

Laney: [00:00:00](#) Hey friends, welcome to Sweet for Certain podcast. My name is Laney and I'm interested in two things, people and dogs. For the second season Sweet for Certain podcast, We will be diving primarily into the topic of off-leash dogs. What does it mean when you let your dog off leash? Who is impacted? You may notice we've got about a 50 episode season one behind us. I grew so much during that season as an interviewer, as a person. And I'll tell you this, I can't wait to grow even more.

Laney: [00:00:42](#) Hey friends, if you still haven't heard about anchor, let me share with you. It is the easiest way to make a podcast. Let me explain. It's free, free to download, free to use, free to create with their creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer. I record all of sweet for certain, right with my iPhone. Although I do need to get some like soon, I promise. Anchor will distribute your podcast for you so it can be heard on Spotify, Apple podcasts, and many more platforms. You can also monetize your podcast with no minimum listenership via anchor and it's just everything you need to make a podcast in one place. Download the free anchor app or go to anchor.fm to get started.

Sound Effect: [00:01:28](#) [Inaudible]

Laney: [00:01:33](#) Well guys, here we are. She says with nervousness, a lot of anticipation, a lot of excitement. There's a lot of, there's a lot coming up here. There's a lot of good stuff. This episode is the first episode of our new second season, which we are focusing on off-leash dogs. This first interview is with an account that needs almost no introduction that's @publiclands, hate you. This account has been involved in the dog community in a variety of ways over the past, but most notably recently there was an incident where publiclands hates you, utilized strategies of call out culture to try to change an influencer's behavior and actions A few influencers were sharing images and videos of illegal behavior on our publiclands and publiclands. Publiclands hates you, embarked on a quest to try to change that. Right and was met with met with an interesting reaction, that's for sure. This conversation is going to be focused on what it means to be an influencer, where the responsibility level lies. I'm focused also on the goal behind the account and the reason that call culture is being utilized. And then we'll discuss some of the current events. I think you guys are really gonna learn a lot from this episode and I'll tell you this, everyone is welcome on this podcast. No matter your beliefs, no matter your practices, no matter practices you're willing to

- Laney: [00:03:00](#) Share online. We're all here to learn. We're all here to grow from one another. And like I always say, it's not really, it's not really that you should construct this echo chamber around yourself, right? On social media and the content you consume. You should always be striving to broaden your horizons, broaden your understanding, and try to try to understand where people are coming from and try to learn from others. So my goal here and having Steve is just that and I hope that you will enjoy this conversation between me, Steve and Rory from @dobiesisters. I'm not going to spoil it anymore. Without further ado, here's Steve.
- Laney: [00:03:37](#) Hey guys, I'm so excited to have you on the podcast. We've got a Steve here with public lands, hates you and Rory with Doby sisters and we're going to talk about off leash dogs.
- Rory: [00:03:50](#) Very exciting time.
- Steve: [00:03:51](#) Very controversial topic.
- Laney: [00:03:53](#) Yeah, no kidding. I think Steve has had kind of a quite the introduction by fire with the dog Instagram community over the past couple of weeks. I know you've had some other encounters that we'll get into, but certainly this is the most stirred up I've seen everyone, so that's good because that's, that's a good way to get people to act, I think. I agree. So basically I'm going to start off being, being really up front with the listener because this is such a sensitive issue and there were a lot of accusations flying around. So we're, we're doing this in sort of a balanced panel discussion kind of format.
- Laney: [00:04:28](#) The three of us should be able to give and take pretty easily in conversation. I brought dobie sisters on Rory because I don't trust myself to handle an interview this big all by myself. But I did want,
- Rory: [00:04:41](#) I am happy to be the adult.
- Laney: [00:04:43](#) Okay. So the way we usually start off interviews on the speaker, certain podcasts are the, the guest gives a little bit of introduction about themselves and who they are and yeah, just basically introduces the listeners to who you are. And I'd love for you to do that. Steve. Obviously you do maintain anonymity, but maybe you can give a little perspective as to who you are and while you're on here tonight.

Steve: [00:05:08](#) Sure. So yeah, like you said, Steve is not my real name. I, I operate the public lands hates you. Instagram account and website. And I'm here today because I've recently called out a number of we'll call them adventure dog Instagram accounts for repeatedly engaging in illegal behavior on public lands. And that is a big part of what the public lands hates you Instagram account does. It kind of takes a look at people who are engaging in that kind of behavior and if they're not necessarily willing to you know, be accountable for that behavior calls that behavior out.

Laney: [00:05:52](#) [Inaudible] Yeah. And we're going to get in a little more into your methodology a bit later on. But I think that was a good little elevator pitch. And then Rory, if you wanted to introduce yourself, although you're a repeat guest on the podcast.

Rory: [00:06:06](#) Yeah. Like you said, I'm a repeat guests obviously. So I think most of the people that are listening from your you know, repeat listener community already know me, but my name is Rory. I have two Dobermans, Griffin and Boston, and I like hiking with them. And this is a topic that interests me because I've kind of had my own personal I guess evolution on this topic before this blew up. And that's, you know, another reason that you know, I'd like to chime in here and that's something that we can get in later too. But just kind of observing social norms around leashes. I have a mountain house in blowing rock North Carolina. I used to live there full time, but now I live in Ohio, which is very flat and is not really amazing for hiking, but has some pretty places nonetheless.

Rory: [00:06:52](#) So love you Ohio. But I am also a lawyer who works in politics. So wading into controversy, you know, getting people together, negotiating hard topics, let's literally what I do for a living. So, you know, I've had a lot of private conversations with people in the dog community who have said either, you know, one way or the other, like, Oh my God, I hate that guy. I can't believe you would talk to him. And I'm like, well, if you disagree, that's all the more reason to talk to him. And that's just, I think I approach things a little bit differently. I'm a little bit desensitized to these sorts of conflicts. Not in a bad way, but I've also seen firsthand, I used to be the staff director of a congressional committee that, you know, it can be, it can be work and you can take people who are on very different sides of an issue and get them to, you know, not necessarily agree, but at least respect each other's positions and come together. And that was kind of my hope for participating in this discussion as it may be people who are, you know, really polarized on one side

of this issue or the other can learn something. And, you know, I shot Steve a message before we started this conversation and he agreed. So I think that, you know, quite frankly, we're already off to a great start.

Laney: [00:08:03](#) Yeah, I think so for sure. And definitely background in politics is why I wanted to have you on. And I think I I, like I said, I'm, I'm, we're, we're really gonna try to have a balanced discussion here. I'm going to out myself right now as an a person who has broken leash laws in the past. Big time. I have to, I'm more than willing to admit that I've broken them in the past. There's probably nobody who owns a dog who hasn't, to be honest. That's really true. That's really true. I will say that my record in national parks is clean and I'm proud of that because that was my that was my parents' influence. But, but the state parks and County parks have been terrorized by me, so I will be editing that behavior. But I am interested in having a, you know, a balanced discussion like we talked about. And again, you know, a phrase that keeps floating around is nobody's perfect. And people use that to either justify, call it culture or explain their current behavior or whatever. And I think we can all just agree to start this podcast with that. Like, we don't need to keep saying that over and over. We can move on from there. And, and that's why I'm trying not to say I'm not perfect myself because everybody knows that

Steve: [00:09:16](#) And I'm, I'm not either, there's a number of posts on my account that acknowledge that for a number of mistakes that I've made. So I will also own up to that right now. Yeah,

Laney: [00:09:26](#) For sure. So just to get us started, I think the first thing I wanted to talk about was just a tiny bit more on, on your actual background in post Steve, because I was curious in when you, when you initially started the public lands hates you account if you could speak a little bit to your motivation at that time. Like if you had seen a lot of behavior in person or you were really more fired up about the stuff you were seeing online.

Steve: [00:09:52](#) Sure. So it was mostly in person and it was one particular hike in that really got me fired up. And that was I think it was in 2018, summer 2018 went on a hike with some friends in the mountains in Idaho and we just saw one thing after another that showed how disrespectful people were being on public lands from off-leash dogs where they weren't allowed to campfires, that people hadn't fully extinguished in the middle of wildfire season two folks carving their initials into trees to shortcutting switchbacks, just one thing after another and on

the drive home, you know, I got to thinking about it and I kind of drew the conclusion that the reason that I've personally been seeing so much more of this kind of disrespect is due to social media and Instagram. You know, people are seeing all these beautiful locations and they want to go experience them too, but they're not necessarily getting the education that they need to go and experience these places with respect. So I decided to start the Instagram account and fight fire with fire, if you will. And it started off slow. Then the super boom hit and the super bloom is really where things took off cause the images coming out of there and the damage was so striking. And you know, once that kind of you know, slowed down a little bit, I started you know, taking a look at other specific topics.

Rory: [00:11:23](#) Yeah. So can I just back up real quick, you know, in terms of starting the account, I'm just curious, how did you choose the handle? Public lands hates you because you know, whether you love it or hate it, so to speak. I mean it gets your attention. And, and that concept around I know you also have public lands dislike you to handle when people are blocking, but how did you come around to that? Because you know, in social media as we see, and this is topic that we're going to keep coming around to, like branding is everything. And I think the branding is, is kind of clever.

Steve: [00:12:00](#) It's, yeah, it is. It actually wasn't the original name of the account. The original name of the account was IgG untagged. To kind of discourage geotagging without information. Eventually after, you know, really diving into the geotagging subject some more, I figured that that wasn't comprehensive enough to kind of cover everything that I was interested in looking at. And so I changed it to the public lands. Hates you and I can't take credit for that name. That was a rip off of the Joshua tree hates you Instagram account. That was started during the government shutdown to cover the abuse that was happening in Joshua tree national park. Unfortunately that account has been shut down due to multiple threats of lawsuits, but I'm still here.

Laney: [00:12:47](#) Still here. Still kicking. Yup. So as far as when, when you were creating the account, I think one of the, one of the central tenants in the way that, that people remember this account is by the fact that you're anonymous and you've chosen to remain, remain anonymous. That's the thing that both pisses people off and people admire, I think. And I'm, I'm curious if you immediately knew you were going to do that and then when, when you started to engage in call it culture and influencers were saying, well, who the hell are you to say, you know, how

did you basically resist the urge to out yourself or what we were thinking? Like what was your thinking there?

Steve: [00:13:25](#) You know, I originally didn't really think about it. It wasn't until the account really started taking off and I started to realize how much influence and how much power a, some of these influencers have and how irritated they can be when you start calling them out. And when I realized that, that's when I really said, okay, I've got to keep this anonymous and I really don't think that my face has anything to do with the message of the account. I think that the message speaks for itself. So like a lot of influencer accounts, it doesn't need shirtless guys with six packs or women's swimsuits to attract followers. We all know that sex sells cute dog pictures sell, highly edited landscape photos sell. But the fact that this account has attracted so much attention as it has, based on the message alone, without any of that sexiness, I think is pretty astounding.

Laney: [00:14:14](#) Yeah. And I think that, I think that it's an interesting criticism that people often devote to is that you've chosen to remain anonymous. And I think they kind of hold that up as like a, see isn't this guy a coward who's calling me out? He won't even show his face. But I mean, that's such a strange thing to say because they're, they're not saying that about the person running the national park account who's commenting, you know, to remind them of the law.

