

## **S8E9 – LIVE with Patty Upton**

Joey - Hey everyone, we are live on the Overland Podcast. Thank you for joining us. My name is Joey. They call me the Professor. I'm here with my personal mechanic, Tony. Anytime I have anything wrong with my FJ he figures how to work on Toyotas and...

Tony - I'm here for you, bro

Joey - I appreciate you... yeah, it's been a lot of YouTube for us in the past figuring out how to put front end parts on and different things like that and I just want to let you know thank you I appreciate it

Tony – yeah, no problem anytime

Joey - Well, I'm recovering from a weekend trip backpacking. My wife and I just walked twenty-six miles over seven.

Tony - Why would you do that?

Joey - We had to hitchhike around control burns. We crossed over forty water crossings, but it was amazing weather. Nights around the fire were great and. Anyway, my feet hurt, my back hurts, but we're back at it. So here we are. But I am excited about our guest this evening.

Tony - Yes, sir.

Joey - As we do this live show. So, if you're watching or listening, we will be live. You can join in with your questions and comments. We have with us this evening, Patty Upton. Patty, thank you for being with us. Thank you for joining us.

Patty - Thank you.

Joey - She is joining us from, we're not going to disclose her location. She is hidden in a bunker somewhere, ready to get out and go do a few things. But you can follow her and see what she's doing on Instagram @sandshipdiscovery. And also, at a new place that you may not have seen @tnt.triedandtrue as she gets ready for the Rebelle Rally this fall.

Tony - Right on. So that's pretty cool.

Joey - And also on her website at [www.outbackofbeyond.com](http://www.outbackofbeyond.com).

Patty, I love how on your website you introduce yourself you call yourself “a mom, a lifetime girl scout, a hopeless romantic, a voracious reader, and Loren Lee Upton's traveling companion and wife.” I love how you introduce yourself.

Patty – yeah, that’s it in a nutshell.

Joey - You speak very highly of your late husband, Loren, and most of your story includes your time with him. How did you meet?

Patty - My ex-husband introduced us. At the time he wasn't my ex-husband, but yeah.

Joey - That's a good story.

Patty - We were living in the canal zone in Panama at the time. This was back in late 1975 and anytime a vehicle showed up down there looking as Lawrence, he was driving at that time. This was in 1975. He's driving. I think it was a 1972 Ford F-250 specially outfitted. He put duels on the back. He had this massive bumper with this 5000 lb. or 50,000 lb. winch. I mean, massive winch on the front end. And California license plates. And when you see something like this, you think, oh, this guy thinks he's driving to South America from here. Little does he know. Well, that was basically what it was.

And so, my husband brought him home for dinner. And we worked with the Boy Scouts at the time, my husband and I did. And we were sponsored by the Air Force Tropical Survival School. So, we had a lot of contacts that we kind of put Loren in touch with for... medical supplies, maps, which were practically non-existent, other contacts that might have more information about the Darien Gap, that sort of thing. So that's kind of how I met him first, was at that time. And at that time, I was probably of the right age to do something like this, but I was not of the right mind. I keep thinking, you know, I had only been married for a couple of three, four years, and I was working. My husband was working. So, yeah, we were settled into a life at that time. So, we did our best to help them and get them off on the right foot.

Joey - That's interesting. Did you really know what you were getting into when the two of you got together?

Patty - Well, I had done some reading of Lorne's journals from his past trips. And I had read the British had gone through. from in the seventies, 1972, 1973...1974. I probably have it here somewhere with whenever the Range Rovers came out, the year the Range Rovers came out is when the British went through. They were going to show off how great the Range Rovers were. And they were doing this trip from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. And they got to the Darien Gap and they found out that the Range Rovers weren't going to do that well. And they actually airlifted a secondhand Land Rover in. And that's what helped him get through. So, it was one of those things I've read about, I'd seen a little film about it.

So, I knew of it, I knew from people that I'd helped in my earlier years when I was in still living at home, I'd met some young backpackers that came through and they stayed with us for a few days and they were backpacking through so in fact we took care of their vehicle that they well no they had a vehicle they had driven down to Panama but they were going to back through the jungle and then come back to Panama take their vehicle and drive back to the states.

So, I'd helped another man back in early seventies on a bicycle that wanted to go through the Darien Gap. So, I knew of it. I knew that there were these, this obstacle down there. This was not something that you took on lightly. It wasn't, you know, it's not a weekend trip out into the, you know, the woods somewhere. You have to be able to be able to prepare and plan and Logistics are by far more difficult than the trip. I mean, if you can winch one hill, you can winch fifty hills. If you can build one raft, you can build three rafts. But it's the logistics when it comes down to the men you've hired to work for you to search trail, find trail, clear trail, feeding these people because that was part of their agreement to work was, they were to get fed, making sure that they were fed, that they had their supplies, that, you know, that they had what they needed. But yeah, logistics are by far more difficult than the actual trip.

Joey - Well, speaking of logistics, you point out on your website that all of your expeditions occurred before Internet, before GPS, before Google, before cell phones, before even digital cameras. How much harder does that make the logistics and the planning?

Patty - Probably a lot. Although when I look online and start, there's so much information out there. that that doesn't necessarily mean it's all true. When you're getting up to a border crossing, it's a gamble. I mean, even today, it's probably still a bit of a gamble. But I know my husband and I did a trip to Panama. We did a trip to Panama overland in 2017-17 in our Dodge.

See, I had never driven from Prudhoe Bay Alaska where Loren started to Panama. I didn't join until Panama right so one summer we drove from here in Idaho to Alaska and back and then one winter we drove from here in Idaho to Panama and back and having the internet I was able to know more or less what was going to be required at every border and having traveled internationally. I also knew you have half a dozen to a dozen copies. Well, probably more than that for each border crossing of your passport, your driver's license, your insurance papers, you have all of this in a folder so that when you get there, you can, when they say, well, you have to go down the corner to get a photocopy. No, I've got a photocopy. And, you know, cause his brother owns the photocopy shop.

