

File Name: 0502171841_TAS-028-New_York_Subway_Lawsuits.mp3

File Length: 00:39

[START OF TRANSCRIPT]

Emily: Hey Kyle, you know what we haven't talked about in a while?

Kyle: What's that, Emily?

Emily: We haven't even talked about our Patreon.

Kyle: God, I don't even remember what that is!

Emily: You see, it's this really cool thing where people can choose to donate however much they feel comfortable per month, and it supports the production of our podcast.

Kyle: Oh my god, what does it pay for?

Emily: It pays for transcripts, and it pays for hosting, and it pays for all the things that we need to make this podcast great. But you know what it doesn't pay for?

Kyle: What's that?

Emily: It doesn't pay for us because we don't want your money, we just want the money to make the podcast better.

Kyle: So what you're saying is, if these lovely audience members give to the podcast, it will be better?

Emily: Exactly. And we won't take a dime. We're just in it to make it better.

Kyle: Go find us at [Patreon.com/theaccessiblestall](https://www.patreon.com/theaccessiblestall).

Emily: And we'll love you forever and ever and ever! Thank you!

Kyle: Bye.

Emily: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau.

Kyle: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

Emily: And I'm a little out of breath because Kyle just made me hold my breath.

Kyle: What are we going to talk about today?

Emily: Oh wait, this is the Accessible Stall.

Kyle: All right, we both said that. What are we going to talk about?

Emily: Elevators.

Kyle: Why?

Emily: Because what goes up, must come down.

Kyle: Okay.

Emily: Except for if you're in New York City, sometimes you don't go up, sometimes you don't go down, and sometimes you're down and you can't get up and sometimes you're up and you can't get down, it's terrible. I hate New York City.

Kyle: Elevators in New York City are a joke. Why are we talking about it?

Emily: Yeah, I was going to say in case you're wondering why we're complaining about elevators, there was recently a... or two, rather, dual class action lawsuits filed against the New York City subway system for their discrimination against wheelchair users. So, this raises several interesting things which I would like to talk about as one, a native New Yorker, and two, a wheelchair user, and three, someone who loathes the subway system.

Kyle: Before we do that and get down into the nitty gritty, I would love to share with you a story that I think you and the audience will appreciate that is semi-related in that it is related to transportation, but not at all related in any other way.

Emily: Do go on.

Kyle: Please indulge me, if you don't mind. I was coming home from work today, and the bus stop I normally take from work is constantly moving due to construction. I just didn't want to deal with finding the bus stop that has been in the same place for the last hundred years. So I took a cab. Green cab, New York City Cab, like licensed. Not Uber, not Lyft, not Juno, not nothing. Just a regular old green cab. So, I get in the cab and tell the guy my address. He goes two blocks away from my address and he says "All right." I'm thinking he's talking to his friend on the phone because you know, cabbies talk on the phone. He's still stalling and I realize he wants me to get out of the cab. So I say to him "This isn't where I said." So he repeats my address back to me, and I said "Yeah, you're not there. Does this look like a house? This is an intersection." So he goes "Ugh." Then, I just instruct him on the cross street, and he doesn't take me there, he takes me to half the cross street and not the other half. I tell him that and he goes "Ugh." He repeats my address back to me again, so this is the second time and I know that there's no way that he misheard me because he repeated my address back to me twice. Then, he takes me back to the original spot and I tell him to just keep going, and the way it goes is it goes 26, 27, 28, but he was insisting it goes 26, 27, 26. I swear to God. I tell him, I'm like, "Dude, just keep going." He goes, "No, it's going to be 26 again." I'm like, "We're on 26, it's not going to change back to 26 you're going in a whole different direction." He was arguing with me, and I'm like, "Dude. Just humor me and just drive straight." He does, and of course it goes to 28 because that's how numbers work. He tells me "All right." But at this time, I realized from before that this tone of voice meant "Get out of my cab." He didn't turn down my block. So I'm like "Does this look like my house to you?"

