

**[00:00:00]** Intro

Darin: You are listening to the Darin Olien Show. I'm Darin. I spent the last 15 years exploring the planet looking for healthy foods, superfoods, environmental solutions, and I've had my mind blown along the way by the people, the far off places I have been, and the life-altering events that have changed my life forever. My goal is to help you dive deep into some of the issues of our modern-day life, society's fatal conveniences. The things that we do that we're indoctrinated into thinking we have to, even though those things are negatively affecting us, and in some cases, slowly destroying us and even killing us. Every week, I have honest conversations with people that inspire me. My hope is through their knowledge and unique perspectives, they'll inspire you too. Together, we'll explore how you can make small tweaks in your life that amount to big changes for you, the people around you and the planet, so let's do this. This is my show, the Darin Olien Show.

[00:01:22] Guest Intro

Darin: Hey there. Welcome, everybody. How's it going? What's happening? How are you doing? How's life? Are you dedicated to what you're doing or you're just kind of cruising through? I get it. There are certain times where we just kind of cruise through but I tell you what, I'm uncomfortable if I don't know what I'm doing, and I don't know where I'm going, and I certainly need to know why I'm doing it. And that is kind of what keeps me going. This is a wacky world, so just have a ponder on that but that kind of warms me up to this great human, John C. McGinley as my guest today. So John has so much that he has done in his career as a TV, movie actor, but his dedication, his commitment, his reason for doing things, his why, what he is here for is clear when anything comes out of his mouth. And I've been friends with John for probably about a decade. I see him on a regular basis aside from the quarantine craziness. He's one of my dear friends. I love him. I'm just blown away by who he is as a human and what he's doing with the opportunities that have opened up for him. Any of you see Platoon? Okay, well, John's in that. Any of you seen The Rock? Well, John's in that. Have you seen Scrubs? Well, he's in that too. Have you seen, let me guess, Wallstreet, Point Break, Highlander? His list of movies that I think he said close to 100 movies, and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of episodes of TV. But here's the thing, I'm not sitting down with Johnny to talk about his Hollywood stuff because Johnny's not that kind of guy. Johnny is a car-heart wearing badass strong, dominant alpha whose heart and morals are just straight up right there. You don't guess, you know exactly where John's at any moment, he will tell you, he will share with you, he will be authentic. And that is maybe the antithesis of Hollywood. But more importantly, it's just in his DNA of being an artist, expressing himself. And probably his biggest role that he's played in his life that I humbly gather when I sit down and get to talk to him a little differently on this podcast, which is why I love podcasts. You get to just sit and have this, you guys as audience listening which creates this elevated consciousness, and you'll hear the importance of his son Max McGinley coming into his life. Max having Down Syndrome clearly was one of the greatest gifts in John's life. John is a huge advocate of the Global Down Syndrome Society. We'll put a link



below and also Special Olympics. He's a massive advocate. And my God, if you have ever seen or get a chance to see him with his son and his other daughters, he's got two other daughters, you will be blown away. He is present, he is there, and he takes his responsibility as a parent straight on, heartfelt and serious. Do you know what I mean? Not the bad seriousness but straight up and intended as being the best parent possible, and that's a beautiful thing. So I'm excited for you guys to get to know my good friend, John C. McGinley, and get a different sense of what a great human he is. And at the same time, he's had all this crazy success. And I want you to meet this beautiful blue-collar, heartfelt alpha male that is just one of my great friends, so enjoy. This is John McGinley.

[00:06:51] First Half of Interview

John: "In search of Eldorado. But he grew old— This knight so bold— And o'er his heart a shadow— Fell as he found, No spot of ground, That looked like Eldorado. And, as his strength, Failed him at length, He met a pilgrim shadow— 'Shadow,' said he, 'Where can it be— This land of Eldorado?' 'Over the Mountains of the Moon, Down the Valley of the Shadow, Ride, boldly ride,' The shade replied,— 'If you seek for Eldorado!'" That's my soundcheck, has been for about 100 films.

Darin: That's better than fucking 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

John: Has anyone ever done an Edgar Allan Poe poem for soundcheck up here before?

Darin: I think you're the one and you're the only because there's a lot of things that is apropos to, the one and the only John McGinley. So Johnny and I, for everyone who's listening, we've worked out together. He's one of my dearest friends. But when you're not around and we comment about you, several times through the years, we will always say John is the best. There's no one like him. And that is the beautiful--

John: I'll take that any day of the week.

Darin: And that's the originality and you get what you get with John, it's straight, it's real, hundreds of movies under your belt, living in Hollywood for decades, in and out of that stuff and to be as authentic and real and as grounded, and as gracious and grateful, enthusiastic about life. And everyone who doesn't know Johnny, he breaks into a thing. Everyone is dying and laughing and it's just the best, so I guess what stands out for you in your career as meaningful? What are the highlights because there's the Hollywood thing, we could run through that list, but what has got you to continue the way you've continued being very successful in it? And what are the highlights along the way in this long career that you've had?

