

INTRO: This is The Elegant Warrior Podcast. It's the podcast about elegance in all of its forms. We're talking about our definitions of elegance and how we maintain it in times of trial. We're also talking about how we can advocate for ourselves with elegance and in a way that makes us most likely to win.

I'm your host, Heather Hansen: author, speaker, consultant, trainer and self advocacy expert. Let's talk elegance.

HEATHER HANSEN: Hello my elegant warriors, have I got a guest for you today. Her name is Ashley Banfield and that name should be familiar to you because she has been gracing your television stations on ABC, NBC, CNN, all the channels for many years. She is an award winning veteran journalist. Currently she is the host of Banfield on NewsNation. NewsNation is a new channel that is very dedicated, very committed, to being fair and middle of the road. And if you haven't checked out NewsNation I highly suggest that you do. Ashley has won an Emmy, a Telly, a Gracie, a national headliner award. She used to be the host of Legal View with Ashleigh Banfield, which is how I met her. I used to be a guest on that show quite frequently. She is currently, well, she was also a legal analyst for Court TV and she's currently a regular contributor to Investigation Discovery, I. D. Murder mystery.

When she does this anchoring on News Nation on her show Banfield, she has chosen to start a program that she calls Rising Tide. And it is meant to primarily start with broadcast journalists and help them, mentor them, through the beginnings of their career. But the information that she gleans from her guests in doing so applies to all of us. She has had, or will have, guests like Dan Abrams, Shepard Smith, Elizabeth Vargas, Gayle King, Meghan McCain, Savannah, Guthrie, Jake Tapper, I mean the list goes on and on. And in today's episode, we talk about this program, Rising Tide. We talked about why she began the program, what it means to her and all of the things that she has learned from the various guests. You do not want to miss this episode and you do not want to miss the Rising Tide program on NewsNation. Take a listen and enjoy.

Hello, Ashleigh Banfield. It's so good to have you

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Good to see you, Heather.

HEATHER HANSEN: It's so good to see you and it's so good to see what you are doing over at NewsNation. I am delighted to see that you are part of the lineup there. I had known that Dan was going to be over at NewsNation and now you're there as well. What drew you to having your own show there?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: You know, I was exhausted switching back and forth from all the news channels just to try to get what the actual story is. You know, everybody is cherry picking and omitting on purpose facts that fit their narratives. And so now there's nowhere to go for the actual news story, unless you're gonna get it spun in some anchors, you know, opinion and that's what drew me.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah. And I think that it's such an important thing. You know, I teach a lot about how to build credibility. Because in the courtroom, you know, my background, that's what we have to do. We have to build credibility quickly. And so many of the news stations have lost credibility over the last few years for various reasons. And NewsNation, you know, so far the reviews, the surveys, everyone sees NewsNation right now as the most credible source. And that's gonna feel phenomenal after your background of having been so many places that had such credibility.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: It's great to see the, you know, the gauges come in and we fit right in the center of the bias charts. That's a feather in our cap every single time one of these studies is done. And it's also testament, this isn't a marketing scheme, this is what we're doing. The people who work here love journalism. They love what they do. They probably, like me, done it for decades and they're disappointed in the direction they're seeing it going elsewhere.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah. You know, I was just listening to a podcast interview, I forget the name of the gentleman, but he wrote an article talking about the death of democracy because of social media, and one of the things- Jonathan Haidt, I'll put a link to the article in the show notes. But one of the things he was talking about is how everyone gets their news from a different place now. And it's no longer like the three stations like it used to be. Do you, is the dream to have the majority of Americans getting their news from your show and the other shows at NewsNation and that's that push for credibility to make sure that that happens?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: You know, obviously I want our network to be successful. But even more altruistically, I want Americans to return to their best selves, their better angels. Because they're not doing themselves any justice eating 'news Cheetos' night after night after night. You know, we're here to give you what you used to rely on when times were better, you know. We didn't hate each other the way we do now. We weren't so vitriolic the minute we got to our keyboards. And it's because there was a fairness in the news and so that's what I'm desperately hoping for, even above and beyond the success of my show or our network, is that Americans realize your diet is killing you.