Please turn down this intersection.” He goes “Ugh.” I was like, you know what? “[Bleep] you.” And I got out of the cab.

Emily: Did you actually say that?

Kyle: Yeah, and I didn’t tip him either. He can go [bleep] himself. Anyway, elevators.

Emily: You know what, this points to a larger problem with the New York City transportation, which is that it’s all terrible and I hate it.

Kyle: Yeah it’s really bad. It’s really, really bad.

Emily: Yeah. Specifically we are talking about subways today because the two class action lawsuits are challenging the fact that over 350 of New York City subway stations are completely unusable by people who cannot climb a set of stairs.

Kyle: That’s slightly over 75%.

Emily: Yeah, that is ridiculous. The other suit which I happen to be a much bigger proponent of, is accusing metropolitan transit authority of not taking good care of the elevators that actually exist.

Kyle: Yeah, I’m a bigger fan of that one as well.

Emily: I think it’s worth talking about both because sure, it seems like a straightforward lawsuit, but I think that in a city like New York it’s kind of a loaded concept to initiate lawsuits about something as big as their infrastructure.

Kyle: Their infrastructure is a big, sad joke. If anyone listening knows anything about it, you know not to think about it otherwise you’ll never get on the train again. It’s true, the infrastructure in New York City subway. The oldest one is over 50 and you wouldn’t use anything in your house if...

Emily: The subway system itself is about 150 years old.

Kyle: Yeah, it’s 110 something like that. But like the oldest system still in use is just over 50, and it’s like unless it’s your house itself, if anything in your house was 50 years old it probably doesn’t work anymore, you know?

Emily: My house is over 50 years old.

Kyle: Yeah, there you go. I think mine is too, actually. All right, but you know what I mean. Look men houses don’t move.

Emily: My house works okay I think.

Kyle: Which one do you want to talk about first?

Emily: Actually a house is a good analogy in so far as if you don’t take care of the house, as time passes the house will no longer be a functional house.

Kyle: Replace house with subway system and you'll see Emily's point. Which one do you want us to talk about first today?

Emily: The larger of the two lawsuits, the one that's taking on the entire subway system and all of its inaccessible glory.

Kyle: I am all for that in spirit, but the practical version of me, good luck. That's what I have to say about that.

Emily: My thinking is from a completely practical standpoint. How would that even be possible in anyone's lifetime without seriously screwing up transportation to the point of riots in the street?

Kyle: You know if they were to do that, they're going to find other problems that they're going to want to fix. I think the estimates say that to renovate 25 of them, like the 25 next most popular, is a billion. Then to do the rest it will be 4 billion. That's a lot of money, that's a sizeable chunk of the MTA's whole budget.

Emily: I don't care about the MTA's budget because the MTA just likes to take your money and laugh at you. I have no sympathy for the MTA.

Kyle: I do a little bit because we say that as New Yorkers because we don't live in a city where you're charged the distance you go, like you should be. Instead we pay a flat fee. Everyone who says anything about how expensive the subway is has never been outside of New York City.

Emily: No, it's not that I think the subway is expensive per say, but I think that on the whole, we pay for crap.

Kyle: Yeah, I don't think I get \$2.75 worth of service every time. That I agree with, that is true. My point is, if we paid more, we might. Maybe.

Emily: All of my endless stream of complaints about the MTA aside, the big thing that I keep thinking about is as much as I love the idea that New York City is being sued for something that is utterly ridiculous, like not having an entire transportation system be accessible...

Kyle: Or at least over 50%.

Emily: - - the vast majority of it.

Kyle: At least if you were 51% we'd be complaining a lot less, but you're not even close to adequate. It's pathetic.

Emily: It's ridiculous, but this is one of those things where I'm trying to reconcile my extremely strong belief in access with how all of this would go down in an effective and timely manner. I just don't foresee it. Granted, I do not have a PhD in city planning over here, but I'm pretty sure that you don't need that to see this.