John: It's interesting as things were going along, and you just reeling off different stuff made me do a self-inventory. When things were cruising along and I was doing for a long time, I was lucky enough to about three or four films a year. And so I call it the movie train, and I never got off the movie train because I thought in my mind, I decided that it was a jinx if you got off the movie



train, so I wasn't necessarily doing great films all the time. I did plenty of stinkers, but you just stay in that fraternity/sorority, and you stay in it. And then Max came along 21 years ago, and I don't want to leave town anymore. My son Max McGinley is 21 years old. Max is born with Down Syndrome, and I want it to be in town. In town, being Los Angeles. And so however you wheel this stuff or lucky enough to fair catch something coming down the way, Scrubs came along, but Scrubs was informed by Max. And what it means is, is that Dr. Cox could have been just a run of the mill jackass and then he wouldn't have been that interesting. But he was this really hardcore teacher with a heart of gold that he didn't want anybody to know about. But the whole heart of gold part of component of it was Max and living in gratitude. And that your question was, what different projects and films and TV shows have impacted me along the way, and it wasn't the TV shows as much as recalibrating everything after Max was born and bringing max two sets in my chest, bringing Max to sets with me, not physically but emotionally and spiritually, informs everything. It's also informed the roles I took since Max was born. There are a few exceptions but mostly, bringing max two sets with me recalibrated everything starting in 2001 when Scrubs started.

Darin: And so Max is born, and then you got Scrubs.

John: Yes, a couple of years later, about two or three years later. When Max was born, I think I took about a year off because when a child is born with special needs, and you don't know what's coming down the pike. It's like getting hit with a cosmic hammer of disorientation. That's how I was impacted by Max showing up. We didn't have an amnio and the blood protein test and the sonogram showed that he was a girl and that he was fine. And it turns out that he was a boy and his 21st chromosome tripled. And what does that even mean anyway? And what is Down Syndrome? I know this is not the question you asked, but everything goes back to Maxie for me.

Darin: Well, and everyone needs to understand that Johnny has embraced it in such a way that every time I see you interact with Max in any one of your two daughters and your wife, Johnny's 100% present and dad of the century, and that is so powerful because you're constantly being a leader, being a teacher and being there for Max. And so when you say that, when I hear that, I absolutely hear it and know it because that informs you to this day because I see it.

John: 100%.

Darin: And you are, just to touch on that point, you are the global ambassador for the International Down Syndrome Society.

John: For Global Down Syndrome and also for the Special Olympics.

Darin: Oh, great.

John: So those are kind of tip of the spear organizations that put the Kumbaya aside. And I've been with groups who do the Kumbaya. And what I mean by that is that we can do this together



and it takes a neighborhood and all that. These two organizations have lobbyists in Washington and raise money and are about research, especially the Global Down Syndrome Foundation in Denver. And it's not about holding hands. It's about medical research so much so that they built an adjunct to the Denver Children's Hospital called the Linda Crnic Institute, and it only serves people with down syndrome. There's no hospital in the world that only serves people with Down Syndrome. And so those are the groups that I've distilled it down to. And I'll be going to Washington the second week of February, and I'll be going to Denver the first week of February to do-- My whole thing is, aside from Max, is to advocate for people who can't advocate for themselves. It's that simple for me, whether it's helping maybe to inform people about the word retard and retarded and how that stigmatizes a population that hasn't done anything to anybody ever but can't return serve. So in other words, if you use inflammatory language about Italians or Jews or gays or lesbians, there will be a tax, a T-A-X. There'll be a consequence for that language. But for the special needs community, you've picked the perfect target for your vitriol to not return serve. That pushes my buttons.

Darin: Right. And this organization, is that still going on Spread the Word?

John: Spread the Word is an initiative that happened out of the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho almost 11 years ago now. I was up there for the first time and I met these self-advocates. And I don't even know what a self-advocate was. And I met these people who were pretty high-functioning young people on the spectrum. And they started talking about things that bothered them. And one was language, specifically, the words retard and retarded. And so we crafted a campaign called Spread the Word To End the Word. And it started as a viral campaign where people took the pledge to spread the word to end the word. There was no money involved, and it caught on and so baby steps. Baby steps since people are still using language about African Americans and other groups, and so we're baby steps.

Darin: Break that down for everyone because there's a technical use for that, is that correct? So retard, is there a place where it can be used in the description or is it something that is absolutely off-limits? Because obviously, since I've known you, Johnny, the volume in my mind when someone uses that word now that I have the awareness is so loud. That word is inflammatory, and it was simply out of the education that you showed me. And so now it's the volume in my head, and I'll stop someone when they use that. So is there a place where people can use it in a clinical sense? Break that down.

John: Not in 2020. If you can just think that as the same way you'd use the N-word for our black friends or any language about an Italian or a Jewish guy, if those can be used as complements, that's kind of a litmus test. So if it's ever a compliment to call somebody a retard or say you're retarded or the party was retarded or you're acting like a retard, those aren't complements. You're chopping somebody down. And so that's the easiest street way to do it. And you needed another celebrity telling you how to talk like you need a hole in the head, and that's not ever what I advocate. All I'm suggesting is there might be a better way. Sometimes I teach screenwriting symposiums down at UCLA and at USC, and the challenge for some of the writers



is, is there a better way to break that joke than making retard or retarded the operative word in the joke? Is there a better way to do that? I guarantee you there is. And how can we break that joke better because it's usually the butt end of a joke?

Darin: And you've seen that in a lot of scripts. It still happens to this day.

John: Tons.

Darin: They're throwing it around. And so you're simply advocating like, listen, use a different way and don't disparage this whole population.

John: Well, since I can't tell you how to talk, and you're free to talk any way you want but there is a consequence for when you talk in certain ways. In other words, there'll be a consequence if you use the N-word in a certain company. All I ask people is when the R-word comes up, I just ask them if there's a better way to say it. And then they'll say what? And I said, "Well, you just said that everybody was acting really retarded. And as a member of the special needs community, I find that really offensive." And then the person will go, "Oh, my God, I didn't know. I'm so sorry." "Well, now you do. Now we're having this conversation." And so instead of saying "Don't say that," which will put everybody's Dukes up, I will just ask people, is there a better way to say that?

Darin: That's great. And everyone listening, hey, take that advice because it's a question.