HEATHER HANSEN: That's right. And, and you're, you're doing that, you're doing that with the show. And the way that we know that you're doing that is if you watch the responses to the various shows, your shows, Dan's shows, both sides are mad. You know, we used to always say in the courtroom, you know, it's a good settlement when no one's happy, right? Because you know that it's fair.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: I've always said, I'm an equal opportunity offender.

HEATHER HANSEN: But that's something to pride yourself on in your business. You know, if everybody on the far ends of the spectrum, the most extreme, are feeling a little bit ruffled, then you're probably doing something right. One thing that you're definitely doing right and I want to talk to you about is this beautiful Rising Tide program. I am blown away by the people that you

have coming on to talk to you about mentoring, not just young broadcast journalists, but really all of us. Where did this idea come from?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Well, you know, I've been added 34 years and as I look back to those first, you know, two decades, and more. We didn't have mentors. It just wasn't done. Everybody was kind of scrambling for the top on their own and felt there was no room at the top. And I remember someone saying a long time ago, women particularly felt there was no room at the top and that they really had to get there themselves at all costs. And there's truly plenty of room at the top and the Rising Tide does lift all boats.

And then, so I always felt in the back of my mind that I've learned a lot and I would like to be able to impart this at scale. Because I get people calling me all the time asking, you know, can you give me some tips, can you look at my tape, can you help me out with my career? And I don't feel like I was reaching enough people just, you know, in this spotted way throughout my career. And so this was a way to be able to scale that, especially since I do have 3.5 decades of knowledge base in best practices and also I have all these friends who are at the top of their game and so it was for many of them a very easy ask. Will you do this? It's a half hour out of your time and you can help hundreds of young people in the business.

And then the third reason was because in the last 10 years ish, I've seen our craft take a beating and I'm devastated. I'm really upset over what it's like to tell people now that I'm a television journalist or just a journalist. It's not regarded in the same esteem as it used to be. So, if I can help younger people do better in this job, we can restore journalism to the way it used to be considered to, to that shining element on the hill.

HEATHER HANSEN: And I have to say there's no one better suited for this Ashleigh. You know, for a little while I was doing a lot of television, and I was sort of, I always say I was an equal opportunity talking head, so I did a lot of the different shows. And you were always so kind and a mentor even then, and you probably didn't notice it or even know what you were doing. But not everyone was that way. Not everyone made you feel welcome. Not everyone, and you know, especially the first few times that you do television, you're a little nervous, you don't know which way to look, you don't know which camera to look at. And you and Shepard Smith, who I know is one of the mentors, the two of you were the two who made me feel most at home, most comfortable, most like I could be my best because you sort of guided me through the process.

So when I found out that you were doing this, I was not surprised that it would be you who would see this as an opportunity. And some of the names that you're having on, I mean they are, they are the names, you know, and again, no surprise but Dan Abrams, Elizabeth Vargas, Gayle King, Meghan McCain, Savannah Guthrie, Jake Tapper, Shepard Smith. These are people that from all ends of the political spectrum, from all different areas of the field, and the advice that you're getting from them, I mean I have, I have watched the episodes that you've done and it's absolutely unbelievable some of the advice that, that I've seen you glean from these people. What do you think is the best piece of advice that you have received so far as

you've talked to people like Lester Holt, Gayle King, Mika. Is there one or two things that stand out?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: You know, one of the things I didn't expect Heather was that I was actually going to learn a lot. Old dog, new tricks. My colleagues have really opened my eyes to some things I really wish I had known earlier and I'm employing now. Lester said to me, well said to everybody, when you're working, don't broadcast to your colleagues who you worry are going to criticize what you do. The viewer is your only target, they should be the only person that counts in your work. And I think we are seized with fear oftentimes as to what our colleagues, how they'll rip up our work after we perform. So that was great.

Mika said, Mika Brzezinski, said women back in the day when we got into the business had a very short runway. By 40 you better be looking for another job because you're not gonna last in this one. And she said that's changed. So the runway is much longer. So your patience level should be broader. And I thought that was great because I think patience is a virtue in this business when you want to advance.

And then another wonderful piece of advice from Deborah Norville was, and she got it from Lesley Stahl of 60 minutes. Deborah said always consider that you have two balls in your hand. One is your work ball and one is your family ball, and the work ball is made of rubber and the family ball is made of crystal.

