

Adulthood on the Spectrum: Former NFL player shares his experience being an autistic dad

Andrew M. Komarow

Welcome to "Adulthood on the Spectrum," I'm Andrew, an autistic certified financial planner. I co-run "Adulthood on the Spectrum," with Eileen Lam. Hey, Eileen!

Eileen Lamb

Hey everyone. In this podcast, we want to highlight the real voices of autistic adults, not just inspirational stories, but people like us talking about their day to day life. Basically, we want to give a voice to a variety of autistic people.

Andrew M. Komarow

And I think today our intro, we kind of change that with somebody being a bit inspirational. Um, today we have with us Joe Barksdale. Hey, Joe!

Joe Barksdale

Nice to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

Andrew M. Komarow

Yeah, thank you for coming. Joe is a singer, songwriter, producer. His unique sound smoothly blends aspects from blues from blues soul jazz, rock and more creating an immersive experience at once from upbeat and up close and personal, captivating worlds spreading a message of love and unity harmoniously uniting people through music. All American Honors as a CSS Technical High School linemen led Joe to a scholarship offers and acceptance of Louisiana State University's offer and hence by its engineering program. After starting on LSU's 2008 NCAA championship team, he played with the Raiders, Rams, Chargers and Cardinals. Concluding an eight-year NFL run Barksdale hung up his cleats in 2019 to pursue music full time settling in Austin, Texas with his wife Briana, and two young daughters.

Eileen Lamb

Hey, Joe, thank you so much for joining us today. We start our podcast by asking our guests how they like to identify. But what I mean by that is, you know, some people prefer to be referred to as person with autism and other people prefer autistic person. So, if you have any preference here, let us know.

Joe Barksdale

No, I don't.

Andrew M. Komarow

So, Joe, you mentioned that you you know, were depressed for over, you know, 20 years, but that you were also undiagnosed autistic, When were you diagnosed? How long, what was that process like?

Joe Barksdale

It was three years ago. Process was my therapist works with other autistic clients, patients. But she saw a lot of she had been observing me at this point for three years. And she saw a lot of similarities on top of the thing we were talking about that day. I told her we talked about like, you know why I don't like being around people. And I told her like, I feel like, I'm always acting like what I'm supposed to be, and not like who I am. And I feel like one day someone's gonna realize, you know, I'm not like everybody else. And that was what kind of opened up the doors for that conversation. It led to her referring me to an autism specialist, whose name I'm blanking on right now. But that's, that was the process that led to my diagnosis.

Eileen Lamb

And what impact if any did learning you were autistic have on your depression? How much of your depression do you think was due to, to being undiagnosed?

Joe Barksdale

That's a good question. I never thought about that. Because I think it all works together.

Andrew M. Komarow

You're happier now than you were three years ago?

Joe Barksdale

No. (all laugh) But you know, I'm taking steps meeting with a therapist, I'm on medication, I meeting with a psychiatrist, journaling, exercise, and, you know, doing all those things. But yeah, that I think some of it like some of the mental illnesses, is biological so, I think some of it was was just in the cards, and then yeah, there were definitely I'm sure that there are definitely life situations, you know, that were drastically affected because of the autism and that kind of thing. And I'm sure some of it in some way led to, you know, some form of mental illness and me, but I think it's hard to separate the two, if that makes sense.

Eileen Lamb

Yeah. Do you think music has helped you? With feeling less depressed in any way?

Joe Barksdale

No. (all laugh) I mean, that's not to say that music doesn't make me happy. I mean, my kids make me happy. My wife makes me happy. I do comedy. I'm a comedian. To hear people laugh makes me happy. But I would look at it like maybe, any other kind of pain, like, you know, just, your just in pain and you just kind of get used to it. And there's always this numb ache in the background, but you do your best to push through it. And, you know, that was kind of depressing, but I'm sorry.

Andrew M. Komarow

I mean, man from your intro, it's so uplifting you know, so

Joe Barksdale

That's why it's so uplifting the person that wrote it knows me. (all laugh). Going downhill from here, guys now, but yeah, I mean, that's just the honest truth.

Andrew M. Komarow

No that's, that's what we want. We appreciate it. Is there anything, so it seems like since 2019 was when you left the NFL like was the autism diagnosis did that shape any part in your professional career? The last three years and all that or

Joe Barksdale

I was diagnosed after I retired.