So yeah, it's one of those. And so, we, we were a little bit, better off informed but then again, it's not I don't know that it was all that much more difficult. I just know that sometimes just arriving at the border cold turkey and wondering are we going to get in today or not you know it's all luck of the draw at this point maps would have been nice I think if there was anything out of all that that I could choose to have had back then that we didn't have would have been digital photography because our photos are not... I've got some that were heat damaged because it was all in slide film and either it was the film was heat damaged before it was exposed or it was heat damaged after it was exposed because sometimes it was months in between when we could get it actually processed.

Joey - Just for that to have survived the trip home and made it home with you is a miracle in itself. Most people don't even get their luggage today. I can't imagine wondering where your stuff is back then. Before we get into the Sand Ship Discovery, which is mostly what you talk about when you go to events and stuff. Let's go into a little bit of history. What led up to that? The horseback expedition in 1957. Tell us a little bit of that story.

Patty - I don't know much of it. Lauren, let me back up even further. Loren had decided early on he like he says most people don't know what they want to be when they've graduated college let alone when they're eight years old. He knew when he was about eight years old what he wanted to do for his life, not specifically but in general, he knew what he wanted to be. He knew he wanted to be an explorer. He wanted to go out and find things and do things that hadn't been done and this was all back when he was born in 1935.

So somewhere in the mid, you know forties His older brothers were out on a camp out for the weekend. This was in southern California. They all had donkeys and Loren kept pestering his dad. I want to go see the boys I want to go see the boys. So, his dad walked him out to where the camp they were camping just you know mild from the house probably but that was the wilderness and of course, he arrives at this camp with these teenage boys. And these teenage boys don't want him around. So, his brother said, here, you take the donkeys and lead us home. So, Lauren had the donkeys and he's walking home and he says the feeling that came over him at that time, leading these big boys out of the wilderness with the donkeys out there in front, that feeling never left him. And that's when he decided that's what he wanted to do.

And it was it's just that was where it started. And he did the horseback trip in 1957, 1958, late 1957. He started in late 1957. Yeah, because his son had just been born and that was kind of hard on him. But it was something that had been in planning for about a year and a half. So, it was one of those things that it had to happen because of other people that were involved. And the idea was to go, the goal was to go from the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere, which would have been Death Valley, to the highest point in the Western Hemisphere, which would be Mount Aguacagua in Argentina. It's right on the border, I think, between the two. And that was the dream.

Well, they were out ten months and they were only into Mexico. And he had gotten so sick with dysentery and I don't know what all. He was 6'4" in really good shape. He was only twenty some years old, probably weighed a good, you know, 225, 250 lbs. somewhere in there. He, you know, muscular. He was in really good shape and he was down to 149 pounds when he got back to the States. So that he said he learned a lot from that lesson, mostly what not to do.

And then when his son was about eight, nine years old one summer... He and his son rode what they called at that time tote goats, which were tiny motorcycles with little fat tires on them. And again, they started in Death Valley and they were going into Mexico with him during Wyatt's summer break from school. And he said that they were gone three months. And in that three-month time, Wyatt was, I think, eight years old, nine years old when they left. Maybe he was eight. He probably turned nine in October. And he says he aged three or four five years in that three-month period because of all the experience he got and things that happened.

And what they did and the people they met and the places they stayed and that sort of thing just that experience had aged him matured him I shouldn't say aged but matured him in a way that staying home wouldn't necessarily have done. Then the next the next big trip was when he decided he was going to take one American made vehicle around the world on a north south course, all on land, except for the South Atlantic. And that was what he started in 1975 and got down to Panama and started in 1976 is when he started the Darien Gap in that Ford. And that's where Larry, one of the men that was with him, was shot and killed. They don't know what happened. There are several theories that were floating around. Lauren's personal theory is it was probably an accident by one of the natives. The natives have, they all carry, well, they don't all carry, but most of them carry weapons for hunting. And they're not in the best of shape at all. They're not well maintained. Some, I mean, the cook we had with us, he had a shotgun with him. If you looked at it wrong, it would kind of fall apart in your hands. It was just one of those things that you didn't want to go near if you didn't have to. So, he thinks it was an accident, but that did put a halt to that particular attempt. He couldn't go any further. It was just too, too, too hard on him.

So, we started out again in 1977 driving a brand-new Jeep, a CJ-7. And, he made it through the Darien Gap in forty-nine days, but he did about, ten to twelve miles lashed atop dugout canoes through the Otrado Swamp of Columbia. And it was so it was not an all-land crossing, but the rains were coming and he wanted to get out. He didn't want to get stuck in the swamps during the rainy season. And that point became moot several weeks later because he lost that Jeep over a three-hundred-foot embankment in the Equatorian Andes. Everyone on board was fine. They were all it was a soft top. The top was ripped off. So, everyone kind of was thrown free as it rolled off. you know, end for end down this embankment. And Lawrence says, as he watched the headlights roll in for end, he was planning his next trip.

And he started in the 1979 with another brand-new Jeep that time of CJ-5 and got down into Panama. And this was 1975 or excuse me, 1977, 1979. There we go. And Mark Smith. I don't know if you're familiar with Mark Smith and the Jeepers Jamboree out of California. He and four. I think they had four vehicles were coming up from the tip of South America going north and they went through the Darien Gap just a few weeks before Lauren did. And so, when Loren got down there, he had a practical freeway. They went through there with chainsaws and crews of twenty men, and it was great. He says all he had to do was winch hills that had to be winched. He did hardly any clearing. Got to the Colombian border, just over the Colombian border, and a Colombian park official said he needed permission to go through the park. And Loren says, what do you mean I need permission? I mean, what's going on? He says, so he said, no, no, you need permission. Loren says, okay, what do I have to do to get permission? He said, we have to go to Bogota.

