

*A series  
profiling  
your fellow  
Routematchers.*

by Laura Lee Huttenbach

## Elizabeth Rooney

Project Manager

If Routematch ever had a talent show, Liz Rooney would play the drums, but she could also play the piano, clarinet, trumpet, and a number of percussion instruments. She sings, too. At a karaoke bar, you'd probably hear her rendition of "The Pretender" by Foo Fighters or "Black Velvet" by Alannah Myles. "Those are the ones I totally rock out on," she says. "But only after a couple beers. You know, for liquid confidence." >



# Q & A with Elizabeth “Liz” Rooney

---

## Q: Where did you grow up?

**A.** Pennsylvania. A suburb called Phoenixville, between Amish Country and Philadelphia.

## Q. What did it sound like in your house?

**A.** Constant noise. I’m the youngest of four with three older brothers. We’re a musical family. My mom and dad were both singers in local barbershop choirs. My brother Jim is a classically trained pianist. My brother Patrick is a rock drummer and guitar player.

## Q. Was there any place to escape the noise?

**A.** I retreated to books a lot. I learned to get up earlier than everybody, especially on weekends, so I could read in peace. But I just tried to embrace the fact that there’s always going to be noise and to live with it.

## Q. What was it like growing up with three brothers?

**A.** They didn’t pick on me too much. They were protective of me but not too protective. They taught me to be strong and not babied. If there was ever a boy that broke my heart or pissed me off, they would say, “It’s okay. You gotta get up and try it again.”

## Q. What book changed your life?

**A.** *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. It helped me envision being a more independent person, thinking for myself and worrying about my own success. Ayn Rand has this idea of Objectivism—putting your own needs and desire for success above all else, of not always putting everyone else first. I know it sounds like a very selfish way of looking at things, but it helped me to make the move down here. I looked at this as an adventure, as a good opportunity. I asked, “What would it do for me?” rather than, “Am I hurting my family? Am I bumming out my friends?”



## Q. What did you study at West Chester University?

**A.** My first two years I majored in percussion with a focus on education. Then I switched to history with a minor in comparative literature.

## Q. How did you get into software?

**A.** When I graduated from college, I taught percussion in public high schools for seven years. Then I worked a couple jobs trying to make it in the music business, but it wasn’t paying the bills. So I called my dad, who was a programmer before he retired. “You always had a knack for computers,” he told me. “Why don’t you take a few software courses and see if you like it? That can pay your bills, and you can still be creative in your free time.” So that’s what I did.

## Q. When did you start working at Routematch?

**A.** March 2011. I remember the first interview was two hours long. It was my longest interview ever. I sat with the head of technology at the time, and the first hour of it was him just describing what this industry’s about and explaining what the



company did. It was so foreign to me that there was even such a thing as transit software. I remember going home to my boyfriend and saying, “This company sounds really interesting, but I’m still a little confused as to what they do. I have no idea what I’m getting myself into, but I’m excited about it!”

**Q. If you could go back now, to 2011, what advice would you give yourself in the interview?**

**A.** Be open-minded. Don’t be scared. Don’t be timid. Know that the only constant in life is change. Communicate well.

**Q. With your trained ear, how do you listen to music?**

**A.** I see it. I mean, I hear music, but in my head I’m seeing what it looks like on a page and how it’s going to be played. I’ll see the chord and how the accent and dynamics work. It’s the same as when you’re sight-reading. You’re not looking at the note you’re playing. You’re looking at the note maybe five measures ahead.

**Q. Do you have a favorite composer or musician?**

**A.** I’m a lover of all music, but if I had to pick a composer, it’d be Dmitri Shostakovich. My favorite piece of music is by him, Symphony No. 5 in D Minor. And my favorite band of all time is The Police, because I’m a drummer and love Stewart Copeland. I think he’s one of the best contemporary rock drummers that’s ever lived.

**Q. What’s at the top of your bucket list?**

**A.** I’d love to go to Ireland. That’s my family’s heritage. My dad is a dual citizen.

**Q. Sorry, you said you wanted to transfer to Ireland office?**

**A.** [laughs] No! No, not to Waterford. I want to do a road trip through Ireland. Like, drink a pint of Guinness and go to Galway.

**Q. What living person do you admire most and why?**

**A.** My Dad. He’s the best teacher. He taught me to think for myself. He always said, “The best thing we were born with is free will.” He trusts that I’ll make good decisions for myself. He tells me, “I never worry about you or the decisions you make.” That makes me feel so good.

**Q. Has anyone at Routematch ever heard you play the drums?**

**A.** Not unless they’ve scoured YouTube!



---

*Writer Laura Lee Huttenbach is the author of “The Boy is Gone” and “Running with Raven” (Kensington Press, May 2017). Her website is [www.LLHuttenbach.com](http://www.LLHuttenbach.com).*

---