Andrew M. Komarow

Oh after you retired? Okay.

Joe Barksdale

It did. It definitely explained a lot of my way to working with teams like that definitely explained a lot of the issues that I was having, not just in the NFL, but with people in general, but definitely like, within my job, too. Yeah, I mean, I think about like, why I even got into football in the first place. I was at an engineering camp. And this kid was saying something he was being sarcastic. I thought he was being serious. And I thought people who say things that stupid should be slapped. And before I could tell myself not to slap him, I was already slapping him. But it was a joke, you know, he like stood up and starts flipping over tables, punching computers, and we both got kicked out, but only one of us left with a bill. So thankfully, that wasn't me, because I didn't break into computers. But if we had known I was autistic back then I would have never got kicked out of that camp. And getting kicked out of the camp is what got me into football, because I needed something to do over the summer, to stay out of trouble. And I was like, maybe I can try to get in shape playing football. So something that almost nobody knows about me. And almost nobody believes is I played two years of Pop Warner Football, right? But why don't people believe that?

Andrew M. Komarow

I mean, I'm not an athletic person. I'm sure,

Joe Barksdale

But you said you play two years of Pop Warner Football and not 20 years in the league like very believable. (All laugh)

Andrew M. Komarow

I told some close friends and they thought it's like the most hilarious thing I've ever told them if they if they know me, like, I'm like a computer geek. And, you know, so even the thought of me playing at all is apparently that amusing. But...

Joe Barksdale

That was me at the beginning of playing football, though. That was I mean, I was at an engineering camp. I'm a computer geek too like, so believable for me.

Andrew M. Komarow

So is there anything that I'm gonna tell a quick story that asked question. So I am very is personal but in a funny way. I have very hairy legs. Like you know, James, but like super hairy. You know, like, my dad looks like he you know, shirt off. It looks like he has a shirt when he doesn't like I'm the same. So at like, 13 you know, you have a bunch of boys, but you know, football, and they're all making fun of me because they're just gonna make fun of people for anything, right? It's like what they do, it didn't matter what it was. So I thought, well, logically, if they're making fun of me because my legs are hairy, right? Then what I should do is I should shave my legs. And if you want to get made fun of more by a football team for having hairy legs, shaving your legs is a sure fire way for them to make fun of you even more. So that that that did happen to me. That's my football story. But do you have,

Joe Barksdale

You shouldn't be mad about someone shaving their legs and women can shave their legs cause they don't want hair on them why can't dudes?

Andrew M. Komarow

They were making fun of me for my legs being hairy at the first place. Right? They were just gonna you know? I think a lot of it is picking on people because that's just kind of like,

Joe Barksdale

That just doesn't make sense to me.

Andrew M. Komarow

Well didn't make sense to me, either. Do you have any stories like that? Not, you know, doesn't have to be about your legs but you know?

Joe Barksdale

Just kids in general in middle school?

Andrew M. Komarow

No, or the, you know, football team? And, you know, just something that you know, where? I don't know, maybe you were, you know, a bit different or something like that?

Joe Barksdale

Pretty much every day. I mean, I never saw why there would be this thing. There were coaches that always said that I would think too much but there will be this thing called you know, you blocked you're blocking somebody. The coaches want you to block somebody and like dump them into the ground and try to break their legs. And I'm like, if the dude is blocked, and he's not making the plays, that should be that's good. Right? You know. So it was always looked at as like a lack of a lack of effort for my part, but in actuality it was like the job is done. Logically, if I'm gonna be on this field for 70 more snaps there's no need for me to expend all my energy on snap number three. But, but you know, like, it's, I would say just being a free person. I saw things logically in general, you know, did not bode well for me in football. Like, we'd be going out to practice. I'm like, Hey, coach. You see the heat advisory warning? You know, like, yes, we're gonna go out there still. (All laugh) Okay, well, that sounds illegal. "Somebody shut him up" like, you know, I mean, like those kinds of things. Just things that just never

made sense to me. It never made sense to me why people, even as a professional athlete, because I never watch sports. I don't watch sports. And even as a professional athlete, it never made sense to me why sports matters so much to people just because like, sports are fine, not finite, if sports are going to be infinite, then they don't matter. There's gonna be a champion next year, does this one matter? Just as much as next year's will, which is gonna matter just as much as the last one before this one. So I don't understand how you could base so much of your life and hope and emotions off of something that's so random and unstable? I don't know.