And again, like we were talking earlier, this is not an easy thing. He's out in the middle of literally nowhere, calls a halt to the expedition. Men are on the payroll. He leaves. It was an eleven-day round trip for him to go to Bogota. It was by walking boat, bigger boat, bus, and bigger bus to Bogota. They walked in the door, gave him the permission in two seconds, walked out, repeated his steps, and, got back to the Jeep. We tried to find the park official on his way up river. They said he wasn't there. Got back to the Jeep and he says, we're going to move. Rainy season's coming. We got to get out of here.

And that afternoon or the next day, the park official showed up and says, you can't go. You can't go. He says, I got the permission right here. I'll show it to you when I get to the top of the hill. They were winching. And he says, no, no, no. And Loren says, when I get there, I'll show it to you. So, he showed him the paper and he says, no, it's no good. It's no good. What do you mean it's no good? And about then, when it dawned on Loren, the guy wanted a payoff. Well, if he had negotiated a payoff eleven days before, they probably could have handled it. But the fact that the man told him that he needed permission, therefore, Loren went and got the permission. So, at that point, Loren was very upset, and he said, it's going to take more than you and your gun to stop me. He said, okay. Came back the next day with more men and more guns. So, point was taken and Lauren, that Jeep was left cabled to a tree on the Kakarika River.

Joey - That's so disturbing, you know, and I've read enough books by Graeme Bell about South American and South African travel going from border to border, knowing how much of an issue it is. And I just can't imagine back then having to go through that. But you keep bringing up this term, the Darien Gap. And for those who do not know, explain what that is.

Patty - It's one of the few places in this world where there's two countries that touch, Panama and Colombia. And there's no other countries, of course, that border either one of them. They're surrounded by water after that. that you can't drive to. Just about every country that is bordering another country, there's a way to drive to that country. It may not be the best road. It may not be the most convenient road. It may not be a road in our sense of the definition of road, but it's drivable. The Darien Gap, there's nothing. You get down to the town of Yavisa in Panama and the Pan American Highway stops. And even at that point, it's loosely called a highway. I mean, it's paved now all the way down to Yavisa, which it wasn't when we When we did it in 1985, it was one hundred and seventy-nine miles. And that took the better part of ten hours to drive.

So now it's there is a road all the way down to Ibiza and then there's a river and that's it. You don't there's no more roads. We clocked it at one hundred and twenty-five miles at the direction we did.

Other people say it's about eighty some miles. But our goal was to remain entirely on land. We would cross rivers, but we'd never travel up or down. So, first thing you do is you have to cross the Twitter River and you've got a spit of about four miles of land. And then we had to cross the Chukinaki river bit of land about four miles wide. And then you cross the Twitter River. Some of the expeditions that go down there, they'll go down to the Chukinaki and then they'll boat around that four-mile spit of land because it's just four miles and then go up the Twitter River and start at the village of Pino Ghana and go on from there. Well, that's not necessarily all land.

Our goal was we came to a river, we crossed it. We didn't travel up or down it to avoid anything. And, well, that's why we did our odometer told us. We had one hundred twenty-five miles from and we came out of the village of Rio Sudio, which no other expedition had done. They came out on the Otrado River and most of them then went by boat up some rivers to find dry land further. It would have been further east at that point. I'm trying to picture the map in my mind, but I think it would have been further east towards the Atlantic.

They were able to find dry land by going up several rivers that way, where we ended up going further south and coming out on the Otrado, and we had found out by reconnaissance ahead of time that there was what they called a tractor trail from Rio Sudio out to a road. And that road was thirty-eight miles. And that took us ten hours to drive. It was so bad. It was just there'd been no vehicle. There'd been no vehicle in that village at all at the time we arrived with the Discovery. They sent the kids out of school to come down and watch us cross the river because there had never been a vehicle there. There'd been tractors, but never a vehicle.

Joey - Wow. So, this was in 1984? When you went down with the Discovery?

Patty – Right. He started in eight. Well, he started it at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, June 15, 1984. He got to Panama late October of 1984. And someone, a mutual friend says, hey, that guy's back. I had not seen or heard from him since 1977. So, I said, who? And he says, the one that wanted to go through the Darien Gap. I said, oh, OK. So, I went out and saw him. He was staying at the Jeep Club, the Isthmian Four-Wheeler Jeep Club. And I started helping him write letters, do some, again, paperwork type thing. And I would love that. If you've got a contact with Jeep, let me know.

Tony - Rick wants to know when you're going to make the trip again.

Patty - You pay. I'm going. I would. I seriously would. I'm not paying again. I forget where I was anyway.

So, in 1985 dry season, the only time you can really cross this area is dry season, which is December, January, February, maybe into March, September. Because otherwise, the trails are too wet, the rivers are too high. And of course, the Otrado Swamp, when you look at the map, it's indicated as a swamp. Well, that's only a swamp during rainy season because we were able to find a dry land route through the swamp, which we were told that was impossible. Well, that's not a word in the vocabulary. I mean, it was tricky, mind you, but we did find a route we could drive on with the jeep.

Joey - When you talk about finding a route, were you having to cut trees and make your own road as you went?

Patty - Yes. We hired natives. Our guide had worked for Loren in the past on one or both previous expeditions, Margarito. And smart man, can't read, can't write, doesn't speak English. He could sign his

name. And okay was the only word he knew in English. And he was our main guide. Then we hired men as axe men to cut trail. Axes and machetes were all we used because chainsaws are all great, but now you've got something that's going to break down, that's got to have fuel, that's got to have maintenance, and that's got to have people that know how to use it. Everybody down there knows how to use an ax and a machete. Everyone down there knows how to sharpen an ax and a machete. All you need is a file. That's all we needed.

