Reid Davenport on “Life After” and the Fight Over Disabled Quality of Life

Disability Deep Dive - Episode 112

Jodi Beckstine (00:17):

Who gets to decide what makes life worth living and what happens when disabled people are left out of that conversation, even when the issue is directly about their survival, dignity, and future?

Keith Casebonne (00:35):

Welcome to Disability Deep Dive. I'm Keith.

Jodi Beckstine (00:38):

And I'm Jodi.

Keith Casebonne (00:39):

Today we're talking with Reid Davenport, a documentary filmmaker whose work explores disability, power, and the systems that shape people's lives. In Life After he investigates the 1983 case of Elizabeth Bouvia, a disabled woman whose push for the right to die became a national flashpoint and uses that story to examine the moral, social, and systemic questions that still surround assisted dying today.

Jodi Beckstine (01:02):

It's a conversation about autonomy, power, neglect, and what gets missed when quality of life is defined by systems that have already failed people with disabilities. Let's get started.

Keith Casebonne (01:15):

Before we jump in, I'm Keith. I'm a white man with brown eyes, brown hair, a graying beard, and I'm wearing a green shirt.

Jodi Beckstine (01:21):

I'm Jodi, a white woman with dark blonde hair that's in a bun, and I'm wearing a yellow shirt and glasses.

Keith Casebonne (01:27):

Reid, if you're comfortable, we'd love to invite you to visually describe yourself for our listeners as well.

Reid Davenport (01:32):

Yeah, I'm Reid, I'm a white man with a brown beard, and brown curly hair and glasses, and wearing a black shirt.

Jodi Beckstine (01:46):

To start us off, could you introduce yourself to our listeners and share a little bit about your work as a filmmaker and what drew you to telling the stories about disability in such a direct and political way?

Reid Davenport (01:57):

Yeah, happy to do that. So my name's Reid Davenport. I'm a documentary filmmaker and I guess I've always been interested in disability politically. I didn't say, "I'm only gonna make films about disability," it's just always what interested me as a disabled person. And in the documentary field, and many fields, disability is shown in this kind of individualized medical way. And the disability community, I think it's really important for you to see that politically, and so I have been trying to reframe this narrative about disability to include those, that political reframing.

Keith Casebonne (03:16):

Excellent. Well, that gives us a strong sense of where you're coming from. And let's turn to your newest documentary, Life After. Returns to the case of Elizabeth Bouvia and asks viewers to sit with questions that are still deeply unsettled. What pulled you toward this story and what did you feel had been missing from the way it's been remembered or discussed?

Reid Davenport (03:41):

I always knew that there was this tension between non-disabled progressives and disabled progressives who were involved in the community around assisted suicide. And I'm really interested in that tension.

(03:41):

I was reading a book by the great scholar Paul Longmore that mentioned Elizabeth Bouvia, whose case took place in the '80s. And I was immediately drawn to the story and I started trying to figure out how she died. And according to her Wikipedia page, she was still alive. And I knew right then that this was a story, this was a way to illustrate this tension that was there. And the media coverage of her focused on the disability. I mean, she focused on her disability as the reason that she wanted to die. But the conclusion, she was going through a divorce. She had just had a miscarriage. She was discriminated against in graduate school. And all of these things, it didn't even have anything to do with her actual body and kind of the physical stuff where they were focused on. So I really wanted to focus on the aspect of her story that the media didn't really focus on.

Jodi Beckstine (05:56):

Yeah. There's a quote at the beginning of your film that kind of rang through my head as I watched the remainder of it where you say you couldn't tell if Elizabeth was fighting or giving up. Her story opens up bigger questions about what people are actually choosing. So for me, one of the most powerful tensions in the film is the difference between personal autonomy and structural abandonment. Why was that so important for you to examine assisted dying, not only as an individual choice, but also through the lens of access and care and systemic failure?

