just everyday standpipes when I took their photos and now drawings of them will live in a book in the Library of Congress forever.

[00:22:26] Sometimes I just lay awake at night thinking about these standpipes and it makes me so happy to go out and find some standpipes. It's really exciting stuff.

[00:22:39] This is a page from the section covering my walk through Sodo and Georgetown called The Evolution of Georgetown City Hall. It reads from 1984 until 1910, Georgetown was a separate city from Seattle as such, city officials built a city hall in 1989 to house various city departments. Today, the building is a treasured landmark that still serves the community. Like the alleys in the International District. I knew I wanted to include Georgetown City Hall in the book, but I wasn't sure how. After some digging, I found old photos of the building in the Museum of History and Industry's digital collection and the library's digital collection. Here's the rough draft of the first panel next to the photo reference from MOHAI from 1909. Here's the second panel with another photo from MOHAI. This one from 1925, by the way, I'm just living my dream right now. I've always wanted to sit in front of a room and show people slides of old buildings.

[00:23:31] It's just, wow, I really am living in the dream right now.

[00:23:36] I then found this photo from 1966 in the library's collection showing the upper clock tower portion completely gone. I wasn't sure what happened. So rather than find out, I just wrote.

[00:23:46] Whoa! Because sometimes I am lazy.

[00:23:52] And here's the final panel showing what the building looks like today. Unfortunately for me and my laziness, Jen, my editor wrote - what happened?

[00:24:02] It's like she actually wanted to be good at her job. And I was like, I have to find this out.

[00:24:09] So digging up turned up the Georgetown City Hall National Register of Historic Places nomination form from 1984. Part of the text reads by 1943, the remaining portion of the tower was threatened by threatened by vibrations from the adjacent airfield. It was dismantled. I was quite happy to be able to solve that mystery and strengthen a page that I was already quite fond of that people will spend about three seconds looking at because that's comics. So those are just a few examples of how I approach writing the book. It was primarily a combination of note taking, photos, research and just seeing what happened. And so here we are all told, the result of all this effort and my unexpected journey into walking. Is this book a lovely one hundred and seventy six page Seattle celebration covering twenty three neighborhoods from Lake City to Rainier Beach and covering such joys as a real life Ballard beaver. So cute. All these dang fire hydrants in Phinney Ridge and a dollar I found in Rainier Beach.

[00:25:15] Before Paul joins me up here, I just want to say thank you.

[00:25:19] In case I don't get the opportunity to properly state it later, there is no way I would have been given the opportunity to create this book without you. Your endless support and vocal enthusiasm for Seattle Walk Report took it from this weird little whim of mine on a corner of Instagram into this real thing that we can all hold in our hands and hug whenever we want.

[00:25:44] It's really, really cool. If I had looked into a crystal ball and seen myself here even three years ago in front of all of you, I would have assumed it was some library sponsored event making fun of recreational walking and not celebrating because I just wrote a freakin book about it.

[00:26:02] So thank you.

[00:26:08] I like your socks. Oh, thanks. Thanks. That was wonderful. Thank you for. Thank you for that. Thank you for the book. Thank you for the comic. Thank you.

[00:26:18] Where. Where did you find the time to do this?

[00:26:23] So. So so you when did you when did you sign for the book?

[00:26:28] I signed for the book. So we first started.

[00:26:30] She first messaged me on Instagram in May 2018. OK. And the book was officially done, sent off to the printer, all that I's dotted T's crossed, in May 2019. And it was like about four months that I actually spent involved with the book. The rest of the time it was their people doing the thing or it getting edited. So it was a very intense four months.

[00:26:52] Yeah. And you were also publishing on the on Instagram. Yes. Which I called the Instagram, which I think is so. So, so. So I assume you work quickly.

[00:27:03] Yeah. Yeah.

[00:27:06] I think what it really is, is that I saw what an amazing opportunity this was and the kind of thing that I certainly never thought would happen to me.

[00:27:15] And so I wasn't I didn't want to.

[00:27:18] Blow it by, you know, wasting the opportunity.

[00:27:24] And so it's like they're they're giving me the opportunity to make the exact book that I've secretly always wanted to make my whole life. So if it means that I'm staying up till 1:00 in the morning every single morning over a table and I'm, you know, getting carpal tunnel, which I did like it just about like it was worth it because it's not forever.