Eileen Lamb

So then what did you like about football?

Joe Barksdale

It was a way out of my economic situation.

Eileen Lamb

That's fair.

Joe Barksdale

Yeah, I was poor, before I play, and yeah, it was. It was the quickest way. I mean, even my thought was, like, even if I'm making league minimum, I'll probably make more than like, my dad will make in 10 years, you know? So yeah, that was the money. Like, it was the money from the beginning, I remember my first time like running. And I'm thinking to myself, like, I'm not running for free. You know, I'm gonna get paid to do this. And I'll be damned. Like, you know, what, with these were thoughts I had, not to mention, you know, when I first started playing football, in my mind, my life as an engineer was over. So into, like, I was always a bigger kid. And you know, a little bit more expensive than a regular kid, I guess, to clothe, feed, transport these kinds of things. And my parents would always make me feel like, you know, they were always telling me, like, you need to be rich when you grow up. Because if you don't, your life is gonna be terrible, because you are so expensive. They made me feel like a burden. And like football was the first time that I was somewhere. I said, Yeah, football was the first time I was somewhere where people actually happy to see me and not like, "oh my God". You know, like, "The kids plus sized clothes are upstairs, man, Jesus." Or like, even your own parents are like, "Oh my God, you cost so much money." So it was really cool to see like a group of people like hey, you know, happy to see you here. Even though you suck at football right now. Like, because I was really bad when I started, but I got better.

Eileen Lamb

I love your your honesty. It's, it's very cool to hear someone talk about football this way. What, uh, what inspired you to to leave the NFL? Was it because you finally had enough money to do what you love? Then why did you choose music instead of engineering?

Joe Barksdale

I'll start with that last question first, because you don't need a degree to do music. I was not trying to as much as I love school. Like I realized at that point in time, I had a wife and kids, I'm not trying to "Hey guys, I'll be back and go to class." You know, like, I'm not trying to do that. Um, so I, that was part of

that was a big part of the reason what the engineering I just was, I'm done with. Anyway, um, I was at a game we were playing against the Kansas City Chiefs, I think part of my disillusion with sports too, was I was always on the losing teams. You know, we never went to the playoffs, these kinds of things. So it's not like it was a great experience, either. But I remember we were listening to the Kansas City Chiefs. And I was thinking to myself about you know, there's two 53 man rosters, teams plus the coaching staff, plus the people who work in the front office plus the training staff plus the weight room staff, plus, you know, the, the general manager, the, you know, a lot of people out here coming together to sell out this arena, you know, what, eight times a year. And then I looked up and saw there was an ad for a Taylor Swift concert, which was sold out already in the same arena three days in a row. And I'm like, well, that's significant. It takes all these people to sell this thing out once. And I was like she does it three times with just herself, you know, like, you've seen football ads where they gotta, you know, show you 18 different team members and highlights and all that other kind of stuff. As opposed to just you know, being who you are people coming out. Shit, more people coming out because it's three consecutive as opposed to just one. But I really started thinking about like, what I was doing with my life, and the significance that I was lacking, and I felt that I lacked, you know.

Eileen Lamb

So does music give you that significance? You were looking for?

Joe Barksdale

Not yet. No, I'm just playing, I would say I would say it's a piece of the puzzle for sure. And I'm not saying a piece of a puzzle because of the autism thing, but All laugh)

Andrew M. Komarow

We didn't think you were but now we take a

Joe Barksdale

A lot of dad jokes. But I think it's a piece of the puzzle. I think that, you know, these kinds of conversations are part of the things that helped me feel more significant. Like I said, you know, there's the comedy too. There's being a dad, being a husband. You know, all these things. I think they work together for significance. But music is definitely a factor in that equation for sure.

Andrew M. Komarow

And you talked about being and you talked about being a dad, you have two girls, I have two young girls too, how old are yours?

Joe Barksdale

So we need to go drink together. No, know. That's what we need to go do. I can't say no to my kids. My, my girls are three and five.

Andrew M. Komarow

Yeah, so mine's four and a half. And like, you know, like six months out? Yeah, no, I can't say no, either. Like, it's bad. Yeah,

Joe Barksdale

You know my wife's looking at you like, what are you doing falling for this? It's like, you tell her no. I mean that what we're married for like? But yeah. (all laugh)

Andrew M. Komarow

So but um, do you? So you already had both your kids are close to it when you were diagnosed?