John: Maybe there's not a better way. Maybe you, Bob, can't say that. Maybe that's the best way you can say it. So let's have a talk about that. Even if it's brief. Maybe we could just table that for a second. It's never beating a dead horse to me ever because it does perpetuate this stigma about a population who's minding their own business and trying to get through the day. That's it. Most of the people in our population are trying to get through the day. They don't remember when Max was in elementary school, and then Middle School, this happened twice, and once with a principal in middle school, and I wasn't trying to be a tough guy. I was just telling the truth. The principal of the middle school when we're going in said, "What would you like to see for Max over the next couple of years here?" and I said, "I'll tell you what, I just want him to be safe on your watch. That's it. Everything else is gravy. I just want him safe here." And there was no veiled threat or anything, I just was telling this principal, who was super, this is what I want for my son on this campus. I want him safe.

Darin: Every parent wants that. And since he can't advocate in the same way that you and I can, he can't verbalize in the same way, he can't share that in the same way. You need to go out of your way to have that conversation with the person that's in charge.

John: Correct and you and I largely can stick up for ourselves. And at one point, I know the one that happened for you, I think it happened for me around fourth grade or so, I could pretty much



stick up for myself unless it was a big strong sixth or seventh-grader. A lot of our guys can't stick up for themselves.

Darin: So that organization, the people listening, you can check more information on--

John: The Global Down Syndrome Foundation and Special Olympics. To me, that's best in breed.

Darin: And then spreadthewordandtheword.org?

John: Yeah, that's on the Special Olympics website.

Darin: Okay, good. Okay, cool. So they're kind of joined in that whole advocacy. So that's interesting.

John: By the way, none of that's Debbie Downer to me. That what I put my on my cereal in the morning. Sometimes it sounds a little too onerous. To me, it's oxygen.

Darin: How do you mean that like just because you can be an advocate and do something for this population and because you believe in it?

John: Both.

Darin: The language you use and you can use it here is that it's a privilege and an honor to have Max in your life because you've already said you bring Max with you and you point it to your heart and that clearly changed your life. How has Max, the list is long, but what are the highlights of Max coming in your life? How has it changed your life?

John: Well, I think I tried to explain as a storyteller how Max impacted me but also, Max introduced to me, to my wife, it was a kind of a cold, rainy, March Saturday. And at that time, I only had Max on Friday nights, and then he had to go back Sunday mornings, so it was a desperately finite period every weekend. And I had two chocolate labs at the time, and we live about seven houses from the beach in Southern California. And everybody was losing their minds a little bit in a rainy March day and so I said, "Alright, let's go. We'll go down to the beach. We'll put on some rain gear." And so Max probably was six or seven at the time and the two chocolate labs were very precocious. And they were getting antsy in the house, so we marched down to the beach. And we get down there, and sure shooting, the first thing the chocolates do is they go down to the beach, and they get into it with a Jack Russell Terrier about 200 yards down the beach. And so I put Max well above the mean high tideline and I went to go get them. And when I came back, Max was sitting on this woman's lap. And that had happened when we were really working very hard on speaking at arm's length, which is about 42 inches. A lot of people in the special needs community do this close-talking, which is not appropriate when you see our people talking here, and it's something that's not appropriate. So we were working at talking at arm's length. To see him sitting on this woman's lap and having him face to face with



her and she was sitting in kind of a cross-legged pose looking out at the ocean and Max was right in her grill. And I walked up and I've just gotten the two chocolates and I came back and I asked this woman I said, "Are you okay with this?" And all I meant was the proximity of my son's face to hers to a total stranger on a rainy March afternoon. And she said, "You have no idea," and because she had gone through some stuff, and I didn't have any idea. All I knew is that she was freaky hot, and I'm his father, how are you doing? And so Max introduced me to my wife. I would never have bothered this woman on a Saturday afternoon. It's not in my thing. I'm not good at all that but Max did. And so we talked for a little bit and she had to go and so I said, "Do you want to grab drinks sometime." She's, "Well, I don't drink." I'm like, "Well, me neither." I said, "How about a cup of coffee? That's en vogue, coffee, want to get some coffee?" And she's like, "I don't drink coffee." I'm like, "Oh, for God's sake. What about tea? I'm a big tea guy. Tea?" And she said, "All right, I'll have a cup of tea with you." I'm like, I love tea. Pullover, a cup of tea. So, I finally got our digits and then I got nothing for two months. I got nothing, nothing. It was like 40 days and 40 nights.

Darin: Like you reached out and she never responded or--

John: No. I didn't get a kiss, I didn't get a hug, I get no action. I was very physical.

Darin: But you're dating.

John: I don't know if Nicole will call it dating but--

Darin: You're hanging out there.

John: We're hanging out getting goose egg. And so Max introduced me to the woman who would become my wife. So that would lead the league in the Hall of Fame contributions.

Darin: Nicole McGinley is a walking angel.

John: Yeah, she's a pretty special person.

Darin: She is an unbelievable person. And my god--

John: But I never would have met her if Max hadn't introduced us. No chance, or how do I know, but I would never have introduced myself on that rainy-- I had too many other things going on, I had dogs, I had a special needs kid, you bothering strangers, I would never. We would have gone for a walk and gone back up to the house and tranquillo. We would have hung out for a second or two in that afternoon.

Darin: So he chose her.

John: Max chose her. However you want to package that, that's what happened.



Darin: That's amazing. And you've been married for how long has it been now?

John: My gosh, Billy's 11, so 13 years. We're dating for 14, so that's a good run.