[00:27:42] It's just for now. OK.

[00:27:46] How does it feel not being anonymous anymore now that you've been not not anonymous for I don't know, what, 19 hours or so.

[00:27:56] I mean, I think I'll have to maybe check in with me in a week or two. It kind of hasn't really hit me yet. Like, I don't even know.

[00:28:05] So it's just so amazing to me that all of you living your independent lives, doing your own thing came out here tonight. It really means a lot to me.

[00:28:13] So I don't know. I guess we'll see how it goes. I don't anticipate my life changing that drastically. I might get recognized in Trader Joe's or something, but that's OK. Say hi. I'll be like, hi.

[00:28:28] Aside from Sally Kilroy. Did you read comics growing up? What cartoonists spoke to you a lot?

[00:28:35] You know, I've been thinking about this a lot lately.

[00:28:38] And for some reason when I think about what really inspired me as a kid, a lot of them are kind of things like the back of cereal boxes and catalogs and board games and little things like that or like the cover of magazines for teenage girls where they have like a million things on the cover.

[00:28:56] And it says, wow, wow, wow. And she did, what? And I think if you kind of look at Seattle Walk Report through that kind of context you like, oh, OK. Like you kind of get where it's it's coming from. Yeah. I mean, I did I did dabble in comics, mostly like picture books, even when I was older.

[00:29:14] I just like to read picture books. So like the Sally Kilroy thing or like there was a book called *The Big Orange Splot* that I really liked.

[00:29:21] Yeah, I see that one clap for *The Big Orange Splot*.

[00:29:25] So, I mean, I think I was kind of more influence on things other than comics in my formative years.

[00:29:31] Ok. And did you did you do comics before this?

[00:29:34] I had dabbled in it.

[00:29:38] I didn't have a really good continual outlet for it.

[00:29:41] I had maybe made like one full comic one time in high school just for fun. But I was always doing things that were kind of like comics adjacent. I think I didn't consider them comics because they didn't fit in the traditional - K. You have your panels and your speech balloons kind of thing. Like when I started Seattle Walk Report, I didn't even think about it as a comic.

[00:29:59] It just felt like something kind of other than comics.

[00:30:03] So I didn't have a ton of experience doing this sort of thing. I would say before I started with it. So I just kind of learned as I went along.

[00:30:12] Okay.

[00:30:13] And but you do call it comics. You're not like...

[00:30:16] Yeah, I do. I do call it comics now. Yeah, I have. I've been exposed to a wide variety of things now as I'm like, okay, this is this is comics.

[00:30:25] Okay. And so.

[00:30:30] You and I talked about this when I interviewed you, interviewed you for the Seattle Review of Books. But do you have a good maybe it's changed since then. Do you have a good starter walk for people who maybe want to experience Seattle and don't want to walk 30 miles off the top?

[00:30:44] You know, I've come to really recently enjoy the Chief Sealth Trail in South Seattle. I think it's beautiful. There's never many people around. It kind of gives you a good you know, I don't think that walking the streets is really, walking the streets, oh boy. I don't think the urban walk really appeals to everybody but the Chief Sealth Trail. I feel like it's a good way to kind of be out, but it's kind of more secluded. So I really like that. I also like just starting at Mount Baker Park and kind of you can walk just a short distance and either hang out on Lake Washington or go through the I-90 tunnel pedestrian tunnel thing. So that's a nice place to start. Mm hmm.

[00:31:27] Do you have any tips for finding finding good public bathrooms?

[00:31:31] Oh, boy. Well, the Seattle Public Library has come in handy on multiple occasions. There's always a restroom for you there. Grocery stores, sometimes you can make a sad face and they'll let you in there. It is one of the challenges of this whole.

[00:31:47] This is a real thing. To be an urban hiker.

[00:31:49] Yeah. Yeah. What do you usually do?

[00:31:51] Well, I go to grocery stores. We talked once about the PCC in Fremont. Bathrooms being open and available. Yes, but since then they've been locked. But the code is 1776.

[00:32:07] Thank you for that. Yeah.

[00:32:11] Starbucks sometimes.