Joe Barksdale

Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow

What, you know, if any thoughts, you know, how did the diagnosis, you know, change, you know, anything you know, about, you know, you affect on, you know, being a parent. Anything you want to share about that?

Joe Barksdale

Biggest thing it did for me was just making me more comfortable with my stims. And just repetitive movements in general before, I'll be like, you know, what the hell is wrong with me? People can't see this, that kind of thing.

Andrew M. Komarow

What are your stims?

Joe Barksdale

Ugh, I bob my head a lot. A lot. Making noises, playing with my mouth. So that one's rubbing my palms with my fingertips. Those are the three main ones. But yeah,

Andrew M. Komarow

So, so the diagnosis helped you like accept who you are a bit more, which allows you to be a better parent. Right?

Joe Barksdale

I think it more kind of tells me who I was. And I will say the emotional. The emotional intelligence that has come from, you know, learning that I'm autistic. And this is one of the reasons I don't understand emotions, and I need to put in extra work to understand emotions, you know, I think that learning so much about emotions has helped me become a better parent. So autism didn't directly but it you know, adjacent, it did.

Eileen Lamb

Do your kids know about your diagnosis? Is that something you talked about with your family?

Joe Barksdale

I mean, I will say they're like, they're both still too young. I would think. I think the five year old is close, because she's gonna be in kindergarten next year, but like, the other one is three she still she thinks

they have to, you know, like they were in the bath the other day, and I was so the dog, we have dogs, we have two Dobermans. Sometimes when our female dog barks, I do a really good job of imitating sounds. So one time when our female dog and I can't help myself, what is it called echolalia? But when the female dog barks, I will just bark consistently. And one day, Kennedy, who's the older one, she's like, Mommy, why is Daddy barking like a dog? And I was like, well, sweetie, daddy is autistic. And that means that, you know, there are different spectrums. And I just walked away on that conversation, because I'm like, I'll wait til you are a little older to break it down. But you know, we are introducing it just in terms of like, the concept of autism and like, not everyone is like you and that kind of thing. So yeah. Yes and no, that was a terrible answer. (Joe laughs)

Eileen Lamb

It's good. I have a I have two boys. You guys, I have two girls. I have two boys. And I'm on the spectrum. My two kids are two and my youngest is verbal, but my oldest is nonverbal. But you know, started talking about my autism. And you know, explaining that there is a wide variety of experiences, like my oldest is nonverbal. And I'm here and I'm talking and I have kids and it's I think it's good for kids to learn about it from from a young age five, I think is when we started really talking about it with my kiddo. Would you say that your autism diagnosis is a reason to work harder on yourself?

Joe Barksdale

I don't know about saying it as a reason to work harder on yourself. But I will say it's not an excuse to be an asshole. But that being said, there are times where you may look like an asshole. You know, like when I was a kid, my mom was shopping at this store called Lane Bryant. We wouldn't be in Lane Bryant so much I thought this was the only place that they made women's clothing. I didn't realize that it was a women's big and tall store and that's why it was so quiet. Because there was so much shame, like and so you know, one day we just walk in and I'm like, Hey, is this the only place that makes female clothes we come here a lot and like why are the dresses so big? And like why is everybody looking so surprised? Right? So you look like an asshole. Like ma, so let me find your dress. What size do you wear? Oh, this is an 18. This is definitely too small like just wow you know, but you sound like an asshole. But you're not, you're just in your mind trying to help, you know. So I do think that there are times like that where you can come across that way, but you're right just to walk around and you know, cut somebody out and be like, I'm autistic and walk away. Like that's not acceptable. That's not decent. You don't want somebody you wouldn't. Even if you aren't, you don't want an autistic person doing that to you. I'm autistic, like, you can shout that on a box. I'm autistic to like you know. I'm on the spectrum, you about to be on the floor? Okay.

Andrew M. Komarow

So, do you have any advice for you know, young autistic dads, right, other than it sounds like you can't say no. And probably drink? Do you have it? Do you have any you have any wholesome advice for?

