



Episode 3 Transcript: National Geographic – Scripted Content and Destination Management

Ashley and Tony (Podcast Hosts)

Welcome to the Life at Disney Podcast, the show where you discover what it's like to be part of the story and a career with Disney as we bring the Walt Disney Company's core values, culture, and work to life. We're your host, Tony Williams, and Ashley Siegel, and we are going to share some remarkable stories from the perspectives of the people and the teams behind the magic.

Tony

This week, we're sitting down with a member of the National Geographic team, which gives us some of our favorite shows like *Genius* or *Brain Games*, or my personal favorite, *Life Below Zero*, because I'm convinced that I need to know how to survive in Alaska on my own one day. This team has been igniting the Explorer in all of us for 133 years through groundbreaking storytelling from the best and brightest scientists, explorers, photographers, and filmmakers in the world. Let's welcome to the show, Hugh Fitzpatrick. Hey, Hugh.

Hugh

Hey, thanks for having me.

Tony

Thanks for joining us. I know you're a very busy man, so we appreciate you taking some time to chat with us today.

Hugh

Yeah, you got it.

Tony

Absolutely. So would love to hear about the amazing career you've had. Right, specifically at Disney. I know you've done some amazing things. So, can you tell us how you got your start at Disney and what your career has been like since getting here?

Hugh

Yeah, sure. Well, I guess technically, I became part of Disney in March of 2019, right when the Disney/Fox transaction went through. But just to rewind from that, I started working at National Geographic in 2016. So, when this was recording, just about six years ago and prior to that, I had worked as a producer and worked at the production arm of the BBC and was a TV literary agent at Endeavor and then WME for a period of time. That was my really segue way into entertainment.

Tony

And so right now, you're our VP of our scripted content. Can you tell us a bit more about your responsibilities and what is your day-to-day looks like?

Hugh

Sure. Every day's a little bit different, but in terms of my responsibilities, I work closely with writers and producers of our series, and they often come to us either initially with either a pitch or a script, maybe even a piece of IP like a book or an article, and work with them to shape a series. And what eventually you will see hopefully coming soon on Disney Plus. But very broadly having a role in guiding that initial concept through pitch and script and eventually to air.

Tony

And so, you get to partner with a lot of folks, it sounds like in really bringing this work from an idea to the screen for us.

Hugh

Absolutely. And, you know, I think there's an art and balance to it in terms of working with a lot of creatively talented people. You know, I think you have to kind of pick your shots, know when to get out of the way is just as important as offering input and, you know, thinking for us what is really going to register with that Nat Geo audience. But also, you know, broadly, Nat Geo on Disney Plus as well.

Tony

Interesting thinking about the audience. Right. And being able to determine, hey, this is going to land well with this group. This is going to be well-received. That just sounds like a lot of research to me. Right? What's that research process that goes into finding scripted shows, greenlighting them, and knowing that they'll work for everyone?

Hugh

Sure. Well, as a buyer, you know, you have a lot of incoming traffic in terms of can we bring you this idea? You might hear from the agent or manager or producer, you know what have

you. So, we can then tell those creatives that this is what we do here at Nat Geo. Here's what makes it a Nat Geo show. Here's why it's a story Nat Geo should tell because the brand is so specific that most of what we might hear would make sense for a general entertainment network. But really, we need to think about what works best for Nat Geo and Nat Geo on Disney Plus, and what we would oftentimes talk about a lot with creators is looking at the intersection between the Nat Geo brand and the Disney brand. And just to put it broadly, I'd say what makes it in a Nat Geo show. Well, those are typically stories and subjects that in some way intersect with or touch on science, innovation, adventure, exploration, maybe those events or figures who really have a broad cultural impact and not just in the US, you know, globally, but we need to, and those are always fact-based, or fact inspired stories. Nearly always. And we have to find that along with; I'd say, the Disney brand and the intersection between these two brands. And that is stories that are inspirational or aspirational, have a sense of wonder to them that's really trying to find that sweet spot in terms of what those stories are.

Tony

That's amazing. I think, like so many folks, right, when I think of National Geographic, I imagine this team of folks that love exploring that love nature; they love the outdoors. Are you one of those folks? Is that what drew you to Nat Geo, or was it something else?

Hugh

I consider myself a natural lover. I suppose I like exploring. No, I think nearly everybody who works at Nat Geo and beyond probably is on some level. But I think what we also share is really a sense of curiosity and desire to dig deeper, and really the North Star of the brand, what we talk about is deepening people's understanding of the world and their role within it and igniting curiosity. And I feel that we have to check off that box for us as well in thinking about our audience. So, I think those are characteristics we probably all share.