Rory: [00:14:37](#) Well, not only that, but there are plenty of people who have dog accounts that pretend their dog is writing their captions and that don't show their face and only show their dogs. So, you know, I mean, it's coming

Rory: [00:14:52](#) From the dog community. I feel like some of that is also a little bit the critical, there are plenty of people who only show their dogs and don't show themselves. Yeah. And I just, I think that also it's an easy target for people who I call out to avoid accountability. And I know that we're going to touch on that topic more, but the same with the use of the word hate in the name of the account. You know, people will latch on to those things. The fact that I'm anonymous or the fact that the account has the word hate in it and say, look, you just hate people or you're anonymous, you have no right to call people out. And you know, I think that goes to show how weak a lot of the arguments are against the account.

Laney: [00:15:30](#) Yeah, I definitely, I definitely would agree with that. And you know, obviously there is the example of people using their dog's

voice, but you know, there's several other accounts out there. One that comes to mind is the tactical veterinarian who doesn't show his face for privacy reasons, but shares photos of his client dogs and things like that, that come in for surgery as an educational tool. So I think, I think that you're right, that it, when they commit these kinds of fallacies and things like that, influencers do upon being called out, I think that that's where you start to see their argument really fall apart and where the blocking just starts to happen. And there's no engagement after that. But I will mention, I did want to call out that you in the past have expressed that you're willing to come on platforms like this podcast and so you're not unwilling to pull back the veil and speak yourself. You just aren't keeping your identity private, which is your rights.

Steve: [00:16:23](#) Yeah, that's, that's correct. There's been, there's a number of call them, you know, high profile or influencers in the outdoor recreation space who are femininely against the account, who I've said, Hey, if you want to get on a podcast with a neutral moderator or even not a neutral moderator. And I've even said, I'll, I'll talk with two of you versus just me and we can talk about this. And so far nobody's taken me up on it. Yeah, I was surprised. I, I'm extremely surprised too because I feel like, especially me, if I have an argument that I feel strongly about, then I can back up. I, I'm willing to go out there and talk about it and I'll talk to anybody about it. And I think the fact that a lot of these influencers aren't willing to do that again just goes to show how weak their argument against the account is.

Steve: [00:17:14](#) I know that what the account does is not you know, sexy if you will, but it's effective.

Rory: [00:17:22](#) Well, and I think not only that, but how are you supposed to refute an argument that you don't fully understand? Like, if I am seriously opposed to an argument that was all, you know, again, I said this before, this is all the more reason to engage in a conversation because how good are my arguments against it if I don't fully understand where the person was coming from and I'm not willing to, you know, again, I, I wrote in my earlier making

Rory: [00:17:50](#) A comparison to, you know, being a lawyer and there's a reason that 90% of cases settle because most of the time if you can get people to sit down face to face, you can find some kind of common ground. And so I always encourage people to do that. And you know, I will admit I was a little bit disappointed at the

response Laney got when she invited the accounts that were involved in the dog debate here in the response that they gave.

Laney: [00:18:20](#) Yeah, we can definitely touch on that a little bit later when we talk about the events of the past couple weeks. But I, I was extremely disappointed too. And I think that looking through all of the screenshots from previous call outs and looking at each situation that Steve has been involved in as a case study, I think that the reason that people don't come on and debate is because the people that are not willing to remove their posts and they're not willing to add disclaimers and things like that, like you're asking for the people that are unwilling to do that really aren't interested in learning or discussing at all. And I think that the people that are willing to hear what you have to say and end up putting disclaimers on their posts, those are the people that are in the end, a willing to learn and willing to grow and not take everything as a personal criticism against themselves, I guess.

Rory: [00:19:11](#) But here's the thing. I mean, even if you know, so hypothetically, I don't want to learn. I don't want to grow and I just decide that I really don't care about public lands that much. I care about my career as an influencer or more than that. If I can't double down and say that and explain, you know, one of the things that I've been saying to a lot of people in the context of these conversations licence lately is, you know, I live by the motto, I should always be able to explain what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. And if I can't or if the explanation becomes overly convoluted that was assigned me that maybe I'm doing something that I shouldn't be doing. So if you can't, you know, even if you feel that way, you know, if you can't come and, and defend that position, like that raises a red flag to me that maybe, you know, you somehow think that what you were doing is wrong too and you're just not willing to admit it.

Laney: [00:20:06](#) Yeah, I dunno, Steve, maybe you can talk to this, but I just want someone to say, I want my daughters to be off leash and I don't care about the law. Like why won't they just come out and say that? I mean I don't understand why they, the argument they tried to turn influencers try to turn the argument and all these different ways. If you are really that willing and that committed to breaking the law, why not just come out and say that or stop posting you doing it?

Steve: [00:20:32](#) Well, I mean one of the folks that we're going to discuss later pretty much did say that the, I had to quote their account. If I'm

risking paying a \$450 off leash, fine, your petty Instagram, is it going to change my mind?

Steve: [00:20:49](#) So people do come out and say that. And honestly it's because of folks that say things like that that public lands hates you exists. If people are willing to take accountability for the things that they did wrong and own up to their mistakes, this account wouldn't have to exist. And to be honest, I would be a pretty happy about that.

Rory: [00:21:09](#) Perfect. So I want to back it up a little bit cause one of the things that we've referenced a couple of times is, you know, that through social media, access to or interest in accessing the outdoors has increased her, you know, people with dogs and not on dogs and no dogs alike. And sometimes that education is, is lacking. Why do you think that is? You know, I know the national park service is always encourages people and they have the hashtag no before you go. And a lot of people don't do that. They don't do their research. And so, you know, again, we do have people that honestly don't know that do make mistakes. And I realize there are different categories of the honest mistake crowd versus the knowing and repeat offender crowd. But I think big picture, and you know, I speak for myself a little bit here, you know, I have been on trails where it's like, Oh, well all these dogs are off leash. So I assume it's okay only to find out later that it's not. And you know, not just, you know, thinking to research ahead of time. Why do we think the education aspect is lacking and do influencers now that they have the quote unquote influence that they have bear some of that responsibility?

Steve: [00:22:27](#) I absolutely think that they do bear some of that responsibility or at the very least, to not be spreading this information to not be sharing posts and videos to tens of thousands of people showing multiple dogs off leash in an area where a dogs are not allowed this time of year and B are required to be leash year-round. So at the very least, you know, I would be happy if influencers just stopped sharing that kind of misinformation. But I also think that asking for these people with lots of influence, especially when they're using public lands, which belonged all of us, I'm asking those influencers to add one or just one or two sentences in the caption of their posts saying, Hey this trail requires leashes. Or Hey you know, before you go contact the ranger station that's providing that kind of education to your followers and reminder to your followers is free. It literally just costs a couple of keystrokes. So I, I

personally don't understand why it's so difficult to get people on board, on board.

Rory: [00:23:27](#) I'm going to say why do you, why do you think people don't do it? I mean, as the, the influencer began to rise, you know, we had the rise of, you know, the, the uneducated influencers so to speak. You know, I'm just curious if you have any thoughts on that.

Steve: [00:23:41](#) I don't, I, I honestly, I can't think of a single reason why they wouldn't be willing to do that.

Steve: [00:23:46](#) They're using these public lands to make a living. They have responsibility just like all of us do to respect those public lands and encourage others to respect those public lands. So I don't think that there is any excuse and I couldn't even come up with a hypothetical reason why they don't do it.

Rory: [00:24:01](#) So I'm going to kind of flip this and ask you, Laney, cause I know you've said in a couple of your stories that you feel like on the one hand everybody who's on Instagram is constantly learning from what they read and what they see, but that you felt like it wasn't your job to educate. And so, you know, we have kind of a contrast of people who have said point blank, well it's not my, I'm not in a place to educate other people, but then we also have this, you know, well, if people are constantly learning from what they see where it's kind of the balance between you know, the information you share and, and educating others in an informative way as opposed to just an opinionated way.

Laney: [00:24:41](#) Right. So I think that this has been basically the question I've been trying to answer over two years of having an Instagram account for my dog.

Rory: [00:24:48](#) No. And that's why I'm asking you because I've seen some of your posts and stories where you try to, you know, kind of hash through this. So, you know, as this issue continues to evolve, I'm just curious, you know, where you stand right now.

Laney: [00:25:01](#) Right? So really my answer is going to be a little longer, but this ties into I had made a post a couple of weeks back about the fact that I think it's unethical to edit the leash out of photos and not put a disclaimer at the bottom of your photo, especially when that photo is geotagged Republic lands any kind of public lands or if it's recognizable where the photo is. The reason I think that's unethical is because people have made the

argument to me that it is not the responsibility of an influencer to act as a park ranger and educate people about the parks.

Laney: [00:25:36](#) It is responsibility on individuals to be smart and know before they go on things like that. But what I put forth between people is, yes, we're all adults here. And that is ideally what those people should do. But they follow your account and kind of by osmosis they sort of see your behavior and they learn from it over time. So if you were to just put that one line, it is hugely impactful for people because maybe someone will think to look up the rules at their local trail they've been going to for 20 years that they never thought about looking at before and they'll realize that they've been breaking the law. And the problem is that people mistake disclaimers like that for active education and making education part of your life's mission. And I guess that's what I was talking about when I posted my stories that I'm not doing active education. I conduct this podcast and I bring on people that I think could help others grow and other people could learn from. But I'm not actively educating in that. I'm not constantly trying to teach people lessons because for me it was just exhausting. Instead I'm trying to lead by example and provide the right information to people just by in my posts demonstrating

Laney: [00:26:44](#) The right behavior. However, unfortunately I'm wrestling with this as well because there is a little bit of a personal safety aspect in mind, which is the reason that my dog is often off-leash in our photos. And it's not so much about lawbreaking is because here in Wisconsin there's an extensive network and availability of off-leash trails and trail systems that are actually for off-leash dogs year round, which is incredible. But the ones in particular that are local to me, I worry that if I put that disclaimer in the caption and I share where it is so that people know I'm not being false about the law. I worry that people will begin to realize where I go regularly during the week, which is just kind of like a personal safety concern. I don't really think that's as valid of an argument for some of these influencers who are in parks out West that, you know, there's a plethora of parks and maybe they're going to different ones at different times.

Laney: [00:27:42](#) But at least here in Wisconsin where there's really two, they're local to me, I hesitate to keep posting about that location and it's law. So that's kind of my thinking on why I've been wrestling with this. Because on one hand I feel like it's dangerous to keep picking, taking pictures of my dogs without without any Alicia's

on her. But it's because it's legal where we are. But I worry about posting that disclaimer.

Rory: [00:28:05](#) Yeah. And I understand that too. And you know, just to tie that in with the previous topic where, you know, I mentioned education, I'm just speaking from my own experience. I mean, we have 25,000 followers, which is not huge as far as, you know, some of these dog Instagram goes, but it's more than I ever imagined. And so I feel like in some instances you have the accidental influencer where, you know, for whatever reason, certain accounts that didn't seek it out initially, you know, got into the influencer game and, and not always intentionally, but make a choice.

Rory: [00:28:43](#) You, you, but you also make a choice, you know, when you keep your account public and you continue to keep sharing. So, you know, my thoughts on some of these things have, have absolutely evolved over time. And I think to your, with constant example this brings it back to the geotagging issue that, that we were talking about of you know, how do you share geotag at all, how specific should it be? And I feel like that has both ways too, because I know I shared something on my stories recently. You know, as back in blowing rock and there is a trail, you know, through a park that dead ends into a neighborhood that is under construction. And there are big open fields that look like a mountain bald and they're all privately held locks. And we have somebody who is building on one of those lots.