Joe Barksdale

On a serious note, I would say that it's gonna sound very cliché, but I do think self care is important. I think that sometimes people don't realize that they need it until after they get it. And by that time, you know, it's not too late. But it's like, think about all the things and situations that could have been better if you had been a little bit more relaxed. I would say patience is a part of it, too. Just because, you know, I

can't put myself in other people's shoes in the most I've been through exactly what's happening, you know. And, you know, sometimes I have to remind myself that like, I was a kid, and once and I didn't know everything that I know now. And I know that that's, you know, something that you should work on. You know, I would say I'm saying this as if I'm saying that to a young autistic dad, that's something that you should work on, too. I think that you should figure out like who you are. So as you can be consistent for your kid. I think that's important. Unstable childhoods are not fun.

Eileen Lamb

All parents out there. Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow

And something that I you know, we've learned and that is just reiterating something that you've said, if I'm not doing that well and I'm, you know, not feeling that, well, you know, anxiety or just whatever's going on, it's better to take the time to then come back and be better and present versus hanging around all weekend. And I mean, that and not being like, good time, right? It's better to say I'll say, at least for me, and I think that's what you were saying to that was the hardest, like, I wanted to be there. But at the end, it's better take that hour to like, you know, and then come back in a good place or sit around all weekend and just, you know, snapping or something. Right?

Joe Barksdale

And I mean, you think about 10 good minutes, are better than 60 bad ones, or 60 tense ones. There's like, there's times I would just rather my parents not been around if you're gonna be around. Boy, you lucky we take care of you like, I'm not your boss, why are you going off on me? You know, like making your kids you know, feel that way. But I do think that yeah, like, I don't, I don't know, I know that there are a lot of books written on a lot of things. But there if there wasn't like, a one size fits all manual to parenting, it would be the best seller. You know, there isn't. And I think that part of parenting too, is just realizing that like, hey, this parent may be able to be around their kids for six hours straight. This parent may not, you know, like those kinds of things too. And that's what I mean, when I say like, just coming to terms with who you are like, I can't, I can't handle poop. Like at all. You know, potty training has been terrible. Daddy, come look at this. It's pooping. It's Oh, my Yeah. You helped me why Oh, my where's mom? But you know, we know that I cannot handle poop. But there are other things that I can do that, you know, make up for that. I'm not about to write a book about how to handle poop as a parent. But I say that to say, we all have our own individual journeys. And I think that part of it is just realizing what works for you and your family and not trying to base everything on like a consensus or, you know, something you saw online.

Eileen Lamb

So I want to, I want to ask you a question about something called Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. How do you get it? Why do you want it? Tell us about it?

Joe Barksdale

Um, Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. I'm not gonna do it a disservice. Let me look up the definition. I mean, it's pretty much like the Hall of Fame of Comedy. Winning the mortuary prize for American Humor means like, you know, you are a pretty much like a comedic voice of a generation. It's

like the you know, just like getting inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. A lot of my heroes have won that prize. I want to win that prize. Now I will say I do understand that. A lot of the reason I do want to win that prize comes from deep seated childhood emotional issues revolving like never feeling like you're good enough or trying to get affirmation from strangers, but still, I want to win that prize too. Because I want to be known as the best. Like I want people to say that like I took comedy in a different direction and like, brought awareness to, you know, topics or was able to tackle the topics that most people are too afraid to touch with ease and grace and humor and intelligence. But yeah, I mean, it's very vain, but I want to be eternal. I want to be remembered. Who doesn't want to be? And if you're gonna be remembered, I want to be remembered for being great not for being terrible.

Andrew M. Komarow

You said you want to be remembered for being great, great at what great at you know, football, life just being you know, like the best at everything you do.

Joe Barksdale

Everything that I spend serious time in. So right now, that's music and comedy. Yeah. I'll set up a series time and above for those. Yeah, I want to be undeniably good. Because I never have been before. You know, it was a point in time in your life where you're tired of just being in the top five or the top 10 you know, you want to be the guy. I want to be the guy.

Andrew M. Komarow

But so at the same time, like you're, you know, by most measures, you know, very successful a lot of people can never play in the NFL, no matter how hard they try, you know, I can't, you know, sing to save. I mean, my life, by the way, like, you know, like, literally, like the worst, right? And like, like, you know, like that American Idol dude, who was like doing as a joke, but worse. So, but what can you say for people, but the best is relative, right for somebody else who can never do?