Kyle: Yeah. I don't think even if you had exactly the amount of money that you would need, expendable upon request, I don't think there's a way to do it timely. Even if money were no object, there's no way to do it without wrecking the system for most other people.

Emily: Yeah, or what I could see is they would do one elevator at a time. So by the time they were done, we'd all be not only dead but decomposed.

Kyle: What if they do that and your elevator is last? What's the triage? That's probably something actually pretty easy to figure out, you probably go by population.

Emily: That's a silly complaint. If they initiate it... I know what you mean though. Everyone's going to be like "Why not my stop?"

Kyle: That's the point. Yes, it has to happen but if you're the person that lives near one that is going to be renovated and it isn't until 2085, of course you're going to complain about that, too.

Emily: Also the renovation puts a wrench not only in your travel plans, disability or not, but everyone else's too.

Kyle: Exactly, and that's why it's probably not feasible. I don't know, maybe someone who has a PhD in civil engineering could educate us but probably not.

Emily: Are the subway stations... is it even safe? Do they even have room to carve out an elevator shaft? I'm thinking about some of the subway stations and I'm just wondering, what's their other option? They install one of those hand crank lifts that go up and down the staircase, and one person at a time can use it?

Kyle: You know what? I agree with you, but also, if they can do it to my subway station which is one of the older ones, Main Street, and make it fully ADA compliant, there's no reason why they can't do it. There's really not. This station opened in the '40s and it's fully ADA compliant. They even have bathrooms. Most stations that are accessible aren't fully ADA compliant because they don't have bathrooms. You need to have bathrooms for it to be fully ADA compliant.

Emily: You need to have bathrooms, or you need to have ADA compliant bathrooms?

Kyle: No, I think you have to have bathrooms... well, if you have a bathroom then there has to be...

Emily: Yeah, I think that's more to the point. Also, I would not ever use a bathroom in the subway.

Kyle: The one at Hudson Yards at the other end of the station, because it's the newest, well no longer the newest subway station but it's the fourth newest one.

Emily: Oh, sure. The beautiful one.

Kyle: Yeah. My point is, you can do it to the old ones, you can do it to the newer ones. I would love to see the process by which they pick the stations. I assume it's you just go down the list of ridership because the top 15 of them are accessible.

Emily: I could also see there being a lot of class privilege at play here. I could see them doing the stations that are frequented more in affluent areas first.

Kyle: Affluent areas pretend not to like subways. They have them, but they only have one and it's tucked away because they don't want it, they are like... To your point, the most popular subway station is Times Square, and you know, it's Times Square. Yes, it's a transfer hub for most people, but if you work there and live near there, you're alright. You don't have to worry about money.

Emily: Also, Times Square is one of the ones that's quote-unquote accessible, unless...

Kyle: No, but it is. The problem with Times Square is it's completely accessible but there's also like 20 elevators in the whole station, any one of which can break at any given time and thereby rendering you stuck even though the station is accessible.

Emily: Exactly. Not to mention that traversing it is difficult in general. If we're going to talk about accessibility, maybe start with better signage to the elevators?

Kyle: Yeah, for all its credit, from what I understand this could be completely wrong, but a trusted source, a friend of mine told me this, but New York City apparently has good signage. Which I thought was hysterical because I would never say that in a million years. That just makes me question the signage everywhere else. It's true when you're looking for an elevator, you got to look for a little wheelchair man and then you got to go in that direction and then find it again, and it's like 500 yards down the path you came and you start to wonder if you got lost and it's like...

Emily: Not to mention everything about the subway is anxiety inducing because I always wonder, I know that I double checked to make sure that I was going from one accessible station to another accessible station. But once I get on the subway, "Oh my God, did I actually get on the right subway to go to the accessible station? Am I going to get stuck underground? Am I going to get to the station and the elevator is going to be broken, and I'm going to be stuck there, then I'll have to find a nice person to go upstairs because I'm not going to have any cell service depending on what the station is and then they're going to have to call the fire department and then I'm going to be on the 5 o'clock news because I'm stuck?"