[00:32:12] Yeah, it's like that, but it's a it's a real issue because like when you walk across the I-90 bridge, there's there's a a bathroom on the other side that, like many Seattle parks, is only open for five months out of the year because nobody has to pee in in February. So it's a real issue. So, yeah. Libraries, a number one grocery store is Starbucks are my my things.

[00:32:37] But it's you'll. You'll thank us later. Yeah. Great tip about that, PCC.

[00:32:45] Are there any good Little Free Libraries that you recommend? They figure pretty heavily into the book.

[00:32:50] Are there any good Little Free Libraries? Ha ha ha ha ha.

[00:32:56] Oh, you know, I don't have a favorite. It seems like they kind of ebb and flow a lot. I like there are certain ones. I really like the spirit of like it kind of will be kind of a little ramshackle, Little Free Library. I'm always kind of suspicious. I really like the ones that are shaped like the house that they're outside of. It's so cute. But it's also like really?

[00:33:15] So I like the ones that are a little bit scrappier, you know, they have a little bit more spirit to them. So there's one I can't remember the exact intersection. It's on 20 near 20th and Union in the Central District, and it's red and kind of a beige color.

[00:33:30] And they keep getting their little window broken and they keep fixing it. And it's just like a nice little like story of perseverance.

[00:33:38] And it really inspires me whenever I see it.

[00:33:41] So go say I need to find a really adorable dog. What Seattle neighborhood is the most reliable, adorable dog sauce?

[00:33:53] Well, it's Green Lake, like, for sure.

[00:33:57] You can't deny it because there's something for every kind of dog lover at Green Lake. And you can just kind of sit by a tree and see what you like.

[00:34:04] And, you know, it's not weird at all.

[00:34:08] So don't bother walking around the lake just to, you know, get yourself a little orange juice and. See what you see.

[00:34:20] The book has a lot more research than than the Instagram posts, and it seems like based on your presentation, you really enjoy doing the research.

[00:34:30] And I wonder if that's something you're your you're going to or you're looking to incorporate more into your work as you as you move forward.

[00:34:36] You know, I think it's something that, you know, on Instagram, you're so confined to a certain space and attention span level. I'm actually surprised that my comic does as well as it has because there's just so much in it. And most of Instagram is kind of a quick hey I like that, and then scroll on and my comics aren't really like that.

[00:34:56] And so. But you're also limited just in the amount of space and time you have to explain things. And so when I thought about, OK, what do I want to do when I approach this book to make it kind of a sister to the Instagram, but kind of its own thing, and one of them was to incorporate a little bit more of the local history kind of stuff, which is something that I have a nerdy little passion for. So it was nice to be able to kind of give things more breathing room. And if there was something I wanted to dive into, I could do a full page about that thing, like the Georgetown City Hall building or whatever where on Instagram. I just don't think it would really work as well. I do. I would like to find a way to incorporate more of the little local history nuggets into the Instagram comic. If there's a tie, if there's a reason why I don't want to kind of shoehorn it in. But definitely it's something that I'm interested in and it seems like it resonates with people in some ways. So I'd like to continue doing it.

[00:35:50] I especially liked the anatomy of the electrical poles, little tiny signs and I always thought they were like hobo markings or something like that. But you actually like clearly identify them. Did you did you go to Puget Sound Energy or something like that?

[00:36:02] Oh, my gosh. I'm pretty sure I'm on this like blacklisted email list of the Department of Transportation because I emailed them. It was actually maybe a year ago, a little bit before I started working on the book, actually, just because I was curious one day, if you look at utility poles, there's all sorts of numbers and little tags and little things on them. And I've always wondered why do all these things mean? And so I emailed it says on the pole that it's cared for by SDOT. And so I emailed SDOT about like, what does this mean and what does this mean? And they got back, poor Eric from

[00:36:35] SDOT got back to me and he was like, here's what those means and here's what this means. And I was like, Yeah, Eric. But what does that really mean, you know? And so then

he sent me up to his supervisor who sent me out to his supervisor. But I wasn't going to let go because I did not want to let the people of Seattle down by not letting them know what these things are on the utility pole.

[00:36:55] So that was that was just dogged determination on my part that got you that beautiful page.