HEATHER HANSEN: That's huge.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: It was huge. I made a decision just yesterday, just yesterday based on Deborah's, you know, sharing of that advice.

HEATHER HANSEN: Well, and there's a couple of things there. Number one is that, you know, you're never too old to be mentored. I always say that my mentees teach me more than I teach them in a lot of ways. But I think that what's really important for the listeners to know is that this advice applies to all of us. You know, yes of course, it's great for broadcast journalists. But Lester Holt's advice is especially interesting to me, because in my work now when the keynote speaking that I do in the training and the coaching, I talk a lot about everyone has a jury. And a lot of times in the courtrooms, what I see is that the lawyers are looking to impress the judge or the other attorneys and not connecting with the jury. And it's ultimately the jury who decides your wins and you guys, you broadcast journalist, your jury is your readers or your watchers or your listeners. And so that advice applies, if you're in sales, to not be so concerned about your colleagues, but rather the people that you're selling to. So I love that.

And you know, Mika's advice about patience, that is something I struggle with in huge ways, huge ways.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Yeah. And there's lots of ways patience plays into professionalism, you know, on day to day decision making etcetera, your colleagues if they're running late or slow or

you know, deliverables aren't there. But what she was talking about is patience for the long run of your career. Don't jackrabbit too fast. It can be off putting and it can, you know, bite you, you know, but you where you don't want to invite you. So that I thought was really interesting because I was always very impatient in the first two decades.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, and I think that, you know, I just finished a book called The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry. And I think that you know, to really try to slow down in the big ways and small ways is something that is worth noting. I had the opportunity to read an article that you recently did in Forbes, and I'll put a link to that article in the show notes as well. It's a fabulous article. And some of the advice you gave in there, one piece of that advice was to slow down, which I thought was fabulous. And it speaks to this issue of patience. But the other piece of advice Ashleigh, is something that I think that people don't recognize enough as the most important skill you can have and that is listening.

SPONSOR: Today's episode is brought to you by me. As good as I am at selling my case in the courtroom. As good as I am at making a case for my clients and my evidence in the courtroom. I sometimes forget to sell myself, and I want to make sure that you all know exactly how I serve people like you.

So I do a couple of things. I go into companies and two associations and I give keynotes or trainings or master classes, on how you can make the case for your team, for your ideas, for your leadership, for your products and for your services. And we talk about things like credibility and seeing things from another perspective and using evidence and overcoming objections. And so I do that for all kinds of groups like Google and LVMH and the American Medical Association and SaveATree.

But I also work with some people one on one and with those clients, those people, I tell them all of the ways that they can use the tools I used in the courtroom to make the case for themselves. To make the case for more money, more resources, more time off, the ability to work from home. So whether you work in a big organization and your leader who needs someone to come in and work with your team. Or whether you're an individual who wants someone to help you to sell more houses or be a better teacher or get more raises. I am the person for you.

If you're interested, there's a link in the show notes for us to have a chat. I would love to talk with you about all the ways that I can help you to make the case for yourself and your dreams. Now. Back to the show.

HEATHER HANSEN: How did you learn that that was so important?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Took forever. I still don't think I've mastered it honestly. Um, you know, I started listening to CBC in Canada where I grew up. They have a fantastic show called As It Happens. I was a regular listener and Alan Maitland was one of the interviewers who was such a good listener. He didn't jump in with his question in the first opportunity of a lull. He let that lull play out and he got better stuff. And I noticed all the way along as I was the good viewer that I

am, I'm a great television viewer. That's where the best stuff comes out. And I think the best person after Alan Maitland is Howard Stern. Howard Stern has a delicious skill of listening longer than he talks in his interviews and consequently he gets people to say things you never would imagine that they would say,