And it was easier if we came across a too big a tree to cut down, we found a way to go around it. It was easier to go around it than to cut down big trees. A couple of times, some of the bigger trees we had to cut were ones that had fallen across the trail. We'd have a trail cleared. Men would go out ahead of time and clear the trail. I'd be in camp with the jeep. Trail would be cleared. And in the middle of the night, you hear this crash and a tree has fallen. And sure enough, it had fallen across the trail. We had some fairly good-sized trees that had fallen across an already cleared trail that then took us several hours to cut through and then use the winch and move that section out of the way.

Tony - wow I bet your winch got a workout.

Patty - that Ramsey power takeoff was a lifesaver absolute lifesaver and it was one of those things that I had been familiar with electric winches in the past. And then using the power takeoff there's advantages to each one but having first of all you know on the transmission so we had four speeds not that we ever used all four it was usually first and reverse um but having that capability and then not having to worry about that battery, you know, cause sometimes we'd be winching for several hours.

Tony - Somehow, I feel like my current winch is woefully inadequate.

Joey - What made you want to go and join this expedition after what had happened in the past? I had always been interested in this type of thing I've always liked reading books about I mean living stories of Stanley and Livingston and burton and Shackleton, Burl Markham these are all what's the woman's name queen of the desert Oh, I can't think of her name right now. Bell, Gertrude Bell. These are all books that I read. These are all books that everyone, of course, this all took place, you know, a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago. That sort of thing, maybe even further. But they were all books that inspired me, these people that did this sort of thing.

And so that was and I've always loved maps and see. I mean, my favorite toy as a kid was a globe. I remember my globe with black water.

Tony - Yeah. Yeah. I really enjoyed a globe when I was a kid. There was one in the library that I would just go and...

Patty - Yeah. Find out where you were and find out where your grandparents lived and find out what's over here and that sort of thing. Yeah, I had to buy one.

Joey - When I started traveling the world, I had to buy one for my Granny so I could show her exactly where I was going. That's the only way she could figure it out. What was his reaction when you told him you wanted to come down there and join him? Or did you just show up?

Patty - No, I was in Panama at the time and I was working and I actually arranged for someone. I actually arranged for someone to be at my job for thirty days. I took leave without pay because I knew that if I said I wanted to go. I had to go. I mean, it had to be a near death that would have to keep me out of that

seat the day he pulled out. Lauren was the type of person that you do what you say and you say what you do. You're only as good as your word. So, I knew this from Lauren that I couldn't say, I'll go as your photographer. And then six weeks later or something, when we're getting ready to leave, I can say, and you know what? I forgot I got this appointment. I can't go. I just couldn't do that. So, I had to make sure everything was absolutely perfect, that I had everything lined out so that when the time came, there was going to be no problem with me going. And I had that already kind of worked out. And then I said, I am going to go with you as your photographer. Because he was looking for a photographer.

Oh, these trips were funded by a carpenter and a secretary.

Tony - By you?

Patty - Yeah. Self-funded. Self-funded.

Joey - No sponsorships back then, huh?

Patty - No. Lauren felt that he had to do something. And I mean, I totally... you know, nowadays people are funded before they pull out of the driveway. I don't know how that's done. I'm having trouble with that. I've always had trouble with that. Lauren's philosophy was he had to do something to prove himself before he would ask someone to fund him. After we did the Darien Gap, we had that done. So, when we got to South America, I wrote a lot of letters to a lot of Ramsey and I don't know, maybe Ramsey didn't get one then. But I know that General Tire did. And they agreed to send us, they were going to send us four new tires anywhere in South America. Or was it going to be in Africa? I forget timing. But we didn't get the notice. We never got that letter until I think it was a year later. Somehow, we finally got that letter from General Tire.

So, by then we had gotten, because we went through South America on literally a prayer on our tires. We arrived in South Africa and got Firestone there, agreed to give us, well, they agreed to sell us tires at fifty dollars apiece. So, we got four new tires from Firestone in South Africa for fifty dollars apiece. So that's a form of sponsorship.

The most in money that we got would have been the ship from South America to Africa. That was one that was probably, well, it probably saved us in the neighborhood of six thousand dollars at that time, because, number one, the cost of shipping the Jeep to Africa, flying the two of us to Africa and then us being without the house for thirty days, whether it would be in South America or South Africa, we were not going to have our home. We had to figure that cost in as well. And we figured it was about six thousand dollars. And a shipping company agreed to ship all three of us on board a Greek freighter to South Africa from Chile. And we had to pay about seven hundred, nine hundred dollars or something for our food.

Joey - What happened to the rest of your crew when you went from South America to Africa?

Patty - These were all people that lived there in the Daring Gap. These were all locals that were hired from the village nearby type of thing. When we got to Rio Sucio, we had to go to, which was technically the end of the gap for us. That's where we found what we considered a road. We paid the men boat fare to go downriver to meet us in Turbo, which is a bigger town by far. and we would drive there and meet them and at that point when we got to Turbo we then paid all the men off and they all went back to their villages okay did you pick up a new crew when you got to Africa no Africa was strictly the two of us



that one was there was that Africa there's a road yeah um yeah Africa there's a road but again it's not a road necessarily in it's a very Wide definition of a road. Right. Some of it was good. We did, I think we clocked it in at four thousand to forty-five hundred miles in four-wheel drive in Africa. And that was over a period of about six months.

Joey - And how tell us about the Guinness Book of World Records. What record did you set then?

Patty - That was for the first all land crossing by a vehicle of the Darien Gap. There's been other vehicle expeditions through the Darien Gap, but they've all traveled anywhere from probably thirty to two hundred miles by river.

Joey - Wow, that's incredible. So, tell us the end of the story. You almost make it to your goal and then you had to stop. Wait a minute. You get to where you could see the end, but you couldn't get there because there was a conflict in the countries. Is that right?