Darin: That's a good run. You guys are on a pretty amazing demonstration of family inclusivity two daughters are incredible, well-disciplined, respect to both ways. For anyone who has chaotic family life, not that you've escaped from that--

John: It's a loony bin over there sometimes.

Darin: But there's a lot of respect that you have with your family and your kids. Again, you can see that both ways. And so when you speak, they respect that.

John: Sometimes. Sometimes they don't know. Well, I can't get anybody to bring the trash cans down from the curb. I've offered them money, I've tried to incentivize the whole thing, nothing. Max, Nicole, Billy, Grace, and Kate has also especially recently, they've really impacted how much and where I want to work and how much I want to be away from you guys, how much I'm willing to be away from this nucleus as a 60-year-old man. And if money is not going to be the catalyst, the driver for taking gigs and doing gigs, it's interesting. It has to be something else. It has to be a personality as the director or the writer, or maybe they both suck. And the material on the page is just stunning, or there are not many other ors. And so I've felt, a gear shift, especially in the last year or so, in wanting to be here.

[00:28:31] Barukas Ad (Shortest Version)

Darin: Many of you follow me know I've spent most of my life searching for the healthiest foods on the planet from the Amazon jungle to the Andes of Peru, to the Himalayas and Bhutan, to the deserts of Africa, and everything in between. Discovering hundreds of plants and herbs and superfoods, like this is my Passion. Things like Sasha inchie, wild cocoa maringa, many adaptogenic herbs and on and on and on. If you look hard enough, there are a few unknown extraordinary foods around the world that people still don't know about. And a few years ago, I came across my favorite superfood discovery of all time, Barukas nuts. When I first tasted them, my eyes lit up. I was blown away. They're so delicious with notes of popcorn and cocoa and chocolate and with this amazing crunch. So the taste alone just absolutely blew me away. But after sending them to the lab, which I do and getting all the tests, I realized they're the healthiest nuts on the planet. No other nut even compares. They have an unusually high amount of fiber, which is critical for healthy digestion. We're all getting way too low of fiber in our diet and it's good for the healthy bacteria and microbiome. And they're off the charts in super high antioxidants and have few calories than any other nut. It's jam-packed with micronutrients. And what they don't have is just as important as what they do have because they're found in the forest in the savanna, what's called the Cerrado biome of Brazil. Not grown on a plantation or a farm, they're untouched by industrial pesticides, larvicides, fertilizers. They're truly a wild food. But they're not just good for you, they're really good for the planet. Most other nuts require



millions of gallons of irrigated water, but Baruka trees require no artificial irrigation. Barukas are truly good for you, good for the planet, and good for the world community. It's a win all the way around. I really think you'll love them, so I'm giving all of my listeners 15% off by going to barukas.com/darin. That's B-A-R-U-K-A-S dot com backslash Darin, D-A-R-I-N. I know you will enjoy.

[00:31:44] Second Half of Interview

Darin: Anyone, whether they're an actor or not, I think can appreciate this part. Your work ethic, your preparation is incredible. So break that down. So it could probably translate into any role because you prepare for any role. You come in blazing, you know your lines, you know what you're doing, and there's no ambiguity with that. So when you were doing Glengarry Glen Ross, you were fully practicing doing your lines. Johnny would be on a balancing ball on his knees juggling while reciting his lines. And then you ask him, why are you doing that? And the answer is--

John: I was always afraid the cellphone would go off or something in the theater and I didn't want anything to be more distracting than what I was doing in rehearsal. And that's why I juggle because whenever you drop if you're juggling a club or balls or scarves, it doesn't matter. If you drop something, it's always one of two things, you either don't know the line or the line sucks, and your brain's not transferring to your mouth because something's wrong with the line. Now, if it's Shakespeare and you're dropping a club, it's on you. And if it's David Mamet's lines in Glengarry that's on you, there's nothing wrong with the lines. So something's off, something's blocking. And it's like going into the doctor and going into an MRI machine to see what the problem is and those clubs drop. If you're capable enough juggler, you won't drop a club, you're not going to. The only time you drop a club is when you stop concentrating. And so that's also when the word stop when you drop a club or a ball is when you're not concentrating. So why aren't you concentrating on that line? There's always a reason.

Darin: So it's your way of exposing yourself.

John: Yes.

Darin: To almost your own consciousness around what it is that you're trying to--

John: Absolutely, plus they'll never be a bigger distraction on a set. I can't say this in a live theater, but at the Schoenfeld where there's 1,200, there'll be distractions, there'll be the crinkling of the things, that won't bother you, you're juggling in rehearsal. Someone's cell phone's going to go off, it's not going to bother you. You're juggling. Juggling is harder than a cell phone going off.

Darin: If someone's watching their iPad or a friend of ours, which I won't name, was in a play.



John: Things are gonna bother you and you're doing eight shows a week doing matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays and then six nights, things are going to go wrong. And so I've been on Broadway a couple of times before that, but not in this capacity, not playing Dave Moss in Glengarry, and I want it to be ready for it.

Darin: That's Al Pacino for God's sakes.

John: And who had done any given Sunday for Oliver. I think Al the reason I got casted in Glengarry. I know it is because we spent a lot of time in Miami together. And I asked Johnny Cusack, who's a dear friend of mine, and I asked him, he had Done City Hall with Al, I don't know, about 20 years ago, and they're very good friends and I said to Johnny, "What about the Al Pacino of it all?" prior to going down prior to meeting with Al in Miami. And John said, well, go knock on his trailer. Nobody knocks on his trailer. He said, Keanu never knocked on his trailer on the Devil's Advocate and Al always thought that was weird. And Keanu's the best guy in the planet by the way, I'm sure it's just because he's shy. And Johnny goes, go knock on this trailer. And this sounded like the biggest setup in the history of the world. I'm like, go knock on his trailer, and then some big strong Italian guy's going to come out and beat my ass. That's all he could think. And so I go, "John, if you're sick in the dog on me here, I swear to God, I'm going to kill you." He goes, "Knock on his trailer." So I get down to Miami, and I went over and I knocked on Al's trailer, and we ended up talking for four months. It's the greatest thing ever. And as a result, and I didn't do it for any reason other than I was scared, and then all of a sudden, it yielded this dividend of connecting with Al at a human level. And then that led to Glengarry.