Joe Barksdale

Because like, I am mentally ill, too. And I think that that just distorts how I see things I know, it does. I know it, like affects the reality that I see. A lot of times, so. I mean I may not be the best one for advice. And you know, but yeah, like, that's, I don't know, I can't see it that way. I never have been able to, and I never will be able to even when I was playing, it's like when people would die to be in the NFL. I'm like, why would you die for no reason. You know, I think that there are bigger things in life. And maybe that's what it is the fact that I think that there's much bigger things in life.

Andrew M. Komarow

Sorry, I was thinking, okay, so so Mark Twain. Actually, he grew up like a town over from me, his house. I don't care about him as much as his award, but I don't think they give it out here. I'd hear about it. Right? If they were given out the award. I hadn't heard of the award. Probably separate.

Joe Barksdale

There's probably, I should know this, but I don't know. It's somewhere cool.

Andrew M. Komarow

Then it's definitely not Connecticut close to where I am. If it's somewhere cool. Definitely not near like the Mark Twain house, I promise. Yeah. If it is somewhere cool. So it again, because you don't do enough things already. You do something called Tech Lord of the Sith. Right? And you're and so a couple things. So you've you've tied Star Wars into a lot of what you do, right? Eileen has never seen any Star Wars, by the way.

Joe Barksdale

Well, I think it's time to log out Eileen. I'm just playing. But gonna go ahead and we'll see you next time. Nah. (All laugh)

Eileen Lamb

I'm working on it.

Joe Barksdale

Oh. no no no. I'm giving you a hard time. Look. If you don't like Star Wars, that's not a problem at all. Like I'm

Eileen Lamb

Well I don't know if I like you or not, because I haven't seen it.

Joe Barksdale

Oh, well. But you know, some people like if they don't like you, they don't like if you don't like what they're trying to tell you about all of a sudden, oh, we can't be friends. Why not? Because I don't like but I'm just letting you know, I'm very chill.

Andrew M. Komarow

So tell us what is Tech Lord of the Sith?

Joe Barksdale

It is my tech review channel. And it's also going to be the launch page of my comedy my stand up comedy too. I didn't want to get it intertwined with the music. So I'm gonna pass it on to Tech Lorf channel since I crack jokes on my videos anyway, but pretty much what it is, is I'm really into tech, specifically consumer tech. And you know, there's you see the YouTube videos and you're like, oh, man, what a you know, what's this phone talking about? Do I want to get this phone? I want to get this laptop. I'm not trying to watch a 15 minute you know, Snider cut, or longer of people talking about all the different things. Is it good? Or is it not? Should I buy it? Or should I not like, I don't have the attention span for that. So these are videos for people with short attention spans people who don't have you know, a lot of time on their hands. You know, people who don't, you know, want to wait 30 minutes to see if the new iPhones were to buy. And that's the here's the deal. There is a place for that. But like at least there needs to be somebody who's like Hey, before you go down this rabbit hole of an hour's worth of review footage. Here's the way you know the Wiki, Wikipedia. You know that first paragraph and Wikipedia that's who I see myself as when it comes to tech.

Andrew M. Komarow

Have you ever seen Ice-T presents his Mac repair on YouTube?

Joe Barksdale

No.

Andrew M. Komarow

Okay, I'll send you the link. You should watch it.

Joe Barksdale

Please do.

Andrew M. Komarow

Spoiler alert. The MacBook does not get repaired by Ice-T. So I'll send you the link.

Joe Barksdale

That shows I just go I'm like, Oh, I didn't know I didn't realize he was into computers like. Wooh, I still don't get sarcasm.

Andrew M. Komarow

So we're yeah, actually Eileen and I are very sarcastic. We like speak sarcasm. We're like the opposite where if we assume each other is being sarcastic to us, like, so if we're being serious, we will we have to specify that it's the opposite. Right, Eileen?

Eileen Lamb

Yeah,

Joe Barksdale

That's not fun at all. I'm having a terrible day mentally. Shut the fuck up anyway, like, you're never serious anyway. You know? But yeah. That is the problem with like, you know, sarcasm or humor. People do always assume like, Oh, that's a joke. Yeah, you know?

Eileen Lamb

Oh, yeah, I'm going to ask you some quickfire questions. Basically. You tell me the first answer that comes to your mind.

Joe Barksdale

Okay. Are these one word answers?

Eileen Lamb

Yeah.

