

Name of Interviewees: Ed Bailey and Day Bracey
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Name of Interviewer: Theresa McCulla
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Theresa McCulla: It's June 4, 2018. This is Theresa McCulla of the National Museum of American History. I'm interviewing Ed Bailey and Day Bracey, co-hosts of Drinking Partners podcast. We are meeting at the Hampton Inn Pittsburgh-Downtown in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. And this interview is part of the American Brewing History Initiative, a project to document and collect the history of beer and brewing in America. So, Day, let's begin with you. When and where were you born?

Day Bracey: [Laughs]

Ed Bailey: Be careful, man.

Bracey: March 29 1982. I was born in McKeesport Hospital. So, yeah. It was pretty normal.

McCulla: And where did you grow up?

Bracey: Braddock. Brad-*dock*, PA. Right next to the Edgar Thomas [Thomson] Steel Mill. [unintelligible 0:00:48] tires.

McCulla: And what were your parents' names?

Bracey: Delmore Davison and Sarah Bracey.

McCulla: And what did they do?

Bracey: [Laughs] My dad was a, a police officer for the Wilksburg borough. And my mother, is, she's just a laborer. She's just a hustler. She's had three jobs ever since I was born, so, she's kind of switched. Right now, she works at a screen-printing factory down in Braddock right now, Trau & Loevner, but, she's held quite a few titles.

00:01:17 McCulla: And what was it growing like-, what was it like growing up where you did?

Bracey: [Chuckles] Um, that's a weird question, 'cause you really only know what *you* grew up with. So, it was, it was a childhood. I was poor as shit, oh man, probably shouldn't curse, but, it was pretty poor.

Bailey: Aw nah, you don't gave up all your government information.

Bracey: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Bracey: It was, it was a poor upbringing, you know, Dad wasn't around much. Mom worked quite a few jobs trying to keep the lights on. Went to Woodland Hills, we had a lot-, I mean, I, I was always a, a type of kid that made my own fun, so, I didn't need a whole lot. You know, we'd go run around and play, like, we lived right next to the train tracks and like where all the equipment, you know, they used to store all the city's equipment or whatever down there. So, we'd like, play on, like, coal hills and like, salt hills and, and, these huge tubes of like, you know, equipment that they weren't using. And I mean, I probably shouldn't have been here, now. I probably should've died on any of those adventures in those fields. [Chuckles] But, yeah, Braddock Beach. Shout out to Braddock Beach.

Bailey: That ain't no beach.

[Laughter]

Bailey: That ain't no beach.

Bracey: There's no beach in Braddock, but, it was a little, you know, you could get into the water down there. They would, you know, the boats and whatnot. And we'd go down there and avoid the, the sharp glass that was [chuckles], that was there, and, definitely not eat any of the fish. There was a lot of people fishin' down there. I don't think they should have been fishin'. But, [Laughs] they were. And, yeah, I mean it was a, just, a kid kinda like runnin' around trying to find fun wherever I could.

00:02:55 McCulla: And do you remember much about what you ate and drank growing up?

Bracey: What I ate? Mom, my mom was from North Carolina. She's actually a Cherokee, so she grew up on a farm back then, down there, in Wilmington. And, we ate a lot of southern style foods. Greens, fried chickens, the, you know, beef. I mean, like, we had, definitely a lot of spaghetti, man, 'cause we were poor, too, so she would make a pot of spaghetti and that would, we'd eat that for a week. That was, [Laughs] it was good the first day, and then the second day it'd be a little bit better, and then the third day, it was like, come on man, like, so, yeah. A lot of southern, a lot of southern food. And ramen noodles. You know, a lot of poor food, too. So, yeah, I mean, that's kinda what we, we ate. Kool-Aid. A lot of Kool-Aid. Loved Kool-Aid. Icees in the summertime. We'd freeze 'em in the cups and sell 'em twenty-five cents apiece. Little hustle back in the day, so, yeah. Freezees in the wintertime-, in the summertime.

00:03:49 McCulla: And do you remember, was beer around? Did your -?

Bracey: My mom drank beer when I was younger. She used to drink Schlitz Malt Liquor, the Blue Bulls and the Red Bulls. It was before Red Bull was a energy drink. It was a, it, do you still get Red Bull? I don't know if they got Red Bulls anymore, but.

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: It was Schlitz-, it was the Schlitz Malt Liquor. And I, I don't know what it was, but it was a whole culture where some, you either had the Blue Bull or the Red Bull. And it was like, teams. Like, it's like, they were, you know, that you were either a Red Bull drinker or a Blue Bull drinker, but neither, never both. So, that was her, that was her drink of choice. I remember having my first sip when I was maybe like seven years old at, like, New Year's Eve, you know, like, you pop and, like, gave a little bit of Champagne and I took a sip and I was like, "Why do you all drink this? This is garbage." [Chuckles] So, yeah, that was, that was a really, and she stopped drinking. I got around, like, twelve years old, or whatever, so, yeah, I mean, there wasn't much alcohol, you know, around the house then.

00:04:51 McCulla: And, what did you enjoy studying in school? Did you gravitate toward a particular subject?

Bracey: I gravitated toward sciences. You know, I was, I was big into math, science. I really didn't enjoy, like, reading and history, like, growing up in school. I didn't get into that until, you know, college, whenever it became interesting. Whenever they started teaching it as more than just the George Washingtons and the, you know, Thomas Jeffersons. But, yeah, no, I was, I was big into math and science growin' up.

00:05:19 McCulla: Okay. Alright. Ed, we'll, we'll switch to you for a few minutes. Where and when were you born?

Bailey: I was born May 6, 1986, in Cleveland, Ohio. I'll say Hillcrest Hospital, even though I'm a little nervous about givin' up all that information, but, Hillcrest got my records. You know, born to Yolanda Bailey and Edward Bailey, Jr. I'm the third, so that's pretty cool.

McCulla: And, what did your parents do?

Bailey: Both of my parents actually worked at the Post Office. I have yet to identify what they do at the Post-, well, my mother's a cleric. My dad just works there. I don't know what, what he does. I don't think he has any specific responsibilities outside of wearin' the shirt.

McCulla: And so you grew up in Cleveland?

Bailey: Yeah. Grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, east si-, well, I grew up in Cleveland Heights, went to the East Cleveland School District, so I spent most of my adolescence in East Cleveland. Much like Day, you know, a poverty-stricken area. We were, we were a little more well-off living in Cleveland Heights, more of a suburb, two-parent household for a while. And then, you know, you would go down to East Cleveland. You know, typical urban area in Cleveland, Ohio. But, it, you make your own fun, just like he said, and like, you make your own fun. You create opportunity with fun. You find people your age. You play basketball. You shoot bottle rockets out of Faygo bottles. You, you do whatever. You play hide and go seek, hide and go get it when you turn thirteen, you know. Whatever it is.

00:06:44 McCulla: And, could you talk a bit about the food and drink in your family? What you remember?

Bailey: Well, so I had two different food and beverage experiences. So, one pre-divorce. [Laughs] That's when you get all the good food. In a two-parent household you get tacos or stuff like that. And then post-divorce, yeah, you're dealin' with spaghetti and just enough, just, you're making big pots of whatever, you know. We had syrup sandwiches, all that stuff, like, whatever it can, just eat what's available. Nutrition, not such a big thing. At that time, we just tryin' to get by.

00:07:15 McCulla: And, was beer present in your, in your household? Or in your community at the time?

Bailey: Not beer. So, my father, you know, I like to say that I inspired my father to stop. My father did not drink from the time I was born until now, he's still sober. He just celebrated thirty-two years of sobriety. My mother, you know, she only drank with her friends. So, we didn't really see alcohol in the home. You would have to go to your relatives' house to see, you know, everybody got the one aunt that throws the parties, spades parties. And so that's where all the drinks are.

00:07:45 McCulla: And, in school, what did you enjoy studying?

Bailey: Nothing, but I was forced because of curriculum to study, you know, I, I actually did very well in high school. I was in AP classes. I, I excelled in math. I actually really excelled in chemistry, which, no, I did not go to school to study chemistry at all. I just tested out of that class in college.

