

Invincible shares inspirational stories of disabled people's adventures

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Daniel Ennett's scuba diving adventure was, in his own words, "a bit sketchy."

For one thing, half of the scuba diving instruction booklet describes the hand signals for divers to use to go up or down or indicate distress.

And Ennett has no hands and no arms.

Add to that the fact that divers usually have to plug their own noses to regulate the air pressure in their body as they descend or ascend.

Again, the no-hands thing.

When Ennett dove into the Scona swimming pool with a mask, lead-weighted jacket, a team of experts and underwater TV cameras, the quickly hatched-up idea to use head nods and shakes didn't always work smoothly, but it was all they had. It was difficult to let his helpers know they weren't always squeezing his nostrils tight enough.

"It was a very surreal experience," said Ennett, who had all his limbs amputated when he contracted meningitis at five years old. "It's very hard to communicate when you're underwater."

Now 21, Ennett is hosting a web series called [Invincible](http://www.openskypictures.com/#linvincibleseries/c2ge) (<http://www.openskypictures.com/#linvincibleseries/c2ge>), in which he goes on various adventures, including scuba diving, swimming, curling, shooting a gun from his electric wheelchair, sailing on Glenmore Reservoir in Calgary and going on a trail run in a bucket seat. Throughout the series,

Ennett meets other people with varying disabilities, including an Edmonton dancer with one leg, a local quadriplegic homicide detective, an MMA fighter with one arm and the autistic man behind [Anthony At Your Service \(http://www.anthoniyatourservice.com/\)](http://www.anthoniyatourservice.com/), a small delivery business. He speaks with the architect who built his wheelchair-accessible home, a psychologist from Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital who counsels people on ways to enjoy sex after injuries, people from the [Disabled Sailing Association of Alberta \(http://www.dsaalberta.org/\)](http://www.dsaalberta.org/) and others.

“I’m trying to motivate people to get out of their comfort zone,” said Ennett, a second-year psychology student at the University of Alberta. “Disabled people, it shows them what options they have for various activities.”

The filming by [Open Sky Pictures \(http://www.openskypictures.com/\)](http://www.openskypictures.com/) was very spontaneous, said Ennett, who worked with Frederick Kroetsch and Kurt Stenrath, co-directors and producers of the *Invincible* show. He’s up for almost anything to show how he and others have adapted to life with disabilities, he said. “If you can give me a 75-per-cent chance of surviving, I’ll take it. I’ve dealt with far worse stats than that.”

Kroetsch’s goal is to show the world the unique, inspirational stories of people with physical and mental challenges. Thanks to experts in the field and advances in technologies — such as a sailboat that can’t tip and is fitted with a navigating system controlled by puffs and sips — many people with disabilities can get out on the water, climb mountains, even hunt in forests.

“Regardless of what sort of disability you have, you’re a person,” Kroetsch said during a telephone interview from Phoenix, Ariz. while filming a different project. “When you see Daniel scuba dive, you might say, ‘Wow, that’s crazy. How does he do that? I should get off the couch.’ But in reality it’s not that crazy. You just throw a guy in the water and slap a mask on him and he’s scuba diving. He’s just a person.”

Kroetsch is now trying to find advanced scuba gear with a microphone system and larger mask that would allow Ennett to speak and hear underwater.

Kroetsch also dreams of expanding the *Invincible* series to take Ennett around the world for new adventures, with a goal of better understanding how different cultures treat people with disabilities, and to meet more people from all over the world who have adapted to life with disabilities.

Imagine Ennett climbing Mount Kilimanjaro or scuba diving with sharks and stingrays, Kroetsch said. But the smaller, simple scenes are just as important, he adds.

“I like the idea of head-and-shoulder shots of Daniel talking about things because you entirely forget that he’s a quadriplegic at times,” Kroetsch said. “I feel that it levels the playing field a bit and that is a really neat thing because they are often marginalized in the community. I think a show like this can help say, ‘No, they’re just people. Don’t look at their disabilities, just look at them.’ ”

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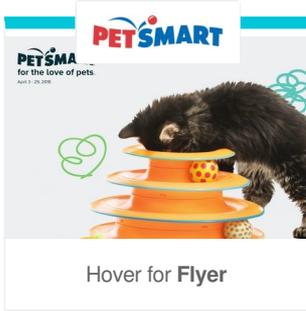
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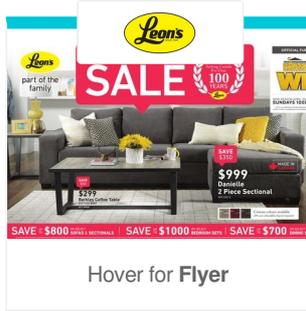


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