HEATHER HANSEN: Isn't it True? And don't you think that kind of listening is connected to the patience piece?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: It is, it's the small patience piece as opposed to the long broad, be patient with your career advancement. Yeah. And that, listen patience plays out in every aspect of your career. In those, you know, those hyper focused moment to moment bits and pieces of your interview. But then also your daily machinations with your staff.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah. And with your, I mean I think if you get that skill of listening and the listeners of the podcast know, I always talk about this book, You're Not Listening by Kate Murphy. It's such a great book about how to be a better listener and why to be a better listener. Because if you master that skill, you know, I always say in the courtroom, the best listener wins. And I think that the same is true in broadcast journalism, and in families, and in life, that if you really work to hone that skill, you will be better at whatever it is that you do.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: You also stress people out when you're not listening to them. and you can, as a talker, you know, right away when your audience is not paying attention to you and is simply looking away and crafting their next issue. That bothers them, because everybody wants someone to be empathetic, not only how they feel, but you know what they crafted and how they're communicating. And it is a very stressful dynamic to be talking to what you feel is absolutely a wall that only wants to express, you know, his or her concerns.

HEATHER HANSEN: I think that's right. And I think that when you're that stressed when you feel that, and you might not even know that you, that not being listened to is what's causing that stress. But you're not as likely to answer the questions. Well, you're not as likely to give the same information and the interview or the interaction or the relationship is never going to be as good.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: (unclear) conversations, right? They bounce off the last thing said. And you can't bounce the right way if you have no idea really what the last thing said was.

HEATHER HANSEN: That's it. Yeah. And if you anticipate it's like young attorneys often will have their list of questions, I'm sure young journalists too, have their list of questions and like check them off without even really hearing what was said and the gems that might be living in those answers.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: But I get scared. Make no mistake. Even after 34 years, I get scared going on the air for an 8-10 minute segment, if I don't have stuff ready to go just in case. So I could carry on an eight minute conversation that's smart and brings in well thought out nuggets

and, and news and issues, you know, I can do that with my eyes closed. But I'm terrified that I'll get stuck with nothing to say. Now it's never happened, but somehow I'm still scared every night. So I do come armed with that list of questions and talking points and the best interviews actually are done when you don't refer to the list.

HEATHER HANSEN: Right. And I think having it is a nice crutch right? To know that it's there if you need it. You know one of the things you also talked about in that Forbes article that sort of portrays to this, or relates to this, is the idea of seeing things from other people's perspective. And I remember on your show, on Legal View when we were on CNN, when you would have especially victims of crime or people who have been impacted. Your ability to see the situation, to see the issue, the event through their eyes and even the interview through their eyes, I think made you an exceptional interviewer. Do you think that that's a skill that you were born with, that you learned or is it a combination?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: I think I definitely had to learn a lot of that. I don't think it came really innately to me because I was the fourth of four kids and I could never get a word in edgewise. So I don't think I had a lot of empathy for what my siblings had to say. But in TV, you either have it or you don't, right? If you're going to be a performance communicator because let's be real, we are up there in front of everybody that's called performing whether you're performing informatively or entertaining. You do have to really get in the heads of that interview in order for it to be an authentic conversation. Otherwise it's just questions and answers from people who are doing it by rote. And and that's not engaging, to be engaging you gotta care.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, Well, and that's why, you know, your job is one of the jobs that will never be replaced by AI or any of these other technologies that people talk about because they're human conversations between people who care about what they're talking about, who care about ideally, care a little bit about each other and care about the issues of the day. And so that care has to come across and does come across when you're effective at it.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Listen, there's a reason it's called personality, you know. AI can't recreate personality or if it does, it's not gonna feel right. And it's also why anchors are paid a lot of money, because they have a personality that's appealing. Their viewers like them. It's not that they like the news, or the way that they're reading it or the, you know, stories necessarily that they cover. It's how they bring that news to the viewer and that can't be replicated by anybody other than that person.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, I think that that really, for me Ashleigh, that really comes back to what we're talking about earlier about credibility. I think that really we choose, at least for me, we choose our anchors because we believe them. And we believe in them and there's a little bit of a difference there. But we believe that we believe that they're going to bring us the right stories that we need to see, and they're going to bring them to us in a way that we need to see them. And we believe that they're going to make sure that we know what we need to know when we turn off the television at the end of the night. And that's and that's no spot.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: A lot of people do. And then there are a lot of others, and a lot of others have now chosen to go with “I just like that guy and I like what he's saying.” Not so much I believe. And I think a lot of trump voters actually said that. Trump voters who say, “well, I don't like what he's doing. I don't like that he said that. I don't believe the. you know, the big lie maybe even. But I do believe in his direction or his policy or his vision or his ability to just say it out loud the way none of us have been allowed to say it out loud.” It doesn't mean that they always believed him. And I think that that's translated into news as well.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, that's really an interesting thing is they don't believe him, but they think that he sees the world the way they do.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Correct that's key because Cronkite, they believed him and they liked him. They didn't have a lot of choices otherwise, right? And if there had been a million other screens that they could have turned to, I don't know how successful Walter Cronkite might have been, it might have been a very different story. But believability is now only one piece of the credibility factor, credibility now also just comes with do you agree with me?