Rory: [00:29:34](#) They haven't started construction yet, but they said, yeah, go ahead, use it. You know, they have three dogs, you know, said, come on down, run around here, have fun. And so, you know, I posted a video of my dogs running on private property with somebody else's dogs and there's a mountain view in the background and got people being like, Hey, your dogs can't be on leash. And I'm like, well, they're on private property. They can. So, you know, I feel like the geotagging thing cuts both ways, particularly with some of these people. And you know, Steve, I would just be curious on your thoughts here. On the one hand, accountability is really important, but we've also seen that sometimes the pendulum swings too far and people are really overzealous when they're passionate about something to correct someone. And you know, they not only might be wrong, but you know, they, this is where we get into the issue of maybe they say their comment in a way that's framed as an accusation or use this language that they shouldn't. And that's they think really the crux of, you know, what people are upset about is this aspect of call out culture where they feel attacked. So I just

realized that I kind of rambled a little bit. So there's, there's geotagging and getting into call out culture, but I think those things kind of tie into one another because people want to call others out for their behavior in specific locations. Does that make sense? Yeah,

Steve: [00:30:58](#) Yeah, it does. And, you know, I think that I could, we could do an entire hour long podcast just about de geotagging. So I'm, I'm not even really, maybe we should do a follow up, but we can if you want, but I'm not really gonna dive too deep into that. There's a lot of complex issues at play there. But you know, I think that if you're going to geotag yourself in a location that clearly requires dogs to be on leash or doesn't allow dogs you've got to expect some kind of, some kind of a backlash to that, that you really do. And that's one of the negatives of, of geotag. It really does. And that that was the, you know, that was the case and the examples that we'll, we'll be chatting about a little bit.

Rory: [00:31:45](#) Yeah,

Laney: [00:31:46](#) For sure. Just to steer us back towards our, our little outline here and I really, I kind of want to wrap up the anonymity discussions super fast before we talk more about influencer responsibility. But I did want to mention to you, Steve, I kind of feel like I mentioned this a little bit earlier, but I feel a bit like the reason it makes people so angry that your account is anonymous is because they feel like you are attacking them personally and they feel like that they, you know, share their lives and they're kind of standing exposed before a crowd. And then there's a sort of this embodied voice that criticizes them. So I wonder if like, I mean you could almost draw a parallel to American politics in a way, sort of like the movement to identity politics over time and more ad hominem attacks, especially in debates. I'm curious if that's, that you think

Laney: [00:32:40](#) Is, is partially why people get so angry that you're anonymous.

Steve: [00:32:44](#) I understand that sentiment, but I don't feel that it's entirely correct. You know, if and when folks do figure out who I am, I'm going to continue calling out this kind of behavior and people still aren't going to like it. Nobody likes being told that they're wrong. I don't like being told that I'm wrong. I've been personally called out by a number of accounts, you know, one with over a million followers. And that feeling sucks even when nobody knows who you are per se. But at the end of the day, the facts are that if you've done something wrong, especially when you're on public land, you have I feel like you have the

responsibility to own that. And that applies to any kind of mistake if you make a mistake. Do you know folks, folks need to be able to own that and that's a hard thing to do.

Steve: [00:33:39](#) It requires sucking up some pride, but it's the right thing to do first. For sure.

Rory: [00:33:44](#) I think that's so important. And I think, yeah, that also ties into, you know, one of the things that people talk about is, is the demographics of influencers. A lot of them are really young and haven't learned a lot of life lessons about how to handle adversity with you know, humility and grace. So as somebody who is getting ready to enter their fourth decade of life, you know, some of this stuff here just strikes me as unfortunately very juvenile. And you know, it's not to say if social media had been a thing when I was that age that I wouldn't have done the exact same thing. I was, you know, also young and naive at one point too. But just the fact that so many influencers are so young I think contributes to that lack of humility.

Steve: [00:34:31](#) Yeah. I think, I think it's something I mentioned to one of you at one point, which is like, yes, influencers have this responsibility, but it's also not that surprising that a bunch of young women in their twenties are not very skilled at public relations when it comes to these kinds of, when it comes to these kinds of controversies. Right. so it's, I mean, it's an interesting conversation and I think that we can talk for hours about what influencer, what level of responsibility influencers have. But I think at the end of the day, it really comes down to the individual follower who's seeing, you know, the public plans hates stories or is seeing different call outs of people. They follow us. It's really up to you to throw your support behind the people that you think are demonstrating the, the appropriate level of responsibility for their actions. Or at least that's what that's kinda been what I've gotten out of it. And I'm curious, I'm curious also Steve, if you feel like you are an influencer in the same sort of way and if you feel the weight of responsibility as an influencer, especially like what you mentioned about when you've gotten called out and you feel like you, even if you've never

Laney: [00:35:38](#) Felt like you've screwed up, like do you feel like you bear responsibility for your followers in their actions?

Steve: [00:35:43](#) Well, I'll start at the beginning and say that. Yeah. I mean, I definitely think that the public lands hates you. Account does qualify, qualify as an influencer account. But I also just want to

make the point that anybody who has a social media presence or anybody who's you know, a member of society and out in public, you're an influencer. What you share and what you do as seen by others and influences what those people do. As far as, you know, me having accountability for my followers. Yeah, of course. There, there comes some accountability from me in regards to that. You know, I, I do my best to practice what I preach. I don't engage in any kind of abusive or threatening language. Yeah, I'm definitely sarcastic sometimes. So I try to lead by example there. I try to share posts and stories frequently that are, you know, encourage that and preach that. But at the end of the day, when you have 60,000 people following you, and a lot of them are riled up about people who are repeatedly doing these illegal and harmful things. That's a tough crowd to fully control. And I think that after you know, the first high-profile incident, I kind of really realized that and that's when I created the guidelines that I have for the account and really have tried to do a better job trying to encourage people to you know, leave comments and send messages in a kind, polite and educational way.

Rory: [00:37:10](#) Can you talk a little bit more about that experience? Because I think there is some overlap with the dog Instagram community and what happened there. And I think that is a lot of people's, a lot of people's first impressions to public lands hate you STEM from that incident. And I don't know that a lot of people stuck with it to see the guidelines you're talking about and the fact that you are now encouraging people to make sure that they're respectful when they leave a message or a comment on somebody's page. So I assume that that was you know, in the same way that we're talking about education on public lands, I assume that was a huge lesson in social media for you and an important one. So I am just wondering if you can talk a little bit more about what that experience was like on your end.

Steve: [00:38:03](#) Yeah, for sure. So I don't have a gag order yet, so that the account that I called out there was Brianna Medallia who definitely, you know, is a dog account and you know, I called the her out for multiple infractions for a dog off leash in arches national park too. You know, getting too close to wildlife to you know, taking a bath in a mud pot in the desert and it didn't it didn't go over well. What I shared was definitely very critical although factual in my opinion and a lot of my followers went too far with the messages and the comments that they sent to Brianna. And that for me was extremely eyeopening. You know, I was fired up about it, but I also, you know, wasn't sending

threatening messages or anything like that, which some people did.

Steve: [00:38:58](#) And like I said, that opened my eyes and, and that incident and the account was smaller back then, but that incident was what really led me to create the guidelines and really push the the, the being polite and being educational thing to my followers in their interactions with other accounts. Do you feel like it's been successful? I feel like there has definitely been. Yeah, I do. I do. I feel like things have gotten a lot better. There's still influencers who will claim that nasty, terrible things are being sent to them and said to them. And despite all that, you know, I always ask to see that I don't stand for that. If I see any of my followers sending messages or leaving comments that are abusive or threatening, I'll block them immediately. I'll personally report them to Instagram. That's something that I take seriously. That actually happened with the, these incidents that we're gonna talk about in the future here. And I had to block somebody cause the message that they sent wasn't educational. It was, it was rude, it wasn't productive, and that does nothing to help the cause.

Laney: [00:40:07](#) Yeah. I just wanted to call attention for anyone who's listening to the highlights on public lands hit you account. There is there is a highlight called guidelines that lays out everything you developed post Brianna media in that situation. So I think some of the things to call out from there as you've said, that if you see any of this behavior happening, you should absolutely let you know so that you can act on it, block those people, et cetera. You mentioned you have a zero tolerance policy and a submissions are anonymous. So I think you posted this recently, but even if you fly your drone constantly around national monuments and have your dogs off leash and all this stuff you're not in a worst position to report people. You still can.

Steve: [00:40:52](#) Absolutely not. You know, I, I can compartmentalize. If for instance, the, the women that we're going to discuss here soon came to me and said, look, I had all these people send me these messages and those messages are you know, threatening or abusive or rude I'll block them, those people from my account, I'm happy to do that. I'll report them to Instagram. I'm happy to do that. I'm dead serious when I say you know, I, I really do take this stuff seriously and I don't want the public lands hate you account to be a conduit for any kind of that behavior. I don't want you know, every troll on the internet to come to public lands hates you and think that it's a safe space for them because it's not

- Laney: [00:41:36](#) For sure. And I think that, I think that it's really interesting because with the Brianna Madia situation, it certainly sounds like there was
- Laney: [00:41:44](#) More of that going on.
- Laney: [00:41:46](#) But I think, as you've mentioned to me since then, the actual instances are pretty low, but people are still confident to post. Oh, I've been getting tons of horrible messages, but very few screenshots to actually report those people.
- Steve: [00:42:01](#) Yeah, for sure. And the one screenshot that I did see it didn't really have any squares. Even it just, it was something like, you know, you can take the girl out of Missouri, you can't take the Missouri out of the girl hashtag white trash. That was it. I blocked that person. Like that's not productive. It doesn't further the cause doesn't help protect public lands. All it does is give people who abuse our public lands more fuel for their fire against the account.
- Laney: [00:42:26](#) For sure. Yeah. I think, I think that's one of the craziest things that people don't even realize is why would it be productive to your cause to allow people to tell people to kill themselves and really inflammatory language like that. I don't understand why that would ever be part of the purpose.
- Steve: [00:42:40](#) I don't understand it either. And that's why I, you know, I really try to say that that's not something that I stand for and I try and show it in, you know, my actions.
- Rory: [00:42:49](#) So before we transition into the current situation, cause I felt like we've alluded to it a couple of different times. I'm closing the loop on the Brianna situation. Has there, was there any kind of conclusive resolution to that? I mean, did you ever have any direct contact with her? I mean, I know that you had your guidelines that kind of resulted from that, but was there any, was there any concrete resolution to that situation? Obviously she shut down her account for a while. You know, she's back on social media, still doing the Vanlife thing. Or was just the guidelines, the resume, the only resolution on your [inaudible].
- Steve: [00:43:29](#) She removed two of the three posts that I called her out for. She still has one posted with a snake draped around her neck with a caption that just say my new friend or something like that. But I haven't heard anything from her since I was blocked.

Laney: [00:43:47](#) Yeah. And I think that, I think that what came out of that and you know, allow myself, I've long looked up to Brianna, but obviously with the current off-leash conversations, I certainly don't appreciate some of, I dunno, thinking back on the way the situation went down, I do remember that basically her, the final words to you were kind of like, I'm going to still do what I do and I feel bad for you because you're a sad person.

Steve: [00:44:17](#) Yeah, that's a, that's a pretty good synopsis there. You know, I could, I could quote you the screenshots. There's no need for that. That's close enough.