[00:37:01] I I had always wondered and I was too lazy to find out myself. So thank you. So I rejoined Instagram because of you. And I was I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about about social media. It obviously helped you find an audience, but also it's owned by Facebook, which is like categorically evil. So do you. Do you have a love hate relationship or are you gonna stay on Instagram, do you think?

[00:37:28] You know, I think for better or for worse right now, it's just the best way to get your things out there to the widest amount of people in the easiest way, because they don't really need to seek you out. It can just kind of show up one day. I mean, I am excited to not be anonymous anymore because I just want to hear how people found out about it.

[00:37:50] It's just been kind of like a mystery to me. It just kept multiplying.

[00:37:54] You know, I think there will probably be a day where something better than Instagram comes along and then we'll all be on that thing and then it'll be evil and then we'll move on to the next thing. And we're all just gonna do that until we die.

[00:38:08] So, I mean, I I wouldn't be here without Instagram, which is so weird to say, but it's true.

[00:38:16] So what can you do if you can't beat em? Join em. I don't know.

[00:38:24] I wanted to identify your family. How how would they be able to do that?

[00:38:30] I wonder? They all may have matching shirts on right now.

[00:38:45] Oh, man.

[00:38:49] I love my family a lot. I really do.

[00:38:54] That was just so adorable, I came in early and they were they were all there, nobody else was here. It was incredible.

[00:38:59] I think the whole anonymous thing has kind of been killing them more than it's been killing me. Like, I'm pretty sure my mom's just been exploding in every grocery store she goes into. Like, I need to tell somebody about this. You know?

[00:39:11] So I'm very happy for my family's sake that they can go tell everybody about it now.

[00:39:16] Please give mother walk report a chance to unquell.

[00:39:20] Yeah. Love you.

[00:39:26] So I'm also a walker and I started doing, you know, like six mile walks and now like every Saturday I'm doing 30, 30 miles. My longest walk was around Lake Washington, which was fifty two miles in one day, which I don't recommend doing. And you you recently posted about the 30 miler across the top of the lake, which isn't as quite as bad as it seems because the trails are really good around the lake. But so are you going to become distance queen like me? Or is that you know?

[00:40:02] We'll see, I definitely I learned a lot about myself in that 30 mile walk.

[00:40:08] And there is something about getting to that point where you're like, I can't go on and then finding the strength to keep going. That really appeals to me.

[00:40:20] We'll see.

[00:40:21] I mean, sometimes the mile long walks I have are just as good as the, you know, 20 mile walks. So I think just I just follow my heart and follow the wind. And sometimes I set out for a really long walk and then I end up going home after five minutes because I want to be doing something else.

[00:40:38] So I don't know. We'll see what the future. I mean, Seattle's only so big. So, you know, and I don't really want to go to I don't know, Everett.

[00:40:49] Sorry, Everett.

[00:40:51] There's a nice trail all the way to Everett by the way. Okay. So I'm going to ask one more question, then we're gonna turn it over to you. So start kicking up some some good ones. So now that you are not anonymous, you're kind of officially a part of the Seattle cartooning community, which is very large and very robust and kind of going through a through a renaissance right now.

[00:41:12] And I was wondering if you could talk about some local local cartoonists who you who you enjoy and and yeah.

[00:41:20] Well, the first. So as far as like local indie comic makers go, the first cartoonist I was aware of at all because I really didn't know any of the players in the scene before I started this was Tatiana Gill who would post comics for the for the Capitol Hill blog. And I would see them and feel so there was like a there's a vulnerability to putting your comics out there that I don't think non comics makers realize. Maybe it's the same thing in every field. There's kind of a vulnerability. And I was so inspired and scared of the power of her being willing to put her work out there and seeing it on the Capitol Hill blog and seen how local it was. So she was the first person who was kind of on my radar.

[00:42:09] I recently read the most recent local comic I read was called Around the Neighborhood by somebody I don't know named Rachel Scheer. And it was just it's kind of like an auto bio comic about walking around Seattle and exploring a new city and that sort of thing. I really enjoyed it.

[00:42:26] In general, I don't know if he's here tonight, but Brandon Lerman, I don't know how to say your last name. I'm sorry. He has this like enthusiasm and commitment to the worst possible jokes.

[00:42:41] And he just takes something and runs with it in the most beautiful way.