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, yeah, that that can be a little bit dangerous. There's also now, I mean in Cronkite's day there wasn't this push for authenticity and vulnerability. And you know, I think that, I'm a Brené Brown fan, but I do believe in and I know that she agrees with this, that people have to earn your vulnerability. But at the same time, I think that people do like to see vulnerability in their anchors in the people that they watch. And how do you, I mean, you've been doing this for such a long time, and you have been in the business before that was the thing. And then I remember when Robyn Roberts cried on TV after the hurricane and she was like unable to find her family. And so you start to see this idea of the human side of some of our anchors.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Dan Rather's cried on David Letterman. I mean that was huge you know. After 911 Tom Brokaw got misty as well. You know, so these guys who were, you know, stoic figures, they were considered the last bastion of the stoic anchorman with Gravitas. They showed that they had the vulnerability at that, you know, remarkable moment as well and people liked it. It turned out they did like it.

HEATHER HANSEN: How do you work that into your world? Especially as a woman, because like in the courtroom, it's funny, we were just talking about this this weekend, my mentor was a six ft four ex-DEA agent. And during his closings, he would sometimes cry, you know, because we do get emotional. I would never, because as a woman, I would be afraid that that would show some weakness and so it's I think it's a different question for us. How do you handle that as having done this so long and so well?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: It's a really, really good question heather because I'm just looking, I'm putting myself in the courtroom right now, and you're standing in front of a jury. I know you to be a kind person who's just got a lot of legal smarts and if I were a juror looking at you, I would empathize with you crying if it truly was real. If I could see that you were, you know, crafting this

performance for me and you know, they can smell a rat. Everybody, viewers, jurors, everybody can smell a rat when there's just an ounce of inauthenticity. So I actually do think that if some crime actually did bring you to that stage, and you had to catch it in your throat for a hot second, I do think that would play. For me, it's the same way. I am never gonna put it on. I think I'm a good actress, you know, I played all sorts of roles in college and in high school. But I could never act to the point where people would truly believe it. They think it was a good act, um which they don't appreciate, but they would not think it's honest. So, I just think the first part of that the authenticity part, as opposed to the empathetic part. The authenticity part is what will take you there, and why your viewers will stay with you, no matter what happens.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, I think, I think that you're right about that. I know that with Rising Tide, you have primarily interviewed broadcast journalists. However, I will say that every single interview and everyone that you're going to interview, I know it's applicable to everyone and in some ways people have said that we are all broadcasting these days with Tiktok and Instagram and Facebook. Do you agree with that premise? And then the second part of that question is, is the interviews that you're doing with Rising Tide even more applicable to everyone because of that?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Yeah, I mean, you're right, everybody is a broadcaster now. Look at us, we're doing this via a camera. This is what I have done for living, you know, this is so easy for me. It's not that easy for everybody to communicate to a camera and communicate the way they would, you know, in a boardroom or in a newsroom. So the communication, you know that we're all going through right now, I think everybody could learn a thing or two about that from Rising Tide. But I think more importantly, broad strokes. Broadcasting is no different than every other job in the, in the way that human dynamics are at its core. And human dynamics in any office in any business, sales, medicine. I mean, bedside manner, that's human dynamics, you know, sales, it's human dynamics, broadcasting, communication, it's human dynamics, marketing, human dynamics. So, you know, these lessons that, you know, my mentors that come on the series and give out, they apply to every single facet of your life. Even if you're not working, just on how to be a better person, you know, just on how to succeed in your hobby or you know, in your book club, all sorts of things this applies to.