Laney: [00:44:24](#) Right. And I just, and not specifically about Briana, but I think that something that's really what you mentioned earlier, Steve, about how it feels bad to be wrong and it feels bad to feel like other people think you're wrong is the way that people often not just point you out as a bully, but also claim that their mental health is being negatively impacted. And something I want to say about that is like it's amazing how much openness and positivity people feel about mental health topics in today's society. But I think that claiming like call outs like this are detrimental to your mental health is a very interesting deflection of responsibility because yes, it would cause me anxiety as well to know that I was wrong and other people think I'm wrong, but that's part of feeling wrong and feeling like you've made a mistake. So I guess it's interesting how so many of these influencers with these huge platforms that are open to criticism at all times from people all over the world immediately resort to a mental health argument because I think it's hard to argue against.

Rory: [00:45:32](#) Well, I would add, and this goes back to our point about demographics earlier, I think what we're seeing is that a lot of people who are active users of social media, their self worth is inherently tied to how they perform on social media and the amount of likes and comments and things that they got. So when your identity is wrapped up in a platform like this to feel attacked on that type of a platform maybe really does impact your mental health and can be very jarring. And I think, you know, on a deeper level, we would hope that if you go through something like that, that an introspective process would take place of, okay, all of these people think I'm wrong. Are they ganging up on me? Was I actually wrong? You know, it's kind of like the flow chart. Yes. Okay, can I, how do I handle this?

Rory: [00:46:22](#) Do I take responsibility? Do I take the post down? Do I say something or no, and if you're not wrong, then how do you

respond to that? Because even if you inherently disagree, I think that there are still ways to, to be respectful about that too. You don't have to ultimately agree at the end of the day, but if this many people think you are wrong, you know, again, even if you arrive at the same conclusion that you started with, I would hope that there is a, some sort of thorough introspective process that takes place in between. And I'm not confident that that's always what takes place.

Steve: [00:46:58](#) I'm, I'm not either, especially based on the responses that I've seen you know, many, many times over the stories that people post. I, I think that it's just a deflect and hope that it passes and then everybody forgets about it. Cause you know, influencers are able to make that happen on social media by deleting comments they don't agree with and blocking people. They don't agree with it. It's just so easy for them to create their own little reality.

Rory: [00:47:26](#) Well, and also people's attention spans are short. This is something that we struggle with in news all the time about, you know, Oh, this scandal. Well, there's going to be a new scandal tomorrow, so just wait it out. You know, and you know, not, we don't always spend as much time having more insightful and thoughtful conversations that take more time in more detail than I think just, you know, it's not just a call out culture. I think we're, as a society and this transcends beyond social media and beyond public lands. But, you know, we're addicted to outrage just as a society right now. I want to be more outraged about, you know, something that someone else did and just, there's like this escalating scale of, you know, it just, it's, it's so interesting to watch people just be outraged and sometimes they get outraged over frivolous things and I just, I don't necessarily understand that phenomenon, but it's definitely present in many walks of life beyond just social media.

Laney: [00:48:35](#) Yeah. And I think, I think we're pretty squarely in the current situation now. So I'd like to start obviously I mentioned at some, at some point that we can assume a higher level of social media literacy from listener. So this particular episode, a lot of people were exposed to this incident, so we're not going to dive into everything. Although maybe we will dive into a lot of it, but I want to point out that on public lands, hate to Instagram, I there are highlights that you've provided concerning the three accounts that were involved in the events of the last two weeks so that people are more than willing to refer to those highlights and follow along and see the actual screenshot. See the actual proof of what we're saying here.

- Steve: [00:49:18](#) Yeah. All the, all the stories that I posted calling these women out are posted in the highlights for anybody to see in their entirety. Nothing to hide.
- Laney: [00:49:26](#) And I want to stress the, obviously we're trying to have a productive conversation here. We're going to try to keep things productive and, you know, not just, we're not,
- Rory: [00:49:39](#) We don't just want to point the fingers and say, Hey, you guys broke the law that we're, I think we're past that. You know, I think in the interest of having a balanced discussion, I understand what it's like to be passionate about something and to wish that other people shared my passions. I also know what it's like to feel like I was backed into a corner and I had no choice but to lash out at people. I think that, you know, one of the challenges with Instagram, everything is instant. And sometimes when people are in an emotionally heightened state and they're angry, they say things that they don't mean, you know, to Brianna maybe his credit, you know, she, she shut her account down for a little bit and took some time away.
- Rory: [00:50:21](#) And I'd like to think that, you know, perhaps more reflective but just responding instantly. You know, and publicly I think sometimes people dig themselves a hole by, by responding in that way and may be saying things that are, you know, based in emotion rather than reason. And I would hope that they may be wished they didn't say say after the fact, but you know, for a community that loves to talk about reactive dogs, I mean, you know, they should certainly understand what, what lashing out entails. But I would think that, again, this is back to bringing in the human element of, you know, I would just love to see more introspection from some of these people instead of I was attacked, you know, I think yeah, it sucks. We've talked about that. Nobody likes, you know, when it's pointed out to them that they were wrong, but that doesn't necessarily equate to an attack or bullying.
- Rory: [00:51:18](#) There are specific definitions of these things. And it could have been a really productive conversation and it just, it just wasn't, it just fell flat. And I think, you know, when you, when you idolize some of these influencers, I mean obviously you don't get that many followers, you know, out of nowhere. I think these are women who are talented photographers and I think that there are women who genuinely love their dogs, but I think they are also women who are perhaps lacking a little bit of a inability to see beyond themselves in their experience. Not everybody in Colorado you know, is an adventure dog person.

You know, some of the comments that I've been receiving on the posts that I put up is we've been talking, it's like, I don't want to see an off leash dog. I don't like dogs. I don't care if your dog is well-trained. Like I don't want it anywhere near me when I'm on a trail. And you know, those, those types of comments. And so I think sometimes people forget that even though you genuinely love your dog and you spend lots of time training your dog, it's, it's your dog and it's not everybody else's dog. They don't want to interact with dogs necessarily in the same way that people in this dog community do.

Laney: [00:52:35](#) Okay. Right. And the next episode, or one of the episodes in this small series will be about the actual impact of dogs on the environment around them, including on all their hikers and on animals. So I do, I do want to call it that. We'll be discussing that in more detail, but probably not in this episode just because there is so much here when it comes to more of the social media side of things. I, so I'd love to, I'd love Steve for you to communicate basically like a one minute summary of the events of the past week and a half or so. As you understand them and as the screenshots have shown us just to provide a challenging yeah, I can I'm happy to help you as well, but just the jumping off point as far as like what events happens so we can discuss them in more detail.

Steve: [00:53:27](#) Sure. So on January 5th, a follower of mine sent me a story that @thewanderlustdogs had posted in the Indian peaks wilderness in Colorado. I sent her a message that morning at 7:10 AM about dogs off leash dogs not being allowed there and that dogs aren't allowed there at all. This time of year I checked back on the morning of January 7th, so two days later saw that I had been blocked and that on January 6th, she had actually posted a picture from that location with the dogs off leash at geotag the location. So at that point I've been blocked. I tried to talk to her privately as I do with all people that I call out. So I posted the stories that are in my highlight reel, basically calling her out for having dogs where they aren't allowed and having them off leash in an area where leashes are required at all times.

Steve: [00:54:19](#) You know, from there a lot of people got riled up. Her friend Ellen and pack chimed in and Ellen and pack then also posted photos from that same hike with dogs off leash in an area where dogs weren't even allowed. So I called her out and then there was an additional person who is associated with them who had posted a picture of wanderlust dogs with a dog off leash in great sand dunes national park and a park ranger, not from that park, but a park ranger inquired was told that, Oh, the

leashes had, had just been edited out. Well, it took all of five minutes to find a highlight in that account. Stories showing five dogs, I think running off leash through great sand dunes national park. And so I then called that account out. So you've got these folks who are given opportunities to make it right privately and not only are they you know, not taking that opportunity, they're continuing to post pictures from these locations and are even straight up boldfaced line. And that's how these call outs came about.

Laney: [00:55:34](#) Yeah. So I think, I think one of the most interesting points for me at least about the first hike that spurred the whole thing is that I'm actually on this hike. The girls ended up going a lot farther than they intended without proper winter gear. So basically the reason that I initially was interested in the account is from the perspective of wilderness rescue and safety teams. I thought it might be possible that the reason this area is close to darks during the winter is because they're not interested in evacuating out dogs that need assistance. So I started thinking about it from the rescue perspective was getting a little frustrated that the response was so cavalier given the fact that we could have been talking about evacuating not only two girls but also five dogs. So that's, that's, that's a little bit of my taken the reason think that way is because I actually hiked to the Highline trail on glacier once with my family and they had to post a permanent ranger at the head of that trail to physically check people's water before they left because they had the rescue, they had to rescue so many people off of that trail.

Laney: [00:56:38](#) It's I think a 13 mile trail and people would come with, you know, just the Nalgene. So it's definitely very kind of close to my heart is more of like the rescue side of things. And I got involved by saying, Hey, everybody, check out public lands. A few stories and was subsequently blocked. But I think, I think one of the interesting things to point out here is that great sand dunes national park is probably the only park that dog Instagram really knows. Dogs are not allowed off leash. This has come up before and I don't recall the actual accounts, but that is the only park I've seen people post like disclaimers that says leashes edited out, leashes are required and great standard national park. So it was very interesting to me that that park was involved in this situation.

Steve: [00:57:24](#) Well, I think I've called out other accounts there. But you know, while we're talking about that, there are very few, if any, national parks that allow off-leash dogs. But it might be, there

might be one or two, but as a general rule, dogs are always required to be leashed in national parks and in a lot of national parks are highly restricted to where those unleashed dogs can be.

Laney: [00:57:45](#) That's exactly true. And you know, I might've alluded to this by mentioning stories from glacier and Acadia and a variety of other parks, but my family tries to visit at least one national park a year. So I'm very aware of how absolutely restricted they are when it comes to dogs and many of the ones out West, you basically just might as well not go. They're that restricted when when it comes to bringing dogs. I will note for people that Acadia is one of the best parks. If you are willing to abide by the laws and leash your dog, they have a lot of trails that are open to people with unleashed dogs. Yeah, I will second to that. Acadia is awesome. As a native new Englander, I'm a big jam, so basically what the events of the actual call out, like you mentioned first message privately and then things really spiraled out of control in this situation when after you were blocked and removed from the conversation.

Laney: [00:58:37](#) There were a variety of stories being posted that basically admitted that the girls knew, the women knew that the, the, their behavior was a problem but accepted it as a calculated risk and I think that that's behavior that's really prevalent in general in dog owners and I don't love it, which is saying, well the fine is this much. I'm going to risk it because I want to see my dogs run around, which I can kind of relate, but kind of not really because then when it came to you saying message their sponsors, the girls were posting about how they barely have enough money to pay their own bills, so you shouldn't be doing that.

Rory: [00:59:12](#) Well, and, and for the record I share a sponsor with one of those accounts and the sponsor sent an email I believe on Monday, so like two days. I believe a lot of this transpired over the weekend acknowledging that they had received a lot of messages and saying, you know, you all have a duty to be law abiding citizens. I can pull up the text of it if you give me a second, but basically saying, acknowledging that we've received all of these messages and let me see. Here it is. Okay. Here it is. It says, hi all, I hope you're doing well. I wanted to send a quick note to all of you that our account has been flooded with messages about illegal conduct as it relates to leash laws and national parks and other protected areas. We always encourage you to be mindful and respectful of these laws and to follow these laws, especially if you are creating and sharing content. And then in bold it says this is especially true for any content

with our product. Do you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out and let us know.