[00:42:45] And in some ways, I feel like kind of a kindred spirit because sometimes I just take something and I just go, go, go. And I don't really care. It feels like he's doing it for himself first and foremost. So I really admire Brandon's work. There's also a local cartoonist named D.W. who does these weird kind of detailed, cool drawings that I really like. There's somebody on Instagram who I wouldn't maybe call a cartoonist, but just as drawings and I think he just put some on Instagram and his name's Rob Hamilton and he does a lot of old Seattle signs and that sort of thing. Maybe I'll post it on my Instagram stories later so you can find it. I just admire kind of people who are have one particular thing that they do and seem to do it really well.

[00:43:29] So those are the folks who come to mind for me. Great. Thank you. What are you drawing outside Seattle Walk Report?

[00:43:35] I sure don't have a lot of time for a lot of drawing outside of Seattle Walk Report. I feel like I've kind of fallen.

[00:43:42] I found this thing that I that really inspires me and never feels like a drag. Even when I was working on the book and going to work and trying to balance everything, it really didn't feel like a slog.

[00:43:56] It felt like this is what I'm supposed to be doing.

[00:43:58] And so I don't really have a lot of other drawing that I do outside of Seattle Walk Report right now. And I am OK with that. It's a nice little channel for my creativity.

[00:44:10] You're welcome. What's your favorite urban hike? Sorry.

[00:44:17] You know, this is a very unsatisfying answer, but one of the things that prevented me from walking for a really long time was I felt like there had to be a particular way that you do it. Like I would read a walking guidebook and it would say, OK, you got to start at Lake Union and you have to go this way and then left here and right here. And I would just kind of feel overwhelmed by it and like, oh, no, if I don't follow this exactly.

[00:44:38] I'm going to miss out on what I'm supposed to see and true walking freedom.

[00:44:43] And when it really clicked for me was when I realized that these walks could start right outside my front door and take me anywhere I had the time and energy to go. So if you're so inspired by my tale here and you're like oh walking, I should give it a try. Just kind of see what happens if you don't have a plan. Just go outside your front door and see what happens. And even blocks away from where you started, you can find some really fascinating and interesting things. If I had to.

[00:45:11] Urban hike, I would say that maybe going from wherever you live to Discovery Park is really nice because it's a satisfying end point and that's kind of a hike in and of itself. And you can do whatever your thing is, if you like the water, if you like views. You know, it kind of has it all. So that's a nice place. You know, if you're wanting something specific.

[00:45:35] How do you take care of your feet?

[00:45:37] It's a good question. It's definitely taken time. So I couldn't have done a 30 mile walk two years ago.

[00:45:47] It would be like, okay, I'm walking five miles now and oh, my feet hurt pretty bad the next day. But then you go six miles the next time or whatever. My secret is I'm not sponsored.

[00:45:56] Ok, but super feet insoles are absolutely the way to go. Now listen, OK, you'll feel. Listen, everybody. I'm gonna get real with you. You'll feel those drugstore insoles and you'll be like, oh, that feels like a cushy good time. But a cushy good time is not what you want. You kind of want the weird, hard plastic thing and you'll be like, why am I spending like twice as much on these weird little hunks of plastic? But trust me that it's absolutely the way to go. I also have some other tips for Feet Care Foot Care in the book.

[00:46:31] But, you know, a lot of initially when I would get I don't really get blisters anymore because my feet are just made of stone now. But at the beginning, it was a lot of bandaids.

[00:46:42] And I can't think of what the. Yeah, moleskin and that sort of thing and just kind of doing as much as I could beforehand to prevent discomfort in the areas where I knew that blisters were likely to show up. So but now it's just a man sad feet.

[00:47:01] If you're gonna do more than 30 miles, you should bring another pair of shoes and switch halfway through.

[00:47:06] That's the that's the best advice. I think that's from the Mountaineers. But yes.

[00:47:10] How do you eat on the walks? It it sort of depends on how long it is.

[00:47:15] I'll usually pack some snacks like bananas or protein bars or things like that and have plenty of water with me. Sometimes it's fun to stop some restaurant or little place to get food along the way just because it's like I'm in this neighborhood and I didn't think I'd end up here. And so what's around? So that's kind of a fun thing to do, but obviously not a requirement. You know, it's basically food and water are the main things that I pack. So I just bring a lot of it more than I need. And then it just keeps me going for the most part. So.