Reid Davenport (06:40):

Because it is both. Part of the autonomy doesn't happen in a vacuum, and all of our decisions are influenced by our surroundings. So what do you have, when you are legislated into poverty, or you're discriminated against, or you're socially isolated, or you have shitty healthcare? These are all antithetical to your quote unquote "bodily autonomy" and that's contradictory. Bodily autonomy should be more or less innate. I think that people need to have the right to live lives of their own design before they have the right to die.

Keith Casebonne (07:48):

Wow. And it also gets into a deeper issue underneath the policy debate, which is how disabled life itself is being understood or misunderstood. That distinction feels really essential here because especially when the public conversation tends to just want to move toward really simple answers, the film pushes back on the idea that disabled quality of life can be judged from the outside. So what do you think the public and sometimes even policymakers still misunderstand about how disabled lives are valued, especially in conversations framed around suffering or burden?

Reid Davenport (08:25):

Yeah, well, I think you alluded to it when you talked about this quality of life notion. We always hear about quality of life as a projection, usually from medical professionals. We never hear about it from the actual person. Studies have shown that doctors rate disabled peoples' quality of life vastly lower than disabled people do. Studies show that for two years after a person acquires a disability, they rate the quality of life as lower than non-disabled people. And then after two years, it's exactly the same. So this poor quality of life for the majority of disabled people is a farce. I also think it's political inertia that we have these systems in place that have been in place for decades, and there is no political incentive to change it. So policymakers don't even have to think about disability in order to perpetuate these lack of opportunities that are given to disabled people.

Jodi Beckstine (10:40):

Yeah. Once you start questioning who gets to define quality of life, you have to ask who's been left out of the actual definition defining it. So Life After also brings in the disability community voices that are often left out of the mainstream reporting on assisted dying. Why was that central to the film and how did those perspectives reshape or even deepen the story for you?

Reid Davenport (11:12):

Well, I mean, this is a film about disabled people, so it should include the voices disabled people. And that sounds really obvious, and yet that doesn't happen. We see stories, films, books about disability by non-disabled people. So it feels like a really low bar to transgress that it's kind of radical to tell the story about disability with disabled people. I don't think my convictions changed from before to after making the film, but I think they deepened and I think that these notions of medical ableism and state ableism and societal hostility towards disabled people have deepened and there's no question as to how disabled people by and large do not occupy first class citizenship.

Keith Casebonne (12:58):

Oh, and it really speaks to why representation in these conversations is just not optional. There's such a difference between including disability voices and letting them actually reshape things, reshape the way we see things. For listeners who may be coming to this issue with real uncertainty, what do you hope they leave the film in this conversation thinking about differently when it comes to dignity and choice and the conditions that people need in order to truly live?

Reid Davenport (13:53):

I think that the main intervention I want to make with this film is not necessarily wading into this culture war of assisted suicide. But rather I want to illustrate the forces that cause people to become so desperate. That the government institutions are not set up for the majority of disabled people to live the life that they desire, which leaves people desperate. And in Canada, as we explore in the film, you do not have to be dying in order to access assisted suicide, and this is in Canada. You only have to be disabled. So you have poor disabled people who can't get the healthcare they need opting for suicide because they're poor and they can't get the healthcare they need. I don't see that as much of a choice.

Jodi Beckstine (15:20):

Yeah. Watching the film, that's a perspective that came to me as I watched that I went in differently. I thought about assisted suicide being a choice that someone could make and how great for them to be able to make that choice. And then finding out really it was they're making that choice because we have not set up any other choice. We're not taking care of them in the beginning. It's a cop out for a lot of legislators and I think so it's very eye-opening for me.

(15:57):

There's not really a good segue into the last question that we do. It's kind of an abrupt turn from this conversation that we were having, so I'm just going to jump in and ask it. And the second segment we do on the podcast, it's called our Deep Cut where we talk about media in disability spaces. So we ask our guests if there's a book or a TV show film or even a song that's resonated with you or that you'd like to share with our listeners.

Reid Davenport (16:24):

Yeah. Can I share two?

Jodi Beckstine (16:27):

Yes, absolutely.