HEATHER HANSEN: Well, human dynamics in your family, I mean everyone has a family, whether they like them or not. And so all of these things, I couldn't agree with you more. I think you have such a phenomenal list of people who are joining you and it's such a reflection of your time in the business and your reputation in the business and how well liked you are in the business and no one else could do this Ashleigh. And I also, I want to note that one of the things you mentioned in the Forbes article is that you're considering taking this when you're done, and I don't know that you'll ever be done with all these beautiful names that you have, but taking this beyond journalism into maybe perhaps some business leaders and so forth, is that part of your overall plan for this?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: 100%. For starters, I just wanted to go with you know, my rolodex. Because I could call these people and say "do me a solid" and I knew I could get really good

bookings and at least get, you know, a year or two scheduled, you know. And we did, we scheduled a full year right away and I'm already, you know, booking into 2023 which is great. Then I definitely do want to branch out. I'm slightly branching out from news in Harvey Levin. Because Harvey Levin is a, he's a broadcaster that's unparalleled. He's a businessman, he has his finger on the pulse of America in so many different ways. He's a syndicator, you know, he's just done so much and so he's going to be one of our mentors coming up in the near future. And also Steve Wilkos, because Steve Wilkos, his path to success with Steve Wilkos show is so different than everybody else's. I mean he was a bodyguard on the Jerry Springer show, how would he ever have imagined this incredible brand that he's created now? And he's such a nice person, so I think he's just going to have a wealth of knowledge, the things that you probably never thought of before. But they could, again, all apply.

And then yes, we're going to scale to broadcast industry executives. Because again, that's in my wheelhouse and I can get them. And then after that, we'll probably start moving on to the genie remedies of the world and that, that kind of thing.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah. But the executives is gonna be a whole different, whole different ball of wax because like the c suite of any organization sees things differently, has a different perspective. And that perspective is so helpful for people who are just starting off, even if they're just starting off at 50 years old in a different field or stepping into something new. And I think that for the listeners, you want to go and check out Rising Tides. Look at any one of Ashleigh's past interviews, they're all there on the website. The link to the website is going to be in the show notes. You will see just friends talking, phenomenal conversations. And so many, you know, I always actually pull a quote out of this conversation and when I watched your interviews with all of these friends of yours, I was like, I pulled that quote, I pulled that quote, I pulled that quote. So they are just gold mines.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: And also anybody who joins the series, and it's all free, they can ask questions. And this whole thing was set up so that I would say hi to my friend and ask that, you know, like just do a couple of minutes off the bat and then open it up to all of the mentees and they populate this series with their questions. And I have just been so overwhelmed at how smart and pointed and insightful a lot of these questions are from, you know, not always just young up and comers. Some of them have been in the business for years and are still looking for advice from their peers.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, it's phenomenal, it's a phenomenal thing that you're doing. I think it's brilliant. I think it's going to be more and more noticed, more and more appreciated, and more and more viewers as time goes on. And the tide of that, of the tide of Rising Tides will continue to rise.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: That's what I hope for.

HEATHER HANSEN: So I think, I think it's amazing. I could talk to you about this stuff all day. I just think it's fascinating. But I need to wrap this up and I want to make sure I get your answers

to our last three questions. I can't wait to hear what your answers are. The first question is about elegance. So the root of the word elegance is to choose and we believe that everyone chooses their elegance. What does that word mean to you?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: You know, elegance for me, sometimes it's a bad word. Honestly, it's and I'll tell you why because I know that sounds really weird. But I feel as though if men feel there's something that is an injustice and they speak out about it, it's considered fairly heroic. But oftentimes when women see an injustice and speak out about it, they're labeled as a Karen. And I find that to be offensive and oftentimes I blame elegance. Because as I was growing up, I was told, keep your voice down, you shouldn't be so abrasive. And, and these were all things that just didn't apply to my brothers. And so in the name of some kinds of elegance, I think women have been relegated, and still to this date suffer because they're not being elegant enough.