Kyle: If it makes you feel any better, one of the things that the New York City subway station and the MTA did do was make sure that cell service gets through to every subway station. So you will be able to call the fire department. It's actually...

Emily: I've been in subway stations where there's not great cell service, though.

Kyle: Where? It's there now.

Emily: I can't recall. I don't know.

Kyle: When was the last time you were on the subway because it's brand new...?

Emily: The last time I was on a subway I was using cell service.

Kyle: My point is, if you can renovate the Columbus Circle station to be an underground mall, because they did that. Now that station was already accessible so I give it a lot of credit, but if they can put an underground mall in the Columbus Circle subway station, complete with selfie tablets to take your picture in the Columbus Circle subway station, I don't want to hear about why you can't afford an elevator.

Emily: Clearly, I have not gone exploring.

Kyle: I actually don't care what your stupid reason for not having money for the elevator is because the Columbus Circle Subway Station negates all of it completely.

Emily: You only know this because you used to work in that area. I think I've been on that subway maybe three times in my life and once was to come visit you at work.

Kyle: I have to recommend that you check it out. It's a beautiful mall, but it's a mall in a subway station.

Emily: Yeah, that seems like a waste of money.

Kyle: In fact, whoever paid for it paid so much money for it that they actually changed the color of the station. They're not green, like the staircase isn't green. It's orange. I didn't even know that you were allowed to do that but they did.

Emily: Sometimes you can change the staircases.

Kyle: Can you?

Emily: Like, advertising. You can put the advertisements...

Kyle: Not the color of the stairs though.

Emily: Yeah.

Kyle: So shutting down the entire subway system to make it all accessible is ridiculous, even for us. The other suit that Emily brought up is in my opinion, the more interesting one.

Emily: The one about making sure that elevators that do exist are not constantly in disrepair.

Kyle: Yeah. Or, I understand mechanical things break. I understand that with that many of them, somewhere it's going to break all the time and the ridership at certain stations is going to heavily weigh which ones break all the time. I fully understand that. Here's what I don't understand, though. I don't understand therefore why there isn't a place, a system, somewhere in the MTA that doesn't text you immediately when an elevator gets reported broken, that doesn't update you,

doesn't send you an email. There is one, but there's always a 15 minute delay and that's pathetic.

Emily: 15 minutes is not even close to actual reality in some cases. My favorite thing is when you've made every effort to double check the website, get to your station, and then find out.

Kyle: Of course that doesn't protect from the unfortunate situation that it breaks when you get there. That's no one's fault, that's fine. But the fact that there's a human being updating the website instead of a computer when an elevator breaks in New York City, one of the most wealthy cities in America and probably if you were to list World economies, and treat every state as separate countries, we'd probably also be in the top ten along with California. There's no excuse whatsoever that is pathetic.

Emily: You know what I'd like to see money spent on, truly? A full team of on call elevator repair people who will be easily reachable not by some button that leads to some unknown telephone number when you push the emergency call button to say the elevator is broken, but like actual people who can be contacted and be there, I would say if we're talking the city, should be there within an hour.

Kyle: Yeah. Maybe at two for the inner boroughs.

Emily: That still throws a wrench in your plans, but there's absolutely no reason why elevators should be persistent in breaking down.

Kyle: Check this out, you can get volunteers to help with that. You probably need to be trained to be an elevator repair man. In the event that hiring such an on-call elevator repair service is infeasible, there's no reason why New York can't run a service where people can sign up to volunteer to be runners for fireman if they see somebody stuck in the station, or something like that. There's many avenues to success here.

Emily: Yeah. On top of that, maybe enforce treating the elevators a little better somehow because they are essentially like places where homeless people go to the bathroom, and where people throw all their garbage and where there's mysterious substances on the wall. Look, I'm not saying that I think that the way New York City police treat homeless people is acceptable, and I think it would be great if homeless people could just go into somewhere and use their bathroom and not have to resort to peeing in an elevator, but that said, that's still something that I'm rolling my wheels in.