Reid Davenport (16:31):

Okay. I was late to the party, but I just read Leah Lakshmi's work and it's stunning, specifically The Future Is Disabled. And I know that white disabled people are not the primary audience. I know it's primarily for people who are involved or who can be more involved in the disability justice movement, which is primarily queer and BIPOC disabled people. But I feel like it really allowed me to justify and accept the way I do things more.

And I've also been reading an anthology by Joseph Grigely, who's an artist and an art historian. And some of the ideas and the way he incorporates ADA complaints, for example, or, as a deaf person, his conversations that he's written down for people who don't sign has been a really joyful read.

Jodi Beckstine (18:00):

They're both great. Great choices.

Keith Casebonne (18:00):

Yeah.

Jodi Beckstine (18:00):

Thank you.

Keith Casebonne (18:18):

Yeah, I love both of those for sure. Well, Reid, thanks again so much for joining us. And this has been a really thoughtful conversation. It's such a interesting and also challenging and deep subject to discuss. And your film does a great job shining a light on it, and thanks for talking to us about it.

Reid Davenport (18:40):

Thank you so much. It was a pleasure to be here with you.

Jodi Beckstine (18:43):

Thank you.

Keith Casebonne (18:43):

Thank you.

Reid Davenport (18:46):

All right, take care.

Jodi Beckstine (18:47):

Stay tuned. This week's Deep Cut is coming up.

(18:55):

Quick content note. This episode includes discussion of assisted dying, suicide, disability, quality of life, and the way care systems can fail people with disabilities. We know these topics can be difficult and personal, so please take care when listening and pause if you need to.

Keith Casebonne (19:13):

Today's Deep Cut, we're talking about Life After, the documentary from filmmaker Reid Davenport. The film begins with the story of Elizabeth Bouvia, a disabled woman whose case became part of the national conversation around assisted dying in the 1980s.

Jodi Beckstine (19:28):

Life After is not only looking at one case. It uses Elizabeth's story to ask bigger questions about disability, care, autonomy, public policy, and who gets to decide what makes life worth living?

Keith Casebonne (19:41):

This is a sensitive topic, and we want to say upfront that we are not here to tell listeners what to believe about assisted dying.

Jodi Beckstine (19:48):

The film does is ask viewers to slow down and think about the conditions around choice. Does someone have care? Do they have support? Are they being listened to and valued? Are they being given what they need to live?

Keith Casebonne (20:02):

Today we're talking about Life After, what it asks of viewers and why disabled voices need to be centered in conversations about life, death, care, and dignity. So Jodi, for listeners who have not seen Life After, what should they know about the film before watching it?

Jodi Beckstine (20:18):

Well, I went into this film, it's a documentary about assisted dying, but it ended up being way much more than that. It begins, as you said, with Elizabeth Bouvia's story, but it opens into larger conversations about disability care and public policy and in general about how society views disabled quality of life. It's not an easy watch, I will say. So it's very important that you know that ahead of time, but it's an amazing film.

Keith Casebonne (20:55):

It is. It is very hard to watch as you said. But yes, it is amazing. And I think it's something that so many people need to watch and know. It's something that doesn't get talked about, but it's very impactful and important conversation that I think people need to be a little more familiar with.

Jodi Beckstine (21:18):

Yeah. So it starts with Elizabeth's story, but it doesn't leave the viewer there. Why do you think that was such an effective way to open the conversation?

Keith Casebonne (21:30):

Yeah, I think Reid's choice of opening with that makes a lot of sense. First of all, it's something that a lot of people have heard of. It's one of the only stories related to this that was nationally publicized and was just all over the news at one point in the '80s. But I also think it added, there's sort of a mystery behind it. As Reid mentioned, he wasn't sure if she was alive or dead, what had happened after that case. Once it was over, it just was over and nobody really got to learn anything more about her or what became of her or her story. So it's sort of like a mystery essentially. And I think you get hooked into wanting to know more about what happened and that fate.

(22:25):

And while it is very heavy, very hard to watch in some ways, I think it grounds it in a way that you want to keep watching it and you want to find out what happened. So I think putting it together that way makes it more approachable than if it was just jumping right into here are the current laws and problems, and it adds story to something that I think it was needed.