00:08:08 McCulla: Alright. And so now, questions for both of you, just, comedy and beer and then eventually the podcast. In what order did those things happen?

Bailey: Comedy came first. I think for both of us, comedy came first. We actually met each other at an open mic. If you've ever listened to our podcast, you hear the infamous story about how we went to an open mic. Day had a full photography crew take a photograph at an open mic, the audacity of this man. [Laughs] To

have photographers at an open mic. And we really just met through his photographer takin' a picture of me and posting it on the internet. And two young African Americans at the open mics in Pittsburgh, you know, we kinda gravitated to each other, just through common experience.

McCulla: And what year was that?

Bracey: So, 2012.

Bailey: Yeah. 2012.

Bracey: 2012. Yeah, I mean we were at open mics. He came in and, and Ed had just, I mean, he's just a natural talent. He killed his first time on. I still haven't seen him do a bad set.

Bailey: It's not true.

Bracey: And, yeah, I mean we got to talkin'. And then, and, and then in this area in Pittsburgh, there's not a lot of successful black people in this area. The median income is, you know, in the twenty thousands for blacks, and it's double that for whites in this area, so. When, you know, when you took-, look at the arts, it's hard for people to have that time to get out and pursue those when you're, you know, so busy working. And I think that's a, that's a large part of the reason why there's so few, you know, black comedians, black artists in general, in this area. And that was a thing that, you know, we would see each other all the time at shows because, you know, we were, you know, you know, two of the only, you know, guys in that, and, and, in that field. Got along really well. Held conversations. And they were conversations that people would kind of like gravitate towards.

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: They were just sort of kinda like, standing around and just listening to us talk to each other, which was kinda weird. Like it was a, like, we'd just be having a conversation and then look around and people would just be like, noddin' along, like, yeah.

Bailey: Just laughin'.

Bracey: Yeah. Laughing.

Bailey: Phones out. Recordin' it.

[Laughter]

00:10:11 Bailey: Alright. Yeah, we kinda put, we were kinda put into the podcast. And, like it, it, it's something that happened naturally. You know, you get two

people who get along, who understand each other, and who have that comedic spirit, I mean. Day, while he compliments me all the time, he's just as funny. He's very humble about that. In some, in some venues. [Laughs] But, you know, it's, it's, it's, it's like we, we're actually really friends. And so, that friendship comes out through conversation. And people enjoy listening to two friends enjoy life.

Bracey: And we, with the podcast, it was like, you know, we were, we were on stage a lot, and it was like, how do we get our, our voice out, you know, beyond just this room, you know?

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: At the very most, you're only gonna be able to reach, you know, anywhere from a hundred to even five hundred people in a room at one time. And it's, you're, you're, you're bound by space and time. I mean, with something like a podcast, like, that's timeless, it's out there, it's to the world, so, you know, and it was a, it was a thing that was fairly new in Pittsburgh.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: Podcasting has been a thing for, for, for decades, but, but it's, this area is usually a little bit slower on certain trends, so we were able to kinda like, we were, I guess forward-thinking enough to say, hey, like, you know, let's try to get into this, you know, while it's kinda young in this area. And just see where it goes. And because, you know, most of the places that we performed were at bars, like, I mean, to be honest, like when we, you first get into, like, open mics and things of that nature, like, it's just an excuse for people to drink.

Bailey: Yup.

00:11:40

Bracey: Or just an excuse to get people to stay there longer. So, it's like, you know, when I first started producing shows it was like, you know, how long, how many people can you bring and how long can you keep them here drinking? Yeah, I mean, so, we realized that there, you're, you know, early on, shows like, you know, when we started the podcast it was like, okay, just, it kinda just all blended together. You know, I mean, Ed came and we sat on the porch and he was like, "You know, we should call it 'Drinking Partners.'" And it was like, that just makes sense. It, it encapsulates the, you know, what we do with comedy, it encapsulates that, that conversation piece and also the industry that we're already a part of, which is, you know the alcohol industry. And we, we didn't, we didn't set out to be a craft beer podcast. We were just settin' out to, like, have a nice conversation.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: With alcohol involved, like, to lubri-, lubricate the conversation. And then the craft beer industry kinda took us under their wing and supported that, so.

Bailey: Right. We started off drinkin' spirits. And then Day, you know, he showed up with, with a couple of Weyerbachers and it was my introduction to craft beer. And, you know, it just became a thing because the podcast was doing well and then the craft beer industry is so supportive. It's like, we grow together. You know, we're growin', not as comed-, just as comedians, 'cause the comedy industry is growing here in Pittsburgh. But then the podcasting as well. The craft, the craft beer, you know, is generally, the breweries are owned by young individuals. They try to create more of an experience. So whereas you go to a regular bar, you're just there to drink, dance. Like, the craft beer industry, they try to create an experience, you know? They really have their hands on what happens there, what type of feel, the atmosphere. And they, you know, they took to us, we took to them, we enjoy their product, they enjoy our product, it was, it was a marriage of, you know, more like-minded people.

00:13:21 McCulla: Great. And, so I'll back up a little bit. How did each of you get into comedy?

Bailey: Peer pressure for me.

Bracey: [Laughs] Yeah.

Bailey: [Laughs]

Bracey: It was the same for me. It was, it was years of people sayin', like, "You should be a comedian."

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: "You should be on stage." And me sayin', "Well, no, because, like, you're just drunk and this is a completely different type of conversation." You know? Like, gettin' on stage and making strangers laugh to something that you think is relatable is completely different than, you know, just having a drunk conversation at a party. So, yeah, it was a lot of years of me just sayin', like, "No, no, no." And then eventually, like, I mean, I just, I didn't have any reason not to try, you know? I had a little bit of time and I, you know, I saw, you know, I looked it up online, I said, you know, "Let me just get on stage and see how it goes." And, I fell in love with it afterwards, so. Been here since.

00:14:06 Bailey: Yeah, my significant oth-, my significant other, like, she worked with an individual who was on the open mic scene and she got a list of open mics from him and basically came home and was like, "Alright, we're doin' this on Monday." And for, for you as an individual, like, you, you can notice when you can control the room. Like, even amongst your friends, you kinda notice when you're the

center of attention, the, the, you know, origin of most of the hilarity. And I've been able to control at least my immediate atmosphere. And that's what you do with comedy. You control that atmosphere. Whatever room you're in, you're controlling that atmosphere for that time you're on stage. So.

Bracey: Yeah, and it's, I mean, I was, you know, you look at, like, event production and whatnot and we've gotten into, you know, throwing parties in college and whatnot. And like you said, it's that, it, you know, like, like I kin it to being like, like group therapists. I go on stage, 'cause I mean, it, there's this room full of people, most of them don't know each other, you know, and like, especially when you first get into it. Like, we're sorta gettin' to a point now where we have a brand and people are coming to see us. But, for the most part, like, you know, when we first got into it, it was just a bunch of people comin' in and is goin', "Okay, well, you better be funny." And they didn't know what they were gonna get. And watching that crowd, like, you know, get a couple laughs here, a couple laughs there, and then, you know, I, I see people's, you know, they'll, they'll be kinda reserved. You'll tell a joke. They don't know if they *can* laugh at it, or if they *should* laugh at it. They'll hear somebody else laugh. And then they'll, they'll feel okay laughing at it, like, 'cause it's that, "Oh, I didn't know that I was, I thought, you know, other people felt that way."

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: "I mean, like, I didn't know. I thought I was the only one." And then you get a whole room of people that thought they were the only one, and then afterwards like, you know, some, some folks become friends, we become friends with them, and, you know, it's a-. We hope that at the end of it, that there's some, I don't know, some, some camaraderie and some, some healing and, I guess.

Bailey: Yeah, I'm not, you lookin' at me. I'm not, I'm not hopin' for healin'. I hope you laughed. I hope you enjoyed yourself. I'm very, I'm ground floor with it. Enjoy yourself. I, I did my job. [Laughter]

00:16:02 McCulla: How, so, how does that, it seems very different then, to, to produce a podcast and, and you don't have an audience in front of you that you can see.