Kyle: I don't think that's unreasonable. I challenge anyone who thinks it is to do it because...

Emily: Ewe, like ewe. I don't even touch my wheels because I'm using a power chair. My friends just the other day on twitter we were talking with someone who was mentioning that when she rolls around the city every time she gets into an elevator she might as well take up stock in Clorox wipes because that's how much she's

touched urine. I know all of this sounds like a giant bitch session, but the reality is the transportation sucks. It is so hard to use public transportation.

Kyle: You know what the funny thing is? Everyone thinks that. That is not the opinion of the disabled community in New York City. Nobody is happy with the state of the subway system. You would be and again maybe you wouldn't maybe you are cynical like we are, but you would be shocked to see that so many people are unhappy and still absolutely nothing gets done. If only the people that cleaned up after New Year's Eve in Manhattan could also fix elevators. That's the other thing, when you see how quickly things can get done when people want them done, like when you have a giant parade that's literally disrupting traffic and making people not be able to go to work. After Thanksgiving, after New Year's, after whatever, we love parades here. That is cleaned up within 24 hours you would never even know there was a parade. I know that... sorry you were about to say something, I know that cleaning up confetti is a lot less complicated than repairing an elevator, I understand that. If you can have the manpower to do one, you can have the manpower to do another.

Emily: New York City has us literally by the throats. A parade is like a fun, touristy thing for them. The subway is something that millions of New York City residents, why did I say millions? Millions.

Kyle: It is millions, that's why. It's 4 million more when they commute.

Emily: Plus tourists. It's something that everybody relies on when you come to New York City at one point or another to get around. New York City knows that even if people are going to complain, people are not going to suddenly stop using it.

Kyle: They can't. Yes, we know the buses are accessible. God bless the buses. Yes, we know there is a certain pathetic percentage of cabs that are accessible. Yes, we know that we can summon them remotely. But that doesn't work either.

Emily: Buses are an interesting thing because I find them to be less direct if you're trying to go cross town obviously. Again, I know that we're talking about New York City things that someone in Seattle is not necessarily going to relate to, but on the whole, and I think this is something that most people can relate to if they live in an area where there are buses for public transit, the problem with the buses is sometimes if the driver is a real jerk, getting them to stop for you if you're a wheelchair user or sometimes they'll stop and be like, "Oh, yeah there are already two wheelchairs on here and we can't take you." If every wheelchair user starts using the buses religiously, the buses are going to be impossible to use.

Kyle: In that case Emily, I think we just did ourselves a dis-service by saying that for anyone...

Emily: No, because everybody is going to stick to their preferred mode of transportation.

Kyle: I know. I understand when there's two, and on the bigger buses four because there's two buses stuck together, wheelchair users on a bus. I understand that. It literally

makes it impossible. We're not actually knocking you for that, but when you're that jerk bus driver who just doesn't feel like pressing the ramp button, because the two pounds of pressure you need to push that button is just too much for your thumb that day, I don't care. I don't.

Emily: I'm just thinking now as we've spent like 25 minutes ranting about the problematic New York City transportation system, in light of all that, I still find myself feeling like I should be somewhat grateful that it at least exists. I know that so many people who live in more rural areas, don't have any access to this type of public transit.

Kyle: Oh, sure. We should be grateful for it. A broken system is better than no system. It just is, because no system means that you are stranded, a broken system means you might be stranded. That's all there is to it. I don't think it's that much to ask that our system work better. I really don't. The MTA should be more like [0:24:01 **WoMana**], the Washington metro. I don't care that...

Emily: Washington DC, not Washington State.

Kyle: That's pathetic to say because it's like ten times smaller and five times fewer people. It looks like New York built this amazing thing a hundred and some odd years ago, and then just kept doing it that way instead of improving upon it at all.

Emily: See, and then I say that the DC metro is for the most part a dream with how easy it is to ride. You ask anybody who lives in DC and they will have nothing but terrible things to say about it.