Patty - Oh, okay. That would have been probably when we were in the Middle East. Yeah. Which is probably not too much different from today. When we were in, in order to remain entirely on land, we had to go through Sudan and then into Egypt. And then from Egypt, there's a tunnel under the Suez Canal into the Sinai. And from the Sinai, we went into Israel. We could not drive from Israel into Jordan when we were there in nineteen eighty-eight. And at that time, the only other option was Lebanon, which was definitely out for Americans. This was five years after the bombing of the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut. So, Americans were still not very welcome in in Lebanon. And it wasn't that we weren't welcome in Jordan. It's just that the two countries on paper were at war. And we talked to Jordanian officials in other embassies before we got to Israel, and they said, you're not going to be able to do it because we don't have relations. It's just because of who we are in that part of the world. In order to keep peace with the other Arab nations, we have to have that border closed. So, yeah, we understood it, but we still tried. We got there. We tried. We spoke with U.N. we said look paint it white put a big blue un on the jeep you drive it across that little tiny bridge that's you know thirty yards across and we'll fly around or boat around or whatever and pick it and he says, we can't even drive our vehicles across the bridge. We have to walk across and get picked up by the United Nations office on the other side so we could not get into Jordan we had to go back into the cyanide into Egypt and take a boat up to Jordan. Then we could continue but that's a water barrier we crossed you know that was not legitimate we continued on um we finally ended the trip at Gamvik Norway went through the old Soviet Union big eye opener and finished the trip at a little town called Gamvik, Norway, at a lighthouse.

And we didn't know where we were going to be going. We didn't know where the end of the road was. We were just looking for the furthest road north. So, we would just keep going from town to town on the north Edding. And they said, oh, yeah, there's another town up here. There's another town up there. So, we finally ended up at this little town of Gamvik at this lighthouse outside. And they said, yeah, you can't go any further. And that was it. And nowadays, North Cap... It's further north. And we did go there, but that was a border, I mean, a water crossing. You could only get there by ferry. It is further north. But now there's a bridge. I mean, if it had been a bridge back in the eighties, we would have done North Cap.

But anyway, back to Israel. So that was always a thorn in our side is that we didn't do it all on land. And in two thousand, we thought we were going to go back. We were working in that direction. We had plans laid. We thought we'd go back the winter of 2000. And then Arafat blew up with another big

intifada against the infidels and all this. So, we thought, well, driving a red Jeep with California license plate may not be the best thing. Because one thing's for sure, if California was that was where Lauren was from. So, I mean, it still has the California tags on it. Everybody knew that. I mean, if it had said Illinois or Wisconsin or something, they probably would have scratched their heads and said, where is that? But, you know, the fact that it was California, it was pretty obvious.

So, it was put on hold and then life got in the way, work, health issues started arising, that sort of thing. And then in late two thousand seventeen, our Lawrence, who was with us, Loren's nephew that was with us on the first thirty days in the Darien Gap, he came and took the Jeep and re-outfitted it. You know, she's not showroom by any means. She has all her dents still. She earned those dents. But new coat of paint, a little bit of Bondo where the rust was really bad. New brakes, thank God. New wiring harness. Things that she really needed. So, we were going to go in late, and our boss at the time in late, he says, no, he said, you need to go sooner rather than later. He would only see Lauren about every four or five months because we took care of a home of his up here. So, he wasn't here all the time.

So, he could see Loren's health decline more than I could being around him constantly. He says, you've got to go sooner rather than later. He says, I will put up all money for your trip to Israel as far as transportation costs. So, he paid all transportation costs of the Sand Ship Discovery from Washington State to Israel and back again. And then our airfare round trip to Israel and back. And so, on May third, 2018, we drove from a road we were on in Israel just outside the town of Elah across the border, the Yitzhak border to a town to a road we were on in Jordan. It's called Airport Street and made a U-turn and came back right back through the borders again and back into Israel.

Joey - That's so neat. Were there moments that you didn't think that you would make it on this trip?

Patty - Oh, yes. I think there were two. The first was in... Well, they were actually both in Sudan, come to think of it. I had come down with malaria and didn't know what it was. I was just very, very sick. And... We weren't in Khartoum yet. We were still out in the open desert headed towards Khartoum. And the only way I know what happened is I've read Loren's journals because I was out of it. I was running such a high fever. The inside of the Jeep, he had it made up so we could sleep inside. It was not comfortable. And during the Darien Gap, I slept inside the whole time because it was primo conditions for me. Two people in there is a little tight. So even in Africa, we slept outside a lot. But he could make up the bed in the inside and still drive. So, he would drive and I was laying on the bed inside.

And we had stopped at a Greek construction camp. And they had said, go to their head office in Khartoum. They'll know what to do. And they gave him a business card for their head office. So, when he arrived in Khartoum, he saw a park with shade trees, because this was quite warm, parked under the shade trees, and got a taxi cab and says, look, I need you to take me to this address. But I need you to wait for me at that address, because I don't know where my cars parked. I said, OK. So, he took him to the Greek office. And he went up and talked to the man. They came down and talked to the taxi driver. Taxi driver said where Lauren had left the Jeep. They said, OK, we've got it from here. Paid off the taxi driver. He says she needs to get to the hospital.

So, they came. They took Lauren back to the Jeep, got me to the hospital. And it was diagnosed as malaria and amoebic dysentery. And they admitted me. And it was later that day or the next day when I finally my fever finally broke and I was semi lucid. And I was in there for, I think, three days in the hospital and then released. And then a couple of weeks later, we were on our way north towards Egypt.

And everything was fine for the first few hundred miles. But the further north we went, we had to go up the west bank of the Nile because the border on the east bank of the Nile is or was, I should say, under contention between Egypt and Sudan. They couldn't figure out where their border was. And we had a letter from the Egyptian consulate in Khartoum stating that we had permission to cross the border from Sudan into Egypt on the West Bank. So, we had to go up the West Bank, which was fine. And we always had the Nile River somewhere within a walking distance of us, not necessarily right next to us, but fairly close.