Tony

That's perfect because I'm thinking about how we can kind of shift to this portion, right? How innovation is important, right? And all of these characteristics that go into what makes Disney this incredible place. Wanna think about the kind of culture, values, and work? Right. That happens at Disney. And you've spoken to this a bit when you talked about finding stories that make sense for Nat Geo and Disney to tell. Right. We have the best storytellers in the world. Right. So, what makes Nat Geo? What makes Disney this amazing place for storytellers? For people that want to tell stories?

Hugh

Sure. Well, you know, for one thing, I think Disney is home to a really incredible roster of storytellers, and those are, of course, a combination of filmmakers, producers, writers, you know, you name it. I mean, and when you look beneath that, you know, it is on the television side; these are studio rosters from 20th television and the ABC signature. So,

these are, you know, before that merger, these were two very substantial major studios that had a number of overall deals. And I'm just talking about TV now, you know, to be too narrow. But if you look at combining all that was there, so you have filmmakers like Darren Aronofsky, Gina Prince-Bythewood, Jon Chu, you know, Jake Kasdan and his producing partner Melvin Moore, and writers like John Ridley, Drew Goddard. I mean, the list goes on and on and on. But I think part of what makes Disney unique is just an incredible roster of talent and just the remarkable reach of the company and in so many, so many ways and facets of life.

Tony

You obviously have so much passion, right, about the projects that you've gotten to work on. And I think what's the final product of that. Right. We've seen that amazing work on screens on our TVs. What, like not thinking about just the output? Right. But in terms of the work and getting to work with folks. What has been your favorite project or most rewarding? Right. In terms of your Disney career?

Hugh

You know, there have been so many I've really enjoyed working on. I can tell you in particular about the couple I'm really excited about and then one and an experience I'll never forget. And the two I'm quite excited about are our next season of *Genius*, which is going to profile two figures for the first time, Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X, and that is the first season of *Genius* that is going to go straight to Disney Plus. I think that is going to be a tremendous series and a priority for us and that it comes from a team of many talented people, including Gina Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood. So that is really viewing it as kind of our first foray, you know, into scripted on Disney Plus along with our first original for Disney Plus because this is that would be season four of *Genius*. But our first original is a project entitled *A Small Light*, which came to us from talented showrunners Joan Ritter and Tony Fallon and Keshet, and that looks at a story of a young twentysomething woman named Miep Geis who was living in World War Two era Amsterdam. And she was like many typical twentysomethings in that she was in her first job. She had her first serious boyfriend. She was really on the precipice of a lot of big adult life decisions. And one day, she heads to work and her boss calls her into his office and tells her, my family and I are in a desperate situation. We are out of options. We have to go into hiding. Will you help us? Because her boss happens to be Otto Frank, who is the father of Anne Frank. And so, we have the opportunity and privilege to tell a story that millions are familiar with by way of *Diary of a Young Girl*. But we really haven't seen it from this angle, from this young heroine's point of view. And to see what a young twentysomething woman was able to do in terms of just the scale of her courage and her bravery and really taking on a burden and responsibility that I think few people could ever really possibly fathom. And, you know, she, of course, not only helped the Frank family and kept them hidden for nearly two years, but probably had nearly a dozen people in all, and during that time, she

kept them safe. She also evaded arrest. Held down a day job and kept her marriage intact, you know. And it was just this incredible story that really blew us away in pitch.

Hugh

And so, we are really in the pre-production stages on both *Genius MLK/X* and *A Small Light*. So, I'm particularly excited about those. A few years back, we made a show titled *The Long Road Home*, and it was an adaptation. The writer named Mikko Alanne took on based on a book by Martha Raddatz, and the book profiled a group of U.S. Army soldiers who were in Iraq, Sadr City, specifically during a peacekeeping mission in 2004. And we had we made the series. And fast forward to the premiere. We had a premiere in Westwood, you know, sort of typical what you would imagine a Hollywood premiere is like, though, our communications team, which Chris Albert heads up, which is just an exceptional group and a wonderful group of colleagues, they had a group of veterans, surviving veterans come on stage after the premiere, which was remarkable. And, you know, it's kind of one of these moments that you, in the moment, you understand the magnitude of it and how unique it really is. And we were also able to have a screening at Fort Hood, Texas, where all the soldiers came from in Iraq and where they lived before then with their families. And we also had the honor to show it to a group of many, many veterans, and families there, which was, again, a privilege, and I'll never forget it.