Steve: [01:00:15](#) That's awesome. I mean, I'm, I'm super happy to hear that. And that's why a lot of the time with these call outs, especially with big influencers who have sponsors, I recommend that people go and contact their sponsors. You know, I'm losing money because of your actions is a sure fire way to change people's behavior. If folks know that they have the potential to lose an income stream because they are breaking the law, they are going to change their behavior. And for me, if that's what it takes to get people to respect the laws on our public lands then that's what I'm going to do. It's that simple for me

Laney: [01:00:52](#) For sure. And I think it's interesting, sort of our whole point of the interview so far about how you can create an echo chamber if you want to, especially as an influencer by blocking and deleting comments and things like that. It would be pretty crazy if a business, you know, blocked every customer that was messaging them about an ambassador. So I feel like it's definitely a way to avoid the sort of personal confrontation that things start to become. So once you've been blocked and to reach out to the business and try to figure it out that way. Yup. And it's worth noting as well that in this series I've already got two businesses that are on board for being interviewed about having received messages not just about this account or this situation, but other situations and kind of talking about their thinking as far as ambassadors creating content. You know, Steve, I don't know if you're aware of this, but one of the most interesting things about this is that a lot of these companies sell leashes like, so why not create some lease content while you're save that.

Rory: [01:01:56](#) Cause I had the same thought. I was like, I was a small business owner. I would jump all over this and you know, influence people to show my, my leash as a, as a product and some of these photos,

Steve: [01:02:09](#) There's a, yeah, there's a lot of irony in this, in these situations, but that, well that one definitely takes the cake.

Rory: [01:02:15](#) So it makes me, well, it makes me think about like, do you guys remember the crying Indian? Like don't let her the iron eyes, Cody ads. Do you remember those? And like people don't realize that the, the nonprofit that started the the iron eyes, Cody PSA or is like it was all corporate sponsors. That was like Coca Cola. And people were concerned in the 70s when these

Pepperidge bottling industries switched the plastic that they were creating, you know, an excuse to litter. So rather than change their bottling practices, which you know was more cost effective for them to use single use plastics at that time, they created this nonprofit and this PSA do encourage people to like, yeah, we're still gonna make our drinks and plastic, but it's on you individual person who consumes our beverage to throw the plastic away when you're done and not litter.

Rory: [01:03:10](#) And it's like, to your point about life's great irony is people don't realize that basically the crying Indian was the genius of Coca Cola news to me. That's awesome. Yeah, the Chicago Tribune did a, a expo say on this like a year and a half ago and I was doing a story on PSA as recently where I came across it. I thought it was fascinating. So I think, I think that, I love that. And I think that the conversation with companies will certainly be interesting because kind of like you mentioned Steve, if somebody isn't willing to be upset about the fact their reputation is on the line, maybe their wallet will convince them. And again, painting it as just like painting it as bullying doesn't really make sense to me. I think painting it as attacking someone's life and livelihood also doesn't make sense to me because, well, you know, Rory pointed this out, but your professional reputation is so important.

Laney: [01:04:07](#) And the founder of the company that I worked for in real life always likes to mention this Warren buffet quote, which is like, it takes decades to build a reputation and seconds to ruin it. So I think, I think it's really interesting. It's really interesting there when when people's mutation doesn't seem to motivate them to tell the truth and do the right thing.

Rory: [01:04:31](#) Well, and as an extension of that, you know, again, I just want to reiterate, you know, I, I understand, you know, as do you as the CIF that feeling like, you know, the social media mobs are coming for you is a terrible feeling. So, you know, I get it. I empathize. Like that is a sucky thing to go through. However, with that being said, I think it is incredibly naive to think that you can you know, disable comments and block your way into pretending that none of this never happened.

Rory: [01:05:03](#) And so, you know, there's no limit on how many Instagram accounts. Somebody can have. A lot of people have dog accounts, personal accounts, work accounts, you know, block away, have a good time. But if people really want to see your comments or see your posts a message you like, especially if you continue to keep your count public, they will find a way.

And that just brings back to, you know, my point of, you know, whether you agree with the the situation that happened or not. I think if you're going to agree to be, you know, a quote unquote public figure in some respects, you, you do need to, to acknowledge that. And I know the wanderlust dogs did and she posted, you know, I'm sorry I made a mistake and it, it started off really promising but then veered off into the, you know, Boohoo

Steve: [01:05:54](#) Well, I think it might've actually started with the Boohoo poor me. I think in the first sentence, you know, I've been, it was something along the lines of, you know, I've been a victim of bullying. It didn't really start with the apology and I, I'm trying to pull that up right now just to take a look at it.

Rory: [01:06:12](#) I will say so I do not know either of these accounts. Personally. I've been on dog Instagram for a long time, but I'm kind of at a different place in my life than a lot of the adventure dog people. So you know, just socially, again, demographics, I'm a lot older than a lot of the people here. You know, professionally my life is just in a different place. But without being said, you know, when I mentioned that I was doing this, a lot of people reached out and they said, you know, I just want you to know that like she's a really nice person and I don't, I don't dispute that. I think that she probably is a really nice person. But you know what, people also used to say that Ted Bundy was a really nice person, like being nice in and of itself doesn't absolve you from personal responsibility.

Rory: [01:06:54](#) And I think, you know, that's one of the things that that is frustrating is that we often reduce people to two one post one action or like a series of posts as the case may be. And people just shut down without engaging in a more productive conversation. And even just with this podcast and example of just, it was instantly shut down is it won't be a productive conversation. Like, how do you know? You know, like I used to read the Frances the Badger books as a little kid and that was one of them. How will, you know, unless you try it, you know, it's, it just, again, it was a little bit disappointing that some of that was, you know, immediate, basically almost all responses that were beyond the individual's control were shut down.

Steve: [01:07:38](#) Yeah. And you know, I w I just want to say, you know, again that that post gets start with today. I learnt what it felt like to be internet bullied. And I think that bullying and shaming have just become these buzz words that people will use to as an out to any situation to kind of deflect. But the definition of bullying is

defined by the national center against bullying is when an individual or group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to them

Steve: [01:08:08](#) Or a group of people who feel helpless to respond. Now there's a lot of different moving parts to that, but if we look at the end to a person or group of people who feel helpless to respond, everybody here had an opportunity to respond privately and publicly. They all had an opportunity to come on this podcast to talk with us and they chose not to do that in the hopes. I don't know what their hopes are. I won't speak for them. But th just the use of those buzzwords I think has personally gotten out of control and I think is kind of insensitive to people who actually have to deal with bullying on a daily basis for things like their religion or their looks or their you know, their sexual orientation and who are legitimately bullied for something that they can't change. Where these women had multiple chances to kind of come out and defend their actions.

Laney: [01:09:09](#) And I think we need a divorce who someone is from their actions, right? Although, although, you know, your actions are usually indicative of who you are as a person, I think that just the way that if someone were receiving a parking ticket, you wouldn't come up to the attendant and say, well, this person is a really nice person. I, you know, I personally, they bought me a coffee a few times. Like that's, that's really not at stake here. And that's why it's so upsetting to see people discussing this as such a personal attack because the Instagram platform demonstrating a willful, knowledgeable, intentional breaking of laws over a long period of time. I think the oldest screenshot we've got of her dogs at this park in particular, the wanderlust dogs is from 2017. So an intentional over a long period of time breaking the law.

Laney: [01:10:02](#) She can be a wonderful person. I don't know her personally, but that doesn't mean that, you know, her actions are, are never able to be criticized. And the problem is that, you know, you do open yourself to criticism on these platforms. And I think that, you know, especially in today, in today's world, it seems like there's like this identity situation where if you, if I disagree with you, that means that I hate you, that that's not true. Yes. And I just want to say too, to your point about, it's not personal. I mean, I think to a certain extent, you know, one of the challenges for, you know, these accounts is that you know, in some ways it could've been anybody. Like we said, it wasn't, you know, I owe it to the best of my knowledge. Steve's is not have a vendetta against wanderlust dogs or Ellen and pack and could

care less. You know, he calls out behavior that he sees and it doesn't matter who the person is.

Steve: [01:11:00](#) I'll just interject and say that anything that I call out is something that's sent to me by my followers. So it's these women's fo, these followers of these women who are sending these women's content to me, they know I'm not trolling for, for stuff.

Rory: [01:11:14](#) Well, right. And so in some ways, you know, again, I, I empathize with their situation cause I feel like, you know, they were just unlucky that somebody chose to send their content when, you know, it's the you know, when your parents say, if everybody's jumping off a bridge, would you jump off a bridge? You know, there's a lot of people using that logic of the will. Everybody has their dog off leash and you know, it doesn't necessarily make it right. But I do think there's some, some credibility to the, the social norms argument of, you know, one of the challenges with social media is when you see things over and over, you normalize the behavior. And I think that's the, the bigger, you know, more existential piece here is, you know, it is disappointing when people can't realize that a problem is bigger than themselves.

Rory: [01:12:02](#) And this is not an issue about these women as individuals. Again, you know, I want to give them all the benefit of the doubt. I assume they are nice and they are wonderful and they genuinely love their dogs, which is why their accounts are as large as they are. However, with that being said, you know, in his lane, he just said, you know, you're not immune from criticism just for, you know, being nice and for being a talented photographer. So I think that we have to balance those things. And again, it would be great if people realize that, you know, this is an issue that is bigger than an individual and not, you know, an attack, a personal attack on those individuals.

Laney: [01:12:42](#) Right. Uand yes, I agree. I just wish it's just so hard, right? Because for these people, it is that personal because they're sharing their day to day lives on an account and it feels like they're bearing their soul and telling their friends this stuff.

Laney: [01:12:58](#) But as you said, Steve, it's their own followers that, that sent this information to you and you can view that as a betrayal or you could view that as maybe there's a follower who cares so much about both me and public lands that they want me to do better.

Rory: [01:13:13](#) Um did the person who sent it to you mentioned if they had reached out to the individuals before sending it to you? I don't recall. I generally, I generally advocate for that, but in this instance, I, I couldn't tell you. Yeah, I could find out, but that would take me 10 minutes. Yeah. I was just curious. You know, if that was, was the tactic being used. But again, I think, you know, and I, I talked about this recently in one of my posts, but it's, it's kind of been an interesting bell curve.

Rory: [01:13:45](#) So I started my account from my dog's in 2015 and you know, they were young, they were puppies. They were not trained at the time, so they were always on leash. And you know, I got shit from people that were like, Oh, it's too bad that, you know, you didn't train your dogs and therefore have to keep them on leash and it wasn't a, you know, good for you for following the law. And like, it was kind of like the inverse of what we're talking about. People made me feel bad about myself for posting pictures, my dogs on leash when I was hiking with them. So I felt like I had to train them on an E color and be off leash. And you know, I'm glad that it did that for a variety of reasons. You know, I currently live on an acre and a half of land, you know which is not huge obviously, but it's enough space for them to run around and climb trouble.

Rory: [01:14:31](#) And you know, again, I think there, there are a variety of reasons why you should have a well trained dog beyond what you do on public lands. And that's a conversation for another time. But these people who posted these hiking pictures of, you know, dogs off leash and scenic vacate and scenic locations like, you know, we're just worshiped and people drew the conclusion that they were great dog owners because their dog was off leash and therefore must be well behaved who wasn't running off. It was sitting still for pictures and at that point, you know, dog Instagram was not what it is today. There are certainly much more people in the, you know, adventure dog community now than there. There were then. But now we're kind of seeing the pendulums you know, go the other way where so many people I think had dogs off leash including people that shouldn't.