Bailey: It's, you have to really understand what's funny about you. And that's really what you're doin' on stage. You, you, you find the things about your thoughts, about, you know, on stage you find a little red thread, you know, if, if you're doin' fifteen minutes, that fifteen minutes has to be cohesive, for most comedians. Some of 'em are, are very, just, random. But like, for myself, it's very cohesive. I'm giving you a piece of me. A part of Ed Bailey that you can relate to. Even if it's not how you live, you understand people like that. You understand how someone could come to the conclusions that I came to. And it's the same on the podcast. Like, we, we've done it for so long now we have personalities on the podcast. Like, we have certain things that people expect to hear from us. You

know, I argue against space, Day doesn't want to have me talk about this in the Smithsonian. [Laughter]

Bracey: The Smithsonian? You gonna talk about space at the Smithsonian?

Bailey: Yeah. I mean, I'm not going to go all the way into it, but check us out, Epicast Network, I mean. [Laughs] But yeah, so, it's, it, but, I say that to say, like, there are certain things that people expect. Like, I'm the conspiracy theorist, you know. I mean, I come up with all this wild stuff that, like, is out of, cra-. And Day, you know, he's the opinionated person. And people really, they look for that when they listen regularly. They look for you to be yourself.

Bracey: Yeah, I mean, I, I think we're both pretty opinionated, but, I mean.

Bailey: Nah.

Bracey: But for, but for, for, for us to, like, for me at least, like, being in that, and it was hard when you first get into it 'cause you don't have that read and react.

Bailey: Right.

00:17:31 Bracey: You know, from the audience. You don't get that instantaneous feedback, which is, you know, vital when you're on stage, 'cause you need to be able to, you know, always be thinking about, you gotta be thinking about the last joke. You gotta be thinking about the next joke. You gotta be readin' the reaction, and then tryin' to switch, you know, and pivot. Whereas with podcasting, you know, and it's, it's, it's longer format.

Bailey: Mmhmm.

Bracey: But, where, where I get mine from is, is just one, like, you know, me and Ed are both conversationalists. Like, I don't know if I could do a pod-, like, you know, there's podcasts where people just talk into a mic for like an hour. I don't think I could do that.

Bailey: Nah. I can't do that.

Bracey: I've always been a conversationalist, so I know, like, me, I mean, we know when a conversation is going stale. We know, it, there's, there's highs and lows in that. And you're sittin' there for about an hour or two, you know, ninety, ninety minutes, so you can feel that. Like, okay, this topic is done. We need to move on. And, you know, if I'm, we're havin' a conversation, if we're enjoying ourselves, it's more.

Bailey: Probably a good convo. Yeah.

00:18:21 Bracey: People that are listening are looking, enjoying themselves, too, because that was what we wanted it to, to, to do. And we wanted to make people feel as if they were in a room with us as we were havin' a conversation. It got into, first couple of episodes that we did were just he and I talking back and forth to each other. Which was okay, but like, it still kinda teeters out a bit. I mean, like, doing it for like ninety minutes. So, we introduced a third person so it became more of an interview show.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: And with that, like, you know, it gives us more, you know, room to, kind of like, you know, play around with, you know, some things. And then, you know, take it back to the, the attention back to the person that we're interviewing and, you know. And, and then, and having, having us interact with that person. So we could see *them*. They're having fun? Then, you know, that's probably a good podcast. You know? So, yeah. I mean, that's kinda how we, we've kinda gone from that live to, you know, more, you know, talking to a wall. [Chuckles]

Bailey: Yeah, I think a guest makes it easier. You, 'cause they're the interesting, like, you're, you're bringing something to the table. They have a company. They have a hobby. They have something that they're doin'. A lot of times craft brewer-, brewers come on, so they have breweries. So, they have a story. And we're just pickin' out the funny pieces of that story, or extracting, you know, whatever's funny in their life and kind of bringing that to the show.

00:19:42 McCulla: And so, how do you, how do you choose guests?

Bailey: You doin' something cool? Come on Drinking Partners.

Bracey: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, we, like, you know, we, it's, yeah, if you're doin' something cool, like, we, we were, we're a craft beer podcast. That's our, our foundation. We're always drinking on the podcast. So, we're, you know, we're extremely interested in that. We're always, we're always tryin' to find that, you know, a brewer that's doin' something cool, and bringing them on.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: So, that's [unintelligible 20:06] I mean, like that, with the brewer side of things. With, you know, the rest of the guests, it's just, if you're doin' something cool in this area. It's, it's a very Pittsburgh-centric podcast. It, but it's a podcast that, it's Pittsburgh-centric, but it has a, it has.

Bailey: Its message resonates throughout.

Bracey: Yeah.

Bailey: So it's, it's not, it's not any different than any city. So, with craft breweries, a lot of them are neighborhood-centric. Like, they're in an area, they're in a specific area, they're not looking to become these large distribution breweries, you know? They're trying to serve their area. And, you know, that's what we're doin'. We're serving our area. It's something that could be copied or something. You know, I mean, we, we support small business. 'Cause that's what we are. Drinking Partners is a small business. The, us, you know, Day and myself as comedians, we are a small business. This country thrives on small business, you know what I mean? It ain't always gonna be a Budweiser. Budweiser ain't doin' nothin' in your community.

00:20:58 Bracey: Yeah. Yeah. We, we, that was our message early on. As artists, you should treat yourself as a small business when you get into it.

Bailey: Mmhmm.

Bracey: When you do it, do it as a business. And you should treat yourself as such. You should get that same respect. And you should be, you should demand compensation for your time. And.

Bailey: Get the bag.

Bracey: And we look at artists or whatever, and the artists that are in the city, like, yeah, they're, they may be Pittsburgh-, you know, based. They may be coming through Pittsburgh, having a good time, and you know, doin' a show here or whatever, but the conversations that we have are conversations that, you know, if you're an artist in California, if you're an artist in Czechoslovakia, if you're an artist in Africa, you can, you can, you can get these parallels, you know, with these people. And, and, that's what, like, a lot of, we learned a lot of lessons in craft beer. These craft brewers, they're artists in, you know, in their own right. I mean, and that's, that's the vibe that, that's where that respect, I believe that we have, that we share with the brewing industry, is that they like what we're doing with like, you know what I mean, like, they can't do what we're doin', and we can't do what they do. And there's that mutual respect and understanding of the skill that it takes to do what we do. A lot of people will see us on stage and go, "Oh, I could do that. Like, I'm the funniest guy."

Bailey: No, you can't.

Bracey: "Oh, I could do that."

Bailey: No, you can't.

00:22:02 Bracey: Some people will drink a beer and go, "I can make this in my basement." No, you can't.

[Laughter]

Bracey: I mean, with enough time and practice? Yes. You know, I mean, you could. But, this is, you know, this is a craft. We've been working on this for a while.

Bailey: Get your ten thousand hours.

Bracey: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Bracey: Get your ten thousand hours in. You know what I mean? Like. And that's what, you know, with, with the artists that we have on, when we're choosin' a guest, it's, it's really a guest that we respect.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: It's somebody that we think is doin' something cool, like, we, we, we try to stay away from just getting guests on because, like, they're doing something and, and that might be the wave at the moment or whatever. If I don't personally like what you're doin', then we're, we're, I can't sit with you for ninety minutes and have a conversation. That's gonna, it's gonna teeter out. I'm gonna be disinterested halfway through, and I'm sure the listeners are gonna be, you know what I mean, like, they're gonna tell that this is, this is fake. This is forced. So, it's more or less just finding people that are, you know, that we respect and are, you know, that have that same, I guess, mentality of, of, you know treating themselves like a small business and finding some level of success, whatever they deem that success to be.

00:23:07 McCulla: I'd love to hear how beer became a part of that.

Bailey: It, it just happened naturally. I mean, once, once like I say, he brought the Weyerbacher. It was a new experience for me.

McCulla: Can you just say, do you remember what it, what it tasted like?

Bailey: It was the Merry Monks. It.

McCulla: Yeah.