Tony

We do have an amazing roster of folks, right, and I know were also always thinking about the next generation, our next generation of storytellers, the folks that are watching from home now and saying like that's going to be me.

Hugh

I had a very circuitous route, honestly. So, I think the first thing I would ask somebody, maybe in college or coming right out, and I've given this advice before and have been asked this question before, do you have a sense of what you want to do? It is a vast field and there are many opportunities, which is great. It can be somewhat daunting because it is not as clear a path as, say, well, you want to be a doctor or a lawyer, then the first step is, you know, you have to go to a specialized graduate or medical or law school and then take the MCAT and LSAT. I mean, there's a very specific path for it. But with entertainment, there are any number of jobs you can do and many that will be created, you know, long after our conversation today. But I think my first question would be, do you have a sense of what you want to do specifically? And I would encourage if so, I would encourage a person to try to head in that direction as quickly as possible. You know, if you did not and you wanted to just get an education in the business, I still think it's worth working at a talent agency. You know, I did it. My boss, Carolyn did it; many others did. And, you know, I framed it as it's almost like grad school in a way, because you can when you're working in an agency, agents are nearly part of every deal that is struck. And certainly, you can find agents repping any element of a film or a television show. You, you know, you name it. And

if you work in an agency and you come up through the mailroom unit, you sort of in the nerve center there. And you can understand with time how the parts connect and how projects eventually get made. And I think it would be a tremendous experience for anybody to learn that way. It's not to say it's the only way by any stretch, but many times people that go to work at an agency and then they get their feet wet and then that helps sharpen their focus and they decide where I really want to do is work as a producer or I want to work as an executive or I want to work at a studio or I want to be a buyer, you know, what have you and other people like I did. I mean, you stick around long enough and, you know, you get promoted and then you work as an agent and you can even shift later on, which is something I did. Yeah, I did as well. You know, the other part of it, it seems like very basic advice, but I think it's good just to center your thinking center someone's thinking on this is asking someone what shows, or films do you watch, and do you like, you know, and trying to work backward in that. Do you recognize any pattern of writers or producers across those series or films, you know, be a production company or television or feature writers, or what have you? And I think as many of those as you can kind of categorize, lo and behold, some of those writers may be affiliated in deals, you know, featured deals or television deals, you know. And so, I think it's important to think about what you really respond to creatively, what you like watching as a member of an audience, and then think about where, you know, where have those people worked or where are they working now? And that that can be another path forward.

Tony

I think that's probably career advice we can all take, right? Watch a little TV and figure out what it is that you want to do.

Hugh

I really do think it can inspire you on another level. I mean, it sounds a little passive just watching TV and features. And I don't mean for it to be, but I think you know, like anything else, if you think about another field that's not entertainment. I mean, chances are you're absorbing a lot of information about it by way of research. Or if, you know, if you're an attorney, you're going to at least by way of an example, you're going to be at least fluent and understanding what cases really affect the field of law that is your specialty. And so again, I think beyond, and I'll add something to beyond watching series and films and really honing your tastes. I would also think there's so much social media and journalism that is devoted to entertainment and I would highly, highly recommend anybody to source it and read it and read as much as you can. There is a vast field of entertainment journalism, really, and I would encourage anybody to look at that besides enjoying what you're watching.

Tony

Got it. Got it. Really appreciate it, well, Hugh. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you for sharing so much about your career. Right, about the amazing work that's happening at

Nat Geo and the amazing opportunities. Right. To be a part of that world. As we hear, there are so many different things, there are so many opportunities for folks that want to come into this space, right? To really figure out what it is they want to do. Right to run headfirst into that and then leverage all the resources that are available, be they entertainment, or other media journalism, to really help them along that journey. And so, thank you for that. Thank you for your time and looking forward to continuing this conversation.

Hugh

You got it. Thanks so much for having me. It was fun.

Ashley

Our next guest is definitely going to ignite the inner explorer in all of us. The National Geographic Expeditions team offers special trips for photographers, families, and independent travelers. You'll enjoy boundless opportunities to be surrounded by natural wonders and exotic wildlife with the National Geographic expert sharing their knowledge and passion for a region and making each experience enriching and unforgettable. Let's welcome to the show, Benji Schwartz. Hi, Benji.

Benji

Hi, Ashley, how are you?

Ashley

I'm doing well. I'm so excited that we have you here today.

Benji

Excited to be here.