This was late June, so it was rather warm, and it was our water supply, and we knew it flew north, flowed north. Our compass no longer worked, so we were down to Loren using a pencil and looking at the sun and reading the shadows and trying to determine which way we were going, plus the river. And we got into we were there was a rocky outcropping that came right down to the river's edge and we couldn't get between the river and that rocky outcropping. So, Loren had to swing out into the desert to go around this outcropping. Oh, probably maybe a mile and a half out and then swing back. And we broke an axle shaft and we had already used the spare shaft back in Central African Republic. So, we had front-wheel drive only. And Jeeps and sand and front-wheel drive don't necessarily do that well.

Tony - They don't gee and haw very well, huh?

Patty - And we were able to use the winch and winch up into some brush to get a little bit of shade. And that night was really probably the scariest of the whole expedition. Because we didn't know where we were. We knew nobody else knew where we were. Again, no GPS, no sat phone, no, you know, these... spot tracker things or whatever none of that existed um so we had we took an inventory of what supplies we had and Loren said I want you to make a list of what you think we need to take with us bare minimum to get out of here and I'll do the same and we'll compare our lists and we compared lists after working on this. He says, I don't want you to talk. I just want you to write down a list.

And when we compared lists, he had basically had everything about the same, except he had the inside rearview mirror of the Jeep. He was going to take that for a signaling device. And we thought, OK, what we're going to have to do is we're going to have to walk so far because we didn't know where the river was. We had no sight of the river at this point. We were going to have to walk so far, stash our supplies, walk back to the Jeep, get the rest of the supplies, walk up and then just keep leapfrogging north as much as we could or until we could find the river. And he said, I'll hike up to that mountain the next day and see if I can see how far the river is. So next morning he hiked up there and the river was about a mile distance from where we broke down. And he walked down to the river and it had a good current.

We didn't know if we were far enough north to be on Lake Nassar, in which case there'd be no current. Had to leave the Jeep, secured it the best we could, put a letter on it saying, you know, we've gone for help, got broken parts. This is our passport number. This is who owns the Jeep, you know, blah, blah, blah. We will be back. And we have two big tin drawers that are probably eleven, twelve inches deep by seventeen inches wide and thirty-three inches long that fit in the tailgate of the Jeep that slide out. And those are our pots and pans and food supplies, that sort of thing. Use some Loctite silicone sealant, sealed up the seams. Lauren took some tamarisk branches and made outriggers. We took all the gas that we were carrying in jerry cans, dumped it in the tank of the Jeep, used the jerry cans as flotation devices on the outside of this outrigger. This box, this aluminum box, we put our supplies in.

And we, Lauren and I, got in the river. Oh, we had a spare tube, a tire tube. We inflated that, tied it to the raft, and we called our little craft the SS Survival Ship Nile Queen. Still has her name on her. And we floated down the Nile River for two and a half days until we found some form of civilization, which was one man in a cone tent. He said that someone was going to come in a vehicle and take his produce up to the village late that night for to the market we said can we get a ride he said yes so, we stayed there the rest of the day and got a ride into the village of Wadi Halfa which is a good-sized village there on the map. And from Wadi Halfa we could get a train back to Khartoum and we called the states, which is not an easy thing in a foreign country, especially Sudan.

That was a two-day, I think it was a two-day process to call the states. And you could only make an international call from the Hilton Hotel. Called my mother, said, we need... These axles, this is who you have to call. This is the size. This is the number of teeth on it. This is, you know, we gave her absolute specifications. You want to talk to Scotty. You want to talk to so-and-so. This is the number. You're going to send them to this man at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum. Don't put our names on the package. And that was the end of it.

And Loren says, I don't want to leave the Discovery out there all by herself. He says, it's come too far. It means too much to have something to happen to her. He bought six weeks' worth of food, got on the train, went back to Khartoum or back to Wadi Halfa, hired a couple of people in Wadi Halfa to take him up by dugout, small boat up river to where he knew the Jeep was parked. And that's where he stayed was at Broken Axle Camp. I stayed in Khartoum waiting for the parts to arrive. Eleven days after my mother sent them, I had them in my hands.

However, the rains had come and the Nile went into flood first time since the forties, I think it was. And the railroad tracks were washed out going north. There was no way for me to get out. I could take an international flight out of Khartoum, but that's all I could do. There was no other way for me to get out of Khartoum. I spent two weeks knocking on doors, government, police, NGOs, you name it. I talked to them and said, is there any way I can get to Wadi Halfa? And finally, it was through one of the NGOs. They said, we're flying release supplies up. The Belgium Air Force has loaned us a C-130. They're flying them up tomorrow morning to Wadi Halfa. You can be on board. And they said, be out on the street corner, you know, seven o'clock in the morning.

And I was out there at six o'clock in the morning with my axle shafts and flew to Wadi Halfa and then hired these same people to take me upriver to where Broken Axle Camp was. And it was a fifteen-minute repair job. We'd gone to free floating axles after having axle problems in the Darien Gap. You don't jack it up. You undo those six bolts, take that hub flange off, put the new axle shaft on, put the flange, the bolts, bingo, you're done. Fifteen minutes.

Tony - Yeah, but you had no way of communicating with him. No, no, absolutely none. He could tell the river was rising and he could see that it now looked like chocolate milk. So, he knew that there was something up, that he didn't know the railroad tracks were washed out, but he knew something was definitely not right. He just didn't know what it was. And of course, I had no way of letting them know that, you know, everything's fine. I got them. I just can't get out of, out of Dodge.

Joey - That's just how, the society we live in today, we've become so dependent on communication quick right now.

Tony - Communication. You guys are weeks away from each other and have no idea.

Patty – yeah, everything's done in the journals. I'll be writing and I'll be writing to Loren in my journal telling him about my day and saying, you know, I can't, sorry, I can't get there, but this is what's happened so far. These are who I've talked to. This is what's going on. Talk to, you know, Abdul down on the corner to see if he had any camel trains going north. That sort of thing.

Tony - So, yeah. Patty, my mind is just blown right now. Yeah, to be out there like he was and not to have any word of what in the world is going on, but yet he stayed there. That just blows my mind about how he actually stayed there and waited on you to get there.