Kyle: To be fair though, the DC infrastructure there is terrible too. The red line literally catches fire I think something like twice a week, technically. That's ridiculous. But you can get on it, you see the trade? So you might die in a fire, but you can get on the train.

Emily: Yeah you can access that fire. The other thing too, and this is what really gets me, is at least all of the metro stations are wheelchair accessible. I think it's all of them, right?

Kyle: It is all of them and even when they break because they immediately send out shuttle buses when the elevators break.

Emily: I've never had the shuttle bus experience.

Kyle: I have. They're awful but they're there. They're genuinely awful because everyone, every wheelchair user who lives in DC flocks to them because they have to. That's not the fault of the bus, really.

Emily: All I know is that we likely want what we can't have, and so while I wish that I had the DC metro in New York City, I'm also aware that I should be grateful for what we do have. In spite of being grateful, I don't think there's anything wrong with wanting the accessibility features that do exist to be taken better care of. I think that is the

lawsuit that should gain the most traction. I think it's the one that's the most reasonable.

Kyle: I agree. I'm not going to say this to put a damper on your parade, but the train station I take every day, the seven line, has been being renovated for the past three years. I don't mean to say this, but they're more important than accessibility because the major stations on the 7 train are accessible, the minor ones aren't, and that is a problem, but if you're going somewhere on the 7, you're probably going to get off at an accessible stop. Things like being able to tell when the train is coming, way more important than accessibility.

Emily: I would argue no.

Kyle: Really? You would? Why?

Emily: When the train comes you just get on the train.

Kyle: Yeah but being able to know when it's coming and being able to know of delays immediately. That's a lot...

Emily: I think that is something that is not mutually exclusive with accessibility.

Kyle: I agree. Since the vast majority of New Yorkers don't have a disability and don't need accessibility, in terms of a priority, it's not more important...

Emily: Until they do. Until someone breaks their leg, until someone's MS progresses, you know.

Kyle: Yeah. But no one wants... that's the reason the world is not accessible Emily. No one wants to think that they'll ever become disabled.

Emily: Of course not. I think they can be working on structural improvements and system changes while also working on accessibility. I think that accessibility needs to not be this constant separate entity that just galls me. It's like "Let's fix everything else. Also, let's make it accessible."

Kyle: I really, genuinely want to know the thought process to why they don't. I know it's money, I know it's expensive. I understand. Again, New York City. We're rich here. New York City is a wealthy place. If we don't have the money, there's not enough. There's never not enough because we can do things like host a giant party at the end of every year that costs more than I'll ever have in my life. There's no excuse. There's none. I want to know if you had a reason that wasn't money, what's the next reason? Is it that too many tourists use the elevator at once and therefore they break more often because they exceed the weight capacities too much, is it the homeless problem you mentioned earlier, what is it? Every single one of those, I think could be mitigated in a way that doesn't impede your life in a negative way such that you wouldn't be able to use the train. I really believe that.

Emily: First it's got to be monetary, but I think in regard to that that really shows where prioritization is. They just made this whole effort to offer free Wi-Fi around the city and arguably, internet connectivity for free is a really great thing especially for people who are homeless or who many not have the money for a cell phone plan with all this data. I get that that's an amazing way to spend your money, but it just seems that the more you think about it, the further down the totem pole disability gets.

Kyle: I would say that that's more important than... freedom of information is more important than physical access because at least you can access it. If you have freedom of information you can access it from places that you can access.

Emily: I would say the free Wi-Fi is also one of those things that literally could benefit anyone, disability or not.

Kyle: I don't want the New York City government spying on me. Use your VPNs kids, they're good for you. Still, free Wi-Fi is cool.

Emily: What am I they going to look up on public Wi-Fi? I mean **[0:29:27 inaudible]** I know that...

Kyle: Come one Emily, why don't you have glass walls at your house? What are you doing that you don't want people to see? Anything. You wouldn't change with the **[0:29:37 inaudible]** that shades drawn. Wait, drawn means up or down? **[Bleep]** I don't know. I meant visible to other people.