Bailey: It tasted like, I don't even know how to describe it. It, it just. You ever taste something, you like, you start gettin' that Brady Bunch feel when they was at the table trippin' off mushrooms? It was like, this just took me on a wild ride. Like, it's all these different flavors. All this different. You know what I mean? I didn't have a palate at that point. I didn't have a preference. This was brand new. It

was the Merry Monks. And I'm just like, "Yo, *what is this?*" And it, and it was, you know, and that, it didn't hurt that it was strong. And it was a stronger [Chuckles], and I'm like, "Oh! Two of these and I'm good?" like, "I'm, I'm, I'm good to go after this?" And, it was like, you know, it was a good cast. We had, you know, the conversation was flowin', and it just became a situation where it was like, you know, they do this *here*, in the city. They create things just like this in the city. And it was, the, the brew industry was, I, I would say still in its infancy here in the city.

Bracey: Yeah, it was just startin' to pick up.

Bailey: So, the growth together. Yeah. The growth together, like, people were eager to find a different medium. I mean, we're, we an outlet for individuals that is very useful, you know? We have a decent lis-, listenership. You know, we're, I don't wanna describe us as tastemakers or whatever, but people kinda listen to what we doin', where we are, and respect our opinions. And so, people, you know, when you're a small business you need that sort of signal boost. So, it just, it just kinda happened. We were, we rock with the product, they rock with us.

00:24:41 Bracey: Yeah. I mean, like I, I was kinda into craft beer. Not like heavy, but like, I enjoyed the flavor as, like, I, I've always enjoyed food. So, I mean, that was a thing. And whenever I realized-, and I like drinking. I love, I'm a fan of drinking.

Bailey: Well, yeah. We do that. We drink for real on the cast.

Bracey: Yeah.

Bailey: It happens. [Laughs]

Bracey: I was always, you know, I was always a drinker. And then, when I realized that, like, I could drink something that actually tasted good. 'Cause beer was just like a, eh, I'll get it. You know what I mean?

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: It's a special-, I'll drink it or whatever. But I didn't drink it 'cause, like, I loved the flavor of beer. And then I had a, I had a, it was a Blue Moon was my first, like, introduction to a beer that tasted-.

Bailey: Blue Moon [Sings].

Bracey: I was like, oh, they put a orange slice in it. It was like, oh, that's *fancy*. You know what I mean, like.

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: It was like a step up from a Corona, and it looked fancy on the bottle, you know, and, and I, from there I was like, oh, you know, and I tried a Full Pint. I got a, it's a local brewery, they released a mix, you know, mix twenty-four pack. And Perc E Bust was a coffee porter that they had out at the time. And I was like, "Wait, beer can taste like *coffee*?" Like, I, like, I didn't, I, my like, my mind was blown. And from then, I was, like, kind of a, you know, my roommates, we would, once a week we'd each get a different case of some type of craft beer and try out new stuff. And it was cool. But again, I was very novice in it. And, whenever we started the podcast, I was like, you know, it'd be cool, 'cause I know there's a few brewers around here or whatever, it'd be cool if we can just, like, maybe try to take some of these, you know, and add this, you know, craft beer element to it. Again, not thinking it was gonna be a craft beer podcast.

Bailey: Right.

00:26:11 Bracey: It was just, like, this is a different type of brewed beer we're gonna bring here. And then we did an event in December of that year, and Full Pint sponsored it, which was super awesome. We didn't know that was a thing that people did. Like, you know, we didn't know it was a thing that we could get to do. We didn't even know what a sponsorship was. But they sponsored an event. And then Brew Gentlemen, which is Braddock-owned.

Bailey: I went down there with Fetterman. Yeah.

Bracey: [Chuckles] Down there with Fetterman. We reached out to John Fetterman and they allowed us to come in and do a live podcast with John Fetterman, who is the mayor of Braddock, which was my hometown, which it was like a huge thing. And it was, at that time, time it was our biggest guest. And people loved it. And they had just did a Freshman Cask event. It was Apis Mead, Grist House, Hitchhiker, and Brew Gentlemen, which today are the.

Bailey: Yeah, they.

Bracey: Huge breweries in the area. And, you know, we didn't know, we were like, oh, well if we're gonna do a podcast with these guys, are we allowed to go do, you know, we didn't know how people got along in the industry.

Bailey: [Chuckles]

Bracey: And Brew Gentlemen were like, "Oh, you know what? You should go hang out with *these* folks." And then like, and that was how, every time we went to a brewery, somebody at that brewery, would be like, "Hey, have you heard of *these* folks?"

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: And like, they just, and it was, you know, and we sal-, we saw this camaraderie. It was like, you'd, a camaraderie that we really didn't see in the art scene. In the art scene, it's sometimes you, you see, you see people doing cool stuff, you see it as competition. Whereas, like, brewers, they see, you know, especially microbrewers, they see that as, as, you know, collaboration and opportunity to grow together, because if, you know, you're coming and you see a good beer here, then you're gonna.

Bailey: You're gonna be searching for that. Yeah.

Bracey: You know, beer. They got that. And we learned, you know, quite a few lessons from that. And they, you know, like I said, they would, it started with, you know, Full Pint and Brew Gentlemen, and it just kind of went from there, and from that, like, once we did Brew Gentleman, and we started to get in with them, it was like, well, yeah, let's, you know, it was a, it was a real interest between two of us. Like, we both were, we wanted to learn more about this. And that's when it became more of a drinking podcast.

Bailey: Yeah. I think that's, I think then that's where the podcast comes. So, he comes from having a craft beer background. I'm brand new to everything. I'm learning everything on the podcast. So, you, you go through this experience through someone who's like, I got a more seasoned palate. You know, I mean, I have preferences and things like that. And then you also have a gentleman who's like, I'm trying to find out about everything. I'm trying to see what's going on. And, like he said, the industry, though, was so supportive of each other that it's something that we just wanted to be aligned with. You know. We're trying to grow. They're trying to grow. Let's respect each other. Let's rock it out.

00:28:48 McCulla: So, when you're, excuse me, when you're recording and you have a, a, you know, beers that you're enjoying there or with a guest, what, what role does the beer play in the conversation?

Bailey: Well, we, well, so, I think for me, and again it's, we, we play two different roles, so for me being the more casual individual, so Day like, likes to go out and be at the events, the beer events. He's like, he's been in the culture for a little bit longer. Me, I like to enjoy my beer in the privacy of my own home. So, I like to chill. But like, we, we try to show that this adds to your experience. So, we're, we're, we're interviewing someone who's interesting, who's got a great story, you know. We're meeting them. You're live, you're hearing us meet them and interview them and learn about them, and we're doing this having a great experience with beer. 'Cause like, for me, growing up, you, it was St. Ides, OE, you know, it had a stigma. Like, the person drinking the beer was the alcoholic. But this craft beer, like, you can enjoy it at home. You can enjoy it after work. You know. It's, it's what, today's Monday. I had a beer when I got off work, you know. I mean, there's nothing wrong with that. You know. You can't go home and have a glass of vodka on a Monday. Like, it looks crazy. Like.

[Laughter]

Bailey: You go home and just pour a shot. You, your wife is like, "So, what happened at work today?"

[Laughter]

Baily: You crack open twelve bottles of beer and you're just Dad. Like, sitting there enjoying the game, having a beer. And it just adds to the experience of life. And we try to project that and portray that on the podcast. Like, we're just, our experience is enhanced by this great product that we enjoy.

00:30:11 Bracey: Yeah, I mean, like, some, some casts, it's more prevalent than others.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: Some casts, like, if we have a brewer on, we're gonna talk about, like, they're gonna bring their brews.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: And we're gonna have a brew conversation for about 90 minutes.

Bailey: We'll have a flight. [Chuckles]

Bracey: Yeah. We're gonna have a whole tasting. We're gonna get in their background. We're gonna get into the flavors. We're gonna get into styles. We're gonna talk about the trends and what's coming next. We're gonna do a whole beer podcast. But if we don't have, you know, sometimes we have people that don't drink beer. They don't drink at all.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: So, that podcast is.

Bailey: We handle it for 'em.

Bracey: Now, *we're* gonna still be drinking.

Bailey: Yeah. We take care of that for you.