Jodi Beckstine (23:00):

Yeah, definitely.

Keith Casebonne (23:02):

So when the film moves from Elizabeth's case into present day conversations about assisted dying, what changes for the viewer?

Jodi Beckstine (23:10):

I think you kind of touched on it a little bit. The shift makes it more immediate as to what's happening. You first learn about her case and you're watching it and there's this footage from the past and it's centered on this one person and this one legal case. And then it starts connecting the history to what's happening now. And it became clear to me that

these questions, this idea has not gone away and it hasn't been solved and it hasn't really moved forward. You're no longer just looking now at Elizabeth's story. You're being asked to think about policies and attitudes and care systems that are around people with disabilities today. And I think that made it harder to sit with because again, it's not something, oh, that's taken care of, that's done, that's passed, that's whatever. These are choices and decisions that people with disabilities are having to make now, which is very difficult.

Keith Casebonne (24:20):

Absolutely.

Jodi Beckstine (24:22):

Well, her story is very specific, but the film uses it to ask questions about today. Why do you think her story still matters?

Keith Casebonne (24:36):

I think primarily because it is something that still we're talking about today and needs to be dealt with. And just because we're talking about something that happened a little over 40 years ago now, that's just sort of a touchstone. Nothing got solved, nothing got resolved. Yeah, that case itself had a verdict, had a decision. And again, I don't want to go into specifics because if you don't know the background, you should watch the movie and I don't want to even spoil that. But there's a decision in that specific case, but it's not like it started a precedent or changed. I mean, it's still a question that comes up and different countries, different municipalities, different courts see it differently. And it's kind of a mess. And I think it matters because we're still 40 years later dealing with the exact same things. I mean, I don't think anything's really changed from that time.

Jodi Beckstine (25:48):

I agree.

Keith Casebonne (25:49):

Yeah. So a lot of people may come into this issue first through the idea of autonomy, which is the right to make decisions about your own body and your own life. Why is that such an understandable starting point?

Jodi Beckstine (26:03):

That's how I came to understand it in the very beginning. I was very like, "This subject is about body autonomy." People with disabilities can struggle with that because our bodies can sometimes be discussed and judged and treated and managed outside of ourselves by other people. So the idea that a person should have control over their own body and their own choices was something that I was like, "Yes, 100% behind that." But like a good film, it complicates that idea because the people that are potentially making these choices, they started asking, "Do these people have care? Do they have support? Do they have a community? Can they live safely at home? Is the government offering them assistance? Are there doctors listening to them?" And that's when things started, I started, "Wait a minute," things started shifting for me. And it's not just about one choice. It's not an isolated decision. And it started to become more about the conditions around the person that were shaping the choices that they were making.

Keith Casebonne (27:27):

Yeah. Yeah. No, indeed. There's so much depth to the conversation. I mean, it's incredible. You can't grasp it until you see the movie, I think, and really understand. Yeah. Yeah.

Jodi Beckstine (27:49):

The film asked what choices people have. And why do you think that question mattered so much to the conversation specifically about assisted dying?

Keith Casebonne (28:01):

Yeah, I mean, I think it directly relates in the idea that, kind of how you just touched on a minute ago, but we're talking about literal life and death, and you should have control over that choice. Well, again, this is not about whether assisted suicide should be an actual thing or not. We're not going into a judgment on that. But the point is if it exists, you should have the right to decide if you want to do it or not. Because again, it is life or death. This is not about you don't get to choose what restaurant you go into tomorrow or for lunch or something. This is major. And if you don't have that autonomy, if you don't have that right, that's massive.

(29:11):

The idea of what assisted dying is, it's about a choice. And if you're making that choice, well, if someone makes that choice for you, or you're making that choice under some sort of duress, or because you feel like there aren't better choices out there, that opens a massive can of worms and makes it something that... Again, it's just a complicated

question. It's just a complicated thing to understand and even form an opinion on because there's so much to it. And yeah, if you know the choice, then is it even-

Jodi Beckstine (29:55):

Is it even a choice anymore?