Joey - I mean, that's got to weigh on you mentally.

Patty - Yeah, it does. At some point, you don't.

Tony - Each one knew that we, you know, each one knew. You know, they were depending on the other one to do their job.

Patty - I was depending on him to stay there and watch the home front. And he was depending on me to show up with axle shafts. So, I mean, we each knew. But there's that mental stress that how do I let him know that everything's OK? And he was going under the same thing. How do I let her know that I'm fine? Because I was worried now was his six weeks' worth of supplies of food beginning to dwindle. And he had already and he like I said, he knew something was up with the river.

So, he had actually started cutting back on his rations. And when I got there, I've got a picture I show in the slideshow. You know, I say he's got a great tan, but he lost a little bit of weight. He's standing there. He's in shorts and you can see all his ribs.

Tony - Yeah. That's a level of mental toughness that is just insane to me. Like I can't. I can't wrap my head around that. That's crazy. I mean, not in a bad way. I mean, I'm just saying.

Joey - Oh, yeah. That also speaks to a love for vehicle and how you bond with a vehicle. You want to go back and.

Patty - You bet. I mean, she has a personality. She's a she. She's temperamental. She's faithful. But, you know, she had it meant a lot. Loren was doing this in one American made vehicle, not a series of American made vehicles. And he'd gotten that far and he couldn't let anything happen to her to knock that down.

Joey - One thing I thought about when I was thinking about this and going through the stuff and trying to picture your travels, especially through South America, everybody has always talked. And it's actually been a fact that when you go to Mexico, don't drink the water. You know, the water's not good. How, you know, like this past weekend, I was in Arkansas and I was filtering water out of streams that I could see through. Crystal clear water. How did you make sure that y'all had good, clean water and your food was clean and all that?

Patty - I think most of South America, we were drinking tap water. I can't I can't say that when I went to Mexico with Lauren in 2018, 2017, I think it was we bought bottled water. I don't know what he did through Central America. Once we got to South America, we usually filled up a five-gallon jug at a gas station. And that was our drinking water. And if we had tea, I did boil it. But we still drank the water.

Now, in Africa, we boiled it or we pill it. We still had Halosone pills from the Darien Gap. So, we would pill it. And then when we got to Wadi Halfa, after we broke down, we ran out of our Halosone pills. And we had no way of purifying our water when we were staying in this little thing, they called a hotel.

But we were sitting there on our beds, if you want to call them that. And we had to drink the water that they had at the hotel, which was in Crocs. that was brought up from the Nile River and just put into these crocks. And the crocks, of course, allow the water to cool through evaporations through the pores of these clay crocks. So, the water was nice and cool. It just looked like weak tea because that was the color of the water. And we sat there and we had white enamel cups and we're looking at it thinking, OK, we got to do this because we need the drink. And we did. And I mean, we had no problems, but I mean, it's not to say that, you know, it was probably the best thing to do. But again, when you don't have a way of purifying it. That was it.

Joey - Well, we mentioned earlier that in doing this, you set a Guinness World Record. How did you how did the public. in the media react to your accomplishment when you got back? How did you let them know what you'd done?

Patty - No, we really didn't. I mean, we did some newspaper interviews, that sort of thing. I wrote a magazine article. There really wasn't that big of nothing over it I've had more in the past two years because I've made a point of getting out there and going to overland shows and expos and jeep shows and jeep rallies that sort of thing and doing slide presentations showing the Jeep telling about you know showing them how the bed makes up showing them underneath the hood where he's got the shovel stored and the axe stored and you know all these things that places that he's tucked stuff in around the engine compartment.

So, I mean, being able to see the slideshow and then go over and look at the Jeep and put hands on and have them and people can sit in it. This is nothing. I'm not worried about you people sitting in my Jeep. It's not going to hurt anything. You know, someone says, can we touch her? Can we open the doors? Look inside. Sit in there if you want to. So, it's only been in the last two years. And it was something that Lauren and I talked about doing. But with his health that got very bad there the last few years, he says, well, when we retire, this is what we'll do. Well, he was also saying, you know, you didn't want me to quit. He says, you got to keep working. You need to keep working. So, I kept working right up until literally a month before he passed. I was taking care of him almost full time and working. And I just had to, I finally told the boss in July fourth and Lauren passed in August. I said, I can't do it anymore. I can't do both. I'm cheating both of you right now because I can't give both of you what you need and I said I've got to quit and he totally understood which was I mean we had a great boss great boss he's family

Joey - yeah that's totally different today when people do things like this you can follow every step that they make right so to be able to hear what you did completely after the fact and you remember so many details about it. It's good that you kept journals so that you can remember everything, all the places and times and stuff. So that's, that's incredible.

Now your, now your husband, Lauren, he passed away in 2022. What, how do you want everybody to remember him?

Patty - I would say he would want them to remember him as somebody who said what he was going to do and did what he said he was going to do. Honorable, a man, not a handshake, your word. I mean, a

handshake's okay, but it's your word that's going to do it. Look a man in the eye and tell him, and that's what works.

Joey - Yeah. Well, most people know you from going around and attending events, sharing your story, doing classes, and telling stuff like that. You do that. You mentioned earlier that you're going to be going to Overland Expo West here in just a month or so.

Now you're embarking on a new challenge, the Rebel Rally. Are you excited about this?

Patty - Apprehensive, yes. Excited, yes. um scared definitely all of the above. Yeah, I mean it's one of those things that again I feel prepared in that I am going to see it through I mean one way or the other we'll compete we'll do it. I mean there's no question there how bad we're going to be at it or how good we're going to be at it will be seen on the last day.

Joey - yeah right...tell us about your partner.

Patty - Connie Rodman, she's an avid off-roader to a degree, not necessarily, she's done a lot here in the States, but her primary off-roading with her husband, Graham Jackson, was they spent several months in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, overlanding and they, she had never done that sort of thing. So that was her initiation into it. And then, you know, she thought, oh, this isn't that bad. So, then they did Cape to Cairo, no Cairo or London to, Cape town overland. And she's done that.