Bracey: Yeah, we're gonna, you know, we're gonna tell you what we're drinking, and you're gonna, you know, be, hear about thirty minutes in, how that's affecting us. And you know, like, so the, the beer is always gonna be a part of it. It's just not always as talked about or prevalent. But, I mean, like I said, for us, I mean,

like, it's, it's always there, and, and it helps, it helps smooth the conversation. It's a, it's a social lubricant, so.

Bailey: Yeah, and we service two different, you know, demographics. You have the beer lovers and the comedy lovers. We service, and, and a lot of times that, that blends. Like, people who love beer tend to love comedy. Which is how we do the live comedy shows sponsored by a craft brewery. That's how that came to be. Like, the two worlds collide and you see a lot of overlap. But, there *are* comedy lovers who just love to hear us go back and forth and argue. And there are people who wanna hear about the beer. So, that's why we have those episodes for them. But we also bring out, you know, the personality of the brewer. Like, if you went to a restaurant and you got to know the chef, you, you would feel better about the food you ate. Like, you know the person that's creating your experience. So, we try to provide that.

Bracey: Yeah, we try to, like, like, even with a, with it, if it's not the brewers or whatever, if it's a different artist coming through, the conversation that we have, you're not gonna get that same conversation, it's not gonna be the same old, like, alright, well, tell us where you, you know, and like, that whole, you know format is, you know. There's some podcasts and some interviews that are, you know, heavily regimented. They have segments. They have, you know, whole thing or whatever. And then you kind of know what you're gonna get. I, it's a double-edged sword, 'cause, you know, sometimes people are like, are like we get some feedback, and it's like, "Well, you guys, you have to do segments," and like, you know, I'd like to know what it, you know, what I'm getting. But, I think what the, the, what the magic of what we have is kind of a lightning in a bottle thing. And having that alcohol there, I mean, I'm telling you, we've had guests go on that forgot they were on a podcast. I mean that's, and it happens often. And they just forget that they're, you know what I mean, and it just becomes a conversation. The mics melt away. And like, it's just three or four people in a room having a good time. And then, they wake up the next morning like, "Hey, what? What did I say?" [Laughter] So, you know, that's the, that's the experience that we're trying to, you know, when we, when somebody comes in, even if you're a fan of that, that person or that, you know what I mean, when you hear them on our podcast, you're gonna get a different interview than you've maybe heard before, so.

00:32:50 McCulla: Nice, nice. I'm curious, if you consider yourselves members of the media or, do, do you, is there a role that you think the media can or should play in beer culture in America?

Bailey: Let people know it exists. Let people know how wonderful it is. You know, let people know that, I think craft beer, you can tailor it to your experience. You know, when you see a lot of, of the spirits advertise, they try to create, you know, the party vibe. They try to create maybe the muckety-muck, like, I'm sitting on this crazy couch with this crazy view with the square glass, you know what I mean, they try to. But with craft beer, you can be whatever you want. It could be

you in pajamas, you know, after you ate your eggs for breakfast. It doesn't matter. Like, it's, it's something, and it, and it feeds your hometown. Like, these are breweries that service neighborhoods, service the city. Like, it feeds your hometown. So, why, why spend money elsewhere when you can spend it right here? You can see the brewery. You can meet 'em. They probably like stuff that you like. You know what I mean? So, the media can be, as Day likes to call it, the signal boost. We gotta let people know what's going on, 'cause everybody doesn't know what's happening. People don't know in Pittsburgh that Pittsburgh's actually kinda poppin' right now. Like, Pittsburgh is, it's a fun place. As long as you find your thing.

00:34:03

Bracey: Yeah, I mean, we, we also do the, the live shows which are super dope. Again, and they're always, it's always BYOB and, like, free beer from, like, a local brewery. So, that, you know, people get introduced in that, in that regard as well. As far as the media, like, I, I'm, I'm a big fan of, of, well I'm not going to say fan, but a, it, journal-, I went to school for journalism. I didn't finish, but, knowing your bias and, like, watching in the media and the, and the role that it plays in craft beer, I think it has to play the same role that it plays in any, any regard that it's at is, sometimes, I mean, you're there just to kinda, like, we're more of a just having fun with it, and we really don't come into contact with people that we don't already, like, know and respect and, and enjoy. So, like, you're not gonna get a brewery on the podcast that we don't like. We're not gonna be drinking beer that we don't-, we might get a brewer that brings a style that we don't like. But we're not gonna have a brewer on that we don't, you know, particularly like. So, we don't have to, you know, fall into-, we don't, we don't have to worry about, you know, like, biases and truth in, in reporting and whatnot, because we pick and choose who, you know, we, we, we mingle with. But as far media in general, I do believe, you know, it, you should, you know, like, as breweries open or close and there's different industry beefs and whatnot, we're, we're lucky enough to kind of be on the outside of that. But there's a lot of turmoil and there's a lot of changeover. And you look at the percentage of, you know, growth, I think a few years ago they were at, like, four percent, and now they're up to, like, twelve or thirteen percent of the total market, and you're seeing these Budweisers and the big, you know, breweries, starting to buy smaller, you know, I mean, brewers, and like, you know, and this, you know, I think there's a, there's a, a responsibility for the media to kinda be on top of that and say, you know, hey, this brewer isn't, you know what I mean, that or what, you know, is no longer, this isn't a local. Your money isn't staying here anymore. Or to say, you know what, you wanna go there, that's cool, let's have that conversation. Why should you go there? Why shouldn't you go there? I mean, I think as the media they should, you know, like I said, I mean, stay on top and, and, and just like any other journalist, like, you know, recognize their bias. And I think there's a responsibility to report the truth and not just fluff and, you know, just kinda. And I, I, I don't envy those, the, the reporters in the media that are in that, that realm, because we get to have most of the fun and just kinda, you know, be on the outside of it. You know, outside of it all. We're big proponents of the local. We support local and that's,

you know, that's our brand. So, if, you know, Budweiser, you're not gonna see a Budweiser, you know, event, you know, sponsor you know what I mean, event, because that's what we believe in. Now, if somebody else is doing it, that, that's cool on them. We're not there to.

Bailey: Yeah, it's not our, that's not our wave.

Bracey: Yeah. That's not, that's not up to us to, you know, say yea or nay on that. You know what I mean, so.

Bailey: And that's how journalism has changed. Like, you really get to report your wave, your, your thing. Like with, with social media, the advent of social media, you get to report the things that *you* like. You're not pressured by this large company, this large production company. It'd be like, alright, this is the happening event and we need the blow-by-blow. And this is like, nah. This is what *I* do. This is what *I* enjoy. This is how *I* enjoy it. These are people that *I* like. These are people that *I* enjoy. You should, you should probably pay attention to them.

00:37:20 McCulla: And so, you, you have maybe kind of more of a, a pulse on, on what consumers want to perhaps a different extent than, than someone who is reporting on the industry all the time. What, what might you, how would you describe what consumers are wanting?

Bailey: Well, so we report from the vantage point of a consumer, which a lot of people, you know, who do this for a living, don't report as a consumer. So, you know, what I want isn't necessarily what Day wants. And that's fine. We have the freedom to do that. Like I, I like a more chill time. I like to go to a place, I like to go to a brewery and have a relaxed atmosphere and have conversation. Like, me with another well-to-do individual, you know, who's trying to get it in life. We sit and we have a conversation. Maybe we're strangers, but we're enjoying this good product. We're sitting and chilling. So, I, I like to talk about that aspect. Like, alright, here's what I enjoy. Here's what *I* do. Here's how *I* use it. You know what I mean? So, that's what we do. That's, that's, that's the point of our podcast. This is what I like. This is what I do. Here's how you can do the same thing. If you're into that. If you're not into that, fine. We got a different vantage point. So, he might be into different stuff. He might wanna be somewhere and he's gonna talk about that. And I'm gonna discuss how I view that situation, not in a negative, just, well what, what do you do there? How does that work? You know what I mean? It's just a conversation amongst friends. You learn from each, we learn from each other just like we learn from the guests. We learn from each other, right there on the spot. And we record it and throw it out there in the world. And people give us their opinion on it.