Emily: I know what you mean. Although I have accidentally done that several times.

Kyle: We all have. It's nothing you want to do unless you're into it.

Emily: I know what you mean. If I'm checking Facebook or twitter, or whatever, sure I don't want them reading my information. On the whole, if they're going to read my information, fine. If I have no money to afford Wi-Fi in any other capacity, fine.

Kyle: That's your trade, right? You're the product and they advertise to you and blah blah blah. I wonder... again, that's another thing that I wonder that's probably never going to be publicly accessible, is where disability in terms of the city budget, actually lies? I can't imagine it's actually at the bottom. Scraping gum off the sidewalks is probably at the bottom. No, I'm serious but I also can't imagine that it's anywhere practical enough to get it done in a timely manner that will affect our lives.

Emily: The city has yet to even accomplish things like carving out curb cuts on all of the city blocks. Quite frankly, that takes...

Kyle: Yeah, that's even more pathetic.

Emily: Yeah, that takes what?

Kyle: Two guys and a jackhammer?

Emily: Yeah. An hour or so per...? You could have that done in a month.

Kyle: You could have that done in a week. Where there's only one jackhammer in the city.

Emily: Sometimes it's like we're sitting here and filing class action lawsuits, and I don't mean "we" like we had anything to do with it, but you know. These lawyers are filing this class action lawsuit about the public transportation system and I still struggle to be a pedestrian in the city.

Kyle: To be fair, and I should've probably said to be honest, I think that would have been a much better suit. Everyone knows that the subway sucks. I don't really think people are conscious at all about how much the streets suck. I know I'm not. Especially because most streets do have curb cuts. That's one of the things that you don't really realize isn't there until you're faced with it. If I think that, I bet you your average able bodied person does.

Emily: In the more touristy parts of the city like Midtown, the curb cuts are not great, but they exist. The further uptown or downtown you get, that's where the curb cuts become iffy. I just think that it's so silly that we're trying to get an entire transportation infrastructure changed when we can't even get people to smooth out the curbs. Come on.

Kyle: You know what, you said Midtown but actually if you go, this is a little inside baseball for anyone that doesn't live in New York City. But just for fun for you, if you go to Vanderbilt Street, right outside of Grand Central Station, which totally is not a major transportation hub at all, there's no curb cuts on Vanderbilt Street. That's right in the heart of Midtown.

Emily: I was actually right over there during the Women's march and you're right.

Kyle: Yeah. It's like the worst street in the city, honestly.

Emily: Every street is the worst street in the city but honestly, I don't know why I didn't say earlier on than most of the way through our recording that we should have tackled the curb cuts first because the more I think about it, the more I feel like my blood pressure rising over this.

Kyle: You can't get to your subway elevator if you can't get down your street. Can we just talk about elevators for a second because we actually touched on this on our pre-chat and we were like talking about how much elevators are actually really stupid and there really ought to be something better by now in the history of elevators?

Emily: I truly cannot think of something else, though.

Kyle: I know but really, it was a joke but we were saying like, "There really ought to be something better than a hole in the wall with a poly on it."

Emily: You think?

Kyle: Yeah, I do. I do. Look, if Japan can make a train that is 200 miles an hour with magnets and [bleep], doesn't even touch the tracks to get rid of all the friction, are you're going to tell me that elevators are the greatest way to ascend the building? I don't think so.

Emily: As much as I can be like, "Oh, I'm not a city planner but I can't tell people how to do their jobs, but I feel like I can at least logically talk about it." I am in no way an engineer and can't even begin to come up with a better solution to elevators other than maybe stop having stairs. Since that's not happening ever in until the world explodes and then stairs just stop existing on account of the world doesn't exist, I ain't got no solution.

Kyle: You don't have to get rid of them. Just make them better.

Emily: Although the more I think about it, the more I feel like there's got to be some genius MIT student or something who's already figured out how to surpass stairs and has like evolved to a different level. We just don't know about it yet.

