

# RRP 109 — Brian R.

*Sober Enough to Say Yes: Recovery, Native Roots, and Finding Purpose Through Music*

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## Episode Information

- **Presenters:** Peter and Julie
- **Episode Length:** 1:36:43
- **Release Date:** April 10, 2026

## Episode Summary

Brian R. is a Klamath tribal member, artist, and community radio DJ based in Portland, Oregon. In this episode, Brian shares a journey that spans decades of drinking — beginning in his teens, accelerating through his twenties and thirties, and quietly hollowing out his life through COVID-era isolation — until a second DUI, a court-ordered IOP program, and an AA community finally gave him the tools and the accountability to build something new. That something new turned out to be Shady Pines Radio, where every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. Brian hosts a show dedicated entirely to Native American artists and composers — voices he says are systematically overlooked by mainstream culture. Brian's story is one of identity, generational patterns, the unexpected power of service work, and what becomes possible when sobriety makes room for a life you couldn't say yes to before.

## Key Points

- **[00:09:19]** Court-ordered into AA — and the moment Brian realized it was working
- **[00:13:03]** Brian's second DUI: the California stop in Beaverton at midnight, and the 14-years-364-days detail that still stings
- **[00:16:34]** First drink, first blackout, first note left for mom and dad — the origin story of a drinking career
- **[00:24:11]** Brian identifies as a Klamath tribal member — his biological parents were both alcoholics, and he reflects on generational patterns in his Native community
- **[00:31:00]** Teaching English in Korea at 23 — drinking soju laced with formaldehyde, losing dangerous amounts of weight, and boarding a plane home
- **[00:52:34]** The geographic cure: Seattle, Vermont, Atlanta, rural Georgia — and the moment he realized the same person got off every plane
- **[01:09:45]** COVID isolation, a bottle and a half of wine a night, and the second DUI that finally triggered IOP
- **[01:18:07]** The intake urine test: Brian told his IOP counselor he “barely drank.” His result came back at 33,000 parts — normal is up to 200

- **[01:21:30]** Sitting in a plastic chair at 52, telling his intake counselor he was actually looking forward to IOP this time — and meaning it for the first time
- **[01:23:54]** Losing his AA service commitment — and the relapse that followed almost immediately after
- **[01:29:52]** Brian’s founding of the Northwest Two-Spirit Society — raising visibility for Native American culture and identity
- **[01:32:42]** From AA to an open mic to Shady Pines Radio — how sobriety made room for Brian to say yes to the show he was born to host

## Guest Quote

“My sobriety has prepared me to say yes to things that before I would’ve had to say no.” — Brian R.

## Websites Discussed

- [Shady Pines Radio](#) — Community radio station; Brian hosts Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. featuring Native American artists
- [Painted Horse Recovery](#) — Native American-focused recovery organization based in Portland
- [Real Recovery Podcast](#) — Real stories of recovery, resilience, and redemption

## Episode Links

- **Listen:** <https://mdcr1.com/109>
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## Hashtags & Mentions

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