00:38:48 Bracey: Yeah, yeah. Alright, 'cause we, you know I think folks that are, like, pure, like, say, you know, journalists and, you know, beer journalists, I think the more you get into something, like, the further you get away from that vantage point.

And sometimes you can, you can get the, it can get to be too technical and you're, you know, getting into the hops and the origins and the, you know, the notes and this, that, and the other. And, like, the average beer drinker doesn't know all that. And you, so, you know, we, we still are able to kinda enjoy it and enjoy it from that end. And when we have brewers come in, you know, like, we get to have conversations with them and we get to pick their brain. You know what I mean, and like, and that's like, that's the thing that the consumers don't always get to do, you know what I mean, like, they, you know, you can go, and the beauty of local breweries is that you can see the people that are making it. And yeah, you can have a conversation with a brewer. But it's not gonna be the same conversation that we get to have. I mean, we get to have some sort of inside, you know what I mean, like, conversation. But still from that, that consumer standpoint, not from a, you know, journalistic standpoint. So, like, you know, that interview that they're gonna give that journalist, like, is gonna be completely different than the ninety minutes of us drinking and having a good time, that we have. So, you know, when it comes to, you know, what the consumers want or various trends, typically the brewers know that. You know what I mean, and they're like, you know, 'cause they, they see themselves, they know what's popping up. I mean, all these, right now, we're in the era of the hazy IPA.

Bailey: Right.

00:40:15

Bracey: You know what I mean, and that's everything. And I get it. I mean, it's a, it's a beer that I enjoy. But like, it's a beer that a lot of people can enjoy because it takes away, you know, some of the bitterness of those hops. And when I go to a party, I've been trying to get my friends to drink craft beer for years. And they're like, "Oh, we don't want that hoppy stuff." And this, that, and the other. And trying to find different things that they like. And typically sometimes, like, you know, 'cause I've kind of moved away from Belgians. Like, that's been my, like, I had a Belgian the other day and I was like, I'm just, this banana isn't for me anymore. But when I first got into it, that's all I wanted to drink, you know. And like, when I went to parties, I would have to bring Belgians because that was kind of the only thing that people would be, you know I mean, kind of gravitate towards. Now, I have this juicy IPA I could bring. And *they* enjoy it *and* I enjoy it. And I enjoy it not on some, like, okay, well, this is about, this is a compromise enjoyment. Like, I actually enjoy it the way you're enjoying it. So, like, I think, like, in that regard, you know, I have, like, the brewers know that. But then, again, like, you know, say, when me and Ed are having a conversation with the brewers and Ed's having that, you know, that beer or whatever, he's much more new to the situation, and he doesn't like it, that's gonna be a thing that a brewer might have to wanna perk up and go, okay, because, you know, we are trying to bring in, you know, novice drinkers to the community. And I don't think that the conversations that the brewers have typically with their consumers are with, you know, first timers.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: They're not getting any-. Most of the people that are coming in and having conversations with them or whatever, most of the people that are frequenting them are craft beer drinkers. So, you know, how do you get the new wave? How do you get the black wave? How do you get, how do you diversify? And then, you gotta talk to more people. And I think that gives the brewers a bit more, I guess we're the bridge in that sense.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: Brewers get a conversation with us. And people get to listen to us and, you know, between the two of them, they come up with something.

00:42:01

Bailey: Yeah, I'm definitely the orientation, so what I, what I do is, you know, I learn things, you know, I mean, I know what the trends are now 'cause we've been doing this for a while, but you know, as I, so, I'm, I'm still IPA guy. Like, if I'm, if I'm a go somewhere the first thing I'm a try is an IPA. But it, like, what I try to do with, with new, with new craft beer drinkers is, like, you know, you give 'em a IPA, you give 'em something a little softer. And then you, you try to hit 'em, you know, you gotta hit 'em with a little, you know, the juicy, the juicy IPA. You hit 'em with the, 'cause there's so much flavor. And so, we have to, what we have to do is we have to show you like, listen, you can find the drink that fits your palate. You can find it. You have to be willing to try it. Like, we have to change the narrative around it. So, a lot of people that I grew up with, a lot of the people that I know, again, still think of beer in that one way. And so, it's my job to show, like, I'm still me. I'm not compromising. I'm not any different. Like, I'm not drinking liquor, though. I'm drinking craft beer. And I can do all this drinking craft beer. And I can always have a craft beer. And it, it's never inappropriate. I mean, it's never inappropriate. And I can get whatever. You can pair it with food. Like, people don't even realize, like, there's certain beers that are made specifically to pair with a certain item.

Bracey: Yeah, we learned that.

Bailey: Yeah, we learned it. Yeah. Ah man, we learned that real hard at Hop Farm.

Bracey: Yeah, Hop Farm.

Bailey: Yeah, don't, this.

Bracey: Judged a beer and food pairing.

Bailey: If you a novice, don't do that. Like, know what you getting into.

Bracey: Go and, I mean we didn't realize it. We were, you know.

Bailey: It's like four hours of eating.

Bracey: They would give you these samples. And they weren't like.

Bailey: They were real.

Bracey: They weren't, they were like.

Bailey: Real servings.

Bracey: And like, you know, like, a little bit of, you know, a four-ounce pour of a, you know, we were tasting it and judging it. But we were eating and drinking the whole thing. And we get about, like, ten in and we're like kind of full. And we're like, how many more we got?

Bailey: *Sixteen.*

Bracey: We got like sixteen more. *What?* And so we ended up, you know, having to like, temporary, it took us three hours to, to.

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: Finish that, that whole judging or whatever. So, yeah, we learned that, that, food and beer go together the hard way.

McCulla: But yeah, it's hard work.

Bracey: Yeah.

Bailey: Well, yeah.

00:43:58 Bracey: The thing is that it's, from where we come from, especially a lot of, like, when we go back home, is, you know, the black community, and especially the impoverished communities, they don't have, you know, the money to get into craft beer drinking. Like, to find that thing that they like, you know what I mean, like, if you've got, your drinking money's twenty bucks this week, you know, twenty, thirty bucks this week, you're not gonna go out and get a case of, you know what I mean, whatever craft beer.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: You're, that twenty, thirty bucks is gonna go to what you know.

Bailey: What you know.

Bracey: And gonna get you there, 'cause I mean, like, you, you need, you need to get, you need your down time. You know what I mean? And I'm not, you know, you're not gonna spend, you know, ten, you go to a bar, spend eight bucks on a beer that you're gonna-, you're not gonna like. Like, why would you do that, you know? So, it's somebody that has more disposable income, yeah, I mean like.

Bailey: They get samples. [Chuckles]

Bracey: Exactly. They know, and like, people don't even know you can, you can ask for samples. There's a whole, it's a culture.

Bailey: Right.

00:44:46

Bracey: You know what I mean? It's a whole onboarding process. It's a thing that we're learning, you know what I mean, and, and we're, we're a bit more into it, you know what I mean, but like, I didn't know you could just go up and ask for a, to taste something. Like, *what?* Like, so, you know, that's a, that's a, that's a part of a, part of what we're doing now. I guess, you know, when you say to the media, you know what I mean, like, if we, if we are, if we look at ourselves as a media, we look our, at ourselves as a platform, we are trying to be that voice for the community that we come from and say, hey, look, like, this is how we got into it, you know, and providing that access and, and education on this so that you can get into it as well, you know, because it's more than just, you know, like, you know, getting drunk and having a good time, but, this is an art. This is a, this is a thing, this is something that you can experience that'll, you know, you know, enhance your life, you know what I mean, as well as, you know, again, it may be a thing that could lead to a, a job or a career or, you know, I mean, somebody may open up a, you know, a brewery at some point because they got into the love of that, you know what I mean?