Rory: [01:15:22](#) And I've witnessed that firsthand too. You know, one of my dogs is reactive and it is certainly frustrating when an off leash dog rushes up to her. You know, because she will bite if she is, you know, has her, her personal space invaded by a rude dog, but then, you know, it's my fault because you know, it's my dog that reacted. And so that's incredibly frustrating and I leave, you know, be at home a lot of the times because I don't want to put

her or myself in that kind of his situation. But but to the point about social norms, it's really fascinating to kind of watched how this has evolved and you know, coming back around to, you know, probably the place that it should be given that the rules are what they are. But you see just, you know, if people, if people got famous doing things a certain way, I think they probably want, you know, have the vested interest in continuing to do things that way. Yeah. And I think, I think that that really points to the issue of, you know, what Steve is doing, which is he's trying to keep these people from continuously just benefiting from their legal action. Right. And there's so many people that don't know it's illegal. They don't know it's a problem.

Steve: [01:16:42](#) Well, I think that the, the answer to that's pretty easy. And it's because when there's money involved, people tend to get greedy. I think that people get blinded by money and if there's a way to gain more followers or get more likes by sharing you know, a certain kind of content and a certain way people will do that because likes and followers translate to engagement and higher engagement translates to more money from sponsors.

Steve: [01:17:10](#) And if, if you're just calling somebody out for littering or calling somebody out for a off-leash dog in person you know, for, for them there, there's, there's nothing to, nothing to gain by ignoring that criticism.

Laney: [01:17:23](#) Right. And I think that, I think that it's, it fits too with like if you think about, if you think about calling someone out in person as well,

Laney: [01:17:35](#) There's just a little bit more of like a, an unwillingness to argue with random people. I feel like, and maybe people would even be more receptive to criticism because on law or the chamber, like we mentioned,

Rory: [01:17:50](#) People are often, not always, but often more respectful in person too. And so there are a lot of things, you know, a phrase that, that you know, keeps coming up in these conversations are keyboard warriors, you know, and so particularly some of the people that do go overboard and make nasty comments to some of the people that have been called out. Would you actually say that to somebody in person? And you know, again, that's another issue that I think extends beyond this specific situation. But you know, something we have to figure out is, you know, if you wouldn't say that to somebody in person, you probably shouldn't say that. Say it to them online either. Just

because you can hide behind a screen doesn't, you know, somehow make your, your point more valid or your desire to, you know, use foul language somehow more justified. It just,

Steve: [01:18:39](#) And I think that things escalate online also because you know, people along with what you just said is that people know that it's so easy for folks to ignore it. So a, a, a really polite you know, message or a really polite comment to somebody in person might not be as effective if it's sent as a message to somebody who can easily block it or delete it. Whereas in person that person can't block you and delete you. They have to look at you and acknowledge what you said, even if they don't like it.

Laney: [01:19:15](#) Right. I'm curious, I'm just, Steve, if you've ever engaged in any education like in person while you're hiking or if you focus your efforts more online, because I know for me personally, when outdoors, it can be hard to speak up and I'm pretty much only speak up about stuff that I see that's like really it really intense. Like littering or a fire or something like that.

Steve: [01:19:37](#) Yeah, I do. And it's all situational. There's really minor stuff that you, sometimes you just turn a blind eye and say, eh, at the end of the day it's not a big deal. But if I see people who are shortcutting switchbacks, that's a huge pet peeve of mine. I always say something. If I see people having a fire when they're not allowed or where they're not allowed during wildfire season yeah, I'm definitely gonna say something. And the, again, it's all situational. How I approach it and leave no trace has their authority of the resource technique, which is a great way of dealing with these kind of confrontations in person. If you ha, if your listeners haven't heard of the authority of the resource technique, definitely go take a look at it. It's a great resource for, I'm kind of confronting people about these issues when you run across them while you're, while you're out there

Laney: [01:20:29](#) For sure. And that's a question we've gotten from people is, you know, when I'm in person or that moment can sometimes be so quick or you can be so upset. A woman shared a story that, that you posted, which was like her son was knocked down by off-leash dogs. And in that moment she was so upset, she didn't even know what to say. So I think that a lot of people are, are fearful and not understanding how they could really speak to people in person. So I think it's good to check that resource out and think about ways you did a recent post about whether, you know, you can call someone out and, and try to be empowered in that way. So just to kind of pivot a little bit so we can finish

our conversation up about the events of the past couple of weeks. I did want to share.

Laney: [01:21:17](#) So really my thesis for this interview is basically like you can create an echo chamber if you want to, but you shouldn't. And I think that's really been my thesis too, of the way I've run my account for the past few years. Up until two weeks ago, I'd never once blocked anyone, but someone was DMing me with so much vulgarities so often that I finally had to cave and block my first person. But basically I think that on social media, like you mentioned and we've been talking about so much in this interview, you can block people, you can delete comments and I want to sh I want to talk about some of the deleted comments that happened in this incident and how they pertain to structuring a narrative and creating an echo chamber. So the one in particular I thought we could use as a jumping off point is a person who responded to the wanderlust dogs a apology post where the wanderlust dogs in the end of the posts kind of turned the conversation and said, why are people so mad about off-leash dogs when Australia is on fire?

Laney: [01:22:17](#) So kind of a classic tactic that, for example, our president uses all the time, which is don't look here, look there, look at this other issue. And this commentary I wanted to mention because they had an interesting comment about that. So I'll just read it really quick. So the comment was.

quoted comment: [01:22:34](#) :E Colors are not. Leashes in this area explicitly States that it requires handheld leashes. Yet you clearly think you and your dogs are above the law. I understand that call culture isn't the most productive, but you were informed and then proceeded to post a story listing excuses as to why you and your dogs shouldn't have to follow the rules. I understand the frustration by other nature lovers. When I see people like you disregarding the law and potentially making money off sponsors while engaging in illegal behavior that can be detrimental to the environment. The rules are there for a reason, not just an inconvenience. And who says we don't also raise money for Australia? You can do both. Smiley face.

Laney: [01:23:10](#) So I think that, I think that that's just kind of a tactic. Like we were talking about to try to pivot the conversation towards bullying or pivoted towards mental health or pivoted towards how you, Steve, are a mean person as opposed to actually talking about whatever behavior sparked the conversation in general. And the fact that people can care about more than one thing at once.

Steve: [01:23:31](#) Yeah. And, and just to be clear about why that person put that last sentence at the end of that comment was because you know, wander less dogs in her apology posts. Said something along the lines of why don't all these people just go worry about something more important? And that's what that reference to.

Laney: [01:23:50](#) Right. I mean, Steve, do you personally care about more than just public lands?

Rory: [01:23:57](#) I mean, yeah, I know it seems like I only care about one thing. You know, this is the issue that I've decided to take an interest in, to spend my personal time on because I'm passionate about it. I have other things that I care about as well. But this is the one thing that I've decided to kind of make my issue and everybody is entitled to do that. You know, people say to me all the time are you vegan? Do you drive a car? Have you donated to the Australia wildfires? And my answers to that are kind of irrelevant because you know, this is the issue that I'm focusing on. And if folks want to focus on an issue, other issues, they are welcome to do so. And I support a lot of those issues and I'm happy to support other people who support those issues. But at the end of the day, I'm one person with a limited amount of time who can't cover everything. So that's why I seem to appear to focus on just one.

Rory: [01:24:59](#) I think another one of those wonderful ironies that pops up is, you know, Brianna media posted something about how, you know, she was only going to focus on being good at one thing, which I think is finishing her book. And you know, when you try to do too many things, you know, you don't get very, you don't become very good at any of them and you kind of lose out in how, you know you have the most impact by being passionate about one particular thing. So for all of that, the two of you disagree on, you agree on that theory?

Steve: [01:25:31](#) Yes, that is true.

Laney: [01:25:34](#) Yes. so Rory, when we were discussing the interview ahead of time, you, you kind of shared this perspective from public relations, which is like when you see people in businesses called out in some way they usually go out and go about it in two ways. One is they own it and they seize control of the narrative. Or number two is they say no comment. So social media you mentioned is kind of like a weird hybrid because people try to seize the narrative without actually owning it and owning their behavior. And Steve, I was curious if you've ever thought about it more from like the PR perspective as, because you have had

plenty of people own their behavior and you've shared those positive examples on the account. But I feel like it's these examples of people trying to own the narrative but not on the behavior. That's one of the most interesting things.

Steve: [01:26:23](#) Yeah. And a lot of influencers are really good at owning the narrative and also spinning the narrative in the way that they want it to be seen. And you know, this is one of those examples, you know, instead of focusing on the behavior, it was a distract and change the subject. And I, I don't know why that's the GoTo, it's, it's unfortunate.

Rory: [01:26:51](#) Okay. Can you share the example for some people who may not be familiar with your account or may not be following your account? And I think, you know, one of the things that I'm really encouraged by is, you know, as we're having this conversation, I'm seeing more and more comments post to the posts that I made about, you know, if you have any questions for his conversation was no, and there are a lot of people who've said, you know, I really don't like this guy, but I'm going to tune in. And so, you know, I'm very encouraged by that, but because we have a number of people who've indicated they're going to tune in who don't follow your account and might not be familiar with some of those examples outside of the one that we've been discussing. Can you just talk a little bit about I know in one of your blog posts you had you know, a woman basically taking a bath and a waterfall and you shared her exchange where she said, Oh my God, I had no idea. Like thanks for informing me. And it was a very pleasant conversation and you know, the post was removed and life went on and nothing bad happens to anybody. I don't think people know as much about, you know, people hate more vehemently than they love sometimes. So I don't think people are as familiar with those exchanges.

Steve: [01:28:01](#) No. And of course they're not because they're buying into the narrative that the account is there just to spread hate and bully and shame people. And, and at the end of the day you know, calling people out is part of the account, but that's not the end goal. So yeah, there are a lot of positive examples. There's, there's that one that you just referenced with a, a woman washing her hair in a stream, which is definitely a no, no, for anybody who wasn't aware. And I sent her a DM and I just said, Hey, you know, that's really, really bad practice. This is why she responded. She said, I had no idea. And I said, that's fine. We all make mistakes. That's not a problem. You know, would you mind just removing the post or edit the caption and just say, tell your followers, I didn't know this wasn't okay. This isn't okay.

This is why it's not okay. And she went with option B there. So that post is actually still up with the edited caption. And I think that that is the best result because it informs people about it and educates people. And there's been a number of actually quite a few instances of that. And you know, nobody really mentions those because they, they just want to focus on what they see as the negative aspects of the account instead of the positive.

Laney: [01:29:10](#) It's totally true. And you know, one of the sort of criticisms or pieces of advice I got before this interview was, well, you know, you've shared stories in the past of your dog off leash and I'm sure you have posts of it too, so you better be careful getting involved with Steve and his followers and you know, to that, I really have to say, yeah, I probably do. And I should add a disclaimer to them. Someone would really be saving me time if they thought, if they found that post. You know what I mean? So,

Steve: [01:29:36](#) Well, well let me, let me ask you this. You know, say, say one of my followers sent me that post and I sent you a DM about it and said, Hey, I know where you were with your dog. I know dogs aren't supposed to be leashed there. What's the deal? What would your response be?

Laney: [01:29:53](#) I would say, you're right, am my God. I'm so sorry. I will add a disclaimer or archive the post. And it really is, but I, you know, that's also after a period of, of watching other people do the wrong thing. For personally, and I think that even if I was, I'm still, you know, I'm pretty sure where I'm going to end up falling at the end of the day with all the leash laws, stuff that's been going on. But I want to have the whole series to really tear it all apart and really think about all of it. But I think that even if I didn't know anything about you or your account and you were like a hundred follower person, I'd like to think I would still say, Hey, yeah, I am breaking Alicia law here, but I do that because my dog is well trained or whatever.