Ashley

Now, we always say that everyone has their own Disney story. You certainly have had so many experiences and roles before you came to the Walt Disney Company. But have there been other roles that you've held at Disney before your current role?

Benji

So, when I started out at Disney really, I was just trying to get a foot in the door with the company. My first job at Disney was as a main entrance greeter at Animal Kingdom, working part-time, welcoming our guests to the park. Eventually, I met lots of different people within the parks and moved around a little bit. I worked Wild Africa Trek for a little while, which is this amazing three-hour tour that crosses suspension bridges over alligators and hippos in the back of Africa within Disney's Animal Kingdom, and eventually heard about the Disney Conservation Program, which is a team I'm not sure a lot of people have awareness of. This is a team based at Animal Kingdom that's providing conservation work

here in the United States, within Central Florida, as well as abroad. I got a job on the conservation team doing sea turtle research and did most of my work over at Vero Beach at Disney property along the East Coast of Florida, which also happens to be one of the world's premiere sea turtle nesting sites for both green sea turtles, as well as loggerhead sea turtles, and did a lot of research on their nesting behaviors, worked on a health study where we were weighing them, we were getting blood samples, trying to research sea turtle health overall in wild populations. But the conservation team itself does a lot of work with purple martins, a local bird species here in Florida. I worked with lions in Africa with cotton-top tamarins in South America and working on the team, and I was able to have impacts on all of those different conservation aspects. So, it's a great opportunity to learn more about some of the work that Disney is doing in those areas. I think naturally led into the role with National Geographic as well, focusing in on that conservation both within National Geographic and within the Disney brand.

Ashley

Thank you so much for sharing that. I think that, you know, that is such an interesting part of the company that absolutely I don't think most people know about and thinking about how those teams are able to really sustain what we're doing and sustain the wildlife, especially domestically, where we have all of these parks, and we have all of this going on. To think about that, give back a component I think is just so important. And it's amazing to hear that those are jobs folks are doing right here at Disney. Why don't you just tell us a little bit about your role as a destination manager?

Benji

Sure. So, I manage a portfolio of trips for National Geographic Expeditions, really all over the world. And my specialty is Asia and Africa, but I manage trips in Europe and North America as well. And these are trips that guests join in that they go out into the field and get to experience the world and to learn more about different cultures, different places, experience the cuisine, experience the wildlife, the history, the culture, everything about these destinations, and in my role, I get to do a lot to help put these together, to create these experiences for our guests.

Ashley

That is so cool. It sounds like such exciting work. How does someone get into work like that?

Benji

Oh, I mean, I think we all have pretty varied histories as far as what brought us to this role. But a lot of it was really just a passion for exploration, a curiosity around about the world around us, curiosity for different cultures and different locations. For myself personally, most of my career, pre-National Geographic, pre-Disney, was out in the field. I've been doing this for over 20 years now in the tourism and hospitality industry. I've lived on five

continents. I got a degree in maritime archeology in Australia, backpacked all over Southeast Asia, got certified as a safari guide in Africa, and led safaris and tours throughout Africa, throughout Asia and South America, lectured on ships down in Antarctica and through Greenland and Iceland. And so really just traveling the world and learning about these places to have that background knowledge then bring to our guests.

Ashley

That's amazing. What a journey that you've been on and with such a varied background behind you. Was it always a goal to end up working with National Geographic here at Disney?

Benji

Yeah, I think National Geographic is a brand that's always attracted me. The focus is on expeditions and exploration. The fact that National Geographic has been involved in some of the most amazing discoveries of the last century, discovering Machu Picchu, voyages down to Antarctica, and to the South Pole itself. Just all of these awe-inspiring experiences. So as a naturalist myself, working around the world, encountering all of the different wildlife, National Geographic, I think, was always in the back of my mind. I will say that having encountered a lot of amazing wildlife around the world, one of the things that really ended up striking home was that we aren't always the best at conserving all of that wildlife, protecting some of these species that we really do hold near and dear to our hearts. So, I ended up going back to college. I got a master's degree in international conservation and development, really focused on how tourism can help protect the planet, and how tourism can create positive effects for people around the world. And it was through that, that I really ended up focusing on National Geographic and on my job with Disney here.

Ashley

I love that. I think it's so amazing to think about all those different components of tourism and travel and wildlife and conservation all kind of in one. I think that's just so powerful and such an amazing part of the company that, I mean, we don't often think about when we think about the Walt Disney Company, right? So, I'm so excited that we got to learn more about all the great work that you and the whole Nat Geo team are doing. So, I assume your day-to-day looks really different depending. So today, I'm catching you based out of Florida, right? But what is a usual day or week or maybe even a month look like for you?