Bailey: It's a different walk of life, like, that I've seen just talking to, you know, what you say about the jobs, like, I, I've met people who, you know, in that service industry have been able to move up the ranks in breweries just by, you know, investing in the product and being, like, real champions of that product. Like, that's, that's a cool industry to be a part of. The, the, the events that we go to that we're a part of now, like, these are things that I would never be a part of if not for craft. Like, doing that food-beer pairing, like, that's not something I'm a get if I'm just, I'm just drinking Hennessey all the time. There ain't no Hennessey thing. You don't compare Hennessey with some shrimp. Like, that's just not happening. Like, the opportunities that we get through this is, is crazy and it's because the craft community is so plugged into the pulse of the city. They know, they know what's happening 'cause the consumers are creating the products, so, I like to shop with products where the people who create this are consumers. You know, I just.

00:46:41 McCulla: And so, clearly you're, you have had access in a way that you have said is not always available. What, what else, what can be done? What else do you think could be done to, to broaden the fold of craft beer, so to speak?

Bracey: That's a, quite a bit. I mean, first and foremost, you have to stop systemic racism. I mean, that's, I mean, there, I mean, you gotta work from the ground up. So, I mean, like, I'm, you know, I'm always looking at the community in general. I mean, the more, the, the, the, the more opportunities that the community it has itself, the more opportunities that they can do, you know, this is a, this is very much a luxury. These are very much first world problems.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: Like.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: So, you know, you know, like, you know, building up the community education and whatnot. But, you know, and I guess, and that's another, that's a, that, decades, years, centuries. That's a, that's a thing. That's a, that's the problem that I guess I don't wanna say it's bigger than us, but it's not a thing that, like, and, and then we do our, what we can in our, you know, in our, in our own regard. But what we've been trying to do here recently is, is this black beer festival. It's called Fresh Fest.

00:47:50 Bailey: Fresh Fest. [Singsong] Sorry, I have to do that every time. I have to do it. Contractually obligated to do that. [Laughter]

Bracey: But, it's a, it's a, it's a black brew festival where we're bringing in ten to fifteen black brewers from around the country because we believe that representation matters. When you see somebody doing something that, you know what I mean, like, that, then you think that you can do it yourself. You know what I mean, like, I, I didn't start producing shows until I saw other people that are around me that were produce-, I was like, "Oh, wait, *that's* how you did it?" You know what I mean, so then I started to do that because I saw that if they could do it, I could do it. So, we wanna bring that representation in. And then, we also wanna promote locally the community, so, you know, there are no black-owned breweries in the city. So, we're pairing them with black artists and entrepreneurs to collaborate on beer. So, now they get to have that experience, 'cause we've had several collaborations. Full Pint, Mindful, ShuBrew.

Bailey: ShuBrew. Yeah.

00:48:44 Bracey: We've had these collaborative-. We, again, this is a thing that we didn't know you could do, like, you can collaborate and build, have a beer for you? Like, it's, it's, it's still, I still have a hard time wrapping my mind around it. It, that

being a thing is such an honor. That coffee porter, that Perc E Bust, that, like, that was like, oh man, this is, this is beer? It turned around and Full Pint re-released it and they called it Drinking Partners. It's on tap right now. Like, that's a thing that I was drinking it and now here I am years later.

Bailey: We on the tap.

Bracey: On tap, and.

Bailey: We on the menu.

Bracey: Yeah, it's helping pay some of my bills now. And I mean, and that's the thing, is that, and that's a, that's a, that's a billion-dollar industry that black people don't have access to. So, the, when you collaborate with that, then you know, it's, to start a conversation. You know? Having artists, you know, design a label. Or have a chef come in and introduce new flavors. We have a, we have a rapper, Doctor, Doctor HollyHood that's pairing with Butler Brew Works, and they're gonna make a Moscato beer. You know, to, a Moscato and ice cream beer.

Bailey: For the ladies. [Singsong, laughter]

00:49:42

Bracey: Yeah, and you know and that's a, that's a thing that resonates in, you know, in the black community. A Moscato is, you know, all, all my sisters and her friends, they love Moscato. You know what I mean, like, I can't get them to drink an IPA. But I guarantee I can get them to drink a Moscato beer, you know. And that's the type of thing that you don't as a brewer think about. You know what I mean, so, like, hopefully with that, with those pairings and at the presentation, people will have that conversation. Brewers will have a bit of, better understanding of the black community. The black community will have a better understanding of the craft beer community. There will be that diverse conversation, you know. And, again, diversity, diversity is what pushes humanity. I mean.

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: Mesopotamia is what, like, you know, the cradle of civilization, like, every, everything that has, is through cross-culturalization. And if you are, if you have a homogeneous atmosphere, and I've had a lot of brewers.

Bailey: Homogenous, man. We argue about this on the podcast all the time. It's homogenous, man.

00:50:57

Bracey: We've had a lot of brewers come in and we're like, 'cause I didn't know how everybody would take it, and we went to them, and they were like, "Yeah, man, I look around, there's a lot of white dudes in here." You know what I mean, it's mostly white people. And it's mostly men. You know what I mean? So, you

know, it, like, you need those different voices or else it's just gonna be that the whole way through. So, I mean, that's, that's, that's our attempt.

Bailey: Yeah, I mean, it's, it's a selfish endeavor of sorts in the, in the sense that I, I, I wanna see more of us in, in the breweries. I mean, these are two demographics that have largely ignored each other, you know what I mean? Like, the craft industry hasn't looked into our neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods haven't looked into the craft industry. So, now you get two, you know, moderately successful comedians who are like, yo, we've been able to build something with this industry. This industry, you know, they don't wanna ignore us. Like, they, we, we can have our handle and our people who are involved with it. Outside of this city, like, there's a decent amount of representation and they make good product. And you, you know, we can bring that here. But more importantly, with this, we bring that awareness. You know? I, I run in and Day runs in circles with successful African Americans who don't know about craft beer. And we, you know, through these collaborations now, they reach out to their people, so we reach out to our people, they reach out to their people, we're all bringing, you know, a bunch of, it, it's just gonna look like a totally different fest. I mean, you're gonna have the enthusiasts who've always been in the craft area. You're gonna 'em there. But, you're gonna have a bunch of people who don't know anything. There's a bunch of people that's gonna come who's just, I'm supporting my friend who has this cool collaboration. And, you know, we've been trying to get people to come because we have these cool collaborations. [Laughs] But, yeah man, it's, it's, it's just a fun thing that's great to be a part of. Like, it's good to bring that to the city.

Bracey: And, I mean, you look at Troegs and we did a interview with them. And you know, and like Ed was saying earlier, like, you get these folks that just drinking beer, they like beer, they get a job at the place 'cause they like it, you know. And they start out just kinda as a barback or whatever, wiping down some tanks. And then they become a brewer, like, after some years. I mean, that's the type of, you know, opportunity that we would like to provide to the black community. You also look at the way that, you know, Troegs, they opened up, it was in the middle of nowhere. And then a community sprouted around them. Like.

Bailey: An amusement park. [Chuckles]

00:52:37

Bracey: Yeah, like, an entire community sprouted around the brewery. And it's like, you look at, at Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh currently doesn't have a black middle-class neighborhood. Like, you know, and what better way to, to have a black, you know, to, to, to start to build that wealth, than by opening up a black brewery. And, you know, black owned, black frequented, you know, black employees. And now you're, you know, you're bringing in wealth. People are coming from out and they're, they're bringing this, they're spending money in your neighborhood. You know where those dollars are going. I mean, you're employing people who love the community.

Bailey: You know the people making your beer.

Bracey: Somebody can get a job, young black man can get a job at the, you know, at the counter, and someday, you know, be a head brewer. And then maybe go off and own his own brewery. But that doesn't happen until they're introduced and they have that access and education. They don't know that they can go in their basement and homebrew. You know, they, that, you know, they don't, they don't know that. So, that's what, you know, this fest is trying to, you know, trying to do is, is I guess solve that problem so that, you know, me and Ed aren't the only two black people in, in the room all the time.

Bailey: And we're tired of that, man.

Bracey: Yeah. It gets, it gets old.

Bailey: I need a new black friend.

Bracey: Yeah.

[Laughter]

00:53:45 McCulla: So, I have a, just a few questions to wrap up on. But, related to some of your recent comments, I wonder how you think Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania brewing culture differ when you think, you know, of other places in the nation. How are, how is it distinct here compared to other places?