Laney: [01:30:40](#) But yeah, maybe I should out of a thing that says, you know, you can look here for the leash laws or I would remove the geotag or something. I don't know. But I feel like, I feel like the inclination to first block someone is so strange. And maybe that's because I have tried for so long not to block anyone because as a really opinionated person, I really like people to disagree with me so I can better refine my own understanding. But I don't know. I can't say, I can't say because it's never happened before. All of this happened.

Rory: [01:31:09](#) So, and you know, I have had people point things out to me before and so, you know, none of the things that I've had conversations about have extended beyond, you know, I said there was one misunderstanding where I was on private property and the people thought that it looked like an area that was not private property, but I let the person though and they dropped it. It didn't escalate. You know, I have posted publicly that my own thoughts on the leash issue have resolved. I mean, one of my new year's posts was, you know, I, one of my resolutions is to make sure that Alicia is visible in more photos because, you know, I think there's a middle ground here of a lot of people who, who do leash their dogs, but you know, put the dog in a sit for the photo and take the leash off. And I know I've done that a whole bunch times and you know, when the dog is just sitting in posing, you know, you think, Oh, aesthetically this is much better.

Rory: [01:32:05](#) And I know at least initially like I just, it did not occur to me to think beyond that, that, you know, people don't see that process and it sends a message. And then once I reflected on it some more and I was like, yeah, you know, I don't want to convey that message. Particularly as you know, my account has grown. So, you know, I have a specific posts that I can point people to to say, Hey look, here's why I talk about this where I said, you know, I've had my dog off leash, I've taken the leash off for photos, but you know, I'm making this commitment not to do that anymore. And here you go. You know, it's back to my point about I always want to be able to explain what I'm doing and why I'm doing it and I'm doing it because, you know, based on, based on some of these conversations, you know, like, I hate to admit it, but like it does, it works.

Rory: [01:32:54](#) I have certainly thought so much more about this issue and so much more in depth than I had previously. And in part, you know, this was percolating long before you know, the incident that just happened that we've been discussing, you know, other brands that I work with have talked about, you know, how do we handle this? I mean, it was very clear that something like this was going to happen sooner or later and it did. So you know, I always want to be a better person and so I'm always trying to, you know, learn more. You know, I'm very, very surprised that more people don't approach just life that way. But that's a conversation.

Steve: [01:33:38](#) Yes.

Laney: [01:33:40](#) And Steve. So Steve, before we talk about our last real topic here, I did want to, I wanted to say something to you that I feel like, so I, I got, I got a couple messages that were like, thank God you're talking to them. You get it. You know you've had your dog off leash and you'll give us a voice. Right? The thing is that it's so when your dog is trained to be off leash in a way that is respectful, you can leash them up when you pass other people, other dogs, and they can galvanize the wilderness. It is amazing, right? It's, it's so cool. It feels really good. But the problem with that, and I want to say that to you because I feel like people want me to say that to you. It is a blast. But the problem with that is that you're saying that you having that fun with your dog is more important than everyone else's enjoyment of that trail infinitely to come. Especially considering that so many trails are now completely close to dogs, even leashed ones because of the problems with off-leash dogs. So I think that's what people don't realize. It's not that you, Steve hate dogs, is that you want everybody to be able to enjoy these lands indefinitely. And the more that people break the laws, the less access people are going to have.

Steve: [01:34:53](#) Absolute. Absolutely. That cuts right to the heart of the matter. You know, people who are selfishly breaking a law for their own enjoyment or for the enjoyment of their dogs are risking access for themselves and their dogs and everybody else and everybody else's dogs. By doing that, it's purely selfishness and, and it's too bad. We've seen you know, many areas closed. We've seen, you know, areas that were formerly free term ended permit only areas that now cost money because of that. Like you said, you know, dogs lose access all the time due to abuse. And you know, that's unfortunate and it's unfortunate that people can't see the bigger picture.

Rory: [01:35:34](#) Well, and I just want to add to that because I think it's an important part of this conversation. And to Lenny's point, you know, two things, you know, one of the things that she and I talked about in preparation for this conversation is that I feel like the public at large really struggles with abstraction. They can see their dog having a blast running around. That's obvious and they get it and it makes them feel good. You know, it's Marie Kondo would say it brings them joy. But what they can't see is, you know, the compounded effect of many people's dogs running and you know, ruining trails causing impacts for wildlife. And we just, I think as a society struggle with abstraction.

Steve: [01:36:14](#) Yeah, for sure. And I know that one of the dog studies that we kind of discussed offline here kinda did an extrapolation of, you

know, dog waste and it was something along the lines of, you know, a hundred dogs using that trail over the course of the week and nobody picking up dog waste results in 500 pounds of dog waste on the trail. So it's, it's one person doing one thing. By itself isn't a huge issue. It's when you have multiple people all doing that same thing in a way that's harmful, that the, we see that compounding effect that really does start to cause permanent damage.

Rory: [01:36:50](#) Yeah. And I just want to say, you know, cause I do, I do worry again, you know, the concern was, you know, having a balanced discussion when the people on the other side of it aren't here to represent themselves. So, you know, I just want to say that I freely admit I've been that person. I've acted on my own selfish interest and looked around that no one's here, you know, unclipped the leash, let the dogs go. I've done that. And I've been that person and you know,

Steve: [01:37:19](#) Did you post it on social media for 60,000 people to see?

Rory: [01:37:26](#) But but you know, again, I have over 20,000 and that's still you know, I will freely admit that it wasn't something that I thought about in the way that we are talking about it now. So I just want other people to know that it's okay. You know, you could admit like I have no problem being like, yeah, one time my dog was driving me off the wall, she was driving me crazy, so I let her off leash so she could run around and you know, not drive me crazy anymore. You know, life with two dogs has been you know, a learning process in many ways, but, but you know, beyond public lands, one of the things that's been beneficial and how I have thought about this topic is I've thought about so many other things like safety. I have a dog with a really strong prey drive, you know, at what point we're supposed to take a trip out West in the fall.

Rory: [01:38:21](#) And then, you know, my husband's schedule changed and he couldn't watch her. And I was like, I can't, I can't in good conscious bring this dog was such a high prey drive to a place, you know, where we might encounter bison on a trail. Like it just, I cannot do it. So my thinking has evolved on this issue, you know, well beyond public lands to other things that I think are really important, which include, you know, other people's safety, my dog safety, you know, and there are, I think other things that are important, you know, even if people walk away from this conversation and they're like, Hey, you know what, still don't give a shit about public lands. You know, I hope that they will, you know, nonetheless, continue to think about things

in a way, particularly as it pertains to, you know, their own safety and the safety of others.

Laney: [01:39:09](#) For sure. Right before we wrap up the interview, I, there's three quick things I want to bring up just to really close the chapter on. The current situation, set the record straight and a couple of ways. The first thing was that obviously there was a story post made. And actually I better just quote it right now, but the story posts was essentially saying that comparing Steve's language to something very bad. Okay, here we go. So the wanderlust dogs posted a story, a screenshot of a message from public lands, hates you, Steve. And he said,

Steve: [01:39:49](#) And before and before, before we dive into that that was a message that I, I had been talking to one of her friends through DM and that was a screenshot of a message between me and her friend that her friend had sent to her. So obviously there's no context there, but even without the context that surrounds it I think her the way she uses that and the language she uses speaks for itself,

Laney: [01:40:15](#) Right? Yes. so she, she shared that screenshot without context, just the one line to her followers. She, and in that, in that quote, Steve says, this whole thing could have just been avoided if she ever responded. And the wanderlust dogs posted text over that and said

quoted post: [01:40:34](#) Uh this, this is what is wrong with society. These are the words that rapists and abusers speak to somehow justify their actions. I owe this person nothing. They pointed out that the trail, I tag my story did not allow dogs. So I removed the post, I then went to their account and saw the call it culture and block them. I refuse to engage with someone who mobs after individuals from mistakes, but still I admitted I was wrong to my followers and then he says this disgusting.

Laney: [01:40:59](#) So I don't really want to discuss this in much detail because I don't think it's relevant in the broader sense to keep discussing it. But I did want to allow Steve the chance to read his comment on that, which he prepared ahead of time.

Steve: [01:41:13](#) Yeah. So, you know, I saw that and as a male that wasn't really something that I felt comfortable addressing. But you know, you read that what I said word for word that is something that I said, but I think that one or less dogs comparing being called out for repeated illegal behavior on public lands to sexual assault is just so incredibly insensitive to anyone who has ever had to live

through and live with that kind of terrible experience. And I think that that kind of response along with Ellen and PAC saying that the leave no trace principles are racist goes to show how far some people go to avoid even the slightest bit of accountability by deflecting and distracting from the issue at hand. I'm just curious, how are they reportedly racist? I have never heard that. I mean, to be fair, lady leave, no trace has not done the best job at incorporating indigenous perspectives into their programming. And the organization as a whole, especially the board of directors is pretty homogenous. You know, I actually wrote an entire article about that it's posted on my website that dives in into detail, but that's the long and the short of it. But overall if you're saying leave no trace principles are racist you sure as heck better have something to back that up and she didn't.

Laney: [01:42:44](#) Right. So then to close the second topic, there was a claim from Ellen and pack that she had called two Rangers stations for the Brainard Lake area and Rangers there did not know about leash laws or that dogs were allowed. So I wanted to share the audio of a call that Steve made to the same ranger station and I wanted to play it on the podcast. Right now if that's okay. It's about a minute and a half and then we'll nail down our last topic and close out if that, if that works for everybody. Yep. Okay. Let me know if you hear a ton of feedback noise, but I'm gonna try to play it off my computer.

phonecallrecord: [01:43:27](#) Thank you for calling the Boulder ranger.

park ranger: [01:43:41](#) Good afternoon. Yes, forest service.

Steve (record): [01:43:42](#) Hi. I just had a question about dog restrictions up in the Brainard Lake area. What are those this time of year?

park ranger: [01:43:50](#) Um let's see. What type of activity are you looking to do?

Steve (record): [01:43:56](#) I would be hiking up into the Indian boarding school in this area.

park ranger: [01:44:00](#) Okay, great. Do you have any pets with you?

Steve (record): [01:44:03](#) Yup. I would have a couple of dogs.

park ranger: [01:44:05](#) Okay. so the dogs only allowed off the Brainard Lake road, left-hand park reservoir road or the sourdough trail. So you won't be able to bring them into the wilderness. And C campaign is allowed, but you have to be a fourth of a mile for a developed site. You're not doing any like motorized, just hiking?

Steve (record): [01:44:31](#) No, just hiking it. I was mainly curious about the the dog rules, just cause I want to make sure, you know, not bringing them somewhere they're not supposed to be.

park ranger: [01:44:38](#) Oh, right, right. Yeah. So yeah, they're only allowed in those three areas during the winter, during the summer. Okay.

Steve (record): [01:44:46](#) And then during the summer, is there leash law or anything like that?

park ranger: [01:44:50](#) Yes. So in the wilderness. They do have to be on on leash at all times.

Steve (record): [01:44:55](#) Okay, fantastic. And what's your name?

park ranger: [01:44:57](#) Reagan.

Steve (record): [01:44:59](#) Okay. Thank you very much for your help. I appreciate it. Yeah, no problem. Thanks. You too. Bye.