Benji

Yeah, it's almost impossible to define what each hour looks like, much less each day, each week, each month. There's a lot of variabilities. So, in managing trips all over the world, I might find myself on a 3 a.m. call with a colleague in Buton and then an 8 a.m. call with a colleague in Australia. I talk to different people around the world throughout the day, trying to sort out either issues that are taking place on the ground or working with them on ways to enhance our itineraries, ways to create a better guest experience for the future, or

maybe just talking through contracts and talking through budgets and costing and profitability and all of all the other components that go into creating these amazing experiences. And of course, there are travel components involved as well. And I started this month in New England on one of our Adventures by Disney itineraries traveling through Vermont and New Hampshire, and Maine. And by the end of the month, I'm going to be in Uganda, traveling through Bwindi National Park and seeing gorillas, so really variable as far as what the day-to-day, week to week, and the month to month actually holds.

Ashley

That's amazing. And is your team really owning that full lifecycle of the planning, everything from the conceptualizing of a trip all the way through and joining our guests on these and these explorations?

Benji

Yeah, that's a great question. So, there are a lot of internal and external partners that we work with and just amazing people across the board. Internally, there's an entire team dedicated to developing these trips in advance. So, they're looking two, three, sometimes four years out at what the next greatest location is going to be. They're putting in all the legwork to determine what their itinerary looks like. Usually, by the time it gets to me, that itinerary is in a great place. There may be some minor tweaks or changes that I want to make to it. Of course, once we get guests on the ground, then there are always things that come up that we say, oh, we could make this a little bit better, we could add in that experience to really heighten this for our guests. In general, I'm not joining guests on the ground. So, we have other partners that we work with for Adventures by Disney. It's our adventure guides that are joining these guests in each destination, making those magical experiences for our guests. On the National Geographic Expeditions side, it is our expedition leaders that are really guiding these tours on the ground, and then one of the other important components of National Geographic Expeditions are the experts that we have as well. Every signature lane departure that we have from National Geographic Expeditions has an expert that comes along on that trip to really provide even more insight about that location. They might be somebody with photography expertise that is published in our magazine. They might have published articles on the history of the culture, and the archeology of those locations. So, they really are experts in these destinations, and they're there to make sure that our guests get that educational component of these itineraries as well.

Ashley

We like to think of Disney as a company of storytellers, right? So, all of us really can find these different examples of where storytelling is showing up in our work. You've already told us a little bit about how these trips and all of the planning that you're doing are telling these stories for these guests. But what are some of your favorite or the most interesting stories that you're getting to tell through your work?

Benji

Yes, so storytelling really is at the heart of what we do at National Geographic Expeditions, as well as Adventures by Disney. And it's a huge component of what we try to provide our guests on the ground. Every destination has a unique story to tell. I think for National Geographic Expeditions, we really try to hone in on our brand on what it is that we bring to the world. And what we bring is that history of exploration, that history of expeditions, and the current work that we're doing to promote conservation around the world, to promote cultural enrichment around the world. One of my favorites is a trip that we have to East Africa, to Uganda and Rwanda. It's an area that is absolutely gorgeous. It's an area that has a lot of importance for National Geographic as well. The Dian Fossey Study of Gorillas was a National Geographic-funded study and is a study that really brought the plight of the mountain gorilla to public awareness and just all the similarities between humans and gorillas, all the ways that we interact with one another as a species in very similar ways. That itinerary really makes sure to focus in on not only experiencing the Dian Fossey Center itself but also going to talk with other conservationists that are funded by National Geographic to do work with the mountain gorillas today. So, we're really trying to tell the story not only of where we've been as a people and as a company. What we've done in the past to promote all of this study and all this philanthropy, but where we're going as well, where the opportunities lie, what we've learned along the way and how we can use some of these opportunities to really and better the world around us.

Ashley

We've talked a little bit about multiple different types of trips that National Geographic Expeditions and Adventures by Disney are doing. Can you explain to us some of the different types of trips when we think about Signature Land, Private Expeditions, and these custom trips that you've mentioned?