Keith Casebonne (29:57):

It's not a choice. Exactly. Yeah. Yeah. It's weird to say. It's not a choice, it's not a choice.

Jodi Beckstine (30:04):

One of the strongest ideas in the film is the difference between supporting someone's right to die and supporting their right to live. So why is that distinction so important?

Keith Casebonne (30:15):

Yeah. I mean, you shouldn't even have to think that you need support for your right to live. Your right to live should just... I mean, can anything be more automatic than your right to live? But unfortunately, that's where this thing gets really complicated is that there's some really deeply blurred lines between a right to die and your right to exist, essentially. It's where it gets so complicated and when you get into government and healthcare and benefits and all these different things that should be there to make your life better. And sometimes that's not what happens. Yeah, it becomes like, "Well, what about my right to live if I want?" Yeah, it's kind of scary when you really think about it.

Jodi Beckstine (31:24):

There was a section where a lady was talking about, I think she was at the VA, I may have that incorrect, but was talking about the different things, the care that she needed and the assistance that she needed. And she kept getting denied and, "We can't offer this, we can't give you that. But there is the option of helping you die." Shouldn't that be the last choice, the last option? Shouldn't we worry about taking care of the person first? And that just boggled my mind that someone would even offer that as an option. She should have been able to come to that choice on her own. It should never have been offered to her by people that are supposed to be offering her help and assistance. It just doesn't match up for me.

Keith Casebonne (32:18):

No, exactly. Well, and I mean the film raises this concern that assisted dying can become dangerous when people don't have access to quality care or home-based support or any of the services they need. So what do you see viewers should take from that?

Jodi Beckstine (32:38):

I think that should be our first and foremost concern when it comes to these policies and these things. If someone has quality care, if they have support at home and access to different services, if there's people around them that value their life and care about them, if someone's isolated and under-supported, yeah, that's going to feel like the only choice that they have. Life is too expensive. Getting care is too difficult. And those are two totally different conversations and they're trying to put it into one. "It's easier and less expensive if you just die." And the takeaway should be that dignity for a person also includes their right to care, their right to support, the right of us to invest in people's lives. They're worth that. At least that's kind of what I was taking away from it.

Keith Casebonne (33:45):

Well, and going back to the idea of having the right to choose, sometimes you feel like you don't have a choice. I mean, it's like you're led to believe maybe that, well, all these other options don't exist, so this is what's left.

Jodi Beckstine (34:01):

Yeah. "Sorry."

Keith Casebonne (34:02):

It's like, "Really? That's what's left? I die?"

Jodi Beckstine (34:06):

Yeah.

Keith Casebonne (34:06):

Yeah. Right.

Jodi Beckstine (34:09):

So this is another moment that kind of rang through my head after it came up and watching it was where Reid filled out the form online about his disability and his quality of life. And it starts out a little tongue-in-cheek and funny, but then it becomes really serious. How did you feel about that moment?

Keith Casebonne (34:31):

Yeah, I mean, same. At first, you're giggling a little bit like, oh gosh, it's funny that he's able to match these things here and there. And then yeah, it gets dark kind of quick. "Wait, I could literally just... I qualify. I mean, I could just do this if I wanted to." I mean, he's not a Canadian, and this is a Canadian law for context. But I mean, the concept of it, that it's that easy. I mean, we talk about choice. I do think though that there are some choices that shouldn't be that easy to make. I think there needs to be guardrails and bigger processes involved just to even consider it and talk to the right people and make sure that there really is no other choice or that it really is the right decision for you. I mean, people go to counseling over much more minor things than living versus dying.

(35:52):

And so to think that you could fill out a form and be considered, "Yep, okay, we'll take care of this for you." There should be so many more processes and guardrails and steps to take before that can happen. And so yeah, it gets weird and scary quickly.

Jodi Beckstine (36:09):

Yeah. It's harder to get a driver's license and get into college than it was to fill out that form.