Darin: Wow.

John: The same thing happened with Newman. Johnny and I were down doing Fat Man and Little Boy, about the making of the atomic bombs in Durango, Mexico, 8,000 feet up in the Sierra Madres. And who's down there but with us, but we call them el big dog, Paul Newman, and we're both hero-worship, especially from collectively from Cool Hand Luke. And we could do dueling lines from Cool Hand Luke. And so we both just started hanging out with Paul Newman. And it was the greatest because nobody hangs out with him, but we did.

Darin: And I would imagine, this will be my guess because there's something real about you, there's no bullshit, you're not trying to get anything from him or them, and that's the thing about Johnny, which I said is, it's straight-up who Johnny is and the realness of you. So if you're coming in meeting someone you're going to be real. And if they want to play either their Hollywood person or be real, if they're probably desperately seeking realness with another person because there's always people around going, "What can I get? What can I get? What can I get?"



John: Plus maintaining that affectation is exhausting. And so how great to be able to just put your Dukes down and talk to a fellow human being who happens to be on the set for you with your 16 hours a day for four months. On paper, that seems like it'd be a great relief.

Darin: Break down your process a little bit. I mean, we talked about the learning of the lines and not being distracted and all that stuff. So when you get a role, let's say whatever it is, TV, film, play, what is your process now that you go, okay, cool. I'm going to take that job. And so now, how do you start prepping for that, and what is your process?

John: For me, it's always been about the words. And so because everything else after somebody calls action, or if the curtain goes up, everything else is bullshit. The words is the one thing that's going to sustain you.

Darin: So what does that mean?

John: So in other words, the text, your lines, the script, the screenplay.

Darin: Does that mean knowing it inside and out or what is that?

John: Finding a process for me, a really specific process. So they're on my desk at home right now. There's a half dozen to a dozen black composition books. And so the first thing I do is write out every word that I have to say in the script in double space with a space in between them on one side of the page, and then once you've written them out, I go back and I highlight every operative word in every piece of punctuation. So if there's a sentence and the sentence is Darin left the bomb, comma, on bus 13, comma, yesterday. So Darin left the bomb. The bomb is the operative word in the first one. On bus 13, 13 being the operative word in the second phrase and yesterday. So now I trace out the operative words, and then I start putting verbs on the margins of what you're doing with every piece of punctuation. And so once the verbs are done, and you go over them. So what are you doing with Darin left the bomb, are you ratting out Darin? Are you informing somebody else? Are you investigating? What are you doing with the line? Are you advertising? What are you doing? We had Olympia Dukakis as our master teacher at NYU for three years in grad school, and all she ever wanted to fucking know is what are you doing? And God forbid, you told what you were trying to do, you get kicked out of the fucking program. She's like, what are you doing? And all I ever want to know in the script is what are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? From punctuation to punctuation.

Darin: It gives life to the words.

John: It gives clarity to me.

Darin: Clarity, yeah.

John: And also give me access to the text. And while you're doing all this monkey business, the words are going in your skull. So now you've written them out, you've done the operative words,



you've put verbs in the margins, you largely know the script by now. And now is the fun part. Now you've tilled the soil. Now you get to grow stuff. And so now hopefully, there's a director who doesn't have his or her head up their ass but it doesn't really matter if they do because what I'm doing, I'm not going to rely on you. If you, the director, have something to contribute, then great. That's a bonus. But otherwise, I'm going to make you look good, I'm going to make the writer look good, and I'm going to make everybody be able to go home in a 10-hour day, not a 16-hour day. We're going to get this thing done, and we're going to tell the story. And I'm going to hew to the text and whatever tone you the director, whatever style you want to impose on this, it doesn't matter because I've already done the verbs. I already know the operative words. I know the text backward. If we want to learn it in some foreign language, we can do that because I already know it. I know what we're doing. And then that empowers everything. What happens from there is the fun part. I have a coach who comes over and I have a rehearsal space here that I use. And now we get to start turning everything upside down and finding out how stuff tracks and what might be interesting to try different than maybe is on the page and is the most obvious thing. And maybe that's not your main to the story, or maybe that's not what the director is going to tell, but who cares? That's the fun part. So by the time we get on the set, and you call action, I'm so fucking dialed and fit. I'm ready to go. I can't wait. And I'm usually three or four takes and I'm done. The difference in the Walk and Talk, that first shot with Keanu in Point Break, that four or five-minute walk and talk, and Kathryn Bigelow directed it who is the greatest, but stuff kept going wrong because it was back when that Steadicam arm was brand new and there was this big Aussie guy who was the operator and he was pulling the Steadicam all through the bowels of the FBI. And we did that one about 37 times but I think Kathryn used number four. And so about three or four in I know we have it. Unless you want me to stand on my head and do it a different way, then I'll try that too, but the way it is on the page, if we have time to prepare enough for Scrubs, we didn't have any time. I didn't get to do all this. But also, that character was kind of on you by about four or five episodes in. You knew a bunch about that character. And so you didn't have to reinvent the wheel every single time you got a new episode.