I think, she's done other trips in Africa. And then she's done, and I don't have my paperwork in front of me. You'll have to look up her, go to our website. There's a short bio on there. Australia. She's done a lot of overlanding with her husband in Australia. That's where I'm going to rely on her dune driving experiences from there.

Joey - Have you ever done anything like a race before?

Patty - No. No, no, no, no.

Joey - Slow and easy is the CJ five.

Patty -Yeah. And see, that's the nice thing about that is one of the nice things about the Rebelle. It's not a race. We're not out there racing. We are competing, but it's going to, there are timed events and that you have to be at certain places by a certain time. But it's more precision navigation than anything else. And it's all done old school, compass maps, plotter scales. Your phone, your cell phone are all locked up in a tamper-proof box. Your GPS on your car has been disabled. So yeah, you're relying on Yeah, your wits, basically, to get you through.

Tony - What vehicle are you driving? What will you all be competing in?

Patty - That, I did get that. I did get that. See, I'm prepared for that question. The AEV is loaning us.

Tony - Oh, wow. That's so cool.

Patty - Yes. And this was... Connie and I met after... Got together, I should say, after Expo... Mountain West there in Colorado. She lives in near Denver. And I went to her house after that. We sat around chatting and talking and doing budgets and how we're going to get this and how we're going to get that. And she says, well, we got to get a vehicle. And we said, yeah, how do we do that? And we knew we wanted a Jeep because we wanted to use my story to try an interest Jeep in either loaning us a Jeep,

giving us a Jeep, letting us buy a Jeep for a buck or whatever, whatever legalities need to be done. So, we were fine tuning a letter to Jeep and working on this. And she says, fall back. She's got a vehicle or two that we could choose from that, you know, she's familiar with that they could use. And I said, OK. And we were going ahead with, you know, of course, I was still doing Overland Expos and stuff like that.

So, it was kind of difficult for me to get anything paperwork done. So, I was still, you know, working with getting ideas how to form this letter to Jeep so we could best interest them in it. And we were standing at Overland Expo East in Virginia, just what, it was in October of last year. So, a few, a month and a half after Mountain West. And we're standing around on Thursday night. The Expo hadn't even started. We're at happy hour talking and there's a group of us. And Connie looks at me, she says, hey, I said, what? She says, we got a vehicle. And I said, what? She says, no, we've got a vehicle. And she points across this circle of people that we're standing with. And Matt Feldman is there. And he says, yes, you've got a vehicle for the rebel. And I mean, it was like I said, I don't know who you are, but thank you.

Tony – That just made all of my skin crawl.

Patty - And, you know, we thought, you know, now we have to do is raise the funds, which is not cheap. But I keep my philosophy is everybody has a little bit of money they might be able to donate. But not everybody has a vehicle they're willing to let you use. So that was like one of the biggest weights taken off our shoulders when he came forward with that. In fact, I got my AV shirt on. Yeah, we hope to have it by early April so that we'll have it for the first training session in Ocotillo Wells in mid-April.

Tony - Right on. That's so awesome.

Patty - The plan is then at several of the Expos, I'll have the Sand Ship Discovery on display with, as Matt's calling it, the SSD-II, Sand Ship Discovery II, because he wants it to look as close, how you can make a, a 2023 look like a 1966. Who's to say? But anyway, it's red. He's painted the rims red, which match our Discovery. But we'll be at the AEV booth and have both of the vehicles there on display.

Joey - I'm going to type in and put...This is the website that you have, the [www.tnt-triedandtrue.com](http://www.tnt-triedandtrue.com). This is where you can go and support team one-fourteen, the TNT Tried and True team of Patty and Connie Rodman. They have a link on here where you can go and you can donate, or you can buy things that will help support them. There are several different ways that you can do that. It has a short bio of each of them, and it also has the sponsors that they have and all that. So, you can also follow them on Instagram at TNT Tried and True and follow their every step. So, we encourage everybody to do that. Go and support them.

Patty - Please.

Joey - Yeah, it'd be fun to watch you. And also, you can look at the Rebel Rally stuff and there are ways that you can follow everybody each day when that happens in the fall. So, it's very...

Patty - Yeah, the public's able to tune in and see where we are. We may not know where we are, but everyone in the world that's watching it online can see the little dot there. That's team 114 and they're lost. They're way the hell out of the way. They should be over here! Go back that way go back well that

Joey - I'm screaming at the tv all the time so that'll be right up my alley! Well miss Patty thank you so much for coming on and sharing us a little bit about yourself your husband thank you expeditions and



everything we are We're honored that you have. Thank you so much. I really appreciate this. I appreciate your time.

Patty - Appreciate getting the word out there and hope to meet, you know, some of these people that, you know, I recognize a lot of the names, some of the names I didn't recognize. So, if they're anywhere. But yeah, I'd like to meet some of the people that I haven't met. I'm always welcome to, you know, love to talk to them and be able to show them the Jeep and the slides and everything.

Tony - Right on.

Patty - And they're welcome to share the story as much as they can. The more it gets out there, the better for me. And Misti, who's working, I should say I'm working with her. She's doing the writing of the book and I'm doing the talking and we're working on it.

Joey - Well, thank you for everybody who joined us live this evening. Thank you for everybody who came on and asked questions and participated. I hope you all have a wonderful week. Get out there and go to [tnt-triedandtrue.com](http://tnt-triedandtrue.com) and give Ms. Patty and Connie a support.

Do whatever they can to follow them. Hope you all have a wonderful week. Get outside, learn something new, get involved, and do something cool. I hope everybody Has a great week outside. Enjoy the nice weather that's about to come in the spring.

Tony, good to see you. Miss Patty, stick around. Whether you travel by Rig or by shoe, look out for number one and don't step in number two. We are out.