Bailey: From, from my experience, I think Pittsburgh is only, I guess, it, it, there's a more of a heightened sense of community. I mean, I think in the craft industry there is that sense of community. It's just *so* strong here because, again, we started in its infancy. So, we, we saw it when it began to grow. We saw it at its, you know, origin. When it began to boom. So, I think craft, the industry itself, like Day said, like, they know we need our competitors. We gotta, we gotta eat off of our competitors. Like, our breweries, you know, we, we don't have the mass production to be like, we're gonna supply the whole east coast. So, we can supply this area, and we can be like, we're your local stop for what you like, but you gotta like these, this thing first. So, I need this, I need this brewery across town to work. I need them to put good product out. 'Cause you live over there and you, you know, your aunt lives over here. So, when you're at your aunt's house, you're gonna come to my brewery. And you just see that, it, it's so heavy here and we know these people personally. But I think that resonates throughout the brew industry altogether, so, I, I don't think that Pittsburgh is different in that sense. It's just, I have a direct connection to that.

00:55:13 Bracey: Yeah, I mean, that, I don't get out, I'm not involved as heavily in other cities to know what the camaraderie or the, the temp-, the, the feel is like. I know that we haven't hit the bubble yet here in this area.

Bailey: Right.

Bracey: I know in some cities, the competition is much more fierce. So, they might not have the same sense of camaraderie. And I know that even here, like, we're approaching that. I would say in the next two or three years, you know, you're gonna see, you know, more breweries kind of shut down. And there's not gonna be *as* many, you know, the folks that are in it, the folks that, like, have had some establishments and relationship are there. But like, at some point, an industry is gonna get saturated. And there's gonna be closures and it's, you know what I mean, that's just the natural way of things. But, here, we're just, we haven't reached that yet. And I know that, you know, in other cities, in bigger cities, the New Yorks and Phillys and Miamis and whatnot, that there's still, you know, there, even, there's some camaraderie, but it's not nearly as much because they don't need another brewery. Like, they're, they've got enough. They're like, they've got quite enough. So, other than that, I mean, I know that.

Bailey: We haven't had the buy-outs, either. Yeah, where the large company will buy something out, and then you lose, and then you lose that small-town feel. You lose that brewery. And that's, that's huge.

Bracey: Yeah, we haven't had any buy-outs. The closest that we've come to it is a, you know, like, the Rolling Rock or something like that. You know, those, you know, bigger ones that, you know. But, I mean, they, they've been the, the beer community here has been extremely supportive of the arts. Again, I, compared to other cities.

Bailey: Good point. Good point.

Bracey: I haven't seen a whole lot of, like, a whole lot of, like, comedy and, you know, arts festivals or whatever in, you know, in breweries, as many as I've seen around here. Again, I, I don't know, I've only been to a, a few cities during this craft beer craze in the last three years. I've traveled to about six different cities. There weren't any, there wasn't anything artsy going on at those events. So, I mean, I don't know.

00:57:13 McCulla: Alright. And, one, one last question. It's a big one. But, what, what do you value most about what you do, would you say?

Bailey: Okay, so you just gonna hit us with the-, right at the end? It just feels good to, to be in control of, of what you do, how you spend your time, how you make your money, who you associate with, and how you can bring all of those things together. I'm spending my time, making my money, and I'm hanging out

with the people that I enjoy. And I'm drinking, you know, what I enjoy. I have so much, you know, control over that within this industry. Like, it's, when you get into an industry as it grows, you, you can do that, you know what I mean. You can control, I mean, you can do that period. But, up until this point, I haven't felt that control. And now I'm like, you know what, wow. I get to go out, even, even work-related events, like, I might be going to a beer festival. And yeah, I could tell wifey it's, it's work-related. [Laughs] That's passable. [Laughs] Can that be redacted? [Laughs]

00:58:27 Bracey: Yeah, I mean, it's, it's the same, I get to do what I love. And that is such a rare opportunity. And, and, in any tax bracket. I mean, in any part of the country. In any part of the world. It's very, you know, there's some people that make a lot more money than I do, but hate their jobs. You know? You know, and there's a lot of people that, you know, get to do what they love but they, they're not maybe as successful as, you know, I am, you know, at this moment. Not that I'm in any way, shape, or form, you know, a big, you know, big shot or whatever. I am gonna be in the Smithsonian shortly but. [Laughter]

Bailey: Yeah.

Bracey: I mean, like, it just, it, it really is like, you know, being able to wake up and have, you know, endless opportunities knowing that, you know, as much, you know, time as I put into it, something good is gonna come out of it. And like, and knowing that it's not a, a, a selfish endeavor. Like, you know, being able to, you know, spread joy in general, whether it's comedy, through beer, through activism, you know, whatever it is that I'm able to do, you know, like, whatever medium that it is, like, being able to do something that I love, being able to be outspoken as I am about it, and being able to help other people at the end of the day is, it's just like, what more can you want? You know what I mean? Like, granted, I could definitely use some more dollars, like. [Laughs]

Bailey: It's coming.

Bracey: But, yeah. And like, that, that'll come. But I mean, if, if, if I never, you know, if I just stayed at this, this level or whatever, if, if it all ended tomorrow, I would, I would be, look back at it and just say, like, I got to do something that, I mean, I, most people weren't able to do. You know, find happiness in, in what you love. Like, and spread that joy. It's, it's rare.

01:00:06 Bailey: Can I just add one thing. 'Cause I know we're long winded, but, I would say, and Day can attest to this, the most fulfilling is that we do it with our own voice. This is *my* thoughts. Everything is organic. Everything's authentic. I'm not, I'm not playing to either side. I'm just being myself. And we have been able to create something that as far as I know, you don't get anywhere else. You know, it got us some great opportunity, it got us into the Smithsonian. Like, we, we do a comedy, be wild, be, like, we got a craft beer sponsor, we, we walk, we go around

the city and, you know, we support small business, and we're at all these craft breweries, we interview politicians, like, we host opening nights at theaters, like, it's, we just created something just being ourselves. And, you can't take that away from us. 'Cause it's gonna be in the Smithsonian. [Laughs] It happened.

01:01:03

Bracey: Yeah. Yeah, this, this moment happened. And this thing, and like you said, man, it's being ourselves and, and doing that. And that's, man, I like, I, I, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't know what, we, we, we didn't set out, like, we didn't, we, we just, we, like he said, we were both kind of like forced into it, just kind of like pushed out there because of whatever, and, that was, that's the thing that me and him, like, we both, we value more than anything else is the authenticity of what we're able to do. And that's, that's the hardest part because, I mean, it does, we don't get as many opportunities because of it. You know, because of the way that we speak, because of our language, because of the, you know, the, the people that we choose to, you know, like, and, and because we, we refuse to compromise on various aspects of our, you know, our, our morals and our pride, we do lose opportunities. But, we still get to do what we do. We get to wake up every day and say this is-, and at the end of the day, we don't, we don't, I don't have to ask myself, and we don't have to ask each other, was that worth it? You know, like, "Man, like, you know, this, yeah, we got paid, but like, you know, but, at what cost?" Like, it's never, never really is a cost. Gas is a cost. That's, you know, gas money to get there.

Bailey: We can, we can now embed that into the price.

Bracey: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Bracey: Like, outside of that, like, you know what I mean, there was no, you know, I, I, and that's the thing, you know, and we're, we're both parents. And everything that, you know, we do, we want our, you know, it, it's, this is, you know, even, even with this interview, but even our, our, our online content and our podcast, these are things that are gonna be there, you know, forever. And I, and you know, we want our, our kids to be able to look back and listen to those conversations and, and see our careers and say, like, you know, they were able to do it without, you know, compromising their voice. And we can do that as well. And we hope that other people see that, you know, and that's what we preach. Hey, you can be yourself. You can do that. And you can be uncompromising and still be successful in what you do. Like, you don't have to sell out. That's not a, you're not gonna make as much money, and you're not gonna do it as quickly, but, I mean, you know, how, how much does your pride cost?

McCulla: Well said. Thank you so much both, for your time.

Bailey: Thank you.

Bracey: Thank you.