[00:47:51] Oh, definitely. Would you ever repeat a walk? Sorry I get so excited to answer.

[00:47:59] Yes, definitely. I repeat walks pretty frequently in addition to walking for fun.

[00:48:05] I also it's my primary mode of transportation.

[00:48:07] So like I walk to work almost every day and it's about three miles and I kind of take one of three paths there every day.

[00:48:18] And I mean, that's one of the fun, thrilling things about walking is that you can walk a path and then the next day walk the exact same path and have a completely different experience. And that's not something I appreciated before I was a walker. Like everything was garbage and there was nothing out there for me. So, yeah. Definitely repeating the walk, even like going a year later on some walk if there's some neighborhood I don't get to very often. And

just seeing like, oh there's a new Little Free Library. Oh there's a great new fence or that sort of thing. It's. Yeah.

[00:48:53] How do you get home? Do you go round trip?

[00:48:56] It's either a round trip or one thing I've been enjoying doing lately is taking the bus to a destination and then walking home.

[00:49:03] I see some like little light bulb moments in there because it used to be when I would start out, I would be like, okay, I just walked from Capitol Hill to Georgetown and now I'm in Georgetown and I have to get home and have to be on the bus. If you if you kind of front load the misery of the bus, you can just get that part out of the way.

[00:49:21] And then you're walking towards the lovely destination of home and comfort and non-walk activities. So. But round trip is also nice depending on where I'm walking.

[00:49:33] Umbrella or no? Oh, boy.

[00:49:38] You know, I initially was very anti-umbrella in true Seattle fashion, especially because because I'm writing while I'm walking. It was kind of just a lot. And so just a big hood kind of did the trick.

[00:49:54] Lately, though, I don't know. There's something about umbrellas where it's like, oh, this thing kind of like it keeps the rain away.

[00:50:04] So we might just want to think about it. OK. Like, just let's think about it.

[00:50:12] Ok, maybe 2020 is the year or maybe I'll start my own umbrella line.

[00:50:18] And you say you're from here? Yes.

[00:50:23] Are you intentionally not being political or do you see yourself moving in that direction?

[00:50:29] I really like the comic kind of speaking for itself and being open to interpretation. And I think that's one of the things that has made it successful, is people can kind of see what resonates with them or doesn't resonate with them and apply it to their own lives. Kind of. I really don't like telling people how to feel. I mean, I can share my excitement over the cute dog. You might be scared

[00:50:54] Of dogs. Like the political stuff.

[00:50:58] There's just so much of it. And it does kind of appeal to me to just kind of be this place where. I'm just living my life and enjoying my city and not

[00:51:14] Sad about stuff all the time. I don't know. I don't really have a good answer. It isn't something that I've.

[00:51:20] It's both unintentional and intentional. Like it's just a reflection of my honest experience.

[00:51:30] And I'm just kind of speaking for myself. And your your mileage may vary.

[00:51:38] Yeah. Yeah.

[00:51:42] Are you a library plant? Because that is such a question is what are some good library research resources? That's like a library dream question. Oh, my gosh.

[00:51:56] I mean, in terms of like, oh, my gosh, the library has so many wonderful resources, you guys. And like, people don't even know the half of it. So get out to your library anyway.

[00:52:08] So the main one that I used for this was the Seattle Times historical database. What I really love about it is that you can all put in something so like for the alleys in the International

District. I put in Canton Alley and then you can sort out and see what was the first time that Canton Alley was listed in The Seattle Times.

[00:52:29] And so you can see like.

[00:52:32] I can't remember what it said, but it's just interesting to go back and see kind of the evolution of these things and oh, this was the first time this was mentioned or this person was mentioned or that sort of thing. So the history of the Seattle Times was historical database. Sometimes it's fine just to go in there and type in like Fritos and see when was the first time the Seattle Times ever mentioned Fritos?

[00:52:52] Like, I sometimes do it like just for fun.

[00:52:59] In addition to that, there's some really great like online photo collections. Seattle, The Seattle Room here at the Central Library has a wonderful collection and a lot of it's been digitized, especially the photos, and it's pretty well searchable.

[00:53:12] So if there is a building you like, you can try searching in there and seeing what you can find. I mean, wow, there's just so many things I could go on and on.