That said, I still believe that men and women both should employ a level of elegance in their human dynamics.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, I think that that is a very well noted piece of elegance. And I think that if we go too far to that side, you know, my podcast is The Elegant Warrior and there's like a fine line there, right? Because you need to be willing to speak up and be the warrior and sometimes you lean more warrior. And so I think that that tightrope is exactly what you're talking about. So I so appreciate that.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: And I'll tell you one other thing. Women who speak out and speak forcefully about things they believe in fervently will often be labeled as shrill and that has dogged me for decades. I have watched this with politicians. I have watched this with female anchors and I couldn't be more frustrated about it because there's nothing shrill about a woman having a strong opinion.

HEATHER HANSEN: That's right. And I think that the more that women do and say it and share it, the better off we all are and it, but it takes guts. You know, it takes guts and it takes especially takes guts to be the first and you have in many ways. So it's a, it's no small thing.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Well, I'm glad, I'm glad that Nancy Grace was able to be as hard nosed on the air and angry and you know, sort of a warrior for justice in the way that she has because no one called her shrill. She was pretty magic in what she's been able to do. And I look at her as kind of, you know, somebody who's paved a path that still isn't well trodden enough.

HEATHER HANSEN: No, it's having been on the um, on her show as well. It was scary as can be, but I hear what you're saying.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Nobody called her Karen and I get so angry when I hear that term applied to so many women who are just saying, wait, this isn't fair. But if a man says that there's no label.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah. Yeah. It's there isn't even a word for it. Right? They don't have a Joe. What book Ashley would you like? You've got all those beautiful books behind you. I love a good bookshelf. and my listeners are readers, they buy a lot of books. Oh my gosh, there's book after book after book

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: The whole room all behind me and everything. The whole room is is lined in books.

HEATHER HANSEN: I love that. What book would you recommend to my readers? Could you pick just one?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: So I only read nonfiction. Don't ask, it's silly. But I feel like if I read fiction um I'm somehow doing my job a disservice, I know that's crazy but I feel guilty and like I'm wasting time and I shouldn't cause it's really enjoyable to read fiction. But that said I have read some simply remarkable nonfiction. I'll start with The Dark Genius of Wall Street by Ed Renehan. The reason I love that one, and particularly right now, is because A- it reflects everything you're seeing on The Gilded Age on TV. You know, he's the master of all information when it comes to The Gilded Age. So when you read The Dark Genius of Wall Street, look at the true story behind what you're seeing in The Gilded Age, including the lead character that's modeled after Jay Gould.

The second reason I like the dark genius of Wall Street is because my son's name is Jay Gould. He's the great great great grandson of Jay Gould.

HEATHER HANSEN: Oh my gosh, I did not realize that. That's personal there.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: It's a family connection to that story. And also I am just fascinated by The Gilded Age and so Ed is just so incredibly researched and he really is one of the best resources on all gilded age information. And he's also been a consultant on the show, the Gilded Age. So that's number one.

But then for fun, a nonfiction book that I recommend for everybody is Dead Wake by Erik Larson and then any other book Erik Larson writes. And I mean that it's not hyperbole. He takes five years to research his topics and he writes these historical accounts as, they read like fiction. They're gripping, but they're true and his material is just second to none.

HEATHER HANSEN: Yeah, phenomenal. We'll put a link to both those books. From the show notes. I have read Dead Wake, I haven't read um the Dark Genius of Wall Street so that will go on my list as well.

And then my last question actually is my favorite question. Your answer to this question gets added to our Spotify playlist, which is The Elegant Warrior playlist. What is your theme song when you're walking onto the stage of life, What song do you want playing in the background?

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: I have two, and they're both by the same artist Bachman Turner Overdrive from Winnipeg Canada where I'm from. And I didn't pick them because they're from Winnipeg. Taking Care of Business.

HEATHER HANSEN: I love it.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: And You Aint Seen Nothing Yet.

HEATHER HANSEN: Oh my gosh, I love both of those and no one's chosen either one of those.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Yeah, they're great songs. They never get old and they are inspiring and they're Canadian.

HEATHER HANSEN: Those are all things I could use to describe you. Canadian, never get old, inspiring. I love it. Ashley, thank you so much for coming on. Thank you for what you're doing with Rising Tides. I have the feeling this will be going on for many years to come and maybe you'll come out in a couple of years to give us an update.

ASHLEIGH BANFIELD: Thank you Heather, I love seeing you again. I miss you.

HEATHER HANSEN: I know it's so good to see you.