Laney: [01:45:06](#) So I'm glad I got to throw that out with you guys.

Steve: [01:45:09](#) Can I, can I just follow that up by also saying that if you go to Google and Google Brainard Lake, which is the Trailhead dogs, the first result is the U S forest service website, which clearly outlines that leashes are required at all times and dogs aren't prohibited into the wilderness from November 15th until I think April 30th. It's all very easy to find a quick phone call, quick Google search. There's nothing complicated about it.

Laney: [01:45:37](#) Right? And so to close to close this, I just want people to realize that you can say anything you want online, right? And unfortunately there's very often not a way to hold people accountable. I don't know who Ellen impact had conversations with her if she did or, or whatever. And I'm not going to speak to that, but I think that this ties in really nicely with the situation with Rocky mountain fluffs where that account was caught in a, in a full lie. There was a comment on her posts of off-leash dogs in great sand dunes national park. That ranger, as you mentioned earlier, Steve commented to remind her that dog should be on leash. Her response was, hi, thank you for the reminder. The dog's long lines are edited out for aesthetic purposes, heart emoji. And then like you mentioned a quick look through her highlights and the dogs were off leash, multiple dogs were off leash at the park.

Laney: [01:46:35](#) So while call out culture can be effective. You also have to keep in mind that people lie. So if anybody lets you know that the leash was edited out, you're absolutely within your to comment like the ranger commented, which is, would you mind sharing the unedited version with Alicia's visible via private message? Being a park ranger in lover of public lands myself, I really like to see people enjoying our public lands and responsible and sustainable manner. It would be great to clear this up as a simple misunderstanding and I would really appreciate the effort. Thank you. As polite as can be. I mean really guys. Yeah, so I just wanted to have that little aside in there about lying, right. You're completely within your rights to ask the people that are sharing content with you for clarification about that content. Yup, I agree.

Laney: [01:47:26](#) So yes, and then as far as the events, the last couple of weeks, almost everything is done. The last thing I wanted to mention is that I did invite the Ellen and pack accounts to join the podcast and have a conversation with me and Steve as well as any of her friends that she would like to bring. Unfortunately that request was denied. And I was not able to personally ask the other accounts as I had already been blocked by them. I was subsequently blocked by Ellen and pack and I would like to share the message that I sent for in the interest of full transparency and then the message received. So I sent,

Quoted DM: [01:48:12](#) Hey girl, if you'd be willing to talk about all the recent off-leash stuff, I'd be happy to have you won or lost dogs or anyone else if you'd like to ever have a moderated Discussion with the public lands hates you account. This would be audio only and Petland posted via sweet for certain podcasts, which is my podcast. Let me know if that's something you'd be interested in doing. I'd extend to wanderlust dogs as well, but I believe I may be blocked. It could be a productive discussion. Anyone that you'd like is welcome. I would serve as moderator.

Quoted DM: [01:48:38](#) Uh the response was, no, thank you. As much as I appreciate your kind message, I'm not open. I'm not going to be open to having any more conversations. I'm shutting down all new conversations because of how hateful everyone is. Also going to block you, not out of hate, but just to protect myself from how rude and awful 90% of his people have been to me.

Laney: [01:48:55](#) So I'd like to clarify myself, Steve, you know, we are a acquaintances now and engaging in this professional way, but I wouldn't call myself one of your people. And I hope that, I hope that people over the course of this series will really see that I'm

thinking independently and I'm coming not as a blind supporter of anybody in particular, but really someone who has the best interest of myself, my dog, and the future of public lands in mind. So I did want to share that situation about why this discussion is lacking any of the girls themselves who are the women themselves who were involved.

Steve: [01:49:26](#) Yeah. And I just like to add to that, that I reached out to them through the friend who provided that screenshot earlier and, and asked that person who is an acquaintance with both Ellen and Sam and Ellen responded with a similar message that was forwarded to me. And th there was no response from Sam.

Laney: [01:49:49](#) Yeah. And then Rory had asked me prior to the interview like how did that response make you feel? Which I think is kind of an interesting question. It made me feel shitty. I didn't like it. Especially because, you know, she doesn't know this, but maybe I'm an avid follower and I get a lot of joy watching her and her dogs and it's, it's too bad to be judged based on the fact that I'm willing to provide an impartial platform for people to have a discussion. I really didn't like that. I think that my goal with this podcast is to really be willing to hear from all different people, all different points of view. And it's, it's really too bad that I have yet to find somebody that's willing to defend off-leash off-leash illegal behavior, but it's because it's illegal and because people know it's wrong. I think that none of them are willing to come on and defend it.

Steve: [01:50:37](#) Well, and I might be speaking out of turn here, but I, at least from my perspective as the person who operates public lands, hate to, I think that there's always an opportunity for folks to come and do the right thing, even if it's weeks later or months later. And you know, I know that I would be willing to return to this podcast to have a conversation with with any of them.

Laney: [01:50:58](#) Absolutely. I have a standing invitation out for anybody who has, has been impacted by your account. Absolutely. I'm happy to host any kind of discussion at any time. But yeah, so that's, that's all I had for you as a, as opposed to solid topics and solid points of discussion. But I will say that my I guess maybe I am one of your people in a way because my dad is a huge fan of your account he's sent to you. To me when you had like 6,000 followers, I think a long time ago when you made a post about dogs and he said that a really good interview question he likes to ask people is who do you know that I should know? So basically like, do you recommend any thinkers or accounts or

people involved in public lands or anything like that that people would really benefit in learning from?

Steve: [01:51:48](#) You know, I think that one of my favorite accounts that I get a lot of joy from just cause the guy is hilarious is a Phil Monson and that's P, H I, L L. And he's based out of Utah and he does this kind of alter ego thing called litter Hunter where he just goes around in short shorts and a fake Australian accent picking up all the trash that he sees and it's just hilarious. It's a nice break from, you know what I'm usually doing on social media.

Laney: [01:52:14](#) Yes, I did. I followed that account on your recommendation.

Steve: [01:52:19](#) Give him a follow. He does. He does some good work.

Laney: [01:52:23](#) Yeah. If you're interested in a little bit what maybe lighter hearted public lands, advocacy is definitely, definitely a good option. And then you've called out some resources before, you know, before previously. But what would you say if you could say one thing to the average dog owner who is, you know, maybe 40 years old and has had 12 dogs in her lifetime and is used to just drive into the County park and opening the door and letting the dogs go? I guess

Laney: [01:52:46](#) If you could say something to that person, what would you say?

Steve: [01:52:50](#) Just think about the other people who are there. You know, there's other people who might not appreciate dogs running up to them or their baby, other people with dogs who don't appreciate dogs running up to him. So just you know, be self aware of the impact that the your pet might have and that you know, not everybody might love your dog as much as you do. And of course, make sure that they're allowed there.

Laney: [01:53:15](#) Right. And you know, just because you've never been called out or you've never been asked in person, delete your dog, or you've never had a park ranger or a ticket given or anything like that. That's great. That that's never happened to you so far. But just keep in mind that even while that might not have happened, there's a lot of silent impacts to your actions as we'll get into in later episodes of this series. Not only impacts on the wildlife but impacts also on other people who might want one day want to use that trail. And maybe someone did feel really uncomfortable when you pass by them with your dog. You just didn't know it. So yeah, as far as, as far as my end and I'm not sure about worry, but that's really all I've got for you Steve. And I want to thank you for taking a chance on my little podcast

here and coming on to have the conversation about these really crazy festival weeks.

Steve: [01:54:04](#) Well, I didn't know what I was walking into after seemingly irritating the entire dog world, but I do think that it was productive and at the very least we'll get people thinking about it

Laney: [01:54:13](#) For sure.

Rory: [01:54:15](#) I would just reiterate that point too. You know, going into this, I had a lot of people ask me why I was doing this and saying, you know, the number one comment I got was I hate that guy. And you know, again, I just think if we all are a little bit more open to getting outside of our echo chambers and things, realizing things like Steve just said that not everybody loves your dog as much as you do. You know, when you're in the dog Instagram world, you're surrounded by other people who are constantly trying to out dog each other. And just realizing that the world is a big place and it's full of all sorts of people with all sorts of different interests, some of which don't include dogs. So just be open to learning and if you think somebody is a jerk, then you know, bring them to task and bring receipts. That was probably my favorite part of this call was listening to the conversation with the park ranger. It just goes to show that information is out there if you seek it out. So just reiterating hashtag know before you go.

Laney: [01:55:15](#) Yup. And it takes 90 seconds to figure it out too. That's the crazy part. So just to reiterate where people can find you guys. I've got at Adobe sisters on Instagram and then at public lands hate you as well as public lands, hate you.com. You have a blog on there with plenty of resources for people, FAQ, [inaudible] all kinds of things about how to get involved. Steve, other than the blog and Instagram, is there a way for people to find you as well?

Steve: [01:55:43](#) I mean, that's the best way. A, there's an email address on the website. There's a Twitter account that's not super active. So definitely the best way to get in touch with me is just to DM me through Instagram. I check all my DMS. Even if you have something critical to say you're not going to get blocked. You'll get a response even if I don't like what you have to say. I'll listen for sure.

Laney: [01:56:06](#) And then if anyone were to see any behavior on public lands that was making them upset and they reached out with respect

to that influencer and came to them from a place of grace and understanding and trying to have a conversation and they were received negatively, what would be your recommendation?

Steve: [01:56:24](#) You know, I actually just posted a flowchart about all of this. That's my second most recent post. But you know, if you're, if, if an influencer isn't responsive, you know, you can reach out to me and we can, you know, maybe have a discussion about how to deal with it or you can always, if you've got, you have solid hard evidence, you can always forward that information to the land management agency where the incident occurred and it'll let law enforcement Rangers do their thing.

Laney: [01:56:51](#) Perfect. Love it. Thanks guys. I hope you have a good rest of your night and thank you for giving me your time and doing this interview. I thought it was great. Thanks for having me. Likewise. Thanks for putting it together. No problem. See you guys. Bye.

Laney: [01:57:08](#) Hey friends, I think I've said all I can say. If you enjoyed that episode of sweet for certain podcasts, I invite you to come back for more seasoned too. We'll be continuing with our off-leash series and I can't wait to share the more science based off leash episode where we talk a lot about the actual impact on dogs and the environment as well as talking to some companies and some, some people who are using public lands properly. So I just wanted to let you know that we have merge on sale for suite for certain podcasts, which is amazing. It's on our Teespring store. If you search Teespring and sweet for certain, it'll come up. Also, there's a link in the bio for the podcast account if you'd like to follow along with the podcasts on Instagram. The account is at sweet for certain podcasts.

Laney: [01:57:51](#) If you'd like to follow along with me, Laney and my dog, Lorelei are a personal journey. You're more than welcome to follow along at Lorelei underscore GSD if you'd like to see more content of ours. Some more content that will be focused more on off-leash responsibility, that's for sure. Yeah, those are all the ways you can find us. If you'd like to support the show, the best way to do that as to leave a review on Apple podcasts. That's one of the ways that the show gets discovered and we can get new people involved. So if you'd love to hop over there and write a review, I would love that for you. One of the other best ways to spread the word of a podcast is to tell your friends that you're listening and you enjoy it. So if you don't mind, please tell a friend about this episode and how it might've changed your mind. If you do share anything about listening to

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the podcasts on Instagram, make sure that you tag at suite for certain podcasts so we can see it and repost. That's all I've got for you guys for the rest of tonight. I'm excited to be back for season two. It's going to be bigger and better than ever. Cheers guys.