Darin: It's not. It's organically informing you because of your practice and the time that you've put in already.

John: Yes. But if you're giving birth to a new character, that's different. And if you have time to do everything I just told you, like for Glengarry, they had time to stand on, and I was standing and juggling, not kneeling. If you have time to juggle on a balance ball and do your lines, that's great. That's a gift but you may not have time for that.

Darin: Because Scrubs, you're cranking out--

John: 22 to 24 episodes.

Darin: Yeah, so you've been given lines and they're changing them probably the day--



John: On the way to the set.

Darin: On the way. So what do you do because this is such a great-- So number one, part of my extraction of that is your work ethic. If you're preparing that much for the thing that you want and when that thing, this is a universal principle, let's just step out a little second. If you're preparing that much and doing that work, you are creating a receptacle of receptivity and actionable things that are way above anyone else. If someone came to the set and didn't prepare and didn't know their lines, how's that going to go? You're ready, you're a stallion in the starting block ready to go. So, the Scrubs is kind of this example of like, okay, well, yeah, I know the character, I know some things but they're throwing stuff at me at the last minute. So you wanting to prepare because I know you like to do that because--

John: It is the fun part.

Darin: The preparing.

John: Yes.

Darin: You like that?

John: I love it.

Darin: And what about that do you like?

John: I like the puzzle, the New York Times crossword puzzle little and finding it and--

Darin: The creative drive aspect.

John: Yeah, just connecting the dots is exciting to me and not having somebody spoon-feed you the answer. And as an adult who, I don't know, I kind of thrive on putting the pieces together. That feels satisfying to me. If you can do it and if you have surrounded yourself with different teachers who come by. And for Glengarry, always hiring kids, different friends of friends who had come over and they were just to do the lines. I didn't want any input. Since you have no input, you're a child. I just want you to do the lines. And I do that for an hour a day. I can't concentrate that much longer. Then just do the lines over and over and over and over. Then I bought a metronome. And I did it different rhythms with a metronome at different tempos, having nothing to do with the play. I just wanted to do it at different tempos. And that thing would be going at different speeds. And so we do different rhythms with the metronome.

Darin: You're just exercising.

John: That was an exercise. And you could say that's indulgent, I could care less, it yielded dividends.



Darin: So then when you flip to the adrenaline running 10 seasons of Scrubs and they're throwing stuff at you the day before, even throwing lines at you while the cameras going, now you're not able to prepare in that same way, so how do you then deal with the spontaneity of that and what's your process for that?

John: I'm really good at improv and I'd like improv. The problem is, if it gets out that you're too good at improv, it scares some directors because they think you're going to change all their scripts. And since a lot of directors and writers sprinkle fear on their cereal in the morning, you don't want to give them anything to be afraid of. And so I can get on a set, and it's not that fun, but if we need to pull a rabbit out of our ass all the time, I can do that in my sleep. It's not that fun. And you start to rely on a bag of tricks and you become a little redundant because next to Robin Williams or Jim Carrey, most of us have a finite number of things that we can pull out of and we go back on things that are comforting to us. Like I have a bad habit. I whistle all the time. And I gave that to Dr. Cox and now that's a bad habit. I can't do it anymore. And sometimes when I struggled with a line I would just do this thing. I told everybody it was like an homage to Newman in this thing when he does this to Robert Redford but it wasn't. I was just struggling with the text. It became this nervous thing that I saw on editing.

Darin: So they could tell.

John: Yeah, it was a total tell. And I kind of put lipstick on a pig with it, but it was bad habit and I'll never do that again. And I saw it in editing because I'm a post-production. I love post-production. You can fix a lot of things. And so I would insinuate myself into the editing days at scrubs and micromanage things a little bit, even though I had no place, no right being there. But your question was, how do you go from somebody who's maybe a little indulgent in preparation, and a little fanatical to be nimble on the day, and there's a little bit of surrender. But when you're getting lines from somebody like Billy Lawrence, he's going to write to your mouth and your tempo and to your rhythms and they're going to fit in there. I could always tell there are 12 writers on Scrubs. There are two rooms of six writers and they would leapfrog every week. And Billy Lawrence would ride rough shot over both rooms. And I could always tell when Dr. Cox's lines were written by someone other than Billy because it didn't fit in my mouth.

Darin: Oh, wow. That's so interesting.

John: Billy knows that and then Billy would do a pass, and the rhythms would be back in Dr. Cox's rhythms and I would be able to say them like that.

Darin: It was like the DNA. He had the DNA and you knew the DNA and if it changed, it was just--

John: Just the words on the page and this incredibly weird rhythm that Billy wrote Dr. Cox in was his and it fit my mouth.



Darin: That's amazing. So that's the spontaneity of things. We prepare for things. We prepare for business. We prepare for relationships and then life happens and there's spontaneity and you do the best you can with reacting and trying to be informed the best that you can but surrender was the biggest thing that I took from-- We have to respond, but we also have a degree of surrender.

John: 100%.

Darin: And that's a key. That's certainly a key.

John: And I'm curious too. I'm curious, and I think curiosity spawns being nimble and being cerebrally agile. That all sounds like monkey business, but I'm curious. And so if on the day we have to change things, I'm curious to be involved in this exchange. If the exchanges are interesting, if it's not, then I shouldn't be on that set.

Darin: Well, that's also the subtext too that I see is you're a student, you're always a student. So you're teaching, you're learning, you're teaching yourself, you're learning from others and you're practicing, and the best students are the curious ones.

John: Absolutely.

Darin: And just being open and like receptive because the point we think we know it is the death of creativity.