Keith Casebonne (36:17):

Yeah. Yeah. Well, and he mentioned at one point too that somebody, I think they had autism and ADHD and they qualified. Yeah, there's a problem. There's a problem there. Well, the film pushes back on the idea that someone else can look at a disabled person's life and decide what that life is worth. I mean, why is that such a dangerous assumption?

Jodi Beckstine (36:44):

People make assumptions about disability all the time, but they see a wheelchair, they see a diagnosis or the extra need for support or access, and they decide what they feel that person's life must be like. And you can't understand anybody's life, anybody, by looking at them. But it happens to disabled people all the time. We talk about the inspiration trope. It's the opposite. Either your life is so meaningful that you inspire so many people or your life is crap and you should just consider assisted dying. So I think that's one of the reasons why it's powerful is because they're really asking who gets to decide what suffering is and who gets to decide what level of suffering. And on the flip side, who gets to define what dignity is and who gets to decide what life is worth supporting and investing money into and help.

Keith Casebonne (38:01):

Yeah. Yeah, for sure. Absolutely.

Jodi Beckstine (38:04):

One of the things that Reid had said also was that the film isn't just about suicide. It's about what happens to people who are trying to just find a place in the world that's rejecting them. Everything is full of red tape and inaccessible. How do you think that can change the way we understand the film? When you first go into it, you're feeling like it's about assisted suicide. How can that change that?

Keith Casebonne (38:36):

Yeah, no, you're right. It does change it a lot. And it shows that, again, as you sort of just touched on, that it's people's view of disability and making overly simplistic judgments that don't really account for the life that someone's leading and could never understand or be in that person's shoes. It becomes this idea that people with disabilities are... It's fine if they're not in the way and they can live their life and okay, no problem. But if there's ever a problem or it's going to cost this money or it's going to be a drain on resources or whatever, is that life worth it? And that question doesn't come up for other people. I know lots of people have had struggles and lost jobs and had problems, and you don't ever, ever, ever think, "Oh, maybe it's best if you just died." No, that would be an absurd thing to say.

(39:49):

But for some reason, if it's a person with disability, that seems like, to some people, a valid question to ask. Right. Yeah. And it's angering and it's of course deeply ableist. Yeah. But you're right. I mean, it makes the film... There's so much depth in the film because it isn't just about should assisted dying exist or not. There's just too many levels, too many nuances, and too many just deeply ableist people making these decisions. It becomes so much more.

Jodi Beckstine (40:31):

Yeah. Life is priceless until it costs $100,000 for whatever thing that a person needs. Then it's like, "Oh, well, wait a minute."

Keith Casebonne (40:39):

Right. Now there is a price on life. Because that person has a disability, right, now it does have a price. It's not the same. It means their life is not as important. I mean, that's what it's saying. That's what it's saying. I mean, it shifts the question from why would someone

want to die to what made life feel impossible? Why is that sort of the better question for the film to ask?

Jodi Beckstine (41:05):

You don't think about, or at least I didn't think about what goes into why a person would consider this as an option. And the film clearly lays that out. The people that he spoke to don't want to lay in languish in a care home for years on end. They don't have someone that comes in and can help them. There was a gentleman that talked about losing his caregiver, and there was no replacement, and there wasn't a replacement coming anytime soon. He got denied and then later when he was able to reapply, things had changed for him, and that was no longer a decision he wanted to make. And you think about, my God, what if he wasn't denied? And he would never have had this opportunity to continue and see the upswing that happened for him.

(42:04):

It lets you know that when systems are failing people, they are pushed to the edge. And that becomes a choice that is made out of desperation, I think, more than a conscious choice. I think some people, I can't speak for everyone, can make that choice, but a lot of people I think are pushed to that choice. And I think that's the question that the film is asking is what is behind the choice that these people are making? And we need to evaluate that.

Keith Casebonne (42:44):

Yep.

Jodi Beckstine (42:46):

So there's a difference between including disabled people in a conversation and letting disabled people lead the conversation. How does the film show that difference?