Benji

Yeah. You know, National Geographic Expeditions tries to make sure that we really do have something available for everybody. So, our signature land itineraries are our sort of top-end itineraries that are designed for groups. So, we have set departure dates, we have set itineraries, and you can look on the website or call up one of our expedition managers and our contact center to speak to them about what you're interested in. Sign up for one of these set departures. You set dates where you'll join a group of like-minded individuals to explore that part of the world. Our private expeditions are a little bit different. Our private expeditions are designed to be just for you. They're private. So, whether it's you by yourself, whether it's you and your spouse, you and your family, you and a group of friends, their set itineraries that you get to choose the date for and choose whom you're traveling with. Our custom trips are just that; they are completely customizable. So, if you've looked through our website, you've said, you know, I really like this aspect of your South Africa trip, but I also really like this aspect of your Namibia trip you want to do them both, do they both.

Figure out how to do a custom trip that combines the key elements of the trips that you're interested in or key elements of trips that we don't typically go to at all. I mentioned Palau as a destination that not a lot of people necessarily heard of. That started off as a custom trip. It was a trip that a guest called in and said, hey, you know, there's this little country in the South Pacific I'd really like to visit. Are you able to design a trip there? And we researched it. We worked with some local contacts, we found local National Geographic tie-ins, and created an amazing itinerary that was so loved by the guests. So, we said, let's see if we can offer this to more people. Let's open up this area of the world. And that's what we did. It is one of our best-selling trips at the moment. So, the customizable trips really allow you to do whatever you want at your pace and the destination of your choosing.

Ashley

We've talked a little bit about how you ended up at Nat Geo, but really with all of the amazing experience that you have, you can work for any company in the world. So why do you show up for work every day when it comes to working for Disney and National Geographic?

Benji

I really think it's all about what the company is. Both National Geographic, as well as Disney stands for. I think that they are both extremely strong brands, but I'm not sure that everybody realizes how much they actually have in common. I think there's a lot of behind-the-scenes ethos, the belief in the importance of conservation, the importance of diversity and enriching cultures and enriching people that both brands really hold extremely strong. I think it was Walt himself that said conservation isn't just the business of a few people; it's a matter of concern for all of us. And Walt started himself at Disney with the *True Life Adventure* series, starting way back in 1948, trying to educate the public about wildlife, about nature, about conservation. So, while that isn't always seen as much on the Disney side, it is something that National Geographic makes stands out more for; both brands just hold that so close and of such importance that it makes it also a natural pairing in my mind and great company work for.

Ashley

For any of our listeners who are planning to travel or have travel coming up, how can they incorporate some of your expertise when it comes to conservation into any of their travel coming up?

Benji

Yeah. One of the things that we really try to do at National Geographic Expeditions as well as Adventures by Disney is making sure that we're giving back to the local communities. That when we're visiting hotels or restaurants and we're visiting different sites around the world, that the money, the benefits from travel are helping those communities sustain

themselves as well. And that's true from a conservation standpoint also. When we visit national parks around the world or state parks, even here in the United States, making sure that we're doing our best to promote the conservation within our parks, within the world's parks, that we're making sure that local guides are being compensated. And finding a way to create a sustainable livelihood that also helps protect the environment around them is extremely important to us as an organization and something that each of us can do when we're exploring the world and when we're traveling.

Ashley

I think that's such an important reminder for all of us. Thank you. I know that that's something that we can all take into account when we think about our own travels. Now, for those listening, if they're saying, okay, this is it, I want to go do what Benji is doing, I would love to be planning some of these trips or leading some of these trips. What advice do you have for people? What should they be doing in their lives to potentially start a career with National Geographic?

Benji

I'd say be curious. Be curious and explore. It doesn't matter if you're traveling internationally, if you're going to remote parts of the planet, or if you're just looking in your own backyard. If you're here in central Florida and you're looking at going out to the springs or going to some of the state parks, just learn the places around you, learn the culture of the area, learn the history that's unique to every different site around us and learn the local wildlife. Meet the people that you're talking to and interacting with, learn about their stories and their histories, and then really think about the logistics of what you're doing, whether you're planning a day to Disney World or you're planning a larger expedition to Tanzania. The logistics are so important to everything that we do. It's so important to our role here at National Geographic Expeditions. If it's something that doesn't make sense for you logistically, it's probably not going to make sense to our guests either. So, trying to keep track of how you make those decisions and how you figure that out is invaluable in trying to work for National Geographic and getting a role like Destination Manager.

Ashley

That's just it's amazing. And I really appreciate you joining us today. Thank you so much for sharing with us. And helping us to learn what goes into the behind-the-scenes at National Geographic for the expeditions and Adventures by Disney, and even more so for sharing with us about all of your amazing travels and so safe travels on your upcoming trips. And thank you again for being here with us today.

Benji

Thank you, Ashley, it has been great speaking with you

Ashley

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Ashley

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