John: Where I get in trouble on sets is when people just want to go again and again and again without tempering the again with input. So otherwise, because I know we got it four or five in. And now if you just want to go again and again and again without suggesting what do you want to do different in the again? There's kind of this fatigue directing where we'll just go till you're tired, and then something will occur. I'm not going to get tired, ever. And so what do you want? Do you want to go faster? Is it that simple? Do you wanna go slower? Do you want me to do it in Latin? What do you want? What are we doing? We have it. I know we got it in three and four. What are we doing? Let's just go again, have fun. Fuck you, have fun. I'm not going to have fun if I'm swimming and wondering the whole time, I'm not in character, I'm in John's head going, what the fuck are we doing? What are we doing? And on most sets, I usually in the meeting or what used to be the audition process, that would become really clear. And so when I met David Fincher on Seven, the character California was written on the page for a Latin male, but the producer Arnold Kopelson, who also produced Platoon said, "Mc, you got to just come in, rest in peace. Mac, you got to just come in and meet David. You'll love him. He's outstanding." And David had done a bunch of stuff, but I didn't know him. And so I drove in and I met David, and he just from go. And California's a profoundly ancillary character in Seven but he has a couple of fun things to do, and David, his input was specific and right on, and there was zero bullshit. And by the time I left that meeting, I was like, I'm doing California. And then we did, and it was thrilling with this young guy who knew precisely what he wanted in the frame. And that's where I



excel. I don't do well with people who, I don't know, who are just kind of swimming around in it. I don't do well there.

Darin: You like clarity.

John: Yeah, I thrive on it.

Darin: Highlights of the illustrious career, what would they be?

John: Definitely Glengarry, Platoon, Scrubs. Those are top three. The Rock was being on Alcatraz for a couple of months was fantastic. Doing Wall Street during the day. For three weeks, we shot Wall Street during the day. And I was doing the play talk radio at night, which would then become a film and I would do that with Oliver. And so during the day, Charlie and I were down right next to the Woolworth Building, lower Manhattan. And then at night, I was driving straight up Lafayette Street to The Public, the Shakespeare Festival, and doing talk radio, which was a smash hit. And I went end up doing it for two years. I'll never do that again, but it was a great part. And that was kind of the New York actor's dream doing a big studio film during the day and a hit play at night. That was pretty tough to beat.

Darin: What would you say to a kid either coming out of high school or coming out of college who wants to pursue something, maybe he's an actor, maybe he's not, what would you say as advice for anyone wanting to pursue something gratifying in their life?

John: What worked for me was accumulating a set of tools. For actors, it would be how to break down a script, how to speak eloquently without originalism, how to move. So all the things that happen in an acting conservatory for, in my case, those will be the tools, things that you can carry with you. And having a set of tools, I don't care if you're an entrepreneur or what you're doing, having a set of tools that will allow you to over-prepare so you can over-deliver.

[00:56:49] Fatal Convenience Intro

Darin: Now we've reached a part of the show where we address society's fatal conveniences, and how we can avoid falling into them and being a victim of them. I defined fatal conveniences as the things we may be doing because the world we live in makes us believe we have to or we're not even aware that these conveniences are harming us. Even though they may be saving us time, or tricking us into thinking they're good for us, the truth is, they're not. In fact, they could be slowly harming us and even killing us.

[00:57:29] Fatal Convenience

Darin: The convenience of plastic, but plastics are in our environment is extremely toxic. And the closer that it gets to us, to our mouth, to our food, to our environment, the more dangerous it is. So the convenience in plastic has happened over the last 50 years. We used to have coke bottles in glass, the classic coke bottles I used to drink all the time. You cracked that open and



drink out of a bottle, you return that, you get some refund back, most things very little when I was growing up actually were in plastic but the emergence of plastic is now increased. So every bit of plastic that has ever been created is still here. 9.1 billion tons of plastic is in our environment. That's crazy and plastic is not just plastic. It is a cacophony of many different chemicals, and largely it is from petroleum. When you break that down, you get octane gasoline, you get diesel, you get oil, you get paraffin, and you get chemical, very toxic compounds in the atmosphere if you break plastic down. That is what plastic is, a huge amount of chemicals and chemical bonding that creates plastic. And then we have the insane idea of putting water in plastic bottles, wrapping our food in plastic bottles or plastic wrappers, and using it for everything. One-use plastic, a straw we use for 30 seconds and throw it away and on and on and on. So the convenience is that it's very easy, very cheap to make, and we keep creating more and more of it. And this is probably exaggerated, only 9% of the 9.1 billion tonnes on the planet are recycled. So the idea that you are putting your plastic in a recycled bin is only for your somewhat delusional satisfaction because 91% of all of the plastic that you're separating is being put in a landfill hole in the ground so that people don't have to worry about it. There's nothing being done to it, very, very little. So on that, that's a big rabbit hole but I just wanted to set the context. Our fatal convenience as a society, it is strangling us and strangling our oceans. So that's the big picture. Now, let's get down to the nitty-gritty. So on an individual level, plastic, again, is petroleum, and all of these byproducts. I'm only going to highlight a couple of the chemicals. The number one chemical that I'm going to highlight is BPA, Bisphenol A. So this stuff is an estrogen-mimicking compound. So think of it in terms of the softer the plastic, the more Bisphenol chemicals are in there. So you want to, number one, stay away from the softer plastics, especially with one of those cheap bottled water companies that you can just crush the whole thing after you've drunk it. That means that there's a lot of estrogen-mimicking compounds in that bottle making it super malleable. There are plastics that are out there that have BPA free. So definitely if you're going to use plastic at all, try to get BPA free. But the most important thing is the bisphenol exposure is a synthetic estrogen. So this binds to our estrogen receptors, increasing and changing our hormonal systems. That's the emergence of females moving into estrogen dominance and menstruating a lot earlier than ever before. There are reports of girls starting to menstruate at 8, 9, 10 years old. That has never happened on a wide scale before. The problem is that BPA or bisphenol A is metabolized in the liver, and then it forms these other glucuronides that then have to be excreted by the urine. Due to that kind of structure, it interacts with these estrogen receptors and then creates this disruption in our signaling patterns. Bottom line is, without going too far into that, this is a very, very dangerous hormonal disruption for the female. And male, it binds to our estrogen receptors creating us as too much estrogen dominance and therefore leading and leaving us in a poor testosterone dominance and also essentially leaving us to neutering and the motility, which is the ability for our sperm to proliferate, but also being able to even have functioning to get to the point of desire which is connecting with the ovary. So the neutering of men is happening largely because of the plastics and the dominance and the endocrine disorders that are happening as a result of this stuff. Not to mention the hormone dependence of that leading to tumors such as breast tumors, prostate cancer, and metabolic disorders, polycystic ovarian syndrome is an extremely intense