Andrew M. Komarow

Close to it don't have to be. Whatever,

Eileen Lamb

Whatever. Do you have a favorite quote? And if so, what is it and who said it?

Joe Barksdale

Favorite quote, so I can quote like a poem or something?

Andrew M. Komarow

Whatever, whatever you want.

Joe Barksdale

I won't quote the entire poem. But it's a nutshell know, this author, the name of the Robert Frost name of the poem is "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening." There was a lovely, dark and deep but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep." Because that's how I feel about my life. I mean, we, the way I see the woods is like, you know, like him sitting down and dying. But you know, him saying, like, but I have promises to keep, like, you know, it's ambiguous. So it could be promises to yourself to other people, you know, to God, I don't know. Miles to go before I sleep. I've come so far, but I still have so far to go. So it kind of encapsulates like my entire existence at this point in time. Well, actually, it encapsulates my entire existence period. I won't even say at this point in time. But uh, yeah, so that's that.

Eileen Lamb

I like it.

Joe Barksdale

Sorry, that was way more than one word.

Eileen Lamb

Good. What, uh, what is your biggest inspiration when it comes to music? A band? A singer?

Joe Barksdale

Kanye West. Oh my god. Kanye West. I'm sorry. But I would say Kanye West. Um, Marvin Gaye is very close. Like, but Kanye West.

Eileen Lamb

What's your favorite alcoholic drink?

Joe Barksdale

Margarita. Actually, no, my favorite alcoholic drink? Is a tequila neat. You know why? It's low in calories. It gets you where you're trying to go. And you don't have to walk around with it the whole party.

Eileen Lamb

What is your favorite portrayal of autism in the media?

Joe Barksdale

Tina Belcher your from Bob's Burgers. I mean, it's I don't even know if it's like confirmed that she's autistic but I feel like she is. And I love her character so much.

Eileen Lamb

Another thing I've never seen I guess I'll add it to my list. What was your dream job as a child or what did you want to be?

Joe Barksdale

I wanted to be one to design cars, whether it was interiors or exteriors, but I wanted to like work on cars I wanted to I grew up in Detroit which is a you know home of the three big the big three motor factories. So yeah, I wanted to design cars.

Eileen Lamb

What's your dream car?

Joe Barksdale

A Bentley? No, I don't have a dream car.

Andrew M. Komarow

What you have now?

Joe Barksdale

An Audi QA But me, yeah my dream car is a driver. Is that kind of like I'd rather have a driver. Yeah, that's a great car right? A nice car with a driver because then you can have those tequila neats so you don't have to worry about driving home.

Eileen Lamb

There you go, pay an Uber driver.

Joe Barksdale

Yeah, that's why the first time you got that answer. What's your dream car? A driver. Yeah, well part of the spectrum are you on? I'm sorry.

Eileen Lamb

Well, I think that was all the questions we had for you. Thank you so much for joining today and being so honest, it was refreshing. Are you on social media? Do you want to tell people where to find you?

Joe Barksdale

Um, yeah, you can. I mean, honestly, you can just Google like Joe Barksdale. Thankfully, there are many former football player and autistic comedian, musician. producers out there. But yeah, you can really Google Joe Barksdale. jbdale72 at Twitter, I mean on Twitter and Instagram and Joe Barksdale on Facebook.

Andrew M. Komarow

Thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

Joe Barksdale

Honestly, you guys are fantastic. I hope I wasn't too long winded.

Eileen Lamb

Oh, no, you were great.

Andrew M. Komarow

You were seriously like and we tell you if you

Eileen Lamb

You are autistic so you know if you are not great.

Joe Barksdale

I need more autistic friends that's been like the saving grace for my comedy and my music. What do you think about this? This is not that good, bro. I just thank you for your honesty. Like,

Eileen Lamb

Yeah, it's very useful to have autistic friends for this reason.

Joe Barksdale

For sure. Oh, by the way, I don't know why I forgot because I do have an album coming out. I just released the single last week. There's another one coming out next month. And there's an album coming out the following month in August at the end of August.

Eileen Lamb

Congrats if you want to send us a link that we can include in when we go live. Yeah, well, we'll send you links and everything when it's live. But thank you so much for

Joe Barksdale

No problem, thank you guys for your time. I appreciate it.

Andrew M. Komarow

Thank you. Have a good one. Bye.

Joe Barksdale

Bye bye