Kyle: The point is I think through all this that... I'm cautiously optimistic to see where these lawsuits go. I don't think they're going to go anywhere. Truth be told, I think this is more of a publicity stunt for the people that sued the city, so that people know who they are and see that they're doing "important work". I do think that the way the MTA handles this is going to be the real tell or accessibility to come in the city because if they just completely throw it out on the grounds of it being impossible, that tells me that access is nowhere near the top of the priority list. Whereas if they issue a statement with a plan or anything other than completely getting rid of it, at the very least you know they think about it. Even if we don't see it.

Emily: On the whole, I'm also pretty skeptical of these lawsuits. I'm not skeptical because I don't think that they have extremely good intent, and that they're extremely important. I'm skeptical because of the people who are on the receiving end of the lawsuits. I think that this is a great example of advocates and activists putting your money where your mouth is, and if you don't like something you do something about. What's a stronger way to send a message than slapping someone with a well thought out lawsuit? At the same time, all the well thought out lawsuits in the World, are they going to change a structure that's bigger than any one person?

Kyle: Is it going to do more than just waste New York City's money?

Emily: Yeah, because the other way this could go is that the city could end up devoting tons of money to firing back. Rather than solving the problems, they'll try to come to some kind of settlement agreement or they'll try to ...

Kyle: Which they'll take because...

Emily: Who are you settling with? You can't really make a settlement with this lawsuit. I don't think anyone is in this lawsuit...

Kyle: Well it's a class action so settlements not really going to work that way.

Emily: I'm not a lawyer or a city planner or a civil engineer or an architect.

Kyle: We're actually the worst people to talk about any of this.

Emily: You know what we are? We're disabled people so I feel like our opinions kind of matter.

Kyle: In terms of being plaintiffs, but we're not.

Emily: And New York residents? We're not plaintiffs, we're not anything. We're two people who have an opinion on a thing that made news. That's perfectly okay.

Kyle: Yeah, you're right. Anyway, New York City sucks. Everyone living here, disabled or not, thinks that. But we also pretend it's the greatest city in the World because it totally is.

Emily: It's actually really awesome. I just really hate it. But it's awesome.

Kyle: That's the thing. It's so good that the parts that you hate relative to how good it is is so bad because the rest of it is that good that you can't imagine something so good having parts that are that bad. At least that's what it is for me.

Emily: When I take the very nice and clean elevator up to the highline which is a park on Old Train Tracks incidentally...

Kyle: - - in the sky.

Emily: In the sky, literally a sky park. It is a highline...

Kyle: You're going to tell me they can build a park in the sky with four elevators but you can't make a train accessible?

Emily: I'm literally enjoying walking above the city, rolling above the city, whatever. I think how amazing that is, and so much of the city still sucks. Be that as it may...

Kyle: You know what you got to do? You got to build whole foods around everywhere that has inaccessible subway station.

Emily: Why?

Kyle: Then the rich folk will go there and then all of a sudden, magically...

Emily: Exactly. So what we really need is crippled gentrification.

Kyle: Yep. Boy, you're going to get a lot of hate for that. Oh no, you said the g word. You said the g word that's not actually bad but people think it's bad because of what it implies.

Emily: I said the g word after the c word, oh boy. Oh no. Come at me hate tweeters.

Kyle: No, it's all good. I got your back.

Emily: Thanks.

Kyle: You are welcome.

Emily; Appreciate it.

Kyle: Any final takeaways about New York and how awful it is?

Emily: Yeah you guys, Kyle bought me this really cool shirt today.

Kyle: We're going to put a picture of it in the thing.

Emily: So New York is not all bad because Kyle lives in it.

Kyle: I would say the same but you actually don't live in the city.

Emily: I still live in New York.

Kyle: Metro Area.

Emily: Technicality. But he got me a really cool shirt you guys. New York City is terrible, Kyle is great. Thanks for listening.

Kyle: See you next time.

Emily: Bye.

Kyle: Bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]