Keith Casebonne (42:57):

Oh, as soon as you asked that question, the first thing that popped in my head was there's a scene where I think it's a local law that's being passed or maybe a statewide law that's being passed in New York about this. And there's a press conference and journalists and the people are all saying, "Yes, we think this is the best thing for people with disabilities to have this option, and we're going to make sure that happens." And then off to the side, there's a whole bunch of protesters, people with disabilities saying, "We don't want that." I mean, literally they're saying, "We don't want it." And the people who are saying, "This is

what they want." And it's like, could you just turn your head and say, "Oh, they don't want it. Oh, sorry, my bad. Let's start this whole thing over again." No, that's not going to happen, of course. But that's literally what's happening is that people are telling them at that moment, "We don't want it." And they're saying, "No, you do." "No, we don't." "Yes, you do."

Jodi Beckstine (43:51):

Yeah.

Keith Casebonne (43:51):

What? I mean, I don't know. I have no words for that. That's just absurd.

Jodi Beckstine (43:57):

It's such a stark conversation, but it's comical in that sense. Turn the camera five feet and see what's really going on. Talk to people who really are affected by this instead of this legislator that's just shoving a paper across his desk and putting things forward.

Keith Casebonne (44:17):

Absolutely. Yeah, "This is what's best."

Jodi Beckstine (44:17):

It's so frustrating.

Keith Casebonne (44:19):

No, we do know. And I don't remember the exact conversation, but I think someone asked a very specific question about disability and addressed that people are against this. And the answer was like, "Well, no, they don't know best," or something like that. I don't remember the right words, but it was something along those lines. And it's the kind of thing where you want to reach onto your screen and just be like, "You dummies. Why do you do that? Why do you feel that way? What is wrong with you?"

Jodi Beckstine (44:51):

Yeah, they don't want to help when it comes to access to care, but they sure want to help when they know better than you.

Keith Casebonne (44:57):

Yeah, right. Exactly. Well, for people who watch Life After and feel unsettled by it, which I think should be everyone that watches Life After, what do you think they should take away from the film?

Jodi Beckstine (45:11):

I think being unsettled, like you just said, is part of the point. I love films that make you think about them way beyond just watching it. There's no easy answer. I think that's plain. We need to think about choice and care and dignity for people. I think the viewers should sit with questions like what does real choice require? What's behind choices that people are making? How can we help people get care that they need, support them to live so that they don't have to be faced with this choice? And the question that always comes to me since starting the podcast with you is, are we working towards a society where disabled people can live fully and be accepted and made to feel like they belong?

Keith Casebonne (46:22):

Nothing to add to that. No. Yeah, I agree 100%.

Jodi Beckstine (46:28):

Well, today we talked about Life After, Reid Davenport's documentary about assisted dying, disability care, and who gets to define the quality of life.

Keith Casebonne (46:37):

Yeah. And as you can tell, this is not an easy film and it's not trying to be. It asks viewers to sit with really hard questions about autonomy, dignity, support, and what real choice requires.

Jodi Beckstine (46:49):

It also reminds us that disabled people must be centered in conversations about disabled lives, not spoken about from a distance or treated as examples or hypothesis.

Keith Casebonne (47:00):

That's right. Well, we're really happy you joined us for this Deep Cut. Keep listening and keep asking better, hard questions. Keep pushing for a world where people have the care and access and support they need to live.

(47:19):

A big thank you to Reid Davenport for joining us for this episode and for helping us think more deeply about Life After, assisted dying, disability care, and who gets to define quality of life.

Jodi Beckstine (47:30):

You can learn more about Reid Davenport and Life After through the film's official website and PBS Independent Lens.

Keith Casebonne (47:37):

If this episode moved you, challenged you, or made you think differently, please share it with someone who may need this conversation.

Jodi Beckstine (47:44):

Thank you for listening to Disability Deep Dive. Join us next time as we continue exploring disability, culture, rights, identity, and the stories that shape how we understand the world.

(47:54):

Disability Deep Dive is a podcast that is brought to you by Disability Rights Florida, where real conversations about life, culture, and ideas meet the lived disability experience. Follow us on YouTube, Spotify, and wherever you get your podcasts. You can also find us at disabilityrightsflorida.org/podcast.