[00:53:23] But definitely The Seattle Times historical database is my favorite.

[00:53:28] The public stairways. What's up with that?

[00:53:32] You know, it's funny, I have all these things that I am not, that I didn't know weren't things other places because I've never really known anything else. So like one of the things I have a page about in the book is, you know, those drug free zone signs that have like this sassy line design on them. I kind of thought they were like a universal thing in every city. And then I found out it was a Seattle specific thing. And I'm always finding out like, oh, stairways. Other cities don't have them. I guess it makes sense.

[00:54:00] My favorite stairway is by Mount Baker Park and it's kind of along Lake Washington Boulevard and it's as little unassuming staircase. And it's just so cute. And it's maybe I've tried

to research it, but I wasn't having much luck. I think it's from like the 1910s or 1920s and there's just something so cute about it. And then they're building a new staircase, too. So it's like the new and the old have a little bridge and Mount Baker Park. You know, Queen Anne is a fun place to go if you love stairs.

[00:54:35] There's a lot of beautiful staircases over there. I'm definitely not blasé about it. It's definitely something I didn't really think about or appreciate before I started to walk a lot.

[00:54:43] It was one of those things where I was like, have you ever really looked at a staircase before? Like, This is amazing. So I appreciate.

[00:54:54] Do you walk alone? And do you listen to anything?

[00:54:57] I primarily walk alone. Sometimes I'll bring someone along.

[00:55:02] Someone understanding, like because I know it seems like like fun times out there on the street with me. But it's kind of a lot of introspection and me kind of being in my head or just kind of seeing things that nobody else really sees. And then by the time I explain it to them, they're like, I just want to go home. So. So I enjoy walking with the right sort of person.

[00:55:26] But I tend to walk alone. When I first started, I. One of the reasons why I got started walking was because my podcast backlog was so big that I knew that I wouldn't be able to get through it with any of the distractions in my apartment. And so I thought, I just need to leave and I can't come back until I've gotten through my whole podcast backlog.

[00:55:48] And seriously, that's kind of how this whole thing started was like too many podcasts. It's 2017, you know.

[00:55:56] So.

[00:55:57] But in recent months or maybe the last year or so, I've kind of taken out the headphones and really been open to sounds like the other day I heard these birds and I was like wow birds.

[00:56:12] And just that sort of way that it really allows you to be in the environment and also just for safety reasons. It's also nice to have your ears open. So definitely haven't been listening to as much stuff lately. Occasionally I'll do it. But for the most part, I'm headphone free.

[00:56:31] Do you collect things from your walks for them unless it's money or like, I guess this is money too. But I found some cool old coins, so stuff like that I usually take for the most part I try to leave things as is. One thing I do take with me is bread tags, those little plastic bread clips. So a little fun fact about me in my off time when I'm not working or doing this comic, I collect those little plastic bread tags. And I actually recently completed my goal of having one dated tag for every day of the year.

[00:57:07] Thank you. Thank you.

[00:57:13] I have them in like an old man's coin collecting binder. And when guests come over, I'm like, would you like to see the bread tags and I'll be like, what's a special day to you? Here's that bread tag. So I'm always collecting the bread tags, even though I've now completed my goal.


[00:57:35] I still collect them and I just when I see them on the sidewalk, I can't help but pick them up. So that was a little bit too much about me. But.

[00:57:43] I am who I am. Hard to illustrate walks.

[00:57:47] You know, there are some walks where, despite my best efforts, there's just nothing going on. I don't want to name a particular neighborhood.

[00:58:01] Ok.

[00:58:02] I'll say this, I'll say this.



[00:58:04] I thought about on April Fool's doing a comic about the Magnolia neighborhood where it said Seattle Walk Report across the top and then it was all just blank.

[00:58:17] I love Magnolia. The views are beautiful. Little midcentury houses. People watering things indefinitely.

[00:58:26] It's all good. And Magnolia.

[00:58:28] As far as things on sidewalks go, there is just not a lot of it.

[00:58:32] And that's OK. It's fine to be Magnolia. Please don't hate me. But Magnolia. It's a rough it's a rough neighborhood, you guys.

[00:58:48] All right. Thank you all so much for coming out and thank you so much.

[00:58:59] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.