challenge for women largely leading back to chemicals in our atmosphere, and this BPA and overuse of plastic. And there was a 2011 study found that pregnant women showed BPA also affecting brain development in the womb linked to the baby's having higher risks of hyperactivity, anxiety, and depression. And keep in mind that we now know in our modern-day world of all these fatal conveniences and chemicals that we're using and experimenting with, unbeknownst to the modern-day consumer that we have 200 largely untested chemicals in the umbilical cord of every single child being born today. And that number is only increasing and increasing in the amount. So that is just part of our reality. So I really want to emphasize that this exposure, this insanity of the convenience of getting food and water and using plastic, I get it. It's impossible for myself to not use plastic too because everything we buy, everything we purchase, every supplement, every food, virtually even canned foods have BPA in it. It's almost impossible because we have made these choices. So what I want to emphasize is, please lower your exposure to these things. This is one of the biggest things that you can do to not expose yourself to unwanted chemicals. The biggest mistake people make is how can that really harm me? I don't use it that much. But when you start looking around all your shampoos, your toothpaste, your deodorants, your food, your water, your coffee, your Starbucks, all of this stuff, plastic, plastic, plastic, plastic. What the EPA, FDA, USDA, CDC, all these organizations, what they don't want to acknowledge is the bioaccumulation of all of these toxic compounds. The bioaccumulation of all of this, so they put recommendations out going, hey, this product is not going to expose you to this much, therefore, we don't have to tell you about it but since we have thousands and millions of products that are using dangerous plastics, softer plastics, high BPA plastics, that is bioaccumulation and largely leaving us in a very dangerous chemical soup. What can you do about it? So there's a lot of research. Some of those things are again, water bottles, baby bottles, dental fillings, sealants, dental devices, medical devices, eyeglasses, lenses, household electronics, sports equipment, all of this stuff has off-gassing, you're touching it, you're exposing it. It's crazy. I'm not suggesting that you have to get rid of every plastic because it's almost impossible, but here are some very powerful things you can do. Carry your own glass, stainless steel ceramic water bottles. Get your own water creation device, reverse osmosis, distillation, and advanced water system that can get out all of the water stuff which I've talked to you about fatal convenience of tap water. Make sure you have your own container that is free of plastic. If you have to use plastic then you make sure you have a container that is BPA free. So number one, get rid of using plastic for your water. It's insane. We can't get rid of it at airports and things like that when we travel, we get to do the best we can. I get it. Choose harder plastics at that point better. If you're on the road and you can get glass water bottles or water in glass, even better. So don't consistently drink out of plastic ever. Buy a filter, get a glass. Reduce your exposure to food that is wrapped in plastic food that is canned without it being BPA free. And please, please, please make sure baby formulas and baby bottles are absolutely, please BPA free. This is a really extremely important aspect. It will say BPA free and make sure you follow up with that they've tested that, and it's actually true. Try not to ever, ever, ever cook with plastic. And if you're using microwaves still, then you're crazy. I'll do a fatal convenience on microwaves. Microwaves are insane to use. I see people using microwaves and then plastic as well. It's like a toxic soup. Please don't cook with plastics or put hot food on



plastics. Styrofoam, oh my god. Some people using styrofoam and plastic forks and all of that stuff. Please don't do that. Extremely important. Look closely at the plastics with the number seven is the recycling symbol. That's a really good one to use because they use recycling and that largely doesn't contain BPA. So if it doesn't say BPA free, and that has a number seven, that's a really good idea. So limit your exposure, open up your eyes to the amount of plastic in your environment, anywhere where you have food, touching plastic, then we need to limit that and create those new habits. So please, this is a big one. This can over time and over years of living, if you start to lessen and lower the amount of exposure to plastic and BPA and estrogen dominant and limit your exposure to the estrogen disruptors, this will have a huge effect on your life. I promise you. Healthy habits added up over time will create health. Non-healthy habits will create destruction. This is what fatal convenience is all about. Opening your eyes to the modern-day issues, the modern-day conveniences that have a fatal flaw and plastic has got a big fatal flaw. Okay, guys, leave on a positive note. Take your power back. Use glass. Try not to use plastic with your food, especially in your water. Okay, love you all.

[01:12:44] Generic Outro

Darin: That was a fantastic episode. What was the one thing that you got out of today's conversation? If today's episode struck a chord with you, and you want to dive a little deeper on a variety of topics, check out my live deep dives on darinolien.com/deepdive. More episodes are available on darinolien.com as well. Keep diving my friends, keep diving.